The Diablo Gazette™
Arts, Entertainment and All That's Good in Our Communities
Concord, Clayton, Walnut Creek, Martinez, Pleasant Hill
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MAY 2019

ALASKAN PIG RACES IN CONCORD

Alaskan Pig Races will be one of many events at this years Kidfest.

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- Calendar of Events, Reviews, and Concerts

from the Publisher

David King

Surrounded by Celebrities

The 7th Annual Concord Wine, Art and Beer Walk is on May 11th from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. It's a nice event to stroll Downtown Concord with nearly 20 stops along the way for you to refill your glass.

The Diablo Gazette's "Out to Lunch" local restaurant reviewer, Richard Eber, has been supporting the event for five years by donating his private wines, Zinfelmax Cellars. He will be pouring at Canasta Kitchen at 2118 Mt. Diablo. He's very proud of his wines which will be easy to identify; the labels feature pictures of his wife Mary's Abysinnian cats.

I am really pleased to see that Netflix is now showing the documentary "I Am Maris." This is a documentary of Maris Degener, a former Clayton Valley Charter High student who suffered severely from anorexia. Maris found her pathway to control the disorder through Yoga. She logged her thoughts in a daily blog that became an international internet sensation that has helped others with eating and mental disorders. Diablo Gazette has featured Maris a couple of times, (August of 2016), and again in (November 2018).

While attending UC Santa Cruz, a film student noticed Maris's blog and was inspired to produce the documentary which has won accolades at several film festivals. In April, it became available on Netflix. The notoriety has impacted traffic to our website www.diablogazette.com which surpassed 800,000 pageviews in April. Maris has become quite the celebrity.

Speaking of celebrities, Ruby Dooby Do (Concord's infamous Doberman that has 79,000 instagram followers and her own column in this magazine ("Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue", page 15) will now be featured on the cover of a new book to be released in September, titled "Between Shadow's Eyes". Jill Hedgecock who recently won an award for her thrilling book "Rhino in the Room" is the author. By the way, May 1 is "Save the Rhino Day."

You too can become a celebrity simply by sharing your stories or your expertise with the Diablo Gazette. Feel free to give it a try.

Contact me at diablogazette@gmail.com. Thank you for reading.

Ruby Doby Do,

concord mayor

by Carlyn Obringer, *Email: Put MAYOR in subject line CityCouncil@cityofconcord.org*

Tech Initiative to Attract Start Ups

Every day, I seem to read about another major Bay Area employer relocating, or moving jobs, to places like Austin and Denver, often without considering more affordable options closer to home that have a highly skilled workforce – places like Concord. This is one of the reasons I began attending meetings of the Diablo Valley Tech Initiative, a new group focused on fostering economic and social growth for tech start-ups, entrepreneurs, leaders, educators, and students here in the Diablo Valley, which includes Concord. This initiative aims to make the Diablo Valley an even more attractive place for start-ups, living-wage jobs, education, housing, and overall quality and balance of life, so that tech talent is fostered, grown, and developed here.

While campaigning door-to-door for City Council in 2016, I learned firsthand that Concord has a growing number of tech employees/entrepreneurs, who have relocated here from San Francisco, the South Bay, and other parts of the country in order to purchase a home in the Bay Area. In addition to Concord's relatively affordable home prices, compared to much of the Bay Area, these new Concordians were attracted by the ability to commute by BART to their jobs in San Francisco, Oakland, and the South Bay. Still, many of these workers would likely relish the opportunity to work in their field closer to home.

As a start, Diablo Valley College (DVC) is hosting monthly in-person networking and idea generation meetings. DVC's mission includes providing career and technical education, supporting the economic development of the region, and promoting personal growth and lifelong learning. DVC helped to launch the Diablo Valley Tech Initiative in part to learn more about the workforce needs of tech employers and discern what new programs the community college could offer in the future.

Virtual groups were created on Facebook and LinkedIn, called "Diablo Valley Tech Initiative" and "Diablo Valley Tech," respectively, to facilitate professional networking and connect Diablo Valley Region tech workers. Many tech entrepreneurs and employees with whom I have spoken feel isolated and are having difficulty identifying local talent for projects, even though potential colleagues may be living and working nearby. It is my hope that by collaborating, in my role as Concord Mayor, with Diablo Valley-based technology professionals, educators, investors, and fellow elected officials via this initiative we will be able to enhance Concordians' overall quality of life through increased local, living-wage jobs, the creation of new investment opportunities, and reduced traffic, commute times, and carbon emissions.

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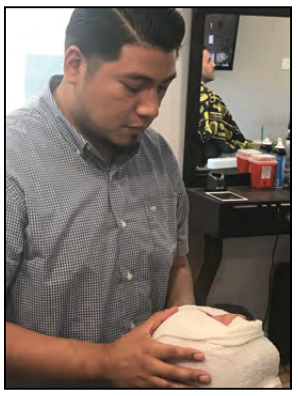
1920 Barbershop Dream

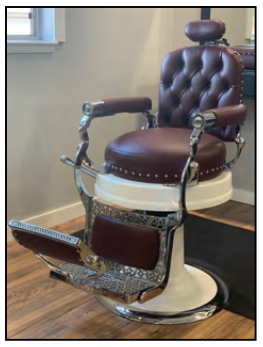
Brothers Ricky and Isaias Huerta are examples of the American dream. They have opened a new barbershop called the 1920 Barbershop at 2045 Mt. Diablo St. above Vinnies thanks to the suggestion of one of their clients, Kyle McClay.



McClay has been a longtime client of theirs at the Parlor Barber Shop in Concord. Having learning their life story he decided to help them take that next step in realizing their dream of owning their own business. He offered them space to open their own barbershop. McClay is owner of American Home Kitchen whose offices are above Vinnies in Downtown Concord.

"I had this large unused space and I just thought it was a way that I could help them get started," McClay said.

They subleased the space and McClay offers free haircuts to all of his own employees. "I see it as helping someone out when it hasn't been easy for them and helping the community start a new business. I'm all in when it comes to Concord and its future," McClay said while getting his haircut.



So what is their story? Their mother immigrated to the US with Isaias, 6, Ricky, 8, and sister who was 2. She rented a 1-room apartment for the four of them and worked two restaurant jobs.

Once old enough, the brothers attempted to go to Diablo Valley College, but it was a struggle, especially since they too both worked two jobs.

They worked in restaurants and ran a small urban clothing boutique inside a friend's barbershop on Contra Costa Blvd. That is how they became interested in barbering for themselves.

They went to an apprenticeship school which gave them a temporary two-year license to work and learn the trade. Thanks to the Dream Act, they were able to get their Califonia ID, Social Security number, and appear before the CA State Board to get their barber licenses.

"We credit our mother who showed us good work ethics. She worked hard and started with nothing when she came to this country. We are pursuing our American dream," Ricky said. They both have family, comfortable homes, and now they are launching their next stage of owning a business, thanks to McClay's help.

"We chose the name 1920 Barbershop because that was the year that barbering was recognized as a profession in the US," Isaias said. They furnished the salon with five antique barber chairs from the early 1900s. They found the chairs online and had them restored by a company in Southern California. They are beautiful.

"There are 24 barbershops in Concord, so we wanted to do something different," Ricky said.

1920 Barbershop is a full service cut and hot shave barbershop that comes with privacy in an atmosphere of early American nostalgia.

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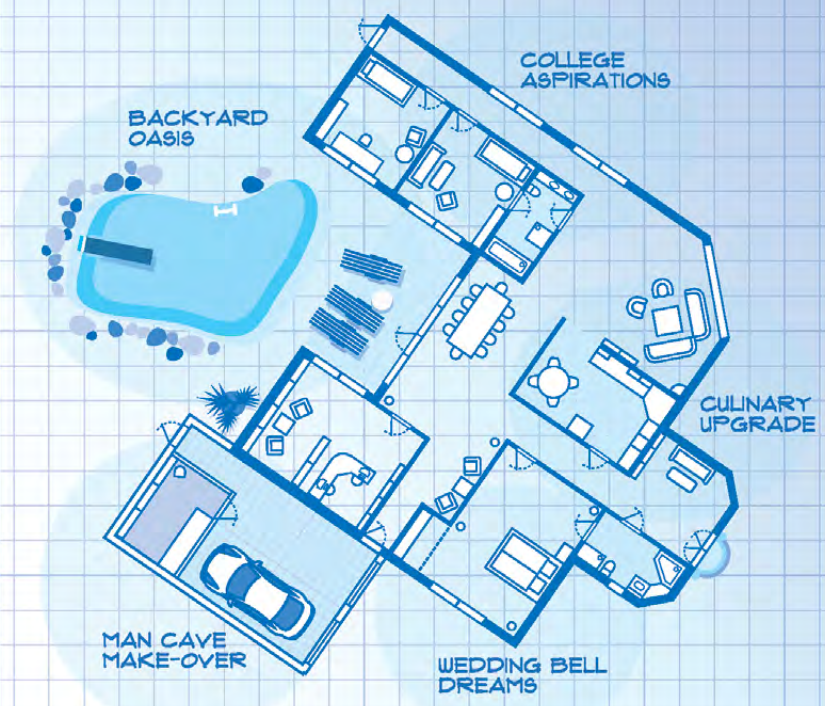

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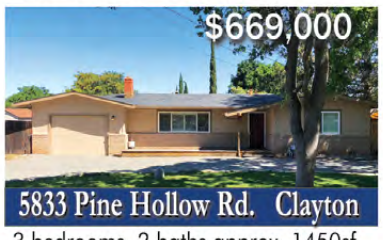

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The Dangers of Overpricing Your Home

The most common issue that most home sellers confront is determining exactly how much their home is worth. If you're selling your home, then you know that many factors contribute to the pricing. While it can be tempting to price your home on the high side, it can have potentially devastating consequences. This is what can happen when you list your home for too much money.

Your home won't show up in search results. Most homebuyers begin their searches Online. In most cases, they will conduct a search that includes their price range. When you price your home too high compared to others in your neighborhood, your home will not show up in the search results. Many buyers who may otherwise have been interested in your home will never even see it listed Online.

Your home will not attract the right buyer. Another danger of overpricing your home is that you will attract the wrong buyer. If a potential buyer is looking at homes all in the same price range, they may be disappointed with yours. Your home will not have the same amenities as the others on the market for the same price. The potential buyers who do look at your home will most often be non-starters. They are more likely to make an offer on one of the homes with better amenities.

Your home will stay on the market too long. New listings, those that have been posted in the last 30 days, get the most traffic. Once you have gone beyond those 30 days, you'll see a decline in the number of showings you book. The longer your home is on the market, the more negative it appears to potential buyers. In fact, if a buyer knows your home has been on the market too long, then they are more likely to make a low-ball offer. In cases like this, you may end up selling your home for less than it is worth, simply because you priced it too high in the beginning.

You will have a problem with the appraisal. Even if you find a buyer that is willing to pay your asking price, you could still run into trouble. If this buyer is relying on financing to purchase the home, then it is unlikely the deal will make it to the closing table. During the closing process, the lender will order an appraisal of your home. If the appraiser determines that the market value is less than the price you have agreed to sell for, the lender may deny financing. This wastes valuable time and prolongs the home selling process while you search for another buyer.

Your home won't sell. The bottom line; if you overprice your home, then it is unlikely you will sell it. This is why it's so important to work with a professional real estate agent who is an expert in your local market. By partnering with a knowledgeable agent, you can feel comfortable that they will price your home based on the current market conditions. Not only will this result in a quicker home sale, you will feel much less stressed in the process.

Courtesy of www.Virtualresults.net.

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CLAYCORD NEWS & TALK

In case you missed it...

Kick'n Mule Bar & Kitchen Opening in Clayton Valley Shopping Center

Kick'n Mule Bar & Kitchen is moving into the 2,100-square-foot space formerly occupied by Bella Ristorante in the Clayton Valley Shopping Center near the corner of Washington Blvd. and Clayton Rd. in Concord. Kick'n Mule currently has restaurants in Danville and Sacramento. An exact opening date has not been announced.

Amy's Kitchen Proposes New Drive-Thru Restaurant in Walnut Creek

Amy's Kitchen, a pioneer in the organic food movement, is planning to expand to Walnut Creek with the addition of a drive-thru restaurant at the corner of 2nd Avenue and N. Main Street. Amy's Drive Thru offers veggie burgers, shakes, french fries, pizza and burritos — all with gluten free and dairy free options.

Residents Oppose Closure and Sale of Pleasant Hill Library

Residents of Pleasant Hill protested at a City Council meeting in April and urged their elected officials to push back against the county's plans to close the city's library and sell the land it sits on before construction of a new library can be completed.

There are plans to open up a temporary collection at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center while the new facility is being built, but library users have cried foul over concerns about how that would affect access for children or seniors with mobility issues who are currently able to use the existing library at 1750 Oak Park Blvd.

There have also been complaints about a lack of public communication during the planning process.

Supervisor Karen Mitchoff, who represents Pleasant Hill, in March had said that the county may be able to sell the property for $10 million to $15 million and argued that the "best and highest use" for that asset would be to put it on the market.

The library is scheduled to close in August, but the new one isn't scheduled to reopen until Spring 2021. During public comment, roughly 10 people asked the Council to keep the existing library open until the new one's been completed. Despite consistent pushback during public comment, the Council declined to take the matter up.

State Legislation Could Make Marijuana More Accessible in Cities, Counties That Have Banned Retailers

New state legislation authored by Assemblymember Phil Ting, D-San Francisco, could make marijuana more accessible throughout the state.

If passed, Assembly Bill 1356 would require local jurisdictions in California to issue one cannabis retail license for every four onsite liquor consumption licenses, like bar and restaurants.

The bill would only apply to jurisdictions where more than 50 percent of voters supported Proposition 64 back in 2016, legalizing recreational adult cannabis use.

"Californians voted for Prop. 64 to replace the illicit market with a legal system that would grant Californians safe access to cannabis products, while also creating good jobs and significant tax revenue," Ting said in a news release.

According to Ting's office, since Prop. 64 went into effect on Jan. 1, 2018, about 76 percent of California cities and counties have banned cannabis retail businesses.

"Banning and limiting access to cannabis in these jurisdictions only fuels the illicit market in our state," said Assemblymember Reginald Jones-Sawyer, D-South Los Angeles, who co-authored AB 1356 with Ting.

According to Ting's office, AB 1356 allows local jurisdictions that don't want to meet the 1-to-4 ratio to come up with a local ban on the ballot for the next scheduled election.

Update: The bill was heard April 23 at the State Assembly's Business and Professions Committee and passed. Ayes: 12; Noes: 7; Abstain: 1;

BART General Manager Retiring in July

BART General Manager Grace Crunican announced that she will be leaving her job on July 6 after eight years leading the transit agency.

At the end of a BART Board of Directors meeting, Crunican read the announcement but didn't explain why she's leaving or what her future plans might be.

She sited many projects, including the replacement of the entire rail car fleet and the train control system, as well as "billions in other infrastructure components" and the agency's focus on building affordable housing on BART property as "elements which will help the agency to thrive in the next decade."

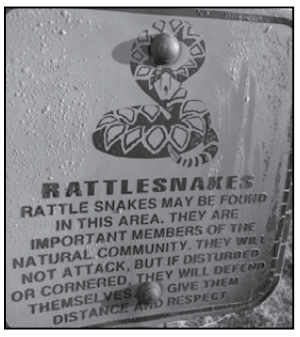
The announcement caught BART board members off guard, but they praised her for being a strong leader and a "straight talker."

"This is a big surprise to us but at the same time you've served this district with tremendous distinction and worked incurably hard," said BART Board President Bevan Dufty.

Board members did not discuss when they might start looking for Crunican's replacement.

ALERT: Rattlesnakes Are Out

The rain's gone and the sun's out, which means it's time for the rattlesnakes to make an appearance in the local open space. Be aware of your surroundings if you live near or use the local open space, such as Mt. Diablo State Park, Briones, Shell Ridge or Lime Ridge.



If you see a snake, give it space. It won't hurt you unless it feels like it has to defend itself.

If by some chance you do get bit, call 9-1-1, remain calm and move beyond the snake's striking distance.

Nepalese Cyclists World Quest Gets Stalled in Concord

Cyclists Bhesh Bahdur (left) and Yubaraj Mainali (2nd from left) launch their world cycling tour to help raise blood donations in Nepal

Two Nepalese cyclists who are two years into a 5-year mission that began in Nepal to travel around the globe on bikes found their quest temporarily stalled in Concord. Concord was never on the destination plan. It's part of the experience of executing an impromptu publicity campaign meant to raise global awareness for blood donations for Red Cross.

Nepal suffered a devastating 7.8 earthquake in 2015 that killed 9,000 and injured nearly 22,000. Yubaraj Mainali, of Jhapa, Nepal was a volunteer to gather food, water, and supplies for its people. One of the issues Nepal suffered in the aftermath was an acute shortage of blood in the blood banks.

"In Nepal, there's a misconception among the citizens that donating blood harms the body. So, there is a shortage of donors in Nepal," explained Mainali, who is a regular blood donor himself.

Mainali decided to help the Red Cross in a bigger way. He embarked upon a publicity campaign to raise awareness about blood donation by cycling across his country of Nepal. "As a regular donor, how can blood donations be bad for the body if I can ride across the country," he rationalized.

He bought a bike for about 10,000 rupees (roughly $1000) and started his trek with approximately 1000 rupees in his pocket, ($10). He packed lightly, including a light, sleeping bag, medical kit, repair kit, and water. The rest he would rely on the generosity of the locals for food and room and board. Each day, Mainali pedaled his way roughly 100 miles from town to town.

He has run into issues. "There are days that you have to go without food, Mainali said. "In the city of Pokhara, my bike was stolen." Fortunately, someone gifted him a new bike to continue his mission. These are just part of the experiences and the thrill of the journey to a traveler.

Along the way, he met Bhesh Bahadur Kadel who joined the cause. After finishing the tour in Nepal, the two decided to continue the mission and set a new goal for themselves, 150 countries in five years relying entirely on the generosity of the citizens of each country.

"There should be no scarcity of blood in the world," Mainali insisted. "We would make a light plan, but couldn't be certain we would do this or that at a particular place because when we reached that place, the situation would be different."

On March 11, 2017, the two entered into India. There they met and was photographed with Govinda and his wife. Govinda is a popular movie actor in India. "That was exciting."

Each day they received love and took risks, but it gave them insights about a different world. "The unimaginable visits and incidents were like dreams," Mainali said.

In Tokyo, Japan, a girl proposed to him. In Korea, they had to work for 15 days to earn $300,000 rupees ($3000) to manage money for travel.

In rich European countries, they spent nights sleeping in the cold.

They were looted in the jungle when going to Singapore from Malaysia.

While on a highway in Singapore, they were stopped by the police. "You are not allowed to ride a bike on the highway there." After explaining to the police that they were unaware of the law and of their mission, the police decided not to punish them and instead escorted them reiterating the countries rules.

Going through poverty in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam was very risky. Thailand they enjoyed.

In Taiwan, Japan and Korea they had language problems. In Korea, he tried using sign language when asking for a bathroom. He used his small finger to indicate he needed to pee and was scolded by the offended woman that told him that sign meant "I love you."

Out of money in Japan, they met Korean honeymooners in Fukuoka who gave them a ride in their motorboat into Busan, South Korea.

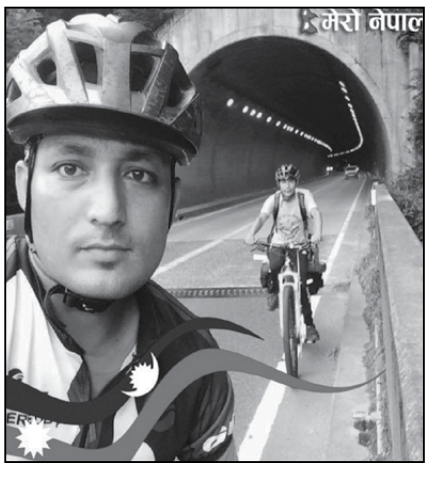
They've since learned when entering a country to start at the Nepalese Embassy to gain Visas and get a list of Red Cross and Nepalese community groups which has been very helpful.

They flew to Washington DC from Germany. After meeting with the Nepal Embassy there, they toured around Maryland and raised enough support to fly to San Francisco.

In San Francisco, both bikes were stolen. Sameer (Sam) Devakota, owner of Momo n' Curry, a Nepalese restaurant in Concord, has been helping them. "It's been a long time since we have had authentic Nepalese food," Mailani pleasantly noted.

They hope to receive new bikes and head north through Lake Tahoe and then into Canada.

So far, they have visited 42 countries in their two years of their mission to reach 150 countries. If you would like to support them, contact Sam at 510-303-6546, or support make a blood donation to Red Cross.



THE LEGAL PAGE

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Limited Conservatorships

Being a conservator is a big responsibility. A conservatorship is a legal tool you can use in caring for loved ones who are not able to care for themselves, assuming there is no signed Power of Attorney in place.

You can be the conservator of the person or a conservator of the estate depending on whether your responsibilities of care require physical care for the loved one or managing his or her financial matters because the conservatee is no longer capable of making such decisions for themselves.

In a previous article "Setting Up a Conservatorship" (Diablo Gazette, April 2019), I discuss these options in more detail.

There is another kind of conservatorship, called a "Limited Conservatorship." These are for individuals who are unable to care for themselves because of an Intellectual or Developmental Disability (I/DD) which began before age 18, including cerebral palsy, epilepsy, Downs' Syndrome or autism.

Perhaps your son, let's call him Jack, has a diagnosis of epilepsy and has turned 18 over the last year. You may be unpleasantly surprised when your medical provider refuses to disclose to you the results of Jack's recent lab tests. What are you to do?

California limited conservatorships give family members the legal authority to care for adult children whose developmental disability impairs their ability to care for themselves. These are granted in a court proceeding.

Asking the court for an emergency temporary limited conservatorship would restore your rights to supervise Jack's financial, medical and social life. After all paperwork is submitted to the court, the limited conservatorship becomes final.

Limited conservatorships are intended to enable the developmentally disabled to receive services to lead independent and productive lives. As a parent, you know you are your child's best advocate. The limited conservatorship tool will help you to guide his or her care for their lifetime.

The conservator of the person, the conservator of the estate, and the limited conservator must attend a short training for conservators offered by the court. Each conservator will have the ongoing duty to report to the court for regular reviews and to meet with the court investigator.

I have a brother and niece who have acute autism. I know how challenging caring for a developmentally disabled family member can be. And, my husband's 90-year-old mother lives with us. She's a spitfire; sharp as a tack for now. But who knows about the future, we may need to establish a conservatorship ourselves.

The California Courts publish a very informative Conservator's Handbook. It can be downloaded at www.courts.ca.gov/documents/handbook.pdf. Type that address into your browser to read more on these topics.

If you have any questions, give me a call at 925-482-8910 and I'd be glad to chat with you.

Rita A. Holder practices family law, tax law and wills, trusts and probate. Her office is in Walnut Creek. She offers a free 60-minute consultation. Give her a call at 925-482-8910 or rita@ritaholderlaw.com

Looking for Free Legal Advice? Look Here!

Attorneys who volunteer to help the community are not as rare as one might think. In fact, the Contra Costa County Bar Association publishes a list of Free Legal Workshops every month.

The workshops cover critical issues like Immigration Law, Bankruptcy, Family Law, Guardianship and Conservatorships, Housing for Seniors, Senior Self-Help, Debtor's Rights, Small Claims and Domestic Violence Restraining Orders. Many are offered in Spanish.

Some workshops involve a short presentation followed by a Q & A session. Others allow individuals to meet privately with an attorney for 10-15 minutes to discuss their legal issue. Attorneys answer questions and give guidance about options, risks, benefits and potential next steps. The information participants provide to the attorney is kept strictly confidential.

The attorneys who conduct the workshops cannot represent program participants, but they can provide legal information and offer referrals to public agencies. If they recommend that a participant needs an attorney, the Bar Association's Lawyer Referral and Information Service is ready to help, for a nominal $35 referral fee. But In many cases, the workshops help people learn the process and provide helpful information.

The workshops and clinics are held at various locations throughout Contra Costa County from Pleasant Hill, Richmond, Martinez to Pittsburg, Concord and Bay Point. Local public libraries, courthouses and educational institutions (such as John F. Kennedy University) offer a free, easily accessible venue for these workshops, which provide county residents who would not otherwise have benefit of a legal professional, a new forum for justice.

Local law students also benefit from these workshops as they assist in screening attendees and are afforded the opportunity to observe client interviewing techniques.

Some of the workshops are staffed by attorneys who volunteer their time and others are staffed by attorneys for public agencies or the county. Volunteer attorneys do not look to gain clientele from these workshops, indeed, anyone seeking a referral to an attorney is directed to the Lawyer Referral and Information Service.

Eligibility requirements vary, but most require that participants live in Contra Costa County. Some require advance registration and many address issues on a first-come first served basis, so be sure to arrive on time.

For a complete list of free legal workshops in Contra Costa County and for information on the Lawyer Referral and Information Service, visit the Contra Costa County Bar Association's website at www.cccba.org/community.

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Your 2018 Guide to Bay Area Events

The Diablo Gazette's ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

VISIT CONCORD A Northern California Original

by Elaine Schroth, *Executive Director*

A Music-Filled Summer is Coming to Concord

The sound of music can be heard throughout the city of Concord. The warmer months promise a special seasonal bounty of tuneful listening, as bands take to the stage at popular venues, providing open-air concerts that are family-friendly and offer a supremely vibrant music scene.

The 50th Anniversary Concord Jazz Festival on Saturday, August 3 is this year's highlight coming to the Concord Pavilion. The lineup features such well-known acts as Dave Koz, The Legendary Count Basie Orchestra, Chick Corea, Poncho Sanchez, Esperanza Spalding, Patti Austin, and Jamison Ross.

There are numerous exceptional acts coming to Concord Pavilion throughout the summer. Florence and the Machine, Bush, Elvis Costello and the Imposters with Blondie, Lynard Skynard, Sheila E., Breaking Benjamin, Peter Frampton, Steve Miller are some of the concerts to look forward to this summer. Turn to the Calendar on pg. 9 for a compete list of all bands and appearance dates.

Thursday night live music returns to Todos Santos Plaza for the 31st Annual Music & Market Series May 30 to September 26, from 6:30 p.m.-8p.m. The 2019 series offers a diverse live music experience featuring local bands from all over the Bay Area. Grab your lawn chairs and blankets for this free, fun, family-friendly musical series. Here are some tips to make your experience amazing.

There is plenty of parking within easy walking distance, including two free city garages: Todos Santos Parking Center: Concord Avenue between Salvio and Pacheco Streets. Grant Street Garage: Salvio Street, between Grant and Colfax Streets. Get to Todos Santos Plaza Early: Get to the plaza early to enjoy a variety of restaurants and local food vendors offering delicious cuisine from around the globe.

Alcohol is not allowed in the park, but you can grab a craft beer, wine or other alcoholic drinks at one of several surrounding establishments before or after the concert.

It's okay to bring your kids. This is a family-friendly event. The plaza's playground and large grassy area will keep kids entertained, playing and dancing to their delight.

A definite can't miss this year is the 3-night salute to Woodstock's 50th Anniversary — Thursday, August 15 through Saturday, August 17 — featuring Santana, Jefferson Airplane and Jimi Hendrix Tribute.

Blues lovers unite every Tuesday night in July at Todos Santos Plaza. On stage this year are Roy Rogers and The Delta Rhythm Kings, Frankie G and the Conviction, Delta Wires, The Dylan Black Project and rounding out the month is Ms. Taylor P Collins. Tuesday Night Blues is July 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30, 6:30 p.m. - 8 p.m. For more details on Concord's downtown music events, visit http://www.cityofconcord.org.

Visit Concord is your source for summer concerts, go to https://www.visitconcordca.com/music.

Elaine Schroth is the Executive Director of Visit Concord and is a monthly guest columnist in the Diablo Gazette. She can be reached at ESchroth@VisitConcordCA.com.

No End Game for Free Comic Book Day

With the record setting box office movie "Avengers: End Game" currently in theaters, there is no doubt why Free Comic Book Day (FCBD), now in its eighteenth year, continues to grow.

Always on the first Saturday in May, FCBD is an international promotional success for the comic book industry now supported in 2,300 stores in over 60 countries. Flying Colors Comics (and Other Cool Stuff) at 2980 Treat Blvd. in Concord is not only our local participant, but owner Joe Field is the creator of the promotion.

FCBD is a day you can come in all day and find thousands of free comic books for readers of all ages. Flying Colors hours are 11AM-7PM. Guest Dan Brereton, cover artist for Valiant Comics' "Bloodshot FCBD" special and "Punk Mambo", will be there signing from 11AM-3PM.

Each year, long lines form before store opening, filled with cosplayers (in costumes) for costume contests and photo opportunities, and that's what fans do. It is quite the sight. Prizes including limited variant editions from Marvel Comics and Valiant Comics, treats, and special deals add to customers' enthusiasm.

It all started eighteen years ago when Field proposed a simple plan to promote the comic industry around the release date of a "Spider-man" movie.

So, technically, we can say that this global phenomenon began in Concord. "I don't think I envisioned what it was going to become, I just wanted to make it happen," Field said. "It has taken on a life of its own. The first year we had about four comic books and 1,600 stores. Now it is around 6 million comics, 2,300 stores, and in 60 countries."

Each year new comics are written and printed exclusively for FCBD, so any comic you pick up at this event will be a storyline you cannot get anywhere else. All the big publishers, like Marvel and DC, put out comics alongside smaller independent publishers getting new brands out there. This year there will be a free Avengers FCBD special.

"As good as these movies are, they are still not as good as the original comics," Field claims.

The attraction is not just for kids. "I have been attending Free Comic Book Day for the past four years and each year it gets better. Last year, I brought my young son with me and I am not sure who was more excited, him or me," customer Desire told us who describes the event best. "It's comics, balloons and cake. Superhero look-alikes walk along the line to get into the store for plenty of memorable photo opportunities. Plus, many people waiting for comics show off their costume making skills with great outfits of their favorite comic hero. Waiting in line becomes half the fun of going. It isn't just about getting a free comic; it is about being absorbed into comic culture and the enjoyment that goes along with them. It is a day of excitement and nerdy-ness not to be missed."

With fans like that, there is no end game in sight for Free Comic Book Day.

DIABLO GAZETTE FUN ZONE

30TH BAY AREA KIDFEST

COMES TO DOWNTOWN CONCORD MAY 25-27

The 30th annual Bay Area KidFest on the Memorial Day Weekend May 25-27 is one of the Bay Area's longest-running family events and this year all three days are jam-packed with entertainment, activities, food and fun in the spacious outdoor setting at Mt. Diablo High School 2450 Grant St. in Concord.

KidFest producer Jay Bedecarre says, "KidFest began in 1990 with the stated goal of being 'the premier children's event in the Bay Area' and we are proud to say we have accomplished that goal. We have been able to provide entertainment, education, activities and family fun to over a half million kids of all ages who have attended KidFest during our first 29 years."

There are dozens of free kid's activities including face painting, balloon hats, spin art, keepsake handprints, inflatable slides and crawls, kiddie golf, soccer and much more included in the low admission price. Sunday afternoon Bike East Bay will once again present Bike Rodeo.

"We're so pleased to bring the largest collection of traveling attractions to our KidFest audiences this year including the All-Alaskan Racing Pigs, BMX Freestyle Team, Professor Smart's Science Show, Python Ron's Reptile Kingdom, Kid's Town America and the chance to meet and greet all-time movie favorites Spider-Man and Olaf."

KidFest offers an all-day, all-ride wristband to be used on all the thrilling rides including zip line, Dragon Wagon roller coaster, Xtreme Lasertag, Bungee Spider Jump, Water Ballerz, giant slide, Spider Mountain, Ferris wheel, petting zoo, pony rides, Stars 'n Stripes train and 10 more rides.

There's an eclectic Food Court, arts and crafts and exhibitor booths.

For the ninth year, KidFest presents a special Memorial Day ceremony at noon Monday, May 27, with the 18-time World Champion Concord Blue Devils C Drum and Bugle Corps, Mt. Diablo High School Jr. ROTC color guard and music honoring America's service people past and present sung by young sensation Janelle Feraro.

Claycord reader's poll has voted KidFest the Best Community Event five times. This category covers events in Clayton, Concord, Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill and Martinez. KidFest has won this category every time the poll has been held.

Admission is just $6 with a donation of canned food to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano or $7 without donation to the Food Bank. Babies under 24 months and seniors 65+ are free. On Saturday, attendees can double the discount deal by bringing two canned goods to get $2 off an admission.

Proceeds from Bay Area KidFest benefit local educational, health and sports non-profit groups. KidFest continues for the 24th year as one of the major annual donor events for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

KidFest has donated over $80,000 in cash this decade to local educational, health, arts and sports programs and has collected over 125,000 pounds of food for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

"We are especially proud of the nearly $500,000 we have contributed to local schools, health and sports organizations and other non-profits. Additionally, our attendees have donated over 60 tons of canned goods to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano in the past 23 years."

KidFest is open 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday and 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. on Memorial Day Monday. KidFest is held at Mt. Diablo High School, 2450 Grant St. in downtown Concord, just off Highway 242.

On-site vehicle parking is $5 with plenty of free street parking around the festival site.

For more information visit www.KidFestConcord.com.

PLAY A GAME?

HOW MANY WORDS CAN YOU FIND?

C	C	A
A	K	J
L	B	K

Find as many words (four or more letters) as you can BUT, your words MUST INCLUDE the MIDDLE LETTER. **There are 11 possible words**. Check your answers below. Puzzle courtesy of www.BooksNPieces.com

Puzzle Answers

9 letter word:
blackjack

jackal back
clack lack
aback balk
black kaka
alack jack

S	P	O	O	N	S	A	T	S	A	N	A	C
P	I	K	L	O	N	D	I	K	E	S	Z	L
I	N	S	D	R	A	C	E	H	T	N	I	U
D	O	K	M	S	K	S	I	H	W	Q	X	B
E	C	C	A	P	K	X	G	O	F	I	S	H
R	H	A	I	L	Q	I	R	N	X	B	M	E
R	L	J	D	A	E	E	P	U	S	E	C	A
A	E	K	Z	Y	K	O	O	B	M	W	A	R
T	X	C	Z	O	L	E	T	S	O	M	V	T
S	L	A	P	J	A	C	K	X	Q	V	Y	S
Q	R	L	L	E	C	E	E	R	F	L	Z	Q
C	X	B	R	I	D	G	E	T	O	R	A	T

IN THE CARDS
RUMMY
OLD MAID
HEARTS
POKER
WAR
SPOONS
CRAZY EIGHTS
BLACKJACK
GO FISH
SPIDER
UNO
SLAPJACK
KLONDIKE
FREECELL
TAROT
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calendar of events

May 4 Free Comic Book Day
May 5 Cinco de Mayo
May 12 Mother's Day
May 27 Memorial Day

FUNDRAISERS

Pancake Breakfast - Supporting Veterans of Foreign Wars – 2nd and 4th Sundays includes eggs, pancakes, sausage, beverage. 8 – 11 a.m. Willow Pass Road, Concord $5 buys a terrific breakfast. http://www.vfwpost1525.org

MAY 11
The Story of San Pablo, Last Small Town of San Pablo. History talk and book signing. 3:00pm – 4:30pm presented by CCC Historical Society. Veteran journalist Dan Smith presents rare, vintage photographs from the collection of the San Pablo Historical Society. FREE. RSVP is requested. Em.ail: mkting@cocohistory.org or Call: (925) 229-1042
All proceeds benefit the preservation work of the Contra Costa County archives. Campbell Theater, 636 Ward Street, Martinez. For more information, visit www.cocohistory.org

MAY 11
Swedish Pancake Breakfast -Sveaborg Lodge serves a Swedish Pancakes with ham, lingonberry preserves, other toppings, fruit, juice, coffee & tea. Location is Odd Fellows Hall, 4349 Cowell Rd. (between Ygnacio Valley Road and Treat Blvd), Concord from 8:30 A.M until 12:00 P.M. Adults & Youths 11 years and older - $10, Children 4-10 years - $5, Children 3 years and Under – Free. https://www.facebook.com/sveaborg449

MAY 31
Jazz Cafe Stanley Middle School, Lafayette 6pm to 10pm in the Stanley multi-use room. Peformed by jazz student musicians from Stanley Middle School,Campolindo ,and Acalanes High Schools. Food, raffles and silent auction also available. Single tickets: reserved $20 (all ages); unreserved (at the door; cash only) up to $15. Donations encouraged. Stanley Middle School, 3455 School St., Lafayette. Info: stanleymusic.org/jazz-cafe

OUTDOORS

Farmers' Markets
Concord Tuesdays: Year-round, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Thursdays: April 18 – October 24, 4:00 – 8:00 p.m.
Martinez Sundays, 10am to 2pm, year-round, Main St. and Estudillo.
Walnut Creek Diablo Valley Farmers Market Saturday 9a.m. - 1 p.m. Shadelands Business Park, N. Wigett Lane and Mitchell Dr. Also, from
Contra Costa Certified Farmers Market - North Locust St between Giamona and Lacassie St. Sundays 9 am - 1 pm, Year Round, (925) 431-8361 http://www.cccfm.org

RUTH BANCROFT GARDEN

MAY 4 & 12
DIY Mother's Teapot Day -Celebrate your mom by bringing her to a DIY workshop at the Ruth Bancroft Garden and create a succulent dish garden in an unique, vintage teapot.
MAY 14-18
National Public Gardens Week
May 14 Make a Pet Rock 10A-1P; FREE. Children can paint and decorate a garden rock to take home. This is a drop-in event but RSVP requested.
May 15 Free Admission Day, all day! Enjoy all the spring blooms in the Garden.
May 16 Make & Take Dish workshop 10A-4P. Make your own mini succulent dish garden. Bancroft potting soil and potting vessel are provided. May bring your own embellishments. Children and adults. $5 per dish.
May 17 "Get the Dirt on Soil" 12 noon - 12:30P Talk with Walker Young, Assistant Curator. Learn about the special soil needs of the cacti, succulents and other dry-garden plants. Free, RSVP required.
May 18 - Nursery Sale Saturday. download 20% one day only coupon at www.ruthbancroftgarden.org/events
Vintage Tea Party 2:00p-4:00P Host Melissa will share her family heirloom tea sets, you will choose the teacup in the pattern that most speaks to your heart. Nibble tasty scones & tea sandwiches while learning a bit of tea history. Tea sets are formal, but you can choose to wear a hat and gloves or dress more casual. This will be a gluten and carbohydrate-laden event of homemade delights all in support of the Garden!

YOGA IN THE PARK

9AM-10AM Recurring event at The Veranda in Concord. Join on the first Friday of every month through September. Next Class is June 7. FREE all levels Yoga flow Next

MAY 4
GET RATTLED - Keep your dog safe. Rattlesnake avoidance training at an agility facility (Star K 9 agility) $85 for initial training or $60 for reinforcement training if previously trained by Get Rattled or Natural Solutions. 925-933-8774 Mt. Diablo Dog Training Club 1027 Detroit Ave. Concord Suite A www.mddtc.org/

MAY 4
Free Comic Bookday - 11AM-7PM; Free comics, costume contest, treats, prizes, and meet cmic cover artist Dan Brereton. 2980 Treat Blvd. Concord.

MAY 24
Destination Weddings -Mount Diablo State Park 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM
16 Couples can exchange wedding vows atop the summit's observation deck of Mount Diablo. The County Clerk-Recorder will officiate weddings at the iconic site.
$60. Couples can obtain a public marriage license for $86 or a confidential license for $90 from the Contra Costa County Clerk-Recorder in Martinez. For more information, contact Joseph Barton, Clerk-Recorder Services Supervisor at 925-335-7900.

MAY 25-27
30th Annual Bay Area Kidfest - downtown Concord. See article pg. 8 for details or visit www.kidfdestconcord.com.

JUNE 1-2
Walnut Creek 38th Annual Art and Wine Festival: Heather Farm Park. 301 N. Civic Dr. See more info on pg. 13.

JUNE 6
Walnut Creek First Wednesdays Street festival- live music with Vybe Society, dancing, food trucks, wine and beer, Kids Fun Zone, interactive games and free prizes. 5:30pm-8:30pm, Cypress Street. Free admission.

JUNE 6-9
Wings of Freedom Tour - Buchanan Field Airport. Tour, take flight in, or pilot vintage WWII bombers and fighters. Admission, $15 Adults, $5 children. Go to www.CFDN.org for times, flight reservations and pricing details.

CLUB/SUPPORT GROUPS' NEWS AND EVENTS

MAY 11
AAUW 7tAnnual Art, Wine,& Beer Walk- Enjoy local art, California wines, local craft beer and great music while Strolling downtown Concord. 11A-4P.

MAY 16
Concord Nueropathy Support: "Balance and Fall Prevention." Alayne Balke, speaker. 1:30 pm. First Christian Church 3039 Willow pass Rd. Concord. For more Information 925-685-0953 ask for Wayne.

May 18
CarFit, a free program designed to help improve older driver safety. Trained volunteers will be on hand to ensure the safest "fit" for older drivers and their vehicles. 10 AM to 1 PM, at the Church of Jesus Christ of Later-Day Saints, 555 Boyd Road, Pleasant Hill. RSVP Danielle Haber (925) 671-5221 or dhabr@pleasanthillca.org Must have a reservation to participate in CarFit. Call or email now!!!!!

JUNE 1
Concord Pride Admission Free. 12 PM - 6 PM. Come to Todos Santos Plaza and celebrate community, diversity, & PRIDE. This event is family-friendly. Rainbow Community Center of Contra Costa. 2175 Willow Pass Rd, Concord

VISUAL ARTS/ THEATRE/MUSIC

May 3-31
"Looking Out My Backdoor", A Plein Air Exhibition at Main Street Arts Gallery, 613 Main Street, Martinez.

VINNIES BAR AND GRILL

LIVE COMEDY NIGHTS,3rd Mondays every month. 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM
Top Bay Area comics. Free show -- No cover, no minimum. 21+. Full bar and restaurant. Mean Dave hosts, 3rd Monday every mont h.. 2045 Mt. Diablo St. Concord May 20; June 17; July 15; August 19

MAY 11
Clayton Valley Garden Club's annual Plant Sale. 9a.m.-1p.m. at Endeavor Hall parking lot, 6008 Center St., Clayton. Phone 925-276-2299 or www.ClaytonValleyGardenClub.org

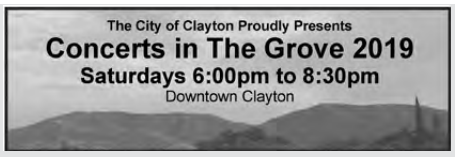
MAY 11
MomDay in the Park and All Area Music Festival. Combining two great events, celebrate Mom and Bay Area music education at the same time. Todos Santos Plaza for the All Area Music festival, featuring performances by Bay Area student musicians.

MAY 19
"Better Together - Songs of Strength and Friendship" -Diablo Women's Chorale 3:00 p
Songs from Paul Simon, Cyndi Lauper, Keb' Mo', Queen, Rodgers and Hammerstein, Emily King, and many others. Purchase advance tickets by calling 1-800-838-3006 or online at www.DiabloWomensChorale.org. $25.00 General Admission, $22.00 Senior, and $15.00 Child/Student. If available, tickets are $30.00 at the door.at Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Road, in Lafayette

Summer Concerts by the Lake
Enjoy live music by the lake at Pleasant Hill City Hall 100 Gregory Road from 6-8. p.m. Produced by the Civic Action Commission.
May 26 - Forejour
June 9 - Unauthorized Rolling Stones

JAZZ ON TUESDAYS
Malcom Hunter. Don't cook dinner on Tuesdays. Recurring event through **J**uly 5:30 PM to 8:00 PM. The Vineyards Restaurant. Crowne Plaza, 45 John Glenn Dr. Concord

MAY30
Music and Market Series
Concord High Jazz Band and The Blue Devils
June 6 – Steve Lucky & the Rhumba Bums
June 13 – Soul Power
June 20 — Native Elements
June 27 – East Bay Mudd



May 11 BOSTON ROCKS Music from the city of Boston www.aerorocks.net
May 25 Brickhouse Hits from 80s,90s, and beyond. brickhouserocks.com.
June 8 Mixed Nuts variety from 50's to today. mixednutsband.com.
June 22 The Boys of Summer. Eagles tribute band. boysofsummertribute.com
July 6 Pride and Joy Pop/soul Motown hits. pridejoy.com
July 20 Club 90 Dance music of 90's club90band.com
August 3 Apple Z Dance and rock classics facebook.com/applezband
August 17 NightMoves/Creedence Classic Revival ccseger.com
August 31 Cut Loose Rockin' blues, R&B rockin' country. cutlooseband.com.
September 14 VYBE Society 10 piece band of musicians from major label bands. vybesocietyband.com

CONCORD PAVILION

MAY 15 Florence and the Machine 7:30 pm.
May 25-26 KBLX Stone Soul Concert - at 12:00 PM - Maxwell, Ledisi, Eric Benet, Raheem Devaughan. Sun 12:00 PM Maze, Stephanie Mills, Jeffrey Osborne, Cameo;
Jun 7 For King And Country; 4:00 PM
Jul 20 Femme It Forward Tour - Brandy, Monica, Mya; 7:00 PM
Aug 3 Concord Jazz Festival; 4:00 PM
Aug 7 Bush and Live; 7:00 PM
Aug 8 Elvis Costello & Blondie; 7:00 PM
Aug 11 Wiz Khalifa; 6:00 PM
Aug 24 Lynyrd Skynyrd; 6:00 PM
Aug 24 ZZ Top; 11:59 PM
Sep 6 Heart with Joan Jett and Elle King; 7:00 PM
Sep 18 Breaking Benjamin; 5:30 PM
Oct 12 Peter Frampton; 7:30 PM

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Views of the Valley

Photos by Micah

Egg-citing! Hundreds of kids and parents and the Easter Bunny hopped over to Pleasant Hill Park for Pleasant Hill Recreation's Easter Egg Hunt on the morning of April 20.

Guest artist Martin C Segobia – shares his tips and techniques for painting portraits at the Concord Library

(Above) Mrs. Ballard's 8th Grade Spanish class at Pine Hollow Middle School actually enjoyed their final exam, a fashion show that students moderated completely in Spanish as they walked the runway (below).

Martinez Craft BeerFest

One of these ladies appears to be the designated driver.

Volunterring to work the booth can also be fun.

A well attended event in the books.

Plenty of Art…and wine at Clayton's Art and wine Festival that attracted thousands.

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SUMMER CLASS SCHEDULE 2019

Summer Session Dates: July 8th – August 17th

Sign up TODAY for our **6-week** summer dance class session. Keep your dancers moving and grooving this summer with our fun-filled dance classes for all ages and levels. No recital, no costumes, just fun and learning! Priority registration for Fall classes to all enrolled summer students! Make sure you get the classes you want in September!

Register online. MULTIPLE CLASS & FAMILY DISCOUNTS APPLY!!

SUMMER DANCE CAMPS 2019

Seven 4-Day Camps: July 8th – August 22nd

Summer Dance Camps are a fun and creative summer activity offered in a variety of dance styles, from classical ballet to hip hop, and appeal to children of all ages and levels. Keep your dancers moving this summer with our amazing instructors and awesome curriculum.

Please see website for all tuition, class & camp descriptions, schedules, and studio policies.

925.524.0180

claytonvalleydance.com

For more information call or visit our website or email us at: 5678@claytonvalleydance.com

Clayton Valley Dance Academy 5416 Ygnacio Valley Blvd. Ste 60, Concord

Why Age 7 is the Right Time to See an Orthodontist

By the age of 7, the first adult molars erupt, establishing the back bite. During this time, an orthodontist can evaluate front-to-back and side-to-side tooth relationships. For example, the presence of erupting incisors can indicate possible overbite, open bite, crowding or gummy smiles.
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by Carol and Randi –*The Frugirls* www.frugelegance.com

Hosting at Home: Mezze – Antipasto Table

Hosting an upcoming celebration doesn't have to be intimidating or stressful. Whatever the occasion, pre-prom, graduation, you name it, we have some tips for you. Hosting at home can be a lot of fun as long as you make a plan and prep as much as possible in advance.

We love being with our family and friends in the comforts of the home instead of a local restaurant or bar. It saves a lot of money and it's much more pleasant.

Here 's how easy it was to prep for a Sip and See Baby Shower hosted by Nicki (Carol's daughter) for her twin sister Megan. A Sip and See Shower is a baby shower for someone who has had a baby before. It's for everyone to come "sip and see" baby #2 (or #3+).

We prepared a gorgeous food table with a combination of a Mezze platter/ Antipasto platter served buffet style. "Mezze" is a selection of Mediterranean small dishes. "Antipasto" is a colorful presentation of Italian meats, cheeses and olives. Together the spread is a long display across the table with a brown paper platter / table runner. Also added into the mix are breads, crackers, pitas and assorted veggies.

The brown paper, spread across the food table, is so simple and yet so rustic and elegant. To label the cheeses and assorted foods, we just wrote with a fine point marker directly on the brown paper. Be aware that there are different kinds of brown paper rolls. When serving food, it's best to use the kind designed for food versus the craft paper. We used a few small plates and cutting boards for the items that need to be contained like olives, hummus and dips. Also, add a few elegant touches like some candles and a few oranges with leaves picked straight off the tree from the backyard if you have one.

Mezze Platter Foods include hummus, tabbouleh, stuffed grape leaves, assorted olives, tzatziki dip, sliced pita bread.

Antipasto Platter Foods include assorted olives, cheeses, sliced Italian meats like salami and prosciutto, nuts, grapes and cut up vegetables.

Decide if this will be for appetizers or the main course. If it is for the main course, just add in more dips, cheeses, and Mediterranean or Italian favorites. Keep things flowing and spread it out to avoid crowding.

We also set up a beverage station and dessert table in the kitchen. The beverage station offered a rustic beverage dispenser filled with water and some sliced fruit. We filled a metal beverage tub with wine, Champaign and some water bottles.

The dessert table displayed homemade lemon bars and lemon cake made by a relative, plus sugar cookies topped with homemade cream cheese frosting and fresh berries (you can learn how to make these in our Baby Shower Cupcake Tower blog post). On our lucite cupcake tower, there were bitesize french macaroons. For a centerpiece, a bouquet of colorful flowers in a white pitcher worked beautifully.

The Mezza / Antipasto Table can work for many types of gatherings. From a simple and intimate evening with friends to a holiday or special occasion such as a wine or a book club get-together, a bridal or baby shower, etc. One thing is for sure, you don't have to break the bank or your back putting it together.

FrugElegance Style is the way we like to do things... Keep things simple and easy so you can enjoy the gathering too. Most importantly, have fun.

Happy Mother's Day
from the Diablo Gazette

www.DiabloGazette.com

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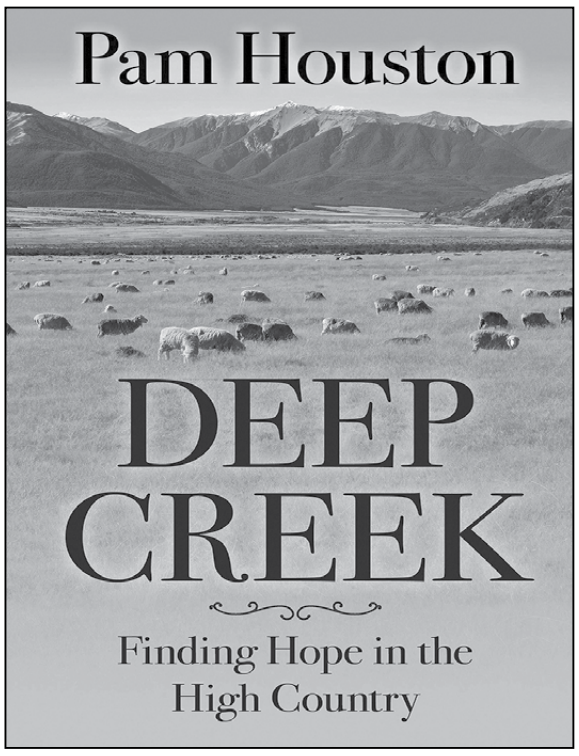
Deep Creek: Finding Hope in the High Country

by Pam Houston



In Pam Houston's new memoir, "Deep Creek: Finding Hope in the High Country" (2019, W.W. Norton & Company, hardcover, 302 pages, $13.05), the grit of the author's life experiences and the complexities of man's impact on nature are explored. She balances heart-wrenching stories of her neglectful parents (a self-centered diva mother and alcoholic and abusive father) with hope, by illustrating the way one caring person (a nanny) can prove to be a lifeline and alter a person's life.

The memoir uses a creative structure, weaving tidbits about the hardships of ranch life in the tiny community of Creede, Colorado with snapshots of her early upbringing, and the challenges she faces as an adult juggling the needs of her pets and livestock and her travel schedule as a writing teacher and coach. A major theme is the influence of nature on her life.

Houston describes the perils of Colorado's winters and wildfires with the ranch and her connection to her remote home in the Colorado landscape as a common thread. Perhaps the most compelling component of the book is the detailed account of the massive firestorm that burned 110,000 acres near Creede in summer 2013. Not only does Houston capture her emotional angst over the concern for her Icelandic sheep, beloved Irish wolfhounds, and her elderly equines, she also provides snapshots of the firefighter language, their heroic efforts, and the communications between the fire officials and the community.

Her descriptions of the post-apocalyptic landscape and her reverence of the amazing healing power of Mother Earth is a testament to Houston's love of the natural world.

Deep Creek also captures a glimpse of the American frontier when ownership required "proving" the land and failure to do so meant losing your property, when neighbors came by to help others in need, and when living in a log cabin was an ordinary way of life. Houston's respect for the legacy of her ranch is both admirable and endearing as she renovates the original homesteader's historic cabin on her property into a usable writing space, incorporating artifacts found beneath the rotting floorboards into the redesign. The respect Houston shows for nature, the people of Creede, the land owners that came before her, the ranch animals and wildlife that share her 120-acre parcel, shines through her prose and leaves the reader with a new appreciation for a rancher's lifestyle and the earth.

Pam Houston is a prize-winning author of "Contents May Have Shifted" and has published four other books, including "Sighthound", about an Irish Wolfhound with a few lessons to teach his owner, and a short story collection, "Cowboys are my Weakness." When she isn't working as an English professor at the University of California at Davis or travelling the world, Pam lives on her beloved Colorado ranch near the headwaters of the Rio Grande. "Deep Creek" will likely appeal to fans of Cheryl Strayed's "Wild", Jeanette Wall's "Half Broke Horses", and "Where the Crawdad's Sing" by Delia Owens.

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movie review
Movie review by Sandie Angulo Chenn, Common Sense Media

5 of 5 STARS
181 minutes PG-13

common sense media

Avengers: Endgame Doesn't Disappoint!

A Personal Review

"I went to see it with my kids. **Well worth it** in all its **three-hour long** glory. No spoilers, but you will not be disappointed. The film defied the many predictions made Online as to the plot, and even managed **a twist or two** beyond what you might guess."

~William Gensburger, BooksNPieces.com

"AVENGERS: ENDGAME" is set after Thanos' catastrophic use of the Infinity Stones randomly wiped out half of the earth's population in Avengers: Infinity War. Those left behind are desperate to do something -- anything -- to bring back their lost loved ones. But after an initial attempt -- with extra help from Captain Marvel (Brie Larson) -- creates more problems than solutions, the grieving, purposeless Avengers... believe there could be a way to reverse Thanos' deadly snap. It takes a while to gather the squad -- some of whom have changed dramatically -- but eventually Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.), Thor (Chris Hemsworth), Captain America (Chris Evans), Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson), the Hulk (Mark Ruffalo), Rocket (Bradley Cooper), Nebula (Karen Gillan), Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner), and Ant Man team up for one last life-or-death mission to outsmart Thanos (Josh Brolin) and save the universe.

Directed by the Russo brothers, their poignant, powerful finale more than lives up to the hype: It's a thrilling conclusion and a deeply emotional exploration of loss and love, duty and honor, friendship and family.

Written by Christopher Markus and Stephen McFeely, the story focuses on the remaining Avengers and their post-trauma lives. Each seems overwhelmed by their failure, so when they start to regroup, it's clear that they're far from the same confident, optimistic superheroes who thought they could defeat Thanos in Infinity War. The dads in the group are particularly effective at showing how personal the grief is, providing a contrast to the general sense of failure and loss that the single superheroes feel. As the often-underappreciated Hawkeye, Renner stands out in a crowded field of immense talent for making his character feel central. His intensity and his platonic, brotherly love for Natasha/Black Widow, is perfectly conveyed. Johansson does a lot of the emotionally resonant work in the movie, keeping tabs on everyone, encouraging her friends, and acting like everyone's favorite sister (except in the Hulk's case). The big three -- Iron Man, Captain America, and Thor -- are also fabulous. Their differences have never been more obvious, but each proves that despite past conflicts and heartbreaks, they're worthy and ready to fight side by side.

There's so much packed into the three hours of Avengers: Endgame that it might seem overwhelming at times; this is clearly a film that will inspire repeat viewing. There are unexpected twists and moments of hilarity, as well as more serious scenes and themes. Those well-versed in the Marvel Cinematic Universe will delight in the many Easter eggs and clear fan service (yes, there's still a Stan Lee cameo), while more casual fans will still find plenty of reasons to applaud. When one gut-punching beat finishes, there's barely enough of a break for a zinger from Tony or Rocket (voiced by Bradley Cooper) before another moment squeezes your heart. But don't despair: This is a bittersweet example that the best heroes won't allow hubris or insecurity to defeat them. Endgame ranks up there with The Return of the King and Deathly Hallows: Part 2 -- all are epic, emotional, and exceptional franchise finales.

The Diablo Gazette is published monthly and serves the greater Diablo Valley. Tel: (925) 298-9990 | Advertising Requests: **Diablo Gazette**: advertising@diablogazette.com | **Claycord**: david@claycord.com Send comments, questions, calendar items and **Letters to the Editor** to: diablogazette@gmail.com | Questions and comments to **Inside Secret Service**: secretservice@diablogazette.com

Out to Lunch

The California Fish Grill

by Richard Eber | photos by Eric Zhang

When it comes to sea food, very little exists in the casual dining genre past pre-breaded frozen sandwiches offered by the likes of Mc Donald's and Burger King. Except for a special or two at mainstream restaurants, one must save up their money to enjoy the high-end spectrum of destinations such as Scott's, EMC, or the Walnut Creek Yacht Club.

Luckily, a relatively new eatery, The California Fish Grill, has emerged providing patrons an inexpensive alternative to enjoy seafood cuisine at very affordable prices. Located at the Orchards Shopping Center at the corner of Oak Grove and Ygnacio in Walnut Creek, the San Diego based franchise has enjoyed extensive patronage since opening up nine months ago.

The secret to the California Fish

Grill's success according to Manager Luis Zuniga is the restaurant's ingredients. "We receive shipments from our supplier, Global Seafood Marketing, every other day to insure freshness in everything we serve. This helps us compete in quality against white table cloth establishments that charge much more."

California Fish Grill offers an extensive selection of seafood entrees at an average of about $10-$12.50 per plate. Choose among salmon, trout, Swai, Hawaiian Swordfish, Louisiana catfish, and Ahi Tuna, and a school of others. The most expensive items are the large (U-13) shrimp and the seared scallops at only $13.99.

Their most popular entre is the Barramundi Sea Bass imported from Vietnam. It consists of a tender large portion that is simply grilled to firm yet tender white flakes with extra virgin olive oil and lemon. It has a subtle flesh that reminds one of hard to find Chilean Sea Bass.

California Fish Grill serves their seafood without toppings, which allows patrons to select sauces of their liking. They include a choice of garlic butter, seasoned olive oil, chimichurri, cajun, and a blazing hot dynamite concoction. All of these are made fresh each day. The intensity of these sauces provides a complexity that compares favorably to more pricey competitors.

All dishes are served with two house sides ranging from brown rice to grilled zucchini. Especially noteworthy is the housemade Kaleslaw with a tangy dressing. For $1.75 more, one can order fried brussels sprouts. This dish is jazzed up with Balsamic vinegar, tomatoes, parmesan cheese, and Daikon sprouts. In addition, a fire roasted street corn and dynamite fries with very hot sauce, are offered.

The California Fish Grill menu also lists a similar variety of fried offerings such as the popular fish and chips.

Using Swai white fish, each order delivers a generous portion of three three- ounce crispy battered pieces. Their fried shrimp, served regular or cajun, reminds one of what might be found at small cafes on the Gulf Coast.

Everything I tasted was fresh with no greasy after taste. Zuniga said the kitchen staff frequently tests and changes the canola oil they use to maintain quality.

Outside of providing entre Bowls which combine many ingredients off the menu, they also offer a selection of California Coast tacos, fried shrimp and fish options served in a thick and durable corn tortilla layered on top of a mix of cabbage, tomato, pickled red onion, and cilantro,

The shrimp taco ($3.45) came with four large pieces (of which I had to eat a couple of those fried beauties before the taco could be easily picked up). Combination plates can be ordered for less than $10.00 which includes 2 tacos, rice, beans, and a soft drink. This is an excellent value not easily matched elsewhere.

In addition to their sea food menu, The California Fish Grill offers some intriguing drinks to accompany their food including microbrew sodas that come in a variety of boutique flavors. I tried a tropical pineapple Macha green tea and a salted mango with lemon juice that were made with frozen puree.

The owners of California Fish Grill chain are members of The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch. This group monitors consumption of product harvested from the oceans to insure that whatever is consumed is sustainable for generations to come. Such awareness for the environment is one of the many things this chain does to distinguish itself.

In all, one cannot help but be impressed by the culinary experience they offer. Because of the straightforwardness of the menu, the restaurant does not need to hire high priced Chefs to prepare their food. Their "Keep it Simple Stupid" (KISS) philosophy works well in providing a quality family dining experience at reasonable prices.

38th Annual Walnut Creek Art and Wine Festival

Walnut Creek Chamber Art & Wine Festival returns for its 38th year at Heather Farm Park on Saturday, June 1 and Sunday, June 2. Once recognized as of East Bay's Best Outdoor Festival by the now defunct Contra Costa Times, and winner of Walnut Creek Magazine's 2016 and 2017 Best Community Event, the Walnut Creek Chamber Art & Wine Festival offers a fun weekend distinguished by its spacious park setting, family-friendly activities, free admission and convenient central location.

As with past years, Art & Wine 2019 will continue to feature top-quality, non-stop local and Bay Area music and entertainment the entire family will enjoy, distinctive hand-made crafts and works of art from more than 200 artisans, award-winning local and regional wines and microbrews, ethnic and traditional festival food, the Premium Wine Tent, the delightful Festival Train (a longtime family favorite), and the Kids Zone. Heather Farms is located at 301 N. San Carlos Dr. in Walnut Creek.

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by Debra Morris, *Pacific Coast Farmers Market*
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Cherries: A Short Season

Have you ever seen a cherry orchard in early spring? It is one of the prettiest sights there is. Rows of trees following undulating hills show off their pink blossoms, quickly followed by bright green leaves and then...drum roll, please... one of the season's favorite fruits – cherries!

California farmers grow a variety of sweet cherries with subtle taste differences, even some interesting boutique varieties. Beginning with the Brooks and Bing cherries, the season moves on to the Rainiers, Royal Hazels, and Burlats. Some cherry growers even bring a variety called Champagne Coral, a tasty little number that will make your eyes roll with its amazing flavor.

These fabulous cherries can be found at a farmers' market from Gotelli Farms of Stockton, J&J Ramos Farms, both from Hughson, Cipponeri Farms out of Turlock, Diaz Farms of Fowler, and Allard Farms from Westley.

The season for cherries has begun but it's a short one usually lasting only until the end of June. So now is the time to pick up several bags of these juicy red orbs before they're gone.

Cherries have a fascinating history. The famous heart-shaped Bing was named for the Chinese foreman who helped develop the cherry in the 1870s.

Cherries were brought to America by ship with early settlers in the 1600's and brought to California by the Franciscan missionaries in the 1700's.

Sweet cherry wood is used for furniture, musical instruments, and flooring because it is a very nice color and is a hard, easily workable wood.

Cherry wood chips are also used in smokers for a sweet flavor.

Sweet cherries, the variety usually eaten fresh, are picked by hand, leaving the stems intact. They are harvested at

firm-mature stage to reduce bruising.

Grandma Harvey's Cherry Cobbler

3/4 cup sugar

3 tablespoons melted butter
1 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 cup milk
2 cups or more pitted cherries
1 cup sugar
1 tablespoon cornstarch
1 cup boiling water

Mix 3/4 cup sugar, butter or margarine, flour, salt, baking powder, and milk together. Place cherries in the bottom of a 9-inch square pan. Spread dough over cherries in a small bowl. Combine 1 cup sugar and cornstarch. Stir in boiling water. Pour mixture over the dough. Bake at 350°F for 45 minutes. Serve warm.

Recipe: Gotelli & Sons Farm

aRt Cottage

by FROgard www.aRtCottage.info

Mark Jezierny Exhibit Features Over A Dozen Artists

Our special treat for May is the Mark Jezierny and Students Exhibit, along with live music by our local uke players the PHOE' VAH NO HO ALOHA singers. The Open House and artist reception for this exhibit is on May 4 from 2 - 4. This free event is opened to the public. Enjoy drinks, snacks and meet the artists.

Mark Jezierny's show with his adult art students has become an annual Spring event at aRt Cottage over the past years as they continue to paint, explore and launch themselves to becoming professional artists. These students have come to know the art world and enter shows at other venues when they can. Confidence is what is achieved once an artist has learned from an experienced teacher like Mark, and when the artist shows a piece in an exhibit the butterflies and cold feet seem to disappear.

Goomee Planter (California Redwood, 16"x10") by Spike Mills

A painting hanging in the gallery gets "a red dot" once it is sold. It is a real thrill for me when this happens at an art opening reception as I ring the "cow bell" and announce the selling artist and the new owner. It brings smiles all around. A long time ago an art teacher told me that there are four things one must do before they are considered a professional artist. First, make art. Second, show in a gallery. Third, sell a piece. And, fourth, get published. Thanks to the Diablo Gazette, many times you will see an art piece in this column with credit to the artist. Boom! Published!

Mark Jezierny

There will be more than a dozen participating artists in the Jezierny show and the show includes more than 40 pieces. Mark currently teaches for the Mount Diablo Adult Center in Pleasant Hill and for the Lafayette Community Center. He also teaches private classes. More information about Mark Jezierny can be found at www.jezart.com

After looking at the art in the gallery, guests may visit the beautiful attached garden where many sculptures can be found among the flowers. Some of the work you will see in the garden is by Spike Mills, our visiting artist from Wawa, Canada, Lake Superior Region. Spike made a stand for a punch bowl (Goomee) which is made from white cedar and painted with acrylic. It stands 4 ft. tall and is a Gitchee Goomee character. We will be using it at the reception. Eight of Spike's pieces can be seen at aRt Cottage. His Blue Eyes statue made from California redwood can also be found in the garden. Spike will be giving a mask making workshop on Tuesday, May 7 from 6 to 8pm at the aRt Cottage. Please register online. We only have room for 20 students, register early. Go to artcottage.info click on the What's New Page.

Diablo Foothills by Mark Jezierny

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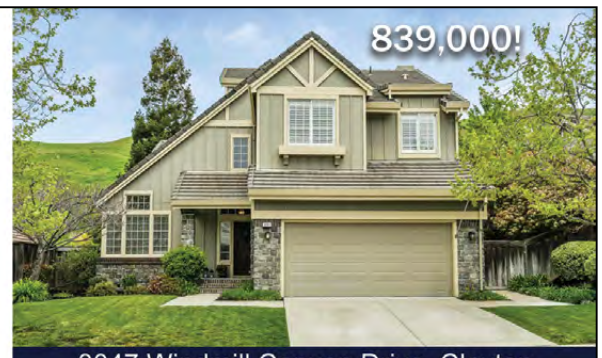

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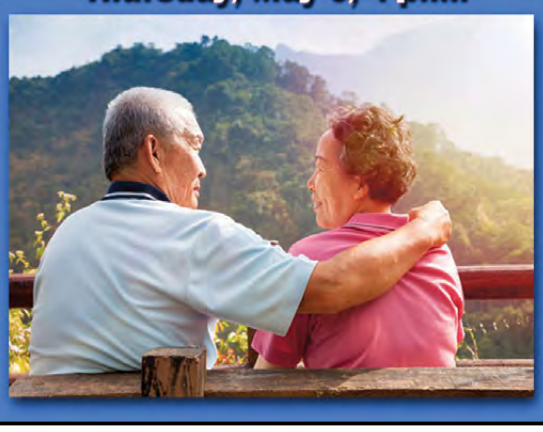

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Ruby Dooby Do to the Rescue

Ohli

Each month a hard to place dog in foster care will be featured to give them extra exposure to find their forever home.

Ohli is described as a medium-sized black and tan shephard/Shiba Inu mix being fostered by M.I.T Mixed Breed Rescue. This 45-lb handsome, 5- to 6-year-old boy spent the first part of his life mostly tied to a front porch. Because of his early experiences, Ohli is skittish when kids approach him. However, he adores adults and has a positive history interacting with other dogs. He is generally calm, but with a medium energy level, getting exercise will be a big plus for this sweet boy. He enjoys long walks as well cuddling on the sofa. He is housebroken, has a short coat that won't require much grooming, is up to date on shots and is neutered.

Ohli will require love and patience as he navigates through the transition, but this loving boy will steal your heart with his affectionate nature. An adult only home would probably be best for Ohli. His adoption fee is $300. If you think Ohli might be a match, please fill out an adoption interest form: https://mitmixedbreedrescue.org/applications/application/

M.I.T. Mixed Breed Rescue is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Please consider donating to this worth organization (https://mitmixedbreedrescue.org/): 100% of donations are used for the care and maintenance of our rescued dogs. Their mission is to work closely with rescuers in Taiwan and the shelters in San Francisco Bay Areas to save as many neglected, abused, and homeless dogs as possible. For more information, about M.I.T Mixed Breed Rescue or Ohli, contact https://mitmixedbreedrescue.org/

Dog Bites "Pawsitive" News: Celebrate the special bond between pets and people at this community festival at Broadway Plaza, Walnut Creek at ARF's Animals on Broadway May 19, 2019 10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Bring the family, including your pet, and walk to save lives at the one-mile Pet Walk. Raise funds by signing up at www.arflife.org/arf-events/2249/animals-on-broadway, then the fun continues with raffles, demonstrations, and a Pet Wellness Fair.

May is "Chip your Pet" Month. Make sure your pets are tagged and microchipped to make ownership clear (a key step for disaster situations). May 11th is National Animal Disaster Preparedness Day. Just as you and your family need a first aid and survival kit, prepare one for your pet: include any medications, at least three days of food, travel food bowls, enough water for the animals, litter tray and litter for cats, poo bags for dogs, a towel or blanket, printed photos of your pet in case you get separated to post in the neighborhood or at emergency shelters.

A Bone to Pick: **FDA Warning/ Pet Food Recall.** These lots of Darwin's Natural Dog Food contain harmful Salmonella levels. Darwin's Natural Pet Products Natural Selections Chicken Recipe with Organic Vegetables for Dogs Package: 5309(11)18101 9 Manufacture Date: October 19, 2018; 5375(11)181106, Manufacture Date: November 11, 2018 and Natural Selections Turkey Recipe with Organic Vegetables for Dogs: 5339(11)181026, Manufacture Date: October 26, 2018. Symptoms of Salmonella poisoning include lethargy, diarrhea or bloody diarrhea, fever, vomiting, decreased appetite, and abdominal pain. Call your vet immediately if you suspect your pet has had Salmonella exposure and shows any of these signs.

[Ruby Dooby Do is Concord's Instagram celebrity with more than 79,000 followers. Instagram.com/rubydooby__Do. Column written by Jill Hedgecock, award-winning author of Rhino in the Room. www.jillhedgecock.com.]

Destination Weddings Event Atop Mt. Diablo

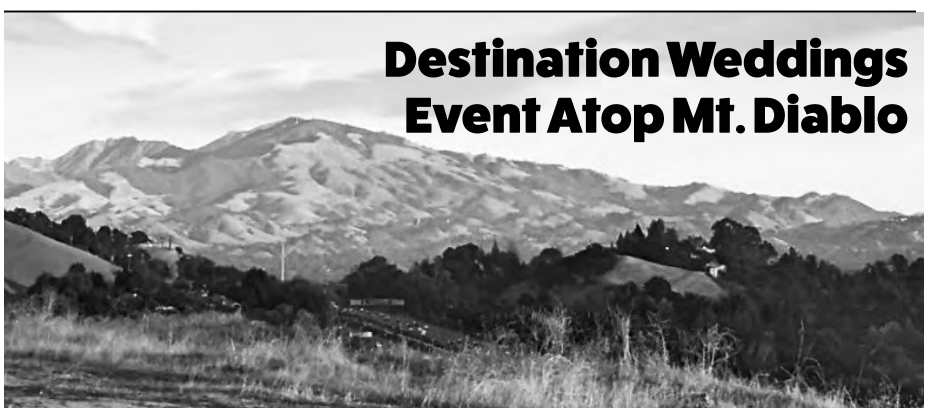


Photo by: "Mt D and de moon" by Calmuziclover CC BY 2.0

Back by popular demand, the Contra Costa Clerk-Recorder is offering a special venue this spring for couples who wish to exchange wedding vows atop the summit of Mount Diablo. In partnership with the California State Department of Parks and Recreation, the County Clerk-Recorder will officiate weddings at the iconic site from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm on Friday, May 24th.

There are only 16 appointments available for this spring "Destination Wedding" event. Last year's event filled up quickly, as couples took advantage of the unique wedding experience.

Weddings will be held on the summit's observation deck, with a dramatic backdrop of Contra Costa's rolling hills. On a clear day, the summit offers a view of San Francisco, the Sierras and beyond.

Couples interested in having their ceremony at the summit of Mount Diablo must make an appointment. Ceremonies can be scheduled online at www.contracostacore.us.

The civil marriage ceremony fee is $60. Couples can obtain a public marriage license for $86 or a confidential license for $90 from the Contra Costa County Clerk-Recorder in Martinez. A marriage license may be issued from a different county in California but must be presented to the Clerk's office when the ceremony is purchased. The Contra Costa Clerk-Recorder holds Destination Weddings each season at unique and picturesque locations throughout the county. For more information, contact Joseph Barton, Clerk-Recorder Services Supervisor at 925-335-7900.

Tony La Russa and ARF Donors Launch a Pets for Veterans Building

by Jill Hedgecock, Author of Rhino in the Room, www.jillhedgecock.com

Tony La Russa and wife, Elaine, ARF's Executive Director, Elena Bicker

On April 2nd, Tony La Russa and wife, Elaine, ARF's Executive Director, Elena Bicker, President Greg McCoy along with other ARF Board of Directors joined a crowd of ARF staff and supporters in the current Animal Rescue Foundation facility parking lot. They had assembled for a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the successful Saving Both Ends of the Leash® campaign, a landmark accomplishment for ARF which opened in 1991.

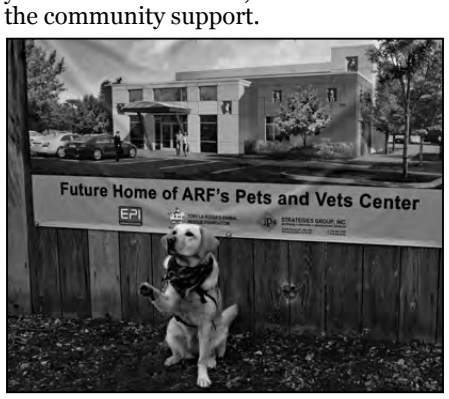
ARF's existence can be credited to stray cat, "Evie" who disrupted a baseball game and thus revealed to La Russa and his wife Elaine that there wasn't a suitable adoption resource for "Evie" in the East Bay. Tony La Russa credits his wife with the success of ARF.

"She's a crusader," says La Russa, "people trusted her early on. We were going to rescue them (the animals), and then then they started rescuing us."

While ARF's central mission of rescuing pets remains, ARF's new roles and programs and the desire to save more animal's lives has created a need for more facility space. The $18.7 million, 23,800 square-foot expansion at 2890 Mitchell Drive in Walnut Creek will include a nearly 8,000 sq. ft. Pets for Vets Center building, 30 additional kennels that will allow for another 500 dogs to be saved each year, and several all-weather training fields. ARF will also be adding solar panels to reduce its carbon footprint and save on energy costs.

"Tony had a vision," said Jim Heim, head of Business Development, "It set out a year and a half ago and the support of so many people allowed for quick action."

Quick action indeed. In 2017, the goal was to break ground in 2020. The fact that dirt was shifted in April 2019, a full year ahead of schedule, is a testament to the community support.



"We've never lost track of our original mission," said La Russa while holding his newest canine companion, Sparkle. "Saving Both Ends of the Leash has gone beyond my expectations. Together we are saving lives, both human and animal."

The Pets for Vets Program was launched seven years ago to give back to veterans who have served our country. The rescue dogs are particularly helpful for vets who are suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). PTSD can be a devastating condition because those afflicted by it can be afraid to leave their homes or have episodic events during routine activities like grocery shopping. A companion dog can make all the difference in helping these former military personnel adjust to civilian life.

"We had a vision," said La Russa. "We

had a small version or the gold version. One was about 5 million bucks and the other was about 18.7. The Board said look at the potential of what's happened in the first six years. And here it [the gold version] is."

Danny Kimbrell, the Pets for Vets dog trainer, was in attendance for the groundbreaking along with several veteran graduates of the program and their dogs. The new facility will bring more responsibility to Kimbrell who will also be training other dog trainers as part of the program expansion. Danny who once served as a paratrooper in the 82nd airborne, was inspired to lead the program after training his own dog as a service canine.

Regular ARF operations, which include adoptions, ARF's award-winning children's summer camps, birthday parties, and veterinary services, will continue as normal during construction. However, the foster program will play a vital role in the rescue operations over the next 18 months.

"We have an outstanding foster network already helping us with animals who benefit from time in a home environment, such as young animals or those recovering surgery," said Bicker. "We strongly encourage anyone who has additional room in their home and heart to consider becoming a foster during this time when we'll utilize all our resources as we continue our life-saving work."

While the funds are nearly raised, there is a small shortfall. The majority of the expansion funding has come from individuals and ARF is asking the community for support to raise the final 1 million dollars. The Engelstad Family is matching all gifts 2:1, so every $1 donated translates to $3. To donate visit: arflife.org/campaign.

Jill Hedgecock's passion for dog rescue led her to start the Ruby-dooby_Do column for the Diablo Gazette in 2017. Two ARF rescue dogs that have been featured in her column have found forever homes. The mascot for the column, Ruby, a zipper-nosed Doberman, is the inspiration for the canine character in Jill's second novel, **Between Shadow's Eyes** *to be released later this year.* www.jillhedgecock.com

Free Park Fridays, Free Festivals, Free Concerts

For 85 years, the East Bay Regional Park District has preserved and protected open space in Alameda and Contra Costa counties, and provided public access to regional parks, shorelines, and trails for hiking, biking, swimming, horseback riding, boating, fishing, picnicking, camping, and nature discovery.

To celebrate the East Bay Regional Park District's 85th Anniversary, the Park District has planned a number of special events and programs, including FREE Park Fridays, FREE Concerts in the Parks, and a FREE multicultural festival.

Free Park Fridays: Park entry and other fees will be waived every Friday in 2019 from April to December to celebrate the Park District's 85th Anniversary. Park entrance and fees for day use parking, swimming, dogs, horse trailers, boat launching, and fishing permits will all be waived. Fee waiver does not apply to special event permits/reservations, camping and associated fees, or state fees such as fishing licenses and watercraft inspections. Fee waiver also does not apply to District concessions. Park entrance is subject to available occupancy.

Free Events/Concerts in the Parks: Family-friendly music events with food and beverages available for purchase. Bands and performers will be announced later.

Lake Chabot Concerts in the Park – Saturday, June 22 (Castro Valley)

Crown Beach Concerts at the Cove – Friday, July 12 (Alameda)

Crown Beach Concerts at the Cove – Alameda, Friday, August 9 (Alameda)

Contra Loma Concert in the Park – Friday, August 23 (Antioch)

Crown Beach Concerts at the Cove – Friday, September 13 (Alameda)

John Sutter Gateway Bridgeyard Festival – Saturday, September 28 (Oakland)

East Bay Regional Park District is the largest of its kind in the nation with 73 regional parks over 122,000 plus acres, and over 25 million annual visits per year – more than the A's, Giants, Warriors, 49ers, and Raiders combined.

Early park leaders circa 1940. Left to right: (Unknown man), original Board of Directors members August Vollmer and Aurelia Reinhardt, and first Park District General Manager Elbert Vail.

How Old is That Tree?

Trees are fascinating creatures and learning about their ways can keep you entertained for a lifetime. Their symbiotic relationships with their surroundings are fascinating, as is photosynthesis and their reproductive systems.

One other fascinating thing about trees is that you can reliably tell how old they are down to the year by observing their bodies because of the annual growth cycles.

Yes, you can tell how old a tree is by reading the rings when the trunk is cut in a cross-section. Actually, you're able to tell how old that part of the tree is. In a large branch you can also count how long it's been there in this way. Skilled arborists can even gain other information from looking at tree rings. Arborist can also gather fairly accurate info about whether there were droughts, disease or damage in the tree's history.

The wood of a tree grows fast in spring and is lighter because it consists of larger (more moist) cells, so the pigment distribution is less dense. In the summer, it's dryer and growth is slower; the wood forms smaller cells and looks darker. Fall and winter there is no growth worth noting. So, when the tree is cut, the layers appear as alternating rings of light and dark wood. Each light/dark set is one year of growth, so either count dark or light rings, but not both.

The main drawback of using this natural record-keeping system is that you have to cut down your tree. It is possible to bore a sample without killing the tree, but not without hurting it.

If the tree is still standing, with some math you can still approximate its age. With a measuring tape, determine the circumference of the trunk in inches at about 4.5 feet above the ground. Divide the total by 3.14 (pi) to determine the diameter, deducting .5 to1 inch depending on the thickness of its bark.

You will need to get an idea of the average width of a growth ring which you can get from a cross section of wood from that species. Once you have that, divide the diameter measurement by the average width of an annual growth ring. For rough estimations, use .2 inches.

Doing this tree age estimation can be just as fun and counting rings, and you get to keep your tree.

For more tree fun facts, go to Sexytrees.com and read through their blog.

computercorner

by William Claney, Tech Writer, Computers USA

Tech in English

Intel's Most Powerful Consumer CPU Released

Step right up ladies and gentlemen we have news for you, and this is going to put your computer into warp-drive. Intel Corp has just released their i9 series Central Processing Unit (CPU) for the consumer market making it the fastest chip Intel has ever introduced for regular users.

According to Intel, "The 9th Gen Intel® Core™ mobile processor takes enthusiast laptop performance to a whole new level. The new Intel® Core™ i9-9980HK delivers world-class performance with up to 5.0 GHz with Intel® Turbo Boost 2.0 Technology, 8 cores, and 16 threads with Intel® Hyper-Threading Technology (Intel® HT Technology), and 16MB of smart cache to conquer the most demanding workloads. Want to reach for even greater levels of performance? — the Intel® Core™ i9-9980HK processor is fully unlocked and can be overclocked for even more performance."

Interpretation: It's fast.

If you just purchased a new computer with an 8th Gen CPU like an i5, don't worry your new computer may take this upgrade as it is compatible with a host of motherboards that hold the chip in place, provide resources to it and receive computational data from it. So, you may have caught a break and can upgrade without much effort or cost. If you have older generations of CPUs, you may need to invest in a whole new system to get the benefits.

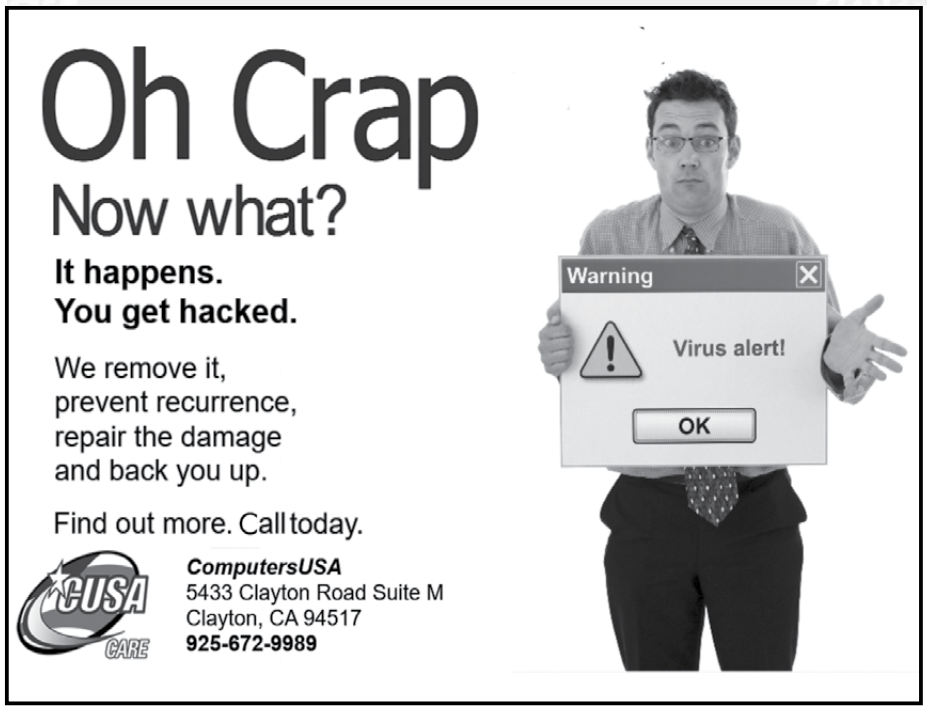
Pricing on the new 9th Gen CPUs is reasonable with am i3 selling around $200 or about 20% more than the generation it replaces.

Ok, so what? Well, if you just surf the Internet, write a letter or two, this news is a ho-hum moment. However, Computer Aided Design (CAD) programs are power hungry and this 25% boost in computing will be a welcome addition. Gamers will be able to unleash the full capacity of their best games and, provided they have a good graphics processor (GPU) and a great 4k monitor, oh watch out, I'm liv'n' large in cyber-space. "Red 5, goen' in." Good luck Wedge. (If you missed the reference review the Star-Wars saga.)

The i9 chip series is currently in production and available for delivery as a chip only product or in new computers coming off factory lines.

Oh, by the way, if super speed at all costs is not what you want then check out the price drops in older, but still worthy, chips in new computers. For example, i7 7th Gen sells for about half (½ as in 50% off) as it did when it was just released.

Now go get that new thing and enjoy.



David George

THE NAKED GARDENER

ECO-FRIENDLY HERBICIDES

Green, green everywhere! Our naked garden flashes its best springtime colors in May. Bright red roses and yellow day lilies burst forth, and clematis vines, dotted with purple and white blossoms, climb to the sky. All of these colors sparkle against a background of glow-green hillsides and trees.

But is some of our native green vegetation in the wrong place at the wrong time? Are pasture grasses and other unwelcome weeds poking through cracks in your driveway or sidewalk? Before you rush to the garden shop to load up on Monsanto Round-up or other poisonous herbicides, be aware these lab-invented chemicals have been linked to cancer in humans and wild creatures. Not good!

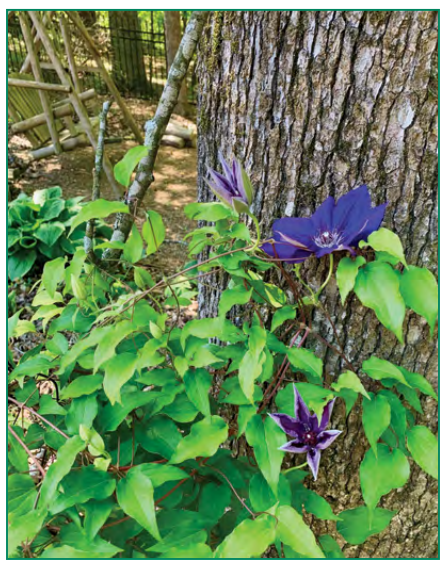
Herbicides (plant killers), invented in the 1940's and 50's, destroy a plant's ability to manufacture its own food from sunlight, called photosynthesis. Researchers have found that herbicides alter genetic structures in non-targeted plants and animals exposed to them over time. And the targeted plants are even mutating into resistant strains.

But we all have weeds and they spoil the attractiveness of our garden. So, what are some proven eco-friendly alternatives for weed abatement? For large territory, such as street margins, hillsides, and weedy areas close to homes, weed-whacking is friendlier than herbicides. For unpaved pathways, use a scraper to separate weeds from their roots. And you can treat weedy driveway and sidewalk cracks with boiling water right from your tea pot. Also, bend over and pull weeds from your lawn and planters – it's good exercise.

I am experimenting with vinegar-based weed killers for larger areas. Vinegar will kill most weed leaves and stems with its acidic acid. It is all-natural and breaks down quickly. A sufficiently strong dose, or repeated applications will also kill weed roots. My best performing combination so far is to mix a gallon of undiluted white vinegar (5% acid), along with an ounce of liquid dish-washing detergent, such as Dawn or Dove. You can find stronger vinegars (20–30% acid) online, advertised as cleaning products, such as Green Gobbler and Eco Clean but these are more expensive. Try a few different vinegar and dish soap combinations to figure out which works best for you and let me know your best results.

I do NOT recommend adding table salt like some websites suggest, nor do I add gin or vodka – I save those for evening applications. Go all-natural with your weed control and get naked.

You may email your questions or comments to NakedGardener@diablogazette.com. In some cases these may appear in future columns.



Mrs Butterbanks

"YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE, LICK THE BOWL!"

Read my blog at www.butterrequired.com

FRENCH STRAWBERRY CAKE

Here's an easy dessert anyone can make to surprise and spoil Mom for Mother's Day. It's sweet, tart and filled with strawberries. Serve with a dollop of whipped cream and it gets even better. With this cake, there is no frosting involved or slicing of layers evenly, so it's a fool-proof indulgence that is sure to impress!

French Strawberry Cake

½ cup butter, softened
1 ½ cups sugar, divided
3 eggs
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp strawberry extract
1 1/3 cup flour
1 ½ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp salt
½ cup sour cream
16 oz fresh strawberries, sliced

Preheat oven to 350°, spray an 8x3 inch round cake pan and set aside. In a stand mixer, cream 1 ¼ cups of sugar and butter until creamy, add extracts, sour cream, and eggs one at a time until well mixed. In a separate bowl, whisk flour, baking powder and salt together. Slowly add to the butter mixture. Fold in the strawberries, reserving ½ cup for topping the cake. Sprinkle remaining ¼ cup of sugar over the top of the cake and reserved strawberries. Bake until just firm in the center. 35-40 mins. This cake has a dense custard like center, so be careful to not over bake, or it will dry the cake. Let it cool completely in the pan. Serve right from the pan and add that dollop of whipped cream. Happy Mother's Day!

See How Stunning a Dry Garden Can Be!

Photo by Zella Urmson Photography

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JOURNEYMAN'S JOURNAL
by Scott Feuer

TALES FROM THE TRAIL

Black Diamond Mines
Forgotten Towns

Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve is one of my favorite local destinations nestled in the rolling hills between Clayton and Antioch. It is an extraordinary place to hike during spring and you'll learn some amazing local history. Perhaps you pack your tent and sleeping bag for an overnight campout in our wildflower covered hillsides. With over 65 miles of trails and two backpack campsites, the Preserve offers hikers of all ages an opportunity to explore the diverse flora and fauna through grasslands, foothill woodlands, mixed evergreen forests, chaparral and riparian ecosystems. And the best part, to my surprise, is the rich history of mining towns that once boomed in these hills. Back in the1860s five mining towns (Somersville, Nortonville, Stewartville, West Hartley, and Judsonville) were founded to extract low-grade coal to power California's railroads, ships, and industry of the 19th Century. By the 1920s coal mining switched to producing silica sand to make jars, bottles, and other glass products for 20 more years. Today the towns are long gone, but the cemetery, mine shafts, and a unique visitor center (located inside the mine tunnels) can be explored while hiking the many trails that traverse the rich history of the area.

Step off the trail and enter the mining tunnel leading to the Greathouse Visitor Center deep underground.

The Preserve's main entry is from Antioch, but I preferred to hike in from downtown Clayton over Peacock Ridge via Black Diamond Mt. Diablo Regional Trail. Although this route adds about four nondescript miles to the round-trip hike, finishing at the historic Clayton Club Saloon for an ice-cold beer certainly rewards the experience. Interestingly however, this segment of trail is actually the old Black Diamond road that miners use to take to obtain supplies and socialize in Clayton's saloons and inns back in the day. It's a steep steady hike, but worth it when reaching the top to enjoy the spectacular views out across Concord and Martinez. The best vantage point is a hidden little rock outcropping near the power line transmission towers directly atop Peacock Ridge. Be sure to navigate up to this spot as you will not be disappointed.

From here, I recommend continuing along Black Diamond Trail a couple more miles to Ridge Trail to appreciate perhaps the best views in Black Diamond Mines. On Ridge Trail, veer right at the many trail lookout points along the ridge. Incredible panoramas of Mt. Diablo's "backside" to the south and Black Diamond Mines' Rose Hill Cemetery and the Delta to the north put the hike in perspective.

Rose Hill Cemetery. Many children died from disease and epidemics that swept through the mining towns during the late 19th century.

Merging with Stewartville Trail junction you have two options. Continue west down to the visitor center if your day hiking for the shorter loop or east down Miner's Trail to Stewartville's backpack camp if overnighting with your reserved permit.

One of five coal mining towns (Somersville, Nortonville, Stewartville, West Hartley, and JHudsonville) located between Clayton and Antioch gone forever.

The 10-mile jaunt from Clayton to Stewartville Backpack Camp is completely worth it. There are not many places to backpack overnight locally, and the opportunity to sleep under 150 year-old olive trees planted during the heyday of Stewartville in complete darkness is undeniably unique. During one solo overnight trip, my mind started playing tricks on me.

Earlier in the day I had visited the old cemetery and read about the hauntings and other supernatural stories associated with the old abandoned towns prompting unnerving thoughts that evening as the sun went down. Alone and tucked inside my sleeping bag, the wind gently rustled the thick olive tree canopies above my tent. Thoughts repeatedly ran through my mind of all the miners and their families who lived here years ago battling all the hardships and diseases that plagued many of them to their deaths. With every sound of rustling leaves, I freakishly wondered if they were still here as ghostly spirts roaming the hills. I didn't sleep much to say the least. While the supernatural taunting kept me awake for much of the night, it was the natural events that shook me to the core.

Old mine tailings battered by years of wind and rain contrast with the vibrant green hillsides.

About 2:30 in the morning I was completely startled by an intense, viscous coyote attack on some helpless critter just up the hill from my tent. I jolted out of my sleeping bag to the terrifying sounds of multiple coyotes howling and growling as they took down their helpless prey. It sounded like they were only yards away. It scared the you-know-what out of me. The attack lasted only seconds but the howling continued.

Soon after, another pack of coyotes from the other side of the valley started howling. Back-and-forth it progressed; coyotes on each side of the valley seemed to be communicating in long cries to each other in celebration of their kill. With me in the middle of this acoustical mayhem, I wanted no part of it. I laid there helplessly waiting until dawn. Thankfully, I emerged from my tent unscathed.

If I unwillingly convinced you to forgo camping, day hiking to the visitor center and Rose Hill Cemetery are a must. Hike the Chaparral Loop Trail across amazing sandstone rock formations and intense spring wildflowers. Walk through the Rose Hill Cemetery which served the five towns as a Protestant burial ground for the coal field families. It was upsetting to learn that most interments were young children that suffered epidemics of diphtheria, scarlet fever, and smallpox as families endured the hardships of coal mining. The Greathouse Visitor Center has a wealth of information, old photographs, and interpretive displays of the coal field families who once lived and worked here. Tours deep into the mine tunnels are also available with reservations.

The return hike back to Clayton is mostly downhill once you scramble up the worn sandstone trail from the visitor center. I enjoy this last stretch of downhill trail and treat it like a reentry into today's civilization while reflecting on what life would be like walking into Clayton to socialize after a long week working the coal mines.

At the end of the hike, cross Clayton Road and walk down Main Street to the Clayton Club Saloon for well-deserved beverage and taste history in person.

Trailside wildflowers are abundant in spring especially this year with the above normal rainfall.

This saloon has been serving the community since 1873!

I recommend you get out on the trail this spring and experience our local history before the summer heat arrives. For more information on Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve browse www.ebparks.org/parks/black_diamond/ .

Camp under the 150-year-old olive trees in the deserted town of Stewartville, simple. But sleeping with the sounds of howling coyotes nearby is not so easy.

the concordian

by Edi Birsan, *Email me: Put EDI in subject line CityCouncil@cityofconcord.org*

Happy Mother's Day, Dad

With Mother's Day approaching, and as people extol the virtues of Motherhood, I find myself reflecting on its true meaning. Growing up as a latchkey kid in the 50's and 60's, the image of Motherhood as it was depicted on the Donna Reed Show or Ozzie and Harriet inspired an overwhelming envy in me, especially after I had been abandoned by my mother and left with only my step-father - Dear Ol' Dad.

In retrospect, it became apparent that the TV shows of that era promoted a concept of motherhood which was in fact a sham. The images of motherhood, and for that matter, family life, that the TV dangled in front of us were, for most of us, quite unreal.

The time has now come for us to salute the reality of those mothers who, rather than standing in their spotless kitchens, all dolled up in their pretty dresses, waiting for hubby to come home from work (as depicted on TV), actually lived through the challenges of a shortage of time, food, money, spousal and filial attention and support, and/or the scorn that was given to mothers who worked.

We must now salute those mothers and those that took on the role of mother, who resisted the temptation to escape into a bottle, into a collection of pills, or to simply leave home. Those who managed to deal with the vagaries of children and the demands of a family, with less than adequate resources, both financially or emotionally, were in my opinion able to drive out the darkness with a level of commitment that we usually say can only be given by a mother to her child.

I therefore salute you, my Dear Ol' Dad. You turned out to be more of a Jewish Mother than you would ever admit, or that I gave you credit for when you were alive during that terrible time. On this Mother's Day I salute not only you, but all those mothers, then and now, who resisted the temptation to pack it all in, and who demonstrated the truth of the saying that "virtue only shines in the shadow of temptation".

Senior Living: When It's Time to Engage Adult Protective Services

by Christine Sevier

As a senior living advocate, I am often confronted with problematic situations. This month I was introduced to a woman in her sixties who was temporarily housed in a hotel, due to a house fire. She was single, never married, with no children and had no one really advocating on her behalf, other than the caregiver, who was a young woman hired from a domestic referral agency (DRA).

DRA's provide a caregiver for a finder's fee which is a one-time only fee or a "fee for service", which is a percentage or flat rate. The caregiver will be paid directly by you and you may be considered the employer of record, and therefore responsible for any payroll taxes, workers compensation and liability coverage as well as supervising the caregiver. If you choose to utilize this model, your caregiver may not be bonded, insured or have gone through the proper background screening. It is an unregulated field and only a business license is needed for an organization to offer in-home care services. My ears automatically perk up anytime I am introduced to caregivers who are not hired on through licensed home care organizations (HCO).

During the assessment, it became apparent the current "caregiver" was taking advantage of this poor women, denying her access to medical care and keeping her in a hotel, alone and without the proper care she desperately needed. She was disheveled, confused and clearly could not make decisions on her own. The disreputable caregiver did not have a power of attorney and reported there was no family to speak of. She hoped I would help her find the cheapest independent living apartment, despite the fact that the women clearly needed more care. After educating the young lady about her client's rights, I informed her I would have to make a formal report to Adult Protective Services (APS). Let's just say the conversation did not end well and APS got involved.

I am sure situations like this are happening all around our community, so I urge you to speak up. If you see a caregiver taking advantage of a senior, call adult protective authorities. Adult protective services will provide emergency intervention which may include: investigating complaints, coordinating family and community support resources, strengthening current living situations, developing and protecting personal financial resources, and facilitating legal intervention. So, if you see something, please...say something. The elders in our community are counting on us to protect them.

To report abuse, neglect, or exploitation of an older person call (877) 839-4347 or (925) 602-4179.

Christine Sevier is owner and founder of Creating New Hope, a Senior Living Advocacy organization. For more information and guidance navigating the caregiving continuum, call (925)495-0330 or visit www.creatingnewhope.org.

theRIGHTmove

by Terrylynn Fisher, *Broker Associate*
www.BuyStageSell.com

Beware Conflicts of Interest in Double Ending, Coming Soon Ads

Every appointment a Realtor goes to is a job interview. In listing presentations, Realtors will give their background, their successes and lay out how they do what they do. Much of what Realtors do are a minimum standard of care, meaning that all licensed Realtors can do the same things for a client that others can do. Some just do more of them or do them differently. That is where we differentiate ourselves. There are those things that on the face value seem simple and advantageous for you but serves the Realtor or buyer's interest over yours.

Becoming a listing agent for a seller brings with it a responsibility to act in the best interests of that seller – a fiduciary responsibility that carries with it the duty to act with the highest standard of care for a client and to place the client's interests ahead of their own. Therefore, if a Realtor is fiduciary to a seller, how can they be a fiduciary on the same transaction for a buyer?

For example, if a "Coming Soon" ad is designed to capture buyers for the listing agent for them to represent both buyer and seller (double ending), is that a conflict of interest? Does it give advantage to the buyer who wants to get the home before anyone sees it? Was full market exposure given so that the market decides the price, not a limited market exposure allowing early offers with little to no competition? In addition, if there is a commission reduction for that dual agency (double ending), you have to wonder whether there would have been a higher net to the seller with more offers, or higher offers received if full market exposure occurred?

The DRE - California Department of Real Estate Winter Bulletin to California real estate licensees contains two pages of warnings such as: "If using a 'coming soon' strategy, do not accept and act on offers until a property has been broadly marketed; obtain prior written permission from the seller that demonstrates that the seller understands that this "'coming soon' strategy may not result in receiving the best sale price; avoid double ending a property that is not fully marketed".

Only three lines of the 2-page bulletin stated, "Handled properly, 'coming soon' can benefit a seller. In concert with Multiple Listing exposure, it can increase the exposure time of the property, increasing interest, helping potential purchasers know that it is soon to be available".

If "coming soon" ads are designed to attract buyers, it does... but this can be very frustrating to buyers. They see a property they can't actually view until a later time and they wonder, "Why advertise if I can't see it?"

Worse, is it a coming soon property that buyers can drive by while the junk haulers, landscapers, plumbers, termite companies are there for all to see? That may not be the first impression sellers are after either.

It begs the question, if it's ready to show, then why not just fully market the house and put it on the Multiple Listing, when the client's interest is served first.

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Clayton Valley Charter High
Scheible Says...
Executive Director Jim Scheible

CVCHS Students Perform, Excel in New York Competition

During spring break, the CVCHS Choirs, under the direction of Elizabeth Emigh, competed in the Worldstrides OnStage National Choral Competition held in the majestic Riverside Church in Upper Manhattan. Schools from 12 states and two Canadian provinces were represented at the musical competition.

Exposure to an external, competitive musical experience provided our choir and band with opportunities to challenge their talents and recognize their full potential on the big stage. In April, several groups from the CVCHS musical program were selected to perform at famous New York City venues and were able to work directly with world-renowned conductors and judges.

CVCHS' Concert Choir, Women's Ensemble, and Show Choir were all awarded gold medal rankings in their respective divisions. Additionally, our Women's Ensemble was awarded a coveted Adjudicators Award, earned by scoring above the 95th percentile in their division.

On another note (no pun intended), fifty-one members of the CVCHS Wind Ensemble, under the direction of Lydia Lim, took the stage at Carnegie Hall for the National Band & Orchestra Festival. CVCHS was one of 24 instrumental groups chosen nationwide to audition and ultimately selected for the final performance – an honor reserved for only the highest performing musical groups. Our students were thrilled to play in front of their adoring friends and families in Carnegie Hall's historic Stern Auditorium.

"It was such a wonderful opportunity to perform at Carnegie Hall," said Sarah Kidd, a senior who plays the flute and will be attending CSU Long Beach next year. "Playing on the same stage as many famous musicians was a huge honor and an experience I will never forget."

While in New York City, students from both groups also took in the sites visiting numerous landmarks such as the Lincoln Center, Broadway, Rockfeller Center, Radio City Music Hall, 9/11 Memorial, and Central Park.

I couldn't help but reminisce about the lyrics of Frank Sinatra's iconic "New York, New York". I started my teaching career in New York City, so I know the kind of experience our students had on their visit to the Big Apple. They certainly left their mark on the city.

Both trips were tremendous opportunities for our choir and band members and the experience of a lifetime. I am pleased CVCHS students such as Sarah continue to have possibilities outside of the classroom to explore the global stage. It's not just the exposure to new places that changes students' lives, but also the experience they have during these trips. Congratulations to our students, their families and our amazing music department staff. Play on!

CHCHS choir visit NYC landmarks

CVCHS Choir performance at the majestic Riverside Church in Upper Manhattan

CVCHS Wind Ensemble performance at the historic Carnegie Hall

Aquanuts Win Gold at Nationals

by SportStars Magazine

The Walnut Creek Aquanuts (WCA) synchronized swim team had an exceptional showing at the U.S. Junior and 13-15 National Championships April 10-14 in Riverside, CA winning five Gold medals and the High Point Award.

Last year, the Aquanuts came home without a single gold.

U.S. Nationals is the most prestigious National event in the sport of synchronized swimming for the Jr. and 13-15 age groups.

In addition to the teams' success, coach and Olympic Gold Medalist Tammy McGregor also won the Junior Coach of the Year Award. She has coached most of this year's Junior team for the past four years, coaching soloist and graduating senior Ava Jih-Schiff of Danville for over six years.

"In her 10-year career, Ava had never won a national gold medal until now," said McGregor. "This year, her last with WCA, she won a medal of every color. It was the perfect ending."

For the Juniors, the team won its first gold medal for WCA in the Free Combination event. WCA took home gold with their precise and energized "Rock vs Classical" routine. Flier Heather Ding wowed the crowd with lifts topping eight feet off the pool surface.

"We kept doing more and more and more to prepare, and finally this year it was enough for gold. Everyone did a great job and you could tell the athletes were 'all in'," beamed McGregor.

The momentum continued into the Junior Solo event where Yara Elian topped the podium with gold, Ava Jih-Schiff took the bronze swimming one of her solo routines to "Last Dance", and Marlena King took fourth nationally.

In Junior Duets, Miko Begossi partnered with Jih-Schiff to take the silver medal. Ryan Lewis and Ariana Stanton took sixth place nationally.

In the 13-15 events, Kristen Smidstra coached her athletes to gold in both the Team and Free Combination events. A Team has eight swimmers and Free Combination uses ten swimmers.

The WCA B team, coached by Robin McKinley, also made the finals placing seventh in the Team event.

All three 13-15 Duets made it into the finals. Joanna Liu and Dalia Ovadia placed fifth, Emma Moore and Miya Yamamoto placed sixth and Atira O'neil and Megan Kerner took seventh place in the country.

Former gymnast Alexis McCracken of Walnut Creek placed fifth in the Solo event. "Since the addition of the 13-15 age group to this National meet in 2014, WCA hasn't won gold until this year. The girls put in a tremendous amount of hard work for this outcome," said Coach Smidstra.

Three Aquanuts, Atira O'Neil, Megan Kerner, and Alexis McKracken, were placed on the 13-15 National Team and will represent the US internationally this summer at the Youth World Games in Slovakia.

If you've never seen Walnut Creek Aquanuts world class performance, you may consider attending "Symphonic Synchro" on May 11th 4-7 pm at Clarke Memorial Swim Center. See WCA's competition routines and an exhibition by the U.S. National Team. Experience piano music poolside by Maestro Gregory Taboloff on a Steinway concert grand piano as well as a string ensemble performance by Play Youth Orchestra. $25 for General Admission; Kids under 5 are Free. For more information: www.aquanuts.org