



Vines in fall glow at Thatcher Bay Vineyards in Livermore. Owners Scott and Lisa Burkhart were the recent recipients of a TVC loan designated solely for the replanting of grapes. (Photo courtesy of Diana Roberts of TVC)

Water Agency Prepares to Shore Up Flood Protection to Mitigate Expected Damage

Increased Storm Activity Tests Aging Infrastructure, Stream Banks, Floodwalls

By David Jen

TRI-VALLEY — In response to wetter storms and aging infrastructure, the Zone 7 Water Agency last week began soliciting public feedback on its new flood-management plan. The feedback, along with a systemwide evaluation due later this year, will help form a set of capital projects and corresponding implementation plan in 2027.

Zone 7, which wholesales and manages drinking water in the Tri-Valley, provides flood protection among the 37 miles of streams and flood channels throughout the community.

Possible flood-mitigation measures range from structural projects, such as floodwalls and berms,

to maintenance programs around sediment removal and vegetation management, to policy decisions, such as those around elevation requirements or zoning.

Three community meetings last week sought to capture any public concerns the team may have missed in the plan, released in 2022, and what the public thinks the priorities should be, said Elke Rank, senior water resources planner at Zone 7.

“At some point, there’s going to be decisions made about which projects are the best set and how do you prioritize and choose those,” Rank said at the Jan. 13 community meeting at the Zone 7 Administration Building in Livermore.

Zone 7 engineer Jeff Tang said

the last time the agency formulated such a plan was in 2006. Since then, new weather patterns caused by climate change and the build-out of cities have drastically altered the risks and impacts of flooding. Aging infrastructure and changing environmental regulations have also motivated the new plan.

“With atmospheric rivers happening more often, there’s that potential for more flooding more often,” Tang said.

Current projections estimate that a 100-year flood event would damage 1,180 structures in the Tri-Valley, resulting in some \$330 million in repair costs. In comparison, the storms of 2017 caused \$33 million in damages, and the storms

(See FLOOD, page 7)

Dublin City Council Moves towards Next Step in Multi-Use Development Project

CEQA Statement of Overriding Considerations for Fallon 580 Set to Be Filed

By Sanestina Hunter

DUBLIN — The Dublin City Council on Jan. 13 re-adopted a Statement of Overriding Considerations for the Dublin Fallon 580 project, a court-ordered step tied to a California Environmental Quality Act lawsuit. The action is a required finding under CEQA — California’s environmental law — that the project’s benefits outweigh certain significant and unavoidable environmental impacts identified in earlier Eastern Dublin environmental reviews.

The Fallon 580 project is a proposed 192-acre mixed-use development in eastern Dublin

near Interstate 580. The parcels sit immediately east of Fallon Road within city limits and Dublin’s urban limit line. Plans include 238 medium-high density housing units, new parks and open space, and up to about 3.3 million square feet of commercial and office development.

Amy Million, Dublin’s community development director, said the council’s action did not approve new development or change the project’s design. Instead, she said, it reaffirmed the city’s prior environmental findings, so earlier approvals remain legally compliant.

The City Council first approved the Fallon 580 project in July

2024, according to the staff report. The Kingswood Owners Association later sued the city, alleging CEQA violations. After trial, the Alameda County Superior Court found Dublin’s environmental analysis complied with CEQA.

However, the judge ruled the council still needed to adopt a project-specific Statement of Overriding Considerations, because Fallon 580 would contribute to significant and unavoidable impacts identified in prior Eastern Dublin environmental documents.

Those impacts include traffic and freeway congestion, regional air quality, increased energy use tied to water treatment and water

(See FALLON, page 7)

Conservancy Issues Vineyard Replanting Loan to First Winery

Program Leads Concerted Effort to Revitalize South Livermore Valley Struggling Wine Industry

By Jessica Zimmer

LIVERMORE — This month, the Tri-Valley Conservancy (TVC) awarded its first low-interest loan through a new program to revitalize south Livermore’s wine industry. The Sponsored Replanting Program offers 15-year low-interest loans of up to \$15,000 per acre.

Wine grape growers are encouraged to replant varieties like cabernet franc and sauvignon blanc that are in demand and suited to the region. Their appropriateness for the region prompted Livermore Valley Wine Community (LVWC) last year to declare them signature varieties in an effort to establish the

region’s identity in the wine industry. The loan program is open to Alameda County vineyard owners who have conservation easements with the Tri-Valley Conservancy.

“We’re replanting eight of our 16 acres with three clones of cabernet franc. I have verbal agreements to sell the grapes when they’re ready, three years from now, to a number of local wineries,” said Scott Burkhart. He co-owns Thatcher Bay Vineyards in Livermore with his wife, Lisa Burkhart.

The Burkharts will keep the remaining eight acres split between four acres of cabernet sauvignon and four acres of merlot.

“I heard about the program

(See LOAN, page 6)



Temporary repairs help stabilize the bank of the Arroyo Mocho near Hopyard Road in Pleasanton. Zone 7, the City of Pleasanton and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers repaired stream banks and enhanced flood protection in the area last fall. (Photo — David Jen)

LVJUSD Budget Cutting Session Triggers Discord

Opponents Question Process Behind Unexpected Suggested Reductions, School Closures

By Vivien Wencker

LIVERMORE — Dozens of parents and community members gathered to voice their frustrations at a Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) board meeting on Jan. 13.

The meeting was held to discuss budget reduction options for the 2026/27 school year. LVJUSD currently has a deficit of \$16.1 million, for which it plans to make \$14.8 million in cuts for the 2026/27 school year and another \$1.3 million in cuts for the 2027-28 school year.

The closure of two schools, which was included among the list of reduction options, prompted outrage from the community. Over 30 speakers expressed concern during the public comment period regarding that option.

“I think a lot of the community understands that there are difficult decisions to be made, but the way that this has been handled so far is not the way to make them,” said JuNelle Harris, a Livermore parent.

“To announce that there would be school closures on a PDF attached to a board agenda item that very few of the community read with just one month to make the decision ahead of the February 13 timeline with just this comment period is completely inappropriate,” Harris said. “This is not a decision you make overnight. To drop it this way on top of cuts that the community was already gravely concerned about is frankly insulting and an abuse of trust to the community.”

Although there was no specific mention of which schools would

(See LVJUSD, page 7)



Christina Cavallaro (Photo courtesy of Craig Hughes)

Asst. Editor Christina Cavallaro Promoted to The Independent’s Managing Editor Role

TRI-VALLEY — Christina Cavallaro was engaged as The Independent’s freelancer over two and half years ago, and then as its Assistant Editor a year later. She has earned the respect of readers and staff in short order. When asked last week, she accepted the responsibility of Managing Editor.

She is filling the vacancy created by the departure of Dan Wood. The Independent greatly appreciates his work at the newspaper for almost ten months, and wishes him all the best in his plans for

the future.

Cavallaro grew up in Livermore, moved to Spain, Japan and San Francisco for a time, and then chose to come back to the hometown that she deeply loves.

In San Francisco, she served as a copywriter and editor for a publishing company overseeing multiple areas. During this period, she also worked as a freelancer, contributing numerous newspaper and magazine articles throughout the Bay Area.

Publisher Joan Seppala noted,

“She began freelancing for The Independent in 2023, writing many compelling feature stories. She has shown herself to be a strong front page news writer as well, capturing the complexities of the important issues. Her warmth as an individual is exceptional. We are pleased to have Christina bring her wealth of talents to The Independent’s Managing Editor position.”

Expressing her interest in the role, Cavallaro wrote, “Community for me has always been a North Star. I spent a lot of time traveling

(See EDITOR, page 7)

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PET OF THE WEEK



SUNNY D

Just like the drink that unleashes the power of the sun, Sunny D the dog is bursting with energy and joy — he’s the ultimate combo of cuddle bug and adventure buddy who’ll steal your lap one minute and your heart the next. Come meet Sunny D at Valley Humane Society today and unleash the power of fun! Call (925) 426-8656, or email info@valleyhumane.org to get started with the adoption process. (Photo courtesy of Valley Humane)

‘Guns, Fishing and Other Stuff’ Will Close Doors

By Sanestina Hunter

DUBLIN — Family-owned sporting-goods store “Guns, Fishing and Other Stuff” is set to close after more than two decades in business as owner Bill Morgan retires.

The specialty shop did not list a final closing date but planned to remain open while supplies last, and discount merchandise by up to 75% as it winds down operations.

The decision to close was announced in a Dec. 13 Facebook post, which read, “It’s true, we’re closing. It’s been our pleasure to serve you. It’s time to retire ...

come out ... for great deals in every department. We sure hope to see you before we’re through!”

Community members and customers responded with supportive comments online, thanking the store for its service and reflecting on its longtime presence in Dublin.

Located at 6705 Amador Plaza Road, Guns, Fishing and Other Stuff sells firearms, and hunting and fishing gear, along with shooting accessories and ammunition for long guns, handguns and shotguns. It also buys and sells used firearms and offers appraisals.

According to its website, the shop also operated an indoor firing range and offered training through Trygon Firearms Training, with classes ranging from introductory pistol and rifle instruction to defensive-shooting and concealed-carry courses.

It is unclear what might replace the business.

The long-time establishment also operated as a licensed Federal Firearms License (FFL) dealer, which allowed it to assist with transactions that required an FFL, including certain firearm transfers and shipping requirements, according to its website.



From the first hunting rifle to the perfect fly-line, “Guns, Fishing and Other Stuff” has outfitted generations of outdoor enthusiasts. The Dublin retail fixture will soon be closing its doors. While the shelves may be emptying, the tales of the ones that got away will remain. (Photo — Jacob Clauser)

Less than a year earlier, in April, the sporting goods store also closed its sister location in Vacaville. The company did not publicly list a reason for the shutdown.

The Dublin closure comes as the Tri-Valley has seen several recent business shutdowns across retail, bars and food service.

Hirst, Harringtons to Receive History Maker Awards

PLEASANTON — Brad Hirst, the owner of Equity Enterprises, and Nancy and Gary Harrington, longtime supporters of the arts in Pleasanton, will receive History Maker awards at the Museum on Main’s 19th annual Wines & Valentines dinner at the DoubleTree Hilton on Friday, Feb. 6.

The gala, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m., is the primary fundraiser for the nonprofit Museum on Main.

In addition to the History Maker awards, the evening will include a four-course meal, live and silent auctions,

live music and dancing, and the museum’s annual Fund-a-Need campaign.

Tickets are \$175 and may be purchased on the museum’s website, museumonmain.org.

Hirst and his wife, Sandra, moved to Pleasanton in 1967 and quickly settled into the community with both joining service organizations.

In 1969, Hirst was also appointed to the Pleasanton Planning Commission.

A year later, he turned down a corporate promotion with Shell USA that would

have meant moving to Southern California and decided instead to stay in Pleasanton and go into real estate.

An only child of a single mother, Hirst says he believes everybody has a responsibility to make their community a better place than they found it and in helping to make it a better place, have fun. He credits his wife with sharing that philosophy and is proud of the effort they put into making Pleasanton better.

Hirst was finance chair for the Pleasanton Fiesta in 1975, chaired the city’s

American Bicentennial Celebration from 1974-1976, and was president of the city’s centennial committee in 1994.



Brad Hirst (Photo courtesy of Christina Gray)

He also joined the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce board of directors in 1990, later serving as president, and helped start the Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

He was also a founding member of the Balloon Platoon, a comic marching group that recently celebrated its 50th anniversary and volunteered for more than 20 years with the George A Spiliotopoulos Invitational Golf Tournament, which raised funding for scholarships for Pleasanton seniors.

Over the years, Hirst has received numerous awards, including the Pleasanton

Mayor’s Award in 1995, the Sam Walton Business Leader Award in 1999, the Ed Kinney Community Patriot Award in 2010, and the Community of Character Award in 2014.

Nancy and Gary Harrington, both retired educators, donated their first piece of public art to Pleasanton in 2007. The life-sized bronze of an elderly veteran, known as “Poppies,” by sculptor W. Stanley Proctor now rests on a 7-foot granite bench outside the 1933 Veterans Memorial Building on Main Street.

The Harringtons, who recently moved to Washington State, continued to donate art to the city and started the Harrington Art Partnership Piece for You (HAPPY) initiative to entice other individuals and organizations to add to the public sculptures and murals spread around Pleasanton.

For many years, the Harringtons offered free guided tours of the public art, and

they spent three years creating a picture book telling the stories of artists and their artwork found throughout the community.

The Harringtons were also instrumental in getting a monument paying tribute to each branch of the armed forces at the city’s Pioneer Cemetery. They had taken photographs of similar monuments during their travels and created a matching fund to launch the project.

The fine arts gallery at the Firehouse Arts Center was also named for the Harringtons.



Nancy and Gary Harrington (Photo courtesy of Christina Gray)

LVA Celebrates Black History Month At Bankhead Theater with Story, Song

LIVERMORE — Livermore Valley Arts (LVA) will celebrate Black History Month with a series of Friday performances at the Bankhead Theater that will champion black artists, talents and stories.

The series will begin with a joint appearance by Ruthie Foster and the Blind Boys of Alabama on Feb. 6 and carry over into March with the four-piece a cappella group Kings Return on March 6.

The Bankhead Theater will also host The String Queens trio on Feb. 13.

Black History Month is observed in the U.S. annually during February.

Foster began her career in 1993, singing with the United States Navy Band, and didn’t release her first album, “Full Circle,” until 1997. She was named either Contemporary Blues Female Artist of the Year or Traditional Blues Female Artist of the Year by the Blues Foundation nine times between 2010 and 2023.

Her latest album, “Mileage,” received the Grammy award last year for Best Contemporary Blues Album.

The 61-year-old singer/songwriter will be appearing with the Blind Boys of Alabama, a six-time Grammy award-winning gospel group that has been around since 1939.

The original members of the Blind Boys got their start singing as part of the school chorus at the Alabama Institute for the Negro Deaf and Blind in Talladega,

Alabama.

The legendary group first found mainstream success in 1983 after appearing in the musical “The Gospel at Colonus.” The Blind Boys received its latest Grammy award, for Best Roots Gospel Album, for “Echoes of the South” in 2024.

The group’s cover of “Way Down in the Hole” was also the theme song for the first season of the HBO series “The Wire” in 2002.

Tickets to the 8 p.m. performance of Blind Boys of Alabama with Ruthie Foster start at \$65.

The String Queens is a trio of classically trained musicians and former music teachers in Washington, D.C.

Dawn Johnson, who plays viola, is a graduate of The Julliard School in New York and received the 31st annual Mayor’s Award for Excellence on Performing Arts Teaching for her work with the DC Youth Orchestra Program.

Elise Sharp grew up in Washington, D.C. and began playing cello in the DC Youth Orchestra Program when she was 8.

Sharp continued her musical education at Howard University, a historically Black university, before returning to the DC Youth Orchestra Program, where she was cello instructor and conductor of two ensembles for more than 20 years.

She is now director of a high school orchestra program in Maryland and an adjunct professor at the University of Maryland

Baltimore County.

The third member of The String Queens, Kendall Isadore, earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from Howard University in 2011 and began teaching middle school science. In 2014, she was invited to help perform a new public charter school in Washington, D.C., Northeast Academy, and became the school’s orchestra director.

She later became vice principal and instructional coach at Northeast Academy and started a strings program at a second charter school.

Trained in piano, voice and violin, which she plays as a member of the String Queens, Isadore is also director of enrollment management at a high school in Prince George’s County, Maryland.

The String Queens’ repertoire ranges from the Baroque era and the Jazz Age to the current Billboard Hot 100.

The group released its third album, “RISE,” in 2022.

Tickets to the 8 p.m. String Queens performance start at \$45.

Kings Return is a four-piece vocal group that combines rhythm and blues with touches of jazz, gospel and pop.

The Dallas-based quartet, composed of tenor Vaughn Faison, bass Gabe Kunda, tenor JE McKissic and baritone Jamall Williams, got its first taste of fame in 2020 after posting an cappella rendition of

“God Bless America” that went viral. The next year, they posted a more classical a cappella performance of “Ubi Caritas,” which also went viral, amassing more than 10 million views.

Kings Return also appeared in a sold-out performance at the Bankhead Theater in 2024.

Tickets to the 8 p.m. performance start at \$40.

All three performances are part of the LVA’s Bankhead Presents 2025-2026 season.

Tickets are available online at livermorearts.org, by calling 925-373-6800, or at the Bankhead Theater box office, 2400 First St. Discounts are available for students and military personnel.

The new year brings important changes that could impact the real estate market. Expanded tax deductions-including a temporary increase in the SALT deduction from \$10,000 to \$40,000, permanent mortgage interest deductions, deduction PMI/MIP, non-taxable overtime, potential auto loan interest deductions on US made vehicles, and improved child tax credits-may increase purchasing power and improve loan qualifications.

These could create new opportunities for buyers and sellers alike, but as always professional tax guidance is recommended. Call us today and let's turn your homeownership dreams into reality.

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Spelling Bee Champion Guides Younger Kids to Success

By Sanestina Hunter

DUBLIN — Kopal Tare, a junior at Dublin High School, turned a childhood love of books—from “Harry Potter” to “Percy Jackson”— into Bee Stars, an online spelling tutoring service that helps younger students build confidence and literacy skills.

The program has grown from about 40 students in its first year to about 70 students across the Tri-Valley, serving children from kindergarten through seventh grade, Tare said.

Tare placed in the top 10 at the Alameda County Spelling Bee in 2022 and later competed at the state level.

Bee Stars is hosted online to make it accessible for families across the Tri-Valley. “Reading is so important to me,” she said.

Bee Stars is designed to be more than memorizing word lists, Tare said. Instead, she teaches students how to recognize patterns in language—including roots, word structure and meaning—so they can spell unfamiliar

words with confidence.

“I teach my students it’s not about the word,” Tare said. “It’s about understanding the language and its root, so you can understand what it means—even if you’ve never heard the word before.”

Tare’s path to spelling bees began in elementary school. She continued competing, advancing from campus bees to district- and county-level contests.

Tare said some losses only pushed her to work harder and study more intentionally.

“My spelling bee journey began in fourth grade, when I won my first spelling bee at Kolb Elementary School,” she said. “Standing on stage and winning was an unforgettable experience.”

One turning point came when she watched the Scripps National Spelling Bee and realized top contestants weren’t just memorizing words—they were learning how language works.

“That curiosity pushed me to truly understand language rather than just memorize words,” Tare said.

She also relied on resources, such as SpellPundit, a website that provides vocabulary and spelling bee word lists, to guide her preparation.

“I think it’s crazy that these kids can spell half of the



Dublin teen, Kopal Tare, has a passion for reading that has evolved into an online tutoring service for younger students that pays forward her love of language. (Photo courtesy of Kopal Tare)

words on Earth that no one can spell,” she added.

Tare started Bee Stars during her sophomore year, building a curriculum based on the methods that helped her succeed. She originally imagined teaching in person, she said, but found online ses-

sions made the program more accessible to more families.

Bee Stars runs multiple sessions each year, with the curriculum typically starting in the fall and wrapping up in January. Tare said she keeps students engaged through games, practice drills and spelling bee-style exercises. Some of her students have already won competitions.

“I didn’t want other students to have to realize that same struggle,” she said.

The skills she developed through spelling competitions have also shaped her academic interests beyond language.

The student has become interested in bioinformatics, a field that uses computing to analyze biological data.

“When I took AP Biology, I found it so interesting,” she said, adding that she began noticing familiar word roots in scientific terms she had studied for spelling bees.

Over the summer, Tare completed an internship at UC Santa Barbara, where she worked with biological data and genetic sequences.

Learning the same pat-

tern-recognition mindset she developed through spelling has helped her approach complex scientific problems.

As she looks ahead to her senior year, Tare said she hopes to keep growing Bee Stars and continue working with younger students.

For students who want to compete in spelling bees, her advice is simple: read.

“While it may sound cliché, reading is one of the most effective ways to expand vocabulary, recognize spelling patterns and strengthen overall literacy,” Tare said.

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AVH Freshman Named Humane Student of the Year

PLEASANTON — Jasmine Wang-Jethi, a freshman at Amador Valley High

(AVH), was named 2025 Humane Student of the Year by Animalearn, a national



Amador Valley High School freshman, Jasmine Wang-Jethi is named Humane Student of the Year. (Photo courtesy of Animalearn)

nonprofit that promotes science education without harm to animals.

Wang-Jethi was one of three students recognized by the Pennsylvania-based nonprofit for their advocacy for the humane use of animals in education.

The nonprofit said she was recognized for leading a campaign encouraging teachers at AVH to offer non-animal alternatives to dissection for students who want to opt out of traditional dissection lessons, in collaboration with Animalearn and the New Roots Institute, which opposes intensive animal farming practices.

“In early 2025, Animalearn joined New Roots Institute as a campaign partner

to mentor high school and college students who wanted to work on campaigns advocating for animals used in science education, many of whom are farmed animals,” said Animalearn Director Nicole Green. “Jasmine is one of the students affiliated with this program, and she has demonstrated the skills necessary to be a successful animal ally.”

Along with national recognition, Wang-Jethi will receive \$750 in non-animal resources for AVH science classes.

Animalearn is a division of the American Anti-Vivisection Society, founded in 1887 with the goal of abolishing the use of animals in all research, testing and education.

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LEISURE CARE

EDITORIAL

Our Water Problems Are Compounding, And Time to Act is Running Out

The situation with water in California has always been fraught. Ever since the postwar boom in population, the state has struggled with various interests over the limited supply. The 1974 movie “Chinatown” about the political machinations behind expanding water service to the state, remains as relevant as it was when it was released more than 50 years ago. These days we can add global climate change into the cauldron. The Zone 7 Water Agency, which wholesales water to the Tri-Valley, is in the process of planning infrastructure projects that will help the region cope with more frequent and bigger floods.

The projects have not been selected yet, nor has a price tag for any of them been determined. But you can bet they will be expensive. The projects will be even more expensive if we do nothing to halt an ever-warming climate.

The effects of climate change are complicated, but in brief, they’re manifesting in longer and harsher droughts interspersed with more intense storms dumping a lot more water on the region all at once. It’s the worst of both worlds: more risks of fires, crop failures and degrading water quality during dry seasons, followed by flooding that our current infrastructure isn’t built to handle.

It is estimated that a 100-year flood could impact 1,180 structures in the Tri-Valley, resulting in \$330 million in damages.

At the same time, the definition of a 100-year flood may be changing. A 100-year flood is one that has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year, and a 26% chance of occurring within 30 years.

But increasing atmospheric rivers may cause those 100-year floods to happen more frequently.

In addition, the latest State of our Estuary report, developed by dozens of scientists and government agencies, paints a dismal picture of the health of the Sacramento River Delta and Estuary. The amount of fresh water flowing into the estuary has been essentially cut in half over the last 80 years, while at the same time the region’s population has exploded. The report gives poor marks for most of the measures used to assess the health of the ecosystem.

At the same time, beneficial seasonal floods in the Delta, those which help preserve and restore habitat, have occurred in only six of the last 74 years, while 380,000 acres of land have subsided below the tidal elevation. A less healthy delta and estuary are less capable of handling increased flooding during intensifying storm seasons.

Too much water all at once, but never enough when we need it — that’s our future unless we take drastic steps. Zone 7’s plan is essentially one of mitigation: planning for eventualities and calculating what will be enough, especially given that climate change may well accelerate past estimates, requiring us to build yet more mitigating infrastructure later, at a correspondingly higher cost.

Some of those costs may well be unavoidable, but like the Sites Reservoir, they don’t address the core problem.

The short answer is that we need to use less water in the state. The planned Sites Reservoir project to increase the state’s water supply had an estimated

price tag of \$6.8 billion six months ago, and that also comes at a steep environmental cost, diverting the upper Sacramento River at a time when the Delta and Estuary already don’t get enough water.

Specifically, big agriculture businesses use way too much water. Agriculture needs to diversify more away from water-guzzling alfalfa, almonds and pistachios and into more drought-tolerant crops. Many fields need to implement more efficient water management technology, such as drip- and micro-irrigation. And urban areas need to conserve and recycle more of the 400 billion gallons of treated wastewater that gets flushed into the ocean each year.

We as individuals can conserve more water on our own — plant drought-resistant gardens instead of grass-filled yards, for example — but that won’t amount to much if we don’t also tackle the agriculture sector’s much larger level of consumption.

The state legislature needs to take up this issue. Fortunately, they can: Democrats have a supermajority of seats in both the Assembly and the Senate. They can mandate drip agriculture across the agricultural sector, enact tax benefits for farmers that diversify their crops, and penalize those that use too much water. More cities can follow the example of Livermore, Pleasanton and Dublin, who all use recycled water. The legislature can provide more incentives to do so (or disincentives if nothing is done).

Many of our Tri-Valley wineries have also shown leadership. Livermore’s Retzlaff Vineyards, in 2006, became

one of the first certified organic wineries in the state and was an early adopter of drip-irrigation. Wente Family Vineyards, Concannon Vineyard, Ruby Hill Winery, Page Mill Winery, and others, were among those in the valley who did so as well. Other area wineries utilize minimal irrigation techniques, such as dry farming (no supplemental irrigation).

However, we need to do more. We have to pressure our legislators to stand up to the California agricultural lobby, which hasn’t been apparent, so far. California is the largest farm state in the U.S., and there’s a lot of money in Sacramento seeking to preserve the status quo.

But the status quo isn’t sustainable. There’s really no way of just pretending we can build our way out of this mess. But we are not powerless to act. What’s been missing is political will, both in Sacramento and in Washington, D.C., to confront the multiple intersecting problems head-on. Gov. Gavin Newsom isn’t running for re-election, and clearly seems to be trying to present himself as a moderate as he readies his likely presidential run. But having the governor essentially trading local politics for national isn’t going to help us. (Nor will it help him, we don’t think, but that’s another issue.)

It’s not about picking and choosing which problems to tackle either. We have to go after all of them. That will require everyone to share in the burden, even as we try to hold the biggest water guzzlers to account. The alternative, an escalating cycle of droughts and flooding, is too severe an outcome to ignore.

MAILBOX

Mailbox Guidelines:

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

The Church as Conscience to the State Reverend Michelle Magee, Livermore

Each year, around this time, we remember a great orator, prophet, preacher, and civil rights leader, Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Those of you who lived in the years of the Civil Rights Movement know better than I do that those times were times of racial tension and violence in our nation. Many thought those times were behind us.

One thing that Dr. King said is that the Church should be the conscience of the state. I am pastor of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Livermore, and in our Lutheran Baptismal liturgy we promise to re-

nounce all that defies God, “the powers of this world that rebel against God” and the “ways of sin” that draw us from God. Other traditions have similar promises.

While not trying to impose our particular faith on anyone else, we do have the responsibility to clearly and consistently name how our government is not living up to its calling of serving the best interests of the citizens, guaranteeing life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for all. Our God is a God of love who cares for us and has revealed a way of mutual care that leads to those purposes.

Yes, there are matters where what is ethical gets murky, and people of good

conscience can differ. However, there are many issues where our Christian call to love our neighbor as we love ourselves can be the example, is in line with other faiths, harms no one.

What is one way you might honor Dr. King and his call for Church to be conscience to the state? A call or letter to a government official? Becoming more involved in a local issue?

To paraphrase a recent quote, hate has been shouting and now love needs to speak up.

Not only to honor Dr. King, but to live out our baptismal promise of renouncing all that goes against God’s way, and our vocation to love our neighbor as we love ourselves; those of us who claim the Christian faith especially (while always welcoming all people to do what they can) need to find more ways to express, loudly, real love for one’s neighbor that does engage our government and our society.

Religion should not try to dominate politics; but a politics that has forsaken any sense of ethics needs to be shaken into realization that they are not the only power.

Suicide By ICE Daniella Karo, Pleasanton

Renee Good, the Minnesota woman shot by ICE, didn’t live to learn what all of us should know, that when you aim your vehicle at full speed towards a human target you may not make it home alive and well! We live in a country where one has the right to protest any and all government issued policies, whether right or wrong. A peaceful protest, that’s it! When you bring along a potentially deadly weap-

on like an automobile, and try to interfere with the task at hand ICE is pursuing, and you motion your car towards one of them, mayhem may occur! Renee Good, brazen and ignorant of consequences of such behavior never got a second chance! The rest of us, pay attention. Act at your own risk!

AARP Tax-Aide Services in the Tri-Valley Johnna Thompson, Livermore

The Independent’s January 15 article about AARP Tax-Aide services mentioned only two of the six Tax-Aide sites available to residents of the Tri-Valley and Castro Valley. In addition to the Livermore Library and Dublin Senior Center, as mentioned in the article, Tax-Aide services are available at the Pleasanton Senior Center on Mondays and Fridays, the Livermore Senior Center on Tuesdays, the Dublin Library on Saturdays, and the Castro Valley Library on Wednesdays and Thursdays. All sites are now taking appointments for dates from the beginning of February until mid-April.

Information on these sites, as well as other nearby locations such as San Ramon, Danville, and Brentwood, can be found at the following url:

www.aarp.org/money/taxes/aarp-taxaide/locations

“Citizens United” May Be Temporary Elizabeth M. Judge, Livermore

Citizen’s United, passed by the Robert’s Supreme Court in 2010, allowed funds from corporations and billionaires to influence elections without accountability. That began the overt slide of government

out of the people’s control. It really has become a “corporate” rather than a real democracy.

However, states control corporations and govern what rights they have. So it is the states that have the power to stop electoral campaigns from being so heavily influenced by unlimited corporate and special interests’ funds. (Elon Musk spent over \$290 million for the presidential election in 2024.)

Strangely enough, few folks are in favor of unlimited money influence. Stopping such funding across the board, limiting corporations as well as unions for example, is attractive to many on both sides.

Fortunately, California will have a bill soon that would make corporate money in elections illegal, and billionaires will no longer be able to donate anonymously! Called the Corporate Power Reset (CPR), it should surface here with a bill number soon. A similar bill may pass in Montana and make it to the Supreme Court first, but due to complicated laws governing corporations, the Court may hesitate to fight it. Imagine that!

Time to Act Barry Brynjulson, Pleasanton

Minneapolis is a trial run by Trump and his masked thugs to see how far they can go and how much they can get away with. Their intent is to sow chaos and to terrorize non-MAGAs. The Administration claims ICE agents have total immunity to do anything they feel compelled to do in the line of duty including shooting Renee Good in the face. Her last words were ‘I’m not mad at you, dude.’ Trump, Vance, and Noem

spread lies about the video footage we all saw. They’re investigating Renee Good’s wife, Gov. Walz, and the mayor of Minneapolis... everyone except Jonathon Ross, the ICE Agent who murdered Renee.

We are headed swiftly toward a police state, martial law, and, probably, cancelled elections. DJT has already mentioned canceling the elections... Karoline Leavitt said Trump was kidding. So reassuring.

It’s time for all of us to turn out once a week for 60-90 minutes at a PEACEFUL rally. There is one every Saturday at noon in Dublin on Dublin Blvd. near Safeway. Livermore, Castro Valley, Walnut Creek, Lafayette, and many other cities have something similar. For locations and schedules, see Mobilize.us/map.

You are needed now. No more simply complaining and worrying. Show up if and when you are able, or live with what is coming.

COP Climate Talks Lucas Nelson, Livermore

As world leaders gather for climate talks, one major contributor to climate change continues to be sidelined: industrial animal agriculture. While energy and transportation dominate the conversation, factory farming remains a leading source of greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, water pollution, and biodiversity loss.

Ignoring this reality weakens any serious climate plan. We cannot meet climate goals while leaving animal agriculture off the table.

Fortunately, solutions already exist. Shifting toward plant-based foods reduces

(See MAILBOX, page 5)

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One boy deftly handles two bicycles on Fairlands Drive in Pleasanton. (Photo — Jacob Clouser)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 4)

emissions, conserves water, and lessens pressure on ecosystems — without requiring new technology or massive infrastructure changes.

Climate action isn’t only about policy; it’s also about personal responsibility. In a world facing overlapping environmental crises, choosing meat-free meals is one of the most immediate and effective ways individuals can reduce their climate impact.

If we truly care about the planet’s future, our climate conversations — and our plates — must reflect that.

The Last Straw?

Frank Cannella, Livermore

About a week ago, President Trump was interviewed by the New York Times where he was asked about how he should approach international law while engaged in his various worldwide escapades. He is quoted as responding that he does not need international law since he can rely on his own “moral integrity” to make the right decisions. How about that! Don’t you feel this bastion of moral integrity should be able to ignore international law? The U.S. Constitution has also stood in his way, but rest assured, Trump is certain his moral integrity will override any constitutional concerns that U.S. citizens may have. And the worst part of it all is that he actually believes this balderdash! He now sees himself as above the law, i.e. omnipotent, just like royalty in previous centuries.

Since that pronouncement, here are a few things Trump has done: he has pardoned, for the second time, a grifter along with her brother (see Eastbay Times, Jan. 17 edition); he has continued his assault on Greenland which has led to multiple NATO allies sending troops there to protect that poor country from U.S. intervention, then threatened additional tariffs on those countries who do so (see previous paragraph re ignoring the Constitution); again threatened military action against cities unhappy with ICE behaviors, and finally suggesting he would enforce the insurrection act against an American city concerned with the fact that there are 3,000 Federal agents abusing their citizens.

I ask any readers, if this isn’t the last straw, what is?

Science Funding and U.S. Decline

Abdul Awwal, Pleasanton

One of the program managers of the National Science Foundation told me that if you want to know what happened 10 years ago, read papers published in IEEE Transactions. If you want to know what will happen in the next ten years, talk to program managers.

One of the important sources of funding for Science and Technology in the USA is the National Science Foundation and National Institute of Health. The proposal success rate is about 3 to 7 percent. One of the common ways a reviewer of a scientific proposal will reject it is by saying that the author is simply proposing incremental progress in a field. However, if one reviews how progress is made in Science and Technology, it is by working for a long time, making steady progress, and only then you may achieve a breakthrough. Sometimes we see a tendency to idolize a certain trendy field (similar to music or the entertainment industry). After a few years, you will see that field is no longer funded! Our political parties, in the name of cost cutting, keep slashing the budget for the NSF, NIH etc. China, on the other hand, following the U.S.’s historical example of scientific prowess, kept increasing their investment in science and technology.

I served as an editor for one of the Optics journals. I noticed that out of 20 submissions, 19 were from outside the U.S., and mainly from China. I discussed this with one of my lab colleagues, who said they must be low quality. One of my colleagues from a U.S. Midwestern university was hired as dean in a

Chinese university, and he told me there is no shortage of research funding. I still see his papers being published in IEEE Transactions. In the U.S., he will not be able to get that much funding. Nature’s recent publication (www.nature.com/articles/d41586-025-03956-y) states that at one time, the U.S. was dominant in 95% of fields, and

China was only dominant in 5%. Now China dominates in 95% of fields and the U.S. only 5%. One of the things politicians can do to make America competitive (great) again is to increase science funding so that a higher percentage of ideas can be funded. What you gain by doing that is to create a higher population of researchers that can produce great things for the future.

“Stop The Steal”

Tom Evans, Dublin

Hands off Greenland. The idea of taking over a peaceful, sovereign country by force is unconscionable. I don’t understand how the vast majority of Congress isn’t up in arms about this. No one disputes the importance of a U.S. military presence in Greenland, including Greenland. They have cooperated with the U.S. for decades in a mutually beneficial relationship; and they have recently expressed that they are open to increased military presence if that is what is needed by the U.S., but somehow that’s not good enough for the our president who feels it’s okay to make Greenland part of the United States against their will, even if he has to do it “the hard way.”

The White House is also understandably interested in rare-earth minerals that Greenland has. This attractive resource does not justify taking over a country by force. If our leaders feel we need more military operations in Greenland — great. Work out the details with Greenland as they would be happy to help. If our leaders feel they need Greenland’s rare-earth minerals, there are legal and ethical paths that they can pursue. It would be a tragedy if the United States used its power in a way that moved its international standing from being a symbol of democracy and freedom toward a reputation of imposing its will on smaller nations for its own gain.

Judge Not, Lest Ye...

Daryl R Carlson, Livermore

In a recent letter to this opinion page, a vocal resident predicted that the long anticipated, necessary, voter-initiative endorsed boutique hotel would fail financially without offer-

ing any concrete evidence to support this assumption. The ground not yet broken but already doomed.

The argument presented is that a larger space in a more accessible location would be profitable and would also have the desired effect of the long-cherished goal of depriving working families of affordable housing.

A splinter of the famed Citizen Advisory group when not given the lollipop of a park to block affordable housing have spent years sulking, petitioning and suing, driving the eventual cost of the hotel and the housing sky high.

Minneapolis Strong, Minnesota Blood, Tale of Two Parties

Greg Scott, Livermore

I don’t think recent Minneapolis events are understood. For that, some of Minnesota itself needs to be known. I am of non-indigenous Minnesota ancestry on my mother’s side. She was born in Fillmore County, in Southeast Minnesota, bordering Iowa.

My heritage is of settler-colonialists of Minnesota that arrived in the 1800s who predominantly emigrated from Scandinavian countries, Germany, and the Netherlands. This influx greatly outnumbered what now are eleven indigenous tribes. Minnesota, until recently, was one of the least diverse states, by population demographic ethnicity, in the U.S., before becoming home to the largest domestic communi-

ty of Somalis, and also having a numerous amount of Hmong.

This majority White culture was strongly influenced by the European revolution of 1848-49 — the most broad spread of European revolutions to date. Minnesota of then and following experienced many of the same social, economic, and technologic changes as Europe in the effects of rapid urbanization, modernizing agriculture, and the expanding Industrial Revolution. This history is a strong influence in the social fabric of what Minnesota is today.

My mother was a staunch Republican, who died in 2023, three days before her 99th birthday. Her dream was to live long enough to vote for Donald Trump and see him become presi-

dent again. I don’t think my devout Christian mother would’ve had much empathy for the lesbian woman who impeded ICE agents in Minneapolis and was cold-blooded murdered. Christian compassion apparently doesn’t apply to such ‘others,’ much less to any antithesis to the Cult of Trump. I never understood this, and I never will,

(See MAILBOX, page 6)

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Jeffrey Macapinlac and his wife, Deanna Thach, held a ribbon cutting last week for a Seniors Helping Seniors franchise at the Dublin Technology Center. The nationwide Seniors Helping Seniors franchise network matches seniors with senior caregivers based on shared interests and activities. Services include non-medical in-home care, including companionship, transportation, light household assistance, meal preparation, personal care and respite for family caregivers. Macapinlac, a former sales executive for biomedical devices, and Thach, a registered nurse, said the new franchise would serve Pleasanton, Dublin, Livermore and Fremont. (Photo — Leah Silveira)

MAILBOX

(Continued from page 5)

especially after reading parts of the New Testament and its references on how to treat humans.

Ironically, my mother’s parents were Democrats. The Great Depression hit Minnesota very hard. My mother, in 1929, turned five-years-old four days after Black Thursday and the day before Black Tuesday. In the 1930s, in the depths of the Great Depression, food riots occurred in Minneapolis. The highly intelligent Republican President Hoover was widely cursed, for he was clueless to the plight of most U.S. residents in the Great Depression.

“Resistance rises when the toll of organized lying and negligent and malevolent governance becomes difficult to ignore. All of this is now unfolding in the United States. It is our turn to mobilize peacefully in the face of abuses of power.” (Ruth Ben-Ghiat, Historian, NYU, 2026)

True now, as it was true in the past.

Appreciating Volunteers and Advisory Bodies
Patricia Munro, Livermore

This year shows little signs of being easier than the previous years. Volunteering is heartening for the soul and a reminder of the common good.

This past week, the City of Livermore held its annual Volunteer Appreciation event, dedicated to the people who have volunteered in so many capacities over the past year. While there are a number of ways to volunteer throughout the year, including spring’s annual Community Service Day, here are some of the people and groups that do ongoing work in many different ways:

Airport Commission;

Beautification Committee; City Historian, working to build public knowledge Livermore’s history; Commission for the Arts, developing ways for the communities to experience art in all its forms; Historic Preservation Commission, identifying and protecting Livermore’s history; Human Services Commission, which works to understand community social needs and assist local agencies in procuring grant funds; Library Board of Trustees, which supports all that the Library does; Livermore Housing Authority, which oversees Livermore’s program for low-income housing; Planning Commission, which advises the City Council on matters related to city growth and development; and the Poet Laureate, who develops literature and poetry programs in the community.

That’s a long list and it all matters for creating the kind of community Livermore is and wants to be. Here’s the link to the city’s webpage with more information, upcoming vacancies, and ways to apply: www.livermoreca.gov/departments/city-clerk/advisory-bodies

Reign In this Tyrant
Ward Kanowsky, Pleasanton

So, our president, in a recent interview with the New York Times, stated that the only limit on his power, on a global basis, is his “own morality.” Let’s provide some context to that statement, since morality is how most of us distinguish right from wrong. Trump’s “morality” has led him to:

- Brag on an Access Hollywood tape in 2005 that groping women is OK because “when you’re a star, they let you do it.”

- Walk into dressing rooms of contestants of Miss Teen USA and Miss Universe while the women are naked or only partially clothed.

- Say that, “If Ivanka weren’t my daughter, perhaps I’d be dating her.”

- Be found liable for sexual abuse to E. Jean Carroll in 1996, a verdict that was later upheld by a federal appeals court.

And more recently:

- Indiscriminately bomb over 30 boats in South American waters killing at least 115 people.

- Abduct foreign leaders and then say he now runs the country and any money from the sale of that country’s resources will go to him.

- Decide that, “One way or another, we are going to have Greenland.”

- Allow his administration to label Renee Good, murdered by an ICE agent in Minneapolis, a domestic terrorist.

Given the multiple examples of how Trump follows through on his “own morality,” then brags about it and acts with impunity by ignoring laws and bullying an inept Congress, we all have to pay more attention, take more action, speak out more, resist more, and expect more of our elected leaders to do more to reign in this tyrant. If that means impeachment, then so be it.

Welcome Trump World: Trump Derangement Syndrome? A Simple Test
Rosario Milelli, Pleasanton

Whenever I, and many others, criticize Donald Trump, we are told we suffer from “Trump Derangement Syndrome.” The implication is that any harsh assessment must be irrational, partisan, or emotional-

ly unhinged.

So let’s try a simple exercise.

Below are eleven statements about Donald Trump. No names. No party labels. Just the words.

Which of these sound like “derangement”?

1. This man is a pathological liar. The man is utterly amoral. Morality does not exist for him.
2. Trump is unfit for office and lacks the competence to do the job.
3. There has never been a greater betrayal by a President of the United States of his office and his oath to the Constitution.
4. Trump is a consummate narcissist and will always put his interests ahead of the country.
5. Trump is unfit for office.
6. The most flawed person I have ever met in my life.
7. He is a con artist.
8. Trump is a phony and a fraud.
9. He’s a race-baiting, xenophobic, religious bigot.
10. A moron.
11. Deeply unethical, dangerous.

Take a moment. Try and match the quotes to the people who said them.

Now, here is the list of possible speakers — in no particular order:

- Good Luck.
- Marco Rubio
 - Lindsey Graham
 - Mitt Romney
 - John Kelly
 - Rex Tillerson
 - Liz Cheney
 - Ty Cobb
 - John Bolton
 - Mark Esper
 - Bill Barr
 - Ted Cruz

Here’s the twist: every one of these statements came from Republicans,

Trump appointees, or Trump’s own inner circle. Not Democrats. Not journalists. Not “the radical left.”

People who worked with him. Campaigned for him. Defended him — until they couldn’t.

If these quotes resemble what critics like me and others have said, that is not coincidence — it is convergence. They come from senators, members of Congress, cabinet members, and Trump’s own lawyers. If that qualifies as “Trump Derangement Syndrome,” then the condition appears to be most prevalent among those who served closest to him.

The rest of us are simply paying attention.

Accountability and Opportunity Cost
Marla Kirby, Livermore

Two words have been swirling around together in my head lately: accountability and opportunity cost (OK, yeah that’s more than two words). These concepts may seem unrelated, but stay with me as I explain.

Accountability: our nation was founded, and has achieved greatness, because it established checks and balances, so that no one power center can be so strong that it could not be held accountable. Over time, those checks and balances have eroded, and now there is vast imbalance in the system.

Opportunity cost: this is an economic term that refers to what you give up when making a choice among mutually exclusive alternatives. Although you can’t know for certain what a choice-not-taken might have held, the process of considering these costs typically leads to better decision-making.

These concepts apply in many contexts in our lives, but right now, the recent and alarming surge in ICE spending has me thinking about them. The tens of billions of additional dollars appropriated to ICE by the Republican Congress has led to abuses and behavior that demonstrate impunity on the part of federal agents and lack of accountability for their actions.

For context, funding to this one immigration enforcement agency is now GREATER than the entire DEFENSE budget of many nations. And to be clear, these billions of dollars to ICE are on top of the nearly trillion (yes, with a t) dollar budget for the U.S. military and nearly \$200 billion (yes, with a b) by American state and local governments on public safety.

What are the opportunity costs that are not being considered when appropriating all that money to ICE? Is all this spending really necessary to keep us safe? How could some of that money be better allocated to im-

prove our communities and contribute to greater safety and quality of life?

Without accountability, the opportunity costs are not considered; elected officials just blindly appropriate an ever-increasing share of our tax dollars to law enforcement, military and public safety without seriously looking at whether some of that money might be better spent. At this moment, we need to restore accountability on ICE; tell Congress to refuse to vote for any funding bill for DHS and ICE unless it places restrictions on them to prevent abuses. For more information, go to act.indivisible.org/sign/ice-out-for-good.

Too Late for NOW — What’s Left is the Dying and Crying!
Zohair Mogri, Pleasanton

Not blaming. The last time I voted it was for ‘what’s his name’.

Recently, I wrote to a well-funded, top institution in the SF Bay Area with a literary question. I did not expect an answer, and made that evident by acknowledging “down boy; know your place.” I was wrong, as I did get an answer requesting financial support. Money runs everything (The prompt engineer in me knows that if I did not expect an answer to my question, I would be correct!]

We all, on our tax returns, may give a U.S. dollar from our taxes to a USA federal government “political system” fund which distributes money to citizens running for federal office. Those who do not “have to” file tax returns are left out. Money runs everything. BUT, politicians receive so many “direct” contributions from large donors, that for us to expect conscientious action by elected officials and others in powerful places... Money runs everything.

Why is Tulsi not rich?

Many years ago, the laws were changed to allow companies and other moneyed interests to do their duty by making direct contributions.

This coming November, and for evermore, VOTE only for those whose top line commitment is to ADD an ADDITIONAL tax of \$10 per \$10 million of the market value of companies and the personal financial value of individuals every calendar tax year to the USA “political systems” fund (Direct contributions to those running for government office would not be allowed anymore.) Money runs everything.

Similar state laws are also needed, as state and local offices are often stepping stones to national offices.

Mixed metaphor but, who will rein the cats? Money runs everything.

And I don’t vote!

LOAN

(Continued from front page)

through the Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association (since renamed the Livermore Valley Wine Community). This seems like a good option. Before, we used home equity loans to plant our vineyards,” Scott Burkhardt said. “We’d plant about four acres a year until we had 16 in all. Now we can do half our total acreage at once.”

He added that cabernet franc grown in south Livermore does not have the “big berry flavor” of cabernet sauvignon. Still, it turns out smooth, with some tannins.

“It has a hint of the zinfandel pepperiness. It’s a delightful combination of elements,” said Burkhardt.

Several other vineyard owners have recently contacted the Tri-Valley Con-

servancy about the program, said Rebecca Spector, executive director of the TVC.

“This program has been in the works for at least two years. We started it because our main goals are to promote wine cultivation and support the struggling wine industry,” Spector said. “We realize it is a large financial investment to replant vines. We want to help.”

The Livermore Valley Wine Community is assisting by telling its members about the program. It helped develop the program; one seat on the conservancy’s board is always filled by a LVWC member.

California FarmLink, an Aptos-based nonprofit that aids historically underserved farmers, ranchers and fishers, is assisting LVWC by reviewing loan applications.

FarmLink will also service awarded loans.

TVC’s’s board of directors approves the loans. The money for the program comes from Tri-Valley Conservancy.

TVC decides what varietals loan recipients can plant on a case-by-case basis. It focuses on varietals identified by University of California, Davis research as having “the greatest potential.” In 2022, the Conservancy commissioned a report from UC Davis researchers to gather information about the different varietals.

The Burkhardts planted their first grapes in 1992. Burkhardt said that in the late 1990s, sales were up. This was partly because Napa Valley was negatively impacted by the phylloxera insect

infestation, which decimated supplies of local wine grapes for years.

“We sold so many grapes until Napa got back on its feet. Right now, our merlot vines have been in the ground for a long time. We were due to replant that varietal. But there’s a general downturn in wine sales across the U.S. We think a different grape will sell better,” Burkhardt said.

Brandi Lombardi, executive director of the Livermore Valley Wine Community said in a press release from TVC, “This kind of practical support is exactly what our winegrowers need right now.”

“It is community in action. I’m glad to be working side by side with TVC to take action to preserve the



Thatcher Bay Vineyards Co-Owner, Scott Burkhardt. (Photo courtesy of Diana Roberts of TVC)

identity, culture, and sustainability of our region’s wine industry,” Lombardi said in the release.

Spector said she has not seen other loan programs like the Conservancy’s pilot. She thinks it could be a solu-

tion for wine grape growers across California.

“We need more ways to infuse and support the industry during a difficult time. Agriculture, particularly wine grape cultivation, is key to the heritage of the Tri-Valley,” said Spector.

Burkhart said cabernet franc could be the “flagship grape” of the Tri-Valley. Still, he also planted some alvarinho, a white wine grape typically grown in Spain and Portugal.

“The cabernet franc from here has fewer tannins. It’s much smoother than some cab francs that I’ve tasted from France’s Loire Valley,” Burkhardt said. “But this is a good place to grow wine grapes. You can definitely make a good argument that we grow a great cabernet sauvignon here too.”



Stephanie Ericson of Dublin peers at a see-through beehive during a Jan. 8 meeting of the Livermore-Amador Valley Garden Club at Crosswinds Church in Livermore. (Photo — Jacob Clouser)

Photographer to Discuss Inside Passage Excursion

LIVERMORE — Professional photographer Ron Rigge and his wife, Lisa, will present an Armchair Travelers program on their Inside Passage voyage along the costs of Alaska and British Columbia at the Civic Center Library, 1188 S. Livermore

Ave., on Thursday, Feb. 12.

The Pleasanton residents spent 14 days sailing aboard the “Sea Lion,” a small shallow-draft ship with just 31 passenger cabins operated by National Geographic-Lindblad Expeditions.

The excursion included a tour of the Haida Gwaii archipelago off the coast of British Columbia and explorations into Misty Fjords National Monument and Glacier Bay National Park in Alaska.

In addition to being a professional photographer, Rigge is chief financial officer for the Foundation for Photographic Preservation in Oakland.

The Armchair Travelers presentation is free and begins at 1:30 p.m.

FALLON

(Continued from front page)

distribution systems, according to the staff report.

Million said the city identified several benefits tied to the project’s long-range planning goals. She said the housing component would help Dublin meet its Regional Housing Needs Allocation and Housing Element goals.

The project would also convert about 42 acres from Open Space zoning to Parks/

Public Recreation, including land for a future community park, natural community park, open space and wetlands mitigation areas.

Million said the commercial and office development is intended to complete planned growth along the I-580 corridor and generate long-term revenue for the city, county and state.

The project also includes roadway and streetscape im-

provements, including land dedication for the future Dublin Boulevard Extension, along with pedestrian and bicycle improvements aimed at improving connectivity and safety.

The Fallon 580 site is located east of Fallon Road and north of I-580, within the Fallon Village area of the Eastern Dublin Specific Plan, which dates back to 1988.

After the council’s action, the project can move forward in the approval process.

“The project applicant has submitted a final map, site development review permits for the two residential neighborhoods, and a preliminary planning application for a portion of the commercial area south of the future Dublin Boulevard Extension,” Million said.

Livermore Alumni to Host Local Crab Feed

LIVERMORE — The Livermore High School Alumni Association (LHSAA) will hold its 14th annual Crab Feed at the Robert Livermore Community Center, 4444 East Ave., at 6 p.m. on Saturday, March 14.

LHSAA is a nonprofit that helps pay for classroom supplies and fund student programs, including athletics.

“This event is about more than just great food,” said LHSAA President, Jim Perry.

“It’s about the Livermore community coming together to ensure our teachers, students and student-athletes have the resources they need to succeed.”

Dinner will include crab, pasta, salad and dessert.

A no-host bar will be available. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

Tickets are \$80 and are available by going to livermorehighalumni.com and clicking on “Crab Feed.”

Teen Poets Named for First Semester by City

LIVERMORE — Savanna Bach, a student at Vineyard Alternative School, and AJ Dennis, an eighth grader at East Avenue Middle School, have been named Teen Poets for the first semester by Livermore Poet Laureate Peggy Schimmelman.

The city’s Poet Laureate program recognizes a high school student and a middle school student each semester during the school year.

The students receive a certificate signed by the mayor and a \$15 gift certificate from Verace Gelato and Cafe.

Their poems are also posted in the teen section of the Livermore Civic Center library.

Bach was recognized for her poem, “Tomorrow in the Show Ring.” Dennis was recognized for “Tomorrow.”

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EDITOR

(Continued from front page)

in search of the depth and range of interests that the Tri-Valley offers. I learned just how rare our area is.

“Where else can you find a beautiful stand-alone valley abundant with vineyards

where live music fills the air; a place where cowboys, artists and scientists, farmers and urban foodies, and people from all over the world learn from one another.

“And we have a net-

work of nonprofits working tirelessly to ensure the resilience of the safety net it builds to protect the most vulnerable among us. I believe it’s that unique pairing of interests that sets

this place apart. I plan to celebrate each one of them.”

For these reasons and others, too, Seppala concluded, “We wholeheartedly welcome Christina Cavallaro as our Managing Editor.”

LVJUSD

(Continued from front page)

face closure, several community members speculated that Lawrence Elementary would be among them.

Equally concerning for the public was the option of staff cuts, the majority of which would be those in supportive positions. These include non-teaching support personnel whose roles do not require a teaching credential, encompassing diverse jobs, such as secretaries, custodians, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, paraprofessionals (aides), and maintenance staff, all crucial for daily operations and student success.

Herb Guidry, the manager of operations for LVJUSD underscored the importance of the staff in keeping schools clean and ensuring the daily functions that keep them running smoothly. According to Guidry, schools are already understaffed in this area, with personnel like himself taking on more work than is reasonable.

For example, one of his many tasks is overseeing two swimming pools—one is a \$9 million facility, and

the other is a \$10 million facility.

“If you were to take my position and combine it with a maintenance manager, there’s no way these pools are going to be maintained the way that they need to be,” Guidry said. “There’s no way that your facilities are going to be maintained, and your people are going to have to step up and clean the stuff for themselves.”

Board President Steven Drouin reiterated his support and understanding for the community’s concerns and, with consent from the rest of the board, voted to table the discussion. In reflecting on how the district has come to this point, Drouin said that while looking back on the process and the directions given to Superintendent Torie Gibson after completion of negotiations with the Livermore Education Association (LEA), he is deeply concerned.

“In good faith, I do not believe that those directives have been followed to this point,” Drouin stated. “I believe that this list was large-

ly created by two people with minimal and reluctant input from others... The end result is that this feels like a rushed job to get done and move on with.”

While no decisions were made with regard to reducing the budget for the 2026-27 school year, the board did vote to approve the tentative agreement with LEA, a decision that marks the official end to several months of contentious negotiations between the union and LVJUSD.

This motion was met with applause from the audience and several board members, including Christiaan VandenHeuvel, Craig Bueno and Emily Prusso.

“Over the past several months, this board has received a significant amount of input from emails, and public comments at our meetings,” said board member Prusso. “Across those many voices, one message has been clear and consistent: the community wants us to prioritize compensation. This tentative agreement does exactly that and

reflects the priorities that were most strongly and passionately communicated to us.”

However, even with this victory, there was still the reminder that approving this agreement comes with the hard reality of reductions and adjustments that the board will have to make in the coming months to ensure that the district remains fiscally secure.

“Those can be painful decisions that will weigh heavily on all of us,” Prusso said. “But at the same time, as a board member I cannot ignore the collective advocacy of our employees and our community. This agreement represents a direct response to what we were asked to prioritize.”

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PLEASE HELP BRING MIGUEL HOME



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

Livermore Wenté Winery worker, married father of three and grandfather

Miguel Lopez

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

To donate to a GoFundMe account supporting the Lopez family, visit
<https://www.gofundme.com/f/bring-miguel-back-to-his-loved-ones>

FLOOD

(Continued from front page)

of 2023 caused \$82 million in damages.

A 100-year flood has a 1% chance of occurring in any given year and a 26% chance of occurring within a 30-year period, a common term for a home mortgage. A 10-year flood has a 10% chance of occurring in any given year and a 96% chance of occurring within a 30-year period.

But exactly what constitutes a 100-year storm or flood is evolving. Climate change resulting from human activity has caused

both longer droughts and larger storm systems, raising the likelihood of damaging floods.

The flood management plan cited a 2018 report from University California, Berkeley that predicts larger storms becoming more frequent within the next few decades. “If precipitation increases, it might mean the 200-year event will become larger than what we now call the 200 event and occur on the 100-year time scale or the 50-year time scale, depending on what the exact

predictions are,” geologist and Zone 7 consultant Sheila Trampush said.

Those larger storms will become separated by longer droughts, increasing the frequency and intensity of wildfires. Burn scars from those fires will then increase the chances of flash flooding when the rain finally does return, continued Trampush. Following the development of its capital improvement plan, Zone 7 will form funding and public engagement plans prior to implementation.



The Language of Trees

By Christina Cavallaro

TRI-VALLEY — The new year was heralded by windy conditions and torrential rain that eventually made way for rainbow skies and green hills in the open spaces we all love so much.

I’m not too embarrassed to admit that on New Year’s Day I finished binge-watching the entire seven seasons (plus four-part revival) of the early 2000s TV series, “Gilmore Girls.”

I started in November to create a protective, happy shield around me from the emotional ups and downs of the holiday season. An editor friend of mine said, “I don’t really see the appeal,” referring to the chaotic escapades of single mother, Lorelai, and her teenage daughter, Rory. The story is set in a quirky, fictional town in Connecticut called “Stars Hollow,” filled with eccentric residents.

“It’s kind of hard to explain,” I told her. For me it’s part comfort, like a Hallmark movie, and part forcefield, like an old-timey handkerchief dabbed with perfume and held to your nose to grit through an offensive smell.

Nothing, however, could have prepared me for waking up Dec. 12 to an email from the Dublin Unified School District full of heartbreaking images of eight different trees, all chopped to the ground. The senseless act of vandalism occurred on the Dublin High School campus in the early morning hours following the school’s fifth annual tree lighting ceremony the night before.

The incident made me think of a book I’d heard about when it first came out in 2018, but I’d yet to read, called, “The Overstory.” I headed straight to the Livermore Civic library and checked out a copy of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel by Richard Powers. I began reading it as my way to honor the memory of Dublin’s fallen trees and to learn more about their power, beyond their beauty as scenery. And to try and understand why my heart felt so deeply broken when I saw all those severed trunks.

The core premise of the book is that trees are sentient, social and interconnected beings with sophisticated communication skills, and that human history is merely a small, often destructive “understory” within their much larger saga. The story is not a metaphor or a fantasy. It’s presented as a complex, biological reality that humans have simply forgotten how to hear.

Powers bases the “language” of his trees on real-life research of forest ecologist Suzanne Simard. We may not always realize it when we are lucky enough

to walk beneath the hundreds-year-old canopies of native oaks in our East Bay Regional Parks, but trees are linked in a massive underground and airborne network.

Through below-ground fungal pathways, trees can share resources and send nutrients to struggling neighbors, even those of differing species. When one tree is threatened or under attack by pests, it sends chemical warning signals to nearby trees to pump bitter toxins into their leaves to prepare for invasion.

And trees’ roles in humans’ lives provide biological, environmental and psychological protections. Despite all they do for us, Powers’ book points out, because we move so fast, we see trees as static objects rather than social, active, communicative beings.

And trees are not the only beings under senseless attack in our communities. Our nation was rocked on Jan. 7 when a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agent fatally shot Renee Nicole Good, without provocation. The entire incident was captured on video by the Minneapolis community where the wife, mother and writer lived.

The damage and destruction to life and limb at the hands of ICE’s deportation campaign has seeped its poisonous way into our nation, our communities and even “feel-good” columns such as this.

Minnesotans have rallied after Good’s killing, and demonstrations have been held in many U.S. cities, including in Pleasanton on Jan. 8.

But where does it end?

The thing is, to an ancient oak tree that can easily live 500 to 1,000 years, a human life is a brief season, or a single afternoon. A tree that has been cut down can be replanted and grow back within a human lifetime.

They may have a chance.

Democracy, on the other hand, is not a renewable resource. When it’s gone, it’s gone. The time to preserve it is now. As last week’s Editorial in The Independent asserted: We must continue to stand by our neighbors, and our leaders must make it abundantly clear that ICE is not welcome in the Tri-Valley, or anywhere.

Let us stand together as a community and, like a tree planted by the water, we shall not be moved.

Do you have tidbits about the Tri-Valley or know of interesting people, places, events or unique perspectives that should be featured in the Heart of the Valley monthly column or podcast? If so, we want to hear from you. Please email me at christina@independentnews.com.

Arend, Malina, Malick Will Present Public Radio Series ‘Selected Shorts’

LIVERMORE — Actors Geoffrey Arend, Joshua Malina and Wendie Malick will take the stage at the Bankhead Theater on Sunday, Feb. 15, for an afternoon of short stories.

“Selected Shorts” is the touring stage version of the popular Public Radio International broadcast series hosted by Meg Wolitzer, with actors reading selections of short fiction before a live audience.

Arend, Malina and Malick all have extensive

film and television experience, although all three are probably best known for their appearances in episodic TV series.

Arend starred in all five seasons of the CBS political drama “Madam Secretary,” which ran from 2014 to 2019, and 42 episodes of the ABC medical/crime show, “Body of Proof,” which ran from 2011 to 2013.

Malina appeared in such Hollywood dramas as “A Few Good Men” and “In the

Line of Fire,” but he, too, is probably best known for his small screen appearances, including recurring roles on “the NBC political drama “The West Wing,” the USA Network crime drama “In Plain Sight,” the CBS comedy “The Big Bang Theory,” and the long-running ABC political thriller “Scandal,” appearing as Attorney General David Rosen in 112 episodes.

Malick is perhaps best known for her role as Judith Tupper Stone in the hit HBO comedy series “Dream On.” winning four CableACE awards for Outstanding Actress during the show’s six-year run. That was followed by seven years as Nina Van Horn in the NBC sitcom “Just Shoot Me!” and six years as Victoria Chase in the TV Land sitcom “Hot in Cleveland,” both starring roles.

She has also appeared in more than three dozen films.

“Selected Shorts” is produced by Symphony Space in New York City and broadcast on more than 130 radio stations around the country.

Tickets to the 3 p.m. stage show at the Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., start at \$25 and are available online at livermorearts.org.

Livermore Valley Arts, which sponsors the Bankhead Presents” series of performances, cautions that “Selected Shorts” readings may contain adult language and content.

Rotary Accepting Applications For Annual St. Patrick’s Parade

DUBLIN — The Rotary Club of Dublin is accepting applications from community groups, schools and businesses interested in participating in this year’s St. Patrick’s Day Parade on Saturday, March 14.

The parade is part of the city’s annual St. Patrick’s Day celebration, which also includes a festival, fun run,

Shamrock Gala and Fire-fighter Pancake Breakfast.

“The St. Patrick’s Day Parade is one of Dublin’s most cherished traditions and Rotary is honored to help bring the community together each year to celebrate,” said Dublin Rotary president Linda D’Ambrosio. “This event reflects the heart of our city—service,

pride, and a shared sense of joy.”

To submit an application, go to rotarydublin.org and click on “St. Patrick’s Day Parade.”

There is a \$125 entry fee for nonprofit groups, a \$175 fee for small businesses and other organizations, and a \$325 fee for large businesses and parade sponsors.

LARPD Seeks Community Input

LIVERMORE — The Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) is asking community members for their input on an update to its Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan.

“Community input is an important part of this planning process,” said General

Manager Mathew Fuzie. “The feedback we receive will help inform long-term planning and investment decisions as we update the Master Plan.”

The survey is available online at larpd.org/master-plan-update through Feb. 1.

LARPD said the feedback will be considered alongside other outreach efforts, including in-person engagement and stakeholder meetings, to help guide long-term planning, system improvements and recommendations in the updated master plan.

Dublin to Hold Job Fair at The Wave

DUBLIN — Dublin will hold its annual Parks and Community Services Job Fair at The Wave Aquatics Center, 4201 Central Parkway, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 7.

The city is looking to fill seasonal aquatics posi-

tions, including lifeguards, waterslide attendants and recreational leaders.

Free training and required certifications will be provided.

There will also be recreational openings with Parks and Community Services in

other areas, including sports and family programs.

Those interested in lifeguard or swim-instructor positions should bring swim attire and be prepared to complete a swim test at the natatorium.

TRI-VALLEY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thursday, Jan 22 and 29

SQUARE DANCING LESSONS

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

Saturday, Jan. 24

DRESS A GIRL AROUND THE WORLD

Make simple dresses for girls in Third World countries! The next monthly Sew-Fest is on Jan. 24, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., at Holy Cross Lutheran Church, 1020 Mocho St., Livermore. Bring your sewing machine or serger, iron, ironing board, scissors, along with your helping hands. Come for an hour or all day! (Please bring a bag lunch if you plan to stay all day.) Cheerful cotton fabric donations are always welcome. Contact Suzanne Beck, 925-352-8447, or suzbeck@yahoo.com for questions or kits that you can sew from home.

Saturday, Jan. 24

PIANIST DANIEL GLOVER PERFORMS “VIVA I’ITALIA”

International concert pianist Daniel Glover will perform the music of Italy in “Viva I’Italia,” a benefit for 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 Jan. 24 at 7:30 p.m. at First Presbyterian Church, 2020 Fifth St., Livermore. Tickets are \$30 and may be purchased at www.valleyconcertchorale.org or at 925-866-4003.

Sunday, Jan.25

HISTORIC RANCH OPEN HOUSE

Visit historic Hagemann Ranch at your own pace on Jan. 25 from 1-5 p.m. Wander this 5-acre, historic site, see the original buildings and the gardens, and visit the animals. Docents will be on hand to answer questions and offer tours. Located at 455 Olivina Ave. in Livermore.

Monday, Jan. 26

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST & AWARDS

Three Valleys Community Foundation (3VCF) is hosting the 25th Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Fellowship Breakfast & Awards in the Tri-Valley, celebrating community service with the theme “The Fierce Urgency of Now,” focusing on courageous, compassionate action and philanthropic service and honoring local leaders who embody Dr. King’s spirit. Tickets are on sale and sponsorship packages are available at 3vcf.org/mlk-fellowship-awards. At the Palm Event Center in the Vineyards, Pleasanton, on Jan. 26 from 8:00 - 9:30 a.m.

Saturday, Jan. 31

CRAB FEED FUNDRAISER

The Dublin/San Ramon Women’s Club is holding an all-you-can-eat crab feed fundraiser to benefit local nonprofits that support foster youth, children and families. On Jan. 31, from 5:30 to 9:00 pm. at St. Raymond’s Catholic Church, Moran Hall, 11555 Shannon Ave., Dublin. Featuring a silent auction, dessert auction, prizes and games. Menu: dungeness crab, pasta, salad, bread, dessert, wine, beer, soda sales. Pricing: \$80 per adult, \$40 youth 6-12, kids 5 and under free. Register online at www.gfwcdsr.org or by mail at DSRWC 20 Lawton Ct. San Ramon 94583. For questions, call 925-381-1040.

Saturday, Feb. 7

BINGO FUNDRAISER

The Italian Catholic Federation will hold a joint fundraiser with the St. Michael Golden Friends on Feb. 7 at St. Michael’s Hall, 326 Maple St., in Livermore. There will be Mardi Gras-themed BINGO and a light lunch. Doors open at 10 a.m., BINGO starts at 10:30. Adults: \$20 per card plus lunch / children \$10 per card plus lunch / additional BINGO cards: \$10 each. RSVP by noon

on Feb. 3 to suzibg@sbcglobal.net (Golden Friends) or dcschauer@comcast.net (ICF). Partial proceeds benefit ICF local Catholic charities.

Sunday, Feb. 8

2026 LIONS SPEECH CONTEST FOR COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

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

Monday, Feb. 9

LIVERMORE-AMADOR GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY MEETING

Come hear Scott Norrick introduce on-line resources that are most useful in tracing British ancestors. Both free and subscription sites will be discussed. England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland will be covered. On Feb. 12 at 7:00 p.m. In-person at Congregation Beth Emek, 3400 Nevada Court, Pleasanton, or via ZOOM. To register, see www.l-ags.org, click on Speakers & Topics on upper left. This speaker will be presenting virtually. No charge, visitors welcome.

Thursday, Feb. 12

LIVERSMORE AMADOR VALLEY GARDEN CLUB MEETING

On Feb. 12 from 6 to 8 p.m., Karla from Beeline Blooms will be presenting about dahlias. Tubers will be for sale. At Crosswinds Church, 1660 Freisman Rd., Livermore at the red Farm Theater Building.

Friday, Feb. 13

MARIA MULDAUR & HER JAZZABELLE QUINTET; MUSIC FOR LOVERS

Maria Muldaur & her Jazzabelle Quintet will be performing their special “Music for Lovers” shows on Feb. 13 at 7:30 p.m. at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave., in Pleasanton. See firehousearts.org for details. Tickets: \$38-43. Be inspired to fall in love all over again!

ONGOING OPPORTUNITIES

FOOD RELIEF SERVICES

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

ONGOING EVENTS

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

SATURDAY PLEASANTON FARMERS MARKET

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

SUNDAY LIVERMORE DOWNTOWN FARMERS MARKET

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

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OBITUARIES

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Dennis Earl Dickman
June 6, 1945 — Jan. 11, 2026

Long-time Livermore resident Dennis Earl Dickman passed away on Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026. Dennis was born to June and Jay Dickman at the Naval Hospital in Oakland, California on June 6, 1945, and he was 80 years old on the date of his passing.

Dennis moved to Livermore in 1948 and graduated from Livermore High School in 1962. He married Carol Ann Higgins in 1964, and they bought their first house in 1969. This home is where they raised their three children, Darren, Michael and Deedra, and where they continue to live to this day. Dennis was dedicated to and greatly loved by his family, and he will be remembered for his incredible toughness and work ethic. Anyone who has ever known Dennis will only be able to smile when they think



of him driving his John Deere Tractor.

Dennis is survived by his wife of 60 years, Carol; his three children, Darren, Michael and Deedra; his nine grandchildren, Cody, Kaylee, Austin, Matthew,

Madison, Brett, Nathan, Annabelle, and Joseph; and his five great-grandchildren, Sadie, Mila, Parker, Violet and Abigail; and his John Deere tractor!

A funeral will be held on Jan. 23, 2026, at Callaghan Mortuary beginning at 11 a.m. The service will be followed by a Celebration of Life at the Dickman family home at around 1 p.m. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you plant a favorite plant in memory of Dennis.

Lastly, the Dickman family would also like to thank our family, friends and neighbors for all their support and care during this time.

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

Paula Bligh Greeley
Oct. 12, 1952 — Dec. 26, 2025

With heavy hearts and gratitude for her life, we announce the passing of our beloved mother, sister, and nana. She was born in Palo Alto, Califor-

nia, and resided in Livermore, California. Her faith was the foundation of her life. She found comfort in prayer and strength in knowing she was

guided by God's purpose. She will be remembered for her gentle spirit, kind heart, and love for others. You will be missed.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Thelma "Elaine" Koopmann
Jan. 31, 1929 — Nov. 9, 2025

We lost our beloved Elaine, a ninety-six-year-old, beautiful spirit. She had been a resident of Livermore, California, for the past fifteen years. Elaine passed away in the comfort of her own home, under Hospice of the East Bay care. Her love, kindness, generosity, strength...and smile, will always be remembered.

Elaine was born to Edward and Thelma (Schilling) Secada in Oakland, California, on Jan. 31, 1929. Her family was living in San Francisco and moved to Sunol in 1938. She graduated from Sunol Glen Elementary School with nine other classmates. She was a cheerleader for three years while attending Amador High School in Pleasanton. Elaine spent her senior year at the old Hayward High School (where Hayward City Hall now stands), graduating there.

Elaine married the love of her life, a native of Pleasanton, Robert L. "Bob" Koopmann in 1947. They were married for 64 years. In their retirement, they traveled across the United States with their trailer, boat and fishing poles, meeting up with and making lifelong friends. They also traveled to Europe several times to follow their ancestry. In 1984, Bob and Elaine built a home in Murphys, California, where they lived until health issues required them to move to Livermore.

Bob and Elaine were instrumental figures in the development of Pleasanton and active in the community. Elaine and Bob started a linoleum and carpet business in 1953. Koopmann Li-



neum was located on the corner of Main Street and Angela Street for twenty-three years. Later, they built a shopping center, Adobe Plaza, which was completed in 1978 on Ray Street and soon moved their business there. Bob renovated the Kottinger Adobe Barn/jail of 1852 that was located on the property. With Elaine's efforts, this site was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985. Elaine sold the Adobe Plaza in 2021 to Bruce and Erika Torquemada. Through the Torquemada's love of Adobe Plaza, the Koopmann legacy lives on.

Elaine joined the Pleasanton Soroptimist businesswomen's club in 1956 and became a Life Member. She was instrumental and spearheaded the chartering of the Dublin Soroptimist in 1982. Elaine was President in 1962-63, and 1972-73. She proudly represented her club, on the board of directors for Amador Valley Scholarships Inc. for 14 years.

She was a pillar for women in business. Other affiliations were many but, she was a longtime member of Native Daughters of the Golden West (NDGW), (Elaine was a dual member to Ruby Parlor, Murphys and Angelita Parlor, Livermore); NDGW Past Presidents Association; Museum on Main; Tulancingo Sister City; Hayward Historical Society; Business and Professional Women's Club (PBW); and most recently a Life Member of VFW Auxiliary Post 7265, Livermore. She attended meetings up until her last year at age ninety-six for these charitable organizations.

Elaine joins her late husband Bob Koopmann, son Dennis Michael Koopmann (infant death) and daughter Marilyn Koopmann Rowe (died 1997). She is survived by her sister Carole Lewis of Fremont; and two children Sheryl Stanger (Virgil) and Robert C. "Bob" Koopmann (Julie). Her grandchildren: Sarah (Brick), Monnica, Tonya, Virgil "Russ" (Polly), Rosie, Sheryl Anna, Tyler and Abbie. Her great-grandchildren: Kayla, Joe, Nikki, David, Carlisle, Hadley, Sadie, Kaden, Lupin and Benny. The extraordinary love she shared with all of us remains in our hearts forever. We will always miss her.

The family invites you to a celebration of life on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2026, at the Adobe Barn at 200 Ray St., Pleasanton from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Amador Valley Scholarship fund or ndgw.org.

Sumiko Halcomb
Dec. 18, 1927 — Nov. 20, 2025

Sumiko Halcomb passed away peacefully and went to be with our Heavenly Father on Nov. 20, 2025. She was almost 98 years old. She was born on Dec. 18, 1927, in the prefecture of Osaka, Japan. She was a resident of Livermore for 62 years. She lived a life devoted to family, faith, service, and creativity. She was loved.

After growing up with her grandparents and completing her education, she met and married Army Staff Sgt. Dewey "Bob" Halcomb. Together they lived in Japan before moving to the United States, where she became a U.S. citizen. She raised three children while supporting her husband's Air Force career until he retired. They were married for 49 years.

Sumiko was a longtime member of Our Savior Lutheran Church Ministries since 1963. In the 1970s, Sumiko helped with Sunday school for eight years. She volunteered for Sunday afternoon Chapel services at the Livermore VA Medical Center from 1980 to 1998 under Chaplain Robert Krueger. Later, her husband joined her in this service, and they worked together until he became ill. She also joined the Harvesters of Our Savior Lutheran Ministries, a group of people who visited newcomers. She became part of the Bread Makers and Bread Takers of the church. She made loaves of homemade bread to carry to newcomers who had visited the previous Sunday.

She volunteered for the "World Vision Organization," which helped children all over the



world. She headed the Countertop Display Program by making sure local businesses had collection displays all around Livermore.

She was an active member of the Las Damas Women's Club, which she joined in 1976 and stayed with until they had to fold in 1999. She was the official photographer and an award-winning historian for many years.

A gifted artist, she excelled in oil and watercolor painting from a young age. She was a member of the Mount Diablo Porcelain Art Association, affiliated with the California State of the World Organization of China Painters, which she joined in the 1970s. In later years, due to her many eye problems, she slowed down but kept her membership and attended meetings and demonstrations. She participated in painting demonstrations at the Alameda County Fair, promoting the old art of porcelain art.

For fun, she joined the Red

Hat Society, which wore red hats and purple attire and went on local adventures, mostly in the San Francisco Bay Area.

She spent her final days in Creekview, a long-term care home, where she received good care. Her memory was failing, but she loved to have visitors. She especially loved when people would sing so she could join in.

Sumiko lived a full life and took advantage of what it had to offer. Her life reflected a lifelong love of community, learning, and creativity.

She was preceded in death by her husband Dewey E. Halcomb, mother Yasuko Ito, father Shosaku Ito, sister Toshiko Burch, and one grandchild. She is survived by her children Brenda Killian of Richmond, Virginia, Donna Redfern of Livermore, California, and Robert Halcomb of Livermore, California; nine grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren; as well as her brother Katsutoshi Ito of Japan.

A funeral service for Sumiko Halcomb is Saturday, Jan. 24, 2025, at 1 p.m., located at Our Savior Lutheran Ministries, 1385 S. Livermore Ave., Livermore, CA. Donations can be made to Our Savior Lutheran Ministries, in Sumiko's name, honoring her legacy. She will be deeply missed, but her spirit of love, faith and compassion will live on in our hearts.

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

John David Molitoris
March 25, 1958 — Dec. 3, 2025



Dr. John David Molitoris, 67, of the Molitoris Ranch in Livermore, passed away peacefully on Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2025, accompanied by his family, after a prolonged illness. John was born March 25, 1958, in Wilkes-Barre Township, Pennsylvania. He was the beloved son, who is preceded in death by his mother, Irene M. Molitoris, father, John V. Molitoris, his sister Jean E. Sipple and nephew and godson, Glenn G. Sipple.

John knew how to enjoy life, and he was adventurous. Since he was young, he loved to hike, camp, ride his motorcycle, travel, and give back to his community. Not only was John athletic and adventurous, but he was a man of pure brilliance. He graduated as valedictorian from Coughlin High School in 1976 in Wilkes-Barre Township, Pennsylvania. He then received his B.S. in Physics from M.I.T. in 1980, his M.S. in 1983 from Stanford University and then his Ph.D. from Stanford University in 1986 under the direction of Professor Walter Meyerhof in the new field at the intersection of atomic and nuclear physics. During his time at Stanford, he continued to be active and participated in judo under the mentorship of Willy Cahill.

After receiving his exemplary and extraordinary education, John dedicated his life to helping keep America safe as an Experimental Physicist for the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Naval Post Graduate School, until his retirement after 35 years. John joined the Lab in 1986 in what is now the Physical and Life Sciences Directorate, ultimately acceding to the position of the Dynamic Experiments Group Leader and Deputy Director of the Energetic Materials

Center. In the last phase of his career, he collaborated with his counterparts at the Naval Postgraduate School in shock physics with energetic materials, continuing the long-standing relationship between LLNL and NPS. Not only was John a dedicated physicist but he was a great advocate for his peers and young scientists at the Lab where he touched many lives and careers.

John was a devout Catholic all of his life. As a young man, he was an altar boy and instilled the word of God in his children. When he moved to Livermore, John became an active member of the Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, where he brought the gift and joy of scouting to the youth of the parish. John enjoyed the simple things in life. His greatest joy was spending time with his family whom he dedicated his life to. He loved to have dinner with his wife and children, going to the movie theaters, telling stories, making people laugh, reading comics, and collecting coins and antique knives. He also enjoyed taking drives with his family any time of the day, and he loved family getaways to Monterey any time of the year. John loved nature and spent much time outside on his ranch, watering his flowers

and trees where he could breathe in the pine-filled air, hear the birds chirp and listen to the echoes of the train as it passed through town.

John was a man filled with love, especially for his three children, Cassandra K. Molitoris, John M. Molitoris, and Regina I. Molitoris and the love of his life, his wife, Lesia K. Molitoris of almost 40 years whom he is survived by along with his beloved brother Dr. Joseph J. Molitoris. John was a devoted and loving husband, father, brother, son, godfather, friend and mentor. He was a man of many mysteries, many ambitions, but most importantly he was a man who loved his family deeply, who were his pride and joy. His greatest wish in life was to see all of his children succeed, which he has accomplished.

John has changed many lives and careers for the better and will be missed dearly. John lived an incredible and accomplished life filled with love, traveling, family, friendship, joy and peace. He will always be remembered and will be in our hearts forever. We know that he has been welcomed with open arms at the gates of heaven by not only God, but by his parents, sister, nephew and his beloved dog, Sigfried. Rest In Peace and May God Bless you, John. We pray that you walk with us in this life until we are reunited with you in the next. We love you now and forever.

John's celebration of life will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 21, at the Saint Charles Borromeo Catholic Church, at 1315 Lomitas Ave., Livermore, CA 94550, which will be followed by his memorial. All family and friends are welcome to attend and share their memories at the service and memorial.

Thomas Patrick O'Sullivan
Oct. 2, 1939 — Dec. 23, 2025

Thomas Patrick O'Sullivan, lovingly known as Tom, passed away peacefully on Dec. 23, 2025, after a very short illness. He was 86 years old. His passing leaves an immeasurable hole in the hearts of all who knew and loved him.

Tom was married to the love of his life, Lydia O'Sullivan, for 65 beautiful years. Their marriage was a true partnership—one built on devotion, laughter, resilience, and unwavering love. Together, they created a home filled with warmth, humor, and deep family bonds.

Tom was preceded in death by his beloved sons, Robert William O'Sullivan and John Martin O'Sullivan, losses he carried with quiet strength and grace. He and Lydia went on to raise their grandchildren, Tabetha Lynn Young and Cassie LaRae O'Sullivan, as their own — pouring into them unconditional love, guidance, and pride.

Tom was a proud great-grandfather to Ashton Young, Autumn Young, Caleb Silva, and Jazmine Silva, each of whom brought him immense joy. He was also eagerly looking forward to welcoming his soon-to-be grandson-in-law, Mike Silva, into the family he cherished so deeply.

Professionally, Tom was a hard-

working and talented craftsman. He was self-employed for many years as the owner of Metal Craft Industries, working side-by-side with his dear friend John. After selling the business, he continued his career with Precision Founders, where his dedication and work ethic were well known and respected.

Tom had a laugh that could be heard from far away—and once you heard it, you never forgot it. It was infectious, joyful, and perfectly captured the kind of man he was. He loved the outdoors, especially time spent at the family cabin, where some of his happiest memories were made. He was an avid tennis player for many years and formed lifelong friendships on the court — friendships built on camaraderie, laughter, and mutual respect.

Over the years, Tom shared his life with many deeply loved pets, each of whom held a special place in his heart. It all began with Charlie, his old pal and constant companion, who truly did everything with him—including going to work by his side every single day. Their bond reflected Tom's gentle nature, loyalty, and capacity for unconditional love.

Above all else, Tom loved

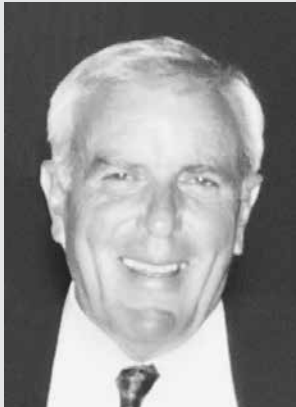
his family. Fiercely. Completely. Without condition. His presence made people feel safe, welcome, and loved. He showed his love not only through words, but through actions—by showing up, by working hard, by laughing freely, and by standing strong for those he cared about.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents, Thomas William O'Sullivan and Pearl Marie O'Sullivan; his beloved sons Robert William O'Sullivan and John Martin O'Sullivan; and his siblings Tim O'Sullivan, Maureen O'Sullivan, Merlyn Bristow, and Barbara Jo O'Sullivan, who died as a child. He is survived by his beloved wife, daughters, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, as well as many nieces and nephews, and by his loving siblings Darrell O'Sullivan, Kelley O'Sullivan, Lindy O'Sullivan, Annette O'Sullivan Gustafson, and Kerry O'Sullivan, all of whom will carry his memory forward.

Though he is no longer with us, Tom's spirit lives on in every shared memory, every echo of laughter, and every moment of love passed down through generations. He was deeply loved, and he will be profoundly missed.

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

Thomas Francis Davis
Jan. 3, 1937 — Nov. 27, 2025



Thomas "Tommy" Francis Davis, 88, passed away peacefully surrounded by his family on Nov. 27, 2025. A longtime resident of Livermore and Ripon, California, Tom was born in Grass Valley before his family moved to Oakland as a young boy. He would graduate from St. Elizabeth High School, where he first revealed the competitive spirit and athletic talent that would guide so much of his life, excelling as a three-sport athlete.

After serving his country in the United States Army, Tom graduated from San Francisco State University and played on the SFSU baseball team. He began his professional career in education as a teacher and would eventually earn a master's degree from Cal State Hayward and move into high school administration as a principal. His dedication to young people extended well beyond the classroom. A gifted and passionate coach, he led football and baseball programs first at St. Vincent High School in Vallejo and later at Livermore High School. As head football coach at Livermore, he guided his teams to back-to-back league championships in 1971 and 1972 and developed a deep love for helping players and fellow coaches reach their potential. He was inducted into the Livermore Sports Hall of Fame in 2013.

That commitment to growth, competition, and mentorship led Tom into what became a remarkable, decades-long career as a professional baseball scout. For over 45 years, and across five major league organizations, he earned a reputation as a respected evaluator—known widely and affectionately throughout the game



as "Tommy." His many awards included being named West Coast Scout of the Year by the Professional Baseball Scouts Foundation in 2010.

Tom built an amazing professional network, shaped by his strengths as an honest, genuine communicator, and he loved connecting players with coaching staff where he believed they could best develop. He identified talent for his organizations' farm systems and was admired not only for his ability to locate and project the talent and intangibles of emerging

players, but also for the way he supported and advised countless scouts, coaches, and athletes. His influence extended far beyond the ballparks he visited.

In retirement, Tom continued to pour his heart into the game and kids he loved by offering instruction, guidance, and encouragement to the high school baseball community in Ripon and other Northern California cities. He enjoyed seeing young players unlock their talents and love for the game. He was a caring friend to all, keeping relationships strong throughout the years and helping those who faced health-related or other challenging circumstances.

Tom is survived by his wife, Carolyn, a loving and supportive partner throughout their life together; his son, Jim and wife Patty, daughter Karen and husband Jon, and daughter Jennifer; Carolyn's son Jeff and wife Andrea, daughter Kristi and husband Brian, and son Steve; along with a total of eleven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. His legacy lives on in the countless lives he touched—as a teacher, coach, scout, mentor, and beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather.

A celebration of life ceremony for Tom is scheduled at 11:30 a.m. on Jan. 30, 2016, at the Big League Dreams Sports Park in Manteca, California.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests a donation to the Northern California Scouts Association (NCSA), a non-profit group of MLB scouts focused on community outreach, conducting baseball clinics, and supporting local baseball.



Dublin High Basketball and EBAL Roundup

By Mitch Stephens

TRI-VALLEY – First off, Dublin High School’s boys basketball team doesn’t carry a player on its roster taller than 6 feet three inches.

Second, the Gaels lost half their 14-man roster off last year’s stellar 24-8 team to graduation, and their top two scorers — Cam Anderson (13 points per game) and Jaiden Jones (12.3) — transferred to the nearest schools, Amador Valley and California-San Ramon high schools, respectively.

In all, the team’s top eight scorers from 2024-25 had to be replaced.

No problem, said coach Tom Costello, in his 21st season. The Gaels have more than made do.

They’re connected. Play with joy. Play for one another.

Helped certainly by one key transfer — dynamic 6-foot-2 senior guard Izaiyah Romero from Colorado — Dublin’s leftovers simply went to work, bonded as a group and are one of the biggest surprise teams in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Despite a pair of down-to-the-wire

at shooting and driving and distributing. Off the court, he’s funny, keeps things light but also loud and doesn’t call guys out. He’s just a genuine and positive leader and his classmates and teammates love him.”

Among those immediately drawn to Li was Romero, a 6-foot-2 guard with major hops (he reportedly has a 42-inch vertical leap) who transferred from Colorado Prep out of Colorado Springs (Colo.), a basketball academy with no student body to account for.

Romero’s father transferred to the Bay Area in September, and his son hit the ground running on his new Dublin campus. Before he attended college, he wanted the true high school experience, filled with big crowds at games, Friday Night Lights and general school activities.

It helped that he was so good at basketball — he’s the team’s second leading scorer at 13.3 points per game to go along with 4.8 rebounds and 3.7 assists — but it’s been his maturity, openness and charisma that has been the perfect addition to an inexperienced squad. He and Li were immediately



Dublin senior basketball standout Izaiyah Romero (13) gets airborne during the Gridley Tournament in December of 2025. Romero is Dublin’s second leading scorer at 13.3 points per game for the 14-6 Gaels. (Photo courtesy of David Stuetel)

East Bay Athletic League losses to California (70-65) and De La Salle-Concord (53-43), the Gaels entered the week 14-6 overall with impressive early wins over St. Mary’s-Berkeley (84-53), state-ranked Folsom (68-58) and 63-61 victory against Valley Christian-San Jose. And Jan. 3, when six of Costello’s players were missing due to the flu, including leading scorer and rebounder Aiden Li, somehow between 26 points from junior Nick Lee and 25 by Romero, the Gaels rallied from an early deficit to win a Bay Area Challenge showcase game at Bellarmine High School in San Jose against a Top 20-ranked team in the Bay Area.

Costello called it one of the most satisfying wins in his nearly three decades of coaching.

After a game at Monte Vista-Danville on Tuesday (Jan. 20), the Gaels host Amador Valley on Friday (Jan. 23) and visit Granada (Jan. 27).

“Our guys find a way,” Costello said. “We got guys who want to be here, who want to compete, who want to be coached and aren’t afraid of competition. They don’t take the easy road. They play with heart. They play with a little chip on their shoulder.”

Li might be at the top of the heart and chip list, as the only returner from last season that played in the rotation.

A starter on most teams last season, Li elevated right to the No. 1 option in 2025-26 and through 20 games averaged a team best 14.6 points per game to go along with 5.6 rebounds and 3.0 assists. An All-EBAL defensive back in football who came out late for basketball, made 10 of 12 shots in the Jan. 16 loss to De La Salle and scored a game-high 25 points.

A top-flight student with a 4.6 grade point average, Li has committed to playing next season at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

“He’s the head of our snake for sure,” Costello said. “He’s a very athletic, tough-minded kid. He’s equally good

picked as co-captains.

“He’s just a super engaging young man and he’s been embraced wholeheartedly by everyone,” Costello said. “It’s been a win-win because beyond our team’s success, he’s really got to experience things like Homecoming and the big student body at games. ... It sure helps to have your two top players also be your hardest workers. It’s been a true blessing.”

Lee, a 6-foot junior, is averaging 12.7 points per game but had his coming out party when Li was too sick to play versus Valley Christian. “He’s probably our best shooter overall and boy did we need him in that game,” Costello said. “He’s improved immensely in all facets and now teams are really paying attention to him and focusing on him, which frees other guys up.”

More key players are 6-foot-3 juniors Odin Chadiha and Maakan Anvari and 6-foot-1 senior Jess Viscovich, the son of a coach in the program. He does the little things like taking charges, guarding players on the perimeter and distributing the ball. “If he scores at all, it’s just a huge bonus,” Costello said.

More EBAL boys basketball games: On Friday (Jan. 23) — Livermore plays at California, Foothill hosts De La Salle and San Ramon Valley plays at Granada. On Tuesday Jan. 27, Amador Valley hosts Monte Vista, De La Salle plays at Livermore and Foothill plays at San Ramon Valley. All games are scheduled to tip off at 7:30 p.m.

EBAL girls basketball schedule: On Friday (Jan. 23) — Dublin plays at Amador Valley, Granada plays at San Ramon Valley, Livermore hosts California. On Tuesday (Jan. 27), Dublin hosts Granada, Amador Valley plays at Monte Vista and Foothill hosts San Ramon Valley.

Have high school varsity sports news of note? A good human-interest story? Email Mitch Stephens at mitch@score-booklive.com

District Dominance — Las Positas and Chabot Men’s Basketball Programs Thrive

By Matt Schwab

LIVERMORE — The Chabot-Las Positas Community College District has a hop in its step again during basketball season.

That’s because the district’s Chabot and Las Positas men’s basketball teams have dynamic players, rugged styles, and are racking up the wins.

Las Positas and Chabot met for the first time this season on Jan. 14 at the Las Positas gymnasium, also known as “The Nest,” when the host Hawks took a hard-fought 83-68 victory in the Coast Conference-North Division. The rematch is Feb. 6 at Chabot in Hayward. Circle the date.

So, they’re big rivals, right?

Las Positas head coach James Giacomazzi would not go that far.

“I would say it’s a friendly competition between the two district schools that love competing against each other, but have a mutual respect,” Giacomazzi said.

Las Positas entered the Jan. 14 matchup ranked No. 9 in the California Community College Men’s Basketball Coaches Association (CCCMBCA) state poll, and Chabot was tied for No. 26. After action last week, Las Positas had a 17-1 overall record, 4-0 in conference play. Chabot was 13-5 and 2-2. They entered this week with a combined 30 wins -- heady stuff for two teams in the same district.

The Hawks can reclaim the perpetual Chabot-Las Positas Rivalry Trophy with another victory over Chabot this season. The trophy, currently housed at Chabot, can only change hands if a team wins both head-to-head matchups in conference or takes two of three if the teams also meet in nonconference play.

So, there is an element of bragging rights at stake, but in the powerful Coast-North conference — led by reigning state champion and current No. 1-ranked City College of San Francisco — every game feels kind of like a big deal.

“We look forward to every game as it’s another opportunity to get better,” Chabot interim head coach Marquis Glenn said. “That’s the good thing about our conference. Every game is going to be a tough game, you have to bring it every night.”

The connection between the Las Positas and Chabot basketball programs goes back to the Hawks’ inaugural season, in 2006-07, when their first head coach, Tony Costello, took the reins after coaching successfully at Chabot and Dublin High School. A 1974 Amador Valley High School graduate, Costello led the Gladiators to the regional playoffs 12 times and then put Las Positas on the basketball map over eight years. His style was to develop young men while his teams played with passion.

The Las Positas season begins annually with the Tony Costello Tip-Off Classic, to honor the memory of the legendary coach.

Chabot and Las Positas played with passion in the Jan. 14 matchup. Chabot started fast and led 9-4 after a 3-pointer by silky-smooth sophomore star Zion Yeargin, but Las Positas opened up a 16-point halftime lead. Chabot rallied to cut it to four points before the host Hawks put it away.

“We’ve got to learn to keep the pedal to the metal,” Giacomazzi said, referring to Chabot’s surge in the second half. “When we take the foot off the pedal a little bit, we lose focus and we just don’t play like ourselves.”

Las Positas was led by sophomore stars Jaden Woodard, Richard Banks and Kodey Weary, who combined for 59 points, along with freshman force, 6-foot-9 Ted Bigg-Wither, from Australia, who brought the thunder from under the basket, finishing with 10 points, 13 rebounds and five blocks.

With about 8:19 left in the second half, Woodard, who had 23 points and nine rebounds, made a statement with his usual bravado. He aggressively

dived for a loose ball in traffic, gained control, and the possession arrow pointed toward Las Positas. Soon after, he converted an old-fashioned three-point play to up the lead to 12 points and tacked on a 3-pointer from beyond the arc after Bigg-Wither powered inside for a basket, and the lead was 72-57.

“That’s what you need from your sophomores, don’t you?” Giacomazzi said of Woodard. “We leaned heavily on our sophomores last year and it worked for our favor, and hopefully we can do the same with these guys this year.”

Woodard agreed with his coach that the Hawks need to keep the pressure on.

“In the first half we were being the aggressors, and the second we started off a little bit slow ... it’s a game of runs, so they were on a little bit of a run and we just had to slow them down,” Woodard said.

Weary, who had 18 points and 10 rebounds in the game, took command during a personal eight-point run in the waning stages. Banks (19 points, six assists), a smooth floor leader, scored eight of the Hawks’ 10 points during a run early in the second half.

Bigg-Wither kept the paint plugged up throughout the game.

“He’s a long drink of water, right?” Giacomazzi said of Bigg-Wither with a smile. “It’s hard to score on him.”

What’s the key to this bunch at Las Positas?

“I think we have a lot of everything,” Weary said. “We have a lot of skilled players and we really attack the paint hard ... we have an all-around hard-working team.”

Chabot was led by Yeargin, Oz Savage and Amani Johnson, who combined for 51 points.

The Gladiators will have plenty of motivation in the rematch with Las Positas.

“We will be prepared for the next time we play,” Glenn said. “Minor adjustments.”



Las Positas College sophomore wing Kodey Weary pulls down a rebound in an 83-68 victory over Chabot in men’s basketball on Jan. 14 at Las Positas. Weary had 18 points and 10 rebounds. (Photo courtesy of Alan Lewis)

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LEGAL NOTICES

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619650

The following person(s) doing business as: Universal Landscape, LLC, 1881 Collier Canyon Road, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Universal Landscape, LLC, 1881 Collier Canyon Road, Livermore, CA 94551. 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/: Francisco Duarte Marron, Office. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 24, 2025. Expires December 23, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6656. Published January 1, 8, 15, 22, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619658

The following person(s) doing business as: Revs Beauty Studio, 2222 Second Street, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Revu's LLC, 380 Misty Circle, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Revathi Battu, Principal. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 23, 2025. Expires December 22, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6657. Published January 1, 8, 15, 22, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619655

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Hala Shawarma; 2. Hala Mediterranean, 1504 Webster ST, Alameda, CA 94501 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Global Tastes, Inc., 1504 Webster ST, Alameda, CA, 94501. 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/: Aimen Sharay, President. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 17, 2025. Expires December 16, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6658. Published January 1, 8, 15, 22, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619502

The following person(s) doing business as: Weld-It Unlimited Fabrication, 23 E Airway Blvd, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Shane Orvis, 226 Joyce ST, 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: 3/2021. Signature of Registrant/s/: Shane Orvis, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 16, 2025. Expires December 15, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6659. Published January 1, 8, 15, 22, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619586

The following person(s) doing business as: Advantage Guild, 2247 Sixth ST, Berkeley, CA 94710 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Anne Szostek, 4025 New York Ave, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. 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/: Anne Szostek, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 19, 2025. Expires December 18, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6660. Published January 1, 8, 15, 22, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619577

The following person(s) doing business as: Opus Luxury Group, 2749 Fressia CT, Pleasanton, CA 94588 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Mahpie-rail Inc., 2749 Fressia CT, Pleasanton, CA 94588 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/: Hamed Nawabi, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 18, 2025. Expires December 17, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6661. Published January 1,

8, 15, 22, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619603

The following person(s) doing business as: Solecio, 18963 Rainier Ave, Hayward, CA 94541 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Johan Ocegueda, 18963 Rainier Ave., Hayward, CA 94541. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 11/23/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Johan Ocegueda, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 22, 2025. Expires December 21, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6662. Published January 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619764

The following person(s) doing business as: Fremont Auto Body & Repair, 37374 Maple Street, Fremont, CA 94536 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Saeed K. Rahman, 37374 Maple ST, Fremont, CA 94536. 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: 12/29/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Saeed K. Rhaman, General Partner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 31, 2025. Expires December 30, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6663. Published January 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619660

The following person(s) doing business as: Fairfield by Marriott Livermore, 220 N. Greenville Road, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Diamond Lodging Inc., 7755 N Gilroy Ave, Fresno, CA 93722. 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: 09/26/2016. Signature of Registrant/s/: Karamjit S. Nijjar, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 24, 2025. Expires December 23, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6664. Published January 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619694

The following person(s) doing business as: Canary in the Coal Mine, 1322A Solano Ave, Albany, CA 94706 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Danueke Eichner, 1322A Solano Ave, Albany, CA 94706. This business is conducted by an Married Couple. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: N/A. Signature of Registrant/s/: Danielle Eichner, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 29, 2025. Expires December 28, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6665. Published January 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619626

The following person(s) doing business as: Palette and Purl, 654 Joyce Street, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Denise Harvey, 654 Joyce 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/: Denise Harvey, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 23, 2025. Expires De-

ember 22, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6666. Published January 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619336

The following person(s) doing business as: Servin TCG, 2111 103rd Ave, Oakland, CA 94603 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Jesus Servin, 2111 103rd Ave, Oakland, CA 94603. 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: 9/9/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jesus Servin, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 8, 2025. Expires December 7, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6667. Published January 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619775

The following person(s) doing business as: Valley Brokers on Main, 855 Main ST, #204, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): David Morris, 855 Main ST, #204, Pleasanton, CA 94566. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 03/08/2012. Signature of Registrant/s/: David Morris, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 31, 2025. Expires December 30, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6668. Published January 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026.

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME ORIGINAL FILE NO. 609317

The person(s) listed below have abandoned the use of the following fictitious business name(s). Law Office of Hellas Leung, 15808 Hesperian Blvd, #127, San Lorenzo, CA 94580. Registered by the following owner(s): Hellas Leung, 15808 Hesperian Blvd, #127, San Lorenzo, CA 94580. The fictitious business name statement was filed on 9/16/2024 in the County of Alameda. This business was conducted by an Individual. Signature of Registrants: /s/: Hellas Leung, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 30, 2025. The Independent, Legal No. 6669. Published January 8, 15, 22, 29, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619887

The following person(s) doing business as: Yesu Host Home LLC, 5648 Bay Street, Apt #421, Emeryville, CA 94608 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Yesu Host Home LLC, PO Box 8511, Emeryville, CA 94662 This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 01/01/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Surafel Tensai, Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 5, 2026. Expires January 4, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6670. Published January 15, 22, 29, February 5, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619893

The following person(s) doing business as: Quantum Software Solutions, 4101 Dublin Blvd, Ste F #3097, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Rigoberto Leyva Salmeron, 4101 Dublin Blvd, Ste F #3097, 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/: Rigoberto Leyva Salmeron, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 2, 2026. Expires January 1, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6675. Published January 15, 22, 29, February 5, 2026.

ed above: 1/4/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Rigoberto Leyva Salmeron, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 6, 2026. Expires January 5, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6671. Published January 15, 22, 29, February 5, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619904

The following person(s) doing business as: NextHome Mount Diablo Estates, 4435 First Street, Suite 363, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Team Durr, Inc., 674 Bellmeade Way, Brentwood, CA 94513. 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/: Christina M. Dusslinger, Secretary. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 6, 2026. Expires January 5, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6672. Published January 15, 22, 29, February 5, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619560

The following person(s) doing business as: Vendly, 2363 Tripaldi Way, Hayward, CA 94545 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): KBTH LLC, 2363 Tripaldi Way, Hayward, CA 94545. 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/: Yen Ching Lee, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on December 17, 2025. Expires December 16, 2030. The Independent, Legal No. 6673. Published January 15, 22, 29, February 5, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619795

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. CA Gold Diggers Meetup; 2. My Tutoring Plan, 3056 Castro Valley Blvd #18, Castro Valley, CA 94546 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Melanie Bailey, 3056 Castro Valley Blvd #18, Castro Valley, CA 94546. 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: 12/31/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Melanie A. Bailey, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 2, 2026. Expires January 1, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6674. Published January 15, 22, 29, February 5, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619794

The following person(s) doing business as: 1. Alameda Island Apparel; 2. Alameda Island Graphics; 3. Alameda Made, 4. Isle of you; 5. Alameda Apparel ; 6. Maya Love; 7. My Oh Maya; 8. Isle of People; 9. Lava Apparel; 10. Hello Alameda; 11. Earth & Us; 12. Of Earth & Love; 13. Alameda Love; 14. Earth Love, 1548 Clement Ave, Alameda, CA 94501-6886 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Ken Yurgaitis, 1548 Clement Ave, 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/: Ken Yurgaitis, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 2, 2026. Expires January 1, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6675. Published January 15, 22, 29, February 5, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

FILE NO. 620068

The following person(s) doing business as: Allen Concrete Resurfacing, 772 Tanager Rd, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Nicolas David Leighman Allen V, 2150 Portola Ave, Suite D #259, 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/: Nicolas David Leighman Allen V, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 12, 2026. Expires January 11, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6676. Published January 22, 29, February 5, 12, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 620104

The following person(s) doing business as: Vela Design House, 1056 Serpentine Lane, Suite C, Pleasanton, CA 94566 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Gar-Cal Corporation, PO Box 24, 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: 5/6/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Rebecca Okurowski, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 8, 2026. Expires January 7, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6680. Published January 22, 29, February 5, 12, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 620105

The following person(s) doing business as: Luma Foundation, 653 Buckeye DR., Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Angel Garcia, 653 Buckeye DR., 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/: Angel Garcia, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 13, 2026. Expires January 12, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6678. Published January 22, 29, February 5, 12, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 620014

The following person(s) doing business as: Barrel Down Wine Services, 2356 Palm Avenue, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Meredith Sarboraria, 2356 Palm Avenue, 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:

2/15/2021. Signature of Registrant/s/: Meredith Sarboraria, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 8, 2026. Expires January 7, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6679. Published January 22, 29, February 5, 12, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 619999

The following person(s) doing business as: Becca Sews, 128 Northwood Commons, Livermore, CA 94551 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Rebecca Okurowski, 125 Northwood Commons, 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: 5/6/2025. Signature of Registrant/s/: Rebecca Okurowski, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 8, 2026. Expires January 7, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6680. Published January 22, 29, February 5, 12, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 620155

The following person(s) doing business as: Golden Pacific Realty, 7161 Amador Valley Blvd, Dublin, CA 94568 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Yadira Estrada Reza, 7161 Amador Valley Blvd, 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: 1/04/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Yadira Estrada Reza, Broker. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 14, 2026. Expires January 13, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6681. Published January 22, 29, February 5, 12, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 620188

The following person(s) doing business as: Level Five Design, Inc., 362 Henry ST, Oakland, CA 94607 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Level Five Design Inc., 362 Henry ST, Oakland, CA 94607. 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/: Rye Hudak, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 15, 2026. Expires January 14, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6681. Published January 22, 29, February 5, 12, 2026.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 620199

The following person(s) doing business as: Calcoast - ITL, 683 Thornton ST, San Leandro, CA 94577-2627 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Cummins Lighting Laboratory, Inc., 683 Thornton ST, San Leandro, CA 94577. 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: 1/2/2026. Signature of Registrant/s/: Douglas G. Cummins, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on January 15, 2026. Expires January 14, 2031. The Independent, Legal No. 6682. Published January 22, 29, February 5, 12, 2026.

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Livermore Municipal Airport Mural Unveiled

Importance of Public Art and Alternative Energy Combine in New Installation that Celebrates Transportation Innovation

By Christina Cavallaro

LIVERMORE — A creative collaboration between local artists and clean-air transportation organizations and their supporters has taken flight in an expansive new mural occupying the side of an immense hangar at the Livermore Municipal Airport.

The mural consists of three panels made of a material called Dibond, an artist substrate often used by sign makers because it can be easily moved around. One larger central mural, 24 feet by eight feet, and two smaller, eight-by-eight-foot flanking murals were installed Dec. 21 onto the side of their unusually located home at West Jack London Boulevard and Discovery Drive.

The project's originator and lead, Livermore artist and educator Thomasin Dewhurst, expressed hope that the outdoor art installation will ignite the public's imagination for similar future projects in other unique locations across the city.

"I was very pleased with the connections this project made between diverse sectors in the Livermore community — the City of Livermore itself, the Livermore Commission for the Arts, the Livermore Municipal Airport, Gillig buses, Ava Community Energy, Monarch Tractors, Trek bikes, Livermore Lions Club and the Bothwell Arts Center," Dewhurst said. "I was excited that art had been the instigator for these connections, demonstrating its definite place in the Livermore community."

Sponsored by the City of Livermore and the Livermore Commission for the Arts, the "Clean-Air Transportation Innovation Mural," represents the union between visual artists at Livermore Valley Arts' Bothwell Arts Center and local clean-air transportation organizations recognized for their innovation in alternative energy.

As one of Livermore's public electricity providers it is Ava's mission "to drive increased access to clean energy while serving the needs of our customers and the well-being of our community."

The organization generates electricity for residents and businesses in Livermore from renewable sources such

to the Livermore Airport. Early buses that led to the development of local electric buses are also depicted. The background includes the Livermore hills, an aerial view of the airport and San Francisco Bay, with hydrogen-powered ferries on view.

The students, guided by youth leader Caroline Powers Robinson, began work

for artists, both visual and performing," she said. "It is a place of inspiration that spans many fields."

The participating youth artists shared their thoughts on the experience and the completed project.

Las Positas College student Mikayla Henry expressed pride for the lasting impact the piece will have on future generations. "I felt very connected to my hometown of Livermore as I made it because I was painting grapes and vineyards and the diversity of our town."

Granada High School student Jamie Yi was grateful to have been able to show a small part of herself to the city where she has spent more than half her life. "The completed project makes me so happy. I learned a lot. I developed a mural style and learned how to design artwork in a cohesive way."

Inara Hepting of Las Positas hoped the mural might convey a world worth fighting for.

"So many of these inventions are already more than an idea — and there's still hope to save the climate."

Another Las Positas student, Kenzie Taylor, felt the mural was a step in the right direction for young artists in the community. "We need more artists breaking boundaries and trying new things. And I hope this experience inspires growth within our small artist space."

Granada's Katelyn D'Souza touched on current discourse in the artistic world that often pits artists and technology against each other — alluding specifi-

cally to AI, which has been argued to harm the environment. "However, this mural is hours of teamwork and painting, dedicated to modern technology that serves our city. I hope that it communicates the message that technology is meant to serve humanity and our earth, rather than act as a replacement or shortcut to art."

Cole Gable of Livermore High spoke to the enriching experience of learning to work as a group, while allowing artists to have their own spaces to grow, leaving room for individual expression as well. "I feel that I was able to contribute my vision of Livermore to others and showcase what is important to me about our home."

In conclusion, Ava Community Energy said, "Public art brings people together, starts conversations and reflects what matters locally. This mural specifically gives local youth a platform to tell their community's story about clean energy and innovation. We support dozens of local organizations per year in projects that make our community shine. This mural does exactly that."



A dual celebration of artistic expression and scientific advancement is on display in a new public art piece created for the Livermore Municipal Airport with major sponsorship by the City of Livermore, Livermore Commission for the Arts and Ava Community Energy. (Photo — Jacob Clouser)

Ava Community Energy sponsored the youth mural portion of the project as part of their hyperlocal Community Sponsorship program.

"We're proud to support this project because it celebrates the technologies that are reducing emissions and improving air quality across our region," Ava said in a statement to The Independent. "The mural makes the clean energy future visible and tangible for everyone who sees it."

as wind and solar.

"We're on a path to providing 100% carbon-free electricity for all customers by 2030, 15 years ahead of the state's mandate," the agency said.

The mural includes the work of eight professional and six youth artists, all rooted in Livermore. Electric buses, and electric- and hydrogen-powered ferries feature in the imagery, along with an historic timeline of selected aircraft linked

to their sponsored mural in July. It highlights wind, solar and other environmentally sustainable operations in a visionary landscape. Livermore Valley Arts showed its commitment to supporting the youth art project by offering Bothwell studio space to the student artists rent-free.

Dewhurst expressed her gratitude for the local arts incubator.

"I think the Bothwell Arts Center, and similar spaces, are vital to a community and

Annual Volunteer Fair Draws a Crowd

By Vivien Wenneker

The annual Make a Difference Festival returned to the Pleasanton Senior Center for its 26th year, bringing together dozens of local nonprofits to highlight volunteer opportunities in the community.

"In one day, visitors to the festival can learn the many ways local organizations are working year-round to make our community even better," said W. Ron Sutton, who created the annual event.

Sutton is also cofounder of the Pleasanton-based Make a Difference, Today and Always nonprofit organization, which cosponsored the festival, along with the City of Pleasanton, Pleasanton Unified School District, Community of Character Coalition, Accusplit Inc., Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Karlsson & Lane Accounting Services.

Among the participating organizations were the Assistance League of Amador Valley, Amador Valley Lions Club, Hively, JustServe, Goodness Village, NAMI Tri-Valley, Tri-Valley Reach, Pleasanton Partnerships for Education Foundation, Tri-Valley Haven, Sunflower Hill and Valley Humane Society.

Each year, the festival connects residents with nonprofits in the area, providing them with a direct pipeline to get involved and learn of the

many ways they can make a difference.

"Volunteerism is addictive — once you do it once, it's easy to get hooked and be onto the next thing," said Linda Wong, who serves on the outreach committee for the Lynnewood United Methodist Church in Pleasanton.

The event also allows nonprofits to connect with each other, and steer volunteers towards where the need is greatest. For example, during last year's festival when not working the tables, Wong started speaking to Jackie Ayo of Goodness Village, and a connection developed.

Goodness Village is a nonprofit that operates a 28-unit tiny home community in Livermore for residents who have experienced chronic homelessness and works to provide permanent housing and support services that allow residents to heal and live independently.

According to Ayo, the connection was cemented over a Zoom meeting where members of the church's outreach committee asked how they could help Goodness Village. At the time, the nonprofit answered that it had a need for bikes, and five months later, members of the church brought over six brand new bikes.

"It was a very emotional experience for everybody," said Ayo, the community en-

gagement manager for Goodness Village.

Ayo has been with Goodness Village since 2021, having started out as a member of its 24-hour support staff and gradually working her way up to her current leadership role. Part of her work involves going to events to spread the word about Goodness Village as well as hosting the organization's podcast, "The Good Pod," and managing its social media.

For her, one of the most rewarding parts of volunteering and her work with Goodness Village has been getting to see firsthand the transformations of the residents it supports.

"We have a pretty low turnaround because of permanent housing, so watching the transformations of people who live there — seeing people sober up, or get a job after they thought they'd never work again has been really rewarding," Ayo said.

Also, when it comes to getting involved, Ayo said that it's less about being a consistent, hands-on volunteer, and sometimes can involve things as simple as watching videos and following a nonprofit's social media.

"There are different levels of support, so I don't want people to feel like they have to be here every week to show support," Ayo said. "It's not just about volunteering; it's also about spreading the word.

Sometimes all it takes is for people to hear about you and then reach out to get involved."

Now entering its fifth year, Goodness Village will celebrate its fifth anniversary on June 30 (which also happens to be Ayo's birthday) and is continuing to grow its presence in the community.

According to Ayo, the nonprofit is considering opening a second location, and is currently working with its community center, hoping to add more houses.

"Ideally, it would be nice to have a Goodness Village in every city," Ayo said. "It's not just about providing people with houses, but the support that they need to get back on their feet."

Goodness Village is one of many nonprofit organizations that rely heavily on volunteer support, and events like the Make a Difference festival are integral to helping spread the word about the work they do and fostering a spirit of volunteerism in the community.

"Being a volunteer, I think you learn about what the needs are in the community," Wong said. "Be it as a church or individual, volunteering can teach you how to participate and help people in need."



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