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County Redistricting

Pleasanton Could Be Split From Tri-Valley

By Larry Altman

REGIONAL — The Alameda County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday adopted new district boundaries that will keep most of Pleasanton separate from its neighbors in Livermore, Dublin and Sunol. The Tri-Valley will continue to be represented by two supervisors.

Although numerous residents wrote and spoke out for months in favor of uniting the Tri-Valley cities in one district because of their common interests, the board's new boundary lines shifted just 16% of Pleasanton from Supervisorial District 4 — represented by Nate Miley — into David Haubert's primarily Tri-Valley District 1.

The remaining 84% of Pleasanton will stay in District 4, which includes a large portion of Oakland and runs through Castro Valley and Fairview.

District 1 includes Dublin, Livermore, Sunol, a small portion of Pleasanton, and a large area of Fremont.

"We have some tough choices to make where some people agree and are happy and some people are not," Haubert said before the board voted 4-0 to approve boundaries that will be in effect for the next 10 years. "Every one of those decisions has a strong rationale behind it."

Supervisor Keith Carson abstained from voting on the finalized map, which will

(See REDISTRICTING, page 6)



Chabad of the Tri-Valley celebrated Chanukah on Dec. 4 with the lighting of a public Menorah in front of Livermore's Bankhead Theater. For more holiday photos, see page 8. *[See photo gallery at www.independentnews.com/multimedia]* (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

At Santa Rita Jail

Third Officer Faces Prison for Sexual Abuse of Inmates

By Larry Altman

REGIONAL — A day after a U.S. Senator called on U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland to fire the head of the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), another male corrections officer was charged last week with sexually abusing a female inmate at the system's institution at the Santa Rita Jail in Dublin.

The charges against John Russell Bellhouse, 39, of Pleasanton, came months after Ray J. Garcia, the former warden at the Federal Correctional Institute (FCI Dublin), and a fellow officer, Ross Klinger, were charged with similar offenses.

Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Illinois), chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, cited Garcia's case while demanding Garland immediately remove BOP Director Michael Carvajal, who was appointed by former U.S. Attorney General William Barr during the Trump Administration.

"It's a recurring pattern of misconduct by officials within the Bureau of Prisons who believe they can abuse inmates and break the laws with impunity," Durbin said during a Dec. 2 floor speech.

U.S. Rep. Eric Swalwell, a Democrat who represents the Tri-Valley in Congress and serves on the House Judiciary Committee, said Carvajal should appear before the panel.

"The recent revelations at FCI Dublin, and throughout the Bureau of Prisons system, are cause for concern," Swalwell said. "I hope the House Judiciary Committee will hear from Director Michael Carvajal soon about what he's doing to address these abuses."

The BOP declined to comment on Durbin's call for Garland to fire Carvajal.

"The BOP takes seriously our duty to protect the individuals entrusted in our custody, as well as maintain the safety of correctional staff and the community," spokesperson Randilee Giamusso said. "Allegations of staff misconduct are taken

(See PRISON, page 7)

Marine Shares Afghanistan Experience

By Dawnmarie Fehr

PLEASANTON — Andres Rodriguez, a captain in the United States Marine Corps' First Marine Division, experienced the U.S.'s controversial withdrawal from Afghanistan firsthand.

The Pleasanton native had been deployed to Kuwait in April, and said he wasn't surprised when his team of marines received the call to head into Afghanistan.

"We arrived in Kabul on Aug. 17," Rodriguez said. "My guys all got tasked out to support different entities. I initially was on the operations floor for the first couple days, liaising with people and different units there. There were American units and units from different NATO countries, so it was hectic. But I spent the majority of my time there at the Abbey Gate, deconflicting, supporting."

During the chaos of the final days of August, Rodriguez and his unit, helped process people trying to board planes to escape the country before the Taliban reached the city. Rodriguez said a person hoping to leave needed one of five important documents: a United States passport, a United States visa, a green card, a special issue visa, or a yellow embassy badge from the Kabul Embassy.

"If a person had one of those five, they were good to begin processing," Rodriguez said. "When I was helping, I was helping the people who didn't have those, but



Andres Rodriguez

(See MARINE, page 7)

Wind Power Lawsuit Cites Eagle Killings in Altamont

By Jeff Garberson

REGIONAL — The National Audubon Society and several local Audubon branches have filed a suit against Alameda County to block development of a new 80-megawatt wind turbine project in the Altamont Pass area.

The lawsuit alleges that in giving approval to the project, known as Mulqueeny Ranch, the County has not carried out needed environmental reviews or worked to ensure adequate protection for birds and bats.

According to the Audubon Society, the Altamont Pass area is home to the densest nesting population of golden eagles in the world.

The eagle population is now declining, however, because so many birds have been killed since wind power development began in the 1980s, the organization charges.

In addition to golden eagles, wind power projects are killing unacceptably high numbers of other important bird species, as well as bats, according to an Audubon statement.

Birds being killed include western burrowing owls, red tailed hawks, American kestrels and tricolored blackbirds.

Mike Lynes, California state policy director for the National Audubon Society, said that Audubon "supports responsibly developed wind projects…, but we have been forced to file this lawsuit because Alameda County has broken its commitments and failed to protect birds and bats in the Altamont Pass for 40 years."

He said the county has "approved a poorly planned project that they know will kill golden eagles and other birds in violation of state and federal laws and that will contribute to the continuing declines of golden eagles and other sensitive species."

The Alameda County Counsel's Office did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

As described by a National Geographic fact sheet, the gap provided by the Altamont Pass in the Diablo Mountain range channels winds west to east at a relatively steady average speed of 15 miles per hour.

(See LAWSUIT, page 7)

Commission Approves Affordable Senior Units

Eden Housing Project Moves Forward

By Ruth Roberts

DUBLIN — The planning commission has taken the next steps toward building Eden Housing's fifth affordable housing development project within the city limits.

In a unanimous vote Nov. 3, commissioners approved the site development review permit for the Eden project on Regional Street, in the downtown Dublin Transit-Oriented District, which would develop 113 units to serve very-low- and low-income seniors. The Dublin Transit-Oriented District is zoned for a mix of residential and commercial buildings, centered around easy access to transit, such as BART. The issuance of the permit enables Eden Housing to apply for the remainder of the funding needed to bring the project to fruition.

"We build high-quality, well-managed communities that benefit not only the residents, but also the neighborhoods in which they are located, and we are very excited about this new project," said Tami Strauss, Eden Housing associate director of real estate development.

The project would include 55 studios, 57 one-bedrooms, and one unrestricted two-bedroom manager's unit. All the units would be restricted to senior households earning between 20 and 50% of Alameda County Area Median Income (AMI). It will include 57 parking lots built around a contemporary five-story building with landscaping and amenities, including a community room and fitness center.

"I really like and appreciate this project," said Commissioner Dawn Benson. "I

(See UNITS, page 6)

Project Site Construction Relaunched

Legacy Apartments Underway Again

By Larry Altman

LIVERMORE — Following an interruption of about four months to find a new general contractor, construction work recently resumed to build the 222-unit Legacy Partners apartment complex in downtown Livermore.

SBI Builders, a San Jose-based residential and commercial general contracting company, took over construction on the Legacy development from Katerra, a Houston contractor that filed for Chapter 11 protection in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in June.

Renato O'Neal, co-owner of SBI Builders with his partner, Paul Nuytten, said the project was about 35% completed when construction halted. The job will take a couple of years for his firm to complete, he said.

"There's a substantial amount of work left," he said.

O'Neal said he and Nuytten heard news about Katerra's bankruptcy filing, looked at the list of Katerra projects suddenly made available for other contractors and bid for the Legacy job through a surety firm handling the matter.

O'Neal said SBI Builders beat three other general contractors, and once the "extensive paperwork process" was completed, began planning; work on Oct. 26.

According to its company website, SBI specializes in

(See LEGACY, page 6)

City Considers Community Input on Climate Action Plan

By David Jen

PLEASANTON — The City of Pleasanton hosted a community meeting Dec. 2 to hear public comments on the draft of its new climate action plan (CAP).

Although the draft charts a course for the city to reach carbon neutrality in 2045 — in line with the state's climate goals — residents at the meeting urged the city to be more aggressive with its plans.

"I think that Pleasanton residents are ready for more substantial action," said resident Becky Dennis.

As an example, she suggested that businesses within the city, like the planned Amazon distribution center, include the impact of worker commutes and customer traffic when making zero-carbon commitments.

Resident Jocelyn Combs echoed the need to act quickly.

"I would like to see more (requirements) and fewer suggestions," she said, referring to the list of actions in the plan.

Andrea Martin, Climate Action Director at Cascadia Consulting Group — which contracted with the city to develop the CAP — said the enormity of the climate change issue must be balanced with the limitations of a single city.

"We've tried to really focus through this planning

(See CLIMATE, page 6)



Pleasanton's Hometown Holiday Parade returned to Main Street on Dec. 4, delighting spectators with elaborate floats, classic cars and revelers on foot, scooter, bicycle and unicycle. The parade was followed by a tree lighting ceremony in which Mayor Karla Brown helped Santa flip the giant switch that lit the tree in front of Pleasanton's Museum on Main. This was the first holiday parade since 2018. The event was canceled in 2019 due to weather and again in 2020 because of the pandemic. (Photo – David Jen)

PET OF THE WEEK



CERSEI

Come see Cersei! Comfortable and cozy, soft like cashmere, this young feline is cautiously quiet. Keep a collection of gifts and offerings coming, and she'll keep you close. The clear-cut option is to choose Cersei! Learn more about Cersei and other cats and dogs at valleyhumane.org. Email info@valleyhumane.org to start the adoption application process.

(Photo - Valley Humane Society)

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Local Woman Helps the Community with Sixth Annual Bus Ticket Fundraiser

By Dawnmarie Fehr

Jacky Poulsen is kicking off the sixth year of her Tri-Valley Bus Pass Drive to provide passes for members of the community who have no form of transportation.



Jacky Poulsen shows off a handful of bus tickets. Her annual fundraiser helps the needy gain needed transportation. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

Poulsen said the passes are an important lifeline for those in need, and while she accepts donations for passes year-round, she gathers most of her funding during the holidays.

"(The passes) enable them to get to medical appointments, food pantries for groceries, jobs and job interviews, many local services, such as hot meals, showers, laundry, and much more," Poulsen said. "Additionally, buses help people stay dry and warm during the cold and wet days and nights."

Poulsen uses the funds she raises to purchase passes from Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA), known locally as Wheels. She pays the full price of $3.75 for each 24-hour pass she purchases and gives them to local service centers to distribute.

"A bus ticket is not a Band-Aid but rather a life preserver for our friends living on the street, struggling in their day-to-day lives," said Donna McKenzie, spokesperson for the Livermore Homeless Refuge. "The cold, rainy season is here, making it even more difficult for them to get around. Please help us help them."

Poulsen began the tradition of collecting bus passes following a suggestion from a friend who volunteered at a homeless shelter. She began by petitioning family and friends for money for the passes. As word spread, so did her campaign. She took her efforts to the community six years ago and has now raised funds to donate thousands of passes to many Tri-Valley organizations. Those groups — including the Livermore Homeless Refuge, Open Heart Kitchen, Asbury United Methodist Church, Interfaith Sharing Food Pantry, Axis Community Health, and Tri-Valley Haven — hand the passes directly to those who need them.

Poulsen collaborates with Asbury United Methodist Church to process all donations. The church office handles the accounts for her, and she said she is very appreciative of their support of her efforts.

"The donation is to Asbury United Methodist Church," said Poulsen. "I email a 'thank-you' letter, and it has an actual receipt from Asbury that has their tax ID. They keep a separate account for the bus passes, giving the whole program a legitimacy that makes people feel comfortable."

Rosemary Young of Interfaith Food Pantry agreed that the bus passes offer an important service to local residents in need.

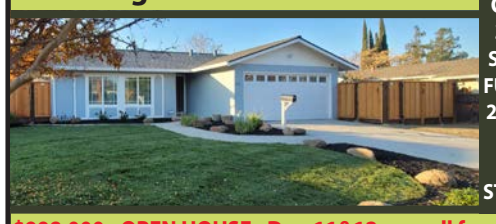
"Sometimes one bus pass can solve what seems like an insurmountable problem of how to get to a doctor's appointment or job interview,." Young continued.

For more information on the bus pass drive, or to donate, visit bit.ly/2021buspasses. Donations can also be made by mailing a check to Asbury United Methodist Church, 4743 East Ave., Livermore, California, 94550. Please write "Bus Pass" on the envelope and in the memo line of your check.

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Nonprofit Alliance Unveils New Grant Program

Tri-Valley Nonprofit Alliance (TNVPA) hosted its inaugural recognition event "The Power of Giving" at the Bankhead Theater, on Dec. 7, where officials honored the beneficiaries and benefactors of the Tri-Valley Nonprofit Fund.

The group also announced the expansion of the fund into a broader grant program to continue the momentum, which began during the first campaign. The grant program launches in January 2022.

During its first campaign, the Tri-Valley Nonprofit Fund raised $183,000 in unrestricted funds, distributing over $30,000 total to each the beneficiaries in three rounds. The organizations were Axis Community Health, Open Heart Kitchen, CityServe of the Tri-Valley, Tri-Valley Haven, Senior Support of the Tri-Valley, and Spectrum Community Services (Meals on Wheels).

The evening ended with a surprise announcement by TVNPA CEO Kathy Young and Board President Carolyn Siegfried about the expansion of the Tri-Valley Nonprofit Fund into an annual grant program.

"The success of the first campaign of the Tri-Valley Nonprofit Fund demonstrated the importance of providing unrestricted funds to nonprofits in support of program and service delivery," said TVNPA CEO Kathy Young. "In fact, the immediate impact we saw inspired our grant program's tag line: 'Immediate Impact – Measurable Results.'"

Any 501(c)3 organizations serving the Tri-Valley communities of Dublin, Livermore, Pleasanton, San Ramon, Danville and Sunol, will be eligible to apply for grants of between $1,000 to $5,000 four times per year.

"Matching partners determine the amount of their match," Young explained, "We are excited to announce that CHEF and the Suttons have committed to match the first $25,000 at 150%. We couldn't be more grateful for their continued support."

For more information, visit tvnpa.org/tvnf.

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City of Dublin to Host Meeting For Two Upcoming Projects

The City of Dublin is hosting a community meeting on Thursday, Dec. 9, at 7 p.m., to provide Dublin residents with information about the proposed Inspiration Drive Memory Care and Assisted Living projects located on the Valley Christian Center property at 755 Inspiration Drive.

The applicant proposes to develop a 55-bed memory care facility and an 84-bed assisted living facility. Both facilities are considered residential care facilities for the elderly (RCFE). The public can join city staff at this community meeting to receive a short presentation about the proposed Inspiration Drive projects and development process. The meeting will be held at bit.ly/3y1ytnF.

Las Positas Program Helps Guide Students' Path

By Dawnmarie Fehr

Las Positas College (LCP) in Livermore is part of a national movement called Guided Pathways, an organization designed to make navigating higher education less difficult and more focused.

Since starting the program five years ago, LPC has made strides to implement new policies in line with Guided Pathways — a framework shared among all community colleges in California to help students get the classes they need to graduate with employable skills.

"From our lens, Guided Pathways is really about looking at the student experience," said LPC President Dr. Dyrell Foster. "Looking at how they are entering and moving through to completion of their goals through our institution. It's about their experience of what we do."

Foster noted the movement has spread across the community college sector, allowing LPC to streamline the journey through its classes in terms of structure and career options. Prior to implementing the pathways program, students were asked what they wanted to major in. Now they are asked what career they would like to have, so their experience can be focused on their desired outcome.

Nan Ho is LPC's Dean of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). As an administrator, she has worked on Guided Pathways since its inception at LPC five years ago. She said that in addition to focusing on end results, the program aids students as they navigate their courses.

"We are looking at ways to provide timely support for students to help them move through the institution in a timely manner," Ho said. "Ultimately, it's about helping students achieve their educational goals. There's a lot embedded in that journey ... there's a lot for us to restructure the student experience from their lens."

Guided Pathways has four pillars to help students. First, they identify the path they want to take; learn how to get on the path; learn how to stay on the path; and lastly, they ensure they've learned what they needed in their journey.

An example of the real changes being made to help students find the right path for their goals can be found right on LPC's website in the Program Mapper, which helps students explore career options, salaries and local job growth predictions, along with the educational components for those careers.

Kristy Woods is a math faculty member at LPC and one of the faculty leads working on Guided Pathways. She said the entire campus has embraced the process of putting this program in place, with input coming from students, faculty and staff.

"It's easy to see from a student perspective what it's like to go through the student experience," said Woods. "We had faculty try to register and see where we can make huge changes. Within a year, we had this whole plan mapped out with an idealized order to meet the need to graduate with a degree in two years."

Woods said that though some of the changes have only been in place since May, there is evidence they are working. The college's counselors have noted students are coming in with focused questions based on program maps they have created using the school's Program Mapper.

"I think it really is empowering the student to know anywhere, anytime, what they are interested in, opening doors to careers they may never have thought about," Woods said. "They can see immediately our degrees are meeting local needs in terms of employment, and the classes they need to take to achieve those are here."

LPC is also working with Cal State East Bay so prospective students can decide whether they want to complete their education at Las Positas, or transfer.

LPC is located at 3000 Campus Hill Drive in Livermore. For more information or to register for the spring semester, call 925-424-1000 or visit www.laspositascollege.edu.


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EDITORIAL New Regional Nonprofit Will Be Transformative

Three Valleys Community Foundation (3VCF) announced its launch in October this year and immediately hit the ground running. The nonprofit has partnered with similar organizations for services, training and overall guidance. Already, 3VCF has received significant financial commitments from Alameda County Supervisors Nate Miley and David Haubert, along with others from the community.

The geographically based organization is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in the Tri-Valley and surrounding East Bay communities. The name, Three Valleys, is a nod to the Amador, Livermore, and San Ramon valleys, an area that encompasses the communities of Alamo, Danville, Dublin, Livermore, Pleasanton, San Ramon and Sunol. 3VCF serves the community as a liaison between existing local donors and nonprofits, helping to secure dollars and new donations as a way to keep charitable dollars local and groups thriving.

At a recent Dublin City Council meeting, the 3VCF leaders requested $50,000 in funding to help the organization assist other charitable groups in the Tri-Valley. We hope Dublin is able to contribute. In addition, we encourage Livermore and Pleasanton to join the cause as well. Supporting the nonprofits that benefit the Tri-Valley will impact our region for generations to come.

MAILBOX

Mailbox Guidelines:
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Biggest Looters
Alan Marling, Livermore

While you must have heard about the smash-and-grab robberies at Union Square of many stores including Walgreens, you likely didn't know that in 2020 a California judge found the same company guilty of wage theft. Walgreens was forced to pay back $4.5 million to its employees.

Wage theft is a widespread problem in the USA, though you might not know it from the news coverage. Though less exciting than a smash-and-grab, wage theft harms the average citizen more. The Center for Public Integrity analyzes minimum wage and overtime violations from the Department of Labor. In 2019 alone, the agency cited about 8,500 employers for taking about $287 million from workers.

Even more disturbing is how the wealth in this country is trickling up. Billionaires hoarded another $2 trillion since the start of the pandemic. While the rich get richer, the rest of us get poorer and more desperate.

If we wish to prevent the need for burglaries, we should fight the root causes of desperation. We should increase our social safety nets and invest more in education. An ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure.

For instance, California spends over $81,000 per inmate per year. We could take that same money and give four citizens a basic universal income of $20,000 a year. That's enough to take off the keen edge of desperation. If you can afford to buy the essentials at Walgreens, you won't have to risk everything to rob it.

So, what can we do? At the Federal level we can pass the Build Back Better reconciliation bill, which will hopefully reduce the ridiculous costs of drugs and childcare, while also providing child leave. At the city level we can build more affordable housing.

Not only are better safety nets the norm in first-world countries and the morally correct thing to do, they're also more effective. People respond better to rewards than punishments. It doesn't matter how great the threat of imprisonment is; if someone is desperate, they're going to take a chance and steal. Then we all lose.

People in Glass Houses Should Not Throw Stones
Alan Heckman, Livermore

The City is planning to provide a ballot measure to raise our taxes.

One approach used to pass parcel taxes is to promise an exemption for homeowners 65 and older. This is the case with the Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District parcel tax.

The exemption is not automatic. You have to fill out a form with the school district and supply your personal information to prove your eligibility.

On the Alameda County Government websites, you can look up the tax bill of your neighbor, your friends. You can even look up the tax bill of any homeowner, such as Livermore Mayor Robert Woerner or Livermore Independent Publisher Joan Seppala. So, I did.

I am wondering, as I look online, why has the Livermore school parcel tax been taken off our Mayor's property tax bill? His financial disclosures show he has significant assets.

It is in the public interest to know if our Mayor believes the schools are not worth $11.50 a month.

Joan Seppala pays the school parcel tax. I am sure she and her husband would qualify if they wanted, but they pay it.

Why are Mayor Bob Woerner and his allies – who say they care about the entire community – attacking Joan Seppala for not caring because she wants Eden Housing moved across the street and she wants the number of affordable units increased by 100?

Bob Woerner, don't throw stones if you live in a tax-exempt house.

If we voters see that our elected officials tell us taxes are good for the community, but not good for themselves, will we support more taxes?

Lives Will Be Saved
Laurie and Bill Herbert, Pleasanton

Today in Michigan, a gun got into the wrong hands. Again. As a result, at least three students are dead and six more are wounded.

This could happen anywhere. Even here. That is why we are so proud that the Pleasanton City Council just voted in a new Safe Storage Ordinance. The ordinance clarifies California state law in three ways:

It clarifies exactly what safe storage is: firearms must be stored in a locked container or by using a gun lock. It applies to ALL residences. It applies to ALL residences, regardless of the presence or absence of children.

During 2020, gun sales surged by 64% and unintentional shootings by children increased by 31%. 2021 has already had the highest number of incidents in the past seven years.

Today a gun got into the wrong hands. Again. If you are a gun owner, lock up your firearms. Lives will be saved.

Today, we hold the victims and families in our hearts. Again.

The Council's Poor Choices
Jim Hutchins, Livermore

In 2018 the Livermore City Council chose Eden Housing to build a moderate- and low-income apartment project on the old Lucky site. Eden Housing then modified the city's proposal to only contain low-income, very low-income, and units for the homeless. They portray themselves to the city as good stewards for low-income housing projects. The reputation for other similar Eden projects within the Bay Area says otherwise.

Eden Housing operates more than a hundred properties in the Bay Area according to their website, four of which are in Livermore. Reviews for their properties list numerous complaints, including mold, pests, vermin, non-working fixtures, dirty and littered common areas, rude and uncaring staff, and inadequate parking. Many of the reviews say their properties' condition is so bad it is often unlivable; some include photographs documenting the problems. Eden Housing is not BBB accredited, and they have a one-star rating with them. Yelp likewise has a one-star overall rating for them, with two stars being the highest rating of any review. It appears their properties start off nice, but as they age problems appear, and Eden doesn't seem to address them.

Interestingly, according to their tax filings, for at least the last few years, this "non-profit" has had an income well over their expenses, i.e., they are making a very good "profit". For the years 2016 to 2019, their income totaled $211 million, while their expenses totaled only $68 million. In those years, they spent less than one dollar for every three dollars they brought in. When their 2020 filing is available a similar pattern is expected. That is money they should be using for upkeep of their properties. Will their Downtown Livermore property have the same fate?

In 2018, the Council made a poor choice when they chose Eden Housing. It is time the Council fixes their mistake.

We Have a Long Way to Go
Eloise Hamann, Dublin

Evidently Anthony Beckett of Pleasanton earns more than $400,000 per year since he expects to pay more in federal taxes. Biden has pledged over and over that any raise in taxes will NOT affect those whose income falls below $400K. Or possibly he fears an audit might increase his taxes since more dollars will be spent on additional IRS agents. The $80 billion dollars spent is expected to yield a handsome profit of $400 billion according to economist, Larry Summers, when people pony up what they owe.

It is a common trick of Republican Congress creatures to make every effort to make the wealthy pay their fair share by talking as if taxes are proposed to be increased on everyone. "Now is not the time to raise taxes," is the usual refrain. Did anyone of middle income or below notice the tax cuts under the last president? Were there Republican cries about the increase in the national debt because of this gift to the rich? Under Trump, the national debt went from $19.9 trillion to $27.7 trillion, an increase of 39%. No worries about grandchildren then.

When I was tabling at the Dublin Farmers' Market against the recall, a woman claimed that Newsom had raised her taxes. When I asked which ones, she replied, "All of them." When I pointed out that state income taxes hadn't gone up and those counties are responsible for sales tax increases, she said, "Well, then it was Biden."

If Rep. Swalwell is gleeful, he has a right to be although many critical areas have been removed such as allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices. However, caps on monthly cost of insulin and annual total drug expenditures remain. Swalwell cares about the everyday American and Build Back Better after being cut in half still addresses their welfare with support for families including pre-kindergarten, family leave, lower taxes on families and people with low income. In fact, a majority of Americans support every item in BBB, but sadly not enough people know what's in it. Thank you, media for paying more attention to the political drama queens.

What will benefit rich and poor alike in BBB is a large investment in clean energy. That will save us from spending more FEMA money. Still, there's a long way to go before 2030 to improve our chances of a livable world.

Maybe We Don't Need the City
Thomas Soules, Livermore

Not surprisingly, after all this time and in spite of the constant expressions of the desires of the people, I am convinced that the mayor and city council will not consider another location for their planned low-income housing.

However, maybe we do not need the city. Two characteristics of Livermorans that I have noticed after being here for twenty years are: one, for the most part, they are rich, and two, they care about their city and the less fortunate among them. Being from the Midwest where people in general are not rich, I can say this. If you bought a home in Livermore forty years ago, you now have an equity of perhaps a million dollars just in your home. Also, folks in Livermore likely work either for one of the big tech companies or in one of the national labs and earn a six-figure income.

So, what if these socially conscious rich folks of Livermore pooled their money, formed an LLC, and bought the partially built Legacy housing just on the other side of L street. Right now, these buildings are a real eye-sore and have been standing half-built for six months. The LLC could convert them to low-income housing. Alternatively, the LLC could buy the area north of Railroad and build low-income housing there, as many have proposed.

I am not a real estate developer or investor. However, I know a lot of people consider low-income housing to be a great investment. The government helps pay for it and subsidizes the rent. It provides a steady stream of at least partially tax-free income. We, as investors in the LLC, would help the low-income folks obtain housing, get a reasonable return on our investment and protect the character of Livermore. We could ignore the city as the city has ignored us.

Keep Up the Good Work
Bill Buchanan, Livermore

As a student at Las Positas College for the last 20 years since my retirement as a teacher and administrator at the Oakland Unified School District, I was pleased to read that the college was implementing a special program for Black students, a historically underserved population. It is similar to the program that the school has for veterans, which has done great things for a specific population of students.

I am proud of the fact that Las Positas College staff recognizes the need for this program and am confident that it will improve the overall operation of the college, resulting in improvements for all the students attending the school.

In no way will negative comments about this program be beneficial to either the college or the students. It is time to think positively and recognize the important benefits that will accrue to all involved. You are a great school that offers a great educational program and experience for those who attend. This program can only enhance that experience for more students.

Keep up the good work, Las Positas College.

In Praise of the City Council
Kevin Lalor, Livermore

Thank you for your service, your time, and your commitment to making Livermore a great place to work, live, and raise a family. I remind you that, despite their claims to the contrary, those who attack you week after week with their negative advertisements and language represent only a minority of the citizens of Livermore.

Most Livermore citizens support you. When you ran for office, your platform was based on support of the downtown development plan. We overwhelmingly voted for you over the candidate who opposed the plan. You have the support of major groups including the Livermore Wine Growers Association, the Livermore Chamber of Commerce, Livermore Downtown Merchants, Downtown Inc., Visit Tri-Valley, Livermore Shakespeare Festival, and more. The citizens have demonstrated our support of the downtown plan with the hotel vote that was vehemently opposed by the opposition.

The downtown plan is the plan, and it's a good plan. The downtown plan will enhance the community. These new residents will be active, engaged members of the community that will invest in our local businesses. This is especially true because they will be more likely to work and live in Livermore vs. needing to commute great distances where they would be contributing to global warming.

Please don't stoop to the level of the opposition to defend your position. The subset of citizens who oppose your efforts are obstructionists. They oppose diversity, don't care about the next generation, and can't accept the fact that they now are a minority. If the opposition represented the will of the people, they would not have withdrawn their Central Park Plan Initiative.

I am excited about the entire downtown plan. Most of my friends feel the same way. It will help the economy; it supports good infill, transit-oriented, reasonably priced housing that will give my kids and employees a chance to live in Livermore.

Thank you again and for serving the needs of the citizens of Livermore.

Acts Of Kindness
Donna Neuenschwander, Livermore

I would like to share three acts of kindness I received this past week. The first was on Tuesday when a gentleman paid for my groceries at Lucky's. Fortunately, I was able to thank him for his kindness. The second occurrence was at Safeway on Saturday when the lady in front of me also paid for my groceries. Unfortunately, I was not aware of this so was unable to thank her. The third act of kindness was from a dear friend who delivered a beautiful Poinsettia to my front door. How lucky can one be!! So nice to know that in this time of negativity there are special people who brighten one's life. I will certainly try to "pay it forward."

Why We Feel Betrayed
Johnna Thompson, Livermore

I recently went to the Independent's archives (Thank you, Independent, for making your archives freely available and easily accessible!) to refresh my

(See MAILBOX, page 5)

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MAILBOX

(Continued from page 4)

memory on the details of the downtown development saga, and why so many of us feel betrayed by the city council's actions.

In 2017, the council hired a consultant, PlaceWorks, at a cost of $500,000, to hold workshops and public meetings to distill public opinion regarding development of the space from the Bankhead Theater to South L Street, mostly on the 8.2-acre site of the old Lucky store. This public outreach was initiated in response to the massive public outcry against the council's prior proposal with Lennar Corporation to build 260 housing units on the site. The Nov. 23, 2017 edition of the Independent reported on the summary that PlaceWorks would be presenting to the council at its Nov. 27, 2017 meeting. According to PlaceWorks, 2000 community members participated in the workshops, and 1,175 filled out the Priority Ranking Worksheets that PlaceWorks provided. The participants identified parking, community character, and open space as the highest priorities, and cultural facilities, public finance, and housing as the lowest. The majority of participants favored a hotel on the west side of Livermore Avenue, and the hotel developer, Presidio Companies, said that the hotel would work anywhere on the 8-acres, but that on the west side "there is a lot more area to play with."

So, what did the council choose to do? Did they take to heart the conclusions of the expensive outreach process? Does the downtown plan they approved prioritize parking, community character, and open space, and have a west side hotel? No. The council's plan has a hotel east of Livermore Avenue without parking; will its guests' cars take up space in the city's public parking garages? The council's plan prioritizes 4-story housing on a large portion of the old Lucky site, with insufficient parking spaces for the number of housing units, the overflow, again, to be accommodated in public parking garages. Finally, is there lots of open space? Look at the city's and Eden Housing's plan and judge for yourself. Is it any wonder we feel betrayed?

Countering Invective Harmonics for Education

Greg Scott, Livermore

"The paradox of education is precisely this - that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated." (James Baldwin)

In the Mailbox letter, "Striking a Chord for Education," in The Independent on Dec. 2, author Owen Brovont adeptly mimics the invective propaganda of the Manhattan Institute and the American Enterprise Institute about educating students on America's long, intrinsically racist past that is carried to the present. This diatribe is also congruent with the incendiary venom of Tucker Carlson's June 25, 2021, show on the same issue on Fox News.

"How many Americans know that the claim that anti-racism is harmful to white people is one of the basic mantras of white-supremacist ideology?" (Ibram Kendi, "The Mantra of White Supremacy," The Atlantic, Nov. 30, 2021).

As a result of these right-wing institutes' insidious ideologies on this topic, former President Donald Trump issued an Executive Order in September 2020 on critical race theory, which has been, thankfully and healthily, rescinded.

"Before mass leaders seize the power to fit reality to their lies, their propaganda is marked by its extreme contempt for facts as such, for in their opinion fact depends entirely on the power of man who can fabricate it." (Hannah Arendt, "The Origins of Totalitarianism," 1951).

Is it any wonder that the voting rights bill, H.R. 1, the For the People Act, has not passed the U.S. Congress in this dark climate?

To the African American, Latino/Latina, Indigenous American, Asian, Pacific Islander, White and students of all races and cultures at Las Positas College and everywhere, here is a Langston Hughes poem: "What happens to a dream deferred? / Does it dry up / like a raisin in the sun? / Or fester like a sore - / And then run? / Does it stink like rotten meat? / Or crust and sugar over - / like a syrupy sweet? / Maybe it just sags / like a heavy load. / Or does it explode?"

Others and I envision a more equitable world. It is from "...the experience of structured marginalization that critical race theory was born." (Patricia Williams, "How Not to Talk About Race," The Nation, Nov. 1/8, 2021). Please follow Martin Luther King, Junior's advice: "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

Where are the City Contamination Reports?

Donna Cabanne, Livermore

Where are the Eden Housing contamination testing results? We were told the first week of August that contamination testing results would be ready in about 6 weeks. That would have been mid-September. Now it's December; another 12 weeks have passed. Why is the city report taking so long? What is the hold up?

After receiving testing results, the Water Board will tentatively approve a clean-up plan and issue a fact sheet. The public will only have 30 days to comment on the proposed clean-up. It is critical that ALL residents receive the fact sheet to be able to comment in a meaningful and informed manner. The costs of clean-up are likely to be more expensive if an underground garage is built at this site. Other clean-up alternatives, similar to those used to clean-up J cleaners before installing Stockman's Park, could be cheaper and require less monitoring.

Please email all city council members and request the fact sheet of the updated Water Board contamination findings for Eden Housing be mailed to ALL residents. Email Mayor Woerner, bwoerner@cityoflivermore.net, Bob Carling,rwcarling@cityoflivermore.net,Trish Munro, pkmunro@cityoflivermore.net,Gina Bonanno, rebonanno@cityoflivermore.net, and Brittni Kiick,bkiick@cityoflivermore.net. Please ask all council members to hold a hearing to explain the possible clean-up solutions and the costs for each alternative. If we are going to pay more taxes, we should know the costs for all clean-up choices upfront.

Something Very Special

Ann Giannini, Livermore

Greetings citizens,

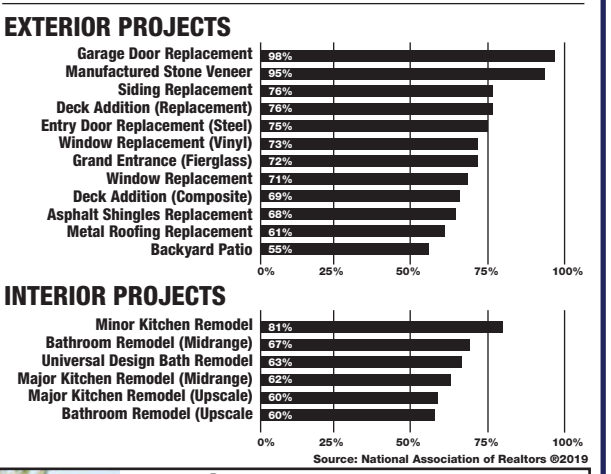
Have you had the pleasure of listening to the Pleasanton Concert Band consisting of over 45 professional musicians conducted by the delightful Bob Williams? Over the years they have performed here at our Ravenswood History Park and Alden Lane Nursery among others.

Unfortunately, they have been unable to practice in Pleasanton due to COVID-19 restrictions, so they have been practicing at our Bothwell Arts Center. They can only perform in Pleasanton outside at this time, burrr cold!

We have now the wonderful opportunity of attending their Holiday Concert, Thursday Dec. 16, at 7:30 p.m., at our Bothwell Arts Center free of charge.

Let's get together and enjoy their always lovely hour-long Holiday Performance. Hope to see you there.

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Local Resident Establishes Nonprofit Bird Conservation Organization in Nepalese Park

By David Jen

Last year, Livermore resident Larry Thompson established Birds Nepal, a nonprofit conservation organization that operates near Chitwan National Park in Nepal.

Birds Nepal aims to promote sustainable lifestyles, eco-tourism and scientific animal studies in the Chitwan area. It also began construction of a bird sanctuary this year.

"This all started when I did a birding trip there three years ago, and I met a young conservationist who just really impressed me as a person," said Thompson. "He was very poor, but he had a very strong motivation to learn and do something with his life."

The young conservationist was Seejan Gyawali, a naturalist who was guiding bird tours when he and Thompson met.

"One of the things that was remarkable to me when I met Seejan was that his binoculars were broken," said Thompson. "And, he had never owned a computer, even though he had a master's degree in zoology."

Thompson took a deep interest in Gyawali's career and eventually partnered with him and his wife, Shanta Buhsal, to start Birds Nepal. The conservation organization focuses on educating school-age children — taking them bird watching, running safari tours and teaching nature-themed drawing classes.

To further their efforts, Thompson had also planned to help Gyawali attend graduate school at Oregon State University. However, when Gyawali's visa application was rejected this year, the team put those plans on hold, and Thompson decided instead to use the funds earmarked for tuition to buy land for a bird sanctuary.

Situated on two acres near Chitwan, the sanctuary will provide a pond surrounded by grasslands and heavy forest to attract a variety of birds and wildlife. The team will also build a public bird learning and research center on the land.

Birds, however, were not always Thompson's focus. A former molecular biologist for the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, he found the need to reinvent himself when he retired about 10 years ago.

"As a scientist, I got my gratification from my research and all of that, and when it came to an end, I started trying to find new ways to make my life meaningful," he said.

He started photographing hummingbirds in his Livermore yard. The photography led to travel, which led to an interest in the people driving nature conservation in foreign countries. When he met Gyawali, conservation became intertwined with helping the people associated with it — both the naturalists and those just becoming interested.

"When you take students out, and they're very excited about seeing rhinos, then that's to me, that's success," said Thompson.

For more information, visit birdsnepal.org.

Livermore Reviews Community Assets

By Aly Brown

During a Livermore Community Asset Management Program (CAMP) meeting this week, the committee discussed the status of the city's assets, which received "health grades" ranging from A to F.

Staff graded the overall health of an asset — which includes roads, retaining walls, storm drains, streetlights, parks and other infrastructure — by its physical and financial health.

During the Dec. 6 meeting, City of Livermore Management Analyst Debbie Bell reported the grades for traffic signals (B+ for physical health, F for financial health); public buildings (C for physical health, C for financial); bridges (A for physical, F for financial); traffic signs (A's for physical and financial); and streetlights (B for physical, F for financial).

This grading structure stemmed from the city's analysis of each asset. The process included a review of its condition, the role it serves, the consequence if it fails, whether the city has adequate funds to repair or replace it, and what policies are needed to ensure funding matches the desired quality of service.

Bell said staff aims to release asset fact sheets every three weeks on different topic areas.

"We've been developing a set of fact sheets to try and give a voice to the city's infrastructure," she said.

Traffic Signals

With a B+ in physical health, the majority of the city's 108 signalized intersections are rated to be in good condition. However, an F in financial health indicates there will be funding shortages for future repairs and replacements.

Of the 6,449 components that make up the intersections, 158 are considered high risk, with an estimated cost to repair or replace them at $1.1 million. The remaining assets are considered medium risk (4,598 assets; about $29.7 million to repair/replace) or low risk (1,693 assets costing about $23.3 million).

Public Buildings

The city's 42 buildings valued at $131.4 million earned C grades, indicating they are in average condition but are not without funding obstacles. The total cost to repair or replace all assets is estimated to be $165 million — $3.8 million on an annual basis. The most immediate need — 930 components noted as high risk — could cost about $5 million.

Bridges

Not including those owned by the Livermore Area Park and Recreation District, the city owns a total of 44 bridges, which earned high marks (A) for physical condition but failed on the financial side. The current cost to replace high- and medium-risk components is about $101 million.

Traffic Signs

Poised in the best position from both a physical and financial health standpoint, the city's signs scored A's, with an estimated annual repair and replacement cost of about $205,000.

Streetlights

Another community asset to score high for physical health (B) but low on the financial side (F), Livermore's 8,000 streetlights are in decent condition, but about 20% of the asset components are marked high- or medium-risk. This could cost around $15 million.

For more information, visit https://www.livermore-assets.net.

CLIMATE

(Continued from first page)

effort on actions that the local government would have more influence over, and acknowledging that, in some cases, there's not much a local government can do," said Martin.

But some at the meeting did not see local scope as a reason to hold back. Resident Beth McCarthy brought up the value of leadership and the desire for Pleasanton to serve as a climate action example.

Combs also agreed.

"Pleasanton is the perfect community to drive this. We're educated, we're affluent, we're engaged — for the most part — and we have a biotech hub here," she said.

Known as CAP 2.0, the draft builds on the city's original CAP that was adopted in 2012 with a horizon year of 2020.

Martin described a CAP as "a roadmap of local policies to reduce our greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, enhance environmental sustainability, and prepare for climate change."

Released for public review on Nov. 23, the draft details 15 new primary actions and 10 new secondary actions designed to reduce GHG emissions and increase community resilience within the city.

According to a 2017 GHG emissions inventory detailed in the draft, transportation and buildings together accounted for about 94% of Pleasanton's GHG emissions. CAP 2.0 therefore focuses primarily on changes in these areas.

It seeks to lower transportation emissions both by reducing per-vehicle carbon emissions and by reducing vehicle usage in general. The city will expand its electric vehicle charging infrastructure to reduce emissions, while increased bicycle amenities and public transit ridership will reduce usage.

Building improvements center on phasing out natural gas and selecting clean electricity sources.

In an interview with The Independent, Beckie Menten, a program manager at East Bay Community Energy (EBCE), said, "Building electrification, at its core, is emerging as one of the key strategies towards getting to our climate targets."

She explained that as electricity generation moves toward renewable energy, the consumption side must adapt in order to take advantage of the cleaner sources. Swapping out natural gas furnaces, water heaters and stoves with electric ones are actions residents can take toward this end.

Menten manages EBCE's Municipal Electrification Assistance program that provides reach-code support, gap funding and technical assistance to cities looking to electrify their municipal buildings.

In addition to phasing out natural gas usage, EBCE will also help Pleasanton decarbonize buildings by sourcing clean electricity. Starting in January 2022, Pleasanton's default electricity option will come entirely from wind and solar via EBCE's Renewable 100 plan.

The city will be accepting written comments on CAP 2.0 through Dec. 21. Comments can be made directly to city staff or online at pleasantoncap.konveio.com. The final CAP 2.0 will be completed next year.

UNITS

(Continued from first page)

love the community aspect of it. I think it is a very well thought out and orchestrated design that allows for folks to get together."

Dublin resident Greg Bonato, who identified himself as being with the Building Trades Council, applauded the project for the local workers it will employ.

"I am speaking in support of the plan," he said. "It will be good for the economy, the environment … and it will help ensure the work is done safely by a trained workforce."

According to staff, the development is expected to cost $46 to $74 million, contingent on the number of units constructed, with completion set for 2024.

LEGACY

(Continued from first page)

constructing affordable and market-rate multi-family housing, single daily luxury and tract home building, commercial tenant improvements and residential rehabilitation projects. SBI has several projects underway in Northern California, including Mountain View, Redwood City and Hayward.

The Livermore City Council approved the Legacy development at the former Groth Bros. auto dealership site at First and L streets in June 2018. The mixed-use project includes 14,000-square-feet of retail space, three- and four-story apartment buildings, a restaurant and a parking structure. Once completed, the area containing retail will include two floors of apartments in three-story buildings. Elsewhere, housing rises from three- to four-stories in height.

The parking structure was partially completed when work stopped.

O'Neal said the first step to resuming construction was examining what was done to make sure nothing was damaged while the structure sat idle.

O'Neal said some of the subcontractors previously working on the project for Katerra returned. About 150 to 250 people will be on site every day.

When Katerra, a contractor, supplier and designer founded in 2015, announced its voluntary bankruptcy filing, the company said its financial position had deteriorated rapidly because of the COVID-19 pandemic's effect on the construction industry and inability to procure bonding for developments following the unexpected insolvency proceedings of Katerra's former lender.

Representatives for Legacy — a Foster City-headquartered real estate firm that owns, develops and manages multifamily projects throughout the United States — did not respond to emails and phone messages for comment.

REDISTRICTING

(Continued from first page)

receive a second reading and final vote on Dec. 14. But for all intent, the lines were drawn and the redistricting process that began in April is over.

Pleasanton Mayor Karla Brown said the city did not take a formal position on the various supervisorial maps drawn during the process, but noted that Pleasanton's population split into two districts could prove to be beneficial to the city.

"As a city, we have worked in sync with Supervisor Miley through the years, and we have always had a good relationship with Supervisor Haubert," Brown said. "With two representatives for Pleasanton and for the Tri-Valley on the Board of Supervisors, I see many positive outcomes for our community."

Pleasanton's Vice Mayor Julie Testa said she preferred one Tri-Valley district.

"I am disappointed that Pleasanton is being split up," Testa said. "The Tri-Valley should be kept together."

Required by law, the county's five supervisors redraw their district lines every 10 years once the latest census is taken.

During the process, the county held eight virtual public outreach meetings, received public comments online and on the phone, and accepted dozens of maps and opinions regarding which cities should be kept together as "communities of interest."

One thing became clear during public participation: a majority of those who called and wrote in from the Tri-Valley wanted one large district that included Pleasanton. The last time the districts were drawn in 2010, Pleasanton was kept separate.

In trying to keep communities with similar concerns together — while trying to balance populations in each district — consultants and county staff created three maps, including one that kept the Tri-Valley as one.

During a Dec. 2 Supervisor special meeting, however, that map did not get much support. Supervisors preferred the map that put a portion of Pleasanton in a Tri-Valley district, while addressing needs of other areas of the county. That included: placing Oakland in three districts to give the county's largest city's population three representatives; maintaining Black cultural zones; keeping Fremont's growing Afghan community together; and giving residents in unincorporated areas more representation.

During Thursday's meeting, some Tri-Valley residents continued to express support for a Tri-Valley district.

"I'm very disappointed with the resulting map after all the meetings and numerous comments in support of keeping Tri-Valley together in one district," Livermore resident Rosemarie Thorne said. "It just seems like the public comments from the Tri-Valley have been completely ignored."

Pleasanton resident Kelly Cousins added: "I was very surprised by the final map after hearing so many speakers in favor of keeping the Tri-Valley together."

Livermore Mayor Bob Woerner, however, told the supervisors he was in favor of the final district lines.

"I believe today's finalized map reasonably balances the myriad of competing factors you had to contend with across the whole of Alameda County and that the population variations are well within the legally allowed tolerances," Woerner said. "I would particularly like to thank Supervisors Miley and Haubert for working together and persevering and developing a good compromise solution for the Tri-Valley cities…It's not perfect, but I do believe it's good enough."

District 2 includes Newark and Hayward. District 3 includes Alameda and San Lorenzo; District 5 includes Berkeley and Piedmont. Oakland is represented in portions of Districts 3, 4, and 5.

County documents show each district represents a population of at least 325,000. District 1 is the largest at 348,000 people. District 2 has the largest Asian and Latino populations; District 4 has the largest Black population, while District 1 has the lowest. District 5 has the largest white population.

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LAWSUIT

(Continued from first page)

It has an historic and continuing role in U.S. renewable energy development. In the early 1980s, Altamont became the nation's biggest wind power resource area, a model for more modern wind development projects in Southern California.

Altamont grew to include some 5,000 wind turbines that eventually generated about 580 megawatts of electrical energy, according to the National Geographic.

Early growth was highly destructive to birds, however, reducing the local populations of some species like golden eagles to the point that they were "unsustainable," according to Lynes of California Audubon.

Some reports said that Altamont wind turbines were killing as many as 10,000 birds every year.

Despite the accumulation of data about bird losses, and despite protests by naturalists and conservation groups, Alameda County renewed wind turbine operating permits as they came due soon after 2000 "without any environmental review, without mitigation," Lynes said.

The county "just did what the wind companies wanted, which was renew the permits without any conditions to protect the birds."

As a result, conservation groups sued in 2005, leading to a settlement two years later that aimed at reducing bird deaths by half.

Steps agreed to in the settlement included replacing older, more destructive turbine designs with newer, safer ones – a process known as repowering -- and other measures aimed at progressively stricter protections if bird mortality goals were not met.

In the view of the National Audubon Society and its local chapters, the promises made in that settlement have not been kept. Most important overall was the goal of "reducing avian mortality by 50 percent by 2009," according to Lynes.

The specific project that triggered the new lawsuit was the County's approval two months ago of the 80-megawatt Mulqueeney Ranch project. The company developing the site is Brookfield Renewables, LLC, which believes that its efforts are appropriate for the "responsible and thoughtful development" of the wind power site.

In an emailed statement, it called Mulqueeney "a well-designed and thoroughly studied wind project, replacing over 500 old turbines with 24 modern units."

It said the project "has gone through an extensive environmental review and permitting process with particular focus on avian species."

It has reduced the number of turbines by one-third, and its operational plan includes slowing or stopping turbines at low wind speeds "to further reduce risk to eagles and bats."

The project will provide emission-free power for 18,000 homes and will be built with union labor, stimulating the local economy, Brookfield noted.

The California Wind Energy Association, an industry support group, also argues in Brookfield's favor. The company has bent over backwards to meet environmental needs, working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop a conservation plan to protect eagles, the Association wrote in an August letter to the county.

Brookfield has relocated turbine sites with eagle protection in mind and will reduce turbine spin speeds to reduce risk to both birds and bats, the Association said. It warned that further operating restrictions could doom the project by making it uneconomical.

For their part, the National Audubon Society and its local chapters make it clear that they support wind power and other renewable energy projects generally. They just want them carried out with much greater attention to conservation needs.

This latest lawsuit is National Audubon's first aimed at stopping a California wind power project.

To William Hoppes, president of the Tri-Valley's Ohlone Audubon Society, which is participating in the lawsuit, legal action was forced on the conservation groups by Alameda County's failure to live up to its 2009 promise to reduce eagle mortality by half.

"We felt we had to draw a line," he said.

On a personal basis, he hopes "the two parties might come together without going to court" to find a solution that protects birds, while allowing wind power development.

PRISON

(Continued from first page)

seriously and consistent with national policy, referred for investigation, if warranted. Incidents of potential criminal activity or misconduct inside BOP facilities are thoroughly investigated for potential administrative discipline or criminal prosecution."

Currently, more than 134,000 inmates are confined at 136 BOP facilities, including FCI Dublin. According to the FCI Dublin website, 635 women are housed at the low-security facility, with an additional 116 at an adjacent minimum-security camp.

In a statement outlining the case against Bellhouse, the U.S. Attorney's Office said the former corrections officer was placed on leave in March. The complaint filed against him alleges Bellhouse expressed interest in an inmate in 2020, called her "girlfriend," gave her earrings and allowed her to use an office phone, a violation of the rules.

Bellhouse, the prison's Safety Administrator who supervised and had disciplinary authority over inmates, started with sexual touching and twice engaged in oral sex with the inmate, including one encounter in the facility's safety office. Prosecutors allege that during the encounter, another inmate acted as a lookout.

Sexual relationships between inmates and correctional officers are illegal.

Arrested Thursday (Dec. 2), Bellhouse made his initial court appearance Friday in federal court in Oakland. He is scheduled to return to court Jan. 10.

If convicted of one count of sexual abuse of an inmate, Bellhouse faces up to 15 years in prison, three years on supervised release and a $250,000 fine.

In September, federal prosecutors similarly charged Garcia, 54, of Merced with sexual abuse of a ward. The U.S. Attorney's Office said Garcia, who had been promoted to warden, engaged in multiple sexual encounters with at least one inmate at FCI Dublin while he previously served as associate warden.

In July, prosecutors charged Klinger, 36, of Riverside with repeatedly engaging in sexual intercourse with two FCI Dublin inmates in 2020. Klinger was working in a Southern California federal prison when he was charged.

Last month, AP published an investigation that reported that more than 100 federal prison workers have been arrested, convicted or sentenced for crimes since 2019. The article cited Garcia's case along with others in the system, including guards taking cash to smuggle drugs and weapons, an associate warden accused of murder and jail supervisors stealing property.

In his speech, Durbin cited violent incidents in the BOP system, including a stabbing attack on an inmate at FCI Fort Dix, a New Jersey facility run by the warden who formerly ran the federal jail in New York where financier Jeffrey Epstein killed himself in 2019 while awaiting trial on sex trafficking charges.

Durbin said top BOP leadership, including Carvajal, had failed to implement reforms included in the First Step Act, passed three years ago to improve the system.

"Since day one, Director Carvajal has shown no intention of reforming the institution," Durbin said. "For years, the Bureau of Prisons has been plagued by corruption, chronic understaffing, and misconduct by high-ranking officials. In the nearly two years since Director Carvajal took control of the Bureau, he has failed to address the mounting crises in our nation's federal prison system. It is far past time for new, reform-minded leadership in the Bureau of Prisons."

MARINE

(Continued from first page)

who were deemed able to leave: interpreters, a couple families."

Rodriguez was also receiving texts from people in the United States who were trying to get coworkers or family members out. In one instance, a congressmen asked Rodriguez to find a family of five, in matching turquoise shirts, who were cleared to leave by the state department. Rodriguez spent an afternoon wading through crowds searching for the family, before he was able to find them.

"It was a case-by-case basis on who the state department said could go," Rodriguez explained. "Marines did the initial screening. The state department was screening at the gate and at the terminal. They made the final call of whoever didn't get to go."

The process didn't always go smoothly. Rodriguez said he had to halt proceedings and wait for direction from the state department more than once. His progress was also slowed by the suicide bombing on Aug. 26. Rodriguez was 200 meters away from the explosion and heard the ensuring chaos. During the aftermath, his company held Abbey Gate, a main entrance into the airport. In the end, he and his unit continued to process as many individuals as they could.

"My Marines, Echo Company Marines, were all there to help as many people as possible," Rodriguez said. "No one cared about the politics of it; we just legitimately wanted to help. If there was someone we could help and get onto a plane, that was all we wanted to do. We all probably would have stayed longer, have gone in sooner, if we could have, if we could have helped more people."

Rodriguez grew up in Pleasanton and graduated from Amador Valley High in 2008. During high school, he worked for Wente Vineyards in Livermore, where he met his wife, Michelle. He enjoyed hiking on Pleasanton Ridge and eating at Fiesta Taco. After graduation, he enlisted in the Marine Corps through the Livermore recruiting office and began attending school at Cal Poly Pomona. He was commissioned in 2012 and went on active duty in 2013.

Rodriguez's father, Pete Rodriguez, said he wasn't surprised when his son turned down a Reserve Officers Training Corps scholarship to go to boot camp.

"He had wanted to be a Marine since he was 8," Pete Rodriguez said. "I did 25 years in the Naval Reserves, so he was exposed to it early on, and he wanted to join the Marines because they were tough."

Rodriguez is currently stationed in Southern California. He is enjoying his time on American soil, where he can focus on his growing family.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS



The Livermore Stockmen's Rodeo Association got into the spirit of the season with a decorated stagecoach during the Livermore Holiday Parade and Tree Lighting on Dec. 4. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

Annual Turkey Burn Draws Record Turnout

A record 2,136 adults and children participated in this year's Tri-Valley Turkey Burn Family Fun Run, hosted by the Pleasanton North Rotary Club (PNR).

Runners participating in the 5K and 10K events gathered Thanksgiving morning at Ken Mercer Sports Park in Pleasanton.

Most of them had decorated their runners' bibs with messages expressing thanks for families, friends, health, pets, occupations, hobbies and love interests, while some wore turkey hats and other costumes in the spirit of Thanksgiving. Others ran with infants in strollers or their dogs on leashes, and the runners also donated canned and non-perishable food items to Tri-Valley Haven for needy families during the holiday season.

Corporate sponsors contributed $15,500 to PNR for the Rotary club's youth services, including club-level competition for the annual Richard D. King Youth Speech Contest, Rotary Interact Community Service Club at Pleasanton Foothill High School, and Rotary Youth Leadership Award camp.

"This year's Turkey Burn was everything we hoped it would be," said PNR President Michael Cherman. "It seemed like everyone was looking for a return to normalcy."

Last year's Turkey Burn was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Pleasanton's famous Balloon Platoon made its way through downtown during the Pleasanton Hometown Parade. Formed in 1974 for the KNBR Good Times Parade, the group has since performed in parades and events around the world. (Photo - David Jen)



Deacon Dave's display of holiday lights is a mainstay of the holidays in Livermore. Crowds packed the Casa del Pomba's (House of the Dove) to celebrate the 38th anniversary of this tradition. The fun kicked off with a parade down Hillcrest Avenue, before Deacon Dave's lit up over 720,000 lights. This year's theme was "America Celebrates Our Heroes." (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)



Dublin High School trustees, students and their families, celebrated the season with their own tree lighting ceremony on Wed. Dec. 1. The event also offered the community a chance to honor school district students, employees and a board trustee, who all died in recent years. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)



The Dublin Elementary School Children's Choir, directed by Irene Fong, performed during the City of Dublin's annual tree lighting ceremony on Dec. 2. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

Dublin First Grader Lights State Capitol Tree



Hadiyyah Esmat

Standing next to Gov. Gavin Newsom, Hadiyyah Esmat, a 6-year-old from Dublin, pushed the button last week that lit the California State Capitol Tree in Sacramento.

Esmat, who is autistic, was selected by the Regional Center of the East Bay (RCEB) and the state Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to represent more than 360,000 Californians who have intellectual and developmental disabilities and receive services from the state's nonprofit regional centers and facilities operated by DDS.

Esmat began receiving Early Start services through RCEB when she was 18 months old, and was later diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. The first grader now receives specialized support services at school through the Lanterman Developmental Disability Services Act.

The official lighting of the 65-foot white fir tree outside the state Capitol Building took place on Dec. 2.



Santa and his helpers welcomed the season during Livermore's Carnegie Village Park event on Friday, Dec. 3. The park was transformed into a holiday wonderland complete with shopping, food booths, community vendors and more. (Photo - Doug Jorgensen)

OBITUARIES

Marcia Ann Renck

Nov. 23, 1940 – Dec. 2, 2021

Marcia Ann Renck was born Nov. 23, 1940, in Long Beach, California to Charles and Patricia (Schulze) Renck. She attended elementary school in Lomita, California and high school in Fullerton, California. Marcia attended Santa Barbara College, and then graduated from Westmont College in 1964. She taught elementary school in La Puente, California for one year and then moved to Livermore in 1966. She taught 4th and 5th grades at Almond Avenue and Arroyo Seco Schools until her retirement in 1998. During her years in Livermore, Marcia was a member of PEO Chapter FX, California Retired Teachers Association, and was active in many other organizations and clubs.



Marcia was predeceased by her parents and her brother Leslie Renck. She is survived by a sister Sharon Renck Pearson of Littleton, Colorado, nieces Stacy Barnes of Salina, Kansas, Dayle (and Reed) Blackwell of Centennial, Colorado, Lisa (and Jason) Baldwin of Overland Park, Kansas, and nephews Kyle (and Shirley) Pearson of Council Bluffs, Iowa, Greg Renck of Lawrence, Kansas, and Ryan Pearson of Salina, Kansas, nine great-nieces and nephews, a sister-in-law Paula Renck of Overland Park, Kansas, and her many friends in and near Livermore.

A private celebration of life is planned. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to: PEO Chapter FX (Scholarship Fund), c/o Young, 3441 Streamside Circle #306, Pleasanton, California, 94588. Tri Valley Retired Educators Scholarship Fund (for scholarships to local students going into education) c/o Faye Younker, 1792 Old Tower Road Livermore, California, 94550. Foundation www.support.pkdcure.org or 1001 E. 101st Terrace, Suite 220, Kansas City, Missouri, 64131.

Kristen Marie Adams

June 26, 1962 – Nov. 27, 2021

Kris Adams, age 59, passed away peacefully Nov. 27 at her home after a long battle with cancer. Born on June 26, 1962, in Green Bay, Wisconsin to Donald and Karen Adams. She was the fifth of six children in the Adams family.

Kris attended Wisconsin schools in Green Bay, Plover, Steven's Point and Madison before moving to Pleasanton, California with her family in 1977.While attending Amador High School, she became an awarded diver on the school swim team; accomplished by her self taught dedication and efforts.

After her June 1980 graduation from Amador High, Kris attended Chabot College Hayward. She transferred to California State University where she furthered her education and diving skills as a member of the university swim team.Kris graduated with honors from California State Hayward in 1994 with a BA in political science. Kris accomplished her educational goal while working two and three part time jobs and finally a full-time position at Bradshaw, Inc. Pleasanton until July 1998.

Hired by the City of Livermore July 1998, Kris put her BA degree to task seriously. She loved her position as Assistant to the City Council and Mayor for seven



years. She then switched to the City Manager's office as Administrative Specialist serving on numerous committees and teams, authoring over 1,000 proclamations and certificates. Her photography provided numerous photos for the city, including Executive Team and police portraits. She retired from the city after 19 years.

Passionate about environmental issues, Kris installed solar on her roof, purchased an electric car and always recycled faithfully. She planted and maintained her trees, shrubs and a garden. Her solitude was frequently found at the ocean where she sought the elusive sea otters and gorgeous sunsets to photograph. Her photography provided her family with countless albums filled with memories of weddings, babies and family reunions. Kris was quiet, tenacious and intuitive; an avid reader; a pet lover and frequent pursuer of educational and fun online classes. She loved going to all State and National Parks, watching sports, Warriors, Packers and especially the Olympics. Kris's last dogs, Abbie and Angus were her devoted companions and the loves of her life.

She is survived by her mother, Karen Lott, Livermore; sisters, Terese Adams, Polson, Montana; Patricia George (Nick), Madison, Wisconsin; Pamela Feldmann (Jeff), Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin; and brothers Tom Adams, Portland, Oregon and Steven Adams (Donna), Tracy, California; nieces and nephews, James, Joe, Nick, Kelsey, Keri, Tobias, Kyle, Jenean, and Justine; grand nieces and nephews; Alexa, AJ, Khloe, Cora, Johnny, Ava, Jack, Olivia, Angelo, Ryen, Lukas and Nico. Kris was preceded in death by her father Don and a niece Katie.

At Kris's wish, a private family ceremony is being arranged. In Kris's memory, donations may be made to your local Humane Society or Hope Hospice of Dublin, California.

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

Todd Alexander Wieskamp

April 7, 1965 – Oct. 2, 2021

Resident of Livermore Todd Alexander Wieskamp was born on April 7, 1965, and passed on Oct. 2, 2021. He was 56 years old. He is mourned by his wife of 24 years, Barbara Franks Wieskamp, and his mother, Ayn Wieskamp. He was predeceased by his father, Ted.

Todd grew up in Livermore, California, He attended Livermore High School, where he participated in the cross-country team and played the cello in orchestra. Todd graduated from Livermore High School in 1983. In 1997 Todd married Barbara Anne Franks, his friend since high school, and they were married 24 years until his passing. They had no children.

Todd was a big strong guy and used his strength in jobs such as warehouse worker, security guard and bus and truck driver throughout the Bay Area. Todd was a fun guy who always smiled and laughed with everyone he met. He would tell jokes and



stories and loved pun wars. Todd enjoyed hiking in the parks and camping in the Sierras. He enjoyed cooking, especially barbecuing, and he and his grills enlivened many picnics and campouts. He also loved big dogs, classic cars, and rock and roll. He loved sharing photos of his favorite cars, dog and places he had seen on his travels. He gave himself the nickname "Mooseman" to reflect his bigger-than-life spirit, and even put his nickname on his license plate.

Todd was a great help to his mother during his father's final illness and after his passing. He did even more in this COVID-19 period. Todd was a devoted member of Alcoholics Anonymous with 30+ years of sobriety. He was always willing to serve as a mentor and helped counsel and support many people during difficult times in their lives. He counted his fellow AA members as his closest friends. Per Todd's wishes, he has been cremated. Todd's and his father Ted's cremains will be spread at Brushy Peak Regional Preserve in the spring. Donations in Todd's name may be made to The Regional Parks Foundation, which supports the East Bay Regional Park District. The Regional Parks Foundation P.O. Box 2527 Castro Valley, California, 94546. https://www.regionalparksfoundation.org Please indicate that the donation's purpose is to add trees to the Brush Peak Staging Area Oak Grove. The family appreciates any donation to a charity of your choice.

Betty Greenlee

Sept. 9, 1930 – Dec. 18, 2020

Elizabeth Louise Cowan (Betty) Greenlee was born during the Great Depression into an immigrant farming family in the California Central Valley town of Strathmore. The youngest of six, she beat polio at an early age and became the first in her family to graduate from college, receiving a bachelor's degree from Fresno State in 1952. A committed educator, Betty would teach elementary school in both primary and substitute roles for the next 30 years. She then moved on to teach preschool at the First Presbyterian Church in Livermore while also volunteering at Sunol Regional Park for many years. She loved her church



family and was a dedicated leader within the Presbyterian Women's Association, prayer groups and several Christian charities. She also loved to travel, hike, camp, garden, cook, among many other pursuits.

Betty is preceded in death by Ralph, her beloved husband of 59 years (2019) and is survived by children Raymond (Raylene) of Napa, Ruth Micheletti (Brian) of Pacifica and Stuart (Ginger) of Livermore, seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild born after she passed. She is greatly missed by her family and friends for her sense of humor, joy of life and spirit of service. The family will be holding a celebration of life service on Saturday, Dec. 11, 2021, at 2 p.m., First Presbyterian Church of Livermore. Please join us in remembering Betty at the church or live online at http://www.fpcl.us.

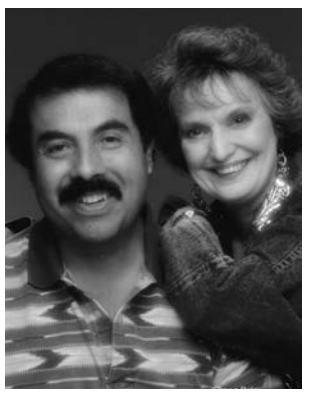
Constance (Connie) Ann Baldonado

July 29, 1944 – Nov. 13, 2021

Constance (Connie) A. Baldonado, age 77, passed away on Saturday, Nov. 13, 2021, in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, almost eight months to the date of her husband Reyes (Ray) O. Baldonado's death on March 14, 2021.

Connie was born in Waukegan, Illinois on July 29, 1944. While still a young girl, Connie's family moved to Livermore, California where she graduated from Livermore High School in 1962. Connie worked for a period as a hair stylist and then for many years in banking. Beautiful, smart, fun-loving, petite but strong-willed, from the moment they met, Connie won the heart of her soul mate, Ray. They married in 1977 and made Livermore their home where Ray worked and retired from Sandia National Laboratories.

Both were incredibly talented and creative artists. Ray was well-known for his skillful carving of gourds into amazing shapes and figures. While Connie crafted exquisite quilts utilizing her keen eye for color and unique pattern combinations. Traveling



was a shared passion, especially with friends and family. They traveled all around the world, but Hawaii held a special place in their hearts. They loved hot air ballooning and returned to Ray's hometown of Albuquerque, New Mexico to participate in the Annual Balloon Fiesta whenever possible.

During their travels, Connie sought additions for her various collections. Most notable was her famous assortment of nativity scenes, many of which were displayed year-round. As active members in the Livermore community, Ray and Connie could always be relied upon to volunteer for fundraising events including those sponsored by Sandia National Laboratories, the Amador Valley Lion's Club and St. Charles Catholic Church.

In 2017, Ray and Connie moved to New Mexico to embark on a new phase of their lives being close with family members and friends residing there. No matter the location, being with one another was what mattered most to them both. Connie will be missed by all who loved her. But there is solace in knowing that she and her beloved Ray are together again. Connie is preceded in death by her parents, Robert K. Brenton, and Marie J. Brenton, as well as her husband, Ray O. Baldonado. She is survived by sister Patricia Ocheltree and husband, Dan; sister Janice Ammendolia and husband, Anthony, along with many cousins, nieces, nephews, godchildren, and friends. A joint burial service and celebration of life for Connie and Ray is planned for early next year in Livermore, California.

Phyllis Jorgensen Fachner

May 1, 1917 – Nov. 23, 2021

Phyllis left us, enfolded in God's loving arms, on Nov. 23, 2021.

She was born on May Day in 1917 at the home of her grandparents, Carl and Ida Holm, Fairview Estate on Stanley Boulevard, then known as the "Livermore/Pleasanton Road." She was a fourth generation Livermore native, hailing from a pioneer Danish family. Her Mother was Mabel Holm Jorgensen Rees and her father was Carl Jorgensen. The family included Sister LaVerne (Coc) Jorgensen Reynolds and brother Stanley Jorgensen, both deceased. Carl was a farmer and the family resided in the stately home at East Avenue and Hillcrest Way in Livermore. He shared his love of farm animals with Phyllis. She attended Fifth Street School and graduated from Livermore High School in 1936.

As a young girl Phyllis helped her beloved Aunt Ione, cooking and delivering lunch to the Circle H Ranch hands. She earned a dollar a day! She also worked at Hagstrom's Dime Store as a young woman. She met Otto Fachner on a blind date at Sweeney Opera House on First Street. They married in Reno, Nevada on March 7, 1939. They raised three children, Gayle, Danny and Janet. Otto provided for the family working as a heavy-duty mechanic at Kaiser Sand and Gravel in Pleasanton. Phyllis was a homemaker. The family attended Sunday services at the First Presbyterian Church Livermore, where Phyllis served as a deacon. Her stewardship included visiting residents in rest homes for 15 years. She was a member of the Martha Circle Bible study, and a Mariner ship group, also helping with decorating the Christmas tree in the Fellowship Hall.

Phyllis is a Charter member, 1948, and Past President of Eagles Auxiliary #609 in Livermore, and was named "Mother of the Year" in the late 1970's. At about that time, she received an honorable mention from the City of Livermore for her outdoor Christmas decorations. She participated in Job's Daughters activities for both girls and spent many years supporting all three children in Scouting and PTA. She assisted in the snack bar at Danny's Little League



games.

While Otto served in WWII, Phyllis was on the home front helping the Red Cross, rolling bandages for wounded soldiers. Phyllis and Otto traveled extensively in the USA, Canada, Mexico and Europe. After Otto's death in 1976, Phyllis expanded her travels to the Caribbean and Hawaii.

Phyllis' grandfather, Carl Holm, helped build the Livermore Danish Lodge, and Phylis was an active member. She helped organize card parties, dinners, the children's Christmas program and other celebrations.

Phyllis had a love of gardening that carried over into her membership with the Livermore Las Damas club. One of her greatest joys was arranging flowers from her garden to create centerpieces for the various organizations in which she so generously participated. She was a fantastic cook, and every summer would "put up" dill and Danish pickles. The family always looked forward to the trays of homemade enchiladas and apple pies from her freezer. At Christmas she outdid herself, baking hundreds of cookies and gifting them to neighbors, her hairdresser, the mail carrier and so many more. Phyllis was a beautiful seamstress, sewing her children matching Christmas pajamas, and a set for a Barbie doll, too. She also refashioned hand-me-down coats during the depression. She and Otto loved to entertain, and hosted the holidays, wedding receptions and baby showers in their home and on the enclosed garden patio that Otto, Danny and Donald built, complete with wood burning stove. She and Otto belonged to a bridge club and took their turn to host with joy, enthusiasm and a great deal of humor.

Phyllis has four grown grandchildren, with whom she loved spending time as they were growing up. She packed them up to McDonalds and out to feed the ducks at Springtown Pond. She made them egg and olive sandwiches for picnics up Mines Road and to wade in the creeks. Phyllis went on to welcome 11 great-grandchildren and 10 great-great-grandchildren, who delighted in spending time with her.

In 2016 Phyllis was honored in the Livermore Rodeo parade as the oldest living Livermore High School graduate. She was 99 at that time. Phyllis was also a lifetime member of the Livermore Heritage Guild and attended their dinners and auctions.

Phyllis is pre-deceased by her parents, her husband, her in-laws, her siblings, her friends and many cousins, aunts and uncles. Phyllis is survived by her loving daughter, Gayle Fachner Diltz and son-in law, Donald, of Riverbank, California; her precious son, Daniel A. Fachner of Chandler, Arizona; and adoring daughter, Janet Fachner Von Toussaint, of Livermore. She leaves many nieces, nephews and cousins who loved and cherished her and will miss her dearly.

Phyllis' life was dedicated to the constant thought of others. She exemplified kindness, open-mindedness, thoughtfulness, acceptance, generosity and selflessness. Her faith was strong. She was a compassionate spirit, with a love so pure. She was and remains, LOVE. We will miss her so much, but her work here is complete.

The family would like to thank all of the caring hands at Heritage Estates in Livermore, where Phyllis resided since its opening in 2004. We are so very grateful for the loving care provided by Hope Hospice.

Services will be held at Callaghan Mortuary in Livermore on Wednesday, Dec. 15, 2021, at 11 a.m., with burial immediately following in Memory Gardens.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the First Presbyterian Church of Livermore or Hope Hospice in Dublin, California, if you wish. Callaghan Mortuary is honored to be serving the Fachner family. An online guestbook is available for condolences at www.callaghanmortuary.com.

Norton Evans Croft

Dec. 1, 1942 – Nov. 15, 2021

Nort Croft passed away peacefully at his home in Ashland, Oregon on Nov. 15, 2021. He is survived by his loving wife of 42 years, Linda Croft; daughter Leslie Bras of Pleasanton; daughter Tracey Abernathy of Sacramento; son Jason Croft of Ashland; son-in-law John Abernathy of Sacramento and daughter-in-law Alicia Croft of Ashland; five grandchildren, Lilly, Logan, Brennen, Carter and Caden.

Nort was born in Vallejo, California but grew up in Wauwatosa, Michigan until the age of 14 when his family moved to San Mateo, California. After receiving an MBA, he worked at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in various administrative and then management positions in Human Resources, with a short stint as the Human Resources Manager at the Berkeley Lab. Nort was a gentle soul who lived his life with integrity. He had a quick wit, a twinkle in his eye and his "joie de vivre" added to his charm. He was forever grateful for what he had, loved sharing time with family and friends, and was



loved by all who knew him. He will be dearly missed but will live on in our hearts forever.

SPORTS CORNER

With Nathan Canilao



Las Positas Men's Hoops Is Building Something Big

When you think of college basketball in the Bay Area, you might think of the success of Cal Berkeley, which featured NBA stars such as Jason Kidd or Jaylen Brown. You might think of the legendary 1998 Stanford team that went all the way to the final four on the backs of former Lakers Forward Mark Madsen and Bay Area legends Jason and Jarron Collins. Even smaller programs, such as San Jose State, San Francisco and St. Mary's, have had their respected runs at program success.

But there is a powerhouse college program that is slowly but surely brewing in the Tri-Valley. And that is Livermore's own Las Positas Hawks.

The Hawks, led by fifth year head coach James Giacomazzi, are currently 9-1 and are ranked 10th in the entire state among community colleges, according to the California Community College Men's Basketball Coaches Association (CCCMBCA).

Their success isn't new. Giacomazzi has led the Hawks to the playoffs in each of his five seasons. He's been able to develop his players so that they can move on to the next level of basketball. Players like Michael Hayes (Chico State) and Wesley Burse (Bethel) have won multiple awards under Giacomazzi and have gone on to play at a four-year institution.

The "college behind Costco" has been one of the premier college basketball programs in the state, and it seems like no one knows about them. Attendance at these games ranges from a crowd of parents to a few students who showed up because there was free pizza.

"We're trying to win a state championship every year; that's the goal," said Giacomazzi in an interview in 2020.

The Hawks have not played a full season since the 2019-2020 season. COVID-19 protocols canceled last year's season, and players have been waiting to play ever since.

The team is filled with some of the best talent that the Bay Area and Central Valley has to offer. Freshman Thomas Gregorious was a first-team, all-league selection from De La Salle High School in 2019. Malik Jackson, who is currently averaging 7.2 points per game, was one of Dublin High's leading scorers in 2020.

The Hawks are led by freshman Jordahn Johnson from Mountain House, California. He's currently averaging 14.2 points per game on 72% shooting from the field.

The Hawks are currently on a seven-game winning streak. They have won all their games by a combined margin of 23 points. Their only loss was to Butte college in their first game of the season in which they went to overtime and lost by 3 points.

The Hawks are also having success off the floor. At the end of the 2019-20 campaign, the Hawks had six players make the all-state academic team. These players had to maintain a 3.0 GPA or higher and be recognized for their play on the court. The team overall had a combined GPA of 3.01 at the end of the 2019-20 season.

Giacomazzi has put an emphasis on making sure his players graduate. He has talked to them about making sure they stay on top of their grades so that they can be eligible to play at the college of their choice after Las Positas.

The Hawks are the perfect sports team for the Tri-Valley to wrap its arms around. The identity of the team is hard-working, physical and smart, which mirrors the community it's located in.

High school basketball takes up much of the talk of the town with the success of the East Bay Athletic League teams in the past ten years. But something that could possibly be bigger is brewing down on Campus Hill Drive. Watch out for the Hawks this season as they will look to bring a state championship back to the Tri-Valley.



Members of Livermore Wrestling Club enjoyed the Boardwalk after their tournament at Harbor High School, in Santa Cruz. From left are Venture Caires, 7th grade, third place; Sam Williams, 5th grade, second place; Jayden Butikofer, 7th grade, first place; and Ty Byrd, 6th grade, third place. (Photo courtesy of Brian Williams)

Cowboys Lose First Round in Tournament To Kennedy

By Nathan Canilao

The Livermore Cowboys girls' basketball team lost its first-round game of the Washington High girls' basketball tournament 42-18 to the Kennedy High Titans on Dec. 2. This is the Cowboys fourth straight loss as they drop to 0-4 on the season.

The Titans pressed the Cowboys early, and the full court pressure forced the Cowboys into turnovers. On the defensive side of the ball, the Cowboys allowed offensive rebounds, which led to a high number of second chance opportunities for the Titans.

Sophomore Anne Polaski did a little bit of everything for the Cowboys. She had 6 of the Cowboys' 9 first half points.

The third quarter was much of the same for the Cowboys. The Titans switched to a diamond press in the second half and were able to create more turnovers. The Cowboys switched to a 3-2 zone in an attempt to stop the Titans' inside presence, but the Titans were still able to get whatever they wanted inside.

The Titans finished the game going on a 16-5 run and closed out the Cowboys. Polaski ended the game with 14 points and senior Cate Zamora added 3 points.

The Cowboys drop to 0-4 on the season and will look to bounce back on Dec. 11 in a game against Washington High at home.

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Newark Memorial Defeats Foothill High 37-29

By Nathan Canilao

The Foothill High girls' basketball team lost a non-conference road game to the Newark Memorial Cougars 37-29 on Nov. 30. The Falcons drop to 0-3 on the season.

The Falcons got into a hole early as they had a hard time breaking the Cougars' full court press. The Falcons were sped up, which led to turnovers and scores for the Cougars.

The Falcons, however, were able to beat the Cougars due to loose balls and offensive rebounds, which kept them in the game the entire half. The Falcons went on a run to end the first half and were down 9 points going into the second half.

The third quarter started off well for the Falcons. They went on an 11-2 run and tied the game with just over four minutes left in the third quarter. But the Cougars adjusted and did not let the Falcons back in the game.

The Falcons had a hard time guarding Cougars' junior forward Jaydin Armas as she finished the game with 18 points. Armas went on a 6-0 run by herself, which stopped the momentum that the Falcons had built.

The Cougars didn't look back and finished the game with a win despite only scoring 2 points in the fourth quarter.

Sophomore Riley Young finished with 12 points for the Falcons and senior Kylie Yu made both of her 3-point attempts to finish with 6 points.

The Falcons will look to get their first win as they face Clayton Valley Charter High School on Friday Dec. 10.

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Livermore Swim Team Shines at Santa Clara Junior Olympic Meet



The Livermore Aqua Cowboys finished sixth place in combined scoring at Junior Olympic Meet. (Photo courtesy of Aqua Cowboys)

At the recent Junior Olympic Meet in Santa Clara, from Dec. 3 to 5, the Livermore Aqua Cowboys (LAC) had 12 athletes in individual events and another 15 relay-only athletes.

LAC finished sixth place out of 110 teams in Pacific swimming in the combined scoring. Gabby Kleman was fourth place in the high point category for 13-year-old girls. Isaiah Silver was fourth place in the high point category for 11-year-old boys. Gabby, Isaiah, and Lillian Jeffries all had seven top 10 finishes out of seven events.

LAC's 10 and under boys' 200 medley relay and 200 free relays were both third overall at the meet. Cassie Clark, Saveta Holunga, Brian Hsueh, Lillian Jeffries, Eva Kay, Gabby Kleman, Mitchell Kleman, Tyler Ortiz, Isaiah Silver, Mica Szymanski and Zach Tekeuchi all made finals (top 10) in the meet.

LAC had a total of 88% best times at the meet, including several tha made LAC's all-time top five list.

Lions Club Hosts Student Speaker Contest

The Livermore Lions Club is holding its annual Student Speaker Contest next February in Livermore.

Students will give a five- to 10-minute speech on the topic "How Can Kindness Reunite Our Country?" The contest is open to high school students. Last year's winner was a junior from Livermore High.

These contests are held statewide. Each finalist uses the same speech at each level. At the beginning levels, the winners receive cash rewards. As they advance, they receive $4,500 and $6,500 in college scholarships. The final winner receives $10,000, making a total of $21,000 in scholarships.

Some past state winners have come from Ukiah, Ventura, Sonoma, and San Jose. This contest was started in 1937 by the San Joaquin Valley Lions.

For more information or to enter, call 805-405-8742.

CityServe Connecting Community Volunteers

CityServe of the Tri-Valley, a nonprofit alliance of churches, schools, businesses and other nonprofits, is working to connect volunteers with local service projects through its Season of Serving campaign.

"Our goal is to activate and inspire local residents to serve at one of the incredible local non-profits, schools, parks or find other ways to serve with their families or colleagues during this festive season," said CityServe CEO Christine Beitsch-Bahmani. "Our unique platform (makes) it easy for people to find meaningful ways to serve right here in their own community where they live. We hope this is just the beginning of a united effort to make a life-changing impact in the lives of our neighbors and the Tri-Valley region as a whole."

Potential volunteers can connect with CityServe at cityservecars.org. Residents can also announce an event, donate to the organization's Season of Service campaign, or submit a project in need of volunteers.



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Forty Livermore Winemakers Showcase a Range of Delicious Red Blends

By Laura Ness

Red blends continue to top the charts in terms of popularity, and Livermore winemakers are right in the sweet spot, offering a range of deliciousness from every day affordable to special occasion spendy.

At a recent annual holiday lunch at Uncle Yu's, there were more than 40 blends attending winemakers brought to share.

A couple of out of appellation wines provided backdrop, including the 2016 Odeon from Big Basin Vineyards, and a Desparada blend from Paso Robles, both of which provided contrast to similar compositions made in Livermore. Takeaway: it's harder to get Italian varietals — and Bordeaux varietals — ripe here than you think.

Brand-new was the 2018 Phil Long Cabernet Sauvignon, from Phil Long of Longevity, sourced from Alexander Valley, showing agreeably approachable fruit and soft tannins, a hallmark of that AVA. Rosie Fierro's barrel sample of her upcoming 2017 Quattro, entirely from Livermore fruit, impressed everyone who tried it.

The 2017 Stampmaker's Reserve GSM from Concannon is supple, lush and juicy. Darin Winton from Cellar 13 wowed with his elegant and well-paced 2019 Aliheliga blend of Merlot (Thatcher Bay) and Cabernet Franc (Ghielmetti).

Mark Clarin says that of all the Celtic Knot wines he makes for the McGrail portfolio, the 2018 Dara Knot is his favorite. Brent Amos brought the 2017 Las Positas Patrinus. Meredith Sarboraria showed off her blending skills with the 2017 Rodrigue Molyneaux Escondido, a combination of Merlot (52%), Cabernet Sauvignon (31%), Petit Verdot (9%) and Cab Franc (8%). John Kinney volunteered that the 2018 Occasio Dos Mesas Cabernet Sauvignon, made by winemaker Dave Hendrickson, is a bit young but possesses charm school manners.

The 2017 Choreography made by Julian Halasz of Darcie Kent Wines, of Cabernet Sauvignon (46%), Merlot (27%) and Cabernet Franc (27%), had a pleasing seam of licorice running through it. The 2018 Page Mill Livermore Valley Vintner's Blend shows off the meaty side of Syrah (35%), wound nicely with dark cherry Merlot (30%), rich chocolatey Petite Sirah (14%), cherry tobacco Malbec (7%), peppery Cabernet (6%), spicy Barbera (4%) and cool cedar closet customer, Cabernet Franc (4%).

Steven Mirassou's 100-point 2017 Lineage, comprised of Cabernet Sauvignon (75%), Merlot (20%) and Cabernet Franc (5%), exhibits polish and panache with every silky sip.

Livermore can blend with the best of them.

East Bay Community Energy Offers Incentives for Installing Public EV Charging Stations

More than $17 million in incentives is available from the California Energy Commission (CEC) and East Bay Community Energy (EBCE) to purchase and install publicly accessible electric vehicle (EV) charging stations in Alameda County.

The incentives are part of the California Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Project to support statewide efforts to phase out the sale of new gasoline-powered passenger cars by 2035.

Funding from the new Alameda County Incentive Project (ACIP) can cover up to 75% of EV charging equipment and installation costs. ACIP is funded by the CEC in partnership with EBCE, Alameda County's public power provider.

Incentives are available for new charging stations at businesses, shopping centers, gas stations, public facilities, multifamily housing developments and other community locations.

Privately-owned parking facilities may apply if the installation is for shared use parking spaces.

At least 50% of the total funding must be invested in disadvantaged or low-income communities. In addition, half of all fast-charging projects must be near concentrations of multifamily housing to help renters without access to home charging make the transition to EVs, according to EBCE.

"As the cost of EV ownership continues to decline, one remaining barrier for customer adoption is access to charging stations," said Nick Chaset, chief executive officer at EBCE. "This is particularly challenging for people who live in apartments where there is no opportunity to charge your car where you live. This project will increase opportunities for EV ownership to people who want access to the benefits that EVs provide."

The incentives range from $3,500 to $6,000 per connector for commercial-grade Level 2 EV chargers and $30,000 to $80,000 for high-powered DC fast chargers. To apply online, visit tinyurl.com/yc39yka6.

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ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 21CV001646

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner:
Tracie Leigh Roddick
5584 Hermitage Court
Livermore, CA 94551
Telephone: 925-640-7806
E-Mail: tracierohm@att.net
filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
Present Name:
Tracie Leigh Roddick
Proposed Name:
Tracie Leigh Rohm
THE COURT ORDERS
that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING
Date: 1/2/2022
Time: 11:00 AM
Dept: 17
The address of the court is:
Alameda County Administration Building
1221 Oak Street
Oakland, CA 94612
A copy of this Order To Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation printed in this county: The Independent Newspaper
2250 First Street,
Livermore, CA 94550
Dated: November 6, 2021 /s/: Judge Tara M. Desautels.
The Independent, Legal No. 5030. Published November 18, 25, December 2, 9, 2021.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584153
The following person(s) doing business as: Jeppson Construction, 828 S K Street, Livermore, CA 94550, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Gregory W. Jeppson, 828 S K 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: 11/1/2021. Signature of Registrant/s/: Gregory W. Jeppson, Sole Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 4, 2021. Expires November 3, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5031. Published November 18, 25, December 2, 9, 2021.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584002
The following person(s) doing business as: Lakeside Village Apartments, 4170 Springdale Dr., San Leandro, CA 94578, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Standard Lakeside GP LLC, 1901 Avenue of the Stars, Ste. 395, Los Angeles, CA 90067. This business is conducted by a Limited Liability Company. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 12/1/2009. Signature of Registrant/s/: Brad Martinson, General Partner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on October 28, 2021. Expires October 27, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5032. Published November 18, 25, December 2, 9, 2021

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584280
The following person(s) doing business as: Humbowl, 2975 College Ave, Berkeley, CA 94705, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Victuals LLC, 2548 Arlington Blvd, El Cerrito, CA 94530. 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/: Eric Wright, Managing Member. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 9, 2021. Expires November 8, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5033. Published November 18, 25, December 2, 9, 2021.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584466
The following person(s) doing business as: Redwood Dynamics, 3301 Sutton Loop, Fremont, CA 94536, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Marc Vittoria, 3301 Sutton Loop, Fremont, CA 94536. 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: 11/10/2021. Signature of Registrant/s/: Marc Vittoria, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 19, 2021. Expires November 18, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5034. Published November 25, December 2, 9, 16, 2021.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584247
The following person(s) doing business as: 1.Sunshine Trade Co, LTD 2. Sunrise Trade Co., LTD 3. Sunny Trade Co., LTD, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Tao Wang, 5364 Moonflower Way, 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: 11/8/2021. Signature of Registrant/s/: Tao Wong, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 8, 2021. Expires November 7, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5035. Published November 25, December 2, 9, 16, 2021.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584466
The following person(s) doing business as: 1.Sunshine Trade Co, LTD 2. Sunrise Trade Co., LTD 3. Sunny Trade Co., LTD, 5364 Moonflower Way, Livermore, CA 94551, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Tao Wang, 5364 Moonflower Way, 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: 11/8/2021. Signature of Registrant/s/: Tao Wong, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 8, 2021. Expires November 7, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5035. Published November 25, December 2, 9, 16, 2021.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584352
The following person(s) doing business as: LBC Notary, 777 Poinciana Street, Hayward, CA 94545, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Llarenyz Baran Caraballo, 777 Poinciana Street, Hayward, CA 94545. 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/: Llarenys Bazan Caraballo, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 12, 2021. Expires November 11, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5036. Published November 25, December 2, 9, 16, 2021.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584048
The following person(s) doing business as: tnd-co, 1031 45th Street, Emeryville, CA 94608, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Tracy Nedderman, 1031 45th Street, Emeryville, CA 94608. 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/: Tracy Nedderman, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on Octubre 29, 2021. Expires Octubre 28, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5037. Published November 25, December 2, 9, 16, 2021.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584065
The following person(s) doing business as: Polycarbon Games, 1550 Hampel ST, Oakland, CA 94602, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Polycarbon Games, 1550 Hampel ST, Oakland, CA 94602. 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: 10/25/21. Signature of Registrant/s/: Jamel Williams, CEO. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 1, 2021. Expires October 31, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5038. Published November 25, December 2, 9, 16, 2021.

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME Case No. 21CV002990

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA COUNTY OF ALAMEDA

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS:

Petitioner:
Sau Yin Lee
2803 Southwind Ln.
Dublin, CA 94568
Telephone: 925-819-0787
E-Mail: jsxlee@yahoo.com
filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows:
Present Name:
Sau Yin Lee
Proposed Name:
Jason Sau-Yin Lee
THE COURT ORDERS
that all persons interested in this matter appear before this court at the hearing indicated below to show cause, if any, why the petition for change of name should not be granted. Any person objecting to the name changes described above must file a written objection that includes the reasons for the objection at least two court days before the matter is scheduled to be heard and must appear at the hearing to show cause why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing.
NOTICE OF HEARING
Date: 1/28/2022
Time: 11:00 AM
Dept: 17
The address of the court is:
Alameda County Administration Building
1221 Oak Street
Oakland, CA 94612
A copy of this Order To Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four successive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation printed in this county: The Independent Newspaper
2250 First Street,
Livermore, CA 94550
Dated: November 23, 2021 /s/: Judge Tara M. Desautels.
The Independent, Legal No. 5039. Published December 2, 9, 16, 23, 2021.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584457
The following person(s) doing business as: A Z Associates, 1725 Shattuck Ave, Suite 400, Berkeley, CA 94709, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Stanley and Vivian Zaks 2001 Revocable Trust, 460 Linda Vista Ave, Pasadena, CA 91105; Walter Zaks 2001 Revocable Trust, 901 Bolton Circle, Benicia, CA 94510; Esther and Joe Adler 2001 Revocable Trust, 616 Parkside Court, Kensington, CA 94708. This business is conducted by a General Partnership. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 12/1/1984. Signature of Registrant/s/: Stanley Zaks, Managing Partner for AZ associates. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 18, 2021. Expires October 17, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5040. Published December 2, 9, 16, 23, 2021.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584484
The following person(s) doing business as: Yoga Below the Belt, 4728 Saginaw Circle, Pleasanton, CA 94588 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Tracy Mattox, 4728 Saginaw Circle, Pleasanton, CA 94588 . 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: 11/22/2021. Signature of Registrant/s/: Tracy Mattox, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 22, 2021. Expires November 21, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5041. Published December 2, 9, 16, 23, 2021.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584595
The following person(s) doing business as: Toffeelicious, 2157 Fourth St. Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Cheryl Bishop, 292 Jeannie Way, Livermore, CA 94550. This business is conducted by an Individual. The date on which the registrant first commenced to transact business under the fictitious business name(s) listed above: 10/27/2021. Signature of Registrant/s/: Cheryl Bishop, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 30, 2021. Expires November 29, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5042. Published December 9, 16, 23, 30, 2021.

FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT FILE NO. 584584
The following person(s) doing business as: Claire Fabre Photography, 3881 Stanford Way, Livermore, CA 94550 is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Claire Elizabeth Fabre, 555 Maine Ave, # 2204, Long Beach, CA 90802. 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: 9/28/2021. Signature of Registrant/s/: Claire Fabre, Owner. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda on November 29, 2021. Expires November 28, 2026. The Independent, Legal No. 5043. Published December 9, 16, 23, 30, 2021.

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Water Users Achieve 20% Reduction; Zone 7 Patterson Pass Project Nears Completion

By Tony Kukulich

The Zone 7 Board of Directors received mostly good news during its latest meeting on a variety of topics, including water conservation; progress on the Patterson Pass Water Treatment Plant construction effort; and the impacts of recent wildland fires on local water quality.

Angela Ramierez-Holmes, board president, noted that Tri-Valley residents achieved a 20% reduction in water usage in October compared to 2020, exceeding the 15% target.

"It was very helpful to get some rain in October so that people will feel more comfortable turning off their sprinklers," she said. "We've proven that it works. If you turn off your sprinklers, good things happen. I just wanted to thank the Tri-Valley for conserving. Of course, we're continuing those efforts. Even though we got some notable rain, that does not take us out of the very deep drought. We are continuing with conservation, and we are asking people to do most of that through their outdoor landscaping."

Patterson Past Project Nears Completion

A three year project to upgrade the Patterson Pass Water Treatment Plant — located in East Livermore — is in the home stretch according to an agency official. Speaking during the board meeting, Mona Olmsted, associate engineer with Zone 7, said the project is expected to begin operation in the spring of next year.

"The project is approximately 85% complete, and we are about two-and-a-half years into a three-year plan," Olmsted explained. "The contractor, Overaa, has projected a one- to two-month delay in completing the project. We currently expect to produce water in the February or March timeframe."

The project's objectives include doubling the water treatment production capacity of the plant from 12 million gallons per day (MGD) to 24 MGD. The plant will also increase its storage capacity of treated water by 5 million gallons with the construction of a new storage tank. Aging infrastructure within the plant, which first became operational in 1962, will be replaced in a bid to improve the facility's reliability. Finally, the addition of ozone treatment capabilities is expected to improve the quality of finished water.

"The Patterson Pass Water Treatment Plant is being upgraded and expanded so that Zone 7 can continue to meet our commitment to providing safe and reliable water," Olmsted said.

Water is fed to the Patterson Pass facility from either the South Bay Aqueduct, which brings water allocated from the State Water Project (SWP), or from storage at Lake Del Valle. Improvements to the facility are expected to carry a $110 million price tag. Funding comes from increased water rates, new connection fees and $19 million in bonds. To date, approximately 83% of the budget has been spent.

"The budget is doing well overall," said Olmsted. "However, the status is showing yellow because, as indicated under risks, there could be COVID-19-related impacts. But those are unknown at this time."

A Look at Wildfire Impacts

The board also received an update on the potential impact of wildland fires on Tri-Valley water quality. The study looked at the SCU Complex that threatened Lake Del Valle in 2020 and the North Complex and Dixie Fire that threatened Lake Oroville in 2020 and 2021, respectively.

The burning away of vegetation can increase the risk of erosion, change snowmelt runoff patterns, increase sediment and debris in source water and impact water quality in ways that increase the demands on the water treatment process. Brian Keil, Zone 7 water resources planner, added that Zone 7 treatment plants are equipped with a robust treatment process that can handle any of the anticipated source water quality changes.

"No significant operational impacts were observed from last year's fire," Keil said. "Therefore, we do not anticipate any significant impact from this year's Dixie Fire."

More Water News

Several significant changes are on the horizon in the coming year.

The Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced last week that water allocations for SWP contractors, including Zone 7, will be limited to only what is necessary for health and safety needs.

"Despite a wet start to the water year, conditions have dried out since that first storm, and we are still planning for a below-average water year," said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. "That means we need to prepare now for a dry winter and severe drought conditions to continue through 2022. We will be working with our federal partners and SWP contractors to take a conservative planning approach to balance limited water supplies with the needs of residents, businesses and the environment."

Amparo Flores, Zone 7 Water Agency manager of integrated planning, said that an allocation from 0 - 20% will likely result in mandatory water-use restrictions.

"We have anticipated a low SWP allocation for 2022 and have planned accordingly," she said. "Zone 7 will meet demands through a combination of conservation and use of water from our reserves. Reserves include the local groundwater basin, water stored in the San Luis Reservoir, water stored in Kern County storage programs and local water runoff captured in Lake Del Valle."

Restrictions are unlikely to be limited to the Tri-Valley. Last week, the State Water Resources Control Board proposed mandatory water restrictions for residents and businesses statewide. They are expected to vote on the proposed restrictions Jan. 4.

Zone 7 supplies treated drinking water to retailers serving over a quarter million people in the Tri-Valley. Additionally, the agency supplies untreated water directly to agricultural businesses for irrigation of 3,500 acres, primarily South Livermore Valley vineyards.

City of Dublin Now Accepting Nominations for Community Awards

Dublin is now accepting nominations for the city's 2021 community recognition awards, including Citizen of the Year, Young Citizen of the Year, and Organization of the Year.

The awards recognize outstanding contributions to the quality of life in Dublin. In particular, the Young Citizen of the Year award recognizes volunteer service by a student in first through 12th grade.

Nominations should be based on five criteria: the Dublin Integrity in Action characteristics of responsibility, respectfulness, caring, giving, positive attitude, trustworthiness, cooperation, doing one's best, honesty and self-discipline; originality and uniqueness of the activity or project; overall relevance and importance to the Dublin community; time and effort spent; and the challenges in accomplishing the activity or project.

All nominees will be recognized at the Volunteer Recognition Event to be held at the Shannon Community Center in March 2022, where the winners will be announced.

Nominations will be accepted through Jan. 21, and can be completed by visiting dublin.ca.gov/vre or calling 925-833-6650.

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