

## Art, Community, & Education

Merry Band of Pranksters Back to Perform 18th 'Big Fat Show'



### Find Out What's Happening Check out the second section

Section II is filled with information about arts, entertainment and special events. There are education stories, a variety of features, and the arts and entertainment and bulletin board list

### Development Proposal Sent Back to Planning Commission

The Pleasanton City Council sent a proposed development on Old Stanley Blvd. back to the planning commission for additional work.

The unanimous vote followed a discussion that grew heated at one point.

The brief spat had nothing to do with the specific project under review. It had to do with the city's approval process and how long it takes to gain approvals.

There were a variety of reasons for sending the project back to the commission.

Councilmembers Cindy McGovern and Matt Sullivan wanted to see if there were a way to save the heritage trees and the 1908 home on the site. The craftsman style home is scheduled to be demolished to make way for 14 single family homes on the 1.2 acre area. All of the trees would be removed.

Sullivan also responded to a neighbor of the project, who pointed out that his solar panels would be impacted by shadows cast by one of the two story homes.

In addition to the trees and home, issues raised by some or all of the councilmembers included parking, the absence of a play area for children, and noise. Several of the homes back up to the nearby railroad track. Mayor Jennifer Hosterman suggested that more green amenities be added to reach the 100 points that

(See PLAN, page 9)

### Further Study Planned On LARPD Future

The Livermore City Council directed staff to conduct additional research into the impacts of changing the status of the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD).

The main issue is whether money now going to the state through a property tax shift would remain in Livermore if the district's status were changed.

A first phase study predicted there could be between \$1.3 million and \$3.1 million in additional revenue if the district were either merged with or made a subsidiary of the city. However, the revenue is based on all the assumptions and predictions in the study coming to fruition.

Currently, LARPD is an independent district. Almost 50 percent of property tax money that should go to the district is taken by the state for ERAF (Education Revenue Augmentation Fund). The ERAF shift from the city is around 24 percent.

The council voted 3 to 1 to conduct a phase II study. Jeff Williams was the dissenting vote. Marj Leider was absent.

Williams commented that he hadn't heard from any member of the public that there is an interest in the issue. He also said it appeared that the LARPD board didn't care. "I see no reason to spend more money on additional study," Williams stated.

The first study cost \$25,000. The pricetag of the second

(See LARPD, page 12)

## Dublin Authorizes Doolan Canyon Study

Dublin will proceed with a study of a proposed development of up to 1990 units on 1450 acres of Doolan Canyon. At the same time, Dublin will discuss the future of the canyon with Livermore.

There is a 90 day time limit on the talks with Livermore.

Pacific Union Land Company is the developer.

Representatives of a variety of environmental groups urged Dublin to respect the urban growth boundary established

by Alameda County voters under Measure D. They asked the council to accept the option suggested by staff to deny the future study. There was concern that developing the land would open the potential for Dublin to continue east into north Livermore. There would also be negative impacts on natural resources within the canyon, which East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) has designated as a future open space preserve.

The study would first look at

general issues in preparation for going to LAFCO to ask that the land be placed in Dublin's sphere of influence. A more specific plan would then be prepared for the land. Dublin would ask to annex it. If the land remained in Alameda County, no development would take place on the land. The only way for development to proceed would be to annex the property to Dublin.

The Dublin City Council vote was 4 to 1 to proceed with both the study and talks with Livermore. New councilmember Eric

Swalwell was the "no" vote. He supported first talking to Livermore.

Swalwell said Dublin should sit down and be good neighbors. Staff can come back with a report on the talks that will allow us to make an informed decision on a future study. He said there is just speculation now as to what Livermore feels. "I want to know what Livermore thinks."

Mayor Tim Sbranti suggested that the study would provide the needed information to determine the future of Doolan Canyon.

"We need to resolve these issues once and for all. It's been a 25 year discussion. It is important that Livermore be part of the conversation."

Councilmember Kasie Hildenbrand declared, "We have heard from Livermore. We know they want nothing in Doolan Canyon," She stated, "Personally I would like to do both, the talks and the study There should be a time limit on any talks."

The area has been the subject (See DOOLAN, page 2)

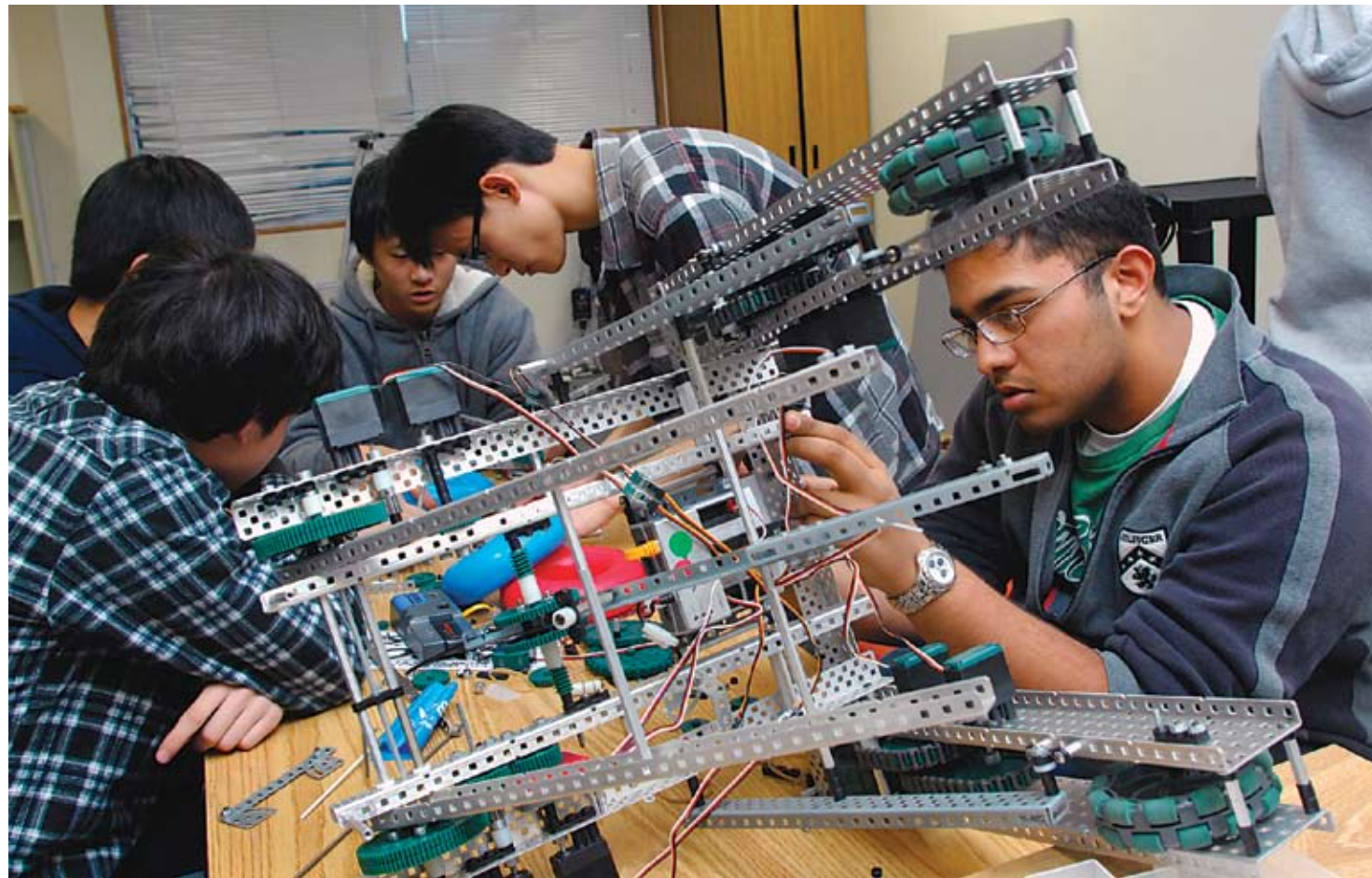


Photo - Doug Jorgensen

Working on one of the robots are (from left) Christopher Herz, Mark Chen, Jerry Cheng, Wenson Hsieh, Abheek Chanana.

## Foothill High's Robo Crop Looks Good This Year

By Ron McNicoll

Repeatedly stacking 7-inch rings on moveable 4-inch diameter tubes is a monotonous chore of repetitive motion that only a robot could love.

However, the people behind the robots — in this instance the Robotics Club at Foothill High School in Pleasanton — find that designing the 18-inch cubed robots, and operating them in tournaments develops their own creativity.

"It's not all about math and science. It represents a lot of

creativity. You learn working skills," said Varun Sharma, vice president of the club, which has two dozen members.

The creativity comes from solving the basic problem for a contest. This year the national competition had to do with building the robot that is able to do the ring-stacking task. There are many trial-and-error moves before the robot is able to carry out the task. That keeps the students' creativity exercised.

Club members acquire various skills in carrying out their goal of becoming better at robotics.

They learn the people skills that go with leadership training and fund-raising. "You learn how to write business letters, how to deal with a lot of people. I learned different aspects of marketing that you wouldn't normally acquire in a school club," said Sharma.

The club has picked up several local sponsors for its team, which needed about \$600 or \$700 to buy parts to build its robot. There is also a high-end robotic competition nationally, that includes high schools, but also colleges. Teams spend thousands building those robots. That's too rich for

Foothill, said Sharma.

As it is, club members will be out raising funds for their own travel, probably at \$1000 per person, for a four-day trip to Disney World in the spring. They will compete in the Vex Robotics world championship. Some of the competition will be televised by ESPN's Wide World of Sports.

Foothill math teacher Bob Loew, who is in his first year as the club's advisor, said that the club has become so popular that it expanded from one to three

(See ROBOTICS, page 2)

## Proposed Routes for ACE Prove Unpopular

There was a definite lack of enthusiasm for plans to run ACE trains through the Valley at higher speeds and on a more frequent basis.

A standing room only crowd heard a presentation from the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) last Thursday at a meeting of the Tri-Valley Regional Rail Policy Working Group. The focus of the meeting was on the proposed Altamont Regional Rail Connection with the high speed train.

The Altamont Corridor Project, which is being led by ACE and the California High-Speed Rail Authority, is part of a much larger vision to connect the entire state with high-speed trains.

Routes being considered include one that follows I-680/I-580 concluding at Greenville Road. Three alternative go through the downtowns of Livermore and Pleasanton ending at the Vasco Road ACE station. Two would go through the vineyards south of Livermore.

Group member Alameda County Supervisor Scott Hagerty said of the presentation that it lacked the visuals that would have provided more understanding of where each of the routes might be built and what they might look like. "I have a high level of frustration with the documents provided," he stated. "It's hard to visualize the two options going through the vineyards. I

(See ROUTES, page 4)

## Livermore Charter School Finds Campus For Permanent Home

By Ron McNicoll

After five years of searching for a suitable site for its long-term K-12 campus that ultimately will house 2000 students, the Livermore Valley Charter School (LVCS) is in the process of buying a 30-acre site near North Canyons Parkway north of Interstate 580.

The parcels are at 3090 Independence Avenue and 3196 Constitution Drive, across from Costco.

Although schools can bypass the local planning process if they wish, as permitted by a state law, charter school officials chose to have the city involved, said charter school CEO Bill Batchelor.

The Livermore Planning Commission will hold a public

hearing on the application when it meets Dec. 21.

"We want to be involved with the city, and make sure we have its support in the process. We found other sites that did not work. At this site, the infrastructure is there. The city is our partner on environmental work," said Batchelor.

Batchelor has had talks with city staff about such issues as the school's potential impacts on traffic and how they can be mitigated.

The site was developed by Exterra. It is held by real estate firm North Star, which has been negotiating with the school. The buildings are 18 months old.

There are 16 relatively small

(See CHARTER, page 5)



Photo - Doug Jorgensen

Prince Royal, Queen Grossioso and Princess Victoria in the wedding scene of the Pleasanton's Civic Arts Stage Company production of The Princess and the Pea. Remaining performances are December 17 and 18 at 7:30 p.m. and on December 18 and 19 at 2:00 p.m. at the Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Rd., Pleasanton. Tickets are adult-\$10, \$15 and \$18; child and senior-\$6, \$9 and \$12. They may be purchased online at www.firehousearts.org. More photos on page 3.

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### PET OF THE WEEK

Licorice is a handsome, long haired fellow desperate for a home. He came to us from Fairmont Animal Shelter back in May. Licorice is looking for his own window he can sit in all day without thirty other cats around to pester him! Once in a home, he would surely be cool and collected, but a shelter situation is something he never adjusted too. If you have an extra window sill and an open mind and heart, call 925-426-8656 or visit the website www.valleyhumane.org, to learn more. Valley Humane Society is located at 3670 Nevada Street in Pleasanton and is open Tues- Sat from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.





Photos - Doug Jorgensen

Pictured are scenes from the Pleasanton's Civic Arts Stage Company production of *The Princess and the Pea*. The show combines the traditional tale of vain Queen Grossioso, henchman Rataouille and Princess Victoria with the fun of British panto-style theater, which includes frequent audience participation and interaction. Remaining performances are December 17 and 18 at 7:30 p.m. and on December 18 and 19 at 2:00 p.m. at the Amador Theater, 1155 Santa Rita Rd., Pleasanton. Tickets are adult-\$10, \$15 and \$18; child and senior-\$6, \$9 and \$12. They may be purchased online at [www.firehousearts.org](http://www.firehousearts.org).

## Reminder: Bird Count Set for This Friday

The Ohlone Audubon Society and the Alameda Creek Alliance will host the second annual Eastern Alameda County Christmas bird count this Friday, December 17. An estimated 90 volunteer birders of all levels of experience will survey for wintering birds within a 15 mile radius count circle in the vicinity of Pleasanton, Sunol and Livermore, within the Alameda Creek watershed.

The Christmas Bird Count is an annual nationwide volunteer-based bird survey effort coordinated by the Audubon Society to promote bird conservation and assess long-term trends in

winter bird populations. In the largest citizen science effort in the world, tens of thousands of volunteer birders and scientists armed with binoculars, bird guides and checklists will take part in Christmas bird counts throughout the Americas from mid-December through early January. Audubon and other organizations use data collected in this longest-running wildlife census to assess the health of bird populations and to help guide conservation actions.

"We have numerous local birders, ornithologists, and public lands agency staff participating

in the second Eastern Alameda bird count, and there is still room for more volunteers of any level of experience," said Rich Cimino, Conservation Chair of the Ohlone Audubon Society, and Events Director for the Alameda Creek Alliance. "The count will contribute to bird conservation and monitoring efforts and will promote stewardship of bird populations and habitats within the Alameda Creek watershed," added Cimino, the initiator of the Eastern Alameda bird count.

The eastern Alameda County effort will complement 15 other

existing Christmas Bird Counts in the San Francisco Bay Area. The count area is in the vicinity of Sunol, Pleasanton and Livermore, and includes five East Bay Regional Parks, significant San Francisco watershed lands, and birding hotspots such as lower Mines Road, Sunol Wilderness, Del Valle Reservoir, and the Springtown area in Livermore. Volunteers will walk, bicycle, or drive count areas, or monitor backyard feeders during a 24 hour period on December 17. Additional surveys during the count week of December 14 to 20 will

locate, identify, and record rare bird species. The surveys will be non-intrusive observations of birds, with volunteers following an ethics code to avoid any impacts to birds or habitats.

Highlight species found during the inaugural count in 2009 included a pair of bald eagles, well over 20 golden eagles, 3 peregrine falcons, 3 prairie falcons, 7 northern pygmy-owls, 1 short-eared owl, 1 burrowing owl, 1 Lewis' woodpecker, 176 yellow-billed magpies, 14 rock wrens, 1 canyon wren, 90 tri-colored blackbirds, and several

uncommon sparrows (17 rufous-crowned, 88 lark, 3 vesper, and 2 grasshopper sparrows).

The Ohlone Audubon Society is chapter of the national Audubon Society serving southern Alameda County that works to preserve the natural world through education, conservation, and advocacy. The Alameda Creek Alliance is a community watershed group with over 1,800 members, dedicated to protecting and restoring the natural ecosystems of the Alameda Creek watershed.

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# CHARTER

(continued from page one)

buildings on one of three parcels. They would be used for K-8 classrooms, and related functions. Another parcel has an 80,000 square foot building. That will house the high school.

The high school enrollment is 80 students this year in its first year of operation as a freshman class. The school will add students each year.

Commercial firms that are already occupying offices in the future high school building will be partitioned off, so they can remain for years, until class growth requires the whole building, said Batchelor.

A vacant lot between the two office complexes will be converted into sports fields. There also will be construction there of a gym and a theater.

All but two of the 16 small buildings are vacant. One less

see will be remaining, because its use in the video production business ties in with the school's use. The other tenant will sign an agreement addressing when it is expected to depart.

"We've gone through probably 15 sites to find the right location. This works from the financial standpoint. It's the only site that works for our needs," said Batchelor.

The first phase of the development will be finishing the building interiors, then moving the K-8 students in during 2011. They currently attend Sonoma School, which the charter school rents from the Livermore school district.

The high school is using Junction Avenue School, which houses the current ninth grade, until the new campus is ready for them.

The first phase of the purchase and adaption of construction will cost \$25 million. By the time the whole plan is in operation, including theater and gym construction, the cost will be around \$45 million to \$50 million, said Batchelor.

Charter school financing works differently from state public school financing. The charter school will be selling a \$25 million municipal revenue bond for the first phase, then paying it back out of its general fund, plus corporate sponsorships, and private donations, said Batchelor.

Use of \$7 million in federal stimulus funds for construction is also being contemplated. However, the payback on the loan might not be as easy to accomplish as other financing, said Batchelor.

Asked about whether such a

big investment would be sustainable over the next 20 or 30 years and beyond, Batchelor said, "I am confident about the support over the years. We offer a nice addition to the community."

## AIRPORT NOISE RAISED AS CONCERN

The new site is seven-tenths of a mile from the main runway of the Livermore Airport. Leander Hauri, the airport's manager, wrote to the state transportation department's aeronautics division strongly recommending that alternative locations be found for the charter school. He is concerned about safety and noise considerations.

Hauri informed the city's airport commission at its meeting Dec. 13 about the letter. Commission Chairman Gene Wheeler told the Independent that although planes will fly eastward

directly over the campus, the aircraft are at sufficient altitude so that safety is not a "significant factor."

"The way the flight paths are laid out there, with aircraft at altitude, most (pilots) would be able to make a runway, one part of it or another if there were flight trouble," said Wheeler.

"The public view of safety is different from most pilots. It's a subjective thing. We try to educate people about that," he said.

Noise in classrooms would be a bigger factor, said Wheeler. The commission warned the Pleasanton school district about building Mohr school where it did in the flight zone west of the airport. The district built the school anyway. The airport continues to receive complaints from Mohr parents about the noise, said Wheeler.

The Alameda County Airport Land Use Commission was scheduled to look at the issue at its meeting Dec. 15, after the Independent's deadline. The commission can recommend mitigation measures for the school.

However, none of the aeronautical agencies have the power to ban schools from an airport safety zone.

Batchelor said that with the walls still to be finished inside at the site, there is excellent opportunity to install sound-proofing to mitigate aircraft noise.

As to safety, the site is not at the end of the runway, but north of its east-west runway layout. "Our current high school location (at Junction school) is also in the airport flight zone," said Batchelor.

# Two Sandia Projects Awarded 65 Million Hours of Supercomputer Time

Two projects led by researchers at Sandia National Laboratories' Combustion Research Facility (CRF) and Computer Sciences and Information Systems Center have been awarded 65 million hours on two Department of Energy (DOE) supercomputers through the DOE's Innovative and Novel Computational Impact on Theory and Experiment (INCITE) program. The research projects utilize two world-leading supercomputers with a computational capacity roughly equal to 135,000 quad-core laptops.

"The Department of Energy's supercomputers provide an enormous competitive advantage for the United States," U.S. Energy Secretary Steven Chu said. "This

is a great example of how investments in innovation can help lead the way to new industries, new jobs and new opportunities for America to succeed in the global marketplace."

Awarded on a competitive basis, many of the new and continuing INCITE projects aim to further renewable energy solutions and understand of the environmental impacts of energy use. The program, open to all scientists, is supported by the DOE's Office of Science and managed by the DOE Leadership Computing Facilities at Argonne and Oak Ridge national laboratories, which host some of the world's fastest supercomputers.

INCITE projects could help speed the development of more

efficient solar cells, improvements in biofuel production, and more effective medications to help slow the progression of Parkinson's disease.

This year's INCITE awards are the largest ever awards of the department's supercomputing time. A total of 1.7 billion processor hours were granted to 57 innovative research projects – using computer simulations to perform virtual experiments that in most cases would be impossible or impractical in the natural world.

The two projects led by Sandia researchers are the following:

- Sandia's Joe Oefelein is the principal investigator on "High-Fidelity Simulations for Advanced Engine Combustion

Research," with his colleague, Jackie Chen, serving as co-investigator. Oefelein and Chen were awarded 60 million hours on the Cray XT5 ("Jaguar") machine at Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Oefelein and Chen's project aims to provide new insights into the dynamics of turbulent combustion processes in internal combustion engines, and to maximize the collective benefits of those insights through collaborations between the researchers involved.

- David Evensky, a computer software researcher at Sandia, is principal investigator for "Trace Collection for Simulation-Driven Co-design of Exascale Platforms and Codes." Sandia's Curtis Janssen, also a computer scientist,

serves as co-investigator. The project was awarded 5 million hours on the IBM Blue Gene/p ("Intrepid") machine. Evensky and Janssen's project focuses on "exascale" computing and is the validation part of a larger effort to help researchers co-design applications, runtimes, and systems for future exascale computing, considered the next great leap in size for computers.

- A third Sandia researcher,

Mark Taylor, is participating in two other proposals that were granted 110 million and 35 million hours. Sandia's Taylor is a co-investigator on "Climate-Science Computational Development Team: The Climate End Station II," led by the National Center for Atmospheric Research, and on "Numerical Study of Multiscale Coupling in Low-Aspect Ratio Rotating Stratified Turbulence," led by Los Alamos National Laboratory.

# Fourth Giant Planet Identified

Astronomers have discovered a fourth giant planet, joining three others that, in 2008, were the subject of the first-ever pictures of a planetary system orbiting another star other than our sun.

The solar system, discovered by a team from Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics with collaborators at University of California, Los Angeles and Lowell Observatory, orbits around a dusty young star named HR8799, which is 129 light years away. All four planets are roughly five to seven times the mass of Jupiter.

Now, the same research team has discovered a fourth planet that is about seven times the mass of Jupiter. Using high-contrast, near infrared adaptive optics on the Keck II telescope in Hawaii, the astronomers imaged the fourth planet (dubbed HR8799e) in 2009 and confirmed its existence and orbit in 2010. The research appears in the Dec. 8 edition of the journal Nature.

"The images of this new inner planet in the system is the culmination of 10 years worth of innovation, making steady progress to optimize every observation and analysis step to allow the detection of planets located

ever closer to their stars," said Christian Marois, a former LLNL postdoc now at NRC, and first author of the new paper.

If this newly discovered planet were located in orbit around our sun, it would lie between Saturn and Uranus. At about 30 million years old, this giant version of our solar system is young compared to our system, which is about 4.6 billion years old.

Though the system is very much like our own, it is much more extreme. The combined mass of the four giant planets may be 20 times higher, and the asteroid and comet belts are dense and turbulent. In fact, the massive planets' pull on each other gravitationally. The system may be on the verge of falling apart.

Lawrence Livermore scientists simulated millions of years of evolution of the system, and showed that to have survived this long, the three inner planets may have to orbit like clockwork, with the new planet going around the star exactly four times while the second planet finishes two orbits in the time it takes the outer planet to complete one. This behavior was first seen in the moons of Jupiter but has never before been seen on this scale.

Quinn Konopacky, a postdoc-

torial researcher at LLNL's Institute of Geophysics and Planetary Physics and a key author of the paper, stated "The implication is that we have truly found a unique new system of planets. We don't yet know if the system will last for billions of years, or fall apart in a few million more. As astronomers carefully follow the HR8799 planets during the coming decades, the question of just how stable their orbits are could become much clearer."

The origin of these four giant planets remains a puzzle. It neither follows the "core accretion" model, in which planets form gradually close to stars where the dust and gas are thick or the "disk fragmentation" model in which a turbulent planet-forming disk rapidly cools and collapses out at its edges. Bruce Macintosh, a senior scientist at LLNL and the principal investigator for the Keck Observatory program, said, "There's no simple model that can make all four planets at their current location. It's a challenge for our theoretical colleagues."

Previous observations had shown evidence for a dusty asteroid belt orbiting closer to the star. The new planet's gravity helps account for the location of those asteroids, confining their orbits. "Besides having four giant plan-

ets, both systems also contain two so-called 'debris belts' composed of small rocky and/or icy objects along with lots of tiny dust particles, similar to the asteroid and Kuiper comet belts of our solar system," noted co-author Ben Zuckerman, a professor of physics and astronomy at UCLA.

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## Information Sought on Bank Robbery

Union Bank on Hopyard Road in Pleasanton as held up by two men at about noon yesterday.

A call to the Pleasanton Police dispatcher reported two armed men with handguns. The two were wearing black hooded sweatshirts and ski type masks to cover their faces.

The suspects entered the bank. One of the men jumped over the counter and approached employees, while the other male approached customers and employees in the office area of the bank. They got away with an undisclosed amount of money. They drove off with a third suspect who had been waiting in a vehicle.

The car was determined to have been stolen in Emeryville on Dec. 13.

The two suspects were possibly black adult males. One was described as 5'6" to 5'11" tall.

He was wearing baggie clothing. The second suspect, also wearing baggie clothing, was described as 5'8" to 5'11" tall. An older model white Honda Prelude was seen leaving the court where the stolen vehicle was recovered and may

be associated with the robbery. Anyone with information about the crime, should call the Pleasanton Police Department at 931-5100.

LIVERMORE CINEMAS		2490 FIRST STREET 443-SHOW	
<b>TONIGHT AT 12:01: TRON LEGACY 3D &amp; 2D &amp; D-BOX</b>			
TRON LEGACY 3D (PG) DLP D-BOX	12:20	4:00	7:00 9:45
TRON LEGACY 3D (PG) DLP THX		2:00	5:00 8:00
TRON LEGACY (PG) DLP	11:30	3:00	6:10 9:00
HOW DO YOU KNOW (PG13) DLP	12:50	4:25	7:05 9:40
YOGI BEAR 3D (PG) DLP THX	12:00	2:20	4:40 6:50 9:10
THE FIGHTER (R) DLP	12:50	4:05	7:10 9:50
CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: VOYAGE OF THE DAWN... 3D (PG) DLP	12:40	4:10	6:45 9:30
CHRONICLES OF NARNIA: VOYAGE OF THE DAWN... (PG) DLP	12:05	3:15	6:05 8:45
THE TOURIST (PG13) DLP	12:30	4:05	6:55 9:20
TANGLED (PG) DLP	11:45	2:10	4:40 7:15 9:35
HARRY POTTER...DEATHLY HALLOWS I (PG13) DLP	11:30	2:45	6:10 9:15
BURLESQUE (PG13) DLP	1:20	4:15	7:05 9:40
127 HOURS (R) DLP	11:40	2:10	4:30 6:50 9:25
Starting Wednesday: True Grit, Little Fockers			
Starting Christmas Day: The King's Speech, Gulliver's Travels			

**WHITE CHRISTMAS Wed. Dec. 22 @ 7pm**

**A CHRISTMAS STORY Dec. 18 @ Noon Dec. 23 @ 7pm**

**BLACK SWAN DAILY: 11:40 2:00 4:30 7:00 9:10**


**127 HOURS DAILY: \*12:15 2:20 4:45 7:20**

**THE SOCIAL NETWORK DAILY: 9:15**

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# SPORTS NOTES



Pictured are members of the Pleasanton Rage U12 White girls team that advanced to the finals of the State Cup Silver division after a pair of impressive victories this weekend. The Rage will play in the finals this weekend in Woodland. The game results are in Sports Notes.



The Pleasanton Rage U12 Broncos advanced to the finals of the Crossroads Invitational Soccer Tournament with shutout victories this past weekend. The Broncos lost in the final to Fremont in a close match marked by outstanding defense by both teams and a 1-0 victory to Fremont. The Broncos are pictured wearing their 2nd place tournament medals. Pictured are (back row) Coach David Meissner; (middle row) Michelle Wood, Cleo Burley, Emma Long, Alex Sanchez, Allie Udelhoven, Caroline Clark, Coach Corinna Meissner, Nagisa Smalheiser, Talia Florio, Arabelle Franco and Gabby Sanchez; and (front row) Alex Landry, Emilee Hansen, Niva Ranavat, Nicolina Priess, Audrey Little, Aoife O'Farrell, Elizabeth Chiou. Photo - Marianne O'Farrell



Springtime Tumbling and Trampoline team members pictured are (top row) David Davisson, Morgan Raschein, Anna O'Brien; (middle row) Kaitlyn Clevenger, Delaney Foote, Shoshana Cohen, Kendall Aasen, Jeremy Pigford; (front) Sabra Wilson.

## Youth Soccer

The Pleasanton Rage U12 White girls advanced to the finals of the State Cup Silver division after a pair of impressive victories this weekend. On Saturday night under the lights at Fallon Sports Park in Dublin, the Rage U12 White beat the Milpitas MXG 6-1. The Rage U12 White opened the scoring just minutes into the game with a goal from Mira Greenlee who scored after receiving a nice pass from LaLinda Xu. Just a few minutes later, Greenlee scored again after receiving a pass from Xu. The Rage U12 White kept up the scoring when Olivia Verbeck scored from 25 yards out by putting the ball too high for the Milpitas goalie to reach. With about 10 minutes to go in 1st half Shanece Hunsaker ran past the Milpitas defense and scored over outstretched hands of the Milpitas goalie. Sami Lai then finished the scoring in the 1st half by beating the Milpitas keeper with a shot to the corner. The Rage U12 White went into halftime with a 5-0 lead. The Rage U12 White kept up the pressure in the 2nd half and scored when Lalinda Xu found the corner of the net after receiving a nice pass from Alyssa Bardakos. Xu's goal finished the scoring for Rage.

Sunday morning, the Rage U12 White was back at it again with a match against the Central Marin Magic. The 1st half was a tense battle with the Rage U12 White girls

controlling most of the play. Finally with 5 minutes to go in the half Ryan Murphy beat the Magic keeper with a hard shot from 25 yards out. Murphy had received a nice pass from Sami Lai to setup the goal. The Rage U12 White went into halftime with a 1-0 lead. In the 2nd half it appeared that the Magic was going to go to even the score when there was a mad scramble in front of the Rage goal. But goalie Izzy Neads and defenders Jenyce Dutcher and Kate Rademann were able to save the day by clearing the ball from the Rage goal. A few minutes later, the Rage U12 White was able to add to their lead when Lalinda Xu beat the Magic goalie with a hard shot to the top corner of the goal. Xu's goal was setup after a pass from Alyssa Bardakos. The Rage U12 White kept up the pressure in the 2nd half with Belle Henry, Shanece Hunsaker and Sami Lai almost scoring once again. The Central Marin Magic tried to attack back but Rage midfielders Mckenna Moura, Sophie Adams, Emily Mickelson and Madison Soble controlled the middle of the field and just wouldn't let the Magic get anything going. When the Magic did get the ball down in the Rage end of the field, Rage defenders Haley Beltran, Jenyce Dutcher and Kate Rademann were there to clear the ball from the Rage end of the field. The Rage advanced the Finals this weekend in Woodland with an impressive 2-0 victory over the Magic.

The Pleasanton Rage U13 Grey team has qualified for the Norcal State Cup Championship game next Saturday in Woodland California. Rage reached the finals by defeating the Union City Outlaws in the Quarterfinals on Saturday by a score of 2-0, on goals by Jazmin Merchant and Avery Jones.

In Sunday's Semi-final game they defeated the Cal Odyssey team from Clovis 1-0, on a terrific breakaway goal by forward Jazmin Merchant. On both Semifinal and Quarterfinal games goalie Dalia Shafi made tremendous saves to keep the opponents scoreless. Precise passing and aggressive play by midfielders and forwards Olivia Christensen, Gaby Cabrera, Darcy Kron, Amanda Chun, Taylor Campbell, Sabrina D'Ambrosio, Emma Theroux, Kailyn Coleman and Erin Overland set up many of the

scoring opportunities and prevented many of the counter attacks. Defense was led by Megan Shackley, Miranda Spring, Alyssa Chau and Bailey Sanchez. Top Offensive Players: Jazmin Merchant, Avery Jones, Erin Overland, Olivia Christensen, Gaby Cabrera, Amanda Chun; Top Defensive Players: Megan Shackley, Miranda Spring, Alyssa Chau and Bailey Sanchez.

The Livermore Crush U14 closed out a spectacular season by claiming the championship at the San Ramon Sunset Soccer Tournament. As they had all season, the Crush received contributions from all players allowing them to win the tournament against the top recreational teams in the Tri-Valley area.

The first game put the Crush up against the San Ramon Blue Monsoon and featured a potent Crush attack in a 4-1 victory. Brianna

Ruloma opened the scoring with a line drive past the Monsoon goalie. Shortly after that goal, Jenna Dobson unleashed a rocket from her left wing position that caromed off the post before finding its way to Ruloma for the put back and a 2-0 lead. RJ Atwal and Natalie Palomo rounded out the scoring while Mackenzie Schley overcame an injury to anchor the Crush defense.

The second match of the tournament pitted Livermore against their league rivals the Mustang Extreme for the third meeting between these two very evenly matched teams. A smart feed from midfielder RJ Atwal to Brianna Ruloma put the Crush up 1-0. That was all the offense the Crush could muster but proved to be all they would need. The Extreme managed a goal of their own and from there, the Crush relied on the sound defensive work of Mackenzie Schley, Jessica Casey, Meghan Lawrence, Jordan Volponi and Devin Everett to hold on for the tie gaining valuable tournament points.

On Sunday, with weather conditions worsening and rain impacting play, the Crush faced Pleasanton's Rage Chaos. The Chaos broke through first but a determined Livermore team battled back. Jordan Volponi nearly tied the game with a blast to the upper reaches of the goal, but a great save by the Chaos goalie deflected the ball

off the crossbar. RJ Atwal got the Crush on the scoreboard with a left footed strike midway through the second half. Carmen Best and Dorothy Richards played solid games at both ends of the field to keep the Crush alive. Jenna Dobson initiated the game winning drive running down a ball deep into Chaos territory and feeding it to Brittney Turner who popped it in the goal. The game winner put the Crush into the championship game to face another league rival in Mustang United.

The championship went to the Crush by a score of 2-1. Brittney Turner and Jessica Casey provided the scoring while Helga Forstreuter and Natalie Palomo came through with solid field work. Defensively, Devin Everett and Meghan Lawrence were very active and goalie Kat Rowe made a series of outstanding saves. Over the course of the season, the players grew into a strong and cohesive team under the leadership of an outstanding coaching staff. The Crush were led by head coach Jorge Palomo and assistants Art Ruloma and Dave Dobson.

## Springtime Tumbling and Trampoline

Livermore's Springtime Tumbling and Trampoline hosted the "It's the Season"

# What Our Readers Are Saying...



"Each week, my wife, Earna, and I look forward to receiving The Independent newspaper and Section II of the paper, "Art, Community and Education." We enjoy reading in depth articles on issues confronting the Tri-Valley area. Section II has been a great addition to the newspaper by giving information on the performing arts, educational events and other opportunities for our personal growth. To the writers and publishers of this great newspaper, we express our deep thanks for your service to our community."

**Ken Mikulasek**

*Livermore Resident, Retired Pastor, Member of Livermore Rotary*

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Photographer Chuck Deckert traveled with the Catholic Community of Pleasanton Music Ministry group, recording the group as it performed in Rome and Assisi, Italy.

## 'Magic Moments' Mark Choir's Visit to Italy

By Ron McNicol

The rain had let up on that dark night in the small Italian town. The air was misty. A few visitors took the opportunity to wander with their children after dinner into a square with a fountain in it.

Some of the children said it would be a great place to sing songs, so the singing started. Then a teen-ager stepped forward from the group to direct them.

Their song grew, and carried up the hill to an old castle where a few people had gone to stroll. Hearing the music, they came down to join in.

Residents nearby opened their windows to hear the music, and then came out to join the song, and see who brought such wonderful voices to their town.

It was the night that the town of Assisi, once the home of St. Francis, discovered the Catholic Community of Pleasanton (CCOP) and its choir.

Singing in the town square was one of many magical moments for the choir and other people from the Valley who accompanied them, said Joe Hebert, the CCOP's choir director. Hebert arranged the tour, which 90 people took part in, including 35 of CCOP's 150 choir members.

The delegation attended an audience with Pope Benedict XVI. The choir received one minute of recognition when introduced among the groups attending in the audience of 6000 people. The choir serenaded the pope with "Where the Sun Will Never Go Down."

The choir sang the second part of a Mass in St. Peter's Basilica on a Sunday night. Cardinal Angelo Comastri, arch-priest of St. Peter's, presided at the Mass. Rev. Padraig Greene, the pastor at CCOP, concelebrated the Mass with him.

The choir offered more variety than is usually heard at the Mass. The choir used cello and harp in a place where they are accustomed to hearing only voice and organ. Some of those in attendance said the arrangements were "the most beautiful they had ever heard," said Hebert.

Another highlight was the concert that the choir sang at St. Ignatius church, a regular event for the city of Rome.

Like many U.S. Catholic congregations, CCOP has picked up songs from the African-American gospel music tradition. It was part of the Rome concert. Hebert translated one song's refrain into

Italian. Hebert invited the audience to sing the Italian refrain. "They didn't sing back, but they were excited that we were singing it," said Hebert.

Amid the grand architecture and pomp of Rome, there is a "larger than life expression of praising God through artistry," said Hebert. Traveling to Assisi was a restful contrast that put the travelers into a more intimate mood for worship, he said.

"In Assisi, the colors are muted. There are depictions of Jesus and the saints. It's all very simple," said Hebert.

Some of the best moments for

the pilgrims came at a Mass at the crypt of St. Francis in Assisi. "It was a special place for many of the people. There was something moving about the experience. St. Francis gave his life to people who were diseased, poor lepers, whoever needed him the most," said Hebert.

"St. Francis led a different life, but he had a clear relationship with God, and what he was here to do. It was a very positive life. It held a certain type of spirituality for people who went there to pray," said Hebert.

The trip is also a poignant farewell between Hebert and the

choir. He has been director at CCOP for 20 years. On Jan. 1, he will become the choir director at Corpus Christi Church in Piedmont.

Corpus Christi was Hebert's parish church when he was growing up in Piedmont. It is also the church where the Rev. Dan Danielson, longtime pastor at CCOP, is in retirement, although he is still active there. Danielson hired Hebert at CCOP, so Hebert feels he is traveling full circle.

Like many choir directors, Hebert is a professional musician who also doubles in another job. In his case, he is co-principal

cellist for the Oakland/Eastbay Symphony. He has also had a career of playing various styles of music, sometimes on recording dates with famous artists. Among them have been Placido Domingo, Ray Charles, and Santana. He played with the latter on "Maria, Maria" on the "Supernatural" album.

Hebert said that his past experience has gone into leading the CCOP choir. "That's why I developed these choirs. People want to experience more (in their lives) and in spirituality. We are singing the music, connecting to the word, and to God," he said.



Come Celebrate Christmas together this year  
at The Catholic Community of St. Charles Borromeo  
**Christmas Masses**  
Friday, December 24  
7 PM & 11:30 PM  
Saturday, December 25  
10 AM  
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## Scouts Recycling Christmas Trees

Youth groups representing the Livermore Boy Scouts of America, Troop #903, #924 & #939 have announced plans for their 35th Annual Christmas Tree Recycling event, scheduled to take place on Saturday, January 8th, 2011. Boy Scouts would like to thank Livermore Sanitation, for their help and support with the annual Christmas Tree Recycling event.

For about the price of a Starbucks cup of coffee, (suggested donation of \$5 or \$10 for flocked, tinsel, or trees over 8 feet tall), Boy Scouts representing these three troops will pick up trees at the curbside of homes or businesses for recycling. Residents and/or businesses interested in this program can make a reservation online at, scoutgreen.org or by calling 925-373-7815. Reservations for pickup must be made by January 4th, 2011.

Here are some fun facts about Christmas Trees as reported on www.earth911.com website.

- There are approximately 30-35 million real Christmas trees sold in North America every year.
- Eighty-five percent of artificial trees are manufactured in China.
- For every real Christmas tree harvested, up to three seedlings are planted in its place the following spring.
- There are about 500,000 acres in production for growing Christmas trees. Each acre provides the daily oxygen requirements of 18 people.
- It can take 15 years to grow a tree of average retail sale height (6 feet), but the average growing

time is seven years.

• The top Christmas tree production states are Oregon, North Carolina, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Washington.

Christmas Trees are a renewable resource

• Today, approximately 98 percent of real Christmas trees are grown on farms throughout all 50 states and Canada. Real trees are a renewable, recyclable resource, and real trees are planted to be harvested just as corn and pumpkins are cultivated for a harvest.

• Young trees in their rapid growth years have a high rate of photosynthesis and thus produce more oxygen than older trees. This year, more than 60 million new seedlings were planted by Christmas tree farmers all over North America.

According to the National Christmas Tree Association, "real Christmas trees are biodegradable, which means they can be easily reused or recycled for mulch and other purposes." Recycled Christmas trees today provide wildlife and fish habitat, compost and mulch for planting new trees, and reducing waste in our landfills.

The Boy Scouts of America is one of the nations largest and most prominent values-based youth development organizations. The BSA provides a program for young people that builds character, trains them in the responsibilities of participating citizenship, and develops personal fitness.

Please visit the website at www.Scoutgreen.org for more information.

## Plays to Celebrate the Light of the Night Sky

On Friday, December 17, from 5:00 to 7:00 PM, Hacienda School will present four plays that celebrate the light of the night sky through the eyes of four ancient civilizations: the Greeks, Egyptians, Aborigines, and Chinese. There will be plays, food, telescopes for stargazing, and activities for children and adults.

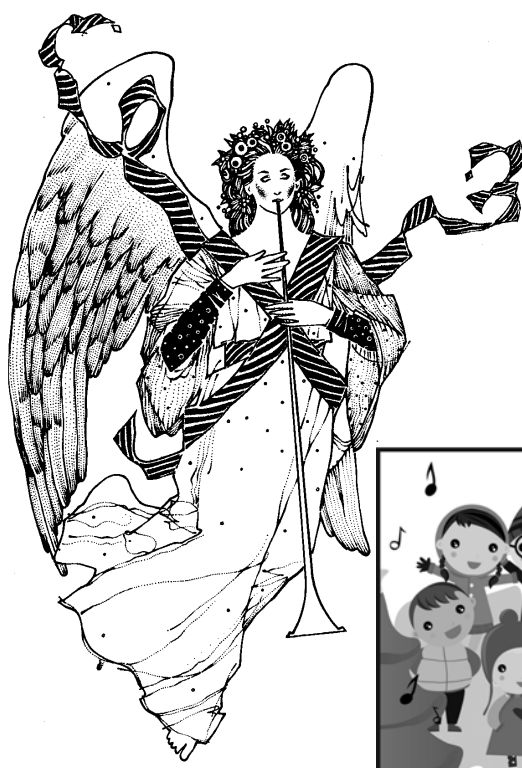
Guests are welcome. There is no charge, but replies are re-

quested to ensure that there is sufficient space and food.

Hacienda School is located at 3800 Stoneridge Drive, three blocks east of Santa Rita Road. It serves students from first grade through eighth grade.

"A Celebration of Light" attendees are asked to reserve spaces by calling 925-485-5750.

For more information, please contact Charlotte Machi at 925-485-5750 or go to cmachi@headsup.org.



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Join us every Sunday for Traditional Service at 8:30 AM  
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## Lab Raises Over \$3.4 Million for Nonprofits

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory employees, along with Lawrence Livermore National Security, LLC (LLNS), have raised more than \$3.4 million to give to their surrounding communities.

Laboratory employees pledged more than \$2.4 million to the HOME Campaign (for Helping Others More Effectively) — an annual charitable drive that benefits community/nonprofit agencies in the Tri Valley, San Joaquin Valley and Greater Bay Area. In

addition, Lawrence Livermore National Security, LLC, which manages the Lab, announced it would donate \$1 million in matching funds.

The total contribution, \$2,428,103, represents the largest amount ever raised in the 36 years of conducting the HOME Campaign.

"Once again our employees have shown their generosity and commitment to helping our neighbors," said George Miller, LLNS president and director

of the Laboratory. "The local agencies benefit greatly from our HOME contributions. We are pleased to be able to make a difference in the community."

Since 1997, the Lab's HOME Campaign has raised more than \$1 million annually through donations that go directly to agencies selected by employees. Again this year, the LLNS Board of Governors announced LLNS, which manages the Laboratory for the Department of Energy, would match the first \$1 million raised in the campaign.

The funds for the match come from the fee LLNS receives to manage the Laboratory, not the Department of Energy funds for the laboratory's operations.

Through the campaign, Lab employees donate money via payroll deduction or onetime donations to benefit more than 400 local agencies of their choice, including umbrella agencies such as the United Way and Tri Valley Community fund.

## PLAN

(continued from page one)

most developments attain. The application considered by the council continued 75 points.

There was also a request to consider either higher or lower density for the site. At 14 units, the development is exempt from the inclusionary housing ordinance and would not have to include any affordable housing.

Under the proposal, the lot sizes would range from 2600 square feet to 4000 square feet. The homes would be sized from 1599 to 1920 square feet.

David DiDonato of Donato Builders, Inc. is the developer. He said that the project reflects guidelines provided by staff during a three year process. He said there were three noise studies conducted. The train whistle sound was not included in the final study.

He called the trees a big problem. He paid for three studies to look at the trees. DiDonato said the trees were found to be in poor condition. He noted that he would be planting 43 trees on the site.

A critic of the plan to remove the trees was Linda Garbarino of the Pleasanton Heritage Association. She said that the trees just needed to be pruned properly and then maintained. However, her main concern was the provision to demolish the home. "Each older home contributes to the look of a neighborhood. Other cities have found ways to rehabilitate such homes. The house and heritage trees could be preserved thereby preserving the city's heritage, instead of destroying it."

Garbarino said it is time to add language to the Downtown Specific Plan to protect the diminishing inventory of vintage homes. "They are the hallmark of our historic community."

Other speakers also asked that the trees and home be preserved.

The biggest concern of neighbors was the lack of parking. It was pointed out that Stanley Blvd. will end up looking like a parking lot unless additional parking were provided.

A different view was offered by James Ellison of Marina Plumbing Co. He said that the project would provide many needed construction jobs. He has had to reduce his staff from 150 employees to 30 over the last four years. "This is a good project. It stands to provide hundreds of local construction jobs that are desperately needed."

Hosterman spoke first for the council, stating, "There are issues. I'm not 100 percent supportive of the project. But, I like it a lot. We need high density housing near the downtown. The city has housing numbers to meet." She said she would go with the experts who reviewed the historic value of the home and found it had none. The trees, said Hosterman, are pretty scruffy. It makes sense to replace them.

Councilmember Jerry Thorne agreed that the trees warranted removal.

Thorne stated, "One thing that bothers me is that this project has been in review for three years. We are a ways away from where we need to be on this project. I'm concerned about the density." He supported sending it back to the planning commission for further review. "All of the problems have not been resolved," he declared.

Councilmember Cheryl Cook-Kallio agreed that the house and trees could go. "The density is an issue." In addition, Cook-Kallio called it reprehensible that we can't resolve the issues before a project comes to the council.

She asked to be part of any effort to establish guidelines on historic preservation for future developers.

McGovern said that the home

was salvageable. "It has an ambience that adds to the ambience of the entire area." She suggested the city's Mike Fulford conduct a peer review of the tree report.

McGovern supported the idea of looking at Stanley Blvd. as a whole, rather than at individual projects. She said that would provide a look at cumulative impacts such as parking.

Sullivan launched the disagreement among the council by commenting on remarks made by Thorne and Cook-Kallio that it takes too long to gain approvals and that all the issues aren't ironed out by the time a project reaches the council. "The review of projects is an important process. We need to hear what the public thinks. This is what the public process is about. We should embrace it. The council is in the business of democracy, not enabling developers to make money."

Thorne countered, "The remarks (made by Sullivan) imply I don't have an appreciation for the public process. It shouldn't take as long as it does. The public process is important."

Cook-Kallio also commented, "I respect other councilmembers. When we disagree, it shouldn't be said that it is because we don't respect the process. When we pick at each other we end up with a divisive council."

McGovern tried to smooth things over. "We always hear the process takes too long. I believe there is some exaggeration on both sides. We don't know the history of the process a particular project has undergone, how much time was actually spent on developing the final proposal. She pointed out that she had been working on a youth center for ten years and there still is no youth center."

McGovern noted that some good points had been raised by councilmembers regarding the project itself. There are things that can be done to make it better. "To have a plan come to the council and have to agree to everything without changes would mean I don't need to sit in this chair. I look at things and try to make them better. I will continue to do that."

She made the motion to send the project back to the planning commission for further study.

### VICE MAYOR

The mayor announced the appointment of councilmembers to various committees and Cheryl Cook-Kallio as vice mayor. The vote to endorse her choices was 3 to 2 with McGovern and Sullivan voting "no."

Sullivan pointed out that it has been a long standing tradition to rotate the post of vice mayor. Jerry has served for two years. Prior to that Cook-Kallio served as vice mayor.

Hosterman said she had the city clerk review past procedure for selecting the vice mayor. "It was very erratic. It's my choice. Cheryl sought me out. I agreed to appoint her."

Sullivan, "Our place is to ratify the choice. As long as I've paid attention, the post has been rotated. When people of the same opinion as the mayor are appointed, the council loses the diversity of opinion. It doesn't allow councilmembers to have the experience."

McGovern noted that each councilmember has a strong commitment to the city. "When I leave the council in two years, I will have served as vice mayor only once in eight years. Everyone is capable. What this process says is that it appears that two councilmembers are not seen as being capable."



Photos - Doug Jorgensen

Golden and red leaves add a touch of fall to the Livermore landscape. The photo at lower right was taken in the vineyards. Above and to the left are scenes from the downtown.



## OBITUARIES

### Charles LeRoy Beers

Livermore resident Charles LeRoy Beers passed away at home on Dec. 9, 2010, where he wanted to be, surrounded by his family.

He was born Aug. 11, 1920.

Charles served in the US Air Force as a Radio Operator with the 96th Air Refueling Squadron. He then worked for Knox T.V. in Oakland as a T.V. Technician for 21 years. He retired from BART as a Train Operator in 1995.

Charles is survived by his wife of 61 years, Doris, three daughters, Sandra (Larry, dec.) Dyer, Colleen (Manuel) Escovedo and Shelly (Steve) Warner; grandchildren, Melissa Escovedo-Couch, Phillip Escovedo, Jillian Saucier and Jodi Weiss; 6 great grandchildren, and a brother, Ken Beers.

His happiest moments were those spent with his family and especially with his grandchildren.

Visitation will be held on Thursday, Dec 16, from 4pm -7pm, Memorial service to follow at 7pm at the Chapel of Callaghan Mortuary 3833 East Ave, Livermore. Burial will be held on Friday, Dec 17 at 10:30 am at Sacramento Valley National Cemetery, 5810 Midway Rd, Dixon, CA

### Linda Jewel Hebenstreich

Linda Jewel Hebenstreich was born to Earl and Patricia Samples in Livermore, on May 29, 1956. She passed on in life on December 7, 2010. She was a resident of Manteca.

Linda is survived by her husband Steven, three sons Travis, Wayne and Michael, siblings Shirley, Jeanette, Kevin and Willie and by her 3 grandchildren, all of whom were very dear to her. Linda will be truly missed by all, who had the privilege of knowing her.

Graveside services were held at Memory Gardens Cemetery in Livermore on Dec. 15.

Arrangements by Callaghan Mortuary.

### Ruth A. Cohen

Longtime Livermore resident, beloved wife, mother, sister and friend, Ruth passed away peacefully at her home in Livermore on November 16, 2010 after a long-standing heart condition. She was 86



years old.

Ruth was preceded in death by her loving husband, Dr. Myron M. Cohen, in 2005.

She is survived by her three children, Leslie J. Cohen of Seattle, WA, Mark Cohen of Dublin, CA, and Lauren Cohen of Livermore and a sister Grace Lebold of Brantford, Ontario.

Ruth enjoyed many activities and belonged to numerous groups throughout her productive life. She was a member of First Presbyterian Church of Livermore, where she always said she "felt like she had come home" when she joined later in life. She also belonged to AAUW, stitch-

ery/quilting groups and book groups. She was an avid gardener and for many years belonged to the Livermore Amador Valley Garden Club and continued her lifelong passion for gardening in her home of fifty years. She also was a travel agent and enjoyed traveling abroad with her husband.

Friends are invited to attend a memorial service of her life at her home on January 8, 2011 at 2 p.m. Please come and share memories of her life. For more information, contact daughter Laren at 337-9919.

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Funeral Service, Thurs., Dec 16th, 7PM at Callaghan Mortuary  
Interment at Sacramento Valley National Cemetery on Fri., Dec 17th, 10:30AM

#### Gary Rainey

Funeral Service, Fri., Dec 17th, 1PM at Callaghan Mortuary  
Interment at Memory Gardens Cemetery

#### Lorraine Volponi

Memorial Service, Mon., Dec 20th, 11AM at Callaghan Mortuary  
Interment at Memory Gardens Cemetery

#### Teresa Medina

Memorial Service, Weds., Dec. 22, 11AM at Callaghan Mortuary

#### SERVICES WERE HELD FOR:

#### Linda Hebenstreich

Weds., Dec 15th, Interment at Roselawn Cemetery

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## Saga of the Mortgage Interest Deduction

**By Cher Wollard**

Approximately 38 million mostly middle-class taxpayers claim an exemption on their federal taxes for the cost of interest on their mortgages. The average exemption is approximately \$10,000, with the largest deductions claimed by homeowners aged 35-45 years old.

Recently, the bipartisan commission named by President Obama to address ways to reduce the national deficit has suggested, among other things, that this tax advantage be curtailed.

The National Association of Realtors (N.A.R.) immediately blasted the report, saying any changes to the mortgage interest deduction could depreciate home prices by up to 15 percent, and promising to "remain vigilant in opposing any plan that modifies or excludes the deductibility of mortgage interest."

In fact, the deduction is very popular with citizens as well. According to a recent poll commissioned by the National Association of Home Builders, 79% of all respondents, both owners and renters, believe the federal government should provide tax incentives to promote homeownership. Even when told that eliminating the mortgage interest deduction would help ease the federal budget deficit, 72% said they opposed any proposal to abolish it. Among that group, 76% of Republicans, 75% of independents, and 64% of Democrats oppose eliminating the deduction.

This is not the first time such a proposal has been made. In fact, this commission considered recommending the deduction be completely eliminated before modifying its proposal.

So it's a good time to ask: Where did this tax benefit come from, how does it work and does it benefit us now?

The first personal income tax was signed into law by Abraham Lincoln in 1861 to finance the Civil War. A year later, that law was rescinded and replaced by another version of the income tax. Both laws were temporary in scope, designed only to cover the costs of the war.

The first peacetime income tax was imposed in 1894 through the Wilson-Gorman Tariff Act. It included a universal rate of 2% on income over \$4,000. Given that the annual average family income at that time was less than \$400, the tax applied to fewer than 10 percent of U.S. households.

The following year, the Supreme Court ruled parts of the law unconstitutional, so the income tax was once again rescinded.

We had no income tax until 1913 when the 16<sup>th</sup> Amendment was ratified by more than three-fourths of the states (38 out of 48), four years after it was proposed.

The initial income tax was graduated, with a top tax rate of 7% on incomes above \$500,000 (the equivalent of about \$10 million 2010 dollars).

From the beginning, interest on at least some mortgages was deductible, but not for the reasons most of us value it today.

The deduction applied to all interest payments - not just interest on mortgages - but did not apply to the first \$3,000 for individuals or \$4,000 for married couples. Given that the vast majority of Americans earned far less than \$3,000 per year, it is clear this deduction applied primarily to businesses and the wealthy.

Furthermore, in those days most people who owned homes paid cash for them. Mortgages did not become a popular vehicle for purchasing homes until the 1920s and did not really take off until after World War II.

Homeownership rates grew from 40.6 percent in 1940 to 69.2 percent in 2004. Ownership rates have diminished marginally since the start of the housing slump, but still represent more than two-thirds of American households.

In the 1980s, the Treasury looked at several proposals to reduce or eliminate interest deductions, including the deduction on mortgage interest. President Reagan, in a 1984 address to the National Association of Realtors, defended the tax benefit.

"I want you to know that we will preserve the part of the American dream which the home-mortgage-interest deduction symbolizes," he said.

Two years later, Congress ended the deductions of interest on credit cards, auto loans and other debt, but - in the face of overwhelming pressure from the public - preserved the deduction for interest on mortgages.

Congress did modify the deduction. Interest can only be deducted from first or second homes (those with more homes cannot deduct interest on those mortgages) and the ceiling on those mortgages is \$500,000 for single people and \$1 million couples. Homeowners can also deduct interest on home-equity loans up to \$100,000 for married couples (\$50,000 for single people) on money used to buy, build or improve their homes.

Those modifications served to target the benefit more to middle-income homeowners.

In 2005, President Bush appointed a panel to look at simplifying the tax code. This panel proposed replacing the deduction for interest on home mortgages with a 15 percent tax credit on primary residences only up to a certain home value.

The N.A.R. and the National Association of Home Builders (N.A.H.B.) protested vehemently. But so did millions of ordinary taxpayers.

President Bush was adamant that any changes to the tax code must "recognize the importance of homeownership."

In the end, the idea was scrapped.

In 2009 and 2010, President Obama has proposed adding income caps to the deduction, but thus far that has not generated much support. In fact, several new and extended tax breaks were initiated for homeowners and homebuyers during the past two years.

Now something similar appears to be on the table.

The bipartisan commission apparently considered and then rejected a proposal to simply eliminate the homeowners' tax deduction. They have since replaced it with a proposal that would cap eligible mortgages at \$500,000, with no additional credit for home equity debt or a second mortgage.

While \$500,000 is more than double the average mortgage nationwide, thus focusing the benefit on the middle class, it represents only a modest mortgage in the Bay Area and other high-cost regions, and would disproportionately affect Baby Boomers, who are more likely to be living in higher-value move-up homes.

Again, strong protests are being registered.

Next week: What would be the impact of changes to the mortgage interest deduction?

Cher Wollard is a Realtor with Prudential California Realty, Livermore.



Alviso Adobe Community Park is the venue for many of the City of Pleasanton's Naturalist and outdoor programs. This unique interpretive park tells the story of California from its earliest human occupation and provides visitors with a glimpse of times past in the Amador Valley.

## Pleasanton Offers Outdoor Programs During the Winter

Pleasanton City Naturalist Eric Nicholas will lead visitors on some unique outdoor adventures this winter season. Please call (925) 931-5340 for information or to register for any of these programs, or register online at [www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/recreation.html](http://www.ci.pleasanton.ca.us/services/recreation.html). The following programs are scheduled in the coming months:

**NEW!** Winter Ramblers Nature Day Camp: Alviso Adobe Community Park December 29-31, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Ages 6-12. This winter camp is all about nature with some very cool history folded in. Crafts, skills, and games will keep you warm and toasty while you learn some cool new things. Fee: \$123 for residents/\$135 for non-residents

**Night Hike with the Naturalist, Laurel Creek, Sat., Dec. 18, 6:30 to 8 p.m.** Naturalist Eric Nicholas for an enchanting wild walk around Laurel Creek for the first guided hike in this area of Pleasanton. You'll learn about local wildlife, plants, habitats, tracking, and much more. Plan to get dirty on these treks. Bring water, a sense of adventure, and dress with weather in mind. Children under the age of 15 must be

accompanied by an adult during the entire hike. Meet at Laurel Creek Park, 5875 Laurel Creek Drive in Pleasanton. Fee: \$6 for residents/\$9 for non-residents

**Ridge Runner Counselor-in-Training Winter Program, Alviso Adobe Community Park Saturday, December 18, 1 to 4 p.m., ages 11 and up.** Calling all former Ridge Runner Nature day campers! Summer will be upon us quickly and you'll want to have your game face on for the newest campers. Learn about tracking, emergency preparedness and wilderness travels as you gain experience for possible future employment. Fee: \$29 residents/\$32 for non-residents

**Ancient Ways: Old Tool School, Alviso Adobe Community Park, Sat., Dec. 18, 2 to 4 p.m., ages 8 and up** learn about the tools of the past and look at some fascinating items, both old and new. Use your imagination to recreate a functional tool from long ago; perhaps something just like your distant ancestors had many, many years ago. Fee: \$15 residents/\$18 for non-residents

**Wondrous Universe Series,**

**Lunar Event, Sat., Jan. 8, 2011, 7:30 to 9 p.m.;** **Winter Skies, Sat., Feb. 5, 2011, 7:30 to 9 p.m.** Alviso Adobe Community Park, 3465 Old Foothill Road. How big is our galaxy? How far is the nearest star? How was our solar system made? Explore the universe as we try to answer these questions and more. Games and hands-on activities will aid us as we search for the answers. Then, if the skies are willing, we'll take a peek at the wonders above through a telescope. For all ages. Fee: \$9 for residents/\$12 for non-residents

**2nd Annual California Newt Festival, Augustin Bernal Park, Sat., Feb. 12, 2011, 9 to 10 a.m.** Learn about the natural history of amphibians, particularly the spectacular California Newt and its interesting cycle of life. In the heat of the summer they burrow deep into the earth to stay cool, and come out after the first rain of the season to make the long trek to their ancestral breeding ponds. Participants will help take a count of newts as part of an annual survey on this unique adventure for all ages. Fee: \$9 for residents/\$12 for non-residents

## LARPD Delays Decision on Plans to Build Sycamore Grove Ranger Station

The Livermore Area Recreation and Park District (LARPD) board tabled a decision on the future of a proposed ranger station in Sycamore Grove Park. The board also heard a report on the success of efforts to increase use of Camp Shelly.

The proposed project calls for renovation of the Denton House as a new Ranger Station for the park. Bids received were higher than anticipated, over the \$560,000 budgeted amount. The lowest bid was \$615,000, the highest over \$1.3 million. There were eleven bids in all. Approximately \$60,000 of the remaining \$560,000 will be used to pay staff time and various fees, leaving about \$500,000 for the project.

LARPD general manager said the board had several options. One was to reject all of the bids, ask the staff to fund the increase, or direct staff to go through the process of qualifying the bids and bring the item back to the board.

Staff attorney Michael Kyle suggested that the matter be tabled until the first meeting in January to allow time for bid protests to be filed.

Prior to the decision to table the item, several board members indicated that they would not support the project if it were over budget.

Steve Goodman said he was not in favor of spending more money than is in the budget. "No way would I support going \$200,000 or more over budget to do this," he stated. "I'd like to see if the low bid is a qualified bid, how much short the funds are and where the district could take money to fund the project."

Beth Wilson agreed. "I won't support the project if it is over budget. My experience is that the cost will be higher than the low bid. I don't think we can afford it."

New board member David Hutchinson suggested readdressing the entire project.

Assistant manager John Lawrence pointed out that even if the district did not proceed with the ranger station, it would do something with the building. It would cost up to \$100,000. "We went to a lot of trouble to obtain the sewer and water connec-

tions," he stated. One option he said would be to build something else, such as a small restroom.

On a more positive note, the board heard a report on the success of citizens' efforts to make Camp Shelly self-sufficient. The camp is located at Lake Tahoe.

Lawrence commented, "This is one of the fun presentations because of the success of the die-hard camp users who came to the rescue after we talked about closing the camp."

Carolyn Siegfried, chairman of the group's marketing committee, explained that camp users believed low attendance was not due to lack of interest, but lack of information. "We proved that was true. Despite increasing the fee from \$25 to \$35 a night, there was a 41 percent increase in reservations. This led to an 83 percent decrease in the subsidy required from the district. Our

goal is to make the camp self-sustaining. We are well on our way."

She added that the feedback from first timers indicates they will go back again. "It truly is a hidden gem at Lake Tahoe."

Director Goodman stated, "In all my years in recreation I have never seen a group act so quickly with such success. This is a model that the rock gym supporters are also using. I think the seeds planted this year will grow next year."

Wednesday's meeting was the first for the Board's two newest members, David Hutchinson and

**Janice Pementel**  
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## LARPD

(continued from page one)

study is estimated to be between \$50,000 and \$100,000.

Mayor Marshall Kamena replied, "If we can show the public there is a benefit, I think they would be with us. I think we should proceed."

The phase II study would provide a detailed analysis to document the specific costs, legal requirements and employee and labor relations issues. It could also include filing a change in organization application with LAFCO.

Management Partners conducted the first study to determine if the potential financial benefits were significant enough to warrant further consideration. The analysis found no "fatal flaws" associated with the two proposed reorganizations.

Lynn Dantzker explained that the premise on which the study was based is that if the status of LARPD changed, perhaps the property tax shift would change and bring more money for parks and recreation to the city. "Ultimately, the outcome would be determined through negotiations with LAFCO." When there is a change in a government organization at LAFCO, there is a negotiation to look at property tax reallocation she explained.

Dantzker told the council the two options would be to merge the district with the city or create a subsidiary district that would be dependent on the city. The portion of LARPD that is outside the city limits would go to a successor agency, such as the East Bay Regional Park District. About 90 percent of the district is within the city limits.

The study found that the greatest monetary benefit would be achieved with the merger option.

LARPD Board President Steve Goodman, who spoke as a resident, stated, "I don't believe the main question was answered. There are a lot of 'ifs,' 'mays' and assumptions in the report. The findings don't provide a clear path forward or a degree of certainty as to how recreation services would be offered. Nothing in the report shows how they would improve or where the money, if it were realized, would be spent."

He was concerned that there

were no guarantees that the current level of funds would be spent on parks and recreation and that the additional monies would go to parks and recreation rather than into the city's general fund. He pointed out that recently the park department in Morgan Hill was eliminated. There was a 50 percent reduction in spending on parks in Salinas. Goodman stated that as part of the city, the parks departments had to compete with other departments, such as police and fire for funding.

Goodman wondered who had asked for the report in the first place. "In the public surveys we conduct it shows residents are happy with the current status."

He suggested that the consultants had not looked at all of the potential outcomes of a change in status. For example, Goodman said that when the Brentwood district became a subsidiary of the city, it did not result in a reduction in the ERAF tax shift. In addition, Goodman noted that the state could change the rules if it appears that it would lose money through such mergers.

Goodman concluded, "If I felt a merger would provide more service, I would support it. We need to make sure there are provisions in place that would make that happen, that the money would go to parks and recreation."

Kamena agreed. He said how any agreement is crafted is the key.

Councilmembers Doug Horner and John Marchand both support additional study.

Horner declared, "The things the city could do with \$3.1 million for parks and recreation would be amazing."

Marchand pointed out that the city does a good job separating pots of money and operating functions. He used the airport and golf courses enterprise funds as examples. Marchand stated, "If the money continues to leave the Tri-Valley there will be no benefit to residents. \$1.3 to \$3.1 million over ten years amounts to \$13 to

\$31 million that could be spent on recreational opportunities. That is a huge benefit."

Several other speakers addressed the issue. John Stein suggested there needs to be a method to protect the funds from this and future councils. There is also a need to determine how the state would respond to such a merger.

Bob Baltzer suggested that consideration be given to annexing parks that are adjacent to the city to retain more of the district's area. He told the council, "Look at the issue as carefully and as thoroughly and inexpensively as possible."

## Meadowbrook Apartments Sold to Raintree

Raintree Partners, a Laguna Niguel, Calif.-based real estate investment and development company, has completed the acquisition of Meadowbrook Apartments, a 125-unit multifamily property in Livermore. The purchase price was \$16.7 million, according to Jeff Allen, CEO of Raintree Partners. This is Raintree's eighth multifamily property acquisition in 2010, bringing the firms holdings in the California market to ten multifamily communities.

The property was brokered by John McCulloch, Curtis Gardner and Kenneth Meislin of ARA Pacific and financing was provided by Fannie Mae and arranged by Richard Olrich of Centerline Capital Group.

Meadowbrook Apartments is comprised of nine, two-story buildings located at 156 North Murrieta Blvd. in Livermore. The property was built in 1981 and offers one, two and three bedroom floor plans. Select units feature wood-burning fireplaces, while each unit contains a private patio or balcony, and air conditioning. The apartment community offers a swimming pool, covered parking, basketball court, children's play area and two laundry centers.

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# Art, Community, & Education

## Merry Band of Pranksters Back to Perform 18th 'Big Fat Show'



Photo - Mark Deneza  
Pictured are (from left) Mari Magaloni, Debi Durst, Johnny Steele, Will Durst, Michael Bossier (not pictured: Arthur Gaus).



For the 18th consecutive year, Will Durst and his merry band of pranksters are taking their end of the year comedy extravaganza to different nooks and crannies of the Bay Area where they plan to satirize, parody, lampoon, mock, scoff, taunt, ridicule, tease, rib, kid and josh current events and do it all with a modicum of taste.

It will come to the Bankhead Theater in Livermore on Dec. 30. Curtain goes up at 7 p.m.

This year the Big Fat Show

says hello to a rising star on the Bay Area Comedy circuit: Mari Magaloni. Mari is a multi talented actress/ sketch artist/ comedienne who has been knocking them dead with a killer Sarah Palin impression, a character she will showcase in the 2010 edition of the Big Fat show.

Performing will be Will Durst, Johnny Steele, Deb and Mike, Mari Magaloni and Arthur Gaus.

The Big Fat Year End Kiss Off Comedy Show features skits,

sketches, songs and stand up comedy, all focusing on events occurring during the year of 2010. Some years the troupe admits having to stretch for material. But not this year: TSA strip searches, BP and Toyota vying for Dufus Corporation of the year, Teabaggers, Meg Whitman, Sarah Palin's hand, Dick Cheney's 6th heart attack, Obama's failed spinal transplant surgery and much much more.

Continuing a holiday tradition as hallowed as coal in Dick

Cheney's stocking and as welcome as an air freshener at a Bohemian Club outhouse on Chili Night, The Big Fat Year End Kiss Off Comedy Show consists of 6 comics, 7 cities, 8 shows and 2,347 laughs. Complete info at: [www.willdurst.com](http://www.willdurst.com).

The Bankhead is located at 2400 First St. in downtown.

For tickets, visit [www.livermoreperformingarts.com](http://www.livermoreperformingarts.com) call 373-6800 or go to the Bankhead box office.

# Hot Club Jazz Group to Help Ring in the New Year at the Bankhead Theater



Hot Club of San Francisco to perform. (Photo - Laura Turnbow)

Jazz group Hot Club of San Francisco will bring 2010 to a festive close by headlining the annual New Year's Eve event at the Bankhead Theater in Livermore.

This all-strings celebration of 1920's jazz, featuring classic tunes and original compositions, follows in the footsteps of the original gypsy jazz group Hot Club de France, but adds a touch of American swing for a sizzling, contemporary sound. Festivities are Friday, December 31 at 8:00 p.m. The evening includes a complimentary champagne, wine and dessert reception with the performers in the theater lobby immediately following the per-

formance.

Founded nearly 20 years ago by lead guitarist Paul Mehling, Hot Club of San Francisco owes its inspiration to the innovative music of Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grappelli and their quintet Hot Club de France. Their acoustic style of jazz, which gained popularity in Europe during the years leading up to World War II, can be described as romantic and full of emotion. Mehling has creatively built on the gypsy jazz style, holding its central elements while incorporating a more American swing tradition.

Although Mehling had developed a fascination for gypsy

jazz as a child, he spent years experimenting with all types of music from classical to bluegrass and rock and roll. He focused on the guitar, but taught himself violin and mandolin as he explored other styles. While traveling in Paris, Mehling renewed his interest in gypsy jazz and when he returned to the Bay Area in the 1980's, he began to form his own band. Hot Club of San Francisco is currently made up of four members in addition to Mehling: Clint Baker on bass, Isabelle Fontaine and Jeff Magidson on guitar, and Evan Price on violin. A highly versatile group, each plays multiple instruments, Fontaine is also a vocalist,

and Price is a gifted composer who has added new works and arrangements to the group's repertoire. Over the years, Hot Club of San Francisco has performed for enthusiastic audiences around the world and produced nearly a dozen recordings.

Tickets to see Hot Club of San Francisco at the Bankhead Theater on New Year's Eve range in price from \$55 to \$75. For those wishing to extend the celebration, the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center has collaborated with local businesses to offer a very special "Swinging New Year's Celebration Package." In addition to a pair of tickets for the performance and post-show reception, the package

includes a three-course dinner for two at Sapphire Restaurant & Lounge located just across the plaza from the theater, overnight accommodations (double occupancy) with hot buffet breakfast at the nearby Hawthorn Suites by Wyndham, taxi service to and from downtown Livermore for the evening, as well as two engraved wine glasses and a complimentary bottle of Livermore Valley wine. The two-person "Swinging New Year's Eve Celebration Package" is available for \$279 and can be booked by calling 925-606-6060.

The holiday evening with Hot Club of San Francisco is the second event in the new "Best of the

## Story of the Kennedy Detail Told in Pleasanton Library Presentation

Author and former Secret Service Agent Gerald Blaine will tell the story of The Kennedy Detail at the Pleasanton Public Library, 400 Old Bernal Ave., Pleasanton.

The presentation will be at 2 p.m. on Sun., Dec. 19.

In 1963, the U.S. Secret Service

had a budget of about \$4.1 million dollars and a staff of about 200 agents nationwide. Just 34 agents were responsible for protecting John F. Kennedy around the clock. They worked in eight-hour shifts, rotating the times of their shifts every two weeks.

On November 22, 1963, President John F. Kennedy was assassinated while riding in an open convertible in a motorcade through Dallas, Texas.

“Secret Service Agent Clint Hill was just ten feet from President John F. Kennedy, desperately trying to hurl his body in front of the gunfire, when the president’s head exploded before his eyes. Covered with blood and pieces of the president’s brain, Agent Hill pushed Jackie Kennedy into the back seat and, clinging to the trunk of the open top limousine as it sped away from Dealey Plaza to Parkland Hospital, all he could do was slam his fist in anger, and give the thumbs down sign to the agents in the follow-up car behind him.”

For nearly fifty years, the close-knit group of men who protected JFK have refused to talk about that tragic day. Until now.

Author Jerry Blaine is a former U.S. Secret Service Agent, assigned in November 1960 to the John F. Kennedy detail and, for the next three years, traveled with President Kennedy all over the world.

President Kennedy’s assassination on November 22, 1963 threw the country and the White House into sudden turmoil and despair. Abruptly, the Kennedy Detail became the Johnson Detail. There



Kennedy detail on streets in Dallas.

was no time to grieve; no time to deal with feelings of anger, frustration and guilt. On July 4, 1964, Jerry Blaine resigned from the Secret Service to join the private sector.

Towne Center Books will sell

The Kennedy Detail at the event.

All library programs are free and open to the public. No registration is required.

For more information, please call Penny Johnson, 925/931-3405.



President Kennedy leaves the church.

## Road Warriors' 'Truffles to Remember' Event Raising Funds for Sons and Daughters of 'Fallen Heroes'

“Truffles to Remember” Fund Raiser for Sons and Daughters of Fallen Heroes

Road Warriors 2010 invites the truffles-and-troops-loving-public to stop by their booth on Saturday,

Dec. 18 near the Pleasanton Farmers Market on Main and Angela Street from 10 am-1pm.

Road Warriors will be giving out handmade “Truffles to Remember” and accepting donations to Freedom Alliance Scholarship Fund to honor and remember those who have lost life or limb in service to America.

The scholarship fund helps deserving students with the rising cost of a college education and serves as a reminder to those students that their parents’ sacrifices will never be forgotten by a grateful nation.

Road Warriors 2010 has raised \$9,250.00 for wounded military heroes and their children and is hoping to reach their goal of \$10,000 by year’s end. Fund-raiser details at [www.RoadWarriors2010.blogspot.com](http://www.RoadWarriors2010.blogspot.com) or 925-600-0664.

## NEW YEAR'S EVE . . .

Bay” series at the Livermore Valley Performing Arts Center. As a part of the LVPAC Presents season, the “Best of the Bay” series, which kicked off in early December with jazz pianist Taylor Eigsti, will feature the remarkable breadth of talent found in artists and performing arts groups emerging from the San Francisco Bay Area. Later in the season, the “Best of the Bay” series will celebrate the Music of Doris Day with the Jim Martinez Trio and vocalist Laura Didier on Sunday, February 27, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. This delightful afternoon

concert treats audiences to Day’s best-known and most beloved songs, as well as entertaining stories and recollections of her long and successful career.

The Bankhead Theater is located at 2400 First Street in Downtown Livermore. The ticket office is open Tuesday through Saturday from 12:00 noon to 6:00 p.m. On performance days the ticket office remains open through intermission. To purchase tickets or for more information, call 925-373-6800 or visit [www.bankheadtheater.org](http://www.bankheadtheater.org).

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Thur Dec 23 7:30pm  
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### Big Fat Year End Kiss Off Comedy Show XVIII

Thur Dec 23 7pm  
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Will Durst, Johnny Steele  
& Friends take on politics,  
war and rhetoric!



### The Hot Club of San Francisco

Fri Dec 31 8pm  
\$55/\$65/\$75

Let the Bankhead host your New Year's Eve Party with a swinging celebration featuring a wine, champagne and dessert reception following the performance.



TICKETS 925.373.6800 or [www.bankheadtheater.org](http://www.bankheadtheater.org)  
2400 First Street, Downtown Livermore



Photo - W. Ron Sutton

Pictured at left is Concert Band Conductor Bob Williams, left, receiving a 35-year service award on behalf of the Pleasanton Community. Charlotte Severin is making the presentation. Upper right photo is a close-up of the photo used for the award.

## Pleasanton Community Concert Band Honored for 35 Years of Service

Santa Claus was not the only surprise visitor at the recent holiday performance of the Pleasanton Community Concert Band at the Firehouse Arts Center. Before a Sousa march finale to the rousing concert, local artist Charlotte Severin came on stage to present a commemorative plaque to the musicians and conductor Bob Williams.

Severin told the audience that

she had chaired the community's bicentennial festival committee in 1975.

Among their many worthwhile, lasting contributions was creation of the bandstand in Wayside Park. Bill Herlihy, then a city councilmember, famously asked Severin, "If we have a bandstand, how about a band?"

It was Severin who came up with the answer, by persuading

Amador Valley Adult Education to sponsor a community band, as they still do. Conductor Williams receives a paycheck for their weekly rehearsals, but he turns the full sum – and then some – back to the band in the form of sheet music or equipment that he purchases for the group.

All of the band musicians are volunteers, ranging in age from teens to 80's. They perform free

public concerts, often a dozen times a year. Their next concert at the Firehouse Arts Center will take place the afternoon of Sunday, April 3. They also appear annually each Fourth of July at that historic bandstand that started it all in what is now called Lions' Wayside Park

The framed award included an historic photo of the band members – who rarely pose for a group shot

— plus an inset of the conductor, with the following inscription: "Given with great appreciation for your generosity of time and talent in serving as the Pleasanton Community Concert Band for 35 years."

Williams was one of the founding members of the band, as were Yvonne Grielich, clarinetist, and Bob Butler, percussionist, both of whom performed at last weekend's concert.

## Local Holiday Festivities to Air on Community Television

This season's holiday parades and tree lightings, will air on Tri-Valley Community TV 30. The 2010 taped celebrations from the Tri-Valley cities of Dublin, Livermore, Pleasanton and San Ramon will be broadcast on Channel 30 at various times throughout the holiday season. For the schedule, please visit the Tri-Valley TV web site at [trivalleytv.org](http://trivalleytv.org).

Kicking off the merriment was

Dublin's 27th annual Holiday Tree Lighting that took place on December 2 at the Dublin Civic Center with entertainment and caroling. The Dublin Unified Elementary School Choir performed. Also on December 2, San Ramon's Bishop Ranch hosted its ninth annual tree-lighting ceremony which included sleigh rides, live music and lighting of the 65 foot tall holiday tree.

Livermore Holiday Sights and Sounds Parade and Tree Lighting was held on December 4th. Tri-Valley TV personality, Anna Kagarakis served as one of the hosts providing commentary along with Livermore City Council member Jeff Williams. A Livermore tradition, the celebration consisted of a parade with floats, marching bands, music, and the lighting of a tall spruce tree and Menorah. Also

taking place on December 4th was the Pleasanton Hometown Holiday Celebration. This event included a parade down Main Street with floats, marching bands, and community groups. The tree lighting ceremony followed the parade at the Museum on Main.

DVDs of the events may be purchased for \$20 plus \$5 shipping and handling (each event is sold

separately) by visiting our website at [trivalleytv.org](http://trivalleytv.org).

Tri-Valley Community Television is a 501c3 non-profit corporation that provides programming over channels TV28, TV29 and TV30 on Comcast Cable, AT&T U-Verse, or streaming at [trivalleytv.org](http://trivalleytv.org). Follow us on Twitter to see what's happening at Tri-Valley TV.



## Trinity to Offer 20th Edition of Live Drive Thru Nativity

This is the 20<sup>th</sup> year that Trinity Church has put on the Live Drive Thru Nativity. It has become a Christmas time tradition in Livermore. It will be presented four nights, Thursday December 16 – Sunday December 19, from 7-9pm. in the parking lot of Trinity Church, 557 Olivina Ave.

Each year filling more than 800 positions for live actors, greeters, carolers, scene directors, traffic control, costumers, and other behind the scenes jobs is a huge challenge which makes the Live Nativity presentation a reality.

When the Nativity was started in 1991, it was the idea of former Senior Pastor James Morton, who left the church to accept a position in Grass Valley part way through the year. Without a pastor, the church decided to pull together to make the idea for a Live Drive-Thru Nativity into a reality. The Nativity has become a Christmas tradition in Livermore. The church does not charge admission to the

event, because current Pastor Jim Meek says, "This is our Christmas card to the community, to help celebrate the true meaning of Christmas."

"Working with children and live animals in the scenes has its challenges," says Bob Boyd, this year's Nativity Director, "Every year and every scene is different than it was the year before." Sheep and a donkey are brought in from local ranches. Live llamas are brought in and outfitted with humps to serve as camels.

Ross Wilson, the Nativity's director for the last 5 years, remembers one year when the sheep got out of the pen. Cast members had to chase them down Olivina Avenue to retrieve them. Another year, the child shepherds and sheep were together in the same enclosure. The little shepherds came out of the scene covered in mud and sheep dip.

Cast member Michelle George remembers taking part in the wise-

men scene, and the llama "camel" getting stirred up and going round and round a tree, and spitting at the other "camel."

Llama handler Kim Ross recalls, "The llamas that we use are generally quite tame. We lead them from their ranch site through town to the Nativity each year. One year we brought a young llama with them, so it could stay near its mother. While the mother was performing, the young llama jumped his pen to get closer to the action."

Another nativity worker, Becky Miller, recalls trying to lead a donkey named Sam-mule over to his scene, through the church's sand volleyball court, when the donkey decided to drop and roll. "I guess that sand was just too inviting for him to resist. I was sure worried that something was wrong and I wouldn't be able to get him back up. He had a good roll in the sand and then popped back up and we continued on our way."

Two local artists, Linda Stewart and Ralph Gutierrez painted scene backdrops the size of billboards to depict the town of Bethlehem in Biblical times. Gutierrez was an experienced mural painter. Stewart learned to paint large while doing these sets, and she says, "Now I have difficulty painting anything small!"

These backdrops are set up in the church parking lot where the six scenes of events around the birth of Christ are acted out. Church members wrote the script to tell the Christmas story "Through Mary's Eyes." Traffic is channelled to approach the scenes in threes. Drivers are instructed to set their car radio to pick up the narration that tells the story for each scene. When the Live Nativity was first held at Trinity, tape players were loaned to each car as they navigated through the scenes to tell the story. A few years later, the system which transmits to the car radios

was developed. This year the narration for the scenes is available in both English and Spanish.

There is usually a line to get into the Nativity. However, greeters and carolers help to make the experience festive during the wait. Sometimes, the community gives back. Linda Stewart, who often directs the Street Greeters, remembers how one year some people noticed them out in the cold and wanted to do something for them. They waited in line and when they drove up to the greeters, they surprised them with a full offering of hot chocolate, complete with sprinkles and whip cream.

Rain has been a rare occurrence on performance nights, in the 20 years that the Live Nativity has been presented. Some years it would pour down and then stop during the Nativity hours. Even when it has rained, the show has continued with characters donning clear plastic ponchos over Biblical period attire.

# baby, oh baby!

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# Reindeer Reds and Babydoll Sheep Make Livermore Holidays Merrier in the Vineyards

by Laura Ness

A serious wine crowd visited the well-decorated wineries over Dec 4 and 5, and were rewarded by filtered sunshine on Saturday and a somewhat wet pattern on Sunday, but it certainly dampened no spirits. Nearly everyone we visited on Saturday was having a experience great traffic, and I saw toys in most of the bins. The wineries that offered toys for sale did very well on filling the bins up. Rhonda Wood joked that she needed an extra firetruck to haul away all the toys! She reported an excellent day with lots of sales and happy customers: but then, it's always all good at Wood.

My first stop was at Retzlaff, where the party had just started, but the crafts people were already ringing up sales of their excellent selections: I gave in to immediate temptation and bought my Mother-in-Law the cutest black sheep with a red stocking cap. Connie Vandevanter was busy wrapping up the Random Reindeer Cases of library wines, and later reported a fantastic day of sales, with a dozen of these cases sold Saturday, and another 9 on Sunday.

This continues the upward sales trend that began in late fall and is continuing in a major way. Says Connie. "We're absolutely thrilled with the turnout we had, the buzz that was generated by the library wine case sales, and our current offerings are flying out the door. We're so busy here at Retzlaff, we can't even think about doing a holiday party until January!"

Concannon's tasting room was packed with tasters, some of whom made their way to the Underdog Wine Bar, where gracious and gorgeous Darcie Kent was ready to pour and talk about her lineup. But first, she sampled some of the cuisine and declared it delicious with her Rava Blackjack Gruner Veltliner, one of my personal favorites. It also impressed Sommelier Journal's Randy Caparosa, who joined me on my holiday

trek through the vineyards. He was quite impressed with Darcie's Picazo Merlot and the DeMayo Zinfandel, which has a healthy dose of Petite Sirah to round it out. With its flavors of raisin, nutmeg and clove, it tasted just like a figgy plummy Christmas pudding.

We next visited the Steven Kent barrel room where we joined a festive crowd enjoying a great selection of wines paired nicely with cheeses and chocolates. The plays well with others "Fratello" blend of Barbera, Petit Verdot and Merlot was poured by a charming elf wearing a bright red shirt that read,

"What happens under the Mistletoe, stays under the Mistletoe." One thing is certain, if it includes any Steven Kent wine, it is bound to be a most memorable and pleasurable experience. I might choose the 2007 Estate Livermore Valley Cabernet, which is drinking really nicely right now. It shows the best of both the Home Ranch Vineyard and the Ghielmetti Vineyard, with a peppery nose, lovely texture, laden with cherries, tobacco, soy, aged balsamic and heavy caramel toastiness. With Lindsey Roffey of Rodrigue Molyneux joining us with her rapidly expanding palate, due to all those sommelier classes she's been taking, we did a little bottle surfing to give Randy a peek at some of the wines at the top of the wine quality pyramid in Livermore. We dove into Steven Mirassou's current favorite Cab, the 2008 Clone 337. Usually he prefers Clone 30, but this powerful tour de force takes your mouth hostage with its juniper berry, cassis, dark red currant tea, subtle tobacco and its huge structure and ample, anything-but-shy tannins. It reverberates in your mouth.

However, the wine of which Steven is most proud, and rightly so, is the 2007 Lineage, a beguiling, totally satisfying blend of the 5 classic Bordeaux varieties.

"We are throwing down the gauntlet with this wine," says



Gary Rodrigue as Santa Claus.

Steven, referring to his desire to take on blends like Insignia and Isoceles with something equally compelling from Livermore. This beauty exudes aromas as warm and inviting as a roaring fire in the velvet tapestry-covered parlor of a well-maintained English castle: there is something big-boned and noble about it, yet in the mouth it is well-behaved, charming and seamlessly integrated like a perfectly-choreographed Nutcracker ballet. The fleshiness is delight-making and the tannins are like pure satin. A wine for holiday enjoyment with dear friends and family.

At Bodegas Aguirre, they were sending people home with wine for the holidays at a good clip.

Sylvia reports that they had more people stopping by their tasting room and saw many new faces. She noted, "Sales were also up, which is always a plus. I know that customers really enjoy this event especially since they don't have to pay to attend and don't have to worry about tickets, bracelets, glasses, etc."

Dane Stark at Page Mill expressed similar satisfaction with the toy collection, traffic and sales, noting that having multiple vendors instead of just one, provided a better shopping atmosphere for visitors. He also reports that believe it or not, he pressed his last grapes on December 7<sup>th</sup>, commenting, "I've never, in 22 years, pressed after

Thanksgiving before!!!"

Occasio reported very healthy sales, up significantly from last December, and they've only been at it a year. Both the Sauvignon Blancs tasted great, in particular, the unoaked one, especially after a spate of tasting some heavy duty reds. It was great to see customers leaving with Petite Sirah verticals in those gorgeous wooden gift boxes (just a few left). Owner John Kinney said they collected quite a few toys on Sunday, saw lots of new people and signed up new club members. He also wants everyone to know that the winery will be closed from December 20<sup>th</sup> through the 7<sup>th</sup> of January, so they can spend some time with their families.

Probably the cutest sight of the day was that of small children feeding the similarly miniature Babydoll sheep as they took a break from patrolling the vineyards over at Rodrigue Molyneux.

These Olde English Miniature Babydoll Southdown sheep grow no higher than 2 feet, are the oldest known purebred sheep in the world and are great weed-whackers that pose no threat to the vines.

They were specifically bred to be small because of the lack of refrigeration: you didn't have to worry about your lamb meat spoiling. Now they are bred to patrol the vineyards, offering anyone with a bent on organic to add three benefits immediately: no need for chemicals to control weeds, and no tractors to compact the soil or to add pollutants to the air. The sheep add fertilizer as they go, aerating the soil with their tiny hooves. The fact their eyes glowed eerily white when I set the camera on red-eye gave me a slightly uneasy feeling: I began to wonder why anyone would want to count sheep while they were trying to fall asleep. But, they were as cute in person as they were a wee bit spooky on film. Term used loosely.

Have a great holiday, everyone.

# What Our Readers Are Saying...



“Livermore is a great place to live, work and play because we are a community. Great communities occur when communication and building connections between people, interests and institutions happen. The Independent serves this very important role to inform and connect locally, where other regional media can only give us occasional attention. No one Internet site can replace what the Independent provides to Livermore. I look forward to receiving it every week, value the content and can’t imagine being an effective community leader without it.”

**Stewart W. Gary**

*Livermore School Trustee & Board President 09/10, Retired Fire Chief, Livermore-Pleasanton Fire Dept.  
16-years Livermore Resident, Member of Livermore Rotary*

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## ART &amp; ENTERTAINMENT

## ART/PHOTO EXHIBITS

**Livermore Art Association Gallery**, located in Carnegie Park, offers art classes, unusual gifts, painting rentals, art exhibits and information pertaining to the art field, 2155 Third St., Livermore. The gallery has been open since 1974 and is run as a co-op by local artists. Hours are Wed.-Sun. 11:30-4 p.m. For information call 449-9927.

**Livermore Art Association, Winter Holiday Celebration Art Show** at Dougherty Station Community Center in San Ramon. The show features more than 30 art works by 20 local artists including metal works, paintings and photography. All art is for sale. The show will run from November 1st to December 17th. The Dougherty Station Community Center is located at 17011 Bollinger Canyon Road, San Ramon. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.

**Paintbrush Diplomacy**, December 11, 2010 - January 12, 2011, International Children's Art Exhibit Works from the permanent collection of Paintbrush Diplomacy, an organization that seeks to connect the world one paintbrush at a time. Promoting peace and understanding through the universal language of art, the organization encourages awareness of international issues through art exchanges and exhibits of works by children ages 5-18. Harrington Gallery at the Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave., Pleasanton. www.FirehouseArts.org.

**Believe/Achieve Art Exhibit**, Diablo/Alameda Branch of the National League of American Pen Women (NLAPW) at the John O'Lague Galleria and the Hayward City Hall Dec. 3, 2010 to Feb. 9, 2011. Reception will be held Dec. 17, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. There is no admission charge. Hayward City Hall is located at 777 B Street. Pen Women writers will be performing original works at the reception. Music and refreshments will be provided.

**Harrington Art Gallery exhibit**, Look of Jazz, Saturday, January 29, 2011 - Tuesday, February 22, 2011. Gallery Reception Saturday, January 20, 2011, 3 to 5 p.m. Bay Area artists such as Chester Elmore, Joan Finton and James Gayles will be featured in an exhibit that celebrates jazz and how it can inspire visual artists. This exhibit will be held in conjunction with our annual Campana Jazz Festival, February 17-20, 2011. Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave., Pleasanton. www.firehousearts.org.

## MEETINGS/CLASSES

**Figure Drawing Workshop**, every Friday 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Artists bring their own materials and easels. Open to all artists. Professional artist models (nude). No instructor. Students under 18 need written parental permission to attend. Cost \$20 per session. At the Bothwell Arts Center, 2466 8th St., Livermore. Coffee, tea and refreshments are available. Call or email Barbara Stanton for more info about the workshop, 925-373-9638 - microangelo@earthlink.net.

**Art Critique and Coffee**, every Friday, 10 a.m. at Border's Cafe, Rose Pavilion, Pleasanton. Information at poetryoncanvas@mac.com.

## WINERY EVENTS

**Cuda Ridge Wines** will be doing a special Bordeaux tasting at the last Winemaker Spotlight of the year at First Street Wine Company, 2211 First Street in Livermore, on Thursday, December 16th from 5:00 - 8:00. The winemaker, Larry Dino, will

be pouring the 2008 Merlot, 2008 Cabernet Franc, 2008 Malbec, 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon, and 2008 Petit Verdot. In addition to these Bordeaux style wines, Larry will also be pouring the 2008 Merlot Reserve which is currently only available to Cuda Cadre Wine club members. All of the above wines will be available for purchase at First Street on the evening of December 16th. Larry will also be happy to sign the bottles which would make great gifts for the holidays. There is a minimal \$5.00 tasting fee.

## MUSIC/CONCERTS

**Music every Saturday** in the tasting room from 12 to 4; open every day if the gate is open and for sure on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays 11 to 5. Red Feather Winery, 5700 Greenville Rd., Livermore. Information at 449-1871 or www.red-featherwinery.com

**Chris Bradley's Jazz Band**, plays at The Sunol Jazz Cafe (In the Center of Sunol) the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month 7:30-9:30 p.m. The band features real Jazz from the 1920's, 30's, 40's.

**Blacksmith Square Saturday Concerts**, Thomas Coyne Winery, John Christopher Cellars, Swirl Tapas Bar and Victorian Olive Oil present live music in the Square, 3 to 6 p.m. Wine tasting (fee waived with purchase), food at menu prices. No outside food or adult beverages. Corner of South Livermore Ave. and Railroad Ave. downtown Livermore.

**San Ramon Symphonic Band**, Dec. 17, 7 p.m. "In Dulci Jubilo" Holiday Christmas Concert. Dougherty Valley Performing Arts Center, 10550 Albion Rd., San Ramon, 973-3343 or SanRamonPerformingArts.com.

**Chanticleer**, "A Chanticleer Christmas," Thurs., Dec. 23, 7:30 p.m. Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. www.livermoreperformingarts.org or 925-373-6800. (Sold out)

**Hot Club of San Francisco**, "Best of the Bay," sizzling, swinging New Year's Eve celebration. Fri., Dec. 31, 8 p.m. Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. Tickets at www.livermoreperformingarts.org or 925-373-6800.

**The Kingston Trio**, folk music, Fri., Jan. 7, 8 p.m. Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. www.livermoreperformingarts.org or 925-373-6800.

**Ying Quartet**, 8 p.m., Sat., Jan. 8, Del Valle Fine Arts Concert, Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. Tickets at 925-373-6800, www.livermoreperformingarts.org.

**Cypress String Quartet**, Sun., Jan. 9, 3 p.m. Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave., Pleasanton. www.firehousearts.org

**Diavolo**, cinematic experience of dance and gymnastics, Fri.-Sat., Jun. 14 and 15, 8 p.m. Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. www.livermoreperformingarts.org or 925-373-6800.

**Tingstad & Rumbel** - American home-style music, Fri., Jan. 14, 8 p.m. Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave., Pleasanton. www.firehousearts.org

**Rodgers & Hammerstein with Hart**, Sat., Jan. 15, 8 p.m. and Sun., Jan. 16, 2 p.m. Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave., Pleasanton. www.firehousearts.org

**Al Jarreau**, 8 p.m. Jan. 28, Dougherty Valley Performing Arts Center, 10550 Albion Rd., San Ramon, 973-3343 or SanRamonPerformingArts.com..

## ON THE STAGE

**The Princess and the Pea**, Civic Arts Stage Company, Dec. 17 and 18, 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 18 and 19, 2 p.m. Amador Theater,

1155 Santa Rita Rd., Pleasanton. Ticket information www.firehousearts.org

**The Little Engine That Could**, Dec. 18-23, Presented by Bay Area Children's Theater at the Front Row Theater, 17011 Bollinger Canyon Rd., San Ramon, 973-3343 or SanRamonPerformingArts.com.

**Firehouse Kids, TBA**, Sat., Jan. 8, 11 a.m. Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave., Pleasanton. www.firehousearts.org

**Through the Eyes of Faith**, featuring Faith Alpher in a moving and funny one woman show. Sun., Jan. 9, 2 p.m. Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. Adult content. 925-373-6800, www.livermoreperformingarts.org.

**Dirty Rotten Scoundrels**, Tri-Valley Repertory Theatre musical comedy production. Performances weekends Jan. 21-Feb. 6, 2011, 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 2 p.m. Sundays. Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. Call 462-2121 or go to www.trivalleyrep.com for information.

**Cabaret**, Pacific Coast Repertory Theatre, Jan. 21-22, 27-29 8 p.m. and Jan. 23 and 30, 2 p.m. Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Ave., Pleasanton. www.firehousearts.org

**The Lion in Winter**, Jan. 21-Feb. 12, Village Theater, 233 Front St., Danville. Presented by Role Players Ensemble Theatre. www.danvilletheatre.com

## COMEDY

**Big Fat Year End Kiss Off Comedy Show**

**XVIII**, Will Durst & Friends Dec. 30, 7 p.m. Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore.

## DANCE

**The Nutcracker**, Valley Dance Theatre 30th Annual Production, December 17, 18 & 19, 2010 - 7:00 p.m.; December 18, & 19, 2010 - 2:00 p.m. Bankhead Theater, 2400 First Street, Livermore. All seats are reserved. Adults \$24, \$27 & \$33; Students 17 and younger \$18. Purchase online at www.bankheadtheater.org, by phone at 925-373-6800 or in person at the theater box office. Highlighting the 30th annual full-length production of the Tchaikovsky's holiday classic The Nutcracker will be Taeko drummers and a large Chinese Dragon who will perform during the Chinese segment of the ballet. Public performances will be accompanied the Livermore-Amador Symphony pit orchestra. The Cantabella Children's Chorus and Harmony Fusion will add vocal entertainment to selected performances.

**Friday Night Dance Parties**, themed parties each Friday night from Salsa to Swing, includes a group dance lesson at 8:15. \$15 cover charge, 8:15 dance lesson, 9:00-10:30 for dance parties. It's All About Dancing, 171 So. J Street, Livermore. 925-449-9292, or studio@itsallaboutdancing.com.

**New Performance Group**, combines dance, gymnastics and acrobatics. Four hours of week of training to start. Two dance classes

as well as tumbling and flexibility class. Information, contact gymfinitjuli@yahoo.com or shellypop@sbcglobal.net. Dance Studio @ Gymfinitj.

**Brinda Dixit, Bharatanatyam Arangetram** or Solo Dance Debut, Sun., Jan. 2, 4 p.m. Bankhead Theater, 2400 First St., Livermore. Free admission. Event includes live music, refreshments and dinner.

## AUDITIONS/VOLUNTEERS

**Solo Piano Competition for young artists**, sponsored by Las Positas College Music Department, open to ages 14 through 24. The winner will perform George Gershwin's, "Rhapsody in Blue" at the May 4, 2011 Orchestra Concert as part of the inaugural season for the new Barbara Fracisco Mertes Center for the Arts. The application deadline is February 10, 2011. The selection will take place in February. To request application forms and information, please contact Music instructor Mary Campbell, mcampbell@laspositascollege.edu, (925) 424-1118.

**Livermore's 2011 Regional Talent Competition** is now accepting applications. Top winners in each of two categories - youth (17 and under) and adults (18 and over) - will each take home \$2,500. This competition will feature singers, dancers, bands, pianists, magicians, comedians and other types of performances. Aspiring performers from anywhere are invited to audition and compete. Information and applications for auditions are avail-



Water part of holiday show.

## Christmas Lights Set to Music

Matt Phipps of Livermore has decorated his home this Christmas with over 40,000 lights. He programs 80 control channels that make the lights dance to the beat and melody of the music. This year's show even includes 30 foot water geysers and a video projection.

Three years ago, Matt, at age 17, started by decorating his home

in Dublin with a few strings of lights and a 16 channel computerized controller. Each year he's added various lights, electronic equipment and water geysers to the light show. Preparing for this takes months of planning, and programming. In order to program a two minute song, it takes Matt approximately 16 hours. Last year Matt won the national 'D-Light

the World Lighting Contest.' This year's show is bigger and has the theme, "Imagination."

The show runs each evening during the month of December. Simply drive up, tune to the radio station posted and enjoy a personal light show.

Check out LivermoreLights.com for times and location.

# ART & ENTERTAINMENT

able at LivermoreTalentCompetition.com. Applications must be received by December 31, 2010.

**Concerto competition, Prometheus Symphony Orchestra** of Oakland is sponsoring a concerto competition for Bay Area string, wind and percussion players age eighteen years or younger. The competition will be held on Tuesday evening February 1, 2011. The winner will perform with the orchestra on Sunday, May 22, 2011, and will receive a \$200.00 award. Contestants are to perform from memory a complete concerto or work for solo instrument and orchestra. The application deadline is January 25, 2011. Applications are available by calling (925) 447-3659 or online at [www.prometheussymphony.org](http://www.prometheussymphony.org).

## MOVIES

**Classic Film Series**, Vine Cinema and Alehouse, 1722 First St., Livermore. Schedule: Jan. 13: Star Wars. All movies begin at 7 p.m. Information at [www.VineCinema.com](http://www.VineCinema.com) or 447-2545.

**Documentary film, Afghan Star**, Dec. 16. Pleasanton Library hosting at the new Firehouse Arts Center. No reservations are required. Admission is free. Doors open 6:15 p.m., film at 7 p.m. Seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. (Info

on movie [www.afghanstar.com](http://www.afghanstar.com).) For more information, call Penny Johnson, 931-3405. Firehouse Arts Center, 4444 Railroad Avenue, downtown Pleasanton.

**Going Places: A Classic Film Series**, shown the first Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Pleasanton Library's meeting room through June 2, 2011. The program is a partnership of Las Positas College and the Pleasanton Public Library proudly present. Candy Klaschus, film historian and Coordinator of the Humanities Program at Las Positas College, is the host. There is no admission charge. 400 Old Bernal Ave., Pleasanton. 931-3400. No registration required.

## OPERA

**Met Opera Theater-casts**, 10 a.m. simultaneous viewings and 12 encore rebroadcasts of Metropolitan Opera productions at Dublin's Regal Cinema, 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays - Schedule: Jan. 5: Verdi's "Don Carlo;" Jan. 8, 26: Puccini's "La Fanciulla Del West;" Feb. 12, Mar. 2: Glass's "Nixon in China;" Feb. 26, Mar. 16: Gluck's "Iphigenia in Tauride;" April 9, 27: Rossini's "Le Comte Ory;" April 23, May 11: Richard Strauss's "Capriccio;" April 30, May 18: Verdi's "Il Trovatore;" May 14, June 11: Wagner's "Die Walkure."

**The Barber of Seville**, Opera San José continues its 27th Season presents Rossini's

comic opera, The Barber of Seville. Eight performances are scheduled from February 12 through 27 at the California Theatre, 345 South First Street in downtown San José. Tickets are on sale at the Opera San José Box Office, by phone at (408) 437-4450 or online at [www.operasj.org](http://www.operasj.org). This production of The Barber of Seville is made possible, in part, by a Cultural Affairs Grant from the City of San José.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Celebration of Light**, Fri., Dec. 17, 5 to 7 p.m. at Hacienda School, 3800 Stoneridge Dr., Pleasanton. Students will present plays and activities from ancient civilizations around the world. The focus will be on astronomy. Weather permitting, there will be telescopes to view the sky. The public is invited to attend. [cmachi@headsop.org](http://cmachi@headsop.org).

**Ball at the Mall**, Fri., Dec. 31, Stoneridge Shopping Center, Pleasanton. Presented by Pleasanton North Rotary as a fundraiser for children in the community. Live music, piano bar, premium no-host bar, champagne at midnight, souvenir glass, hors d'oeuvres and more. Information and tickets at [www.ballatthemall.org](http://www.ballatthemall.org).

**2011 San Ramon Art & Wind Festival Poster Art Contest**, open to San Ramon middle and high school students. The

winning piece of artwork will be featured on festival posters, postcards and t-shirts. It will also be framed and hung in one of the Community Centers in San Ramon. The student who created the winning art work will also receive a \$200 savings bond, second place a \$100 savings bond and third place winner a \$50 savings bond. Prizes are provided by the San Ramon Arts Foundation. All entries will be displayed in the Lindsay Dirx Brown Art Gallery located at the San Ramon Community Center during the month of May 2011. The contest entry form and info can be found online at [www.artandwind.com](http://www.artandwind.com).

Entries are due by January 7, 2011. For more info, call (925) 973-3366.

**Livermore Reads Together**, the 2011 book is "1906" by James Dalessandro. Novel centers on the 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire. Month long celebration will be kicked off on Sunday, January 23, 2011 at 2 p.m. with a presentation by the author, James Dalessandro. A reception will follow featuring famous San Francisco food treats and turn of the century music by Greg Pane. Variety of events planned during the month of February at the Civic Center Library, 1188 So. Livermore. Information [www.livermore.lib.ca.us](http://www.livermore.lib.ca.us)



Christine McCall at the Carnegie building.

## Artist Creates a Kaleidoscope of Artwork

Local artist Christine McCall has been capturing Livermore's heritage and beauty with her new Kaleidoscope photographs. These unusual designs look at first like the images from a toy kaleidoscope. Upon closer inspection, one can see that they are actually made out of pictures of buildings, which have been replicated and mirrored until complex designs emerge.

Christine started work on this project in October. She decided to use images of local businesses, historical buildings, and other iconic Livermore sights as the basis for her designs. The Altamont Pass Windmills turn into a crystal snowflake. Blue Door Antiques into a patriotic burst of red white and blue banners. "It's hard to predict what the design will look like when I'm done," says Christine. She has been working with downtown businesses, getting permission to photograph their buildings. "Livermore is filled with buildings over 100 years old, and their interesting architecture makes beautiful patterns. And these businesses have been here for decades. I want to promote Livermore because it is

such a special place."

To create a kaleidoscope, Christine cuts a wedge-shaped slice out of a photograph. Using Photoshop on a computer, she copies it 12 times in a circle, flipping every other slice. She usually takes about two dozen different slices before she finds a design that works. For the Donut Wheel, the teal-colored arch and jagged roof provide the structure of the design, while the yellow lights give it a splash of color. "The Donut Wheel was the first building I wanted to do. It's such a landmark and I have a soft spot for their doughnuts." Christine also did the Carnegie building because it is home to the Livermore Art Association Gallery and the Livermore Heritage Guild.

Christine is showing her kaleidoscope prints and greeting cards in two local galleries. The new Artistic Edge in Blacksmith Square carries her "Local Livermore" and "Botanic" series. It is open 11-6 every day until Christmas. LAA Gallery in Carnegie Park carries her "Historic Livermore" collection. It is open 11:30-4:00 Wednesday-Sunday.

# One-Woman Show at Las Positas

Las Positas College invites the public to a one-woman photography show featuring the new work by local photographer Pushpa Dalal. The exhibit will be available for viewing Dec. 3 through Jan. 19, in the Barbara Fracisco Mertes Center for the Arts Gallery.

A Reception for the Artist will be held Jan. 19, 5 to 7 p.m. Artwork in the show, entitled "Color, Light and Movement," is for sale, with all proceeds benefiting the Visual Communications (VCOM) program.

"Pushpa is a renaissance woman," said Fredda Cassidy, coordinator and head faculty of the VCOM program. "With both feet firmly grounded in science and the arts, she is a compassionate humanist and lifelong learner. For more than 25 years, she was a practicing OB-GYN. A photographer for most of her adult life, she started taking classes several years ago in the Visual Communications program to further her knowledge in digital photography and graphic design," Cassidy explained.

Describing Dalal's recent creative work, Cassidy said, "Pushpa was blown away at what she viewed on her monitor - images of intense color interacting with movement and light in a totally unexpected, unique, and visually engaging fashion. After each shoot, she examines hundreds of images to find one or two that she fine-tunes to perfection. The results of her endeavor are a visual treat."



"Pilings" is an example of Puspha's work.

In addition to her photography work, Dalal volunteers her medical services at the Axis Community Health Clinic. She is a hospice volunteer at the Tri-Valley Hope Hospice and also volunteers at the ValleyCare Health Library. She is an active member of the Livermore Art Association (LAA) and Pleasanton Art League (PAL) which sponsored her spring one-woman show at Garré Winery. She exhibits in PAL and LAA group shows and with the PhotoCentral program in Hayward. Last May, Pleasanton honored her with a Juanita Haugen Community of Character Award.

Las Positas College's award-winning VCOM program encom-

passes all the visual arts - drawing, painting, photography - but instead of traditional tools and media, students use state-of-the-art computers and software to produce their work.

The program offers an Associate of Arts Degree which prepares students for transition into the profession including transfer to a four-year university program, a Certificate of Achievement for immediate job entry, and a "Drop-in and Learn" opportunity for professionals, students, and interested members of the community. VCOM's Design Shop is a unique entrepreneurial venture that offers career experience to trained students who provide professional-level web and print services at reduced costs for Tri-Valley businesses and organizations.

The Barbara Fracisco Mertes Center for the Arts Gallery is open each day when classes are in session, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Weekend hours vary; the gallery is closed on Sundays, except during arts center performances. Las Positas College will be closed Dec. 23 to January 2; winter recess for classes is Dec. 23 to Jan. 17. For more information about the photography show and VCOM program, please visit the college website at [www.laspositascollege.edu](http://www.laspositascollege.edu) or call (925) 424-1296.

Las Positas College is located at 3000 Campus Hill Drive in Livermore.

## Pleasanton Merchants Open Late; Host Art Walk

A number of downtown Pleasanton merchants will stay open until 9 p.m. tonight, Thursday, December 16 to promote holiday shopping. Visit the following locations to satisfy your holiday shopping list:

Berry Patch, Clover Creek, Gourmet Works, Little Valley Winery, Murphy's Paw, Pans on Fire, Passionate Athlete, Rick's Picks, Sincerely Yours, Studio 7, Towne Center Books.

Downtown Pleasanton merchants offer unique gifts and services.

Shopping local boosts the local economy and fosters community.

The 3rd Thursdays Merchants Art Walk will also be taking place December 16, 6 to 9 p.m. The Art Walk is a collaborative event bringing together local downtown merchants, arts groups, and area artists in an effort to continue adding interesting and lively events to downtown Pleasanton. To download a walking map for this event, visit [www.merchantarts.com](http://www.merchantarts.com)

For information, contact the Pleasanton Downtown Association (925) 484-2199

## LARPD to Present Annual Great Yule Log Hunt

Livermore Area Recreation and Park District rangers will mark the occasion of the winter solstice with a traditional celebration of the yule log. The District is holding its 17th annual Great Yule Log Hunt on Dec. 19.

The tradition of the yule log began with pagan rituals that varied greatly from region to region throughout Europe. These communal fires in ancient times meant light, warmth and security on the darkest day of the year, the first day of winter. Celebrants would gather around and drink a toast for health, wealth and happiness in the coming year. In England, the yule log was selected from oak, pine or ash tree. LARPD typically uses a yule log from a sycamore or oak tree.

Join this wintry celebration with Ranger Pat "Solstice" Sotelo and staff. Wear a silly hat, and prepare for the hunt with games and stories. After hunting down the elusive yule log, gather around the fire to share some holiday cheer. Families can decorate their own yule log to take home.

The Great Yule Log Hunt will be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 19, at the Veterans Park Group Picnic Area. A \$2 donation is requested to help support the program. For more information, call 925-960-2400.

## Tickets Available for Annual Crab Feed

The Livermore Knights of Columbus will hold their 38th Annual Crab Feed on January 8th at the Robert Livermore Community Center. The event will feature an all you can eat crab dinner, raffles and prizes, and live music performed by Open Road.

Doors open at 5 p.m. with dinner being served at 6 p.m.

This event is the premier event of the Livermore Knights. Proceeds from the dinner go to support the many charities and community groups that the Knights provide financial support and volunteer hours to. Last year the Knights contributed more than 46,000 volunteer hours to assist local groups and individuals.

Tickets can be purchased for \$41 online by going to [www.kofc4588events.org](http://www.kofc4588events.org). Questions can be directed to Mark or Clare Duguid - 925-443-5873.

## Children to Perform 'The Miracle on Main Street'

The children of Centerpointe Church will present their Christmas musical, "The Miracle on Main Street" twice during the holiday season.

The musical asks the question of what would happen if you received a wrapped present with no gift inside. That's equivalent to celebrating the Christmas season without Jesus.

Performances start at 5 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 19 and Friday, Dec. 24 in the Centerpointe Worship Center, 3410 Cornerstone Court in Pleasanton. There is no admission charge.

For information, please see [www.centerpointechurch.info](http://www.centerpointechurch.info) or call the church office at 925-846-4436.

## Youth Collect Items for Shepherd's Gate

Youth of the Dublin / Pleasanton area spent an evening gathering donations from over 100 families, who had pledged to purchase goods to help Shepherd's Gate, a homeless shelter for women and children in Livermore. Since 1984, Shepherd's Gate has provided Christ-centered services and housing to over 9,000 battered and homeless women and children. Shepherd's Gate has two campuses, a second one in Brentwood.

Signups were sent around in church meetings for two weeks prior to the event and families went out and purchased materials from a list of needs provided by Shepherd's Gate. Youth went out in small groups to pick up the donations from homes. Three young teenage boys picked up the sacks from our home and they seemed a little embarrassed as they sang "We Wish You a Merry Christmas,"

Several large vans full of donations were donated to Shepherd's Gate and a delicious meal was also prepared and enjoyed by the



women and their children. One of the leaders commented, "It was a great service project for the youth. It .... was a very tender experience - I know I felt the sweetness of the spirit and I know the girls were touched. It was also a very humbling experience to be ...

with these sweet children whose caretakers are going through such a hard time."

The project was sponsored by the Youth Groups of the Pleasanton 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and Dublin Wards of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.



The Pleasanton Middle School cheer team placed first in the United Spirit Association Regional Competition held in Tracy on Saturday, December 11th. The team won the Junior High Show Cheer Novice division competing against six other teams from northern California. The 7th and 8th grade girls, coached by Kim DeJoy, will next compete in the Northern California Spirit Competition to be held at UC-Davis in February. The 2009-2010 team from Pleasanton Middle won the Spirit Championship and then went on to win the National Championship in their division for 2010. Pictured are top left, Amber Marquez, Madison Hinkins, Lexi Ewanich, Erin Moirano, Brianna Morrissey, Coach Kim DeJoy, Madison Maas, Mandi Johnson, Megan Patterson, Emma Loll, Jordan Robinson. Second Row Left, Mikai Lewis, Tori Heckart, Lexi Venema, Lauren Shohfi, Brittany Vargas, Samantha Manning, Ali Johnson. Bottom Row left, Cierra Martinez, Sarina DeJoy, Mitsu Dill, Hayley Hart, Victoria Lachnit, Cameron Bell.

# Milestones

## Community

### Military

Air National Guard Airman 1st Class Shawn L. Ecklund graduated from basic military training at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

The airman completed an intensive, eight-week program that included training in military discipline and studies, Air Force core values, physical fitness, and basic warfare principles and skills.

He is the son of Jerry Ecklund of Livermore. Ecklund graduated in 2003 from North Valley High School, Santa Clara,

Calif., and received a bachelor's degree in 2008 from the University of Phoenix, Pleasanton.

### Education

Southwestern Assemblies of God University's graduating class of Fall 2010 will include a student from Livermore, California (listed below). SAGU offers approximately sixty degrees, both undergraduate and graduate, in various fields of study. Fall commencement was held Friday, December 10. Curtis Robert Wilson of Livermore earned a bachelor's degree in church ministries.

### Community

#### Artist's Work Chosen for Exhibit

Artist Tricia Poulos Leonard of Reno, Nevada has received two special recognition merit awards for artwork in the "8th Annual Color: Bold/Subtle Juried Online International Art Exhibition" hosted by Upstream People Gallery.

The artist is a former resident of the Livermore-Amador Valley.

This international exhibition received approximately 250 entries from around the world and 50 artists were selected by the juror Laurence Bradshaw, Professor of Art at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, U. S. A.

Professor Bradshaw stated, "Tricia Poulos Leonard has a developed artistic use of mixed media as seen in her music themed pieces. 'Jazz Singer' shows the figure with many textural treatments including the treble sign, musical notes and the microphone, all developed with a strong warm and cool vibration amidst the central figure. 'Jazz Musician' is also rich with the angularity of the saxophone player and the black and red with green dynamics."

The exhibition will be featured online at [www.upstreampeople-gallery.com](http://www.upstreampeople-gallery.com) and continue for 12 months, closing November 30, 2011.

Loenard declared, "Jazz Singer and Jazz Musician are two of my series of mixed media paintings based on America's gift to the

world, jazz music. I love the fact that this musical genre originated in the US and has been recognized as an original art form by the entire world. When I am working on a piece, I listen to jazz and am inspired by the movement of the music. My hope is that my art will move the viewer in the way the music moves me."

Further information about the work can be found by clicking on [www.upstreampeoplegallery.com](http://www.upstreampeoplegallery.com)

#### Buddies Without Borders Raises Funds for Pakistan Flood Relief

Buddies without Borders, in collaboration with Imran Khan Foundation, held an elegant gala at the Castlewood Country Club in Pleasanton attended by 350 people on December 4, 2010 raising over \$120,000 to aid the Pakistan flood relief effort.

Almost 20 million people, with a death toll of close to 2,000, were affected by the Pakistan floods which began in July 2010 following heavy monsoon rains resulting in the Indus River flooding until approximately twenty percent of Pakistan's total land area was underwater. The number of individuals affected by the flooding exceeds the combined total of individuals affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami, the Kashmir earth-

quake and the Haiti earthquake.

Imran Khan, sports super star and former Pakistan Cricket Captain turned philanthropist, humanitarian, Chairman of the Board of Shaukat Khanum Hospital (the only charity based cancer hospital of its kind in Pakistan), previous member of the Parliament and current leader of the political party Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf, updated the attendees with his signature candor on the current status of the flood and the efforts his foundation is undertaking to mitigate this disaster. The two main areas that he discussed in detail from the Imran Khan Flood Relief Fund were the seed dispersal program to allow the farmers to begin replanting in order to stave off a future famine

after the current crops had been ruined as well as the adopt a village, school or family program.

Buddies Without Borders (BWB) is a local organization whose mission it is to spread awareness for the Pakistani flood victims through the collective power of American schoolchildren as they use service learning projects to recognize the need for global citizenship, empathy and empowerment and take action now as they grow into the leaders of our future. The children from BWB performed the song Dil Dil Pakistan as seen in the music video from its website. Emma C. Smith Elementary School in Livermore has been selected as the pilot program for the BWB service learning project.

Both Buddies Without Borders and the Imran Khan Foundation were recognized with a Congressional certificate for their efforts in raising awareness and funds in support of the flood relief effort by Congressman Jerry McNerney's office as presented by Ayesha Sheikh. Anyone with interest in donating to this worthy cause may still do so through The Imran Khan Foundation which is a non-profit corporation and a registered tax-exempt public charity under section 510 (c)(3) @ [www.imrankhanfoundation.org](http://www.imrankhanfoundation.org).

Information about Buddies Without Borders organization may be found at [www.buddieswithout-borders.org](http://www.buddieswithout-borders.org).

## Lab Physicist Elected a Fellow of The Optical Society

Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory physicist Joseph Nilsen has been elected a Fellow of The Optical Society (OSA).

The organization said it is recognizing Nilsen for his "pioneering contributions to the development and understanding of X-ray lasers and their applications."

Nilsen has been at the Lab for 33 years. He is currently working in the Weapons and Complex Integration directorate, leading a science campaign and doing research on high energy density physics.

His laser accomplishments include developing the pre-pulse techniques that are now the standard techniques used worldwide to drive X-ray lasers. This technology has allowed such lasers to be reduced in size from requiring large fusion laser facilities to operating as table-top lasers.

In his early research, Nilsen invented and led experiments to demonstrate a nuclear pumped X-ray laser. He also helped develop the X-ray imaging techniques used to diagnose and understand X-ray lasers, which are now used to diagnose other plasmas.

In all, Nilsen has published 240 papers on X-ray lasers, atomic physics, and non-linear optics.



Joseph Nilsen

OSA selected 64 new fellows this year, with about half of them working in the United States. Nilsen becomes the seventh OSA fellow currently at LLNL. He also is a fellow of the American Physi-

cal Society (APS).

## BULLETIN BOARD

(Organizations wishing to run notices in Bulletin Board, send information to PO Box 1198, Livermore, CA 94551, in care of Bulletin Board. Include name of organization, meeting date, time, place and theme or subject. Phone number and contact person should also be included. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday.)

**New Year's Eve Party, Dec. 31,** Livermore-Pleasanton Elks Lodge 2117, 6:30 p.m. no host cocktails, 7:30 p.m. dinner followed, champagne toasts at both east and west coast midnight times, music by DJ Felipe, bingo games after dinner. \$35 per person. Prepaid reservations required by Mon., Dec. 27, RSVP to 455-8829.

**San Ramon Valley Newcomers Club** invites new and long-time residents to its monthly luncheon on January 20, 2011. Roberta Gonzales, award winning weather anchor for CBS5 News, will be the speaker. 11:30 to 2 p.m. at Bridges Golf Club Restaurant, 9000 So. Gale Rd., San Ramon. Luncheon is \$25. Call Susan, 925-718-5214, for reservations and information.

**Livermore High School Choral Boosters "Holiday Bingo Blast,"** Sat., Dec. 18, Bingo Ranch, 3070 Pacific Ave., Livermore. Early session at 3:45 p.m., regular session at 6:30 p.m. Free goodie bags to the first 150 to buy-in. Holiday caroling by the LHS Chamber Choir between sessions.

**Disability Action Network (DAN)** meeting, second Thursday of each month at 2:00 p.m., Livermore CRIL office, 3311 Pacific Ave., Livermore. The Disability Action Network is a group of people with all kinds of disabilities who are working together to make changes in the community. The group works on health care, housing, access, attendant programs, transportation, and other issues affecting people with disabilities. For more information, please call Jessica Lehman at (510) 881-5743 x5937.

**Valley Spokesmen Bicycle Touring Club,** Sat., Dec. 18, 20 mile Marsh Creek-Big Break Trail, meet 10 a.m. at Starbucks in Brentwood, Randy Huey, 518-8439. Sun., Dec. 19, 30 miles ride to see Christmas decorations at Orchard Nursery in Lafayette, meet 10 a.m. at SRV School District Office, Julie Hampton, 510-685-7103. Wed., Dec. 22, 30 miles San Ramon and Danville to Alamo, meet 10 a.m. at Shannon Center in Dublin, Gail Blanco, 872-1001. Anyone planning to go on a ride is asked to call the leader for details on where to meet and what to bring.

**Community Resources for Independent Living (CRIL)** offers services to help people with disabilities and supports them to live independently and participate in their community for as long as they are willing and able to do so. CRIL maintains offices in Hayward, Fremont and Livermore to provide information, support and referrals. CRIL also provides community education at senior centers and affordable housing complexes to residents of Southern Alameda County. The Tri-Valley CRIL office is located at 3311 Pacific Avenue, Livermore and can be reached by phone at (925) 371-1531, by FAX at (925) 373-5034 or by e-mail at abril.tamayo@cril-online.org. Hours are M-F 9-12:30 and 1:30PM to 5 PM. Drop in days are Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30 to 11:30AM and 2-4 PM or by appointment. All services are free.

**The PEER Support Group for Tri Valley CRIL** (Community Resources for Independent Living) meets the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Support groups are a place for people to give and receive both emotional and practical support as well as exchange information. People with generic health conditions, as well as their friends and families find support groups to be valuable resources and a place where people can share medical and emotional information and educate themselves and others. The next Support Group meeting is Wednesday, Dec. 22 from 2 to 3:30 PM at the Tri-Valley CRIL office located at 3311 Pacific Avenue, Livermore. To obtain more information or reserve a place, CRIL can be reached by phone at (925) 371-1531, by FAX at (925) 373-5034 or by e-mail at abril.tamayo@cril-online.org. The Support Group meetings and all other CRIL services are free.

**M.L. Hummel Club,** San Francisco Chapter, meets second Saturday of each month

at 1 p.m. at member's home. Guests welcome. Topics include sharing of Hummel figurine news and information. For information, contact Joan Mumma, club secretary, 447-5164 or www.mumma.org/hummel/

**Widowed Men and Women of North-ern CA.,** Mexican Brunch in Pleasanton, Dec. 19, 11 a.m., RSVP by Dec. 17 to Hilda, 398-8808.

**Sentinels of Freedom Welcome Home Ceremony and Reception,** hosted by Dublin on Monday, December 27, 2010, at 5:30 p.m. in the Community Room of the Dublin Library located at 200 Civic Plaza in Dublin. The event will honor all current military personnel who are home on holiday leave who reside in Dublin, Danville, San Ramon, Blackhawk or Alamo. All those families who have military serving from these areas are encouraged to submit an Information Request Form. Forms may be submitted online at the City of Dublin website www.dublin.ca.gov, obtained by contacting the City Manager's Office at (925) 833-6650, patricia.parks@dublin.ca.gov (for Dublin residents) or contact your City for more information.

**Clothing Drive -** Warm men's clothing for homeless veterans, plus men's and women's business attire for Wardrobe for Opportunity. Please bring to Tri-Valley Unity prior to 10 a.m. service, 2260 Camino Ramon, San Ramon, or call Michele to make other arrangements, (925) 829-1239.

**Pleasantonians 4 Peace,** Peaceful War Protest will be held on the fourth Wednesday of the month, December 22 between 5 - 6 at the corners of First and Neal Streets. Please join us if you can. Call Cathie Norman at (925) 462-7495; Matt Sullivan at mjs7882@gmail.com; or kdowding@pacbell.net. www.Pleasantonians4Peace.org

**Pleasanton Senior Center VIP Travel,** Cathedral of Christ the Light, downtown Oakland, Fri., Dec. 17, lunch along the Carqueize Straits, followed by tour of Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Walnut Creek. Price includes tour, lunch and motorcoach transportation, \$78 per person. Sign up at the travel desk, 5353 Sunol Blvd., Pleasanton.

**Senior Support Program of the Tri-Valley** is looking for Volunteer Drivers to transport seniors to their medical appointments. The Senior Transportation Program supplements existing public and paratransit services by providing rides via volunteer drivers. Volunteers must have a valid driver's license, a registered vehicle, carry automobile liability insurance, and have a clear DMV record. Please contact Jennifer Cullen for more information at (925) 931-5387 or email: ja.cullen@yahoo.com. Funding for this program is provided by Alameda County Transportation Commission (Alameda CTC).

**Daughters of the American Revolution, Josefa Higuera Livermore Chapter,** meets 9:30 a.m. on the first Saturday of the month between Sept. and May at the Asbury United Methodist Church, 4743 East Ave., Livermore. DAR is a women's service organization. The women are descended from a patriot of the American Revolution and are dedicated to patriotism, preservation of American history and securing America's future through education. Information, contact Maris at 443-3087.

**Daughters of the American Revolution, Jose Maria Amador Chapter, Pleasanton,** volunteer women's service organization descended from a patriot of the American Revolution. Dedicated to patriotism, preservation of American history and securing America's

future through better education. For more information, contact anarisco@comcast.net or phone 510-507-5509.

**ClutterLess Self Help Support Group, (CL)** is a nonprofit, peer-based, self-help support group for people with difficulty discarding unwanted possessions. Meetings in Room 7 at 7 p.m. every Monday 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the St. Mary & St. John Coptic Orthodox Church, Room 7, 4300 Mirador Drive, Pleasanton. Just come or call our one of the volunteers: 925-200-1943, or go to www.ClutterLess.org.

**Disability Action Network** is a group of people with all kinds of disabilities who are working together to make change in the community. The group works on health care, housing, access, attendant programs, transportation, and other issues affecting people with disabilities. The group is a project of CRIL, Community Resources for Independent Living. CRIL serves people with all disabilities and seniors with disabling conditions, providing assistance with housing, personal assistant services, benefits, assistive technology, advocacy, and peer counseling. CRIL's mission is to advocate and provide resources for people with disabilities to improve the quality of life and make communities fully accessible. For more information, please call Jessica Lehman at (510) 881-5743 x5937.

**Birthright Pregnancy Support Service,** looking an office volunteer to assist clients weekly on Wednesdays 10-2, and substitute office volunteers for all days. Also looking for a volunteer CPA to assist annually with reviewing books and other related assistance. For information on a variety of volunteer opportunities, please call John Kupski evenings at 606-8230. Open M-Tu-Fri 10 am-2 pm, Thurs. eve. 6-9 pm. Birthright offers free pregnancy tests, guidance, adoption and medical referrals, baby and maternity clothing, and more. Livermore office at 1520 Catalina Ct., just behind the Granada Shopping Center, or call 449-5887. 1-800-550-4900 Hotline number is staffed 24 hours a day. All Birthright services are free and confidential. www.birthright.org

**Tri-Valley Seniors: Need a ride to your medical appointment?** Seniors who require door-to-door service are now eligible for a ride to their medical appointments. Volunteers use their personal vehicles to drive seniors to and from medical appointments. Seniors must be 60 and over, living in Dublin, Livermore, Pleasanton or Sunol, and unable to find a ride (relative, friend, bus, paratransit.) For a ride, or to volunteer, call Jennifer Cullen at (925) 931-5387 or email her at ja.cullen@yahoo.com. Funding for the Senior Transportation Program is provided by Alameda County Transportation Improvement Authority and Measure B Funds.

**Toastmasters,** Amador Valley group meets at Mimi's Cafe, 4775 Hacienda Dr., Dublin, 7 a.m. Thursday mornings. Learn to communicate more effectively, improve presentation skills and leadership potential. Contact Hal Brown, 462-2412, for information.

**Livermore Military Families** is a support group for families in Livermore, who have a loved one serving in the Military. It is a safe place to come and share the joys, tears and fears they have with others who understand what they are going through. All family members are welcome to attend meetings. Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of each month at the home of Cindy Gavello, 2851 Tahoe Drive, Livermore to 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

**Caregiver Support Group,** meets 2nd and 4th Mondays of each month, 6 to 7:30 p.m. Learn new coping strategies and ways to better

care for yourself. No fee to attend. Hope Hospice Inc., 6377 Clark Ave., Suite 100, Dublin, 829-8770, www.HopeHospice.com.

**Pleasanton Newcomers Club,** open to new and established residents of the Tri-Valley. Activities include a coffee on the first Wednesday of the month, a luncheon on the second Wednesday of the month, bunco, Mah Jongg, bridge, walking and hiking groups, family activities and monthly adult socials. Information, call 215-8405 or visit www.PleasantonNewcomers.com.

**Learn Scottish Country dancing** at the Livermore class of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, San Francisco Branch. Lively reels and jigs, graceful strathspeys. All ages. Adults Mondays 8 to 9:30 p.m. Livermore Veteran's Hall, 522 South L St., Livermore; youth or adult Fridays 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the Valley Dance Theatre School, 2247 Second St., Suite B, Livermore. Call Margaret Ward, 449-5932 or Sheena MacQueen, 447-1833.

**Good News Bears,** nonprofit with a mission to distribute stuffed animals to social services, emergency services, medical facilities and anyone who needs a hug. Based in Livermore, the group reaches around the Bay Area and the world. Volunteers needed to hold collections of gently used teddy bears and other stuffed animals, assist with fund-raising and deliver the animals to organizations supported by the group. Meetings 2nd Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. at the Livermore Police Station. Log on to www.goodnewsbears.org or call 373-7982 for more information.

**The Bingo Ranch,** 3070 Pacific Ave. in Livermore and is open Mondays, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturdays. Buenas Vidas Youth Ranch has been running Bingo for 16 years and is now working with Christensen, Arroyo Seco and East Ave Schools, and Exceptional Needs Network and All American Sports Academy Teams. Come play Bingo and support the kids in Livermore. Call 925-606-7777 for more information.

### RELIGION

**Tri-Valley Cultural Jews,** affiliated with the Congress of Secular Jewish Organizations (csjo.org). Information, Rabbi Judith Seid, Tri-Valley Cultural Jews, 485-1049 or East-BaySecularJews.org.

**First Church of Christ, Scientist, Livermore,** has services at 10 a.m. every Sunday. Sunday School for students (ages 3-20) is held at 10 a.m. every Sunday. The church and reading room are located at Third and N Streets. The Reading Room, which is open to the public, features books, CDs and magazines for sale. For information, call (925) 447-2946.

**Sunset Community Church,** 2200 Arroyo Rd., Livermore. Sunday worship service at 10:30 a.m. Nursery and children's church provided. A "Night of Worship" first Sunday of each month at 6 p.m. Wednesday night program for all ages at 7 p.m. Information, call 447-6282.

**Faith Chapel Assembly of God,** 6656 Alisal St., Pleasanton, Sunday School for all ages 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m., Children's Church 11:15 a.m. Women's Bible study Wednesdays at 10 a.m. Please call office at 846-8650 for weekly programs.

**Holy Cross Lutheran Church** Sunday Service 9:30 a.m. 1020 Mocho St., Livermore. Information, 447-8840.

**Our Savior Lutheran Ministries,** 1385 S. Livermore Avenue, Livermore. Sunday worship at 9 a.m.; Sunday School and Adult Bible Study at 10:30 a.m.; contemporary

service 11 a.m. (Connected). For information, call 925-447-1246.

**Asbury United Methodist Church,** 4743 East Avenue, Livermore. 9 a.m. Sunday worship. Information 447-1950.

**Calvary Chapel Livermore,** Sunday Services 10:30 am and 6:00 p.m. 545 N. L Street Livermore. (925) 447-4357 - www.calvarylivermore.org.

**St. Matthew's Baptist Church,** 1239 North Livermore Ave., Livermore. Services on Sunday at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. Adult Sunday school 9:30 a.m., Children's Sunday school at 9:30 a.m. Prayer each Wednesday at 7 p.m. followed by Bible study at 7:30 p.m. 449-3824.

**United Christian Church,** celebrating 50 years in the Tri-Valley. 1886 College Ave. at M St., Livermore; worship on Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. Children's program on Sunday morning and first Fridays. The community is welcome. United CC is an Open and Affirming ministry. Call 449-6820 for more information.

**Bible Study,** offered Wednesdays, 7:30 to 8:30 PM at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6100 Paseo Santa Cruz, Pleasanton. Refreshments served at no cost. 925-305-9468.

**Trinity,** 557 Olivina Ave., Livermore. Services on Sunday at 8:30, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. with Sunday school or Bible study for all ages at 9:45 a.m. Bible study for adults and activities for all ages on Wednesdays at 6:45 p.m. 447-1848.

**Granada Baptist Church,** 945 Concanon Blvd., Livermore. Services: Sunday school 9:45 a.m., worship 11 a.m., Tuesday Bible study, 10 a.m. to noon. All are welcome. 1-888-805-7151.

**Tri-Valley Unity Church,** 2260 Camino Ramon, San Ramon. Class for children, ages 1-10, during church service, 10 to 11:15 a.m. Ongoing adult classes and small groups. All are welcome. (925) 829-2733. www.trivalleyunity.com

**Community Bible Study Class,** book of Luke will be the topic of study in Pleasanton at Valley Bible Church. CBS is a non-denominational Bible study ministry open to all women, with a special children's program for ages 0-5 years old. The class meets on Thursdays from 9:30-11:30AM beginning 9/9/10 and goes until 5/12/11. More information about the CBS program and registration available by contacting Sharon at 925-399-5072, or email bobsharonmerrill@gmail.com.

**Granada Baptist Church,** 945 Concanon Boulevard, Livermore. Services: Sunday school - 9:45 a.m.; worship service - 11 a.m. All are welcome. 1-888-805-7151.

**Seventh-day Adventist Church,** 243 Scott Street, Livermore. 925-447-5462, services on Saturday: Sabbath school 9:30 a.m., worship 11 a.m. www.livermoresda.org/ All are welcome.

**Stepping Stones on Grief Journey,** Grief Ministry bi-monthly sessions, Catholic Community of Pleasanton. Dec. 23, Jan 13, 27, Feb., 10, 11 and Mar. 10, 24, 7:30 p.m. St. Elizabeth Seton, 4001 Stoneridge Dr., Pleasanton. No pre-registration required. Open to all regardless of religious affiliation. Please call Mary Hagerty, 846-5377, for more information.

**The deaf community** is invited to worship at First Presbyterian Church in Livermore, where ASL translation will be provided every Sunday at 10:30 A.M. and on Christmas Eve at 9:00. The church is located on the corner of 4th and L streets.

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**Jacque Pedraza**  
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