



Penny Marshall

Penny Marshall, Pauly Shore to Be Honored

Well known Hollywood celebrities, and the Valley's own John Madden, will be in Livermore for the upcoming California Independent Film Festival.

Penny Marshall, director and actor, will be presented with the 2008 Golden Slate Award for excellence in directing. She will be honored at the Bankhead Theater, April 17, during "A League of Their Own," an Actors Studio style discussion with John Madden.

Penny Marshall first gained prominence as a television actress with a recurring guest role on *The Odd Couple* from 1971 to 1975. She then played the role of the wise-cracking brewery worker, Laverne De Fazio, in the TV sitcom *Laverne and Shirley* from 1976 to 1983. She has directed several successful motion

(See FILM, page 10)



One of the gardens on last year's tour.

Garden Tour Benefits Valley Humane Society

"Hidden Gardens of the Valley Tour," benefiting the Valley Humane Society, will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, May 4.

The tour, rain or shine, will allow participants to visit outstanding and unique gardens at Pleasanton homes, where the love of gardens meets the love of pets.

Each of the gardens is named after the homeowner's pet. Browse "Shabby and Chic" and "Chateau Snowflake" - just to name a few. There will be rose gardens, a tropical garden, and gardens with pools and hardscape.

The tour is also an opportunity to discover ideas and inspirations for garden designs, fountains, barbecues, flower and shrub

(See TOUR, page 8)



Photo courtesy of Goodguys
Pictured is a 1932 Ford 3 Window coupe hot rod. The Beach Boys immortalized the car in their 60s hit "Lil Deuce Coupe." This particular hot rod features a souped up Flathead V-8 motor, painted steel "wires" (wire wheels), a rich black coat of paint, louvers and leather upholstery. It will be on display at the Goodguys 26th All American Get-Together Car Show at the Alameda County Fairgrounds in Pleasanton, Sat., March 29, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sun., March 30, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be 3,000 hot rods, custom cars, muscle cars and trucks of all years, makes and models. Other event features include vendor exhibits, an automotive swap meet, cars for sale corral, live music, kids area and more. General Admission is \$15, Kids 7-12 \$6. For information call (925) 838-9876 or go to www.goodguys.com.

Zone 7 Prompting Brings Focus on Toxic Clean-up

Zone 7 Water Agency general manager Jill Duerig received a pat on the back from the board of directors at their meeting March 19 for what the members called her "strong letter" to a regional agency concerning an underground basin pollution plume.

A toxic plume under two Livermore shopping centers was caused by the chemical tetrachloroethene (PCD), which leaked from dry cleaners and a sewer line two decades ago. The chemical was discontinued at both sites by 1995. Currently, there is a narrow plume about two or three blocks long still below

the surface, to the northwest of the shopping centers.

The two centers, Livermore Arcade and Vintner Square (formerly Millers Outpost), are in the vicinity of Railroad Avenue and P Street. The plume reaches as far as the intersection of Rincon and Olivina avenues. Efforts to clean up the plume have been underway since the mid-1990s.

Owners of the two centers petitioned the Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (BRWQCB) not long ago to release them from further work, on grounds that no further clean-

up work would improve the situation, and that the work in the relevant plume area has been sufficient.

Duerig met with the regional board, and told board members that not only should the regional board require the shopping centers to continue work, it should require them to conduct a survey to see whether the plume has moved, both laterally and deeper into the underground basin.

Essentially, the regional board staff agreed. Duerig put her request formally into the letter that drew Zone 7 board praise.

The regional board staff in

turn sent a letter to the shopping center representatives March 17 asking for a report by June, which would outline the extent of the plume. It also offered the owners and their consultant a chance to submit a work plan to deal with further clean-up, before the regional board makes any decision. That way, the landowners can obtain pre-approval before they commit money to a specific plan.

The regional board's letter said that the plume's boundary appears to be unstable. One test well showed violations of standards for three consecutive times

during two consecutive quarters. Findings at a deeper level test may well indicate the plume is going deeper into the underground, said the board's letter.

These factors seem to cast doubt on the landowners' assertions that the plume is stable and is too shallow to pose a threat to the Cal Water wells. However, the board's letter also says the plume may not be the sole contributor to all of the PCE in the vicinity.

Duerig told the Independent that a consultant for the landowners said that an unnamed third dry cleaner is responsible for

(See CLEAN-UP, page 4)



Photo - Doug Jorgensen

Kids were off and running, scooping up eggs filled with candy and prizes, at the annual Buenas Vidas Youth Ranch egg hunt held in Pleasanton last Saturday.

City Asked to Lead Oak Grove Appeal

The long awaited decision on the Oak Grove development southeast hills of Pleasanton favors landowners Jennifer and Frederic Lin.

Superior Court Judge Frank Roesch ruled that portions of the development plan for the project should have been included as part of the ordinance being circulated by referendum supporters when gathering signatures. As a result, the referendum is non-compliant under the law and nullified.

All other charges against the referendum organizers were dismissed, including the argument that they used false and mislead-

ing information to gather signatures.

Former City Councilmember Kay Ayala, leader of the referendum effort, immediately filed an appeal. She says that she has asked the city to take the lead in the appeal. She contends that the ruling issued by Roesch creates a major problem for the city. "If the judge is correct, the city has approved an illegal ordinance and must redo it. If the judge is not correct, the city has no recourse but to lead the appeal." She believes it is illegal, because it didn't contain all of the information regarding the development.

City Attorney Michael Roush said he is not aware of the request for the city to lead the appeal. "However, at some point the council will discuss in closed session whether to appeal once the judgement has been entered. The council has not yet had such a discussion," Roush stated.

"We gave her what we considered to be the full text of the ordinance. The judge did not agree. I don't believe the ordinance needs to be redone," Roush added.

In his ruling, Roesch noted that the referendum petition defendant did not have to attach

(See APPEAL, page 4)

A 'Sound and Healthy' City

Pleasanton is a "sound and very healthy city," declared Mayor Jennifer Hosterman during her annual state of the city talk.

A packed house was on hand for her presentation last Friday during a Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

Hosterman credited sound financial planning, a diverse economic base and an active and deeply involved community with providing Pleasanton with a quality of life that is "the envy of many." She cautioned that there could be future negative impacts from such things as the downturn in the economy. To avoid such impacts, the city is moving to "create new opportunities."

One effort is to make Pleasanton a "Center of Innovation and

Ideas," a place where ideas can be incubated and grow, noted Hosterman. "There's a groundswell of innovation. We intend to nurture and support those fledgling companies. We've been meeting with growth-company executives and industry experts to help us position the city, and the Tri-Valley, as a center of innovation. We've been told by these companies that access to information and capital are critical, and to that end, we're developing an event that will bring them all together."

Such efforts will help to provide Pleasanton with a healthy, sustainable budget and economy. "In the short term that

(See PLEASANTON, page 2)

More Funds OKed for TV30

The Livermore City Council approved \$61,912 in supplemental funding for Tri-Valley Community Television Corporation (TV30).

TV30 carries local programming, including council meetings.

Over the past several years, expenses required to operate the station have exceeded the income, creating a budget deficit. In addi-

tion to operating costs this year, there were capital costs, financial and organizational audits, legal services, and a public survey. As a result, TV30 does not have the funds to continue operations through the remainder of the fiscal year, which ends June 30.

City Manager Linda Barton told the council that all four cit-

(See TV30, page 4)



Photo - Eric Wood

Harold Hill (Tom Reardon) leads the boys' band in the Pleasanton Playhouse production of "The Music Man." The show opens at the Bankhead Theater on April 4. For details, see page 9.

Hart Students Perform at Carnegie Hall

Thomas Hart Middle School will be the first Pleasanton Unified School District school given the honor and opportunity to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City on Thursday, March 27.

The String Orchestra and Symphonic Band will present a total of six pieces. Close to one hundred students from Hart Middle School will participate in the 2008 National Youth Concert

program. "This has been a dream of mine," said Dennis Aquilina, Director of Instrumental Music for Thomas Hart Middle School who is a native New Yorker. "As a teacher, my goal is to showcase my students' talents. What could be grander than to do it in this world renowned venue," he added.

After submitting an audition (See HART, page 8)

Wine Country Championship Set to Tee Off

Todd Fischer enjoys being an unofficial "Goodwill Ambassador" for the Livermore Valley Wine Country Championship, since the Nationwide Tour event is played virtually in his backyard.

Raised in Pleasanton and still a part-time resident there, the 38-year-old pro golf tour veteran is one of the event's biggest supporters. He plans to be back home for the third edition of the Wine Country Championship at Wente Vineyards when the event returns March 31-April 6.

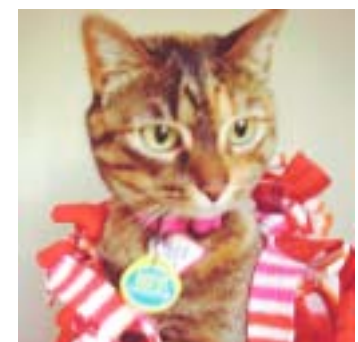
"It's always nice to have a tournament like this at home," Fischer said. "However, there is that added pressure because you want to do so well for your family and friends."

Fischer has played in all four Nationwide Tour events so far this year, finishing in a tie for seventh at the Mexico Open. He would love to have that type of performance at the Wine Country Championship, where he missed the cut last year, his first appearance in the event (in 2006 Fischer was playing full-time on

(See GOLF TOURNEY, page 3)

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PET OF THE WEEK

Pippa is a 3 year old Torbie mix cat. A Torbie is a cross between a tortoiseshell and a tabby cat - her markings are very unique. She is very friendly and loves other cats - in fact she likes to lick them. She likes to be held and snuggled, and would prefer to be an indoor kitty with a lot of toy mice to play with. (As you can see in her photo- she likes to burrow under the blankets, too.) To visit with Pippa or any of the adoptable cats, please visit Valley Humane Society at 3670 Nevada Street in Pleasanton, Wed-Sun from 11AM to 5PM. Visit the web site at www.valleyhumane.org, or call 925-426-8656 for more details.

Speakers Draw Different Conclusions from Proposed Weapons Complex Changes



Photo - Doug Jorgensen
Scott Wilson from the Lab talks about the proposed changes with Livermore Councilmember Marj Leider.

Public hearings held in Livermore and Tracy last week on plans to revamp the nation's nuclear complex drew opposite conclusions from speakers.

One side viewed the changes as providing a smaller, more efficient and more highly responsive complex. The other viewpoint called the proposal a "thin disguise to design and build new nuclear weapons."

The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) hearings attracted approximately 200 people scattered over three separate meetings in Tracy and Livermore last Tuesday and Wednesday.

Robert Smolen, NNSA deputy director for defense programs, spoke in a video at the hearing. He said that the preferred alternative would provide "a viable capability to respond to an uncertain future." It would concentrate special nuclear materials at five sites by 2012. The footprint of the complex would be reduced by one third, the work force by 20 to 30 percent, mainly through attrition.

Under the preferred alternative, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory would be a center of excellence for nuclear design and engineering; a center of excellence for high explosive research and development, with the High Explosives Applications Facility; a science magnet in high-energy-density physics, with the National Ignition Facility; and a platform host site for the Sequoia petascale supercomputer. In addition, most of the Lab's special nuclear material would be removed and consolidated at a more central site. Weapons activities would stop at Site 300 by 2015.

Sandia National Laboratories/California would be transformed into a multi-agency laboratory.

Smolen continued, "Nuclear weapons must remain a viable part of the national security. The production capacity is gone." One of the elements in the preferred alternative looks at adding additional production facilities.

Ted White, in charge of preparing the environmental impact statement, pointed out that NNSA could not pick and choose what

requirements to include. "The size and composition of the nuclear arsenal won't be decided as part of this process." The President and Congress make those decisions.

Speakers in favor of the changes included Lab Director and Lawrence National Security president George Miller, along with Livermore City Councilmembers Jeff Williams and Marj Leider.

Peace, religious, science and environmental advocates opposed the plans.

Miller commented, "It has been clear for some time that the nation has needed a blueprint for the future of the nation's nuclear weapons complex that takes into account the circumstances that have changed since the end of the Cold War."

He continued, "The preferred alternative addresses the need to consolidate special nuclear materials at fewer sites, to shrink the complex, and to replace outdated facilities and processes with modern equivalents that are more cost effective and environmentally responsible."

Paul Hammett, vice president site manager Sandia/California, said the laboratory would work with the Department of Energy to develop new roles for Sandia. In preparation, Sandia has already reduced its nuclear workforce by 15 percent and engaged those employees in other security issues.

Leider and Williams both raised concerns over how NNSA's planned reductions to Lab programs and its employees might impact the Laboratory's ability to help the community.

"I'm supportive of the NNSA's preferred alternative. I'm also concerned about the impact of changes on our community," explained Williams, who recently retired from the Lab. "Lawrence Livermore and Sandia were highly influential in the growth of Livermore. A center of excellence sounds good, but only if it is sustained by government support."

Williams pointed out that he did not think the EIS addressed the economic impact of the transformation. He suggested that

NNSA invest in the city's infrastructure rather than just donate to school programs and charities. Williams also said NNSA should facilitate start-up companies, look for non-NNSA work for the Lab; and consider more procurements locally to provide a sales tax benefit to the area.

According to those opposed under DOE's preferred alternative, at least \$150 billion taxpayer dollars will be spent over the next two decades to rebuild 26 million square feet of nuclear weapons design, testing and production plants across the nation. "The DOE is attempting to sell the American people a bill of goods by referring to this plan as a 'consolidation' when it is really a 'revitalization' of the nuclear weapons complex," remarked Marylia Kelley, the Executive Director of Tri-Valley CAREs.

Lea Abraham of Peace Action West stated, "No nuclear weapon is safe. We live in an increasingly precarious situation, one in which this country can not continue to operate under the theory, 'do as I say, not as I do.'"

Another speaker, Marie Cecilia Freeman, opposed the changes in the complex "on the grounds of common sense and morality." She said that the more the U.S. pursues its current nuclear policy, the more motivated other entities would be to do the same. "Nuclear weapons do not make us safer. They put us in more peril." In addition, "the more efficient such weapons become, the more likely we are to use them," she declared.

The nuclear activists claim that the driving force for "Complex Transformation" is the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program to redesign every nuclear weapon in the enduring U.S. arsenal. The Livermore Lab has been selected to design the RRW. Congress cut funds for the RRW last year. The DOE returned this February 2008 with more than \$40 million for continued development of the RRW in its fiscal year 2009 budget request, according to Kelley.

Comments on the preferred alternative will be accepted through April 10. Comments may be e-mailed to NNSA, sent via the Web, mailed to Ted Wycka, NNSA, Office of Transformation NA-10.1, 1000 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington D.C. 20585 or faxed to 703-931-9222.

PLEASANTON

(continued from page one)



Mayor Jennifer Hosterman

looks pretty good. The city had a \$1.5 million surplus last year and \$26 million in reserve accounts," she declared.

Hosterman noted the city is expecting a decrease in revenues from property taxes and residential fees in light of the current housing market. At the same time commercial growth is continuing. There are over 61,000 employees in 19 million square feet of space. Businesses are attracted by the city's skilled and highly educated workforce. Stoneridge Mall is looking at building a new Nordstrom and adding 200,000 square feet of retail space. CarrAmerica is working on a 500,000 square foot expansion that would include a 130 room hotel. Roche Molecular, a pharmaceutical and medical technology company, has completed a 140,000 square foot expansion at its campus.

"The city is working aggressively to relocate and expand the auto mall to the Staples Ranch property. It will include more dealerships to contribute to the city's tax base," continued Hosterman.

The development is made possible as the result of sound land use planning, said Hosterman. "Build-out and our voter-approved housing cap will present challenges for Pleasanton planning in the future. However, I'm convinced that we'll continue to work through issues as a community to arrive at the best decision for Pleasanton," she stated.

The third priority is to provide a safe environment. Hosterman noted that surveys indicate that people do feel safe in Pleasanton. The city's crime rate is among the lowest in the region. "The rare, recent acts of violence that have taken place remind us that even Pleasanton is not exempt from crime and of the importance of maintaining a constant vigilance on the safety front," she added.

Traffic has become an issue

as the area grows. Hosterman noted that increased enforcement has resulted in a decrease in traffic collisions.

A fourth priority is climate protection and environmental awareness. "The City of Pleasanton has joined with the other Alameda County cities to hire experts to measure each city's carbon footprint. The experts will analyze Pleasanton's footprint in 1990, and strategize changes that we can make to meet those 1990 emission standard levels by 2020. "I hope to be more aggressive than that," stated Hosterman.

She noted that Pleasanton has been a leader in mandating green building and promoting the use of solar energy. Pleasanton is "ahead of the curve" with its energy plan and new energy element.

On a national level, over 800 mayors including those from our largest cities, have signed onto the Climate Protection Agreement, developed by Mayor Nickels of Seattle through the US Conference of Mayors. These cities represent over 25% of America's population. "As a result of our collective actions across America, we are creating a brand new green economy, which means jobs. This is the largest opportunity for job creation that this country has seen in many

years. I am proud to be a part of this movement. I am proud that Pleasanton is one of many cities leading the way."

Regionalism is the fifth priority. Hosterman noted that area cities and Alameda County are working together to improve traffic, provide additional funding for the Tri-Valley Housing Opportunity Center, and lobbied for and received funds to continue to develop the East Bay Regional Communications System.

"Our partnerships and our collaborative efforts are paying off for the region, and for the people of Pleasanton. I want to recognize those elected officials with whom we work to sustain the viability of the Tri-Valley: Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty, Dublin Mayor Janet Lockhart, Livermore Mayor Marshall Kamena, San Ramon Mayor H. Abram Wilson and Danville Mayor Candace Andersen. While we're all dedicated to our communities, we recognize that together we have the power to bring additional resources to our region," she stated.

Hosterman concluded by thanking her fellow councilmembers, city staff and employees. "Together we have crafted Pleasanton into a community that honors its past and protects and advances its future."

BANKHEAD THEATER

ROMANCE, RHYME AND REMEMBRANCE
Livermore-Amador Symphony
 Arthur Barnes, Music Director. The concert features Dawn Harms conducting Beethoven's Fourth Symphony and Lawrence Granger performing Elgar's Cello Concerto in E minor. The evening also includes the Overture from Thomas's sentimental opera Mignon and Ravel's Mother Goose Suite depicting popular children's fairy tales. A pre-concert talk begins at 7 p.m.
Saturday, March 29 at 8pm
 Tickets \$21, \$26, \$31, Students Under 18 FREE

LIVERMORE VALLEY WINE COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIP
PGA Nationwide Tour Golf Tournament at Wente Vineyards
Thursday thru Sunday, April 3-6 • Tickets \$20
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Wednesday, April 9 at 8pm
 Tickets \$26, \$31, \$36, \$11 Students

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Thursday, April 24 at 8pm
 Tickets \$28, \$31, \$36, \$11 Students

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VALLEY ROUNDUP



Photo - Doug Jorgensen

Rob Rucben and Jamie, age 2, took part in a peace vigil held last Wednesday in Pleasanton on the 5th anniversary of the start of the war in Iraq. The program included stories told about those directly affected by the war, poetry from Fred Norman, and music of peace.

Employment Fair

Students at Las Positas College are looking for employers who are looking for help.

The college will hold its annual employment fair on Thursday, April 24, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the student center, building 1700, on the Livermore campus. The college is located at 3000 Campus Hill Drive in Livermore.

Employers interested in recruiting for full-time or part-time technical career openings or summer jobs are welcome to recruit during the fair. There is \$100 fee for employment recruiters to participate in this event. Admission is free for people seeking employment.

Employers who would like to participate should contact Scheanelle Green, coordinator of the Career/Transfer and Employment Center at Las Positas, (925) 424-1423 or email sgreen@laspositascollege.edu.

New Community Development Director

Brian Dolan has been selected to serve as Pleasanton Community Development Director. He will begin work on April 7, 2008.

Dolan brings 22 years of professional urban planning experience to his new position, along with eight years of managerial skill in municipal planning and private sector experience in environmental engineering.

Dolan most recently served as the Director of Development Services for the City of Vallejo.

Prior to that he worked in economic development and planning for the cities of Concord and Palo Alto. Dolan also has broad experience in private sector engineering as a senior environmental planner and is well versed on the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

As Community Development Director, Dolan will oversee a department that merges the City's planning, code enforcement and building and safety units in a reorganization that stems from City Manager Nelson Fialho's desire to streamline the permitting process. Both internal and external work committees spent approximately 18 months reviewing the existing process toward this end.

"I have great expectations that this new department will systematize the planning and development functions of the city in a way that marks an immediate improvement in the level of customer service," observed Fialho.

Dolan will assume the responsibilities of Jerry Iserson, the Director of Planning and Community Development, who delayed his retirement to assist with the transition and will continue working on special assignment for a limited time to assist in completing the General Plan Update.

Dolan currently resides in Moraga with his wife Allison, an attorney who also serves on the Moraga Planning Commission, son Brandon, 13, and daughter Madelyn, age 10.

BART Procurement

BART is currently conducting an Availability and Utilization Study (Study). The purpose of the Study is to analyze and evaluate BART's contracting practices in the areas of procurement of products, equipment, and supplies; construction services; and professional services, including technical, architecture, engineering and paraprofessional services. BART is sponsoring a community meeting to inform the business community about the Study. Representatives from chambers of commerce, trade associations, and governmental organizations will provide literature and information of interest to local businesses.

The meeting will be Wed., April 2 at Joseph P. Bort Metro Center Lawrence D. Dahms Auditorium 101 8th Street Oakland from 6 to 10 p.m.

An overview of the Disparity Study process will be presented and businesses will have the opportunity to share their contracting experiences. In addition, purchasing managers from BART will discuss upcoming contracting opportunities.

Please RSVP by email at bartmeeting@mtald.com or call 510.291.9682 for more information.

Paint the Stadium

The Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) is seeking volunteers or volunteer groups to re-paint numbers on the 7,000 seats at the Robertson Park Stadium.

All materials will be provided by LARPD. The District plans to begin the project in April, 2008. Volunteers 16 years and younger must be accompanied by a participating adult. For more information, contact LARPD Volunteer Coordinator Katrina Hole at (925) 373-5748.

GOLF TOURNEY

(continued from page one)
the PGA Tour).

The elite field of Nationwide Tour players who have committed to play includes each winner of the first four events on the Nationwide Tour this year, as well as 19 of the top 20 leading money winners have committed to compete in the Wine Country Championship.

"The caliber of play on the Nationwide Tour is great," said Fischer. "This tour is not the same as it was when I first started (in 1998). I look at the fields now and can see that it is not a 'developmental tour' anymore."

Other Northern California products in the field include Matt Bettencourt of Modesto, Joel Kribel of Pleasanton, Jeff Brehaut of Los Altos, Matt Hansen of Atwater and Tom Johnson of Weaverville, who is 13th on the money list going into next week.

They all will be part of the only stop in Northern California, which has proved to be the toughest test on the tour the past two years.

Besides hosting the best field of professional golfers to visit the Bay Area in 2008, the Wine Country Championship also will feature gourmet food and wine tasting each day. The AT&T Tech pavilion presented by Logitech will host some of the latest gadgets and electronics for business and the home.

The family oriented Wine Country Championship has averaged 20,000 spectators annually, with event proceeds benefiting local non-profit organizations. Sponsored by Wente Vineyards and hosted by the Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association, the event is to benefit the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center, among other organizations.

While it is a tour-tested layout, the Course at Wente Vineyards also provides tour-quality conditions year round. It has been awarded top honors for Best Playing Conditions in the East Bay Region by Greenskeeper.org and ranked No. 1 on Fairways and Greens magazine's 2008 rankings of non-resort courses in the Bay Area (No. 16 overall in the state).

Currently there are five tour winners from 2008 heading to the Wine Country Championship, which includes the top four money winners on the Nationwide Tour this year - Jarrod Lyle of Australia (Mexico Open), Ewan Porter of Australia (Moonah

Classic), Darren Stiles of the U.S. (New Zealand PGA Championship) and Scott Dunlap of the U.S. (Panama Movistar). The fifth winner is Arjun Atwal of India, who won the Malaysian Open two weeks ago on the PGA European Tour. Also in the field is 2006 Wine Country Championship winner Tripp Isenhour.

Standup comedian Henry Cho, an avid golfer, is to be the special guest at Wednesday's pro-am. Known for being "an Asian with a Southern accent," the Tennessee-born Korean comic also is to perform at the pro-am awards function Wednesday evening.

All three Wine Country Championship Pro-Am events have been sold out. They will be played on Monday, March 31, at 1 p.m., Wednesday, April 2 at 7:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. and are open to the public.

There are a limited number of

VIP Hospitality Passes still available. The popular pass provides access to the luxury VIP Hospitality Tent, with private food and beverage service, overlooking the 18th green. Each ticket is \$125 and valid one day only. VIP passes or Hospitality packages must be purchased before March 31.

Passes for the entire week are \$20 each, available only in advance; daily tickets are \$5 each for the first two days of tournament play (April 3-4) and \$10 each for the final two days (April 5-6). Admission is free for practice rounds. Children 12-younger are free (limit of two) with a paid adult admission.

For tickets and more information about the Livermore Valley Wine Country Championship, visit the website at winecountrychampionship.com, call (925) 447-2200 or fax (925) 447-2900.

EXHIBIT

(continued from page one)

pieces on display is the small suitcase that contained all of her mother's possessions when the family fled Vienna in 1939.

As part of the exhibit, a panel discussion took place at the club last Thursday evening on the question of whether artists should use their work to change society. The panelists, who included Bill Owens, all agreed that art can be and should be transformative. "It can make a better society," in Owens' words.

Celia has written a statement of purpose about the exhibit. She writes, "Art does transcend. Once you understand the art of the other, they are no longer the

other. Differences remain, but our art can bring us closer together and could be used to encourage us to find peace.

"As Leon Smith so eloquently recommended, 'we should be building monuments to peace and not to war — to remind us of what our true objectives should be ...'"

The exhibit opened March 4 and was scheduled to end March 31, but has been extended to April 11. It may be viewed at the Commonwealth Club, 595 Market Street (adjacent to Montgomery Street BART Station). There's no admission charge.

Attorney to Serve on Las Positas College Foundation Board

Attorney David Brilliant has joined the Las Positas College Foundation Board of Directors, Board Chairman Tom Daggett announced last week.

Brilliant is an associate at the law firm of Randick, Odea and Tooliatos in Pleasanton. His practice focuses on trusts and estates, taxation and general business matters. He holds a law degree from Golden Gate University and a LL.M. in taxation. He handles both transactions and litigation.

"After meeting board mem-

bers and learning more about the unique role Las Positas College plays in the Tri-Valley area, I am delighted that I can join the board and serve the college," Brilliant said.

He is the 19th member of the Foundation board. New Las Positas President DeRionne Polard also joined the board as an ex-officio member.

The Foundation awarded two key grants in 2008. The first was for \$20,000 to jump start Las Positas College's growing pro-

gram for veterans returning from service overseas. The second was for \$4,000 to support two Las Positas performing arts programs in downtown Livermore at the Bankhead Theater.

The Las Positas veterans' program is designed to ease the transition of service personnel from military to civilian life as a college student. The program provides assistance with educational and financial needs. The grant also provides money for scholarships and a textbook loan

program for vets as well as an aggressive outreach program.

The performing arts grant will support the orchestra and band concert at the Bankhead Theater on May 14 at 8 p.m.

The Foundation's purpose is to raise awareness of the college in the Tri-Valley area and to raise funds and invest them to strengthen the college's programs.

For information about the Foundation, please contact CEO Ted Kaye at (925) 424-1010 or tkaye@laspositascollege.edu.

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Olivia Davidson, (from left) Kellie Hughes, Michelle Hewitt, Rayley Farnam, Brooke Wilcox and Brittany Wilcox are among those who take part in the knitting project.

Photo - Doug Jorgensen

Knitting Club Creates Items for Charity

By Victoria Kameron

Mrs. Davidson's Knitting Club began with ten young girls knitting in Lisa Davidson's home. The group was started in the fall of 2006 by a couple of moms who wanted their home-schooled daughters to learn the same traditional crafts that their grandmothers had practiced. The group tried embroidery and crocheting before they began knitting, which the members seemed to like best.

Over the last few years the group has slightly evolved in size; girls between the ages of 6-17 now fill the large youth room at the Trinity Baptist Church where they meet once a month, except for Christmas when they meet at Lisa's house in front of the Christmas tree.

The largest change to Mrs. Davidson's Knitting Club will occur on April 16, 2008 when

129 hats will be donated to the children at the Kaiser Hospital in Walnut Creek. The group, no longer merely knitting scarves or hats for themselves, has decided to knit for charity.

"I like it because my sister sometimes goes to the hospital and I know that it helps them," says eleven-year-old Michelle Hewitt who has knitted three hats for charity. One of the club's knitters has an illness that causes her to be in the hospital several times a year. Lisa Davidson said that she hopes to bring a few knitters with her when they visit the girl in the hospital.

"We want the older girls to really appreciate making the hats for such a great cause," says Davidson. Without this club, Davidson noted, "the needle arts would have been forgotten in this generation."

Another one of the knitters,

nine-year-old Brooke Wilcox, said that she enjoyed the social side of knitting. "It's fun. You get to see lots of your friends." She added that the charitable aspect was also important. "It feels really good (to make hats) for the ones that don't have any."

The club is funded through individual donations and through the families of the young knitters. Although Mrs. Davidson's Knitting Club meets at a Baptist church, the club's members come from different faiths. Lisa Davidson said a Sunday school teacher at the church where the club often meets donated the majority of the yarn used. The donor's mother was going into a retirement home and no longer knitted so the Sunday school teacher was able to donate eight-banana boxes worth of yarn, nearly 90% of the yarn needed to supply the club. Lisa said that the knitter's parents spent the \$10-15 it takes to buy a hoop and needle.

Lisa Davidson said that the group is at maximum capacity as she is the only teacher and she likes the personal attention she is able to give each child. However, she said that she would be happy to advise anyone else who would want to start his or her own knitting club for charity. Anyone interested in contacting Lisa Davidson can write a letter to her at the Trinity Baptist Church in Livermore. Include a name and contact information.

Vans Available to Community Organizations

The Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA), operator of the Wheels bus system has established the Wendy Lockhart Memorial Community Transportation Partnership Program in which retired vans from its Dial-A-Ride service will be made available to enhance transportation service to Tri-Valley community based organizations serving elderly and disabled citizens.

The program is in memory of Wendy Lockhart, a former Dial-A-Ride client who was an active member of the Wheels Accessible Advisory Committee from 2004 to 2006 and daughter of City of Dublin Mayor Janet Lockhart.

"I am extremely touched that LAVTA would honor my daughter with the naming of this program. Wendy was a wonderful

young woman who did not let her disabilities define who she was or what she could do. It is my sincere hope that this program will supply others with the same opportunities," said Lockhart, Chair of the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority.

LAVTA recently announced that nine paratransit vans are available for donation, and is issuing a call for applications from

Grape Xpo Rates High

By Harry Stoll

Wrapped in the kind light of day's end, On Tuesday, March 17, the Martinelli Center hosted the GrapeXpo of the Livermore Valley Winegrowers Association. Growers and winemakers gathered in a schmoozy expo hobnob.

A long table faced the audience. Steven Mirassou, owner of Steven Kent and La Rochelle wineries, gave the first taste, saying the relationship between grower and winemaker is critical. Steven Kent Winery emphasizes Cabernet Sauvignon and other Bordeaux varietals. La Rochelle emphasizes Pinot Noir.

The Bordeaux grapes come from a number of local vineyards, including Steven Kent Home Vineyard, Ghilmetti, Wente and Smith Ranch; and has wine remaining from McGrail Vineyard grapes. Now it will be buying from Madden Ranch. Yes, Bam-Bam Madden.

Then Karl Wente, 5th generation winemaker, gave a speed spiel on vineyard management, including marketing decisions about how much fruit to allow. He said about barrel expense, "A thousand dollars for 60 gallons of storage."

Emphasizing the cooperation needed, he talked about butting heads with Steven Mirassou on winemaking practices and said he would rather butt heads over details of tastes in the wine. Later, Wente said that Steven Kent and La Rochelle wine is made at Wente under a custom crush arrangement. Some Steven Kent wines list the winemakers as Steven Mirassou and Claude Bobba, who is a winemaker at Wente.

Everywhere Wente.

Up next, Mitchell Katz, winemaker/owner of the eponymous winery, learned to make wine from his grandfather. In 1998 Mitchell Katz produced 200 cases, now it's 10,000. Originally he bought grapes from Wente. One day Phil Wente said this was getting difficult. "Wente was selling its own fruit and buying fruit from the small vineyards." That's when Mitchell Katz hooked up with grower Chuck Ott.

Ott's vineyard is Falling Star. He purchased the vineyard in 2002, knowing nothing, and found out what the market is like, which consisted of too much Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Merlot. "I left the Chardonnay for the birds." He made a big decision to graft

over to Petite Sirah and Syrah, because that's what the winemakers wanted. He was in the red, but the grafting over allowed him to go on hold and stay even. His growing goal is 2 1/2 to 3 tons per acre. "Falling Star grapes make pretty good wine," said Ott.

Bill Thomsen, co-owner of Harris-Tesla Vineyards, and a lawyer, said growers and winemakers do not need a written contract, pointing out that a contract is based on trust. Keeping each other informed is critical. As soon as the grower knows of trouble delivering that is the time to tell the winemaker. Conversely, a winemaker who is going to have trouble accepting the fruit, should tell the grower immediately.

Now it was time to circulate. A U-shape of tables around the perimeter, backed by large-numbered wall signs with circled numbers, marked the stations of wineries and grape growers. Each participant had a number and would start at that number. In three-minute speed meetings, each group visited a table: Taste, chat, exchange business card and pick up information sheets. The association's Andrea Branton sounded a one minute warning and soon rang a raucous cowbell. The woman is a bell ringer.

Pam Picazo of Picazo vineyards provided barrel tastings of its 2007 Merlot, an interesting lady in a dark red silk jacket. Frisky Hal Liske of el Sol Winery told winemaker Mark Curin that he was changing his business plan to concentrate on Livermore Valley fruit. Curin said

Picazo would have some for sale. Wineries and growers poured along the inner edge of the U.

Here's Tarantino, seller of Cabernet Sauvignon and Petite Sirah to the Wine Group and to Wente; Julio Covarrubias and Julio, Junior of Casa de Vinas. Senior is a longtime vineyard specialist for Wente and they bought the property from Wente. Junior said the excellent Cabernet Sauvignon was made by an anonymous winemaker.

The lovers of Amante Vineyards poured a smooth 2005 Chardonnay. Amante purchased the property from Wente to whom it sells grapes. Red Feather Winery, next door to McGrail was there. Las Positas grows Barbera, Grenache, Mourvedre, Petite sirah and Tempranillo. Owner Merv Frydendal said he sells to whoever buys. "Phil Wente told me 'What you don't sell, I'll buy.'"

Galles Vineyard of Jerold Road sells grapes to Retzlaff. A taster asked owner Harry Galles about the Cabernet Sauvignon he made and was pouring. It's rich, layered and unfiltered. "We couldn't afford the filtration equipment," said co-owner and wife Linda Nidever-Galles.

Deals may have got done, contacts certainly were made. Here came the cheese and crackers and fruit and spreads and the socializing continued. A plate was spilled and the contents scooped back up, the owner invoking the Bart Simpson 5-second rule.

In the silky evening at closing time, a fresh breeze blew through.

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