



There was no shortage of enthusiasm Dec. 6 at the annual Livermore Holiday Sights and Sounds Parade. Floats, performances by local businesses, bands, schools and clubs were among highlights of the downtown festivities. (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)

Pleasanton's Revitalization Plan Seeks To Drive Local Investment

City Creates New Department in Push To Boost Flagging Local Economy

By David Jen

PLEASANTON — The city has created a new department focused on local businesses in a push to revitalize Pleasanton's economy.

The Community and Economic Development Department, formed during this year's budget process, explores opportunities through land use, permitting and process changes to drive new investment in Pleasanton, said Melinda Denis, the department's deputy director, at the Dec. 2 city council meeting.

The department is also searching for a new economic development manager following Lisa Adamos' resignation on Nov. 3.

The department has already

completed initiatives to attract new retail businesses to the city and streamline permit processes, including a simplified design-review process introduced into ordinance at last week's meeting.

"Sometimes you have to put a little momentum behind your effort in order to get the resources aligned to do the work," said Ellen Clark, Pleasanton director of community and economic development. "We've done a lot since the council passed the budget around organization and reallocation of resources to our economic-development efforts."

In June, the city council unanimously adopted a two-year budget that addressed a deficit nearing \$12

million annually. The budget cut city employees, services and programs, while also tapping money outside its general fund to pay for rising pension and infrastructure costs.

On top of the growing expenses, flagging retail and hotel activity since the COVID-19 pandemic has left the city without much of the revenues it previously enjoyed.

The city council, prior to the budget's adoption, identified the implementation of its five-year Economic Development Strategic Plan as one of Pleasanton's higher priorities. The plan includes initiatives to revitalize retail, ensure downtown vibrancy, retain and expand businesses, and support

(See REVITALIZATION, page 9)

City of Dublin Sets New Framework For Outdoor Music and Entertainment

Goal is To Support Businesses, while Maintaining Compatibility for Residents

By Sanestina Hunter

DUBLIN — Outdoor live entertainment in downtown Dublin cleared a key hurdle when the City Council on Dec. 2 approved updated amendments to the Downtown Dublin Specific Plan (DDSP) and zoning ordinance, establishing the framework for allowing outdoor performances in the city's commercial core.

The council is expected on Tuesday, Dec. 16 to take a final vote to adopt the new regulations, which would permit small-scale outdoor entertainment in designated dining areas once they take effect 30 days later.

City Principal Planner Jennifer Byous told The Independent that the new rules aim to give businesses clarity while ensuring entertainment remains compatible with surrounding uses.

"The approach to outdoor live entertainment is to provide clearer expectations for both businesses and the community," Byous said. "The updated standards create a predictable and transparent framework, which helps businesses plan events with confidence."

She added that the amendments support the DDSP's broader goal of creating "a vibrant, dynamic commercial and mixed-use center" with expanded dining, entertainment

and gathering opportunities in a pedestrian-friendly setting.

Outdoor entertainment would be limited to the 284-acre DDSP area, generally bounded by Village Parkway, Interstate-580, San Ramon Road and Amador Valley Boulevard. Because residential neighborhoods border portions of the district, the city incorporated clear performance and noise standards aimed at minimizing impacts.

A key part of the update is a new definition for "Outdoor Live Entertainment," which covers performances held outdoors in approved dining areas and outside permanent enclosed structures. Entertainment may include live music or amplified

(See DOWNTOWN, page 9)

LLNL Involved in the National Effort To Further AI Progress

Genesis Mission Will Incorporate All 17 DOE Labs

By David Jen

LIVERMORE — A new effort to further U.S. technological leadership will unify the nation's supercomputers and datasets into a giant artificial-intelligence (AI) platform.

Known as the Genesis Mission, the work will draw upon the Department of Energy's (DOE's) 17 national laboratories, including Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL), select private-industry partners and academic institutions.

"As a proud partner of the Genesis Mission, LLNL will be joining the U.S. Department of Energy's national laboratories, universities and industry part-

ners to bring AI, supercomputing and scientific expertise together to accelerate discovery, strengthen U.S. innovation and enhance national security," according to an LLNL statement. "With LLNL's legacy of supercomputing excellence, high-impact science and code development, the lab is uniquely positioned for this transformation."

LLNL hosts some of the world's fastest and most powerful computers, including El Capitan, ranked No. 1 in the world, and No. 12 Tuolumne.

President Donald Trump issued the executive order launching the mission last month, assigning U.S. Secretary of Energy Chris Wright the responsibility

(See LLNL, page 6)

Speakers Praise Bankhead At City Council Meeting

Theater Receives Support from Broad Community Cross Section

By Vivien Wenneker

LIVERMORE — Livermore Valley Arts (LVA) Executive Director Chris Carter on Dec. 8 told the Livermore City Council in his annual report that over the past year the Bankhead Theater hit its highest level of earned revenue in the organization's history.

At the same time, however, there was a significant drop in charitable giving beginning in February, a trend echoed by arts organizations nationwide, which resulted in the organization ending this fiscal year in a deficit.

Still, Carter maintained that the overall financial well-being of the Bankhead remains strong, with more than \$1.3 million in its operating reserve fund. Additionally, to counter the downturn in giving, LVA increased its fundraising efforts, launching a \$1 million gift

campaign in August, which is now projected to exceed its goal.

"Since 2007, LVA has maintained and cared for this facility, while working to utilize it to its fullest potential in serving our community through the arts and enhancing the quality of life for Livermore residents," Carter said. "These goals are deeply aligned with the city's mission and priorities, and I hope that alignment is clear in our work."

This year, the Bankhead hosted 222 programs, eight cultural celebrations, the Art Walk, Livermore Comicon and, for the first time, presented Cosmic Odyssey, an immersive, outer-space experience on stage that delivered deeper insights into scientific concepts and technological advancements involving the cosmos.

According to the 2024-2025 LVA Annual Fiscal Report, expens-

(See COUNCIL, page 9)



An artist's rendering displays a new look for downtown Dublin, where live outdoor entertainment could take place in selected areas. (Rendering courtesy of City of Dublin)



Carolyn and Ken Mano have spent 54 years in their Pleasanton home, raising six children in the city they love. Their story is one of connection and a shared appreciation of family, church, community, hard work — and lots of sports. (Photo — Christina Cavallaro)

Pleasanton Couple Share a Love of Service

Ken and Carolyn Mano Shy from the Limelight, but Lean into Their Community

By Christina Cavallaro

PLEASANTON — Were it not for 30-year Pleasanton resident Michael Miller, an interview with Ken and Carolyn Mano might never have happened.

The Manos have lived since 1971 in Pleasanton, where they raised six children who all went to Amador Valley High School. The couple has been so active in countless areas of service that a resident of the Tri-Valley would be hard-pressed not to have crossed paths with them.

For all the time the Manos spend talking and connecting with others, however, they are not big on speaking about themselves.

Sometimes it takes others to shine a light on the people in a community who brighten the lives of so many. In 2023, Ken was a recipient of the annual Ed Kinney Community Patriots Award for outstanding community leadership. Ken served many years in the Amador Athletic Boosters and as a scoutmaster for the former Boy Scouts of

America, and played a major role in Special Olympics events in the Tri-Valley. He was one of the original people who developed and grew the nonprofit service organization, JustServe.

"They are the most gentle, kind and giving people I know," Miller said. "They have served as volunteers for churches and charitable food organizations, school fundraising and community-preparedness events. They are quiet and humble but have fascinating life stories that are very inspirational."

(See MANO, page 8)

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PET OF THE WEEK



GERTRUDE

'Twas a cozy night in winter, when all through the home, little Gertrude was waiting, not wanting to roam. After tennis balls dance and fly in the air, she'll settle in your lap on your favorite chair. Warm, gentle and cuddly, she's the gift you'll adore. Adopt Gertrude at Valley Humane Society and make her yours evermore. Call Valley Humane at (925) 426-8656 or email info@valleyhumane.org to get started with the adoption process. (Photo courtesy of Valley Humane)

Dublin Student Creates New Cyberbullying Curriculum

By Sanestina Hunter

DUBLIN—After recognizing gaps in how schools address online harassment, Dublin High School senior Suhani Gupta set out to create a new kind of cyberbullying-prevention program.

She said many students receive only brief presentations that do not match the complexity of situations they encounter daily, especially as social media plays an increasing role in campus culture.

“We hear that cyberbullying is bad, but we aren’t taught what to do when it happens,” Gupta told The Independent.

As founder and president of the Neuro Health Alliance (NHA) — a student-led, student-run nonprofit focused on mental health — Gupta guides work in advocacy, education and research aimed at reducing stigma and strengthening mental-health awareness across school communities.

She began planning the nonprofit while in middle school and formally established it during her sophomore year, with the help of family and trusted adults.

Her project, STOP Cyberbullying Interactive Training, recently earned her a \$10,000 Be More Grant from the National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS).

From there, she presented the program in November at NSHSS Scholars Day in Atlanta in a “Shark Tank-style” pitch. Ten finalists advanced, and five, including Gupta, received \$10,000 awards, which she said she plans to use for video and animation upgrades.

Gupta said she built the program after comparing what students receive to what adults

typically learn in the workplace.

While many employees complete structured harassment-prevention courses, she said students receive far less despite facing increasingly complex online misconduct.

More than one-third of U.S. high school students report experiencing cyberbullying, and those affected are more than twice as likely to attempt self-harm.

Her understanding of these risks is informed in part by her own experiences with cyberbullying, including doxxing



Suhani Gupta
(courtesy of Suhani Gupta) and swatting, as well as similar incidents involving a close friend.

Doxxing refers to searching for and publishing private or identifying information about an individual on the internet, typically with malicious intent. Swatting refers to the practice of making a prank call to emergency services in an attempt to summon many armed police officers to a particular address.

STOP Cyberbullying uses animated, branching video scenarios that mirror real online interactions.

Each video pauses at key moments and requires students

to answer questions before continuing.

Gupta designed the program in such a way because interactive instruction, she said, is more effective than one-time assemblies. The curriculum also highlights the role of bystanders, who often see harmful behavior before adults do.

“You can’t skip through it,” she said. “It makes students stop and think.”

The scenarios cover impersonation, anonymous threats, deepfake misuse, fake accounts, group-chat escalation and bystander decision-making.

Gupta hopes to pilot the program at Dublin High, releasing two videos each month to study how students interact with the curriculum. She has also discussed integrating the training into district learning management systems such as Google Classroom or Canvas, and has contacted schools in Pleasanton, Livermore and outside the Tri-Valley about future pilots.

“I’m hoping it can be implemented in the 2026–27 school year,” she said

NHA’s broader work includes mental-health workshops, academic-support resources and initiatives supporting neurodivergent students.

Gupta said that students at other schools have asked whether they can launch NHA chapters on their campuses.

Her long-term goal is to develop age-specific versions of STOP Cyberbullying for middle-school students, high-school students and parents. She also plans to expand the curriculum to include digital consent, misinformation and AI-related safety and hopes the training may eventually be-

come a graduation requirement.

Dublin has built a reputation as an innovative city, and district leaders often note that the community’s focus on creativity begins in the schools and extends into the professional workforce.

The young innovator’s work aligns with several student-led projects emerging across the Tri-Valley, including HowToHackathon, founded by senior Kaushik Chandolu; a TEDxYouth conference organized by student Charvi Chapana; and Rhyme, a recommendation-based social app created by graduate Rohan Nihalani.

With a school community full of idea-driven students, Dublin Unified School District Superintendent Chris Funk has said that the district is seeing

more students pursue projects that address real community needs, reflecting a broader emphasis on practical innovation across Dublin schools.

As she moves on to college, Gupta said she plans to study neuroscience and continue

expanding her digital-safety curriculum. When asked what advice she would offer other students developing their own projects, she said:

“Keep pushing. Do your best. The world needs you exactly as you are.”



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Livermore Sets Virtual Meeting To Discuss City’s Traffic Safety

By Vivien Wencker

LIVERMORE — The City of Livermore plans to host a virtual meeting from 6-7:30 p.m. on Monday, Dec. 15 to gather community feedback on its Vision Zero Action Plan (VZAP) for traffic safety.

Led by the Community Development Department, Livermore’s VZAP is designed to provide a comprehensive strategy that will reduce and eventually eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries. Recognizing that traffic deaths and severe injuries are preventable, the VZAP aims to prioritize safety and, thereby, create a more sustainable and livable city.

Vision Zero is a multi-national strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility. First implemented in Sweden in 1997, Vision Zero has proved successful across Europe and is gaining momentum in major American cities such as San Francisco and New York.

According to visionzero-network.org, more than 60 U.S. communities have committed to Vision Zero, with 15 of those from California.

“The Vision Zero Action Plan will guide us in designing roads that account for human error and, crucially, prevent deadly crashes,” Livermore Senior Transportation Engineer Joanna Liu said. “This data-driven strategy provides the documentation needed to secure significant state and federal grants, allowing us to build and maintain the infrastructure required to achieve our goal: zero traffic deaths and severe injuries.”

Each year, roughly 40,000 people in the U.S. die as a result of traffic accidents. Although the rate of roadway fatalities has been on the decline over the past 30 years, progress has stalled in the past decade and went up in 2020 and 2021, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. In 2021, 43,230 people, including 7,388 pedestrians, were killed in motor-vehicle crashes

The 2021 statistics marked the highest number of fatalities since 2005. Additionally, millions more people are injured

(sometimes permanently) each year.

“Communities that want to succeed at Vision Zero need to acknowledge that business as usual is not enough and that systemic changes are needed to make meaningful progress,” according to the guiding principles of the Vision Zero Network.

On a broader level, Vision Zero isn’t strictly a program or slogan but represents a different approach to traffic safety — one that prioritizes cross-disciplinary collaboration between local traffic planners and engineers, policymakers and public-health professionals.

For cities such as Livermore, it is largely a technical mindset that will help with planning, designing, constructing, operating and maintaining roadway networks to reduce fatal and severe injury crashes to zero, based on the Federal Highway Administration’s Safe System Approach for Roadway Safety. It is also be-

ing developed simultaneously alongside the city’s Local Road Safety Plan.

As part of the process for moving toward Vision Zero, Livermore has been collecting data since 2010, analyzing collision trends and identifying safety countermeasures that can be integrated into an action plan with prioritized improvements.

There have been two past meetings for stakeholder/community input, both held in 2023. These have allowed residents an opportunity to voice their concerns surrounding traffic and safety.

Although the Dec. 15 meeting will give residents the same opportunity, it will mostly center on the City’s VZAP, which staff plan to recommend to the City Council in 2026.

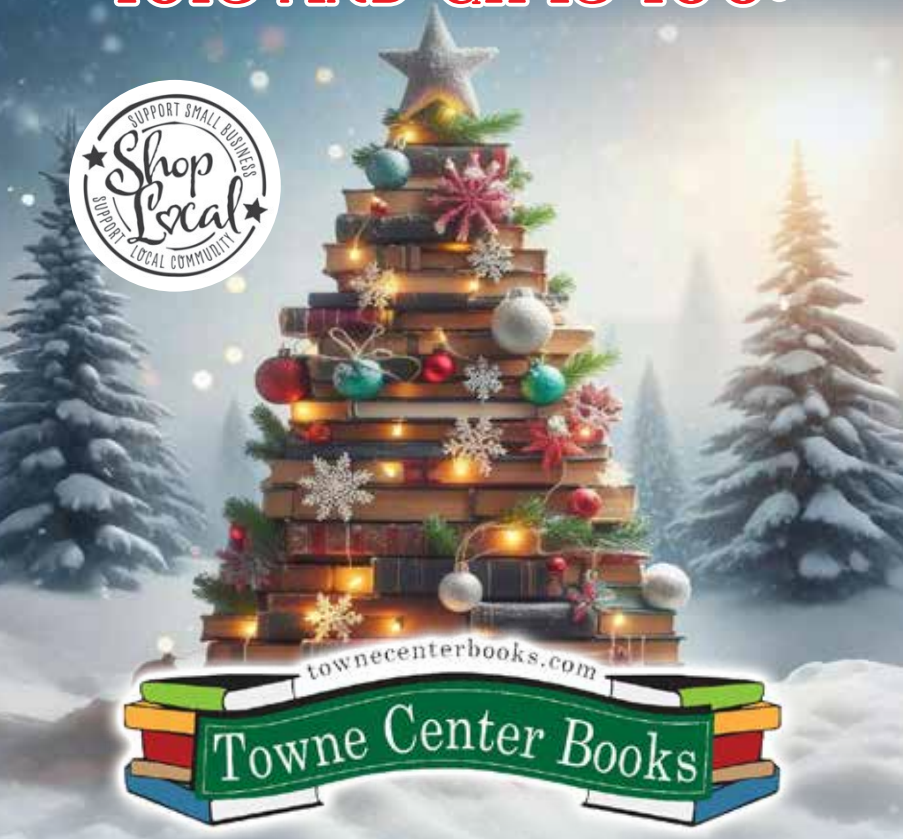
For more information on the upcoming meeting and to register, visit: <https://www.livermoreca.gov/departments/community-development/engineering/vision-zero/public-outreach>.

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Dublin Mayor Sherry Hu Launches Re-Election Campaign

By Sanestina Hunter

DUBLIN — Mayor Sherry Hu has launched her 2026 re-election campaign, outlining a platform centered on fiscal stability, major infrastructure planning, business support and community services as Dublin continues to grow.

Hu on Nov. 23 announced her campaign at the Aloft Hotel, where she said she hopes to continue guiding the city “into its next chapter of thoughtful, community-centered growth.”

the opening of more than 100 new businesses in the past year.

Dublin has been one of the fastest-growing cities in Alameda County for several years. The city is projected to reach 89,595 residents by 2040, a figure that includes about 3,013 group-quarters residents, according to data from Pop-Facts, a demographic dataset commonly used by local governments for annual population and planning estimates. The city continues to add new residents, employers and

The Independent, noting community-led events such as Chinese New Year celebrations, Diwali, Native American heritage programs and African American cultural events.

As part of her ongoing priorities, Hu said that if she is re-elected, Dublin’s next phase of growth will center on completing major infrastructure projects, including the long-planned Dublin Boulevard extension to Livermore and improvements along Dublin Boulevard — the roadway

central focus, with recent investments in upgraded technology, expanded neighborhood- and business-watch programs, and ongoing outreach by Dublin Police Services.

Earlier this year and again in November, the Dublin City Council sent letters to the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Bureau of Prisons opposing the possibility of the closed Federal Correctional Institution in Dublin being repurposed for a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention center. The council cited potential impacts on public-safety resources, local services and overall community well-being, reflecting significant concerns raised by residents after federal officials evaluated the site earlier in the year.

The city participated in National Night Out, engaging with roughly 1,000 residents across 30 neighborhoods to foster police-community partnerships, and continued community connections through the Dublin Farmers’ Market, Coffee with the Chief and other events.

Prior public-safety and community organizations have noted Hu’s leadership on fiscal management and public safety, reflecting ongoing support from groups engaged in past election cycles.

Hu also highlighted recent improvements to parks and recreation, including the city’s 25th park in Wallis Ranch earlier this year, and the upcoming opening of Forest Park on Dec. 13.

Before becoming mayor, Hu served on multiple regional boards and committees, including work with East Bay Community Energy, the Alameda County Library Advisory Commission, and liaison roles with the Dublin Unified School District and East

Bay Regional Park District. She holds a Ph.D. in architectural engineering and has professional experience in engineering, planning and project management.

As she looks ahead to her re-election campaign, Hu said she hopes the community will stay united.

“I ask everyone to work together and be kind to each other, so we can make our community an even better place,” she said.

If re-elected, Hu would serve another two-year term.

No challengers have formally announced campaigns. More information is available at sherryhu.com.



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Dublin Mayor Sherry Hu, third from left, is surrounded by supporters during a Nov. 23 event at the city's Aloft Hotel, where she announced her re-election campaign. (Photo — Xitong Han)

The event drew hundreds of residents and several regional leaders who praised Hu’s collaborative leadership and her focus on strengthening Dublin while engaging constructively on broader Tri-Valley issues.

Hu, who joined the City Council in 2020 and became mayor in 2024, highlighted Dublin’s strong financial position. The city closed the most recent fiscal cycle with a \$36 million General Fund surplus and \$325 million in reserves, supported by disciplined budgeting, steady property-tax revenue and

housing as part of long-term community-planning efforts.

Dublin also remains one of the region’s more diverse and high-quality-of-life communities, known for its strong schools, extensive parks and cultural programming. Roughly 60% of residents identify as Asian, about 25% White, 4% Black, and just less than 10% multiracial, according to 2025 demographic estimates.

“Our cultural strength comes from the people who call Dublin home,” Hu told

that connects directly to Dublin High School. She also highlighted continued support for local businesses, pointing to programs such as the city’s Small Business Navigator and other engagement efforts designed to strengthen Dublin’s commercial corridors.

Hu said responsible planning for future housing needs remains part of the city’s strategy, including affordable and workforce options, while ensuring infrastructure and public safety keep pace with growth. Public safety remains a



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EDITORIAL

Wishful Thinking — New Department Won’t Save Pleasanton from Further Economic Contraction

The City of Pleasanton has continued to try to turn its economic tide. Most recently, the city government reorganized by creating a new Community and Economic Development Department to identify areas where it can cut more expenses or raise income.

The new department is looking for ways to streamline permitting to make development easier and attract new businesses. The department was created as part of the two-year balanced budget the Pleasanton City Council adopted on June 17. The city is both trying to promote itself as a good place for business and tap into expected visitors ahead of next year’s FIFA World Cup games and Super Bowl LX in the Bay Area.

That’s all good, and the city absolutely should be looking for more ways to promote itself. The only problem is that Pleasanton isn’t unique; every other city is doing the same thing, and in an environment where the overall economic pie is shrinking. Even in California, growth in technology is being countered by a slowdown in the hospitality, construction, non-durable goods and government-funded services sectors, according to the UCLA Anderson School of Management’s forecast for 2026.

Pleasanton’s new two-year budget didn’t raise taxes and instead focused on cuts. The city laid off two full-time employees, reduced library hours from 62 to 48 per week, and cut back on

park maintenance and other programs and services to save \$7 million. The city also transferred \$3 million from its Section 115 Pension Trust Fund and \$1.8 million from its Retiree Medical/Other Post-Employment Benefits Fund to close the estimated \$10 million-\$12 million budget gap. The budget was passed unanimously.

The move, while closing the short-term budget gap, won’t solve Pleasanton’s longer-term financial difficulties. The city has an ongoing structural deficit brought about by declining business tax revenues, deferred maintenance of city infrastructure and other capital projects.

The city council has explored raising its hotel tax to increase city income up to \$2.8 million per year, and considered converting to a charter city in order to raise its real estate transfer taxes, which could have brought in up to \$19.6 million per year, more than 20 times the amount brought in during the 2023-2024 period.

In July, the council voted 3-2, with Mayor Jack Balch and Councilmembers Craig Eicher and Matt Gaidos in the majority, to not pursue that effort, which would have required a public vote to convert the city to a charter city. Vice Mayor Jeff Nibert and Councilmember Julie Testa supported pursuing the additional taxes now.

Balch said then that the timing wasn’t right for that step, and the council needed to see if its initial efforts

would yield fruit. Gaidos didn’t think the public would support the effort.

Voters may indeed be tax-shy — last November they rejected Measure PP, which would have increased sales tax by a modest 0.5%. But relying on hypothetical future economic growth to pull the city out of its malaise is shortsighted.

For one, the city will still face budget deficits of up to \$9 million per year even after the cuts during this budget cycle.

And despite the constant stream of bragging and misinformation coming out of Washington, D.C., the reality is the country as a whole is teetering on the edge of an economic precipice, with inflation remaining high, fueled largely by President Donald Trump’s regressive and often arbitrary tariffs. Small businesses in particular, the kind that Pleasanton wants to attract, are most vulnerable to the effects of those tariffs, including the rising cost of raw materials or imported components, and decreasing sales to customers who are themselves increasingly cash-strapped.

U.S. manufacturing has contracted for seven straight months, according to a report from Reuters, also citing the impact of tariffs. Even gains in the stock market look to be more driven by speculation on artificial intelligence than increasing business revenues, with just 20 high-tech companies accounting for more than

half of the S&P 500 index more than half of the S&P 500 index That’s. That’s a record level of concentration that increasingly looks like a hyped-up bubble economy.

Pleasanton is in an economic bind that we need to acknowledge isn’t going to fix itself. Hotel occupancy has been flat despite two new hotel openings in Pleasanton in 2023. Businesses that have closed recently aren’t going to be replaced soon — it’s probably more likely that more businesses will fold in the future before any economic turnaround.

Voters rejected Measure PP last year and elected an anti-tax city council on the promise that the financial bind can be solved with cuts to services alone. That was wishful thinking then, and it’s going to be clear that the rising economic tide is not going to lift all boats after all — the tide may actually be receding.

In such an environment, the city can’t afford to pretend that it can just cut its way to balance the budget, especially if the economy takes a serious downturn in the coming months or years. Voters may ultimately be called upon to pass a sales or other tax measure if they want to maintain an acceptable level of services in the city. Mayor Balch and the council should be laying the groundwork for when that time comes.

MAILBOX

Mailbox Guidelines:

Opinions voiced in letters published in Mailbox are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Independent. Anonymous letters will not be published. All letters are required to have the name(s) of the person(s) submitting them, city of residence and phone number, for verification purposes. Letters may not contain advertising. Abusive letters and letters containing ad hominem attacks may be rejected or edited. Letters are subject to verification and may be edited for clarity at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to decide whether or not the letter will be published. Headings for all letters may be edited at the discretion of the editor to properly reflect their content. A headline will be added to letters received without one. Frequent letter writers may have publication of their letters delayed or not run at all. Letters should be limited to 400 words or less and should be sent by email to letters@independentnews.com or submitted using the form below. The letters to the editor deadline is Monday at 8 a.m. If you wish to submit a letter pertaining to a special event or meeting taking place on a Monday before any given Thursday print edition — and you would like your letter to run that week — please contact the editor (editor@independentnews.com) as soon as possible on Monday to discuss the content and publication options. Otherwise, all letters submitted after 8 a.m. on Monday must hold until the following week.

City of Dublin Just Throws Money Around

Tom Evans, Dublin

At the beginning of November, while most Bay Area cities were struggling with their budgets, the City of Dublin was in the enviable position of having a \$35M surplus. Amongst other items at their Nov. 4 council meeting, they did two things that deserve our attention: 1) they earmarked \$25M of the surplus for various uses, and 2) renamed a fund from Catastrophic Loss (a rainy day fund for emergencies) to Asset Contingency (just a name change, they said, for easier understanding). Out of the \$25M, about \$8M was

made available as an increase in the advance for the Dublin Blvd. extension (now the potential loan totaling \$71M); and \$9M made available for Downtown Dublin (the unexplained fund now totaling \$45M). At the Dec. 2 Council meeting, the City decided it needed an additional unplanned-for \$8.8M for a capital improvement project whose cost estimate had suddenly doubled. The fund for the CIP did not have the entire \$8.8M... so instead of taking it from the surplus that they had, they conveniently took \$5M from the newly renamed Asset Contingency fund. (So much for a rainy-day fund for emergencies — we have to fix the leaky clock

tower.) So, what’s my point? First, don’t just look for ways to spend money — Downtown Dublin and the Boulevard Extension are both expensive, unnecessary projects. Second, don’t be sneaky by changing the name of a fund that was designed to be there for emergency use, and then raid the fund because of poor planning. That is not responsible governing.

Government Fraud

David Marco, Livermore

I knew this was happening, but didn’t know how bad it is. Following is a partial list of problems correlated by Janet Elaine Parks from sources we all have access to. These are not allegations. These are findings from nonpartisan Inspectors General and the Government Accountability Office (GAO).

IRS Tax Credit fraud: Billions paid out improperly due to fake dependents, stolen SSNs, and fraudulent filings. Source: Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (TIGTA), 2023–2024.

HUD Housing Assistance fraud: Fake incomes, forged documents, landlords overbilling programs meant for low-income families. Source: HUD Office of Inspector General, 2022–2024.

FEMA Disaster Relief fraud: Fraud rings filing duplicate claims, fake addresses, and multi-state scams after hurricanes, fires, and floods. Source: FEMA Inspector General & DOJ Disaster Fraud Task Force, 2021–2024.

Defense Contracting fraud: Counterfeit parts, inflated invoices, and equipment billed to the Pentagon that never existed. Source: DOD OIG, 2023.

EPA Grant abuse: Millions funneled into “green projects” with falsified research or no deliverables at all. Source: EPA Inspector General, 2022–2024.

Nonprofit & NGO misuse of Federal Funds: Taxpayer-funded organizations diverting grant money into political activity and “ghost programs.” Source: GAO &

DOJ Fraud Division, 2023–2024.

A well-known example that proves the pattern: California’s Employment Development Department alone lost \$20–30 billion in unemployment fraud during COVID — one of the largest fraud scandals in U.S. history. Source: California State Auditor, 2021–2023. If a single state can lose \$30 billion, imagine what’s happening across dozens of federal agencies.

The real issue: not just fraud — but neglect.

What’s shocking isn’t just the fraud itself; it’s that Washington knew, for YEARS: IGs warned Congress, GAO issued reports, fraud divisions made referrals, oversight committees demanded action, and nothing happened.

Instead of addressing corruption inside their own agencies, the establishment spent years investigating, attacking, censoring and smearing Trump. Meanwhile, ignoring billions in waste, abuse, and criminal activity happening inside the government itself. These agencies had time to investigate Trump, but not time to investigate their own fraud? That’s the definition of a weaponized system. Americans deserve to know this. You can’t fix what you don’t expose.

Bottom line: these aren’t right-wing talking points; they’re official audits, oversight reports, and DOJ cases. Trump didn’t create this corruption. He inherited it... again. And the louder the system screams about Trump, the more obvious it becomes what they’re trying to hide.

Does Kaplanis Represent Livermore Schools?

B.J. Reynolds-Koonce, Livermore

I am writing to express deep concern about Livermore School Board Trustee Deena Kaplanis’ participation as a featured speaker at a partisan event titled “Exercising Parental Rights in

Today’s Culture,” co-sponsored by Turning Point USA (TPUSA). According to the public event listing, she was billed as “Deena Kaplanis, Livermore School Board member ... who will discuss current legislation impacting families.” This listing is publicly available here: <https://patch.com/california/livermore/calendar/event/20251120/59b8d4f7-888c-4b7e-a8e4-a1d-a9cb98316/exercising-parental-rights-in-todays-culture>

Turning Point USA is widely recognized as a far-right political organization that actively promotes conservative ideology on high school, college, and university campuses. Its record includes documented anti-immigrant and anti-LGBTQIA+ positions, which have been repeatedly condemned by civil rights organizations. For a sitting LVJUSD trustee to appear at an event co-sponsored by such a group, while being advertised under her official school board title, raises deeply troubling questions about impartial governance and about whether all students and families can trust her to represent them fairly.

School board trustees assume a profound responsibility: to serve every student in the district without partisan bias, and to ensure that schools remain safe, inclusive, and welcoming for all children, including LGBTQIA+ youth, immigrant families, multilingual learners, and those from historically marginalized communities. When a trustee chooses to participate in a politically charged event tied to an organization with exclusionary and harmful rhetoric, it undermines confidence in that commitment.

The community deserves clarity and accountability. Specifically:

- Was Trustee Kaplanis speaking in her personal capacity, or as a representative of the LVJUSD Board?
- What “current legislation impacting families” did she

discuss, and did that information reflect district policy or personal political views?

- Does the Board view this appearance as consistent with its ethics standards and expectations for nonpartisan leadership?

Our district prides itself on values such as equity, belonging, and respect. These values are not abstract; they directly influence the well-being and safety of our students. When an elected trustee risks lending official legitimacy to an organization whose rhetoric contradicts those values, the Board must respond openly. If a violation of trust or ethics occurred, the Board should consider formal censure to reaffirm its commitment to every student and family it serves.

I also encourage fellow community members to raise these concerns at upcoming school board meetings. Public engagement is essential to maintaining transparency and ensuring that district leadership reflects the values of Livermore.

Our students deserve leaders who represent all of us.

Let’s Just Cram It In

Mark Strauch, Livermore

The Abboud Townhome development should be a concern for all Livermore residents, not just those in the surrounding area. It appears that not only do we have elected leaders that ignore resident concerns, but this also seems to extend to city planning staff as well.

When Councilmember Kristie Wang commented: “We need more housing and it has to go somewhere,” that demonstrated indifference on several fronts. This proposal should have been voted down, and the leadership statement should have been: “We need more zoning-compliant housing, and it has to go somewhere appropriate to, and consistent with, the surrounding area.”

Why have zoning guidelines if we just decide to waive them? Perhaps some

(See MAILBOX, page 5)

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The opportunity to meet Santa Claus was among the attractions Dec. 5 at Holiday Village in the Park at Carnegie Park in Livermore. Billed as “like a Hallmark Christmas movie but in real life,” the event officially kicked off the downtown holiday season. (Photo — Leah Silveira)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 4)

people have forgotten (or never knew) the zoning and development battles that took place to preserve the small-town look and feel of Livermore, including views and sightlines of the hillsides.

Councilmember Wang continues: “This is a relatively low-density in a very under-utilized lot.” I guess the thinking goes: The temerity of a single family homeowner having a 0.62 acre lot, when we can cram in a bunch of townhouses by busting height and setback requirements, and since we are soiling up the place, we might as well toss in a non-compliant attached ADU to boot. Not to worry, we will put in place more traffic calming measures (which to me are actually distractions), and there is really nothing to see here since we have, literally, blocked your views and sightlines with more tall structures.

Author Diane Vaughn of the book “The Challenger Launch Decision: Risky Technology, Culture and Deviance at NASA,” coined the term “normalization of deviance.” This is the psychology that describes people accepting something that deviated from what they expected because nothing bad happened. That continued at NASA until something very bad happened. Hopefully Livermore does not reach a point in the future where everyone looks around and asks: “What happened to our beautiful small town?” only to realize that they accepted deviation after deviation until we were no longer a beautiful small town.

No MAGA or Dictator Left Behind

Barry Brynjulson, Pleasanton

The Guardians of Pedophiles claim to be the party of law and order, yet Trump pardoned:

- Nearly 1,600 Jan. 6 insurrectionists (1/20/25) of felonies and misdemeanors or those awaiting trial
- Lawrence Duran and Marianella Valera (5/28/25), who defrauded Medicare of \$287 million, were sentenced to 50 years in prison in 2011 along with \$87 million in restitution
- Paul Walczak (4/23/25), convicted of tax evasion, pardoned after his mother donated \$1 million to a pro-Trump PAC
- Changpeng Zhao (10/21/25), who pleaded guilty to a crypto money laundering scheme, and was given a four-month sentence and \$50 million fine. Trump claims he didn’t know Zhao or his crime, but that many people said he was a good guy who was wrongly persecuted by Biden. His company had entered a business deal with the Trump family
- 77 people (11/29/25) associated with the Fake Electors Plot of 2020, prior to their trials
- David Gentile (11/29/25), just days into his seven-year sentence, after defrauding thousands of \$1.6 billion
- Ex-Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez (12/1/25), who flooded the U.S. with cocaine for de-

cadies. Sentenced to 45 years in prison June 26, 2024.

War on drugs and Medicare fraud? Ha.

No MAGA or Dictator left behind.

Democracy Will Win

Richard Andrews, Livermore

1933, a time of great uncertainty and economic chaos. In Germany, a charismatic maniac arose from the beer-halls of Munich. A failing artist, Hitler was a good orator at inspiring the troops. His ideas were insane, but brilliantly presented to a nation in distress. His followers were violent and physically active. His name: Adolph Hitler.

We know how that went: Over 40 million killed, Ju-

daism ruined, and Europe a disaster, with Germany crushed.

2016 America was in good shape. But a clever huckster wanted his narcissistic self to have his name everywhere, and the power to purloin wealth. He tried the same ploy. He thought he was a “god”, although he was five times bankrupt and a lousy business man. His name? Donald John Trump.

A close ally of the notorious pedophile, Jeffrey Epstein. Trump is also a convicted rapist, and felon with 34 convictions for fraud. But he has a cult similar to Adolph’s, which is unwilling to accept anything that He doesn’t endorse. A lousy orator, but powerful, he knows

how to use the news media to create phony problems.

He used the slogan “Make America Great Again” so he could rebuild his own Reich. Just as Hitler had tried. His method? Destroy the greatest and most successful democracy in history. His cult nodded their heads, listened to his prophetic orations loaded with “alternative facts” they love to recount and spiel.

Now DJT, like Hitler, is trying to start a war so he can further his destruction of Democracy and institute his Reich. His lackeys on the SCOTUS allow it, with few exceptions. And Mikey and the Gang in Congress go along with it. While the Democrats are late getting into the battle, they’ve joined the battle for Democracy.

Trump may be trying to take us down that destructive path, but we citizens are at last pushing back with leadership that values our Constitution and Democracy more than DJT loves “Mein Kampf.”

He may have scammed us, but America, with our diversity and willingness to allow freedom for all, will hopefully give DJT the same total rejection that Hitler had. Hopefully, without the disaster the world endured to rid itself of Adolph.

May American Justice prevail. And all fascists fail.

The Drums of War in East Asia

Greg Scott, Livermore

As the United States continues being steeped in delusion and distraction, the

drums of war sound in East Asia with J-15 military aircraft from the PRC’s (People’s Republic of China’s) CNS (Chinese Navy Ship) Liaoning aircraft carrier aggressively locking fire-control radar on Japanese F-15 monitoring military aircraft in international waters southeast of Okinawa. This resulted from the new Japanese prime minister hypothetical-

ly stating that Japan would defend Taiwan (Republic of China) against a PRC military attack. Consequently, diplomatic and economic relations between Japan and the PRC are having their greatest rupture since World War II. The cowardice of President Trump is doing little to back Japan, one of our staunchest allies, and the fourth largest

(See MAILBOX, page 6)



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The Ballet Roots Dance Company will present its annual production, “Christmas with Ballet Roots,” at the Livermore High School Theater, 600 Maple Street, on Saturday, Dec. 13. The family-friendly production will showcase the Pleasanton-based ballet troupe’s repertoire of classical and contemporary dance, along with a guest performance by The Academy of Danse Libre, which features historical dance forms from the Victorian era to Ragtime and The Roaring ’20s. Performances are scheduled for 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. Tickets are \$25 and are available online at balletroots.org. (Photo by Lucas Garron)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 5)

economy on our planet. The PRC has continued its posturing in these recent events by following up with 100 military aircraft flights from the Liaoning.

It’s ironic that I am writing this in the early hours of December 8th, the 84th anniversary of President Franklin Roosevelt’s “Day of Infamy” speech, following the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor by Imperial Japan, days after which Nazi Germany, as a key member of the Axis Powers, declared war on the United States. The United States’ naivete to the hugely increasing military power of the PRC portends an historical corollary.

The ignorance of the United States citizenry on international affairs and economic realities is astounding. In her letter, “Why You Should Still Care about Schools — Children or No,” (Mailbox, 12/4/2025), Tara Boyce neglects to point out the frustration of local property taxpayers with the abysmal failings of the educational system. By analogy, most PRC students would eat United States students for breakfast on the basis of knowledge and skills.

A large part of community frustration is based on the fact that community members are not listened to — either by the school board, or by the City of Livermore City Council.

“China is a sleeping dragon, when it awakes the whole world will quake.”

The ignorances extend to economics. The PRC and Japan have extensive U.S. Treasuries holdings, as part of the \$29 trillion U.S. Treasury market financing the \$38 trillion federal government debt.

Ask the students: How will CalSTRS (California State Teachers Retirement System) and CalPERS (California Public Employees Retirement System) make up for the hundreds of billions of dollars in their unfunded liabilities?

Tell students the truth on international and economic affairs!

The Worst of Trump Will Last Indefinitely
Eloise Hamann, Dublin

DJ6T does not worry about climate disasters that are fueled by his belief that

gas emissions, pollution of our oceans with plastics and garbage, are irrelevant. He has no concern about the consequences. He once said that he’ll be gone by the time the worst disasters become prolific.

I recently attended a meeting of the Bay Area Independent Publishers. Each author is given three minutes about the books we are working on or have finished. One great thing about my genre of Sci-Fi is that one can invent a society of sentient beings that mimic the worst aspects of humans on Earth, hoping that people will recognize humans have the same issues. Conceivably, the recognition could lead to improvement. In the description of my book, Not Alone on Earth, I said that the society I created had governance that was worse than ours, until recently. The entire room of fifty-plus people laughed and clapped.

Praise for Mr. Wonderful (part one)
Keith Jackson, Dublin

I have seen the light. I have been against Donald Trump

before now, but the Trump supporters have shown me how wrong I have been. He is truly the most wonderful president we have ever had (just ask him). He has suffered terribly unfair opposition without complaint because that is the kind of person he is. He is protecting us from domestic terrorists disguised as peaceful protesters. Los Angeles would be burning right now if not for our fearless leader. He is also protecting us from brown-skinned criminals who are taking jobs in the car washes and fast food restaurants. They even steal those high paying jobs picking produce in the fields. And why do they do this? They claim it is to feed their families. What nonsense. Trump will put a stop to all this. He is dealing with boatloads of terrorists in international waters pretending to be innocent by blowing them out of the water, sometimes more than once. This proves how brave he is. He is the most honest, trustworthy president we have ever had. He never lies. He has NEVER cheated at anything his entire life. Not on his wives or his taxes or

even at golf. Yet he is constantly attacked by people who claim to be concerned citizens, but are obviously far left radicals who are trying to destroy Trump’s god-given right to be president forever.

He is kind and full of compassion like his mentor and boss Vladimir Putin. He has never made a mistake in his entire life, (I know this because he has said so), yet the unworthy peasants continue to oppose him. He supports Christian values, even though he has no idea what they might be. Anyone in the government who does not do whatever he tells them to do must be fired. This is already underway, and it will continue until everyone who opposes him is fired or we run out of employees, whichever comes first.

(More to come in part two.)

This Concerns Me
Kevin Bryant, Dublin

As a teenager, I spent two summers traveling with the carnival that went through Pleasanton. I know how carnival barkers work, and Donald Trump is the best. He managed to sell 77 million tickets to his show.

Voting is a way to speak your mind, and I’m glad there was such a good turnout for the 2024 election, but I have a few concerns.

Why would any veteran, who put their life on the line to protect our rights, vote for someone that is trying to take away those rights? This, after the way he treated a Gold Star family, disrespected deceased American soldiers on D-Day celebrations in France, and is cutting VA budgets?

Why would a Somali man who has been in America for 25 years, still support him after he says he and his entire people are “garbage”?

75% of his social spending cuts will come from rural communities and red states, yet those folks think he is concerned about them. The

reason he thinks all prices are going down is because McDonald’s lowered his wholesale price.

Why would any immigrant from Central or South America still follow him, when he claims their entire peoples are drug-runners, rapists, and are vermin?

Why would any self-respecting woman vote for an admitted molester and frequent adulterer, who is condescending to not only our female congressional leaders but also female world leaders? His constant insults and derogatory nicknames towards women are legendary. Regardless of whether he is guilty or innocent in the Epstein case, the dozens of women who have accused him of inappropriate behavior can’t all be wrong.

But the people that shocked me the most are the supposed Christians who voted for him.

Is grabbing another person’s genitals and bragging about it a virtue? Has adultery become an accepted day-to-day activity in the eyes of the church? What about not having any other Gods before him? And lastly, how could they vote for any Party that literally took food out of very poor children’s mouths to save a few bucks? I really don’t remember learning these values in Sunday School.

I’m sure not all 77 million Trump supporters appreciate some of the things Trump has done, but enough still accept his authoritarian aspirations, and this concerns me.

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LLNL

(Continued from front page)

of implementing Genesis.

“Throughout history, from the Manhattan Project to the Apollo mission, our nation’s brightest minds and industries have answered the call when their nation needed them,” Wright said in a Nov. 24 DOE announcement. “Today, the United States is calling on them once again. Under President Trump’s leadership, the Genesis Mission will unleash the full power of our national laboratories, supercomputers and data resources to ensure that America is the global leader in artificial intelligence and to usher in a new golden era of American discovery.”

The platform, as outlined by the order, will have access to proprietary, federally curated and open scientific datasets as it engages in AI-directed experimentation and manufacturing.

AI covers a broad category of computer systems capable of finding patterns within large datasets to perform tasks instead of relying on explicit instructions. Today’s AI systems can handle assignments previously limited to humans, such as essay writing or software programming, and at speeds much faster than humans. But the industry’s demand for electricity and public concerns of transparency,

privacy and intellectual property have driven skepticism and calls for regulation.

U.S. private investment in AI grew to \$109.1 billion in 2024, more than four times the amount in 2023 and almost 12 times the amount invested that same year by China, the world’s second-leading private-investor country, according to the 2025 Artificial Intelligence Index Report from Stanford University.

The industry saw significant inroads to AI in medical devices and self-driving cars in 2024 on top of chat-based agents that assist in everything from academic research

to cooking to scheduling vacations.

Trump’s executive order directs Genesis to apply the integrated platform toward progress in advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, critical materials, nuclear fission and fusion energy, quantum information science, and semiconductors and microelectronics. Genesis has until Aug. 21 to demonstrate initial operating capabilities in at least one of these areas.

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PLEASE HELP BRING MIGUEL HOME

Miguel Lopez left in the photo, next to his son, Julian Lopez, and his wife, Rosa Lopez.

Livermore Wenté Winery worker, married father of three and grandfather

Miguel Lopez

remains in Mexico after having been illegally deported in early June.

To donate to a GoFundMe account supporting the Lopez family, visit

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/bring-miguel-back-to-his-loved-ones>

Congregation Beth Emek Invites All to a Special Sabbath Service

Congregation Beth Emek in Pleasanton will celebrate the sixth night of Hanukkah with a special Sabbath service at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 19. The public is invited and the sanctuary at 3400 Nevada Ct. will be illuminated by menorahs brought by the congregants. Hanukkah is an eight-day winter festival that celebrates the second century rededication of the

Holy Temple in Jerusalem after almost 400 years of Ptolemaic Dynasty rule of Israel. Dr. Laurence Milder, rabbi at Congregation Beth Emek, said Jews will be praying with an extra degree of gratitude this year with an end to the fighting between Israel and Hamas. “It has been a difficult two years,” Milder said. “We are deeply grateful to see a peace agreement

between Israel and Hamas, and profoundly thankful that those taken hostage have come home.” Jews light one candle on a menorah during each of the eight nights of Hanukkah, which Milder said helps them remain hopeful. “The rabbis taught that, in matters of holiness, one should always increase light, rather than decrease,” Milder said. “The lights of Hanukkah remind us to

retain our hope, even in dark times.” Other holiday customs include songs, latkes (potato pancakes) and games played with a dreidel, a four-sided top. For more information about Hanukkah events at Congregation Beth Emek, including those designed especially for early childhood families, go to bethemek.org, or call the synagogue at 925-931-1055.

The Livermore-Amador Valley Transit Offers Free Rides During Celebration

The Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA) is offering free rides throughout December on bus #1609, as part of its 40th anniversary. LAVTA said bus #1609, dubbed the 40th Anniversary Bus, will be assigned to local and Rapid routes

throughout the Wheels system and rotated on a weekly basis. Riders can learn which route the bus #1609 is assigned on Wheels social media or at wheelsbus.com/40thanniversary. Founded in 1985 with a fleet of nine buses, LAVTA

now operates 66 buses. Ridership topped 1.3 million in 2024. “We want to share our excitement and gratitude with our valued riders,” said LAVTA Executive Director Christy Wegener. “Public transit is foundational to the success of the

Tri-Valley, and Wheels service has grown hand in hand with the communities we serve for the past 40 years.” LAVTA will be hosting community events and promotions throughout 2026 to celebrate its four decades of service.

Dublin Legends Capture Cricket Finals

The Dublin Cricket League (DCL) Legends defeated the San Ramon Cricket Association (SRCA) Stars in the U16 finals match in the Pleasanton-San Ramon-Dublin National Youth Cricket Tournament over Thanksgiving weekend to

claim the San Ramon Grizzlies Cup. More than 450 players from 15 youth cricket clubs participated in the eighth edition of the tournament, hosted by the cities of Pleasanton, San Ramon, and Dublin. SRCA teams also secured

second-place finishes in the U12 and U14 divisions, while DCL teams earned runners-up honors in the U10 division. The U10 division went to the Blazer Cricket Academy Challengers from Sunnyvale, California, while teams from

the Bay Area Strikers Cricket Academy took the U14 and U12 divisions. Almost 60 matches were played at nine venues, garnering more than 20,000 livestream views nationwide, according to tournament organizers.

Armchair Travelers To Hear about Ireland

Tom Mathews will present an Armchair Travelers program, “Ireland: Land of Terrible Beauty,” at the

Civic Center Library in Livermore at 1:30 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 11. Mathews will share pho-

tos and stories of a three-week trip to Ireland he took with his wife, Dorrie, in May 2025.

This is a free program, and registration is not required.



A young visitor appears a bit uncertain exactly what to make of the surroundings during the City of Dublin's annual Tree Lighting festivities Dec. 4 at the Civic Center. The event featured performances by local school choirs and bands, arts and crafts, letters to Santa, hot chocolate and cookies. (Photo — Jacob Clouser)

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Local Moms Are Baking It Forward

By Christina Cavallaro

PLEASANTON — What do you get when you take four moms with backgrounds in education to lend a hand around issues of food insecurity? You get a well-organized donation campaign that exceeds goals and a van full of food and uniquely thoughtful care packages.

What began as the collection of nonperishable staples to create 100 Christmas dinners (minus the

“We’re all moms,” said Thorsden, a recently retired teacher. “We’ve all volunteered. And we’ve all worked with kids. And what we zeroed in on was, when people can’t put food on the table, they still have kids who have birthdays and they still want to do something for them.”

Each kit comes complete with all the fixings to make a cake with icing, colorful sprinkles and candles, and includes a blank

ing 185 birthday-cake kits.

On top of that, members of the group were astounded by the amount of holiday food items and monetary donations they amassed by reaching out to their collective communities right before Thanksgiving.

“I have to say I’m overwhelmed by the community’s generosity,” said McFadden, a recently retired Fremont school principal. “I mean, it’s crazy. My (former) school donated a

The women wasted no time in getting the word out before Thanksgiving.

“I think people were breaking bread with their families and feeling grateful but were also like, ‘Oh, I have friends that are doing this thing,’” Thorsden said. “And I think people pitched in more money that way.”

The group was ultimately able to raise \$1,060. It spent \$277 on supplies and donated \$500 directly to the Alameda County Food Bank. The rest of the funds they’ve earmarked for another giving project they have in mind for spring.

“I just feel like everybody wanted to get in on the joyfulness of it, which is what we were going for,” Thorsden said. “Even in worry and concern and food scarcity, we can find some joy.”

All of the resources have been distributed locally.

“Alameda County Food Bank is the big hub, and they parse out to smaller gifting organizations,” McFadden explained. The group delivered to Livermore’s Graceland Pantry and some items to Tri-City Mobile Pantry, in McFadden’s former Fremont school district.

“So, we’re spreading the footprint, but we’re keeping it in Alameda County,” she said.

The sad reality is that when items are delivered, they are gone immediately.

“The need is so great, you could almost do this every month, but obviously you can’t, which sometimes stops us from doing stuff,” Thorsden said. “You’re like, there’s an endless need. But it doesn’t mean you shouldn’t do something. Just help where you can, whether it’s individual people or a bigger thing. Just help.”

MANO

(Continued from front page)

The couple met while students at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Ken was working at the bookstore where Carolyn went looking for a job. She recently found an old diary that documented the moment.

“I met this very cute man,’” Carolyn read aloud. “‘And his name was Ken Mano.’ I didn’t get the job ... but I got the man. And he’s still kind of cute, huh?”

The Manos, who were born and raised in the U.S. but are of Japanese heritage, were young children when World War II started and roughly 120,000 Japanese Americans on the West Coast were incarcerated. Ken was born in Los Angeles, where his father had a prosperous produce market before the war.

“As my mom tells it, they sold everything for 10 cents on the dollar ... their valuables, all their stuff from Japan they pretty much burned because they were afraid they’d get in trouble or punished,” he said.

In 1941, Ken, who was 2½ at the time, along with his parents and 1-year-old sister, left Los Angeles on a voluntary evacuation and headed for Utah, where they had a relative.

“There was a short period where, if you had some place to go, then you could leave,” Ken explained.

“That was the only reason they could move,” Carolyn added.

“My parents basically had to take whatever they could (carry),” Ken said. “They just left their home, refrigerators, everything. We ended up living in a refurbished chicken coop for a while.”

Eventually, the family settled into farming life and moved to Bountiful, just north of Salt Lake City.

“They were all Mormons,” Ken said. He used to watch after school as kids walked around the block to the church, where there was a youth program.

“And so, we probably just thought that’s what we were supposed to do,” he said, laughing. Ken joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) when he was 12, along with his younger siblings and eventually his mother and father.

“Our family is very active in the church, so that’s a good thing that came out of that,” he said.

Carolyn was born in 1942 and raised in the small, close-knit community of Highland, Utah.

“I was not aware until I went to college that there was so much prejudice because Japanese people are very proud, and Dad and Mom never complained,” she said. “They were called derogatory names and had to ride at the back of the bus.”

But in Highland, Carolyn’s family owned a farm and was welcomed into the LDS church and community.

“I was very accepted, and we were a close-knit youth group. I just was the happiest I could be,” she said. It wasn’t until she met Ken and read a paper he’d written for college about his experience during the war that she understood her own history.

“I was totally astounded that actually went on because my childhood was happy,” she said.

In fact, a childhood friend wrote to her recently with an apology. “He said, ‘We were told never to date you.’ I had no idea because they were so accepting that I just felt like the rest of them. And what I remember is the goodness they showed me.”

The Manos, together, have been showing goodness their whole adult lives with impactful acts

of service both large and small.

Miller recalled an occasion when Ken learned that Miller needed to haul something that was too large to fit in his own van.

“He contacted me and offered to loan me his old truck,” Miller said. “Apparently he no longer needed it but held onto it to loan out to people.”

The Manos both came from farming backgrounds and learned early about hard work --- Carolyn was driving tractors at age 9 --- and lending a hand to neighbors.

“Pleasanton’s been a great place for us to live,” Ken said. “We’ve never had any problems with discrimination or anything.”

Carolyn added, “It’s just really friendly and kind people, very concerned about local issues and involved. So, it’s very easy to mingle with them.

There were just three or four Japanese families in the area when the Manos moved to the city.

When their kids were growing up, Carolyn was especially active in their schools.

“She’s always done a lot of things,” her husband said. “Like room mother, PTA, and she was always the soccer mom. She made banners for the soccer teams and ran the snack bar for the Amador Athletic Boosters for 10 years.”

The Manos are now proud grandparents to 15 grandkids.

“Children are God’s blessing to me. I love children,” Carolyn said. “I just listened to K-Pop (South Korean pop music) this morning.” Her grandkids love it. “I thought, ‘I can’t be an illiterate Grandma.’ I found myself bouncing to it. At my age, hey, you know, I got to keep up.”

As far as keeping up, she and Ken do not seem to have ever slowed down. Carolyn is battling breast cancer for the third time and said her body isn’t working as well as it did previously. She pointed to Ken. “He’s my Japanese gardener. One day he said, ‘Do you know we have a backyard?’ I seldom go out there. I just enjoy the fruits of his labor. He does it all.”

The garden may be the only thing they don’t do together.

“We both like sports, especially BYU football, basketball and volleyball,” Ken said. “We watch all the games. At least we do it together.”

“We’ve got bucket seats in our couch now,” Carolyn said, laughing.

The couple’s latest “fun thing we were called to do,” Carolyn said, is being LDS service missionaries throughout the Bay Area. Their efforts involve pairing nonprofits in need with grants from the LDS church.

“So, we visited all these places, and it was amazing to me the goodness of people in all areas to help other people who are in need ... the goodness that is out in the world,” Carolyn said. “You hear all the dark parts, but there’s so much good and then we got to serve together in the same effort.”

Ken added, “It’s really fun. And like she said, we’re able to work together and visit these places. The people that run those organizations are really amazing. They’re just so caring and loving and dedicated to helping other people.”

This article is part of a series of periodically appearing stories called “People Portraits.” Do you know of someone in the Tri-Valley whose story you think the community might like to hear? If so, please email christina@independentnews.com



The volunteer village behind the successful “Bake it Forward” project in support of the Alameda County Food Bank includes, left to right, James Thorsden, Lisa Thorsden, Rochelle Morris, Kristin O’Nesky, Peter McFadden, Heidi McFadden, Jeannie Johnson, Mike Morris and Anu Ramakrishnan. Not shown is Sharon Beckley. (Photo — Aiden McFadden)

meat) to support the Alameda County Food Bank turned into the creation of the “Bake it Forward” project.

Lisa Thorsden, Heidi McFadden, Kristin O’Nesky and Rochelle Morris are the mastermind moms behind the assembly of birthday-cake kits that inventively substitute Sprite for perishable eggs and oil so that parents experiencing food insecurity can still provide joyful birthdays for their children.

birthday card and balloons all wrapped in a pan for baking and secured with a cheerful bow.

O’Nesky, a school psychologist said, “It’s basically a birthday in a box.”

The group of moms, plus husbands and friend volunteers, gathered Dec. 7 at Thorsden’s Pleasanton home to assemble what had been a target of 100 birthday-cake kits.

A dozen workers and two hours later, the group blew past its goal, complet-

whole bunch of stuff, too. Our van outside is full of holiday food ... stuffing and rice and all of that.”

The women felt compelled to act during the most recent federal government shutdown that lasted an historic 43 days.

“You just felt so much sadness for people that were going to be affected by that,” O’Nesky said. “And even though this is somewhat small in comparison, it felt good to be able to do something concrete.”

TRI-VALLEY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday, Dec. 11

LIVERMORE AMADOR VALLEY GARDEN CLUB

The December meeting will be Herb Gardening in the Winter/ Holiday Potluck and Social. The speaker, Tabitha Cawelti from Alden Lane, will be teaching that even though it is winter, gardeners need their hands in the dirt! This can be accomplished by planting herbs and vegetables for the season. Members, please provide a dish to share. Last name assignment: A-D sweet treats, E-L cold side dish, M-P hot side dish, Q-R non-alcoholic beverage, S-Z finger foods. On Dec. 11, 6 to 8 p.m., at Crosswinds Church, 1660 Freisman Rd., Livermore at the red Farm Theater Building.

Friday/Saturday, Dec. 12 and 13

VALLEY CONCERT CHORALE'S HOLIDY CONCERT

The Valley Concert Chorale opens its 2025-2026 season with “An American Holiday: Christmas Choral Music from the Americas”, featuring songs from Argentina, Venezuela, Mexico, and the U.S. The two performances will be held Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m. at Lynnewood Methodist Church, 4444 Black Ave., Pleasanton and Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m., at Asbury United Methodist Church, 4743 East Ave., Livermore. Tickets are \$30. College students are \$10 with valid student ID. Children K-12 are free. Advance tickets may be purchased by visiting www.valleyconcertchorale.org, or by calling (925) 866-4003.

Saturday, Dec. 13

NARNIA BALLET

Radiance School of Ballet will be presenting “Narnia — The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” at Las Positas College’s Mertes Theater on Dec. 13. There will be two performances: 2:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Radiance School of Ballet is a local nonprofit classical ballet school based in Dublin. See radianceballet.com for more information.

Saturday, Dec. 13

CHRISTMAS WITH BALLET ROOTS

Pleasanton’s Ballet Roots Dance Company announces the return of its annual production, “Christmas with Ballet Roots”. The festive, family-friendly production showcases the company’s diverse repertoire, blending stunning classical ballet with lively contemporary pieces. Showtimes are at 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. on Dec. 13 at the Livermore High School Theater, 600 Maple St. Tickets are available at balletroots.org/events.html. For more information, visit www.balletroots.org.

Saturday, Dec. 13

‘THE TREASURES OF CHRISTMAS’ CONCERT

Saint Clare’s Episcopal church in Pleasanton will present its Christmas concert, “Treasures of Christmas” on Dec. 13 at 7 p.m. The concert will feature the chancel choir and orchestra telling the Christmas story in a variety of musical presentations. Highlighted will be the Stringed Quartet of San Francisco, “Feat. Amore Strings”. All are welcome. There is no charge but a free will offering will be accepted. At 3350 Hopyard Rd., in Pleasanton.

Sunday, Dec. 14

ASHBURY CHRISTMS CONCERT

Asbury United Methodist Church is excited to present its annual Christmas concert on Dec. 14 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary at 4743 East Ave., Livermore. The concert will feature performances by the Asbury Bell Choir, Children’s Choirs, Adult Choir, and several of Asbury’s talented instrumentalists. Childcare will be provided for young children; please RSVP. A homemade cookie reception will follow. A free will offering can be made at the door. The concert will also be live-streamed on asburylive.org and the Asbury UMC YouTube channel (@AsburyLivermore). For more information or to RSVP, please contact (925) 447-1950 or email office@asburylive.org.

Sunday, Dec. 14

HOUSE CONCERT: THE LAS POSITAS COLLEGE JAZZ FACULTY ENSEMBLE

The Livermore Jazz Society presents the swingin’ sounds of the Las Positas College Jazz Faculty Ensemble! A house concert will be held on Dec 14, 2-4

p.m., with Mario Silva: trumpet, Raymond Chen: tenor sax, Dan Marschak: piano, Cindy Browne Rosefield: bass, and Jeff Marrs: drums. Details at www.livermorejazzsociety.org/events or email info@livermorejazzsociety.org. If seats are available, you will receive a written invitation with the concert address. Seating is limited, so advance notice is highly recommended. Livestream available. Suggested donation: \$20 per person.

Sunday, Jan. 18

HOUSE CONCERT: SIXPENNY

The Livermore Jazz Society will host a house concert featuring Sixpenny, lively music that makes audiences smile and raise a pint! Sixpenny is dedicated to traditional Celtic music, played on acoustic instruments. Their fiddle-forward approach gives propulsive energy to the rhythmic beat of jigs, the dance music of reels, rousing songs and ballads. On Jan. 18 from 2-4 p.m. Details at www.livermorejazzsociety.org/events or email info@livermorejazzsociety.org. If seats are available, you will receive a written invitation with the concert address. Seating is limited, so advance notice is highly recommended. Livestream available. Suggested donation: \$20 per person.

Thursday, Jan 22 and 29

SQUARE DANCING LESSONS

Cactus Corners, a local nonprofit, is offering free introductory square-dancing classes on Jan. 22 and 29 to new dancers. Lessons will continue through the rest of the year. Anyone age 8 and up is invited. At Sunrise Mobile Home Park, 856 Sundial Circle, Livermore, in the Community Room. For more information and to be placed on the class notification list, email Margaret at mmiller1435@gmail.com or call 925-518-7624.

Sunday, Feb. 8

2026 LIONS SPEECH CONTEST FOR COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

The Livermore Lions Club is holding its annual Student Speaker Contest on Feb. 8 at the Civic Center Library in Livermore. The contest provides scholarships for high school students after graduation. Each of up to six students presents a 5- to 10-minute speech on the topic, “Youth Mental Health: Overcoming Barriers to Well-Being.” The contest is open to high school students in and around Livermore. For more information and to enter the contest, call Ann at 805-405-8742.

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

FOOD RELIEF SERVICES

Local residents can access vital food-assistance services to help meet basic needs. Food relief services can be found at: Children’s Emergency Food Bank; 7421 Amarillo Rd., Dublin; appointments M-F, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; 925-828-5363; St. Raymond Catholic Church, 11555 Shannon Ave., Dublin; third Sat. of the month, 8 to 11 a.m.; Open Heart Kitchen; M-F, 1 to 5 p.m.; 450 N. Livermore Ave., Livermore; Tri-Valley Haven Food Pantry, 150 N. “L” Street, Livermore; 925-449-1664 — M-Th, 1 to 5 p.m.; Fri/Sat 12 to 4 p.m.; Alameda County Community Food Bank; 510-635-3663; M-F, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

ONGOING EVENTS

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

In AA, we don’t tell anyone to do anything. We talk about our own drinking, the trouble we got into, and how we stopped. To find a local meeting in person or online, visit valleyservicecenteraa.org or call the 24-hour hotline at 925-829-0666.

SATURDAY PLEASANTON FARMERS MARKET

Open Saturdays, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Main Street and West Angela Street. Seniors 60 and over are welcome for specialized shopping from 9 to 10 a.m.

SUNDAY LIVERMORE DOWNTOWN FARMERS MARKET

Open year-round on Sundays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in downtown Livermore, on Second St. between J St. and L St.

Email non-profit events to calendar@independentnews.com for newspaper calendar and visit our website www.independentnews.com to promote all events online.

REVITALIZATION

(Continued from front page)

workforce development.

Toward that end, city staff have begun promoting Pleasanton as a prime destination for new businesses through print brochures, a new webpage aimed at prospective business owners and an increase in social-media promotion of local businesses. The city completed an assessment of vacant retail sites and Pleasanton’s retail-market outlook, launching a six-month retail attraction strategy in September that began conversations with brokers, property owners and target tenants.

Possible partnerships with the Pleasanton Downtown Association (PDA), Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce and the Alameda County

Fairgrounds also look to position the city as a destination ahead of Super Bowl LX and the FIFA World Cup, both of which are scheduled for Levi’s Stadium in Santa Clara next year. Current discussions with hoteliers and others in the lodging industry may also lead to a hotel-tax increase next year.

Mayor Jack Balch said, “Between innovation-based business, between what we’ve already just done on (design-review permits), and kind of these focus items that we’re doing in partnership with the PDA, Hacienda and trying to do it, I think we’re showing Pleasanton’s strength is starting back up and really a lot of opportunities ahead of us.”

Councilmember Craig Eicher said he is excited to see the strategic plan move forward. “Not only does it support our businesses, which will help them do better, but their success is our success at the same time, so it’s fundamental that we are a partner and work in service of our community to ensure that we can take care of ourselves while taking care of the businesses in our community.”

Looking ahead, city staff will continue to seek more opportunities to streamline retail and commercial permitting while creating a guide for business owners outlining the development-review process, regulations, permits and licenses for setting up in Pleasanton.

DOWNTOWN

(Continued from front page)

sound.

The amendments also create a new chapter of the Municipal Code governing outdoor entertainment and establish two permitting pathways. Smaller, compliant activities may receive a Zoning Clearance, while larger or potentially louder events would require a Minor Use Permit. All entertainment setups must meet applicable Building and Fire Code requirements.

To ensure compatibility with nearby uses, the city set operating limits. Outdoor entertainment must occur within an approved dining area and operate only between 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, and between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Amplified sound must comply with the Noise Ordinance and is limited to music and human speech. Businesses must also monitor sound levels regularly and correct issues as needed to remain compliant.

If simultaneous events at neighboring businesses created greater impacts, the city could require a Minor Use Permit to allow additional review and site-specific conditions.

Some residents raised concerns about potential increases in noise, traffic

and late-night activity. At the Planning Commission’s Nov. 19 hearing, four members of the public voiced similar concerns, which staff said helped shape the final operating hours, noise limits and the option to require a Minor Use Permit when additional oversight is needed. The city’s goal, staff said, is to remain flexible while maintaining strong noise abatement tools and compatibility with nearby homes.

The update builds on earlier downtown activation efforts. In 2023, the City Council adopted Outdoor Seating Design Guidelines to improve outdoor dining spaces and support a more vibrant commercial environment. Since then, staff has worked with businesses to encourage complementary uses — including entertainment — to help energize the district.

A citywide survey sent to business owners in September showed strong support for allowing outdoor entertainment, especially on weekend evenings.

As part of its analysis, the city reviewed how other Tri-Valley communities regulate entertainment. Noise was a common theme across the region. Pleasanton uses Temporary Use Permits or Conditional Use Permits,

along with Downtown Hospitality Guidelines that outline expectations for outdoor and indoor entertainment. Livermore relies on a city-wide Temporary Use Permit approach. Those practices helped shape Dublin’s two-tier permitting structure.

Businesses outside the DDSP area must continue to apply for Temporary Use Permits if they want to host outdoor entertainment.

For public outreach, the city mailed notices to property owners and tenants within the DDSP area and within 300 feet of its boundaries, including publishing legal notices and sending updates to individuals who requested planning notifications.

Josey appointed

Jean Josey was appointed Dublin’s vice mayor for the term extending through Dec. 3, 2026. It marks her second time in the role, after previously having served in 2022.

A City Council member for seven years, Josey has focused on public safety, infrastructure and long-range planning, drawing on a deep understanding of how the city’s departments and policies work together. Josey and her husband moved to Dublin in 2000.

Kashef Qaadri had been serving as vice mayor.

COUNCIL

(Continued from front page)

es amounted to roughly \$3.9 million, of which 67% was earned and 33% contributed. The expenses tallied \$4.3 million, with 77% going to programming, leading to a deficit of \$400,000.

Carter said that the biggest challenges facing the Bankhead are rising expenses, which have continued to increase every year, and the variability in fundraising.

“For the time being, I think we’re in really good shape,” he said. “In the long term, I want to make sure that the facility itself is cared for as best as possible. I think that’s the one thing where we can do a better job of really coming together with a plan, but other than that, I feel pretty confident about our programming. ... I don’t think we’re going to be going anywhere anytime soon.”

Carter estimated that with LVA’s current list of capital needs over the next 10 to 15 years, roughly \$2-3 million worth of Bankhead assets will need to be taken care of, upgraded or maintained.

Thirteen other speakers, mostly leaders of local non-profit and arts organizations, voiced support for LVA and the Bankhead, and thanked the city for its continued commitment to the arts.

“The Bankhead Theater is not only a cultural landmark,” said Christine Dillman, executive director for Tri-Valley Haven and chair of the Tri-Valley Non-Profit Alliance (TVNPA). “It is a community asset in the truest sense. LVA’s ongoing commitment to accessibility and inclusion benefits non-profits across the Tri-Valley. LVPAC (Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center) regularly partners with local service

organizations like Tri-Valley Haven, expands access to the arts and enhances the overall well-being of our region.”

Without the Bankhead, the city would’ve missed out on more than 3,000 programs, 1.1 million-plus attendees and more than \$30 million contributed to the downtown economy over the past 18 years, according to the annual report.

“It is a true community asset, but also the crown jewel of our region,” said Kelly Bowers, CEO of Three Valleys Community Foundation. “From the youth perspective, there’s a great deal of discussion about the achievement gap, but as educators and community leaders know full well, the gap is rooted just as deeply in experience, exposure and opportunity. That’s precisely where the Bankhead shines, and the Bothwell (Arts Center). These are places where young people, including those who are underserved or may never have had the chance to travel beyond their neighborhood, gain access to performances, master classes, multi-cultural events and world-class artists.”

As a center for the arts, the Bankhead has been essential to the success and growth of local non-profit arts organizations, including the Livermore-Amador Symphony, Pacific Chamber Orchestra, Del Valle Fine Arts, Livermore Valley Opera, CYT Tri-Valley Youth Theater, Tri-Valley Theater Company, Cantabella Children’s Chorus and Valley Dance Theater.

“For me, the Bankhead isn’t just a building. It’s the cultural heart of our city and a crucial contributor to the

region’s incredible quality of life,” said Shaké Sulikyan, founder and CEO of Shaké Sulikyan Consulting. “Their commitment to variety is extraordinary — it truly provides something for everyone. It’s incredible to find such a diverse and high-quality lineup under one roof. But the benefits far extend beyond the curtain call. LVA is dedicated to community partners and is actively engaged in making our community better, not just entertaining it.”

The Bankhead has also served as a gathering and learning place for organizations such as TVNPA, along with the Livermore Valley Chamber of Commerce, Visit Tri-Valley, Futures Explored, Quest Science Center, Tri-Valley R.I.S.E., Sunflower Hill, Harmony & Healing, the ALS Cure Project, the Pedrozzi Scholarship Foundation, the Livermore Cultural Arts Council, the Livermore Arts Association, Alameda County and even the City of Livermore, which has held events at the Bankhead on numerous occasions.

“We all understand the importance of the arts,” Mayor John Marchand said. “Thinking back on some very scary times about 14 years ago when the Bankhead was within a few weeks of closing forever and the city, recognizing just how important that asset was, bought the Bankhead — ensuring its long-term viability. ... We recognize the importance of the arts, and how it really is an investment in the community. I sincerely appreciate the work that LVA does, our partnership, and look forward to many decades and generations of the arts here in Livermore.”

Local Author Is Chosen for Livermore Reads Together

For the first time in its 19-year history, the annual Livermore Reads Together program next spring will feature a novel written by a local author.

The Livermore Public Library last week announced that the community had selected “Silver Lies” by Livermore resident Ann Parker for the program.

Set in a late 19th century Colorado mining town, “Silver Lies” was the first in the 8-book Silver Rush Mysteries series by Parker, a Livermore resident who also runs a freelance writing and editing firm, Wizard with Words, and occasionally writes for the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory.

The historical novel was one of six Western-themed titles the library suggested for the 2026 Livermore

Reads Together program.

“Silver Lies” received 154 votes from community members, more than any of the other choices, according to the library.

Published in 2003, “Silver Lies” won the Willa Literary Award for Historical Fiction and the Colorado Gold Award.

It was also a finalist for the Bruce Alexander Historical Mystery Award and the Western Writers Association Spur Award for Best Novel of the West.

Publishers Weekly named it a best mystery of the year.

Set in the silver boomtown of Leadville, “Silver Lies” introduces Inez Stannert, co-owner of the Silver Queen Saloon. She runs the saloon with her business partner, Abe Jackson, a free

Black man whose presence in the frontier town challenges the social norms of the time.

When a body is discovered behind the saloon, the two are drawn into a web of secrets, betrayals and rivalries, and Stannert must confront not only dangerous truths about others but also the hidden past she carries herself.

The Livermore Reads Together program will begin in March, with the library hosting a series of Western-themed events inspired by the featured book.

Meanwhile, the library has copies of “Silver Lies” available for checkout.

All Livermore Reads Together events will be free and open to the public.

For more information, go to library.livermoreca.gov.

OBITUARIES

Praveen “Rob” Singh
March 1, 1967 — Nov. 30, 2025



Praveen “Rob” Singh, born on March 1, 1967, passed away peacefully on Nov. 30, 2025, at the age of 58. He is preceded in death by his loving parents, Pargan and Geeta. He leaves behind his two devoted sisters, Anita and Vinita; his cherished nephews, Evan and Aaron; his beloved grandson, Aubrey; and his faithful puppy, Louis.

Rob was a loving son, brother, uncle, and grandfather whose warmth, humor, and kindness touched everyone who knew him. His nephews, Evan and Aaron, were a great source of pride and joy. He loved taking them to Cal football games, Golden State Warriors games, and MMA fights—moments filled with excitement, laughter, and connection.

He was affectionately called “Pops” by Aubrey, who adored spending time with him. Their routines together—especially watching Sesame Street—brought Rob immense happiness and strengthened their special bond.

Rob had a deep love of learn-

ing and a sharp curiosity about the world. He followed current events closely and had a passion for history, particularly stories from World War II. He enjoyed reading about the era and watching the films and documentaries that explored its bravery, complexity, and humanity.

Rob also cherished laughter. He loved comedy shows and counted Chris Rock and Kevin

Hart among his favorites. His taste in music was just as heartfelt—he enjoyed listening to U2, Metallica, AC/DC, Black Sabbath and other classic artists whose songs brought him comfort and joy.

Rob found great fulfillment in his work at Our Savior Lutheran School, where he especially enjoyed interacting with the children and being part of a nurturing, supportive community. His kindness, humor, and patience made a lasting impact on the students and staff alike.

A dedicated sports fan, Rob enjoyed following the English Premier League, MMA, college football, the NFL, and basketball. To him, sports were more than entertainment—they were opportunities to bond with the people he loved.

Rob’s gentle spirit, loyalty, humor, and generosity will live on in the hearts of all who were fortunate enough to know him. His family and friends will forever cherish the memories he created and the love he shared throughout his life.

Sandra “Sandy” Ruth Gundersen
Feb. 5, 1945 — Dec. 2, 2025



Sandra “Sandy” Ruth Gundersen, age 80, passed away peacefully in her home in Livermore, California, on Dec. 2, 2025. She was born on Feb. 5, 1945, in Memphis, Tennessee.

Sandy was a devoted and loving wife of 56 years to Jack Gundersen, and together they created a life filled with warmth, devotion, and unwavering love. She was a cherished mother to Leon (Elia) Gundersen and Jackie Freitas, and a proud grandmother to Dallas, Jacob, Andrew, Ethan, and Adam—who brought her endless joy. She is also survived by her sister-in-law, Beverly Terrell, along with many nieces, nephews, cousins, and lifelong friends who she embraced as family.

Sandy was truly an angel here on earth. Known for her warmth, kindness, and gentle spirit, Sandy had a way of making everyone feel welcomed and

loved. Nothing meant more to her than her family. Her children and grandchildren were the light of her life, and she poured her heart into every moment spent with them. Her sweetness, compassion, and loving presence touched everyone who knew her, leaving behind a legacy of warmth and grace.

Services will be held on

Saturday, Dec. 13, at Callaghan Mortuary, 3833 East Ave., Livermore, California.

- Viewing: 10:30 a.m. — 11:00 a.m.
- Service: 11:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.
- Reception: 12:00 p.m. — 2:00 p.m.

Family and friends who wish to accompany the family to the gravesite may join them in departing at 2:00 p.m. for the Graveside Service at Roselawn Cemetery, 1240 N. Livermore Ave., Livermore, California.

Sandy’s love, compassion, and angelic spirit will continue to live on in the hearts of her family and all who were blessed to know her.

Callaghan Mortuary is honored to be serving the Gundersen family. An online guestbook is available for condolences at www.callaghanmortuary.com.

Dana Michelle Mendenhal
Sept. 17, 1965 — Nov. 26, 2025

Dana Michelle Mendenhal was born on Sept. 17, 1965, to Tony and Arlene Mendenhal at Eden Hospital in Castro Valley, California.

She attended San Lorenzo High School and went to work right after graduation. She worked for Fuller McRoberts in the accounting department and was very successful. She met Matthew Croghan, and they married before settling in Livermore to raise their two children,

Korrine and Sean.

She later went on to work at LARPD and was a member at Brave Church.

She is survived by her son, Sean; her daughter Korrine predeceased her in 2007; and her sister, Tanya.

Burial will be held on Friday, Dec. 12, 1 p.m., at Memory Gardens, 3873 East Ave, Livermore.

Celebration of life to follow at 3 p.m., Brave Church in Dublin.



Kenneth Raymond Anderson
Oct. 25, 1954 — Oct. 18, 2025

Kenneth Raymond Anderson, a generous, hard-working, and honest man, passed away on Oct. 18, 2025, at the age of 70. Born on Oct. 25, 1954, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Kenneth was the beloved son of the late Myron and Barbara (Lovejoy) Anderson. Raised in Livermore, California, he graduated from Granada High School in 1973.

Kenneth owned his own con-

struction business for 30 years, demonstrating his dedication and commitment to his craft. His work ethic was admired by many and left a lasting impact on those he worked with.

Kenneth was one of five siblings, with two brothers, Thomas Anderson and Jerry Anderson, and two sisters, Susan Nail and Sandy Anderson. He leaves behind two sons, Colton

Anderson and Samuel Anderson, who carry on his legacy.

In addition to his professional achievements, Kenneth had a passion for bull riding in the rodeo and was an avid gunsmith. He was also a devoted dog lover, and his Cane Corso, Karma, was his best friend for seven years.

Kenneth will be remembered fondly by his family, friends, and all who knew him.

Dublin Girls Embracing an Ambitious Schedule in Quest for Improvement

By Mitch Stephens

DUBLIN — Dublin High School girls basketball coach Jose Alvarez didn’t play much basketball while growing up in Daly City and attending Jefferson High. Soccer was his game.

When his own children showed more passion for hoops, he shifted his interest, as well, but combined the principles of both sports.

“Both rely on quickness and footwork, passing and angles,” he said.

Alvarez appears to always have an angle — a purpose — which is one of the reasons he’s regarded as one of the top rising girls basketball coaches in the Bay Area.

It took him just one season to turn back-to-back losing seasons at Moreau Catholic-Hayward into consecutive North Coast Section Division III championships in 2019-20 and 2021-22 (there were no NCS playoffs in 2020-21 due to the COVID-19 pandemic).

Since his hire at Dublin in 2023, the Gaels went from 10-13 the season before to 17-13 and then 22-7 last season.

“We hit a ton of our goals we set at the start of the season,” he said. “One was to reach 20 wins, and we did that. We asked the girls to score 60 points

each game, and we did that several times (14, to be exact). We wanted to hold opponents to under 45, and we did that (18 times).

“It was a very successful season.”

Next Level

To get to the next level, Alvarez has a new angle, and it will be in full view Thursday, Dec. 11 when the Gaels (2-1) visit state powerhouse San Ramon Valley-Danville.

Last season, Dublin opened with 12 straight wins, by an average margin of 26 points, against overmatched teams. The Gaels went 10-7 the rest of the way — 6-3 in the rugged East Bay Athletic League — but a 65-58, first-round NCS loss to Northgate-Walnut Creek left the squad a little empty.

Then again, other than missing 19 free throws, including their final 10 in a row, the Gaels played great in the season-ending defeat.

“We just picked the wrong night to have our worst free-throw game,” Alvarez said. “I think our legs were just done. We had played a lot of games late in the season.”

So why not get the juggernauts out of the way early? And learn from your lumps?

Like playing defending state Division I champion

Carondelet-Concord to open the season.

Alvarez said he got permission from both league officials and other coaches to play EBAL games in December, and Carondelet obliged by thumping the visiting Gaels 66-33 on Dec. 1.

Alvarez never celebrated a 33-point loss so thoroughly.

Carondelet was No. 13 and San Ramon Valley No. 7 in the High School On Sports Illustrated preseason California rankings.

Copy Cats

“We’ve talked often about the energy level and tempo we need to play at, and from the get-go, we learned it firsthand,” Alvarez said. “(Carondelet) pressured us relentlessly without fouling. At practice the next day, it was simply, ‘That’s what we need to do.’”

And that’s exactly what the Gaels did last week in wins over Manteca (68-21) and Mountain House (68-24).

San Ramon Valley, which was ranked 25th nationally by The Sporting News, will likely bring the Gaels back to earth — and offer teaching moments — before Dublin participates in more top-notch competition at the Tarkanian Classic in Las Vegas and in the Pearl Division of the

local 100-plus-team West Coast Jamboree. Both of those tournaments are later this month.

“It’s hard to build your own identity until you really play tougher competition,” Alvarez said.

After losing just two seniors off last year’s team, and with 6-foot freshman Valentina Stone being the only player taller than 5-8, Dublin’s 2025-26 identity should be built around “quickness, organization on defense and depth,” Alvarez said.

‘Draymond’ Lembo

The return of two seniors — 5-8 forward Arianna Chacon and 5-4 guard Ayashe Trotter — who missed last season with ACL tears has added to a gritty, fast, well-balanced group. Chacon had 24 points against Mountain House on a variety of jumpers, putbacks and 3-pointers.

“Both those girls have been through multiple injuries and shown great mental toughness,” Alvarez said. “That definitely rubs off on the rest of the team.”

That duo has joined what Alvarez called the team’s top three returners in versatile 5-7 junior Gaia Lembo (“our Draymond Green, minus the attitude,”) 5-5 junior Makena Beltran (“our best defensive stopper,”) and



Forward Arianna Chacon is one of two talented seniors who have returned to Dublin High’s girls basketball team after having missed last season because of knee injuries. (Photo — Vien Lam)

5-4 senior Addison Leomiti (“a pure, lights-out, knock-down shooter”) who last season more than once scored at least 30 points in a game.

Another freshman, 5-5 guard Sienna Kwan, has already injected energy off the bench, complementing a starting five who are all capable of double-digit scoring.

“She plays competitive soccer and has a nose for the ball,” Alvarez said. “She can really handle

the pressure, rebound and defend.”

Time will tell whether the injection of two freshmen, two battle-scarred seniors and a new schedule order translate to more victories. But Alvarez, whose wife Brianna coaches the junior varsity team, said each day coaching the Gaels is a blessing.

“Dublin has welcomed us with open arms, and we couldn’t be more grateful,” Alvarez said.

Las Positas Men’s Hoops Coach Giacomazzi Gains Milestone Victory in Weekend Tourney

By Matt Schwab

SACRAMENTO — The convincing wins and landmarks keep coming for Las Positas College men’s basketball coach James Giacomazzi.

He earned career victory No. 400 on Dec. 5 with a 90-75 triumph over Shasta in the Cosumnes River College tournament.

A 102-56 blowout of Lassen the next day marked win No. 401, wrapping up the three-day event. Las Positas players Ted Bigg-Wither and Richard Banks were all-tournament selections.

In the aftermath of No. 400, Giacomazzi received a surprise postgame celebration ceremony and then there was a “little bit of a

water shower in the team room,” he said.

“My wife (Kristi) coming to the game was unbeknownst to me; she didn’t tell me she was coming,” the coach added happily. “So, there were a lot of surprises tonight, but I was happy that she and everybody was here to be a part of it.”

Giacomazzi’s career record now stands at 401-220 in 21 seasons coaching community college men’s basketball. He is 199-78 at Las Positas, one win away from another landmark.

“It feels great, man,” he said of No. 400. “It makes you have a little perspective on just how long you’ve been coaching. It goes by so fast. It’s just a real nice accomplishment, and there’s a lot of hands that are a part of it.”

Las Positas (10-0) was ranked No. 5 in the California Community College Men’s Basketball Coaches Association Nov. 24 poll, and will travel to No. 6 West Valley on Friday, Dec. 12. The Hawks will begin play in the powerful Coast Conference-North Division on Jan. 7.

Giacomazzi started his head-coaching career at Cosumnes River, where he

enjoyed an 11-year run before landing at Las Positas in 2015.


He gives his current team high marks.

“They continue to get

better. They continue to work very, very hard,” he said. “They’re really talented, and they play for one another. It’s fun to be a part of.”



The Las Positas College (LPC) men’s basketball team surrounded James Giacomazzi after the Hawks coach recorded his 400th career victory, 90-75 over Shasta, on Dec. 5 in Sacramento. (Photo courtesy of LPC)





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LAVTA Receives Nearly \$64M for Improvements

The Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA) has received nearly \$64 million from the Federal Transit Administration for construction of new administration and maintenance facilities at its Atlantis Court operations center in Livermore and replacement of eight aging buses with low-emission hybrid vehicles.

“This grant award is tre-

mendous for the agency,” said LAVTA board chair Julie Testa. “It’s a historic moment, a new chapter in public transit for Tri-Valley residents and all who work in and visit our amazing communities.”

LAVTA said the \$63.95 million grant would cover about 75% of the projected costs.

LAVTA’s current maintenance yard, built in 1991,

has been operating at 50% beyond its design capacity for over 20 years, according to the agency.

And with more than half of its buses expected to be replaced over the next five years, LAVTA said the new facility will support the latest innovations and technology to operate a modern fleet of high-efficiency vehicles.

The design for the proj-

ect was completed in 2020 through a grant from the Alameda County Transportation Commission.

The eight new hybrid buses will be built in Livermore by Gillig, the second-largest manufacturer of transit buses in North America.

Created in 1985, LAVTA provides Wheels bus service in Dublin, Livermore and Pleasanton.

Dublin To Hold Grand Opening for New Park

Dublin will hold grand opening ceremonies for Forest Park in the new Jordan Ranch residential development at 10 a.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13.

The park, near Cotton Creek School, features a multi-use sports court, pollinator garden, nature playground and picnic areas.

The ceremony will include a ribbon cutting, remarks by Mayor Sherry Hu, light refreshments and commemorative giveaways.

Parking is limited, and the city is urging members of the public to walk or bike to the park.

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618748

The following person(s) doing business as: Sleep Apnea Testing & Treatment enter, A Division of BASS Medical Group, 400 29th Street, Suite 280A, Oakland, CA 94609 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): BASS Medical Group, 2637 Shadelands DR, Walnut Creek, CA 94598. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 10/1/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Rajiv Nagesetty, CFO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 7, 2025. Expires November 6, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6616. Published November 20, 27, December 4, 11, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618845

The following person(s) doing business as: Ambassador Limo Service, 612 Brookfield DR, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Ranjit Singh, 2552 Tennis LN, Tracy, CA 95377; Boota Singh, 612 Brookfield DR, Livermore, CA 94551; Blawinder Singh, 2658 Cranston CR, Tracy, CA 95377. This business is conducted by a Co-Partners. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 2009. Signature of Registrant/s/: Boota Singh, General Partner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 13, 2025. Expires November 12, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6617. Published November 20, 27, December 4, 11, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618618

The following person(s) doing business as: Victory Song Coaching, 2150 Portola Ave, STE D PMB 2028, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Victory Song Services LLC, 1401 21st Street, STE R, Sacramento, CA 95811. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Victoria Rashe, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 31, 2025. Expires October 30, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6618. Published November 20, 27, December 4, 11, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618407

The following person(s) doing business as: JDS Design Build, 2052 Fourth Street, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Jeffery Design Studio, LLC, 2052 Fourth Street, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Andrea Jeffery, Manager, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 21, 2025. Expires October 20, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6619. Published November 20, 27, December 4, 11, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618625

The following person(s) doing business as: Youth With Vision, 1065 Serpentine Lane, Suite 300, Pleasanton, CA 94566. This business is conducted by an individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed

above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Angel Garcia. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 31, 2025. Expires October 30, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6620. Published November 20, 27, December 4, 11, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618171

The following person(s) doing business as: Bratpak Dog Kamp, 3841 First ST, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Archery & Friends LLC, 1008 Essex Avenue, Henderson, NV, 89015. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 2/26/2020. Signature of Registrant/s/: Sean C. Marler, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 9, 2025. Expires October 8, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6621. Published November 20, 27, December 4, 11, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619057

The following person(s) doing business as: Tabletop Builds, 1042 Spring Valley Cmn, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Christopher Lawson, 1042 Spring Valley Cmn, Livermore, CA 94551. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Christopher Lawson, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 21, 2025. Expires November 20, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6622. Published November 27, December 4, 11, 18, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618777

The following person(s) doing business as: VibrantlyME, 3842 Enos Ave, Oakland, CA 94619 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): VibrantlyME, 3842 Enos Ave, Oakland, CA 94619. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 01/01/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jessica Hanserd, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 10, 2025. Expires November 9, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6623. Published November 27, December 4, 11, 18, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618881

The following person(s) doing business as: Fresh Cut Christmas Trees, 2005 Valley Ave, Gate 8, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Pacific Construction Sales, Inc., 157 La Sonoma Way, Alamo, CA 94507. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which

the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Kevin S. Cury, President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 14, 2025. Expires November 13, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6624. Published December 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619150

The following person(s) doing business as: Nicha Baby Care, 5501 Claremont Ave, APT C, Oakland, CA 94618 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Nicha Goldman, 5501 Claremont Ave, APT C, Oakland, CA 94618. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 11/17/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Nicha Goldman, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 25, 2025. Expires November 24, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6625. Published December 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618577

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Grateful Collectibles LLC; 2. JLG; 3. James Loud Genetics; 4. Loud Clones, 22357 Mission Blvd, Hayward, CA 94541 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Grateful Collectibles LLC, 1630 N. Main ST #325, Walnut Creek, CA 94595. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 12/15/2022. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jeanette Koskiniemi, Principal. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 29, 2025. Expires October 28, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6626. Published December 4, 11, 18, 25, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618955

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Baycable; 2. Baycable Custom Interconnects, 46840 Lakeview Blvd, Fremont, CA 94538 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Bay Associates Wire Technologies Corporation, 46840 Lakeview Blvd, Fremont, CA 94538. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: April 1, 2015. Signature of Registrant/s/: Cathlin O'Connor, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 19, 2025. Expires November 18, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6627. Published December 11, 18, 25, January 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618814

The following person(s) doing business as: Joy Fleet Wash,

17728 Imperial Dr, Lathrop, CA 94530 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Jonathan I. Valladares, 17728 Imperial Dr, Lathrop, CA 95330. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 11/12/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jonathan Valladares, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 12, 2025. Expires November 11, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6628. Published December 11, 18, 25, January 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618960

The following person(s) doing business as: Garin Real Estate, 22392 Foothill Blvd, Hayward, CA 94541 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Yeimalis & Associates Financial Group, 22392 Foothill Blvd, Hayward, CA 94541. This business is conducted by a Corporation. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 11/17/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Yeimalis Acevedo-Rasmussen, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 19, 2025. Expires November 18, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6629. Published December 11, 18, 25, January 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619224

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. EZ file Drop; 2. Dayframe, 7172 Regional Street, #506, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Jungle Ventures Group LLC, 7172 Regional Street, #506, Dublin, CA 94568. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Matthew Townley, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 3, 2025. Expires December 2, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6630. Published December 11, 18, 25, January 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619215

The following person(s) doing business as: Off Ramp Music, 7814 Alto Way, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Thomas George Evans, 7814 Alto Way, Dublin, CA 94568. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 7/11/1997. Signature of Registrant/s/: Thomas George Evans, Sole Proprietor. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 2, 2025. Expires December 1, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6631. Published December 11, 18, 25, January 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS

NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 618795

The following person(s) doing business as: Crown Thrift, 526 7th ST, Oakland, CA 94607 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): David A. Ascencio, 170 7th ST, Oakland, CA 94607; Eva Heredia Ambriz, 170 7th ST, Oakland, CA 94607. This business is conducted by a Married Couple. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: David Ascencio, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 10, 2025. Expires November 9, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6632. Published December 11, 18, 25, January 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619172

The following person(s) doing business as: ALT Reporting Services, 6488 Paseo Santa Cruz, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Audrey Philippe, 6488 Paseo Santa Cruz, Pleasanton, CA 94566. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 7/25/2007. Signature of Registrant/s/: Audrey Philippe, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 1, 2025. Expires November 30, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6633. Published December 11, 18, 25, January 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619134

The following person(s) doing business as: 645 N Livermore, 645 N. Livermore, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Albert Wilcox, 1201 Creek Trail, Pleasanton, CA 94566. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above:

10/1982. Signature of Registrant/s/: Albert Wilcox, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 25, 2025. Expires November 24, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6634. Published December 11, 18, 25, January 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619169

The following person(s) doing business as: Global Education Strategies, 1123 Glen Drive, San Leandro, CA 94577 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Catherine M. Eagan, 1123 Glen Drive, San Leandro, CA 94577. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Catherine M. Eagan, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 1, 2025. Expires November 30, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6635. Published December 11, 18, 25, January 1, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619102

The following person(s) doing business as: Shamiyeh Plaza, 379 South Livermore Drive, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): 1. Anis Shamiyeh, PO Box 254, Lafayette, CA 94549; Cheryl Shamiyeh, PO Box 254, Lafayette, CA 94549; 3. Tarick Shamiyeh, PO Box 254, Lafayette, CA 94549; 4. Michele Gunnnett, PO Box 254, Lafayette, CA 94549. This business is conducted by Co-Partners. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 1/1/2022. Signature of Registrant/s/: Michele Gunnnett, General Partner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 24, 2025. Expires November 23, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6636. Published December 11, 18, 25, January 1, 2026.

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Local Couple Aims To Win ‘Great Christmas Light Fight’

By Christina Cavallaro

LIVERMORE — Dean and Barbara Paul are in good company among Livermore residents who have competed on ABC’s “Great Christmas Light Fight.”

“It’s really exciting with Livermore having two other contestants on the show and us being the third,” Dean said. “Livermore’s got kind of a tradition here going with these lights.”

The Phipps family won its competition in 2015, incorporating music, water cannons, pyrotechnics and smoke into a light display. And just last year, Dave Rezendes, also known as “Deacon Dave,” lit up his revered Casa del Pomba (House of the Dove) for the 41st time with a whopping 902,120 lights that earned him the prize-winning \$50,000 and a giant trophy in the shape of a Christmas light.

Now in its 13th season, the show features several families from around the country on multiple nights showing off their glowing extravaganzas for hosts Carter Oosterhouse and Taniya Nayak. The dis-

plays are judged on three criteria: use of lights, overall design and Christmas spirit.

Now the Paul family hopes to continue Livermore’s winning ways in an episode that

of chicken wire has been a real game-changer. Barbara, who participates in local craft shows, brings an artistic bent to the table while her husband brings the brawn.

and then we can do it, right?” Dean said. The chicken-wire tree became a huge snowman the following year.

The major design leap occurred following a trip to

chicken wire.’ And the rest is history once we did that.”

In addition to the use of creative materials, the couple pride themselves on changing the theme of each year’s display, which they conceive together. They also solicit ideas from friends and neighbors “because we’re running out of our own ideas,” Barbara admitted.

But they haven’t had a designer’s block yet.

“I think one of the exciting things about what we do is it’s always a mystery,” Dean said. “We hear it from friends and neighbors. ... It’s like they drive around the corner and it’s, ‘What is it this year?’ Which I think is pretty special.”

What Dean also thinks is special is the show’s big reveal.

“In this day and age and everybody getting instant gratification and being able to find the answer right away — it’s kind of nice to have a mystery of not knowing whether some-

one wins or loses until the air date,” he said.

The two will learn their fate tonight. And when asked what they’d do with the grand-prize money should they win:

“Pay the electric bill, of course,” Barbara said, laughing.

For filming purposes, all show contestants are judged on displays from the previous year. Residents can view the Paul family’s light display this year at their home at 1257 Higuera Court in Livermore.



Dean and Barbara Paul of Livermore face off with two other Christmas-crazed families from across the country on ABC’s “Great Christmas Light Fight” airing at 9 tonight, Thursday, Dec. 11. They are putting their creative skills to the test for a chance to win \$50,000, plus a trophy and bragging rights. (Photo courtesy of the Paul family)

airs at 9 tonight, Thursday, Dec. 11.

When asked if they had a secret weapon, Dean had two words.

“Chicken wire,” he said.

The dynamic decorating duo has been at this for years, but the incorporation

“He’s kind of the muscle behind it and I’m the artistic piece,” she said. In 2016, they were trying to construct a massive tree that would go above the roofline of their house when they had a design epiphany.

“We thought, ‘We’ll just put some chicken wire in there

Barcelona.

“We wanted to make a house that was a mosaic,” Dean recalled. “And we’re like, ‘Well, how are we going to make all kinds of weird shapes of different colors on the house?’ And then we thought, ‘Hey, just line the house with

Local Machining and Fabrication Shops Serve Livermore and Sandia Labs in Multiple Ways

By Jessica Zimmer

TRI-VALLEY — Local machining and fabrication shop owners play key roles in ensuring that new and existing devices at area U.S. Department of Energy labs get built and repaired.

At the same time, the shop owners provide junior and mid-level employees in the skilled manufacturing space opportunities to grow, putting

of Pleasanton Tool. “Most of the time, we have to turn it around within four to six weeks. A third party cleans it. We package, label and deliver the order.”

Some shop owners have personal ties to the labs. Both of Thomas’ parents, for example, are former Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) employees.

Flanigan worked at another shop that fulfilled orders for

That’s a basis to train someone,” Thomas said. “It takes 15 to 20 years to be a decent machinist.”

High school students should consider the Tri-Valley Regional Occupation Program (ROP), which teaches career technical education. The welding program at Livermore’s Las Positas College offers a welding summer camp for high school juniors and seniors.

“There are many students in Tri-Valley middle schools and high schools who are interested in welding and machining,” said Scott Miner, professor of welding technology at Las Positas.

One of the obstacles for students is that very few schools offer shop classes, making it difficult for students to get exposed to hands-on, trade-focused career pathways.

“Fortunately, Sandia National Laboratories donated some CNC and metrology (measuring) equipment to Las Positas,” Miner said. “That allows future students here to do advanced machining coursework and projects.”

High-quality, tangible work samples such as certification test plates (metal plates with welded seams) or capstone projects are an excellent way to showcase potential. Candidates could take photos of their work and submit them with online applications. They can also bring samples to an interview and explain how they made them.

Today, welders and machinists use advanced technology.

“This isn’t the technology younger students are used to,” Miner said. “For example, they may need to get to know how to use software that controls the high-powered beam of a laser-cutting machine. We use

this to cut shapes in different materials. Before, we used to do this by hand, with tools like a plasma cutter or cutting torch.”

A welder or machinist needs to have hands-on skills and a good eye, as well as the ability to understand the materials and be ready to experiment.

Thomas added that once an applicant gets a job, it is a good idea to grow in a position.

“Consider finding ways to advance where you are rather than move from shop to shop,” Thomas said. “It’s better when a shop and a worker build trust together.”



A Las Positas College student uses a process called Gas Tungsten Arc Welding to manually weld together carbon steel components. (Photo — Scott Miner)

those workers on track to gain skills and contacts to eventually become shop owners themselves.

“We focus primarily on aluminum and stainless-steel parts, but we usually never know what we’re making,” said Jake Flanigan, owner of All-In Machining in Tracy. “It could be for the National Ignition Facility or the U.S. Department of Defense. Sometimes, later you see the technology on the news, which is exciting.”

Many orders from the labs need to be completed quickly, by workers with years of experience.

“Typically, we receive a drawing with a quote for the price. Then we ask any questions we need to. Usually, everything’s in the instructions,” said Rich Thomas, owner

the labs before starting his own business.

“They’ll give most people a chance, but you have to prove yourself fast,” Flanigan said. “Also, there’s a lot of paperwork. You have to get special machinery to inspect the parts before delivering them to the labs. This is critical, to make sure the parts work correctly.”

There is not a Tri-Valley association of machining and fabrication shops. Each shop operates separately.

Shop owners are always looking for workers with foundations in welding, fabrication and computer numerical control (CNC) machining. Candidates should be familiar with mills, lathes and any tools in which they want to specialize.

“We want high school and undergraduate students who have hands-on experience.

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