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Dancers from Xiaopei Chinese Dance school in Pleasanton performed a ceremony in front of the Bankhead Theater in Livermore on Feb. 2 to welcome the new Lunar New Year. The company performs regularly in the Bay Area and around the world. (Photo — Leah Silveira)

Pleasanton Schools

School Board Settles On Planned Cutbacks

On the Chopping Block Are Many Administrative Positions, Summer Schools and Custodians

By Ruth Roberts

PLEASANTON — The Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD) Board of Trustees has finalized its proposed district-wide cuts for the coming fiscal year. The list includes eliminating the equivalent of 31.3 full-time positions, out of the district's nearly 1,300 employee positions, and other cost-saving measures for a total reduction of $6.3 million.

Following months of public meetings, stakeholder input and community outreach, the board made its recommended cuts for the 2025/26 school year during its regular meeting on Jan. 30.

"This is a difficult position to be in and I am constantly trying to be cognizant that these are people's lives we are talking about," Justin Brown, PUSD board president, said. "There is a lot of time and effort and sweat and tears put into these decisions."

PUSD funding has been falling short of rising expenditures. Over the past four years, the district has tapped its reserve and one-time funds to cover costs, leading to deficit spending. By the end of the fiscal year 2024-'25, unrestricted reserves are expected to dip below the 3% minimum required by the state.

The budget cuts are the result of several factors, including that

(See SCHOOL BOARD, page 5)

Nonprofit Sector Grapples with Loss of Government Support and Uncertainty

State Organizations Seek to Support Their Missions and Each Other

By Chris Winters

REGIONAL — Many area nonprofit organizations and social service groups are dealing with uncertainty as the Trump administration takes wide-reaching actions.

A Jan. 27 memo from the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is a case in point. It ordered all federal agencies to "temporarily pause all activities related to obligation or disbursement of all Federal financial assistance, and other relevant agency activities that may be implicated by the executive orders, including, but not limited to, financial assistance for foreign aid, nongovernmental organizations, DEI, woke gender ideology, and the green new deal."

The memo came on the heels of a large number of executive orders from President Trump concerning immigration, birthright citizenship, the U.S. Census, DEI programs, fossil fuels and climate policy, foreign aid, and other areas.

After pushback from the public and a lawsuit from the National Association of Nonprofits that led to temporary restraining orders by a federal judge, the OMB largely retracted its memo a day later. But then, on Jan. 29, White House Spokesperson Karoline Leavitt tweeted on X that "This is NOT a rescission of the federal funding freeze. It is simply a rescission of the OMB memo."

The confusion outside of government has especially rattled the nonprofit sector, much of which is supported either directly or indirectly by federal grants. The OMB order — which has never been attempted before — and other changes have been coming too quickly for many organizations to formulate a comprehensive strategy to respond.

"The nonprofits — it's really hard for them to make any plans. They don't know if their programs will continue to operate," said Kathy Young, CEO and president of the Tri-Valley Nonprofit Alliance, a network that provides support and resources to local nonprofit organizations.

The problem is that many nonprofits are funded by a mix of grants from federal, state and county governments. Some of those local funding sources pass through funds they received from the federal government, making it difficult if not impossible to determine exactly how much federal money is in their funding mix.

That makes it especially difficult to plan ahead when, as the Nonprofit Alliance does, it provides services first and seeks reimbursement from the funding

(See NONPROFITS, page 6)



And they're off... for good. The California Authority of Racing Fairs has pulled the plug on races at Pleasanton and three other fairgrounds in Northern California. (File Photo — Doug Jorgensen)

Horse Racing Canceled at Pleasanton and Other Fairs

Season Marred by Lack of Income, Horse Deaths

By Ruth Roberts

PLEASANTON — Horse racing at the Pleasanton Fairgrounds has crossed the final finish line.

And not just locally. Citing financial challenges as its primary reason, the California Authority of Racing Fairs (CARF), the joint-powers authority that organizes fair horseracing at four northern California fairgrounds, announced on Jan. 28, that it will not hold races this summer, including Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton.

Golden Gate Racing, which ran the fall racing circuit, closed down late last month, but the summer fair races were handled separately by CARF.

Built in 1858 by the sons of Spanish settler Augustin Bernal, the one-mile Pleasanton track is the oldest in California, and one of the oldest in the United States.

In addition to the Pleasanton races, the CARF organization has also been organizing races at fairgrounds in Ferndale, Fresno and Sacramento. None of them has secured a race sponsor for this coming summer, although the fairs could still apply independently to hold races.

"After making the difficult decision not to submit future race meet applications, the California Authority of Racing Fairs announces that it has directed staff to reorganize operations to focus on addressing current obligations and future efforts to support California Fairgrounds and their Satellite Network," reads the statement.

"This difficult decision was based upon an assessment of financial challenges incurred in the Golden Gate Racing meet, as well as current

(See RACING, page 7)

Support Remains Strong to Classify Tesla Park a Reserve, Limit Recreation Activities

State Parks' Final Decision on Status Not Expected for Several Years

By Larry Altman

REGIONAL — Members of the public made their preference known again that Tesla Park, a 3,100-acre tract of undeveloped land in the Mount Diablo range, should be classified as a reserve.

In a virtual meeting on Jan. 28, California State Parks and Recreation officials and their consultants heard from nineteen speakers, most of whom favored a "reserve" designation, which would limit recreational activities and focus on protecting wildlife and plants and securing the area's Native American history.

In September, state parks officials delayed the process of classifying the park by folding its classification into the general planning process for the area. More than three years after Gov. Gavin Newsom signed legislation to protect the land between Livermore and Tracy from off-road vehicle use, officials said it could take three to five more years before the governmental process is completed to determine its future.

Specifically, the so-called "scoping" session was intended for the public to voice its suggestions to the parks department for what should be examined in an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), a document that will analyze how such activities and subjects including camping, hiking, biking, noise, the possibility of buildings and roadways, and even dog walking could affect what many speakers described as pristine wilderness.

In completing the document, state officials will also decide how to classify the park, either as a reserve with limited to no recreational

(See TESLA PARK, page 6)



An artist's rendering of Amador Valley High School's new performing arts facility. The new theater will seat approximately 500 people. (See story on page 2). (Photo courtesy of Pleasanton Unified School District)

Islamic Center Opens Doors and Minds

First Open House in Livermore Introduces Community to Muslim Culture

By Christina Cavallaro

LIVERMORE — The Islamic Center of Livermore (ICL) has been serving the Tri-Valley Muslim community since 1994, most of the time in a small mosque behind Mister Pickle's Sandwich Shop. Last year the center moved into a new home, the former site of the Christian World Church, which has since been renovated.

On Feb. 1, the center opened its doors for the first time to welcome the community into its home.

Guiding newcomers in the removal of their shoes before entering the new mosque, ICL member Julie Wild helped answer some immediate questions visitors had.

Mary Perner, a neighbor who lives across the street from the religious center, was securing a scarf around her hair. "So I'm wearing a head covering, is that correct?" Perner asked.

Wild's answer seemed to surprise her. "You don't have to. You're here as a guest so you're welcome to cover or not, it's up to you. I usually just wear it when I pray. Basically, women wear the hijab when they're around men not associated with their family."

A woman in a silvery head scarf walked by. Wild looked at her and smiled, "Other women, like Reem (Hoff) prefer to wear it all the time."

The crowd was beckoned with a "peace be upon you" to make their way to the front of the mosque. Some congregants knelt on the cushiony emerald-green carpet, while most guests sat in chairs.

"Muslims are just like everybody else," ICL Board Member Abdul Awadalla explained to the guests. "Regular people. Business owners.

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PET OF THE WEEK



BRODY

Brody is the ultimate tripod adventure pup. This energetic, tennis-ball-chasing dynamo is ready to bring nonstop joy to an active family. Whether you hit the trails or sneak him a few extra treats, Brody will reward you with endless cuddles and tail wags at the end of the day. To meet Brody call Valley Humane Society at (925) 246-8656, or email info@valleyhumane.org to start the adoption process. (Photo courtesy of Valley Humane)

Pleasanton School Board Gives Green Light to $85M Makeover for Amador Valley High School

By Ruth Roberts

The Pleasanton Unified School District (PUSD) board of trustees has approved a design-build agreement for the creation of new athletic and performing arts facilities at Amador Valley High School. The estimated $85 million project was unanimously approved by the board during its regular Jan. 16 meeting.

The project, awarded to Blach Construction Co., Quattrocchi Kwok Architects and Gensler Architects, will be paid for with funds from Measure I which Pleasanton voters approved in 2022. The $395 million bond will fund several PUSD projects, including the renovation of the Amador campus.

A similar $70 million plan for athletic and performing arts facilities at Foothill High School was approved by the board in November. Several other PUSD renovation projects at the district's elementary and middle schools are also in the works.

"PUSD is privileged to have the voter-approved Measure I bond which gives us the capability to significantly improve the campus for our Amador Valley High School students," said Justin Brown, PUSD board president, when reached by The Independent. "These improvements benefit not just the students and our amazing teachers but also their families who will attend music, theater and athletic events."

The existing theater and small gym, the latter damaged in a March 2024 fire, will be demolished in the summer of 2026. The new gym is slated for completion in 2027, and the new theater is expected to be completed in 2028.

A cornerstone of the project includes the Amador Theater, which is currently not being used due to structural problems that have made its upper balcony off-limits, according to Brown. Students have been holding productions at the Firehouse Arts Center instead. The new theater will include space for at least 500 seats and includes a modified fly loft which allows set backgrounds to be moved easily. There are also plans to preserve the theater's iconic chandelier.

The enhanced campus layout includes a new "Avenue of the Dons" which will connect the sports fields to the new competition gym which will seat up to 1,700 people. When complete, the current gym will become the new practice gym, Brown said. The school's 'small gym', which was damaged in a fire last year, will be replaced and its current location will become part of the redesigned theater and arts building.

The year-long process of choosing a design team included several public forums and input from community stakeholders and district staff. Following requests for qualifications and proposals, the district's facilities and construction team whittled contenders down to 12 firms before making a final determination.

As part of refining the design plans for Amador, Brown said there were some additional changes beyond what was first forecast, but will be made up by combining the $1.75 million insurance settlement from the March fire in the Amador small gym, $2 million in unused developer fees and approximately $5.2 million in savings from various Measure I1 projects. Measure I1 was a $270 million general obligations bond approved by voters in 2016.

These extra funds will allow for the "best possible design for our students to meet both medium and long-term goals," said Brown. "It is important to note that all these investments in art, music and sports will have lasting benefits for our students and better scale the facility spaces to match the student population."



On Jan. 29, students at St. Michael School in Livermore assembled more than 9,700 meal packs for children facing hunger worldwide. The meals will be distributed by Kids Against Hunger Bay Area, a nonprofit dedicated to fighting food insecurity. This annual service project was done during Catholic Schools Week. (Photo courtesy of St. Michael School)

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Musicians Will Give Solo Performances During "Expressions of Youth" Concert

The winners of the Livermore-Amador Symphony's annual Competition for Young Musicians, Ariel Pawlik-Zwiebel and Olivia Luan, will be featured solo performers during the symphony's "Expressions of Youth" concert at the Bankhead Theater on Saturday, Feb. 15.

Pawlik-Zwiebel, 17, will perform Sibelius's Violin Concerto, 1st movement, while Luan, 14, will perform Grieg's Piano Concerto in A Minor, 1st movement.

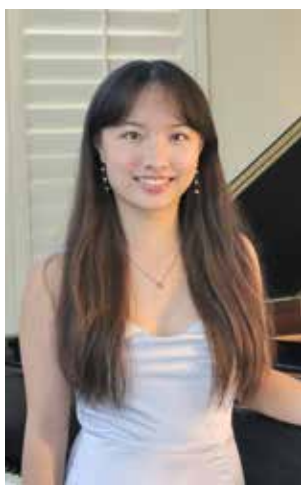
The Cantabella Children's Chorus will also join the symphony for a performance of "Ram Tori Maya" by Indian American composer Reena Esmail, currently the Los Angeles Master Chorale's Swan Family Artist in Residence. The performance will be accompanied on stage by local Hindustani singers and dancers.

Symphony conductor Laura Webber will give a 15-minute "Inside the Music" talk prior to the start of the concert at 7:30 p.m. The Cantabella Children's Chorus will also perform in the lobby during intermission.

There will be a complementary reception following the concert with chocolate and Livermore wine pairings.

Tickets start at $30 and are available online at livermorearts.org. Theatergoers 21 and under are free.





Ariel Pawlik-Zwiebel will perform Sibelius's Violin Concerto, 1st movement. Olivia Luan will perform Grieg's Piano Concerto in A Minor, 1st movement. (Photos courtesy of Livermore-Amador Symphony)

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Valentine's Day Cards to be Sent As Reward for Donors to Nonprofit

Open Heart Kitchen, a Livermore-based nonprofit that provides free meals in the Tri-Valley area, is suggesting a novel way to send someone a card for Valentine's Day.

Donate to the nonprofit by Friday, Feb. 14, and Executive Director John Bost will send a personalized Valentine's Day card to anyone the donor designates, "whether that's a friend, loved one, your favorite teacher, or even your dentist."

Open Heart Kitchen recommends donating by Friday, Feb. 7, to ensure the dedication card is delivered by Valentine's Day.

To donate, go to openheartkitchen.org.

Artist Warren Chang to Teach Oil Painting Workshop

The Livermore Art Association will host a two-day oil painting workshop with California artist and art instructor Warren Chang at the Bothwell Arts Center in Livermore on Saturday, March 29, and Sunday, March 30.

Chang, best known for his depictions of field workers in Monterey County, is an instructor at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco.

He has a bachelor's degree in fine arts from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena.

His work is part of the permanent collections at the Monterey Museum of Art and the Hilbert Museum of Art in Orange, California.

The immersive workshop, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. both days, will teach an "alla prima," or wet-on-wet, approach to painting. The first day will concentrate on painting the head; the second day will focus on painting the human figure.

The cost of the two-day workshop is $425.

To register, or for more information, go to livermoreartassociation.org.

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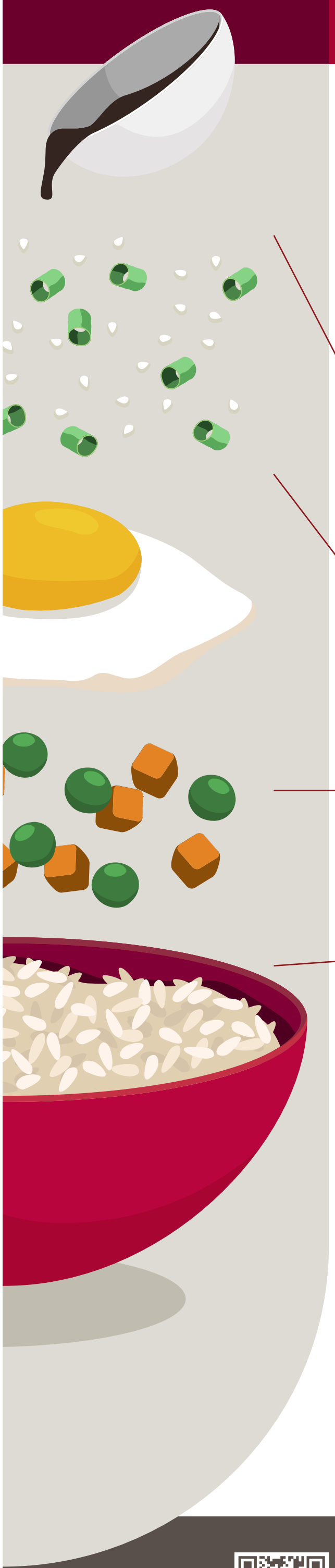
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BEST HOSPITALS U.S.News & WORLD REPORT HEART & VASCULAR 2024–2025

EDITORIAL

We and the State Need to Use Our Power to Help Nonprofits

A memo from the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has ordered all federal agencies to halt all spending on numerous programs, despite the fact that those funds had already been allocated. The courts have repeatedly ruled that Congress, not the White House, has authority over federal spending.

The OMB memo was rescinded after a public outcry, but a subsequent statement made it unclear whether or not the withholding of approved funding would continue.

Where does that leave us, the people?

We're having to find that out in real-time. Nonprofit organizations, concerned that the source of much of their funding would be unceremoniously pulled and be forced to drastically reduce or cancel their services, came together on a call organized by CalNonprofits to begin to formulate strategies.

The short answer was to stay involved in their local communities, focus on their missions, and to work together to protect themselves. That's a defensive measure we all need to take: to support each other. If you have a nonprofit you support, set up a recurring donation if you can. If enough people do that, it may help mitigate some of the uncertainty coming from the government.

The main avenues for pushback are in the courts and in the streets — both figuratively and literally. Lawsuits are best handled by organizations that already have the power to take on the U.S. government: state attorneys general, large labor unions, national-level philanthropic and nonprofit entities. Already suits filed by 22 states, including California, and nonprofit organizations have secured a restraining order halting the freeze on federal funding.

But that is just a temporary measure. We have confidence that state Attorney General Rob Bonta will remain vigilant and oppose further encroachments of Congressional and local power. But we also need our legislature to preemptively move to protect all Californians who could be targeted.

And don't underestimate the power of physically showing up. Nonviolent public protests have proven to be successful in the past and can help protect our rights.

The way our system of government is set up, the real power has always resided in the states, and in the people. We need to exercise that power now.

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 (newsroom@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.

Thank You Livermore for Bringing Some Cheer
Suzanne Gutierrez, Livermore

A very belated thank you to the City of Livermore for making the Holly Jolly Trolley available to our community this past Christmas season. I'm not sure whose idea this was, but I hope it comes back again! What a wonderful way to bring added joy to the holidays, for children young and old! I took several rides with family and friends, and we all agreed it was a great morale booster. We especially loved seeing the smiles of children riding with parents or grandparents, singing carols and ringing the jingle bells! The drivers were cheerful and friendly. Thanks again City of Livermore for bringing some cheer to our beloved town.

DeepSeek: Fire Rooster Sputnik to Dragon/Snake Chatbot
Greg Scott, Livermore

"Technological developments that do not improve life for everyone, but instead create or worsen inequality and conflicts, cannot be called true progress." (Pope Francis, 2024 World Day of Peace message)

In the angst of the Cold War in 1957, a Chinese calendar Year of the Fire Rooster, the Soviet Union launched Sputnik, the first artificial satellite. The United States was terrified. If the Soviet Union could orbit a satellite over us, the thinking went, then they certainly could drop a nuclear bomb on our heads. From an American inferiority complex came intense motivation to catch up and outcompete. Epically, there was little prevailing arrogance, and no apathy. Fewer than twelve years afterward, America put men on the moon. Consequently, great intricate advancing technologies emerged. One Livermore resident's father designed and implemented the Apollo program's lunar navigation system.

As the Chinese calendar Year of the Dragon in 2024 became the Year of the Snake in 2025, our world has seemingly instantaneously changed. From the People's Republic of China (PRC), the introduction of the DeepSeek-R1 generative artificial intelligence chatbot has shocked the American Empire in technology, economy, finance, military, policy, business, political, social, and cultural realms. The powerful, megalomaniacal American tech titans have been deluded and cocky, and joined with the company of misguided political leadership through nauseating prominence via fealty and money. Realities have been rendered inverted for all of us.

"China is a sleeping dragon, when she wakes she will shake the world." (Unattributable)

America has been smug and reckless to the "dragon" of the PRC — America's main global adversary. (Alperovitch and Graff, "World on the Brink: How America Can Best China in the Race for the Twenty-First Century," 2024). Intrepid DeepSeek could not have possibly done what it has accomplished without American and American allies' technology designs and innovations.

A feeble, incompetent President Biden and his inept administration crafted weak and ineffective export controls, which has made the United States highly vulnerable. The Democratic leadership has provided one of the greatest frauds in American history. One can wonder why the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was written at all, if it was not to be necessarily invoked.

Among the ghosts of humanity's zeitgeist, a Pope no longer threatens Galileo: The artificial intelligence worlds of the Galileos now threaten the Pope... and all of humanity. Surpassing the mythical snake ouroboros, we dine on more than our own tail.

We Can Do Better
Julie Wild, Livermore

The Cornerstone housing development project approved at last week's Livermore City Council meeting is of great benefit because it provides 108 apartments for low, lower, very low and extremely low-income families. However, the council should've worked with the developer to find ways to uphold city design standards in key areas and still keep all of the 108 units proposed. If more collaboration and investment were necessary, they should've provided it.

Waivers, which are essentially the waiving of a community standard, were part of this project, as well as concessions. The council voted 4-1 to approve the project as is, with Councilman Ben Barrientos opposing their decision. By implementing a large number of the waivers and concessions, the council vote permitted three major standards to be dismissed. First, allowing a five-story, 70-foot-high building violates our long-established Scenic Corridor policy. We are Livermore not Dublin, and our views of our open space must be protected.

Secondly, all of the 108 low-income units are concentrated in this five-story building, instead of being spread throughout the development as city standards require.

And finally, the low-income building was given smaller rooms, lower quality materials, fewer bathrooms and laundry facilities, and fewer parking stalls. One of my biggest concerns is that low-income residents are stigmatized when they are concentrated in one building with standards beneath those of their Cornerstone neighbors.

Mayor Marchand made the comment that these units at Cornerstone could be occupied by Livermore teachers, Livermore workers, or even Livermore city staff. So, if this housing could be for some of our most respected and appreciated members of the community, why wouldn't we have them live in housing comparable to their neighbors? They give the best each day to our community, so why remind them each day that their home is a low-income unit compared to a person across the street? We can do better than this.

When we spread low-income units throughout the community, those residents feel they're truly a part of the community at large, rather than being labeled in a harmful way. Despite reassurances given by council members, stigma is real. And that's why the standards are in place.

Our goal as a community here in Livermore should be to 'tick all the boxes' for development standards that previous councils have already approved for our housing. When we build something right, we all benefit.

Benefitting Every Citizen
Phyllis Couper, Pleasanton

There have been letters to the editor implying that President Trump is endangering the lives of Americans by pardoning the J6ers. To my knowledge, none of them committed rape, murder, child sex trafficking, or drug deals on J6. However, the thousands of hard criminals that past president Biden let in through our southern border have committed those crimes, yet his administration welcomed them with open arms. Our hospitals, jails, and tax base are severely compromised by many illegals who didn't come here to contribute, but to take and not give back. As for fossil fuels, the assumption has been presented that the environment will be ruined. The strict guidelines for fossil fuel harvesting are far more than those for what we put on our lawns and down our drains. High prices of food, like eggs and meat, will come down. It took the Biden administration four years to destroy the good economy we had when Trump was president the first time. Now he has to rebuild all that again and it takes time. The social services such as Medicare, etc. are being looked at to streamline the unnecessary, ongoing waste, and thus make lower and more available costs to American citizens who need those services. Those suing the Trump administration and the ever-grudgers only demonstrate an interest that doesn't go beyond their own personal philosophy. The ever-shrinking tax base, burdened with the ever-inefficient government agencies, is on a crash course for disaster. It is now a cleanup fix up situation for President Trump, and when accomplished, will benefit every citizen, especially their wallets.

Dictator on Day One
Ramona Krausnick, Dublin

During the 2024 presidential campaign, Donald Trump appeared on an episode of MSNBC's The Reid-Out with Joy Reid and Senator Amy Klobuchar. They played a video where Trump said "revenge takes time" — they both shuddered — so did I, because he said it with such venom and meanness in his voice that it was crystal clear he meant it.

Trump has had four years to carefully prepare his revenge agenda, and it started last week when he returned to the Oval Office.

Trump's agenda is outlined in "Project 2025." One of his nominees, Russell Vought as Budget Chief, is one of its authors. Everything in the Project, from shutting down the federal government to mass deportations to destroying our healthcare system with the nominations of Bobby Kennedy, Jr. and Dr. Oz, has already begun. His promises were so absurd most people did not believe it would ever happen. Guess what, it is happening. Read or watch the news and see for yourself.

In addition, Trump's pick for VP, JD Vance, whose Senate position was bought for him by billionaire Peter Thiel, is a follower of blogger Curtis Yarvin. Yarvin believes that Democracy and the federal government need to be "deleted" and replaced by a national CEO called a dictator. Look it up; he said it in 2012 in a recorded interview. Trump said he'd be a dictator on day one, and he wasn't kidding.

Disrespecting America
Owen Brovont, Livermore

Simply because a person has successfully and illegally crossed the border into the United States, doesn't mean that that person has magically gained the right to remain indefinitely, or to later use the so-called "chain migration" rule to bring other "family members" into the country. One of the greatest achievements of America has been the creation of a mature legal system, but it can only obtain true justice if the law is administered equally, objectively, and universally. Our political leaders have found this concept troublesome because it puts limits on what they can do personally and politically. Unfortunately, leaders like Joe Biden have demonstrated that they experience no repercussions if they choose to not respect the results of legal decisions. Too many Americans also disregard the law out of ignorance, by choice, follow the precedence of politicians, or from heart-felt but misplaced compassion. The fact that such behavior has placed serious burdens on the country, especially our schools, our medical facilities, our financial resources, and our culture itself, apparently is not of overriding importance — ultimately no one, however, is insulated from the negative impact resulting from these burdens. As an example, the fuzzy logic found in the Editorial commentary of the January 30th edition of the INDEPENDENT, and many of its "Letters to the Editor," seem to have avoided any recollection of what the term "law abiding" means, or the critical purpose and function of the law in maintaining safety and consistency in an organized society. Such attitudes serve to seriously undermine the very idea, and the goals, of a rationally organized civil society providing regularity, stability, and fairness in guiding the behavior and interactions of its citizens. In short, it dramatically demonstrates the indifference of many citizens to respect their country, its values, its people, and its preferred way of life. Shame on them!

Cornerstone Project
Thomas Soules, Livermore

I am not sure how far along the development of low-income housing in the Cornerstone project (located north just across 580 at Collier Canyon) is or whether any changes are possible. I watched and attended part of the city council meeting last Monday to learn more about it. Apparently, the original plan was put forth by the Cornerstone Church as a way to better utilize excess parking facilities. The goal to achieve more housing for Livermore, particularly for low-income folks, is commendable and at first, I felt favorable to the project. However, the plan includes putting most of the low-income families in a five-story building requiring a waiver, and there were 10 other required waivers. These were all OK'd and the plan was passed by a 4-1 vote in the Council Meeting with only Ben Barrientos voting nay. Was the city presenting a face on a done deal?

Could the fifth story units be spread out into the complex or could a separate two-story building have been included,? This development is not downtown, but is close to Costco, Las Positas College and bus transportation, which is good. However, the five-story building for the low-income families will nearly front on 580. We do not want to set a precedent and copy Dublin along 580, nor do we want to place low-income folks in a single building.

The 108 "affordable" units are all in the same five-story building. Seven of the waivers for the "affordable" units allow them to be very small compared to the three-story market rate town homes in the rest of the development, and they have only 0.5 parking spots per unit, the state minimum. What will we create in that corner of the development? It certainly will not mix the populations in the low-income part with those in the market rate units.

Finally, how is the difference between the rents afforded to the low-income folks and market rates being paid for: by subsidies, by Section 8, or by in-lieu fees? Again, the city was not transparent with its citizens.

Oligarch Hero
Richard Andrews, Livermore

With the possible exclusion of Warren G. Harding, there has not been a more usurping and corrupt POTUS, than the convicted felon currently in charge. He makes Richard Nixon look like a choir boy. And he has carefully surrounded himself with a group that would make La Cosa Nostra blush.

Now he is keeping all his promises that would hurt the people and make his oligarch clique richer. (Elon, Zuck, and Bezos et al) And anybody else who bought their way into his cadre of brown shirts. And he freed those who would take down

(See MAILBOX, page 5)

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Livermore Police Officers Trent Cox, Brandon Mayer and Joseph Ratcliffe successfully graduated from the Alameda County Sheriff's Office 181st Police Academy on Jan. 30. They will now begin field training. (Photo courtesy of the Livermore Police Department)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 4)

democracy because HE told lies about elections, while killing the guards who tried to stop them. All the while not doing anything to help we citizens, and instead trying to kill Medicare and trying to do the same with SSI.

Too bad Torquemada and Cromwell are dead. Otherwise, DJT would put them on the SCOTUS.

Selective Outrage on Immigration Enforcement

Blake Funston, Dubin

In 2024, the Biden administration deported more than 271,000 illegal immigrants alone. 2024 was a 10-year high for deportations and far exceeded what the Trump administration did its first year, 2017. Yet, I don't recall The Independent publishing a half-page editorial quoting FDR and urging communities to come together. Now, just weeks into Trump's second term, while the exact deportation numbers remain unclear, they are certainly nowhere near a 271,000 pace.

Your editorial seems to justify allowing the estimated 11 million illegal immigrants to remain in the U.S. by pointing to the estimated 175,000 who are needed farmworkers. But surely The Independent is aware of the H-2A temporary agricultural visa program? It's disingenuous to say that our produce prices are linked to lack of farm labor. What, then, is the justification for the remaining 10.8 million and for our elected leaders, who have pledged to defend and uphold laws, to actively defy and break them?

You are right about one thing — there is a growing climate of fear. But it's not policy driving it; it's media and editorial boards like The Independent that are creating it.

What Constitution?

Ward Kanowsky, Pleasanton

During week two, the Trump administration continued its intended purpose of inundating and confusing the American people with an ongoing avalanche of, "What Constitution? I don't need any Constitution. I didn't put my hand on the Bible at the inauguration," authoritarian, Project 2025 actions.

• Announced a surprise, temporary pause of federal grant, loan and other financial assistance programs to be implemented the day of the announcement

• Offered federal workers who voluntarily resigned a buyout package; millions of workers received an email with the subject line "A Fork in the Road" — the same language Elon Musk used when purging X's workforce

• Blamed the deadliest aviation crash the US has seen in decades on DEI even as the cause remained unknown and the recovery mission was still underway

• Played tariff hide and seek: tariffs were coming on one day — 25% on imports from Mexico and Canada, alongside 10% tariffs on China — and then they weren't, and then they were.

Still nothing about lowering costs, and the price of eggs continues to soar. And all of this doesn't even include the nomination hearings for the cabinet picks where the big questions remain, "Who is the most incompetent?" and "Who is the most dangerous?" I'll be back next week.

Mandate Misunderstood

Bruce Crawford, Pleasanton

President Trump and maybe the Republican party in general does not seem to understand the definition of the word "mandate." It only means that the candidate or party has won an election; NOT that they have uncontrolled authority to do anything that they want. FACT: Donald Trump received 49.8% of the popular vote, while Kamala Harris received 48.3% of the popular vote, the remaining votes going to third party candidates. Hence, there are over 50% of the voters in the 2024 presidential election that DID NOT prescribe to Trump's agenda. So why does Trump think that he can run roughshod over the entire U.S. public? And why does he continue to do things against the very Constitution that he swore an oath to protect and defend? I'm aghast at the bullying performance of our duly elected president. How many of the voters regret their vote?

Livermore Lab Needs Public Comments on Its Plutonium Plan

Dasha Orel, Livermore

Lawrence Livermore National Lab has announced that they want to increase the plutonium "Utilization" at their plutonium facility. Plutonium is a highly hazardous, radioactive metal used in the Lab's nuclear weapons development work. This plan will increase the quantities of plutonium shipped in and out of the Lab, increase the type and frequency of risky plutonium experiments the Lab performs, and increase the amount of radioactive waste the Lab generates.

The public comment period regarding this decision will be open until March 3. It is your opportunity to state concern and ask questions regarding the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement that the Lab is going to prepare.

To file a comment, you can: (1) Call or leave a message at 833-778-0508, (2) email LLNLSEIS@nnsa.doe.gov, (3) or mail them to 7000 East Ave., L-293,

Livermore, CA, addressed to "Mr. Alan Chen, NEPA Document Manager."

Your comments can make a difference! For more information and talking points about this issue, check out Tri-Valley CAREs website at trivalleycares.org.

Retired Teachers Offer Tri-Valley Scholarships

The Tri-Valley chapter of the California Retired Teachers Association (CalRTA) will award up to five $2,500 scholarships this spring to high school seniors planning to become teachers or school counselors.

The scholarships are open to seniors attending a public high school in Livermore, Pleasanton, Dublin or San Ramon. The scholarships are also open to past graduates already attending a four-year college or university.

Applicants will be required to submit an essay explaining their interest in a teaching or counseling career and how they plan to achieve that goal.

The deadline to apply is Friday, March 14. The recipients will be announced in April.

Complete guidelines and application forms are available online at div85.calrta.org.

SCHOOL BOARD

(Continued from front page)

PUSD ranks in the bottom 5% in school district funding in California. School district funding is based on enrollment, but there are many other factors in determining the final amount.

Sticking to their vow to keep as many cuts as possible away from the classroom and keeping management numbers in line with the student population, the board unanimously agreed to reduce the ranks of vice principals, executive secretaries and a custodian by 9.5 full time equivalent positions.

Other cuts include eliminating approximately 10 vacant positions and cutting other administrative or non-teaching positions, such as secretaries, drivers, or program specialists. One-time cuts, which means they could be brought back in the future, include reducing the number of paid days in the work year for the superintendent, cabinet positions and other leadership positions. Other reductions include cutting district travel and conferences, reducing outside special education consulting services by hiring in-house staff, eliminating summer school for grades 1-5 and replacing summer school for grades 10-12 with Saturday Academy, and reducing overall materials and supplies in the classroom.

One of the final sticking points was the considered reduction of several custodians throughout the district. Although one custodial position was suggested for elimination, board members Mary Jo Carreon, Laurie Walker and Charlie Jones, were opposed to those final cuts.

"When I was teaching, I relied on the custodians. They saved my 'you-know-what' so many times," said Carreon. "A kid was throwing up or a kid is bleeding. It's important that the classroom is vacuumed every day … For me, I am tired of making all the cuts and I'm done making the cuts."

Walker agreed.

"Our enrollment has declined, but our facilities have not," she said of the proposed custodial cuts. "I have a real issue with reducing them by anything."

There were also several public comments from teachers advocating for fewer cuts and more empathy.

PUSD Technology Specialist Lucy Myers, who is retiring but whose position isn't slated to be cut, asked the board to reconsider several IT reductions.

"Cutting these positions will lead to longer response times and more instructional disruption," Myers said. "Technology issues in classrooms, especially in elementary school, require immediate hands-on support. A teacher managing 24 young students doesn't have time to troubleshoot while trying to teach … teachers rely on quick hallway conversations or catching a tech between classes. If we are not present, those small but critical interactions won't happen, and minor issues will turn into major disruptions."

Marilyn Parks, executive secretary in technology services, whose job would be eliminated under the current plan, spoke of the importance of her position after the board meeting.

"So, I was quite surprised to find out yesterday morning that my position is considered to be reduced," Parks said to the board. "I understand that with the transfer of the team to another department, my duties related to synergy will be absorbed there. But some duties are not just a simple handoff though and they require training and synergy … some of those issues require troubleshooting."

The district's total projected General Fund expenditures for the coming year are $215.4 million, which is a 6.3% decrease from the previous year, when it peaked at about $230 million. About 85% of district expenditures are allocated to salaries and benefits, a portion that has grown over prior years due to increases in salaries and medical benefits.

Interim Superintendent Maurice Ghysels said during the meeting that the board had done the hard work of cutting positions, but then warned that there would be more in the future and additional opportunities to tighten their belts and save where possible.

"The Pleasanton school district has the best set of systems I have ever seen in my career," said Ghysels. "What I am worried about is that a system can only take so much shock. We will continue to reduce; we have attrition coming up and we can't count our chickens before they hatch, but my thinking is, let's go into this knowing we are going to have to do a lot of reorganizing throughout the year … My thinking right now is let's serve our people. We are all here for the kids and we will continue to look for cuts farthest away from the classroom. That's an ongoing thing."

The board will be presented with initial resolutions for Reductions in Force (RIF) based on the cuts agreed to during the board's upcoming regular Feb. 13 meeting. If approved, the RIF notifications will go out to staff on or before the mandated deadline of March 15. As is always the case, there is a chance some positions may be saved or reinstated based on Gov. Newsom's updated statewide budget, which is expected to be issued in May. The governor's budget determines how much funding the state will allocate to school districts. Following that, the final delivery of RIF notices will be delivered before May 15, as required by the state.

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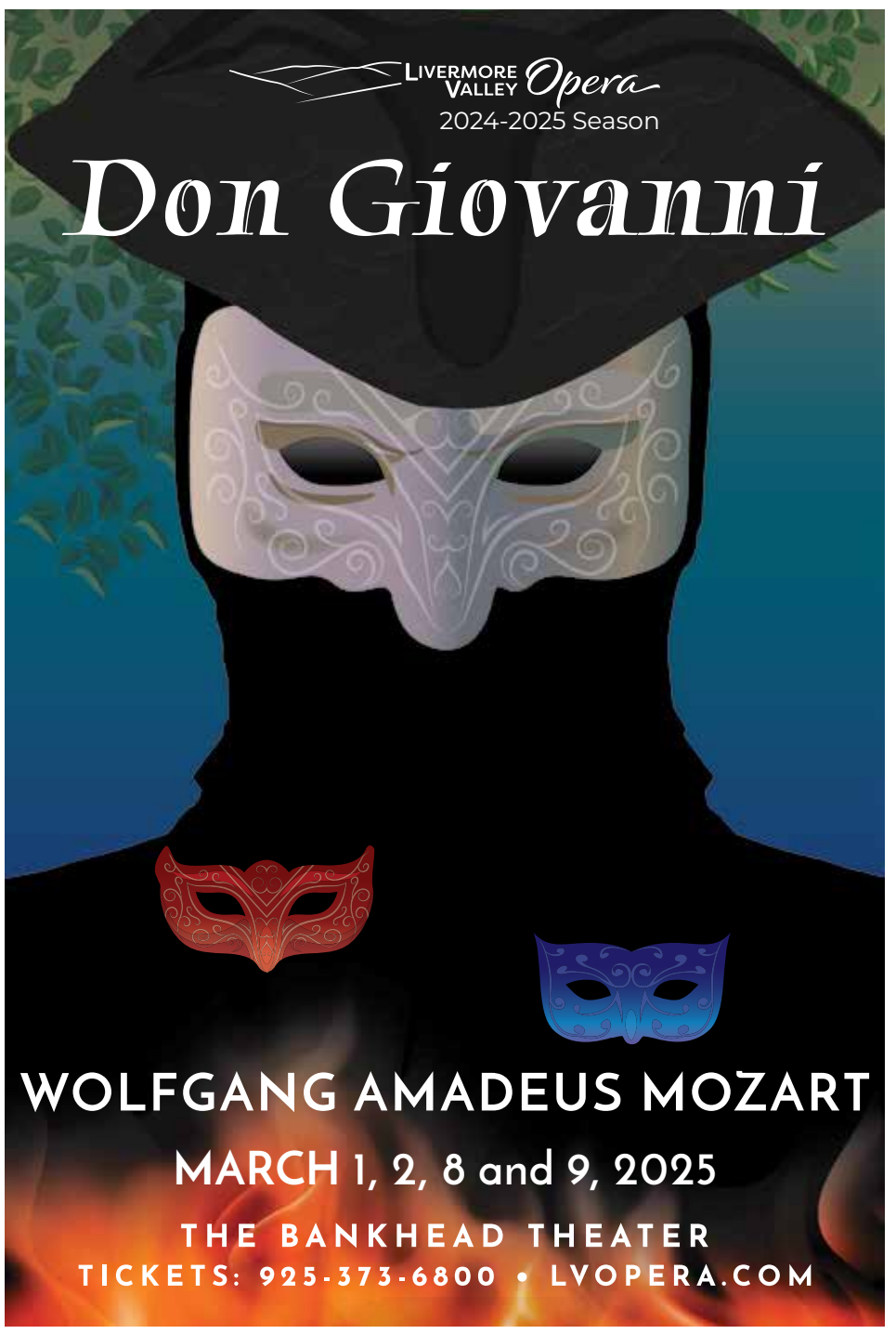
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3VCF to Launch Its '925' Fundraising Campaign

The Three Valleys Community Foundation (3VCF) will launch a fundraising campaign this spring covering the 23 cities and nearly 1 million households in the 925 area code.

The Pleasanton-based foundation, which helps fund other nonprofits and manages charitable accounts for groups and individuals, said the "925 GIVES" campaign would expand on its "give where you live" philosophy.

"Our region is renowned not only for its high quality of life, economic prosperity, educational excellence and vibrant community spirit, but also for its incredible potential to lead in generosity," said 3VCF President Kelly Bowers.

"With 925 GIVES, we're tapping into that collective heart," Bowers added. "By streamlining the donation process for every community member and leveraging modern digital tools, 925 GIVES will provide a one-stop platform for donors to engage with and support the causes that matter most to them and their community. We're excited to see our region come together to uplift our local nonprofits and strengthen our community."

The foundation said it expects 925 GIVES to become an annual fundraising campaign, similar to the global Giving Tuesday initiative.

The inaugural 2025 campaign will encompass all 99 organizations in the foundation's current nonprofit directory and culminate with a 24-hour Day of Giving marathon with hourly updates on Sept. 25.



The private elementary Stratford School Dublin recently celebrated cultures across the world with engaging activities, crafts, dress up days, parent presenters and a 'world tour.' Students learned about the diverse traditions and cultures from all around the globe. Stratford School second-graders Avira Thacker, Madelyn Wu and Elodie Chen show off some handmade lanterns as part of the educational segment. (Photo courtesy of Stratford Schools)

LLNL Quantifies Effects of Metal's Strength on High Explosive

Researchers at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) have developed a way to quantify and study the effect of a metal's strength in modeling high explosive experiments.

LLNL said the research could shed light on an elusive variable in national security and defense applications.

The extreme conditions in high-explosive testing make it difficult to separate the behavior of the explosive material from the behavior of the metal.

LLNL researchers carried out experiments using tantalum, a high-density metal with an extremely high melting point, and two polymer-bonded explosives developed by LLNL and used in nuclear weapons.

Using a Bayesian approach, applying probability to statistical problems, they were able to create more accurate modeling, according to a study published in the Journal of Applied Physics.

Researchers said their findings could also lead to more accurate modeling for equation-of-state studies, which describe matter under a given set of variable conditions, including pressure, volume, temperature and internal energy.

Livermore Library to Host a Teen Art Expo on the Theme of 'Chaos'

The theme for this year's Teen Art Exposition hosted by the Livermore Public Library in April is "Chaos."

The Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., will begin accepting original artwork from Livermore middle and high school students for the annual display on Saturday, March 1. The last day to submit artwork will be Sunday, March 23.

Eligible artwork will include paintings, drawings, photography, or mixed media.

There will be two levels for each category, with artwork from students in sixth through eighth grade in Level 1 and from students in ninth through 12th grade in Level 2.

Best of Show in Level 1 and Level 2 will receive ribbons. There will also be awards for first, second and third place for both levels in all four categories.

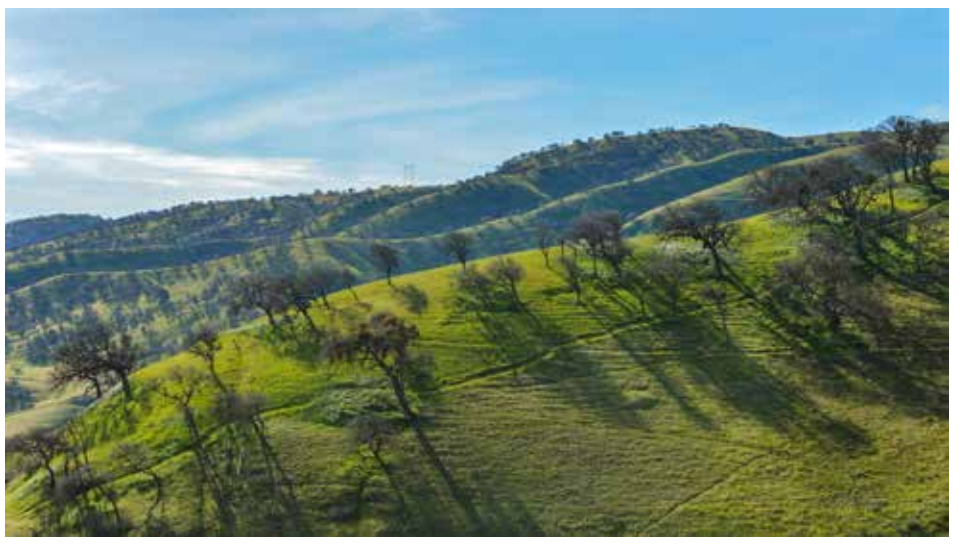
Students may submit only one entry, either as an individual or as part of a team. All artwork must be framed or matted.

The artwork will be on display in the Civic Center Library Art Gallery from Tuesday, April 1, through Wednesday, April 30. The library will also host a reception for the student artists at 7 p.m. on Thursday, April. 17.

For complete submission guidelines, go to library.livermoreca.gov.

TESLA PARK

(Continued from front page)



The California Department of Parks and Recreation is engaged in a planning process that will determine the final status of Tesla Park, a 3,100-acre tract between Livermore and Tracy. (File photo — Doug Jorgensen)

activities or opening it to more intrusive pursuits.

"Classification helps determine the purpose of a park and the range of conservation, recreation and management activities that are appropriate for the park," said C.C. LaGrange, senior associate with PlaceWorks, a consultant working on the EIR and general plan for the park. "The general plan defines the park's primary purpose and establishes a management direction for the park's future."

Although LaGrange asked those participating to address topics for the EIR to study, most of those who spoke got straight to the point: Sixteen speakers voiced support for the park to become a reserve, which would allow hiking, but keep trails free of bicycles and any activity like camping that could disturb the wildlife corridor. A similar meeting held in September had a similar level of support.

"I would like state parks to address in their EIR the use of the 3,100 acres as the lowest recreational impacts," said Carin High, suggesting any visitor center or parking lots be built on park land adjacent to Tesla Park. "I don't think this is the right spot for camping, and I would also strongly encourage you to incorporate into the EIR a robust discussion of cumulative impacts of any of the different types of activities or levels of activities that you might be proposing."

Donna Cabanne, speaking for the Sierra Club's Tri-Valley chapter, said her organization has worked for decades to protect the park. She supported the "lowest recreation intensity possible."

"I would like the EIR to focus on the unique biodiversity, the pristine conditions that exist here, cultural resources, historical resources, impacts to wildlife and specifically, to really look at biological resources, hydrology and water quality, energy, greenhouse gas emissions, noise and also wildfires," Cabanne said. "We believe it should be reserved with the least recreational intensity — hiking, educational material, photography, no camping, and to really look at cumulative activities and how they impact what we have… We can't find a replacement for this type of pristine conditions anywhere else."

Speaking for Friends of Livermore, Dick Schneider, an open space advocate and co-author of Alameda County's Measure D, said Tesla Park should be designated as a reserve.

"Tesla contains at least 45 special status plant species, 74 additional locally rare watch list species, nine sensitive natural communities and 53 special status wildlife species and habitats," Schneider said. "These are not concentrated in one area but spread as a web of life across the entire landscape."

Schneider said the EIR should address the effects of roads, construction, maintenance and vehicles on wildlife and plants. The analysis also should include how campsites, picnic areas and humans and dogs could affect the habitat, bird behavior, the soil and "direct mortality to wildlife from predatory actions, disruption of normal behavior, pathogen and disease transmission, disruption of incipient reproductions by splashing through creeks and ponds and other impacts," he added.

Norman LaForce, president of Sustainability Parks Recycling Wildlife Legal Defense Fund (SPRWLDF), said the park should be a reserve "and there should be close collaboration and consultation and cooperation with the Native Americans First Nations people" to analyze the impact various uses would have on sacred sites. The Tesla area was home to Indigenous Ohlone people.

Of the speakers who wanted to see a less-strict designation, Mark Moskowitz of the Mount Diablo Trails Alliance said the State Parks' mission is to balance conservation and recreational interests and suggested park officials consider "a more holistic and broad-based approach beyond just low-impact parks."

"This notion of perceived threat, or threat to both people and environment by cyclists, we do believe is overdone and antiquated," Moskowitz said.

Calling himself a "recreationalist" who loves the outdoors and wildlife, Tom Gandesbury supported designating the park as a recreational area. Suggesting those participating were Bay Area residents, he urged the EIR examine how residents in Tracy, Mountain House and beyond might use the park.

"There are within 20 miles of the Tesla site, about 300,000 people, and within 30 miles, certainly over a million and these folks need a place to do recreation, to enjoy the outdoors," Gandesbury noted. "It's very easy to say 'Set it aside for the wildlife' when you have access to lots of recreational areas in your backyard. But folks who live in the Sacramento Valley don't have that luxury."

Once an environmental impact report and general plan are completed, hearings will be held for more public input. Eventually, the State Park and Recreation Commission will determine a classification for the park. That isn't expected until 2027.

Anyone wishing to offer suggestions about the EIR can write to the California Department of Parks and Recreation, P.O. Box 942896, Sacramento, CA 94296-0001. Contact: Katie Metraux. Emails can be sent to info@alamedateslaplan.com with "Alameda-Tesla Park Classification and General Plan Project EIR as the subject line. The deadline for comments is Feb. 14.

NONPROFITS

(Continued from front page)

source afterwards.

Even in good years, the Alliance's invoices take as long as three months to be paid from all funders, Young said.

"We laid out this money in good faith on behalf of these contracts, and we don't know if we're going to get paid for it," she said.

And if the funding dries up, critical services go unfunded: shelters for the unhoused or victims of domestic violence may be unable to continue; food banks won't be able to serve meals or obtain groceries; and children's services that allow parents to work may be cut.

Juliana Schirmer, the development and communications director for the Alliance, said she is asking if individual and corporate supporters can create an emergency fund, and if the Alliance would have a role in that.

"We need to be doing something different, and we need to prepare, because week to week, we don't know what's going to happen," Schirmer said.

John Sensiba, a Pleasanton CPA who is the chair of the Three Valleys Community Foundation, which provides grants to local nonprofit organizations, said that he didn't think the foundation would be directly affected by a cutoff of federal funding, because federal grants aren't part of its donor mix, even as pass-through grants from cities or Alameda County.

"But that will clearly impact all nonprofits and service providers," Sensiba said. He hasn't issued any broad statements or advice because the environment is still confusing. "We're going to wait until things calm down. I think it adds to the noise if we throw our voice in there as well."

Sensiba did liken the current situation to the 2008 recession, when many of his accounting clients were similarly worried. The advice he gave then, he said, was to focus on what could be done.

"If we're planning on the world ending, we're in trouble. If we're planning on a path forward, and the world ends anyway, it doesn't matter. So let's plan on a path forward," he said.

Creating Strategies Quickly

The proposed cuts from the OMB memo did not target direct aid to individuals, such as Social Security or Medicaid, but a 52-page document sent to federal agencies named more than 2,600 programs that were slated to be defunded.

That comes to about $3 trillion in federal spending, said Geoff Green, the CEO of the California Association of Nonprofits (CalNonprofits), a statewide membership-based policy and advocacy organization.

According to the U.S. District Court Judge Loren AliKhan, who blocked the OMB order after the National Nonprofit Association filed suit, the memo amounted to a freeze that posed the risk of irreparable harm and that the actions of the government "potentially run roughshod over a 'bulwark of the Constitution' by interfering with Congress's appropriation of federal funds."

On Jan. 30, more than 1,400 California nonprofit executives, staff and funders joined a quickly organized Zoom call hosted by CalNonprofits.

The overwhelming message from participants on the call was for organizations to keep supporting their missions and each other locally.

Thomas Saenz, the president and general counsel of MALDEF (formerly the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund), the country's leading Latino civil rights organization, pointed to the two lawsuits as a sign of hope. "The courts remain an important impediment to the Trump administration running roughshod over them," Saenz told the group on the CalNonprofits call.

Saenz also urged more people and organizations to step forward, noting that while many groups fear retaliation, becoming a prominent advocate is in some ways insurance against retaliation.

Guthrie Graves-Fitzsimmons, the director of policy and advocacy with the Interfaith Alliance in Washington, D.C., noted that the Trump administration was clearly trying to divide many communities. "Our communities really depend on our continuing commitment. When they see someone retreating, it's a blow to their communities," Graves-Fitzsimmons said.

Lisa Matsubara, the chief legal and advocacy officer with Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California, a policy and advocacy group allied to the largest reproductive rights organization in the U.S., added that coalition building is a key to being strong advocates. "I strongly believe in advocacy from all sides," she said. "I think it's really important as nonprofits that we do engage in that advocacy."

Focus on Local Power

Schirmer said the rallying of nonprofits is a bright spot.

"I can't prove it," she said, referring to the quick retraction of the OMB memo, "but it seemed as if as soon as the pressure came in from the public, that's when it rolled back."

If the administration tries to renege on its federal funding commitments again, it's not going to just hurt nonprofits, but businesses, too, Young added. Forming strong coalitions will be a key organizing strategy going forward.

"It's really finding out who is supportive and who's there to help when it's needed. People come out of the woodwork," Young said. "The court system is scary because it's cumbersome, and it can hold up much needed funds."

Individuals also may be able to help by setting up recurring donations to a nonprofit they support. If enough people did that, the combined action could provide a lifeline for much-needed services, Young suggested.

Young passed along a comment she received from Lara Calvert, who runs Spectrum Community Services, a meals-on-wheels program in the Tri-Valley. "We play by the rules; we abide (by) our contracts; we meet our agreements," Young related. "And someone comes in and tears up the contract and may not even pay us for the work we've done." No business can survive like that, she concluded.

"We're very fortunate in our area that our nonprofits work really well together and support each other," Young said. "That's going to be needed now more than ever."

Garbarino Receives Best of Show at Art Exhibit

A colored pencil drawing by Pleasanton artist Linda Garbarino, "Lady from Beaune," received the Best in Show award at the Imagination Expressed 2025 exhibit on display at the Museum on Main in Pleasanton.

Garbarino, who has a degree in art history from the California College of the Arts in San Francisco, has been a professional artist since 2004.

She also has a master's degree in educational administration from California State University, East Bay, and spent 35 years with the Fremont Unified School District, retiring as director of educational resources, before focusing on her art career.

Merit awards for the annual exhibit of East Bay art went to Karen Barry for her linocut, "Alameda Creek Menagerie," Patricia Bourdakis for a colored pencil drawing, "Swan," and Jessica de Jesus for her gouache watercolor, "Fire Break."

Honorable mentions went to Shweta Agrawal for an ink drawing, "Nomadic," Lewis Liu for an oil painting, "Martha's Gaze," Ron Rigge for a photograph, "East from Morgan Territory," Srikanta Umakantha, for an acrylic painting, "The Horse," and Jill Vellinger for a pastel, "Stained Glass Morning."

David Wagner, professor of art at Las Positas College, served as judge for the exhibit, which runs through Saturday, March 15.

The Museum on Main, 603 Main St., Pleasanton, is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesdays through Saturdays.



Linda Garbarino's "Lady from Beaune" won the Best in Show award. (Photo courtesy of Museum on Main)



Jessica de Jesus was presented with a merit award for her goache watercolor "Fire Break." (Photo courtesy of Museum on Main)

ISLAMIC CENTER

(Continued from front page)

Some of us work at Apple. Some of us work at Google. Some of us have restaurants. We love sports. Go 'Niners! We're living our lives just like everybody else here In the U.S. We are different cultures and communities and different types of people." He pointed out that Muslims are spread out over 100 different countries. "We're not just all like the Arabs (depicted) in Hollywood."

He mimed a scary expression with his bearded face. "I personally come from an Arab country, Palestine, but again, Muslims come from everywhere."

"As you can see, we all look different, yet we all have that same faith, that same bond, that same brotherhood that we have within ourselves and with our brothers and sisters in humanity, meaning from other faiths, and our neighbors."

ICL member Karen Samman said during the reception, as a white woman, "I don't always look like I'm part of the community," she said.

Samman converted to Islam when she was 19 and married a man from Lebanon. She's 60 now. A former Christian, she appreciated Islam's absence of formal clergy in favor of forming a direct relationship to God. "It was a fit for me. Maybe it wasn't so popular in the mid-'80s, but I think people are more aware because our world is smaller now and we are now noticing the similarities that people maybe didn't know existed."

Rehan Chishty, another ICL board member, spoke about interfaith relations and similarities among the Islamic, Jewish and Christian religions.

"I think we're 90% aligned, if not more," Chishty said. "We believe in the same prophets, we believe in the same God. We believe in the story of Creation. And so, there's a ton of commonality." What makes Muslims unique, he added, is their belief that the Prophet Muhammad is the final messenger, meaning he was the last prophet sent by God, and no new prophets will come after him.

He responded to a question about the ICL opening its doors in this moment of change in U.S. government administration and how that might impact feelings of safety.

"We are living in tumultuous times, so there is a certain level of bravery that is required so I want to commend ICL for taking this amazing step," he said. A Bay Area native, Chishty recalled going back to his Islamic school right after 9/11 and encountering vandalism and threats.

"It is definitely a time that can be a little uncertain and scary. My wife wears hijab and so it can be scary going out for a walk at night. So we appreciate the support of the Police Department and others to kind of help us from a communal aspect and safety aspect."

Chishty pointed to an example from Islamic belief: When the Prophet Muhammed was given revelation by the Angel Gabriel, he went to his wife and said he was scared and didn't know what to do. The first thing his wife did was take him to her cousin, who was a Christian priest.

"And so I think it's beautiful today to reflect on that because one of the first things that Muslims, or the Prophet Muhammed did, was seek out interfaith support. And so we're trying to do the same thing today."

Reem Hoff closed the panel with a listing of the numerous activities ICL is involved in.

"This is just the beginning," she said. "We moved in here over the summer. We're hoping to just start where we're at and grow from here. Our goal is to be involved in this community and try to contribute through our prophetic lessons and to just do as much good for the community where we live."

Before the audience and ICL members made their way outside to a tent full of tables laden with food representing the diversity of the Islamic world, Hoff was called back to answer a last question about wearing the hijab. She said the topic has even come up recently in her Muslim women's group.

"I've gone through that journey myself, so with all honesty, I've only put on the hijab about six months ago." The journey for her was about learning, not about being told what to do without reason.

She pointed out that it's common in most religions to practice modesty.

"Our biggest role model as women is the Virgin Mary. If you go to a Catholic or Christian church, and you see a figure of her, she's always covered. So for me it's like, you want to be the best version of yourself and be as close to God, our creator as you can. I will do what pleases my Lord, not what pleases me. And so, in a way, that's how I came to accept the idea."

But it's a personal choice, she said.

"Our Qu'ran says in faith nothing should be, what's the word? 'Forced.' Faith is something that has to come from within, from you seeking it."



The Islamic Center of Livermore held its first open house on Feb. 1. The converted church welcomed community members with food and education about the Muslim faith and practices. *[See photo gallery at independentnews.com/multimedia]* (Photo — Leah Silveira)

RACING

(Continued from front page)

obstacles facing the horse racing industry. While this marks a difficult and challenging moment for the Northern California live racing community, CARF will continue to support its satellite wagering members and explore all possible avenues to support the California Horse Racing industry." Satellite wagering, or off-track betting, takes place at various locations that don't have a track on site. Bets are placed on televised races, and while some of the money goes to the racing team, off-track betting pays less than bets made at the track.

The announcement was the final move in the beleaguered recent history of live horseracing at the Pleasanton Fairgrounds. Last March, the California Horse Racing Board (CHRB), the state government agency that regulates horse racing in the state, announced that the remainder of the 2024 Northern California horse racing season had been moved from Golden Gate Fields in Berkeley to the Pleasanton fairgrounds, bringing with it a contingent of workers and customers to the Tri-Valley.

The venture ended abruptly on Dec. 18. The events never earned a profit, and that contributed to the decision to close Golden Gate Racing at the fairgrounds after just a few months.

From the start, Golden Gate Racing at Pleasanton was fraught with controversy. Over just six months beginning in June, 13 horses died at the Pleasanton racetrack, the most recent on Dec. 25. Four died in October alone, and seven of the deaths overall were related to racing. The other six were classified "non-musculoskeletal" deaths, which covers any cause of death outside of racing.

On Jan. 30, CARF's Executive Director Larry Swartzlander announced he was resigning from the position he has held since 2016. Several calls to Swartzlander were not returned at press time.

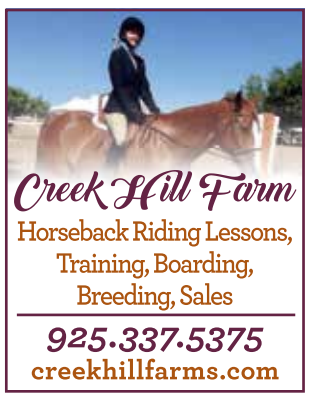
In addition, Pleasanton Fairgrounds CEO Jerome Hoban resigned from his board position at CARF but remains CEO of the Alameda County Fairgrounds. No reason was given for his departure from CARF, but in a press release on Jan. 31, Hoban said, "It's a sad and difficult decision to end racing, stables, and training. The Alameda County Fair did everything in our power to promote and preserve horse racing at the Fairgrounds, but economic and licensing issues made it impossible."

With the end of racing the agreement to stable nearly 500 horses at the fairground is scheduled to terminate on March 25. As of now, there is no word as to where those horses will go, and the fairgrounds said it had no additional information at this time. Ultimately, the decision may rest on the owners of the horses.

The Alameda County Fairgrounds is one of five fairs in the Northern California racing circuit that hosted live horse racing in the summers and more recently year-round. The other sites include Ferndale, Fresno and Sacramento. CARF does not organize the races at the Sonoma County Fairgrounds in Santa Rosa, nor at three tracks in Southern California. It is unclear if those operations will be affected by the closure of four tracks in Northern California.

While fairgrounds in the state are free to explore new summer racing options, the state racing board has not yet received any interest.

"At this time, no racing organization/racetrack in Northern California has applied for dates to run a meet in 2025," said Mike Marten, spokesperson for CHRB. "We require a license application 90 days before the start of any meet. Whether anyone will apply is unknown at this time."


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Ophthalmologist Provides Free Care Both at Home and Abroad

By Christina Cavallaro

Valley EyeCare Center Medical Associates, which has been caring for patients in the Tri-Valley since 1975, is celebrating 50 years of service this year.

Ophthalmologist Michael Gagnon and his wife Lori, who have owned Valley EyeCare for a decade, see patients at their two locations in Pleasanton and Livermore. Together with a team of doctors and staff, they provide everything from vision exams and glasses-fitting to cataract surgeries and corneal transplants.

Since 2023 they have also been dedicated to offering those services to young people whose families may be facing financial hardship, part of a program through the Pleasanton Unified School District called "See to Succeed."

Those efforts have now expanded both at home to the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District, and abroad, where Gagnon has traveled on mission trips to perform eye surgery in Guatemala and American Samoa.

Lori Gagnon, CEO of the business she operates with her husband, said the program that started small in the elementary school their own children attended in Pleasanton where they live.

"So we're now seeing students from both school districts. Which is fabulous. Our goal was to serve both. And we've been able to get there, which is awesome," she said. "We are an affluent area but there are a lot of people that are not, for various reasons. So it's nice to make sure that those kids are still able to succeed and see."



Dr. Michael Gagnon, center, with assistants and a patient in Guatemala before beginning cataract surgery. (Photo courtesy of Valley EyeCare)

The Gagnons know some of the school principals and have had the chance to hear first-hand what an impact the program has made. "They'll tell us, 'Oh, we were having some issues (with a student) and those glasses made a huge difference.' I mean, imagine going to school and not being able to see. You're going to act out or just struggle, right? It's hard."

Gagnon said that the whole team, from opticians and technicians to front office staff, gets excited to offer their assistance to the program.

"It's nice to be able to help our local community. And everyone wants to do that right? I mean deep down," she said.

That pull to help is in fact what led Michael Gagnon to extend his humanitarian work into Guatemala and American Samoa.

"I've always wanted to do some mission cataract work. But you know, with family and kids and everything I didn't really have the opportunity," he said. A couple years ago while taking a humanitarian mission cataract course at Stanford University, Gagnon was invited by a professor there to join a team headed to Guatemala as part of the organization Seeing Again Guatemala. Sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Helena, Montana, and the Rotary Clubs of Los Gatos and Santa Cruz, the organization has sent a group of medical and surgical volunteers every six months since 1966 to provide vision care to the town of Santo Tómas la Unión and surrounding villages in the country's southwestern Suchitepéquez Department.

Gagnon embarked on his first mission to Santo Tómas la Unión in May 2024. "It's a small town. Basically, we're operating out of an old convent." The Clinica Maxeña is the Guatemalan Mission site for the Diocese of Helena and out of which Gagnon's team of 10 serves the Indigenous population. The teams include four ophthalmologists, nurses, scrub technicians and translators of K'iche', the local Mayan language.

"And these are different circumstances," Gagnon said. "I mean, you're sitting there with a generator, a little different facilities than we're used to operating in."

The group arrived in Guatemala on May 16, 2024, with their duffel bags, unpacked everything and set up the operating room and clinic. The group of four surgeons Gagnon was part of performed approximately 80 cataract surgeries over five days and saw more than 300 patients. In their practices in the U.S., most of the doctors would only do an average of five or six surgeries per week.

"Basically, these are folks that are blind," Gagnon said, describing a photo of one of his patients. "I think she was in her early 40s and bilaterally blind in both eyes. So we take the cataract out, and the photo captures the look on her face when she sees her husband and kids for the first time in years. I mean, it's awesome."

In July 2024, he organized his own way to volunteer in American Samoa, and that November, he returned to Guatemala with a different organization, Hospital de la Familia.

He plans to return to Guatemala in August. "Honestly, it's been life changing, more for me than for them just to be able to go there, to bring what I do and provide that service to them. It's revitalizing."

"The thing to remember, especially in Guatemala, when someone is blind in both eyes in their 30s and 40s, they can't have a job. Someone actually has to stay home with them. So when you give them back their vision with cataract surgery, that means one more person can actually go back out and make a living for the family."

Livermore Teen Will Receive Eagle Award

Jack Orthmann, a member of Troop 900 and the son of Jeff and Anne Orthmann of Livermore, will receive his Eagle award at a court of honor on Saturday, Feb. 8.

Eagle is the highest rank in the Scouts BSA program.

To achieve the rank of Eagle, a Scout must earn at least 21 merit badges and complete a community service project. For his Eagle project, Orthmann planned and led the milling and construction of three raised redwood garden boxes for the native plant garden at Sycamore Grove Park in Livermore, including creating a native soil mix and planting native plants.



Jack Orthmann (Photo courtesy of Anne Orthmann)

A senior at Livermore High School, Orthmann has earned 40 merit badges and will receive his bronze, gold and silver Eagle Palms for earning more than 15 additional merit badges.

Orthmann was also awarded the National Medal for Outdoor Achievement, the highest recognition a Scout, Venturer, or Sea Scout can earn "for exemplary achievement, experience, and skill in multiple areas of outdoor endeavor," according to the recently renamed Scouting America program. Fewer than 350 Scouts nationwide have received the medal since the award was created in 2010.

Troop 900 is sponsored by sponsored by Pleasanton American Legion Post 237. Orthmann's father, Jeff, is scoutmaster.

Pleasanton Art League To Hold Youth Contest

The Pleasanton Art League (PAL) will accept entries for its fourth annual showcase of paintings by area middle and high school students, "PAL's Pals 2025," from Friday, Feb. 14, through Friday, March 7.

Only 70 entries will be accepted. Only one entry per student.

PAL will hold a reception and awards ceremony for the student artists and their parents at the Museum on Main, 603 Main St., Pleasanton, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., on Saturday, March 22. California artist Paul Kratter will judge the entries.

The artwork will be on display at the museum from March 22-29. For complete guidelines, go to pal-art.com.

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TRI-VALLEY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Ongoing Mondays
SING WITH THE BOADWAY CHORUS
Join a no-audition chorus on Mondays at 7 p.m. located at the Asbury United Methodist Church at 4743 East Ave. Rehearsals began the week of Jan. 13, but there is still an opportunity to join. In this unique session, songs from previous favorites will be sung. Come to find out if your favorite song will be included! New voices are welcome. Visit the East Bay Musical Society website at www.eastbaymusicals.org/sing-with-us for more information.

Friday, Feb. 7
AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE
The City of Dublin will host an American Red Cross Blood Drive on Feb. 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., in the Bray Community Room at the Dublin Civic Center (100 Civic Plaza). There is a critical need for blood donors. Every donation collected can save up to three lives! To make a donation, visit RedCrossBlood.org, and use the sponsor code, "DublinCommunity," or zip code 94568, to find Dublin's blood drive. You may also call 800-733-2767 to register. The City of Dublin hosts regular blood drives at the Dublin Civic Center on the first Friday in February, April, June, October, and December.

Saturday, Feb. 8
TRI-VALLEY INDIVISIBLE MEETING
Indivisible is a national organization whose goal is to protect democracy and the rights of ordinary people. A Tri-Valley Indivisible chapter has recently been formed. A meeting will take place on Feb. 8 at 1:30 p.m. at the Pleasanton Library. Respectful, open discussion and non-violent, active participation on relevant issues will be encouraged.

Saturday, Feb. 8
PIANIST DANIEL GLOVER PERFORMS THE MUSIC OF SPAIN
Experience a special musical event when concert pianist Daniel Glover performs the music of Spanish composers in his program "Spain's Golden Age of Nationalism" to benefit the Valley Concert Chorale. Mr. Glover's programs are always entertaining and educational as he shares the history and analysis of each piece he performs. On Feb. 8 at 7:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 2020 Fifth St., Livermore. Tickets are $30. Children and high school and college students are free. Advance tickets may be purchased at www.valleyconcertchorale.org., or call 925-866-4003 for more information. Proceeds from the performance will benefit the Valley Concert Chorale.

Saturday, February 8
EUCLID QUARTET
Del Valle Fine Arts welcomes back the Euclid Quartet on Saturday February 8 at 7:30 pm in the Bankhead Theater. One of the most highly regarded reputations of any chamber ensemble of its generation, the multinational mix of violinists Jameson Cooper and Aviva Hakanoglu, violist Luis Enrique Vargas, and cellist Justin Goldsmith is celebrating their 27th season. Euclid Quartet has earned many notable awards, most recently a top prize at the Osaka International Chamber Music Competition. Their concert will include Schubert's much-loved "Death and the Maiden" quartet, works by Haydn and Mendelssohn, and a contemporary riff on Haydn's quartet by Caroline Shaw, an award-winning American composer. Complimentary after-concert reception. Youth are always FREE. Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St, Livermore. Tickets at the box office, 925-373-6800 and website www.livermorearts.org/events/euclid-string-quartet

Saturday, Feb. 8
ELKS LODGE VALENTINE'S DINNER AND DANCE
A Valentine's dinner and dance (w/live music) will be held at the Larkspur Event Center located in the Livermore Pleasanton ELKS Lodge will be held on Feb. 8. Come for an evening of great dinner, live music, lots of raffle prizes plus dancing. A no-host bar will open at 5 p.m., prime rib dinner served at 6 p.m., and dancing from 7 to 9 p.m. Pre-pay by Feb. 4 for $50 (pre-sale) or $60 at the door (if space is still available). Contact the ELKS Lodge at 925-455-8829 or secretary2117@comcast.net. Located at 940 Larkspur Drive, in Livermore. All proceeds support the ELKS Lodge Community Programs

Saturday, Feb. 8
MARDIS GRAS THEMED BINGO
St. Michael's Golden Friends and Italian Catholic Federation Br. 285 will be holding a benefit fundraiser on Feb. 8 at St. Michael's Church Hall, 326 Maple St. in Livermore. Doors open at 10 a.m., bingo starts at 10:30. $15 per bingo card and light lunch / $10 for additional cards / $5 TK-8th grade. RSVP by Feb. 4 at noon to Suzanne at suzibg@sbcglobal.net or Virginia at virginia1153@comcast.net.

Monday, Feb. 10
GATHERING AND VERIFYING YOUR FAMILY'S ORAL HISTORY
Livermore-Amador Genealogical Society presents Sara Cochran, who will define what oral history is and talk about strategies to interview your family; then, go through the process of verifying a family story. At Congregation Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court, Pleasanton, on Feb. 10 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. No charge — visitors welcome. Attend in person or via Zoom. For additional information, contact Tom Mathews, program chair, at program@L-AGS.org.

Tuesday, Feb. 11
PROFITABLE FOOD BUSINESS IDEAS AND TRENDS; FUNDAMENTAL FETA II-1 WEBINAR
East Bay SBDC and the Alameda County Community Development Agency offer a free 10-part series on "Food Business Entrepreneurship" for participants interested in launching and growing food businesses in Alameda County. You will learn the basics to start and grow your own food business, catering, and so much more. Each participant only needs to register once for the first session, and you can participate in this 10-part training series. From 6 to 7 p.m. See dublin.ca.gov for more info.

Thursday, Feb. 13
ALL ABOUT CITRUS TREES; FROM SELECTION TO HARVEST
The Livermore Amador Valley Garden Club will hold a meeting discussing the growing and care for citrus trees; a brief overview of the varieties and benefits of growing edible, fragrance and ornamental varieties. On Feb. 13, 6 to 8 p.m., at Crosswinds Church, 1660 Freisman Rd., Livermore, at the red Farm Theater Building.

Sunday, Feb. 16
LIVERMORE JAZZ SOCIETY HOUSE CONCERT
The Harvey Wainapel Quartet will present a mix of original jazz compositions, creatively re-arranged standard tunes, tunes they believe SHOULD be standards, plus some Brazilian spice on Feb. 16, from 2 to 4 p.m. The quartet features Adam Shulman (piano), Doug Miller (bass), Bryan Bowman (drums), and Harvey Wainapel (woodwinds). To request a seat, email info@livermorejazzsociety.org, or go to www.livermorejazzsociety.org. If seats are available, you will receive the concert address by email. Advance notice is highly recommended. For Livestream info, refer to the website 'Events' page. The 'suggested donation' is $20 per person.

Sunday, Feb. 23
ECKANKAR LIGHT AND SOUND SERVICE
Open your hearts to love with gratitude at a free Eckankar Light and Sound Service on Feb. 23, from 11 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. At the Ridgeview Commons Apartments cafeteria, 5200 Case Ave., Pleasanton. "Gratitude is the secret of love."

ONGOING VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
QUEST SCIENCE CENTER
Quest's vision is to connect everyone to the value of science. Volunteers are needed to facilitate science activities at community events. For more information or to volunteer, contact the Director of Education, Dan, at dgolub@quest-science.org.

ONGOING EVENTS
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.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH
The Unitarian Universalist Church is welcoming to all. Join in on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. for music, singing, and conversation. The church is located at 1893 North Vasco Rd. in Livermore. For more information, visit uucil.org.

DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION (DAR) CHAPTER MEETING
The local Josefa Higuera Livermore Chapter meets on the first Saturday of the month from Sept. to May. The DAR is a non-profit, non-political volunteer women's service organization dedicated to promoting patriotism, preserving American history, and securing America's future through better education for children. For more information, visit jhl.californiadar.org or email jane.everett@sbcglobal.net.

ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Asbury United Methodist Church invites the community to join for worship at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings. This community practices loving neighbors in daily life. The church has Sunday School and nursery care, and worship is followed by a fellowship time. The church is located at 4743 East Ave., in Livermore. For more information, visit asburylive.org.

WINGS — WOMEN IN GOD'S SPIRIT
WINGS is a faith enrichment group of multi-generational Catholic women who meet October thru May on Thursday mornings at 9:30 a.m. at St. Charles Borromeo, 1315 Lomitas Ave., Livermore. Attendees can enjoy a variety of speaker presentations and topics, small group discussion, fellowship and more. All are welcome! See www.stcharleslivermore.org/wings for more information.

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

Private School Will Open New Campus in Dublin

BASIS Independent Schools, which operates a network of private K-12 schools, will open a school in Dublin in the fall of 2026.

BASIS Independent Dublin will lease the three-story, 81,000-square-foot Corrie Center, located at 7950 Dublin Blvd.

Built in 1979, the center was renovated in 2021 and is currently undergoing additional remodeling before the school's opening.

The school will be BASIS Independent's third in the Bay Area and initially include grades six through high school.

"Our BASIS Independent campuses in Silicon Valley and Fremont have set a high bar for academic excellence, consistently preparing students to excel in competitive university programs and achieve their fullest potential," said BASIS Vice President Toby Walker. "We are excited to expand our reach into the Dublin community, where families value an exceptional, well-rounded education that equips students for success in a rapidly changing world."

BASIS said the Dublin campus would include science labs, gymnasium, music and art classrooms, theater, and a 34,000-square-foot outdoor sports field behind the former business center.

The school expects to open with about 35 faculty and staff, expanding to about 60 over the next five years.

The BASIS Independent program is known for a rigorous liberal arts and sciences curriculum, with 25% of its Bay Area students qualifying as National Merit Scholarship semifinalists. According to the company, 23% of its 2024 graduates nationwide were accepted at top 10 universities and 56% were admitted to top 25 universities, based on U.S. News & World Report rankings.

BASIS currently operates schools in California, New York, Virginia, and Washington.

BASIS Independent Dublin will hold a virtual information session for parents and students on Saturday, Feb. 22. To register for the online session, go to dublin.basisindependent.com.

The school will begin enrolling students in August 2025 for the 2026-2027 school year.

Livermore Library Will Host A Summer Teen Academy

Livermore Public Library will host a three-week Livermore Teen Academy this summer for high school students that includes skills workshops, including personal finance and how to apply for jobs, and a short internship with a city department.

The workshops will also include information about municipal government and how to become an informed member of the community.

The program will run from 9 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday, from June 2 to June 20, and is open to Livermore residents who will be attending high school next fall.

Applicants must be at least 16 years old by the start of the program on June 2.

The workshops will be held at the Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore Ave., while participants will report to their assigned sites on internship days.

Those accepted into the program will earn $16.50 an hour during their internships, which will be capped at 24 hours in total.

To apply, go to library.livermoreca.gov and click on "Teens." Applications are due by Thursday, Feb. 29.

Selected applicants will then take part in an interview process. Participants from previous years are not eligible.

For more information, contact Nathan Brumley at 925-373-5572 or njbrumley@livermoreca.gov.

Locanda Wine Bar Named Wine Community Member of the Year

The Livermore Valley Wine Community (LVWC) has named the Locanda Wine Bar in Livermore as its member of the year.

"The entire team at Locanda Wine Bar has been an invaluable partner and incredible supporter of wineries in the Livermore Valley," said Brandi Lombardi, executive director of the nonprofit marketing organization. "We are very grateful for their collaboration and commitment to LVWC."

The Locanda Wine Bar opened at 2293 First St. in 2021. Other Locanda restaurant locations include Pleasanton, Brentwood, Campbell, LaFayette, and Danville.

LVWC also installed its 2025-2026 board of directors last week.

Gina Molinaro-Cardera, with the Garré Vineyard & Winery, will serve as president, with Karl Wente of Wente Vineyards as vice president, Heather McGrail of McGrail Vineyards and Winery as treasurer, and Darcie Kent of Darcie Kent Estate Winery as secretary.

Ian O'Leary of Spirited Packaging, and Brandon Wood of The Cheese Parlor were named affiliate directors, while Wai-Kin Wong of HLW Vineyard was named grower director.

Other board members include Beth Murray Mirassou from The Steven Kent Winery, Bob Pruett of Pruett Estate Farms, Heidi Rasmussen of Concannon Vineyard, Robin Replogle or Fenestra Winery, Harrison Wood of Wood Family Vineyards, and Steve Ziganti of 3 Steves Winery.

Tri-Valley Cultural Jews to Host Secular Purim Party and Potluck

Tri-Valley Cultural Jews will host a secular Purim party and potluck lunch in Livermore from 10:30 a.m. to noon on Sunday, March 16.

Purim is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the deliverance of the Jewish people from a Persian plot to annihilate them in the 4th century B.C.E.

The holiday is traditionally marked by revelry, costumes and the reading of the Book of Ester.

Tri-Valley Cultural Jews said the Purim party would be a "reimagined celebration that emphasizes fun, inclusivity and connection, with no religious requirements or rituals." Costumes based on characters in the Book of Ester are encouraged.

There will also be a secular retelling of the Megillah and performances by the group's teen Jewish Culture School students.

Tri-Valley Jews is a secular group that stresses Jewish culture, history and traditions.

For more information, including the location of the Purim celebration, email culturaljews@gmail.com or call 925-399-8029. The celebration is free to members, with a suggested $15 donation for non-members.

Library Art Show to Explore Futuristic Themes in Livermore Reads Selection

The Livermore Art Association (LAA) will sponsor an art show in March in conjunction with the Livermore Public Library's "Livermore Reads Together" program.

This year, the library selected "The Wild Robot" by Peter Brown for the community reading program and the theme for LAA's "The Future is Now" juried art show is the "coexistence of nature and technology, robotics and artificial intelligence, innovation and art."

LAA said it wanted to encourage artists to "explore how technology and creativity intersect, reflecting on the relationship between human innovation and artistic expression."

The novel, the first in a trilogy, tells the story of Roz, a robot that washes ashore on an uninhabited island and is accidentally activated by the local wildlife. As Roz learns how to survive, she discovers friendship, compassion, and the meaning of life.

"The Wild Robot" was the first middle-grade book chosen for the library's reading program.

The art show is open to all ages. There is a $15 per entry cost, and artists can submit up to five entries each. The deadline to submit pieces is Saturday, Feb. 26.

There will be a reception at the Civic Center Library from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 8, when the winners will be announced. Best of Show will receive $100, with merit awards of $50.

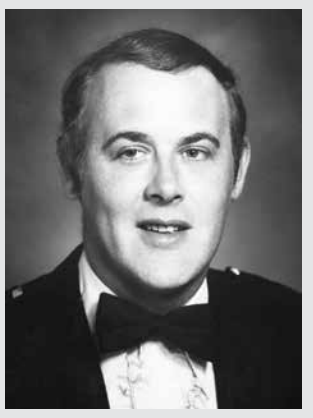
The artwork will be on display in the Civic Center Library gallery from March 1 through March 30.

For more information, go to livermoreartassociation.org.

OBITUARIES

IN LOVING MEMORY

Ian Edwards Dow
Dec. 3, 1943 — Jan. 12, 2025



Ian Edwards Dow passed away peacefully on Jan. 12, 2025, surrounded by his loving family.

Ian was born into a working-class family on Dec. 3, 1943, in Glasgow, Scotland. Looking for adventure in his twenties, he immigrated to the United States of America, where he found himself drafted into the U.S. Army despite his lack of citizenship at the time. After his service, he met the love of his life, Jeannette Lee, in San Francisco. They married in 1977, the same year he became the youngest Chieftain in the history of the Caledonian Club of San Francisco. They moved to Pleasanton in 1984, where they raised four sons. He devoted most of his life to his family, spending his free time ferrying his four sons to baseball and soccer practices and attending various Boy Scout outings. Every Labor Day weekend you could find him manning the Information Booth at the Scottish Highland Gathering & Games with his family. In recent years, that family had grown with the addition of three daughters-in-law and five grandsons.

Ian was known for his passion for Scottish culture and music, a passion that he shared with all who were near. His last day was spent with loved ones, enjoying a single malt and listening to songs from his homeland. He will be sorely missed by all who were lucky enough to have known him. The Dow family expresses deep gratitude for the flowers, cards and support they received from the community during these hard times.

August Joseph Sirianni Sr.
Aug. 27, 1937 — Jan. 3, 2025



On Jan. 3, 2025, the world lost a beloved husband, father and grandfather, August Joseph Sirianni Sr., after a short illness. August "Gus" Sirianni, age 87, was born Aug. 27, 1937, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Nicholas and Gladys Sirianni.

He grew up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the eldest of seven children, where he lived with his parents and six siblings, Nicholas "Nick" Jr., Robert "Bobby", William "Billy", twins Dianne and Daniel "Danny", and sister, "Debbie". All of his siblings are deceased except for Nick Jr. and Dianne, who both reside in Pennsylvania.

After graduating from Youngwood High school, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy in Bainbridge, Maryland, where he received his naval training. He specialized in electronics and technical communications, which prepared him for his lifelong career in trucking and transportation. August enlisted for two tours with the navy, from 1955-1961, where he was stationed overseas in Japan, and later on the aircraft carrier the USS Midway, in Alameda, California.

In Alameda, he met the love of his life, Mary C. Tapia, and they were married in 1961 in Reno, Nevada. They eventually moved to Pennsylvania where three of their oldest children, August Jr., Eileen and David were born. Later they moved to Ohio, where their two other children, Kathleen and Stephen were born.

After moving back to the Bay Area in 1970, August and his family settled in the Tri-Valley area, mostly residing in Pleasanton and San Ramon, California. August continued his career working for various transportation companies, including Consolidated Freightways and System 99. He earned many awards and was often recognized for his leadership and expertise. Eventually, August used his skills and knowledge in the trucking industry and branched out as an owner-operator. In 1985, he started his own trucking company where he eventually incorporated operating G&S Transportation out of San Ramon, California. He employed over fifty drivers and employees. August was integral in a unique delivery design for Toyota Motor Distributors, where he began an unattended nighttime delivery service system. He retired his company in 2002.

August was a self-taught golfer who poured his heart and mind into learning everything about the game. He had a great swing and played the game to a two handicap. During the years of his business, he combined his two passions, work and golf, and he sponsored a yearly golf-tournament, "The Noel Breault Invitational" where players from all over the area would enjoy a nice round of golf, some prizes and a wonderful day. He donated proceeds from his tournament to his wife Mary's sorority, which contributed to cancer research and other philanthropic endeavors.

August will be remembered as a loving husband, father and grandfather. He will be greatly missed.

August is survived by his wife Mary Sirianni; son A.J Sirianni Jr., wife Judy; daughter Eileen Voelker, husband, Mark Voelker; son Dave Sirianni; daughter Kathy Sirianni; son Steve Sirianni; sixteen grandchildren (predeceased by one granddaughter); many nieces and nephews and two siblings.

Service and burial will be private.

Celebration of Life

Vyann Naomi Stager
July 10, 1941 — Jan. 28, 2025



After a long and arduous battle with Lewy Body Dementia and Parkinson's, Vyann Naomi Stager passed away Jan. 28, 2025. Vyann was born in Denver, Colorado, 20 minutes after her twin sister, Dyann, on July 10, 1941. She grew up in Colorado until the age of 12 when her family moved to the San Francisco Presidio for her father to serve as a doctor in the military. They finally settled in Sunnyvale, and she attended Fremont High School, graduating in 1959, and then San Jose State where Vy earned her teaching credential in Early Childhood Education. She taught in Dublin at Cronin and Frederiksen for 35 years and touched the lives of thousands of students. She gave her heart and soul to her students, and she was an outstanding teacher. When she was still at SJSU, she met and married Jack Evans and had her only child, Patricia. Vy and Jack later divorced and Vy met Frank Stager at Cronin Elementary where he was her principal. They married in 1984 and were the loves of each other's lives. Frank passed away in 1998 and Vy retired the same year. She worked for after school programs for DUSD until her first grandchild, Colin, arrived. She babysat Colin, and later Caroline, and she loved them dearly. She proudly helped in their classrooms and attended class events. Vy loved her grandchildren and was extremely proud of them and her role as their Grammy. Vy loved animals and thoroughly enjoyed living on their ranch in the Tassajara Valley where she raised a pig as a fundraiser for Cronin, and also raised calves, sheep, goats and chickens. She enjoyed watching her daughter ride horses. Ultimately, Vy and Frank moved to Dublin and purchased a home in Roseburg, Oregon for retirement. She sold the home after losing Frank. Vy was an articulate, creative, hardworking, and compassionate person who didn't fully realize the difference she made in the lives of her students, her daughter and her grandchildren. She had a witty sense of humor and contagious laugh and cared about others. She would do anything to help anyone. She is survived by her daughter, Patricia, son-in-law, Mark, grandchildren, Colin and Caroline, her twin sister, Dyann Munro and nephews Donald and David and their families. She is preceded in death by husband, Frank Stager, parents Dr. William and Vivian Gilmore and two brothers.

Vy is in Frank's arms once more.

A celebration of life will be held 10 a.m. in Dublin at Old St. Raymond's Church, on Friday, Feb. 7, 2025, a place Vy took her third-grade students when studying Dublin history. Burial will be at Memory Gardens in Livermore at 1 p.m. and a reception will follow at Stager Gym Community Room in Dublin from 3 p.m. to 5.p.m. Please wear red, my mom's favorite color.

Granada Boys Soccer Team Takes Early Lead and Beats Dublin to Remain Undefeated in Home Games

By Phil Jensen

The Granada High School boys soccer team continued its home game winning streak with a 4-1 victory over Dublin on Jan. 30.

Entering this week, Granada was 8-0 at home this season (12-4-1 overall) and 4-2-1 in the East Bay Athletic League. The Matadors were tied for third in the EBAL with one week left in the regular season.

"I'm really happy with the team," said Granada coach Rob Hansen. "We've got a well-balanced group. … We have multiple groups of players that play multiple positions."

Hansen mixes his starting lineup a lot, and his team has been playing particularly well recently. Entering this week, the Matadors are 3-1-1 in their last five games, all against EBAL opponents.

Granada also has scored 22 goals in its seven league games entering this week. On Jan. 30, Granada bolted out to a 2-0 lead in the first 24 minutes of the 80-minute game against Dublin.

Just three minutes, 20 seconds into the game, Granada's Christopher Pratte controlled a loose ball in front of the Dublin goal and sent the second shot of the game into the net. At the 23:19 mark, Christian Franco produced the eventual game-winning goal on an assist from Amir Anwary.

Dublin cut the lead in half at the 28:31 mark on its second shot of the game. Thomas Crowder fired a shot that bounced off the crossbar toward teammate Damon Petithomme, who sent a header into the net.

Anwary, an all-EBAL second-team selection last season as a junior, answered less than three minutes later with a breakaway goal down the left side of the field. The final goal of the game was in the second half at the 50:44 mark when Jetshuoa Torres scored on a pass from Anwary.

"The good thing is the goals have been scored across the board," said Hansen about his team's scoring balance. "That's what you want, so then you get different people rising up."

Granada also beat San Ramon Valley 4-1 on Jan. 28 and played De La Salle on Feb. 4 after this article's deadline. The Matadors host Livermore on Feb. 6 at 6:30 p.m.

Dublin, which received six saves from goalkeeper Phoenix Purcell against Granada, defeated Kennedy-Fremont 6-3 on Feb. 1 to enter this week with a 5-6-5 overall record and a 2-5 EBAL mark. The Gaels played San Ramon Valley on Feb. 4 and have road matchups against Dougherty Valley on Feb. 6 (6:30 p.m.) and a nonleague match against Freedom-Oakley on Feb. 8 (5 p.m.).



A Granada goal goes into the net during the Jan. 30 home game against visiting Dublin. Granada won 4-1 and remains undefeated in home games. [*See photo gallery at independentnews.com/multimedia*] (Photo — Leah Silveira)



Granada's Amir Anwary chases after Dublin's Tyler Fok in the Jan. 30 home game. Anwary scored one goal and had two assists during the game. [*See photo gallery at independentnews.com/multimedia*] (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)

Dublin Girls Basketball Squad Continues Great Season with Win over Granada High

By Phil Jensen

The Dublin High School girls basketball team had a very specific game plan against host Granada on Jan. 31.

"We had to move that ball around and when we found gaps, attack those gaps and finish at the rim," said Dublin coach Jose Alvarez.

The Gaels closed out the first quarter with a 12-2 run and maintained their lead until the end. They produced 29 field goals in the game and won 69-42.

The game was the Gaels' 17th win this season. The next day, Dublin beat Liberty-Brentwood 65-34, earning its most wins since the 2017-'18 season. The Gaels entered this week with an 18-4 overall record and a 5-2 East Bay Athletic League mark.

A basket by Granada's Kaitlyn Brongiel gave the Matadors an 11-10 advantage with 1 minute, 36 seconds remaining in the first quarter. But two free throws by Dublin sophomore Makaela Beltran gave the Gaels the lead for good 23 seconds later, starting the 12-2 run, which ended with another basket by Beltran. The transfer from Moreau Catholic-Hayward, who also had a knee injury this season and didn't play until Jan. 24, scored all 14 of her points in the first half and also had five rebounds, four assists and three steals in the game.

The Gaels' lead grew to 38-19 by halftime, then in the second half, Dublin's Bhagya Gajula exploded offensively for 14 of her game-high 19 points. The senior had six field goals in the second half, including a pair of three-pointers, and she also grabbed a game-high seven rebounds in the game. She had nine of Dublin's 13 points in the third quarter, and the Gaels led 51-27 at the end of that period.

Aanya Pandia added eight points and six rebounds for the Gaels, who out-rebounded the Matadors 29-21 in the game. Addison Leomiti produced 12 points in the game, including a pair of three-pointers. Gaia Lembo had eight points and four assists in the win.

Brongiel led Granada in scoring (13 points) and rebounds (six) and also had a game-high five blocked shots. She achieved this despite battling the flu, said Granada coach Chris Hadden. Scarlett Massengale added eight points for Granada, which entered this week with a 10-15 overall record and 3-5 EBAL mark.



Dublin's Jessica Verdier jumps for a rebound in the Jan. 28 game at Granada High. [*See photo gallery at independentnews.com/multimedia*] (Photo — Doug Jorgensen)

On Feb. 1 against Liberty, Dublin had three players who scored in double figures: Zoya Nomani and Lembo (15 each) and Beltran (10). Lembo added a team-high eight rebounds and had five steals, as did Pandia.

Dublin is busy this week. It hosted San Ramon Valley on Feb. 4 after this article's deadline, then played Rodriguez-Fairfield the next night. The Gaels play at Dougherty Valley in its EBAL regular-season finale on Feb. 7 at 7:30 p.m., and host Kimball-Tracy on Feb. 8 at 3 p.m.

Granada, in contrast, has one game this week. It hosts Livermore on Feb. 6 at 7:30 p.m.



Granada High's Kayla Carroll charges toward the basket, while Dublin High's Makaela Beltran moves to defend it. The visiting Gaels won the game on Jan. 28 69-42, and entered this week with an 18-4 record, while the Matadors fell to a 10-15 record. [*See photo gallery at independentnews.com/multimedia*] (Photo — Leah Silveira)

LPC Accepting Applications for Fourth Annual President's Scholars Program

Las Positas College (LPC) is now accepting applications for its 2025 President's Scholars Program.

The program, now in its fourth year, provides students with benefits ranging from full tuition for up to two years and a $1,000 annual textbook stipend to complimentary parking permits and use of a new laptop computer.

In addition, students accepted into the program participate in community service and leadership activities on behalf of the college.

"We are delighted to once again offer this opportunity to 20 exceptional and highly motivated local high school students," said LPC President Dyrell Foster. "The President's Scholars Program reflects our commitment to fostering academic excellence, leadership, and service among students from diverse backgrounds. Our current cohort has shown tremendous promise and continues to represent this program and Las Positas College with pride."

Students accepted into the program will also receive personal letters of recommendation from Foster and be honored at the college's commencement ceremonies. They are also eligible to join the Las Positas Honors Transfer Program, which prepares students for transfer to a four-year institution while encouraging their social and intellectual growth.

The program is open to graduating high school seniors in the Livermore Valley, Dublin, Castro Valley, Pleasanton, San Ramon, Lammersville and Tracy school districts.

To be eligible, they must commit to enrolling at Las Positas College full-time for the Fall 2025 semester and pursuing an associate degree with the intention of transferring to a four-year college or university.

The deadline to apply is March 31.

To apply, or for more information, go to laspositascollege.edu or call 925-424-1001.

According to Niche.com, an online college research platform with profiles on every school and college in America, in 2024, LPC was the ranked the No. 2 best community college in California and the Bay Area and the No. 4 community college in the U.S.

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FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611700

The following person(s) doing business as: Conway Research Laboratory, 248 Trevarno Rd, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Adam Company, 248 Trevarno Rd, 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/: Adam Conway, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 9, 2025. Expires January 8, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6252. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611593

The following person(s) doing business as: Rainbow Auto Body Repair and Paint, 6421 Southfront Rd, Suite A, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Rainbow Mobile Autobody and Paint Inc, 6421 Southfront Rd, Suite A, Livermore, CA 94551. 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: 12/19/2019. Signature of Registrant/s/: Ruben Hernandez, President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 3, 2025. Expires January 2, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6253. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611583

The following person(s) doing business as: 3D Auto Body & Repair Shop, 1131 6th Ave, Oakland, CA 94606 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): 3D Auto Body & Repair Shop LLC, 600 William ST, Apt 147, Oakland, CAn 94612. 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: 1/3/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Engdawork Getu, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 3, 2025. Expires January 2, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6254. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611507

The following person(s) doing business as: Bhindi Jewelers, 5944 New Park Mall Road, Newark, CA 94560 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Bhindi Jewelers San Fran, Inc, 18508 Pioneer Blvd, Artesia, CA 90701. 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/: Dhanesh Bhindi, CFO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 30, 2025. Expires December 29, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6255. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 610959

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Black House Kitchen; 2. Ability Design House, 2930 Domingo Ave #1315, Berkeley, CA 94705 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): C. House Ventures LLC, 2930 Domingo Ave #1315, Berkeley, CA 94705. 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/: Chelsea House, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 2, 2025. Expires December 1, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6256. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611617

The following person(s) doing business as: Baithak, 4590 Dublin Blvd, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Rincon del Pino LLC, 4590 Dublin Blvd, 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/: Jatinder Singh Grewal, President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 6, 2025. Expires January 5, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6257. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611654

The following person(s) doing business as: The Premium Rx, 5409 Central Ave, Suite 19, Newark, CA 94560 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): LAAVI Pharmacy, A professional Corporation, 5409 Central Ave, Suite 19, Newark, CA 94560. 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/: Lien Thi Kim Truong, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 7, 2025. Expires January 6, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6258. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611651

The following person(s) doing business as: Victory Song Coaching, 2150 Portola Ave, Ste D, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Victoria Rashe, 2150 Portola Ave, Ste D, PMB 2028, 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/: Vicotria Rashe, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 7, 2025. Expires January 6, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6259. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611631

The following person(s) doing business as: Sparkle and Shine, 2602 Otis DR, Alameda, CA 94501 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Esperanza Mendez, 2602 Otis DR, Alameda, CA 94501. 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/: esperanza Mendez, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 6, 2025. Expires January 5, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6260. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611580

The following person(s) doing business as: Hela Crafty, 854 S I Street, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Helena Bireley, 854 S I Street, Livermore, CA 94550. 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/: Helena Bireley, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 3, 2025. Expires January 2, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6261. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611635

The following person(s) doing business as: Baldwin Motors, 10979 Crow Canyon Rd, Castro Valley, CA 94552 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Bobbye Baldwin Jr., 10979 Crow Canyon Rd, Castro Valley, CA 94552. 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/: Bobbye A. Baldwin Jr., Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 6, 2025. Expires January 5, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6262. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611697

The following person(s) doing business as: Morningside Builders, 10979 Crow Canyon Rd, Castro Valley, CA 94552 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Bobbye A. Baldwin Jr., 10979 Crow Canyon Rd, Castro Valley, CA 94552. 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/: Bobbye A. Baldwin Jr., Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 9, 2025. Expires January 8, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6263. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611691

The following person(s) doing business as: MG In Home Services, 1009 Murrieta Blvd Apt 47, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Mario A. Gomez Hernandez, 1009 Murrieta Blvd Apt 47, Livermore, CA 94550. 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: 1/1/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Mario A Gomez Hernandez, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 8, 2025. Expires January 7, 2064. The Independent, Legal No. 6264. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611504

The following person(s) doing business as: Retzlaff Vineyards, LLC, 1356 S. Livemrore Ave, Llvermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Rezlaff Vineyards, LLC, 1356 S. Livermore Ave, 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: 11/22/24. Signature of Registrant/s/: Aaron Taylor, Manager. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 27, 2024. Expires December 26, 2029. The Independent, Legal No. 6265. Published 16, 23, 30, February 6, 2025.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME ORIGINAL FILE NO. 604825

The person(s) listed below have abandoned the use of the following fictitious business name(s): Retzlaff Vineyards, 1356 S. Livermore, CA 94550 Registered by the following owner(s): RW Taylor 1356 S. Livermore Ave, Livermore CA 94550. The fictitious business name statement was filed on 3/14/24 in the County of Alameda. This business was conducted by an Individual. Signature of Registrants: /s/: Aaron Taylor, Executor. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 27, 2024. The Independent, Legal No. 6266 Published January 9, 16, 23, 30, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611728

The following person(s) doing business as: Juan Gonzalez Landscaping, 1540 Phlox Drive, Patterson, CA 95363 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Juan Gonzalez, PO Box 2007 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/: Juan Gonzalez, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 10, 2025. Expires January 9, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6268. Published 23, 30, February 6, 13, 2025.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME ORIGINAL FILE NO. 607159

The person(s) listed below have abandoned the use of the following fictitious business name(s): Mechanic King Auto Repair, 3687 Old Santa Rita Road, Unit 314, Pleasanton, CA 94588. Registered by the following owner(s): RJB Enterprises LLC, 3687 Old Santa Rita Road, Unit 314, Pleasanton, CA 94588. The fictitious business name statement was filed on 6/10/2024 in the County of Alameda. This business was conducted by a Limited Liability Company. Signature of Registrants: /s/: Raymond Haywood, Managing Member/President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 6, 2025. The Independent, Legal No. 6269 Published January 23, 30, Feburary 6, 13, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611903

The following person(s) doing business as: Agen In Place Wellness, 1048 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Deborah Chestnut, 1048 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA 94550. 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/: Deborah Chestnut, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 21, 2025. Expires January 20, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6270. Published January 30, February 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611936

The following person(s) doing business as: All Family Customs, 6733 Ebensburg LN, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Antonio Perez Jr., 6733 Ebensburg LN, 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: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Antonio Perez, Jr., Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 22, 2025. Expires January 21, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6271. Published January 30, February 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611909

The following person(s) doing business as: Pinecrest Environmental Consulting, 6425 Telegraph Avenue, Apt 8, Oakland, CA 94609 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Pinecrest Research Corporation, 6425 Telegraph Avenue, Apt 8, Oakland, CA 94609. 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: 8/2/2017. Signature of Registrant/s/: Christopher Divittorio, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 21, 2025. Expires January 20, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6272. Published January 30, February 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611849

The following person(s) doing business as: Devine Care Doula Services, 431 Thornally Dr, San Leandro, CA 94578 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Caroline Mugwe, 431 Thornally Dr, San Leandro, CA 94578; Agnes Kanjl, 42247 Rosewood Common, Fremont 94538; Damaris Kithusi, 3130 Park Blvd, Apt e, Oakland, CA 94610. 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: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Caroline Mugwe, Partner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 16, 2025. Expires January 15, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6273. Published January 30, February 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611722

The following person(s) doing business as: Aura Enterprise, 5050 Hacienda Dr, Apt 1121, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Deepali Kamdar, 5050 Hacienda Dr, Apt 1121, 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: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Deepali Kamdar, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 10, 2025. Expires January 9, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6274. Published January 30, February 6, 13, 20, 2025.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME ORIGINAL FILE NO. 581818

The person(s) listed below have abandoned the use of the following fictitious business name(s): Fremont Hyundai, 43690 Auto Mall Circle, Fremont, CA 94538. Registered by the following owner(s): DGDG 19, LLC, 911 Capitol Expressway Auto Mall, San Jose, CA 95136. The fictitious business name statement was filed on 8/24/2021 in the County of Alameda. This business was conducted by a Limited Liability Company. Signature of Registrants: /s/: Shaun Del Grande/ President/Memeber. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 27, 2024. The Independent, Legal No. 6275 Published January 30, Feburary 6, 13, 20, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612159

The following person(s) doing business as: Preferred Truck and Equipment, 6175 Southfront Road, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Pleasanton truck and Equipment Repairs, Inc., 3110 Bush Road, Pleasanton, CA 94566. 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: 7/1/2014. Signature of Registrant/s/: Gina M. Cardera, President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 30, 2025. Expires January 29, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6276. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612131

The following person(s) doing business as: Sew in Love, 5429 Brookdale Ave, Oakland, CA 94619 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Jennifer Collins, 5429 Brookdale Ave, Oakland, CA 94619. 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: 1/1/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jennifer Collins, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 30, 2025. Expires January 29, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6277. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612082

The following person(s) doing business as: Huneeus Law, 46 Rock Lane , Berkeley, CA 94708 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Alejandro Huneeus, 46 Rock Lane, Berkeley, CA 94708-1310. 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: 7/1/2024. Signature of Registrant/s/: Alejandro Huneeus, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 28, 2025. Expires January 27, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6278. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612101

The following person(s) doing business as: It'll Do, 2315 Central Ave, Suite 122, Alameda, CA 94501 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Shear Terror LLC, 2315 Central Ave, Suite 122, Alameda, CA 94501. 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: 1/14/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Zachary Snyder, Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 29, 2025. Expires January 28, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6279. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612085

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Air Mail Travel, Co.; 2. Air Mail Travel, 129 Lake Ave, Piedmont, CA 94611 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Air Mail Travel Co., LLC, 129 Lake Ave, Piedmont, CA 94611. This business is conducted by a Limitted 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/: Simone Anne Lang, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 28, 2025. Expires January 27, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6280. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611808

The following person(s) doing business as: MC & Associates Tax and Financial, 735 Anna Maria ST, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Melissa Cook, 735 Anna Maria ST., Livermore, CA 94550. 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: 1/11/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Melissa Cook, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 15, 2025. Expires January 14, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6281. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611824

The following person(s) doing business as: Shakthi Logistics, 7940 Creekside Drive, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Reboot Aqua Inc., Dublin, CA 94568. 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: 1/15/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Raghavendra Swamy Nagari, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 15, 2025. Expires January 14, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6282. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 612037

The following person(s) doing business as: Sierra Oak Counseling Inc., 4725 1st ST, Suite 266, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Sierra Oak Counseling Inc., 4725 1st ST, Suite 266, Pleasanton, CA 94566. 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: 1/6/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jennifer Green, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 27, 2025. Expires January 26, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6283. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611980

The following person(s) doing business as: Tamara the Lactation Consultant LLC, 556 S I Street, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Tamara the Lactation Consultant LLC, 556 S I 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: 1/13/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Tamara Thurston, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 24, 2025. Expires January 23, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6284. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 611746

The following person(s) doing business as: Dumpling Haus, 3442 Livermore Outlets Dr., Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Tea Heart Inc., Livermore, CA 94551. 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/: Fengyan Huang, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 13, 2025. Expires January 12, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6285. Published February 6, 13, 20, 27, 2025.

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Superior Court Judge Ursula Jones Dickson Selected As D.A., Promises to Rebuild the 'Decimated' Office

By Larry Altman

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors last week appointed Superior Court Judge Ursula Jones Dickson to take over as District Attorney, choosing her from a list of seven finalists for the position vacated with the November recall of Pamela Price.

A judge for the last 11 years, Jones Dickson previously worked in the district attorney's office as a prosecutor for 15 years.

"This is going to be a huge undertaking, and I don't know that anybody really understands how decimated and down this office is, and how that's running downhill to law enforcement and to victims and to victims' families," Jones Dickson told the board during her Jan. 21 public job interview. "It's going to take a little more than just knowing how to try a murder case or just knowing how to put together policy or just knowing how to create programs. We're going to have to sit down and get face to face with people."

During the voting process Jan. 28, Board President David Haubert, who represents most of the Tri-Valley, and Supervisors Elisa Marquez and Nate Miley voted for Jones Dickson. Supervisor Lena Tam voted for Annie Esposito, a former Alameda County prosecutor who serves as assistant district attorney in Contra Costa County. Supervisor Nikki Fortunato Bas chose Venus Johnson, a chief deputy attorney general with the California Department of Justice.

Haubert told The Independent that the board took selecting the next District Attorney very seriously.

"We spent many hours reviewing applications, interviewing candidates, listening to members of the community, deliberating, and making a final selection," Haubert said. "I chose Ursula Jones Dickson for several reasons. She is an experienced prosecutor, with deep ties and strong relationships with the current staff in the district attorney's office. She also has a great deal of experience in our court system, having been a judge for the past 10 years. Lastly, her temperament and leadership style is stellar in my opinion."

Jones Dixon told the board during her interview presentation that she would add Esposito to her executive team if given the position. It was not immediately clear if Esposito plans to take the job.

Jones Dixon replaces Price, a former civil rights and defense attorney who served less than two years following her election in November 2022. Campaigning as a criminal justice reformer against mass incarceration, Price received 53% of the vote to become the first Black woman to run the office.

Once on the job, Price followed through in her reforms, raising concerns when she dropped special circumstances allegations against some murder defendants and issued a nearly blanket policy against filing "enhancement" allegations, charges for gang activity, gun use and other crimes that can add decades to punishments.

The recall organizer, a citizens group called Save Alameda for Everyone (SAFE), accused Price of favoring criminals over victims and mounted a recall effort. In addition, Price created controversy when she reopened some police shooting cases, fired some veteran prosecutors, and saw others quit.

Price's term ended when nearly two-thirds of voters elected to recall her in November. She moved on in early December.

Under county rules, the Board of Supervisors was given the job of filling the seat until an election will be held in 2026. After receiving 15 applications, the board narrowed the field to seven finalists, including Jones Dickson, Esposito and Johnson; Alameda County prosecutors Elgin Lowe and Jimmie Wilson; Alameda City Attorney Yibin Shen; and LaTricia Louis, deputy county counsel in Alameda County.

SAFE endorsed both Jones Dickson and Esposito.

During her presentation, Jones Dickson introduced herself as a child of Carson, a Southern California city adjacent to Compton. She said she figured out how to do well in school to "get out of the hood" and attend UC Berkeley. She earned her law degree at the University of San Francisco School of Law and passed the Bar exam in 1998, when she was hired by the Alameda County D.A.'s office.

Jones Dickson was appointed a judge in 2013 and handled criminal, juvenile and dependency court cases. She also held supervisory roles from 2015 to 2023, including serving as Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court, overseeing operations and services within the juvenile system.

During her Jan. 21 presentation, Jones Dickson vowed to sit down with each murder victim's family to show them respect. She said she would repair divisions within the agency and improve its relationship with the public.

"We need to rebuild the victim-witness program," Jones Dickson told the board. "Victims just don't feel heard, and they know that they're not receiving the services that they deserve."

Jones Dickson also told the board that she planned to talk to the faith community, family support advocates and law enforcement officers as they prepare their cases.

"It is important for us to remember that this is going to be a community effort," she said. "It's not just going to be one person, but one person is going to have to lead that effort. Each and every one of us wants to be safe in our community. And the message that I'm getting from the community… is that they're exhausted from being exhausted from being criminalized, but they don't want everybody in jail. They realize that this is a balance, and they think that I might be the one to be able to give that to you."

Jones Dickson said she planned to improve training for her prosecutors, saying Price hired 48 who had never worked in those positions before.

"We're going to have to go back to the drawing board and get people trained up to do the work to be district attorneys," she said. "And that will look like a much bigger recruitment, education and training program that we've had in the past."



John McEuen, co-founder of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, will play at the Almost Famous Lounge on Feb. 8. (Photo courtesy of Alan Messer)

Nitty Gritty Dirt Band's John McEuen to Play at Almost Famous Lounge

John McEuen and The Circle Band will play the Almost Famous Wine Lounge in Livermore at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 8.

McEuen, an Oakland native, was a founding member of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and played with the iconic band for 38 years, spread out over two stints.

His current tour, "The Life I've Picked," is described as a nostalgic review of Nitty Gritty Dirt Band hits, bluegrass classics, and excerpts from his latest, spoken-word album, "The Newsman: A Man of Record."

McEuen will be joined on stage by Les Thompson, also a founding member of the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, and Bryan McDowell, a three-time winner at the Walnut Valley Music Festival in Winfield, Kansas.

McEuen is a member of the American Banjo Music Hall of Fame and the Traditional Country Music Hall of Honor. Now 79, McEuen published a memoir, "The Life I've Picked: A Banjo Player's Nitty Gritty Journey," in 2018.

Tickets for the performance at the Almost Famous Wine Lounge, 2271 S. Vasco Road, start at $18.

LeAnn Rimes Will Headline LVA Fundraising Gala

Grammy Award-winning singer LeAnn Rimes will headline the annual Livermore Valley Arts (LVA) fundraising gala, "Brillance at the Bankhead," on Saturday, Aug. 23.

In 1997, Rimes, then 14, became the youngest solo artist to ever receive a Grammy, winning for best new artist and best female country vocal performance for her debut single, "Blue."

A year later, Rimes became the first country artist to be named Artist of the Year at the Billboard Music Awards. Her ballad, "How Do I Live," from her second studio album, released in 1997, continues to be Billboard's all-time No. 1 hit by a female artist and ranks sixth on Billboard's "Greatest of All Time: Hot 100 Songs" list.

She has sold more than 48 million records worldwide, with more than 20 million album sales in the U.S., according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Rimes made her film debut in the 2000 comedy-drama "Coyote Ugly" and has appeared in several TV series and films.

Rimes will be accompanied by the Livermore-Amador Symphony at the fundraising gala. Proceeds from the gala will support LVA outreach programs and events at the Bankhead Theater and Bothwell Center, both operated by the nonprofit organization.

Tickets to the gala, including dinner provided by On the Vine Catering in Livermore, can be purchased online at livermorearts.org.



LeAnn Rimes will headline "Brilliance at the Bankhead" on Aug. 23. (Photo courtesy of Livermore Valley Arts)

Seminar Will Explain Potential Medical Benefits for Former Atomic Workers

Nuclear Care Partners, a provider in-home care and benefits guidance for former atomic workers, will hold a seminar on Monday, Feb. 17, to explain potential medical benefits under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA).

Passed by Congress in 2000, EEOICPA provides healthcare benefits to those who worked in nuclear weapons production and became ill as a possible result of their exposure to radiation or other toxic substances.

Covered illnesses include certain cancers and lung diseases.

The free benefits seminar will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Home2Suites in Tracy, California.

"Connecting former [Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Sandia National Laboratories] and workers to the vital services provided by Nuclear Care Partners is not just about healthcare," said Laura Welsh, Nuclear Care's community outreach manager for California. "It's about honoring their service and ensuring they receive the support they deserve for the sacrifices they've made."

To register for the seminar, go to NuclearCarePartners.com or call 925-453-3803. Walk-ins are also welcome.

Former atomic workers are encouraged to bring any medical records related to an illness potentially caused by workplace exposure to radiation or toxic substances and any paperwork if a previous claim was denied.

