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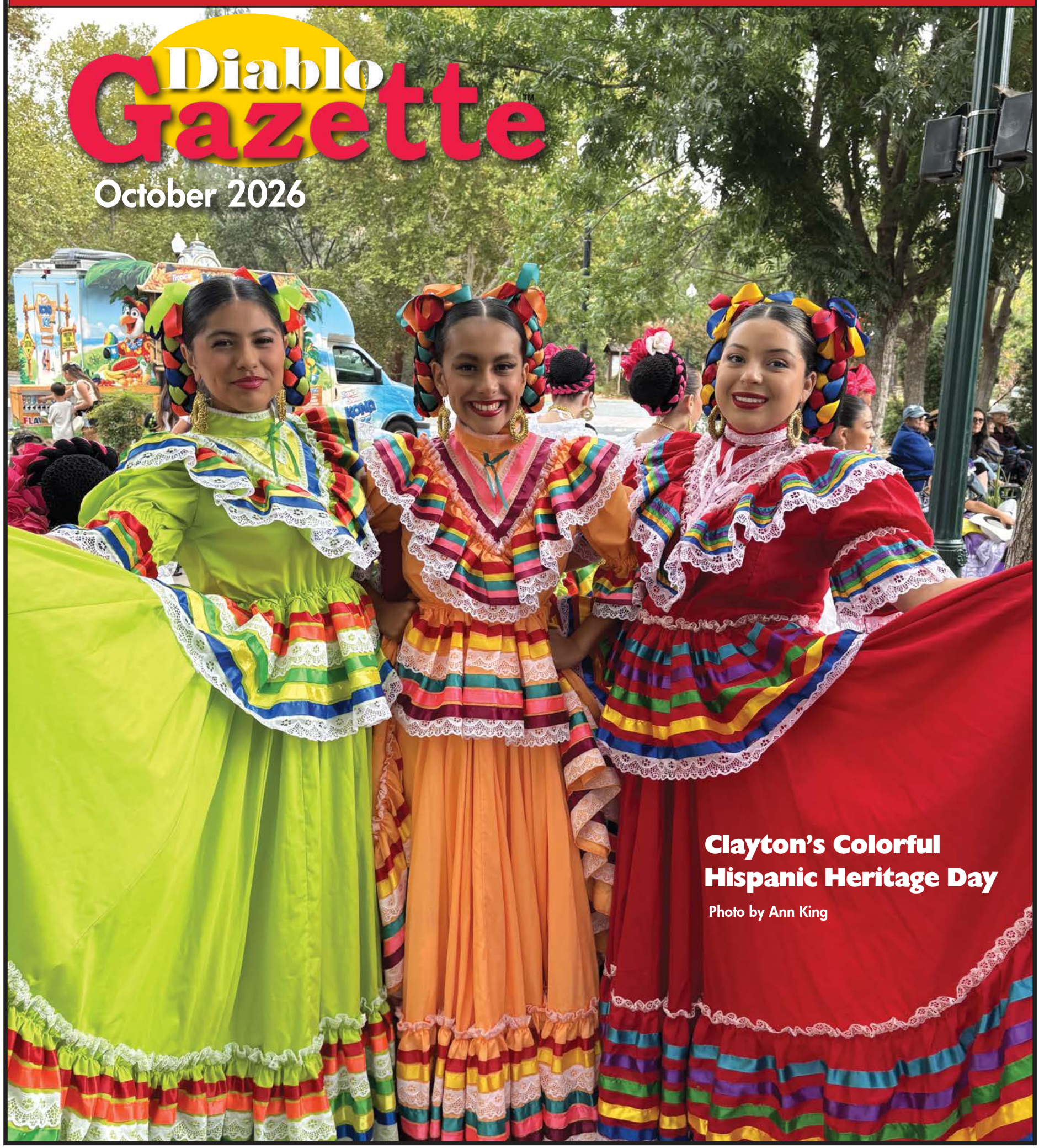
Diablo Gazette™

October 2026



Clayton's Colorful Hispanic Heritage Day

Photo by Ann King

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COUNTRY WAFFLES
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SAVE 15%
Cannot be combined with menu specials or senior menu. Expires October 31, 2026

$9.99 WEEKDAY 6 AM to 3 P every day
BREAKFAST SPECIAL

Two Ranch Eggs Served with your Choice of:
Fresh Fruit & Toast or Biscuits • Hash Brown & Toast or Biscuits
• Country Potatoes & Toast or Biscuits • 1/2 Waffle • 2 Flap Jacks
• 2 Biscuits & Gravy • 2 Slices of French Toast

**Add $2.50 for 2 Strips of Bacon or 2 links of Sausage or 1/2 slice of Ham. Starting at $9.99! Mon. - Fri. until 11:30am! (except holidays)*

$11.99 OCTOBER SPECIAL
All day every day

Two Eggs Served with your Choice

1/2 Waffle or 2 flapjacks & 2 strips of bacon or 2 sausage links or 1/2 slice of ham

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Clayton
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(925) 673-0943

Dublin
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(925) 833-9077

Livermore
1803 Holmes Ave.
(925) 443-9904

COUNTRYWAFFLESEASTBAY.COM

Publisher's Notes

by David King

A Few Moments for Recognition

This edition may be a record achievement for Diablo Gazette with its 32 pages of news, features, event listings, and ads. And there's more that did not make the print. Thanks to all the readers who submit ideas, tips, stories, photos, all which assist in creating this publication each month.

This edition is the last installment of Nell Fleihman's journal of living under Nazi occupation of the Netherlands during World War II. It was an experiment if such a series could hold readers' interest over such a long period of time within a monthly schedule. Please send me a note on your thoughts of this journal if you stayed with it.

As a total coincidence, it so happens that just as Diablo Gazette completed the journal series, Nell's birthday is coming up October 5. She will be turning 104! Happy Birthday! That's an achievement!

I received several positive responses to last month's Op-ed "SFGate Got it Wrong" including this email from a subscriber/fan (milestone) from Hercules.:

"One of your paper's fans again. Loved your editorial, 'SFGATE is wrong; Clayton is better than Most!' The paper is keeping good journalism alive. Much appreciated. It's really such a great little paper! Thank you once again, Pat."

I must admit, compared to previous elections, Clayton's four candidates for City Council this election have campaigned with great decorum.

On completely different note, I attended the Walnut Creek Aquanuts' fall performance, "Viva Las Vegas" on September 5. What an exceptional group of athletes and coaches. They are simply spectacular and, quite literally, in a class of their own, with some of the world's finest artistic swimmers coming through the program. Talking about achievemnen!

In a comedic finale, the swimmers' fathers (the Aquapops) gave a performance that really demonstrates how difficult that sport is. Well done Aquanuts.

Chef Battle Turns a Family Tradition Into a Little Competition

by Habib Jacifi and David King

At Luna Restaurant in downtown Concord, the October 14 chef cook-off, Chef Battle III, is more than a contest. It brings Habib Jacifi into the kitchen opposite his uncle, Chef Abdel Redouane, the man who opened Luna in 2000 and helped shape Habib's path in the restaurant business. Habib once worked under his uncle; now the two will cook head-to-head for guests.

"I learned so much working under my uncle," Habib says. "He taught me to take pride in what we serve and to make people feel welcome. Cooking against him will be fun, but it also gives me a chance to honor what he built." Habib took over Luna in 2018, carrying forward the restaurant's warm atmosphere and its place in the Concord community.

For Abdel, the cook-off is a chance to see that family tradition come full circle.

"It makes me proud to see Habib bring his own ideas and energy to Luna," he says. "Of course, I'm still planning to win." Whatever happens in the kitchen, the evening promises what has kept Luna going for more than 25 years: family around the table, good food, and a reason to come together.

For Chef Battle III, both seatings for the evening are sold out. But you can bet there will be a Chef Battle IV in our future. And on that note, Habib invites any chef out there that would like to engage in the popular series to challenge Habib in this culinary battle. Contact the restaurant.

In the meantime, Scan the QR code below to Spin the wheel and Win one of several prizes and discounts. No purchase is necessary to play.

Explore more dining events at Luna and Fiore in Concord. See their ad on page 6.

The U.S. Navy Approves Financial Agreement for the Base Reuse Project at the Former Concord Naval Weapons Station

On September 24, the City of Concord announced that the U.S. Navy has approved the Term Sheet for the Concord Community Reuse Project at the former Concord Naval Weapons Station.

The Term Sheet is the financial agreement between the City and the U.S. Navy regarding the price and payment terms for approximately 2,422 acres of property at the former Concord Naval Weapons Station to facilitate the property's redevelopment as part of the Base Reuse Project.

The project's master developer, Brookfield, supports the Term Sheet.

"I am proud the Base Reuse Project has reached this important milestone. The U.S. Navy as proven to be a tremendous partner in moving the community's vision forward. This approval moves the Project into an important next phase, and our dedicated staff will continue working diligently to advance the Specific Plan," said Director of Economic Development and Base Reuse, Guy Bjerke, who is retiring on September 30, 2026, after 11 years serving in his current role.

The next phase of the project includes preparing and considering the Specific Plan and additional entitlement documents required to guide future development.

The Specific Plan will bring the adopted Area Plan to life by designing the layout, uses, and features of development, implementing the Area Plan's standards and policies.

Brookfield will be leading the development of the Specific Plan. Both the City and Brookfield are hiring consultants to support this work, which will start this winter, with additional community engagement expected to start in early 2027.

To learn more about the Concord Community Reuse Project and follow its progress, visit the project website at www.concordreuseproject.org.

At the Sept. 22 Concord City Council meeting, ty Councilmembers honors Guy Bjerke, who is retiring September 30 after serving 11 years as Director of Economic Development and Base Reuse.

Laura Nakamura
Concord Mayor
cityofconcord.org

Ten Years, 14 Courts and a Community Built Around Pickleball

Ten years ago, Concord made an astute, forward-thinking investment in the future of recreation by embracing pickleball, a sport that was then just beginning to gain national attention. The decision was rooted in our mission of joining with our community to make Concord a city of the highest quality, and it has proven to be one of our most meaningful community investments. That investment helped position Willow Pass Park at the forefront of public pickleball in the Bay Area.

Today, its 14 courts have become a vibrant gathering place for hundreds of players each week and a cornerstone of Concord's recreation community. Over the years, it has even been included in the Concord Community Academy, where I first learned about dinking and came to appreciate the fun and community that pickleball brings to life.

The demand for pickleball has remained strong in Concord. The courts are often full from early morning until the lights turn off at 10:00 p.m. What began as a promising recreation idea has grown into one of our city's most active and energetic community spaces.

Concord's pickleball has been driven by its community since the beginning. Recreation Services brought together a dedicated group of pickleball players and enthusiasts to help shape the program. Many of those original members still continue to play on the courts each week.

Pickleball players celebrate the 10-year anniversary of pickleball courts at Willow Pass Park.

When the courts were built, Concord was an early leader in public pickleball in the Bay Area. The 14-court facility was one of the first and largest public pickleball facilities in the region at the time. Ten years later, Concord remains one of the region's largest public facilities.

The facility also provides flexibility for major events, temporarily converting four adjacent tennis courts into pickleball courts, bringing the total to 20 for tournaments and special events. Today, Concord offers tournaments, leagues, lessons, clinics, court reservations, drop-in play, and four in-house pickleball professionals.

On September 19, 2026, the City celebrated the courts' 10-year anniversary with a day filled with pickleball fun. Hundreds of players enjoyed a free "King of the Hill" tournament play, "Beat the Pro," free clinics, raffles, and other activities at Willow Pass Park.

After 10 years of use, the pickleball courts were recently resurfaced, helping ensure the facility can continue serving the community for years to come and support the next decade of pickleball in Concord.

Willow Pass Park has not only become a place to play. It is also where long-time players reconnect, new players learn the sport and a community that bonds together around a common activity. It's a living example of when City of Concord joins with our community to build spaces, programs, and experiences, it makes our city a place of the highest quality.

Players who participate in the Pickleball10-year anniversary events received a commemorative wooden pin.

Clayton's Village Market Has a New Look, Blue.

Did you notice? The Litte Blue Store in Clayton is back, back to being blue.

For over half a century, the building housing the Village Market has stood as a welcoming, long-term building and landmark.

The market's legacy began with Don and Carmen Williams, who opened the doors in 1972. It was during their era that the storefront received its famous coat of bright blue paint, instantly cementing its place in local lore as a cherished landmark that generations of residents admired.

In 1991, the Sandhu family took over the mantle. Under Sam Sandhu's leadership, the Village Market continued to flourish.

Recently, it underwent meticulous repairs to preserve the storefront for future generations. Repairs were completed, the exterior was cleaned up, and the building received a vibrant new coat of blue paint, proudly restoring the look behind its endearing nickname.

The Little Blue Store is Back, stop by and say "Hi"

More Delicious Dining Events Coming to Concord's Luna and Fiore Restaurants!

Volunteers Rush to Save Winter Nights Family Shelter

by David Scholz

For more than two decades, Winter Nights Family Shelter has been there when local families had nowhere else to go. Now, suddenly, the shelter itself is the one in need of rescue.

After 22 years of providing homeless families with a safe place to sleep, meals, case management and a path toward stable housing, the Winter Nights board voted in September to cease operations. The announcement stunned longtime volunteers and faith communities that had already been preparing for another shelter season.

But almost immediately, those supporters began fighting to keep the mission alive.

"This is where our heart is, and we can't see it slip through our fingers," said longtime supporter Ann Lawrence.

A core group of volunteers and faith leaders is now scrambling to resurrect the shelter program, possibly through a new nonprofit or under the umbrella of an existing organization.

Among those leading the effort is Judy Stillman, who has been involved with Winter Nights for 21 years and served seven years as its executive director during its early years.

The volunteers mobilized after a Sept. 11 Zoom listening session with the Winter Nights board, where supporters learned more about the organization's financial troubles and the decision to shut down.

"This is not something we wanted to do," board member Emily Hanson said. Hanson explained that Winter Nights had been "running on a shoestring" while its annual budget had grown to approximately $1 million. Monthly expenses were running about $85,000, and a continuing funding gap convinced the board that the organization could no longer operate responsibly.

The board said the problems were deeper than a temporary shortage of donations.In a written statement, it said Winter Nights faced "long-term, interconnected challenges" that could not be solved through an emergency fundraising campaign or a single infusion of money.

"After a careful review, the Board concluded that Winter Nights no longer has the combination of reliable revenue, organizational infrastructure, governance capacity, staffing capacity and administrative support necessary to operate independently in a responsible and sustainable manner," the statement said.

The board stressed that the closure was not caused by "any one person, employee, decision or incident."

For volunteers and congregations, however, the decision was difficult to absorb.

St. Anselm's Episcopal Church in Lafayette was just days away from preparing to host families for another season when the announcement arrived.

"I was devastated to hear this news," said the Rev. Will Scott, who had preached to his congregation about Winter Nights only days earlier without knowing the closure was coming.

Stillman was equally surprised and questioned why congregations and longtime stakeholders were not brought into the discussion earlier.

"It's unfair to the congregations and certainly not the way of collaboration," she said. She has pledged $10,000 toward keeping the shelter effort alive.

The volunteer group has since held meetings and contacted other nonprofits in hopes of finding an organization willing to temporarily provide its tax-exempt umbrella while supporters seek a new path forward.

"We are still in the process, and no one has turned us down, but no one has said they would help us," Stillman said.

Winter Nights began in 2004 as a grassroots effort through the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County. Gwen Watson, a JustFaith Ministries graduate at Christ the King Parish in Pleasant Hill, helped spearhead the effort with members of other faith communities. It eventually grew into Winter Nights Family Shelter, Inc., an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Over the years, congregations, volunteers, donors and staff sheltered more than 1,263 people, including more than 758 children, in parish halls, church community centers and other facilities throughout central Contra Costa County.

The organization also expanded beyond overnight shelter to include safe parking, case management, housing assistance and the Oasis Day Center. As those services grew, so did the cost and complexity of operating them.

While family shelter operations stopped, the Safe Parking Program and Oasis Day Center continued through Sept. 30 as Winter Nights worked through an orderly shutdown and transition for current clients.

The board is also seeking a mission-aligned nonprofit that could potentially receive Winter Nights' remaining assets and perhaps continue some of its programs. Any transfer must go through the required nonprofit dissolution process with the California Attorney General's office.

"Hopefully we can find someone who has the infrastructure and backbone to carry on the program," Hanson said.

Father Paulson Mundanmani of Christ the King Parish said, "Although the umbrella organization may cease to exist, the commitment, compassion and desire to serve among our faith communities remain strong. Together, we hope to identify a responsible and sustainable path forward that preserves the heart and mission of Winter Nights."

Concord Needs Experienced Leadership

☑ Proven Leadership Dedicated to Concord

I am honored that I have been able to represent and serve you as your Mayor and Councilmember, and want to continue with the hard work that I have been doing.

Re-Elect Laura Hoffmeister
CONCORD CITY COUNCIL District 1

- Established balanced budget; expanded homeless outreach and mental health teams
- Supported new crime prevention efforts to keep neighborhoods safe; and new 120 million street repair program
- Created economic development strategies to attract and retain businesses and jobs, and new housing downtown near BART

But more needs to be done. My experienced leadership will work to enhance public safety, increase neighborhood patrols; more city street maintenance and pothole repair, improve neighborhood preservation; comprehensive solutions to homelessness; enhance senior and youth programs; improve our older commercial areas, affordable housing, and improve traffic, pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Laura Hoffmeister

Paid for by Laura Hoffmeister for Concord City Council 2026 ID #971181

www.facebook.com/councilmemberhoffmeister

Use Chamber Directory for Shopping Local

by Kevin Cabral , President/ CEO Concord Chamber of Commerce

I don't know about you, but I was getting tired of complaining about my street and the surrounding streets needing repair, and then, boom! Here came the paving crews.

What an excellent job they did. My street and many of the surrounding streets are now smooth, and the entire neighborhood looks great. Thank you, City of Concord.

That got me thinking about a few things. One is the number of Amazon, FedEx and the occasional UPS trucks that roll down my street every day.

Think about it. Not that long ago, you saw the mail truck once a day, the garbage truck once a week, and maybe the occasional UPS or FedEx delivery. And for those of us who have been around Concord for a while, you might even remember seeing the Crystal Milk ice cream truck making a stop at some lucky neighbor's house.

Now, delivery trucks seem to be everywhere.

I express to anyone who will listen to me, and occasionally people in my own household, the benefits of not using delivery-to-your-door services unless you really need them. More delivery trucks mean more wear and tear on our newly paved streets, additional traffic, trucks sometimes travel a little faster than they should, and, of course, that annoying backup beep.

For the record, none of this is based on extensive research, traffic studies or even something I threw into ChatGPT. It is simply an observation from a guy who lives in Concord and pays attention to what is happening on his street.

Anyhow, that brings me to the Chamber and the businesses we serve.

I understand that it isn't always convenient or easy to go to the local pharmacy, grocery store, record store, hardware store or other local retailer. Sometimes clicking a button and having something show up at your front door is just easier. I totally get it.

But there is still something to be said for walking into a local business.

I love a good hardware store. ACE, Lowe's, Home Depot, Ashby Lumber, Golden State Lumber, take your pick. I enjoy walking around even if I am only there to buy a box of screws and somehow end up leaving with a killer frozen pie.

Shoes are another good example. I like heading over to Sun valley Shopping Center and stopping at the Vans store. There always seems to be a sale on something cool, but more importantly, I can actually try on different styles and decide what works for me. Then I can head over to the Asian Fusion Buffet for lunch which is always good and clean.

I don't have an aquarium or fish tank anymore, but if I am in the area, I still enjoy stopping by Concord Aquarium just to browse and see what's new. Then I might wander a couple of doors down and get a Zombie at Rob Zombies.

Concord has some cool little retail gems. Rockin' Robbie's is always fun. Esse is right across the street. Just Trains has an amazing collection of unique train-related items. Flying Colors Comics has been around for many years, and there is always something interesting to see. Big 5 Sporting Goods is another longtime stop, along with many other local businesses throughout Concord that are worth walking into and exploring.

That is really the point.

Shopping local doesn't mean you have to give up the convenience of online shopping altogether. It just means that every once in a while, before clicking "Buy Now," take a minute and ask yourself: Can I get this from a business here in Concord?

You might be surprised at what you find.

And when you are looking for a local business, I encourage you to visit the Concord Chamber of Commerce's online Business Directory. It is a great place to start, and every purchase you make locally helps support businesses, jobs and the overall vitality of our community.

Once again, this November, the Concord Chamber will also be working with the City of Concord on the Shop Concord program through Yiftee. It is a great way to shop at and support participating local businesses. Keep an eye on the City of Concord and Concord Chamber websites for more information, including details about this year's BOGO promotion.

So, this holiday season, and throughout the year, give local a shot.

You may find exactly what you need, discover a business you didn't know was here, have a conversation with someone in your community and, just maybe, keep one more delivery truck off my newly paved street.

To learn more about the businesses, organizations, programs, and people helping make Concord such a vibrant place to live, work, and grow, visit the Concord Chamber of Commerce at www.concordchamber.com.

In Case You Missed It...

Local news items from Claycord.com and other sources

California Declares State Of Emergency As Powerful El Niño Threatens Stormy Winter

California is preparing for what could be one of the strongest El Niño events on record, with state officials warning residents to be ready for a potentially stormy fall and winter.

Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a statewide state of emergency on Sept. 21, allowing California to mobilize resources and speed up preparations ahead of possible heavy rain, flooding, landslides, debris flows, strong winds, mountain snow and coastal flooding. The declaration allows state agencies to stage flood-fighting supplies, prepare vulnerable roads and infrastructure, position emergency equipment and coordinate with local governments before major storms arrive.

Caltrans is being directed to prepare road-closure, traffic-control and snow-removal equipment in areas considered most vulnerable, while the California National Guard is being prepared to assist with flooding, search-and-rescue operations, engineering and logistics if needed. State agencies are also working to reduce delays for flood-control and emergency projects.

The emergency declaration comes as El Niño continues to strengthen in the Pacific Ocean. NOAA's Climate Prediction Center says there is a greater than 90% chance the current El Niño will become a very strong event during the fall and winter of 2026-27. Forecasters also currently put the chance of it reaching historic strength during October through December at 75%.

A strong El Niño does not guarantee that California, or the Bay Area, will experience an exceptionally wet winter. However, stronger El Niño events can increase the likelihood of weather patterns associated with heavy precipitation and powerful Pacific storms. The exact location, timing and severity of individual storms cannot be predicted months in advance.

For the Bay Area, officials are particularly concerned about the possibility of repeated heavy rain, flooding, large waves, coastal erosion and landslides if powerful storms develop this winter.

State officials are urging Californians to prepare before the rainy season intensifies by clearing gutters and storm drains, knowing whether their homes or workplaces are in flood-prone areas, signing up for local emergency alerts and having evacuation and emergency plans ready.

While it remains too early to know exactly what kind of winter Northern California will see, state officials aren't waiting for the first major storm to arrive. California's emergency declaration is designed to put resources, equipment and personnel in place now in case the potentially historic El Niño delivers a damaging winter.

16-Year-Old Pedestrian Bridge Over Treat Boulevard Set For Major Rehabilitation

Contra Costa County Public Works will begin rehabilitation work on the Robert I. Schroder Pedestrian Bridge over Treat Boulevard, near Jones Road, on Monday, Oct. 5. Work is expected to continue through Dec. 31. Construction will generally take place from 9:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. Sunday through Thursday.

Drivers should expect occasional lane closures and delays of up to 10 minutes. The bridge will remain closed throughout the project, requiring Iron Horse Trail pedestrians and bicyclists to use the existing street crossing at Treat Boulevard for approximately three to four months.

Work includes replacing bridge bearing pads, paint repairs, bridge deck treatment, and sidewalk and curb replacement.

Approximately four overnight closures of Treat Boulevard are also planned, with traffic being directed onto an approximately five-mile detour. Dates for those closures will be announced by Contra Costa County.

Run for City Council as a Write-In Candidate

Pleasant Hill, Calif - Registered voters in Pleasant Hill Districts 3 and 4 can file to run for City Council as a write-in candidate through October 20, 2026.

Here's what to do:

File a Statement of Write-in Candidacy with the City Clerk to declare your candidacy.

Pick up and submit a Nomination Form from the City Clerk. This is required to qualify.

Keep in mind: write-in candidates won't appear on the election ballot. Voters have to write in your name for it to count and only votes for qualified write-in candidates are counted by the County.

Not sure which district you're in? Use the My District Look-up tool to check.

Sky Zone Trampoline Park Under Construction On Ygnacio Valley Road

Sky Zone Trampoline Park is moving into the Orchards Shopping Center at 2800 Ygnacio Valley Road in Walnut Creek (the old SteinMart building next to Petco). Sky Zone will operate seven days a week with timed entry, on-site safety staff, and programs for different age groups. Sky Zone currently has dozens of locations throughout the United States. Construction is just beginning.

RE-ELECT
KIM TRUPIANO
for CLAYTON CITY COUNCIL 2026
Leadership With Results

Experience Matters:
✔ Years of Fiscal Responsibility
✔ Ongoing Support for Clayton Police Dept.
✔ Years of Successful City Sponsored Events
✔ Leadership With Results

Endorsed by: Senator Tim Grayson, Mayor Jeff Wan, Vice Mayor Rich Enea, John Mercurio, Director, EBRPD, Ernie Avila, Board President, CCWD, Frank Gavidia, Chair, Financial Sustainability Committee and hundreds of local residents of Clayton!

To learn more about Kim Trupiano and her campaign, visit her at www.KimforClayton.com or follow her on Facebook@KimforClayton.

RE-ELECT KIM TRUPIANO FOR CLAYTON CITY COUNCIL
Leadership With Results
www.KimForClayton.com

Paid for by the Committee to Re-Elect Kim Trupiano to Clayton City Council 2026 • FPPC ID #1454147

5244 S. Montecito Drive Concord
5 Bed | 3 Bath
2,923± Sq. Ft. | 0.28± AC
Sold for $1,437,000

1795 Klier Drive Concord
5 Bed | 2.5 Bath
2,210± Sq. Ft.
Sold for $1,200,000

512 Churchill Downs Ct Walnut Creek
3 Bed | 2.5 Bath
1,357± Sq. Ft.
Sold for $745,000

Local Expertise. Real Results.

All three of these beautiful homes have been sold! With a tailored marketing plan and hands-on guidance, Lilli continues to help her clients achieve their goals.

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COMPASS

Jeff Wan
Mayor, Clayton
jeff.wan@claytonca.gov

Reducing Risk Near Mt. Diablo Elementary

At our September 1 City Council meeting, we discussed traffic safety on Mitchell Canyon Road near Mt. Diablo Elementary, including the interaction between school traffic and large commercial vehicles using the roadway during the morning drop-off period.

Traffic safety on Mitchell Canyon Road near Mt. Diablo Elementary has been an issue I have been interested in for several years. The challenge is not identifying possible improvements. It is determining which options are actually within the City's control and can realistically be implemented.

I have personally witnessed several near misses between vehicles and pedestrians along this corridor. During busy school drop-off periods, congestion can reduce visibility and make it more difficult for drivers and pedestrians to see one another. Beyond those near misses, there have also been multiple vehicle-pedestrian collisions along this area over the years.

While no single action can eliminate every risk, this is an area where the City can take practical steps to reduce the likelihood of another incident and enhance public safety.

More recently, the City has

considered a variety of ways to improve safety along this corridor, including sidewalks, roadway widening, lower speed limits, additional or improved crosswalks, and restrictions on commercial vehicle traffic.

A sidewalk improvement along a portion of the roadway is already moving forward. Some of the larger solutions, however, require cooperation from outside agencies or property owners, significant funding, or both, which can make otherwise reasonable improvements difficult to implement.

One area where the City has more direct authority is the operating hours for large commercial vehicles. Clayton's current municipal code restricts commercial motor vehicles exceeding five tons from operating outside the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Because those hours are established by City ordinance, the Council can consider changing them. At my request, the Council discussed whether adjusting those hours could reduce the overlap between large commercial vehicles and morning school traffic, when vehicle and pedestrian activity is at its highest.

The Council agreed that the issue deserves further study and formed an ad hoc committee. Councilmember Tillman and Vice Mayor Enea volunteered to serve and will examine the available options.

No single change will eliminate the risks that come with concentrating cars, trucks, buses, bicyclists, and pedestrians in the same area during a busy school drop-off period, but restricting large commercial vehicle traffic during that window is one practical option that could reduce that risk.

I hope the current discussion leads to meaningful action and that future Councils continue pursuing improvements along this corridor. This is something the City has the authority to address, and taking reasonable steps now can reduce the risk of an incident while improving safety and quality of life for residents who use Mitchell Canyon Road every day.

CBCA Clayton Oktoberfest

Saturday, October 3, 2026 11:00a,m, – 8:00 p,m.

Sunday, October 4, 2026 11:00am – 6:00pm

Located on Main Street in downtown Clayton.

Other Times

Opening Ceremony & Keg Tap – Saturday 12:00 p.m.

The Internationals – Biergarten Stage – Saturday & Sunday

Bavarian Dancers – Saturday – Biergarten

Grand Isle Fire Brigade Street Band – The Corral Stage – Saturday & Sunday 11am – 2pm

Polkageist West – the Corral Stage – Sunday 2:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Free Parking

Clayton Community Library – 6125 Clayton Rd.

Diablo View Middle School – 300 Diablo View Ln (Shuttle)

Disabled Parking Only: Endeavor Hall, 6008 Center St.

Free Shuttle Service

Saturday 11:00am – 8:30pm

Sunday 11:30am – 6:30pm

Drink Tickets

You must purchase drink ticket(s) at one of our conveniently located ticket booths throughout the festival footprint in order to be served.

TICKETS ARE ONLY SOLD AT THE EVENT. Admission to this event is free; drink tickets are sold on site at the event only. You must purchase this year's drink tickets to be served. If you are asked to purchase tickets or send money/Venmo to someone, please report it as fraud.

Pouring concludes at 7:30 PM on Saturday and 5:30 PM on Sunday. Located on Main Street in downtown Clayton.

BHR
BETTER HOMES REALTY

Consider it SOLD!

5849 Mitchell Canyon Ct. Clayton

718 Anizumne Ct. Clayton

110 Forest Hill Dr, Clayton

1111 Crest Ridge Ln, Concord

1780 Sargent Rd, Concord

1740 Curry Canyon Rd, Clayton

2262 Foxhill Dr. Martinez

139 Mt. Everest Ct, Clayton

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www.jenniferstojanovich.com

CLAYTON MARKET UPDATE

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
55 La Honda Ct	$1,148,000	2390	4/2.5	8/12/2026
5027 Keller Ridge Dr	$801,765	1343	3/2	8/17/2026
30 Mt Emory Ct	$997,000	2080	3/2	8/27/2026
8 Mirango Ct	$995,000	2420	4/2.5	8/31/2026
139 Mt Everest Ct	$1,430,000	2960	5/3	9/4/2026
978 Kenston Dr	$1,100,000	1571	3/2	9/10/2026
921 Arrowhead Ter	$818,000	1939	3/2.5	9/14/2026

CONCORD MARKET UPDATE

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
3998 Salem St	$1,200,000	1811	4/2	8/19/2026
1505 Kirker Pass Rd #101	$280,000	634	1/1	8/24/2026
3025 Justin Way	$710,000	1172	4/2	8/28/2026
1361 La Vista Ave	$835,000	2076	4/2.5	8/31/2026
1895 Renee Way	$1,400,000	2836	4/3	9/1/2026
1829 Elkwood Dr	$995,000	1806	4/2	9/3/2026
1224 Davis Ave	$1,150,000	2065	3/3	9/4/2026

Based on information from CCAR/Paragon MLS* as of 9/16/26. All data, including all measurements and calculations of area, is obtained from various sources and has not been, and will not be, verified by broker or MLS. All information should be independently reviewed and verified for accuracy. Properties may or may not be listed by the office/agent presenting the information.

Jennifer Stojanovich
Broker/Owner, Better Homes Realty

Waiting for Lower Rates? You May Be Missing an Opportunity

One of the most common things I hear from buyers right now is, "I think I'm going to wait until interest rates come down."

That is understandable; monthly payments matter. However, waiting for the "perfect" interest rate can sometimes mean missing an opportunity that exists in the market today.

There is a common misconception about the Federal Reserve and mortgage rates. When we hear that the Fed raised rates, it's easy to assume mortgage rates automatically go up, too. They don't.

The Federal Reserve controls the federal funds rate, not mortgage rates. Mortgage rates are influenced by the broader financial markets, inflation, economic reports, investor sentiment and even geopolitical events. In many cases, the markets have already anticipated a Fed decision before it is announced.

Trying to time your home purchase around the next Fed meeting, or waiting for the perfect mortgage rate, is nearly impossible.

What is more interesting is what higher rates have done to the housing market. Many buyers have put their searches on hold giving buyers still in the market something they haven't had much of in recent years: negotiating power.

When rates were historically low, buyers were often competing against multiple offers, paying over asking price and sometimes giving up important contingencies. Asking a seller to contribute toward closing costs was difficult.

Today, buyers may be able to negotiate the price, keep important contingencies, request repairs and even ask the seller to contribute toward closing costs or an interest-rate buydown.

Interest rate Buydowns

A 2-1 temporary buydown reduces the buyer's effective rate by two percentage points during the first year and one point during the second year before returning to the full note rate in year three.

A 3-2-1 buydown provides a similar step-down over the first three years. Seller credits may sometimes be used to fund these programs, depending on the loan.

Another option is using seller credit toward a permanent rate buydown, where discount points are used to obtain a lower interest rate for the life of the loan.

An experienced lender can help determine which option makes the most sense for a particular buyer.

The Other Side of Waiting

If mortgage rates come down significantly, many buyers sitting on the sidelines may jump back into the market. That may mean more competition, multiple offers and less negotiating power. Or rates may go even higher. No one knows exactly where rates will be six months or a year from now.

For renters, buying a home they can comfortably afford now provides an opportunity to begin building equity. Your first home can be the first step toward the home you ultimately want.

Sometimes, the best opportunity isn't when the interest rate is lowest. If you are financially ready and your only reason for sitting on the sidelines is waiting for the "perfect" interest rate, it may be worth taking another look.

Buyers Should Ask Themselves

"Can I comfortably afford the payment today? Is this a home I would be happy owning for several years? Can I negotiate terms that make sense for me?"

Remember, you can refinance an interest rate when the opportunity presents itself later. But you can't go back and renegotiate the price and terms of the home you didn't buy.

On the Campaign Trail

BBQ, Band, and Bodies, launched incumbent Kim Trupiano's campaign, and also served as a soft opening for Clayton Club's new owners.

Amy Callaghan Meet 'n Greet at Sip 'n Sweet offers some face to face time.

Charlie Schmidt volunteers for Oktoberfest and has Meet and Greets set up in October at Sip 'n Sweet and Roadside 22.

Maria Shulman targets Social media and power groups, and community service functions.

PAID POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENT

Brian Lawrence
MDUSD Board of Education, Area 4

Putting Kids First

"I've coached, been in the classroom, and volunteered across this district long before I ever sat on the Board.

My understanding of MDUSD isn't theoretical — it's real world experience, built over more than a decade as both a parent and a trustee. MDUSD has real challenges. But the answer isn't to tear down what's working or turn back the clock — it's to keep building forward, to deliver real results for better learning for our kids." Brian

Brian Lawrence's Priorities:

- Advance learning programs that build strong fundamental skills in reading, math, and science
- Increase college and career readiness and prepare students to succeed in a rapidly changing future
- Promote fiscal accountability and responsibility, to ensure effective use of public funds and equitable access to resources
- Expand parent engagement
- Retain and attract talented teachers, principals, and staff

www.btlawrence.com

Paid for by Brian Lawrence for MDUSD Board of Education. ID# pending.

CVCHS News

Bill Morones, *Executive Director*
Clayton Valley Charter High School

Prospective Family Preview Night Welcomes New Students and the Class of 2031

For many families, choosing a high school can feel like a big step. On Sept. 16, Clayton Valley Charter High School opened its doors to prospective students and parents for an evening designed to make that decision a little easier.

The school's New Student and Parent Preview Night gave future students, including members of the Class of 2031, a chance to meet teachers, administrators and current students while getting a closer look at academics, activities and campus life.

Rather than simply touring classrooms, families were introduced to the broader high school experience, from college and career preparation to athletics, performing arts, clubs and student leadership.

School officials outlined Clayton Valley Charter's academic programs, including nine academic departments, five academic academies and Career Technical Education and Regional Occupational Program pathways. Families also heard about Advanced Placement courses and the school's Advanced Capstone Diploma.

A central part of the presentation focused on the school's "Profile of an Eagle," a framework aimed at preparing students for life after graduation. The program emphasizes skills such as communication, quantitative reasoning, digital citizenship and college-level readiness, while recognizing that students may choose very different paths after high school, including college, trade school, employment or military service.

Beginning in ninth grade, students develop an "Eagle Portfolio," which tracks their academic work, accomplishments and personal growth. By graduation, the portfolio is developed into a professional website students can use when applying for colleges, internships, jobs or other opportunities.

Parents received information about the support systems available to students, including services for multilingual learners and students in special education, as well as academic intervention, mentoring and team-based student support.

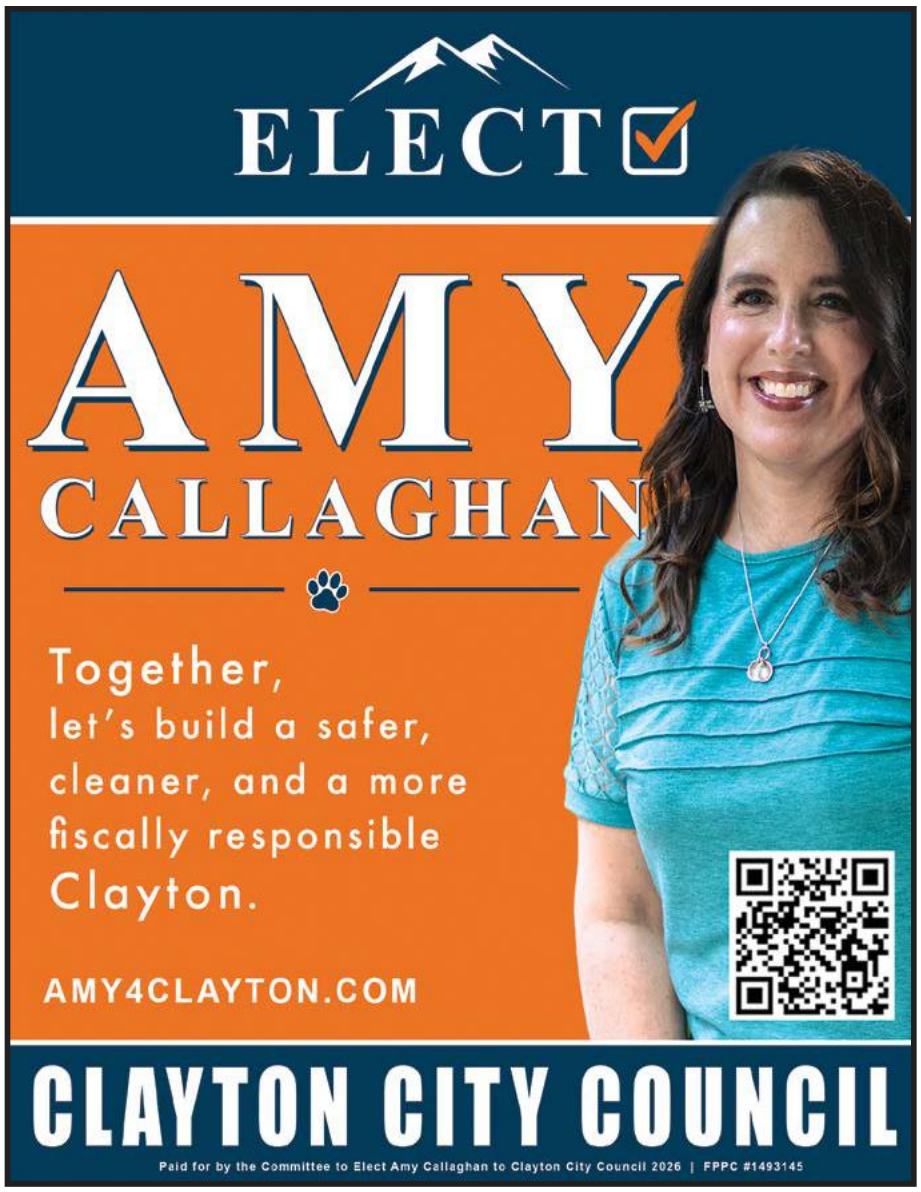
Campus safety was another topic of interest. School leaders explained the school's discipline and safety structure, which includes a discipline director, three deans of students, eight campus supervisors and partnerships with local law enforcement.

But for many of the prospective students, the highlight may have been seeing what happens beyond the classroom. Representatives from clubs, leadership programs, performing arts and athletics were on hand to answer questions and give incoming students a sense of the many ways they can become involved on campus.

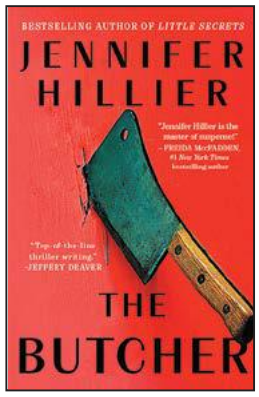
The evening concluded with information about enrollment and upcoming deadlines, giving families a clearer idea of what comes next.

Prospective families can learn more about enrollment by contacting admissions@claytonvalley.org or visiting ugly.rocks/Admissions.

For students still several years away from graduation, Preview Night offered an early glimpse of what high school life could look like and a chance to begin imagining themselves as the next generation of Eagles.



Jill Hedgecock's **bookends**
Author "Between Shadow's Eyes" and "Silence in the Orchard"
www.jillhedgecock.com



"The Butcher" (Gallery, 2024, trade paperback, 352 pages, $15.37) by Jennifer Hillier is the perfect choice for readers looking for an edge-of-your-seat serial killer thriller to read around Halloween.

The novel centers around the infamous Beacon Hill Butcher who was gunned down by an admired and now retired police chief, Edward Shank, in 1985. The detective was celebrated for the killing which ended the serial murders. But now, as Shank enters the final phase of his life at the Sweetbay Village Retirement Residence, a dark family secret emerges when his grandson, Matt, discovers a crate in the backyard of his grandfather's Victorian home.

Matt has been thriving as a renowned chef and restaurant owner. He even has a TV cooking show in the works. But his focus on his career has strained his three-year relationship with his girlfriend, Sam.

Sam is a true-crime author who has been investigating the Beacon Hill Butcher case. Her obsession with the Butcher hatched over the trauma of her mother's death when Sam was two years old, a murder she believes was committed by the Beacan Hill killer even though the perpetrator was supposedly killed two years prior.

Matt also lost his mother at a young age, a shared experience that initially brought the couple closer together. But as Matt tries to reconcile his feeling about the backyard crate contents, his struggles with anger management resurface, putting his relationship and his future in jeopardy.

Meanwhile, Sam's sleuthing into the similarities between recent killings and the Butcher's mode of operation might just be her undoing.

"The Butcher", originally released in 2014, was republished as a trade paperback in 2024. Fans of Freida McFadden's books and "A Flicker in the Dark," by Stacey Willingham will likely enjoy this novel. Get ready for a spooky Halloween night and dive into the pages of this thriller.

Hillier is the author of six other novels, including "Things We Do in the Dark" which was a "USA Today" bestseller. Her novel, "Little Secrets," was a finalist for the Los Angeles Times Book Prize and the Anthony Award. "Jar of Hearts" won the ITW Thriller Award for Best Hardcover Novel and was nominated for the Anthony and Macavity Awards. Jennifer Hillier was born and raised in Toronto. She spent eight years in the Seattle area, which is the setting for all her books. She currently lives in Oakville, Ontario, Canada, with her family. Follow her at jenniferhillierbooks.com.

SCREEN TIME
by Colleen Gonzalez
colleengonzalez.substack.com

Don't Say Good Luck

Sophie (Sunny Sandler) is a typical high school teenager. She spends most of her time with her best friend, Carolyn (Scarlett Estevez), and practices obsessively for her audition in her school's musical production of "Waitress."

Things are going well for Sophie when she realizes her mother (Melanie Lynskey) is having health issues. Her parents tiptoe around the issue, which enrages Sophie who simply wants her family to be honest about the whole situation. The mother-daughter bond is the best thing in this film, as Sandler and Lynskey share many humorous and heartfelt moments together. Lynskey is believable as she oscillates between sweet and funny to a mother facing a serious illness. The viewer can relate to her wish to protect Sophie from the harsh realities of life for as long as possible.

Sophie finds it challenging to devote herself to the play, crush on her leading man, and be there for her mom. Attempting to navigate this emotional roller coaster would be difficult for anyone, but at her tender age, it is understandable that she is struggling to keep it all together.

Although the film deals with heavy themes and stays rooted in reality, it is not a downer. There are many bright moments, and it is refreshing to see a movie that does not gloss over how difficult it is when someone you love is ill. There is also a large emphasis on the play, with many scenes focusing on the rehearsals and production. These scenes are lively and make being in a play look enjoyable and community-building.

Sunny Sandler is delightful as the lead. She has an impressive range, being both humorous and dramatic. Plus, she has a lovely singing voice. There are also many familiar faces in supporting roles, and they all deliver superb performances.

The screenwriter for the film based the script on her real-life experience. It is important to tell a story of how to get through traumatic experiences and how we can show up for one another as family and friends. Hopefully, this film will provide comfort to those dealing with similar situations.

Now Streaming on Netflix

Rated PG-13

White Pony Express Named Regional Finalist for Chick-fil-A True Inspiration Awards

Eve Birge, WPE's CEO with the Chick-fil-A Moo Cow

White Pony Express (WPE), the food recovery organization serving Contra Costa County, has been named a Western Region finalist for the Chick-fil-A True Inspiration Awards®, with the opportunity to earn up to $200,000 in grant funding to help with food insecurities in our community. White Pony Express was nominated by the Owner-Operator of Chick-fil-A Walnut Creek at North Main and Chick-fil-A The Willows.

White Pony Express is already a Shared Table® partner with both restaurants, regularly receiving donated surplus food to help prepare meals for neighbors facing hunger.

The award is decided by public vote. Chick-fil-A One® App users were able to cast their vote for White Pony Express in the Western Region through September 30.

"Every vote is a chance to put more good food into motion and deliver it with love to neighbors who need it," said Eve Birge, CEO of White Pony Express. "This award would help…more than 70 organizations."

White Pony Express currently provides the equivalent of 13,000 fresh, healthy meals each day free of charge to more than 140 schools, shelters, senior centers, and community organizations across Contra Costa County.

Founded in 2013 by Dr. Carol Weyland Conner, White Pony Express is a volunteer-powered 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

Every day, WPE recovers fresh food and essential goods from local businesses and delivers them to more than 140 nonprofit partners. Its work is powered by a small staff and more than 2,000 volunteers, united by the idea that we are one human family, and love only gives its best.

The Chick-fil-A True Inspiration Awards were established in 2015 to honor the legacy of Chick-fil-A founder S. Truett Cathy. Grants range from $30,000 to $200,000.

For the Love of Pets

by Jill Hedgecock, Jillhedgecock.com

When Panting Is a Cause for Concern

Panting is a dogs way to cool down when hot or nervous. . But panting at rest you shouldn't ignore. Photo by Nancy Kerns, courtesy of Whole Dog Journal

Panting is normal dog behavior. It is how dogs control their body temperature and a common response when they are excited. Sometimes all a dog owner must do is pick up a leash or head to the kitchen for a dog to start panting. Short term panting while under stressful situations, such as during a veterinary visit, during fireworks displays, or because of extra activity at the front door during Halloween are normal. But rapid breathing while resting may be a cause for concern.

A normal resting breath rate is anything under 30 breaths per minute. If a canine's breathing rate is greater than 35 times per minute, the dog may be exhibiting signs of a chronic condition and may need medical attention. Panting can also be an indication that your dog is experiencing pain. Other common causes include a collapsed windpipe, a respiratory disease such as pneumonia, kennel cough or a fungal infection, parasites, nausea, and possibly heatstroke in hot weather. If your dog is taking a new medication, read the information to see if labored breathing is a side effect.

Symptoms that warrant immediate or emergency medical attention include:

Rapid or heavy breathing that may involve using stomach muscles, audible sounds that are unusual (some short-snouted breeds snort naturally).

Unusual color to the gums such as blue, pale coloration or dark red)

Drooling (though in Saint Bernards and other breeds, excessive saliva is normal)

Lethargy or loss of thirst or appetite

Sudden panting or open-mouthed breathing while resting

Chemical smell to the breath, which could be a symptom of toxin ingestion, Cushing's disease, diabetes, or kidney failure

Excessive panting is also a primary warning sign of Cushing's disease, an affliction that is often under-diagnosed, involves the adrenal glands, and is the result of excessive levels of a stress hormone called cortisol. It is unfortunate that our dogs cannot tell us when they feel ill. But by simply observing their breathing patterns and assessing the situation, owners can gain clues about whether a dog requires medical intervention of if it is merely excited or feeling too warm.

Note: The information provided herein is intended for informational purposes and does not constitute medical advice regarding pets. Always consult your veterinarian if you have concerns about your dog's health.

Jill Hedgecock is an award-winning author of dog-inspired novels, including the Doberman trilogy series: "Between Shadow's Eyes," "From Shadow's Perspective," and "In Shadow's Reflection." Her latest release, "Silence in the Orchard, features a Doberman trained to detect the scent of diseased honeybee hives. Her books are available on amazon.com.

Is there someone who should be recognized in our community? Centenarians? Award recipients?
Send us YOUR news and announcements.
Email us: diablogazette@gmail.com and let us know.

Solutions page 27

WORD SEARCH - HALLOWEEN

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

CANDY	GHOST	PUMPKIN	TRICK
CAULDRON	HAUNTED	SCARY	VAMPIRE
CEMETERY	MOON	SKELETON	WEREWOLF
COBWEB	MUMMY	SPIDER	WITCH
COSTUME	POTION	TREAT	ZOMBIE

SUDOKU

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WORD SCRAMBLE

Unscramble these HALLOWEEN words:

REYEMETC _____
BEZOIM _____
NODRUCAL _____
KELTONES _____
MECTOUS _____

CRYPTOGRAM

Each letter in the quote below is consistently substituted for another letter. (If A=H, then A=H every time).

UIF PMEFTU BOE TUSPOHFTU FNPUJPO PG NBOLJOE JT GFBS, BOE UIF PMEFTU BOE TUSPOHFTU LJOE PG GFBS JT GFBS PG UIF VOLOPXO.

— I. Q. MPWFDSBGU

Free Halloween Coloring Pages: RokoPuzzles.com

Peggy Magovern: A Journey of Artistic Expression

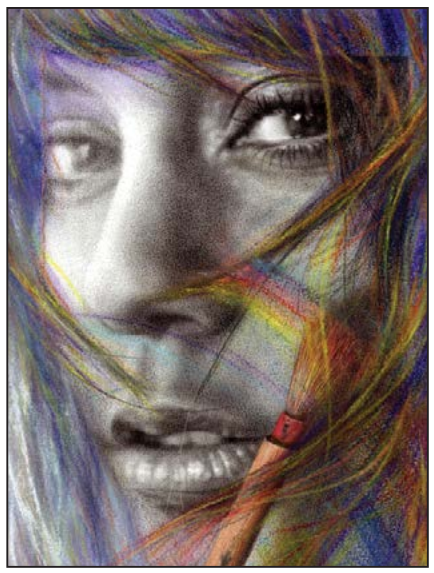
by Julia O'Reilly

For Peggy Magovern, art has always been more than a profession. It became a way to communicate, connect with others, and ultimately discover her own voice.

Born partially deaf and not diagnosed until several years after beginning school, Peggy often found childhood communication difficult. Misunderstandings made her shy and uncertain around other students. Her mother, who loved art, encouraged her to draw, opening a world in which Peggy could express herself without relying on words.

When classmates began noticing her sketches, something changed. Drawing brought confidence and acceptance, and art gradually became an important part of her identity.

Peggy holds a BA in Studio Art from Cal State University, Hayward, although her path to becoming a professional artist was far from predictable. Just before graduation, her portfolio was stolen from a professor's office. Unsure of her future, she trained as a dental assistant while continuing to draw with graphite after work.



Beauty Contest - Color vs. Form, colored pencil/ charcoal

Four years later, Peggy contacted a local advertising department and showed her drawings to an art director. That opportunity launched her commercial art career and eventually led her to Banana Republic, where she learned to use colored pencils professionally.

Her career expanded into fashion illustration, photo direction, commercial illustration, editorial, and publishing. Her clients have included Macy's, The North Face, the Smithsonian, Newsweek, Sports Illustrated, Reader's Digest, Honda, The Wall Street Journal, and HBO. She has also created commissioned portraits for the Hearst family and members of the San Francisco 49ers and Oakland A's.

Transitioning from commercial illustration to fine art brought Peggy a different kind of challenge. After years of working with art directors and clients who influenced the appearance of her work, she had to learn to trust her own creative decisions.

Today, that confidence is central to her artistic philosophy. Peggy believes that an unexpected pencil stroke does not necessarily represent a mistake—it may become an opportunity for the artwork to develop in a new direction.

She expresses that philosophy through her own memorable words:

"The lead will produce the vision if the eraser doesn't fight it."

Working in pencil, colored pencil, and pastel, Peggy combines technical precision and realistic detail with expressive color and personality. Her work has appeared in fine-art venues including the de Young Museum and Beat Museum in San Francisco and the Zimmer Gallery in Mendocino. She has also taught national and international colored-pencil workshops.

"Anna" Colored pencil

Peggy currently teaches Fundamental Drawing in pencil and colored pencil at the Firehouse Arts Center in Pleasanton, sharing the knowledge she has gained throughout her career with other artists.

Her solo exhibition, "Quiet Faces, Loud Spaces," is currently on view at JOR Fine Art Gallery in Clayton through November 8. Visitors can also experience her creative process firsthand during a live art demonstration on Saturday, October 10, from 2–4 p.m. at JOR Fine Art Gallery.

Peggy's journey is ultimately about more than mastering a medium. From finding connection through childhood drawings to building a distinguished professional career, she has learned one of an artist's most important lessons: to trust the hand, trust the eye, and, finally, trust yourself.

MARTINEZ ARTS ASSOCIATION
www.martinezarts.org

Meet the Artists Behnd "Earthly Delights: Two Views"

by Denise Hillman

The Martinez Arts Association invites the community to discover the work of two local artists in "Earthly Delights: Two Views", on display through October at Five Suns Brewing, 626 Main Street in downtown Martinez.

The exhibition brings together the work of June Masuyama and Susan Mochizuki, two artists who share a love of bold color, intuitive processes and inspiration drawn from the world around them, while expressing those influences in distinctly different ways.

For Susan Mochizuki, "Earthly Delights" marks an exciting milestone: it is the first time she has exhibited her artwork publicly. An intuitive abstract mixed-media artist, Mochizuki is drawn to bold color and finds continual inspiration in nature. An avid gardener, she looks to the natural world as a source of ideas and imagery that help her translate her surroundings into abstract compositions.

Masuyama has long had a love for art but was able to fully pursue her passion after retirement. Her travels around the world frequently provide inspiration for paintings that she describes as positive and uplifting journeys through color and space.

Working spontaneously and intuitively, Masuyama allows each painting to evolve through the creative process, often arriving at places of quietude, happiness and whimsy.

"Joy is what it is all about," she says, both in creating the work and in sharing it with others.

The Martinez Arts Association will also be hosting the annual Martinez Día de los Muertos celebration on Friday, November 6, in conjunction with First Friday. More details will be available on the MAA website, martinezarts.org

VALLEY ART GALLERY

COLORFALL

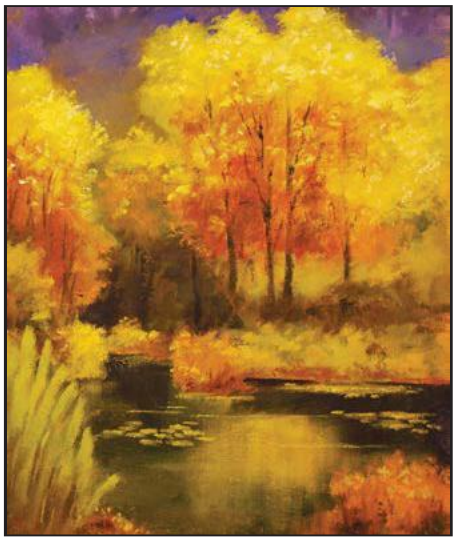
A generally acknowledged truth about original art is its unique ability to add character, warmth and personality to any environment.

This idea of art enriching life is one we've embraced for over 75 years now, to connect the East Bay with the best art of the best local artists.

With some 300 pieces our new show, Colorfall spans a wide range of styles, motifs, media and price points, continuing our mission to help people discover the pleasure of original art.

Also on hand is our usual array of unusual fine crafts and artist designed gift cards.

Please note we're always available by phone or email to discuss any work that may have sparked your interest or to arrange a no-obligation, one-on-one, gallery appointment.



Ed Lucey's "Hardly a Breeze" oil on canvas, 20" x 17"

Get to Know Valley Art Gallery

A special opportunity to learn about the gallery and collaborating with a community of local artists & admirers.

Saturday, October 10 from 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Whether you want to greet gallery visitors, help with hands-on projects, keep the gallery in the public eye, or offer behind the scenes support, there is a place for you here.

Art degrees not required —just your curiosity!

Light refreshments will be served.

RSVP appreciated.

Reply to valleyartgallery@gmail.com

Our online doors are always open for browsing: valleyartgallery.org.

aRt Cottage by FROgard www.artcottage.info

Art Class's

Emergent Curriculum Keeps Creativity Flowing

Damien and Dani with the robot they built

aRt Cottage is not only a local gallery, but also a place where students can explore with materials using their imaginations. Artists ranging from age four to 84 have created some extraordinary pieces. What gets started at aRt Cottage is sometimes expanded beyond the classes. Recently, two creative brothers, Damien and Dani, were all too excited to show me a robot they completed at home, explaining how wires, hinges and aluminum cans were used to put it together.

aRt Cottage teaches in emergent curriculum. The artist, no matter what the age, is the creator of their own project. They have freedom to access the supply room to find any materials that they need. In that process alone, the artist is thinking about how to use the materials gathered and ideas begin to grow into more complex or new projects.

I follow their lead and help them get to a finished project. Themes and passion can continue for weeks, until they are ready to explore something new. Most importantly, every one-hour session is designed to be encouraging, rewarding and fun.

Visitors are welcome to see art in action between 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. aRt Cottage is located at 2238 Mt. Diablo St. downtown Concord.

The Lamorinda Arts Alliance's current exhibit, "Reflection", will continue through October 30. The next new exhibit at aRt Cottage will begin November with a call for art for anyone who would like to display their work. Craft items and boutique items for our Winter Wonderland Exhibit will be welcomed. aRt Cottage at 925 956-3342 or visit artcottage.info.

Alamo Danville ADAS ESTABLISHED IN 1977 Artists' Society

General Meeting with Guest Watercolor Artist Pablo Villicana Lara

The Alamo Danville Artists' Society (ADAS) invites the community to its upcoming General Meeting featuring guest speaker and accomplished watercolor artist Pablo Villicaña Lara.

Join us on Tuesday, October 13, from 7:30–9:00 PM at Blackhawk Gallery, 3416 Blackhawk Plaza Circle, Danville, California.

Pablo Villicaña Lara is an award-winning watercolor artist and educator known for his expressive use of color, light, and technique. During the evening, guests will have the opportunity to learn more about his artistic process and experience his approach to watercolor painting.

This event is FREE and open to the public. Artists, art lovers, students, and anyone curious about watercolor are warmly invited to attend.

Come enjoy an inspiring evening of art, creativity, and community with ADAS.

"Glowing Vines" by Debbie Wardrope

"Lavender Fields Forever" by Debbie Wardrope

Main Street ARTS GALLERY 613 Main Street, Martinez CA

John Tullis and Qian Gao Featured

by Denise Hillman

Main Street Arts Gallery will spotlight member artist John Tullis in October, while award-winning painter Qian Gao continues as the gallery's guest artist for a second month.

Tullis has been drawing, painting, and building things throughout his life. After majoring in art and graphic design at California State University, Long Beach, he spent 40 years working in graphic design and production management in the printing industry before returning to painting about 15 years ago.

His work focuses on plein air and studio oil paintings of landscapes and still life, as well as charcoal and pastel drawings of the human figure.

Tullis taught drawing at the Lynn House Gallery in Antioch and served as a special artist in residence at the Happy Isles Nature Center in Yosemite National Park.

The works of Guest Artist Qian Gao in both watercolor and oils captures landscapes, street scenes and the activity of everyday life.

In his watercolors, Gao uses an economy of brushstrokes and washes, simplifying his subjects rather than striving for exact realism— seeking the transparency, fluidity and freshness unique to the medium. His recent interests include scenes of human activity, particularly markets and street views.

The public is invited to meet the artists at a First Friday reception October 2, from 6:00–9:00 p.m. Visitors can also enter the gallery's October giveaway for a chance to win an original artwork by John Tullis.

Now in its tenth year, Main Street Arts Gallery welcomes art lovers and collectors alike. The cooperative gallery features the work of local artists in a variety of media, including painting, sculpture, photography, ceramics, jewelry, and mixed media.

Main Street Arts is located at 613 Main Street, Martinez. Open Wednesday-Saturday 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Sunday 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. www.mainstreetarts.net

"Boat Repairing" by Qian Gao

"Hornfleur Harbor"" by Qian Gao

"Waterside Living" by Qian Gao

JOR FINE ART GALLERY

Award-Winning Artist Peggy Magovern to Give Portrait Demonstration

JOR Fine Art Gallery will welcome award-winning colored pencil and pastel artist Peggy Magovern for a special pencil portrait art demonstration on Saturday, October 10, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Magovern is known for her expressive, highly detailed portrait work and her ability to capture both the character and personality of her subjects. During the demonstration, guests will have an opportunity to observe her creative process and learn more about the techniques she uses to bring a portrait to life.

The demonstration is free and open to the public. Seating is limited, and reservations are recommended.

JOR Fine Art Gallery

1026 Oak Street, Suite 102, Clayton

Saturday, October 10 | 2–4 p.m.

Reservations: 925-768-5662

Current Exhibit "Summer Escape" ends November 8.

by Peggy Magovern

calendar of events

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CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
concordchamber.com | (925) 685-1181
kcabral@concordchamber.com

October 31 Halloween

November 3 Election Day

Fundraisers

"Papa Jake" Larson monument Brick Drive. Be forever a part of this bronze monument in Martinez Igancio Plaza honoring War Hero Jake Larson. Engrave hour name on a brick. all brick purchases are donations and are tax deductible. papajakelarson.com.

Cars 2nd Chance, vehicle / car donation programs turns donations into cash for charities Clayton Valley Concord Sunrise Rotary Charitable Fund. www.cars2ndchance.org/

October 4 Autumn at the Adobe An afternoon of wine tasting. 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. $50, ($60 at the door) Proceeds benefit the Concord Historical Society. Don Salvio Pacheco Adobe, 1870 Adobe St. Concord. concordhistorical.org

November 14 VFW Post 1525 Auxiliary Craft and Gift Fair 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Two floors of vendors with handmade gifts, handy household items, delicious treats, and vintage/antique wares. Free admission. Free ornament for children under 12. Hot drinks and snacks. Bring your own phone/ camera and take a holiday photo with Santa Claus. Veterans Memorial Hall, 2290 Willow Pass Rd. Concord

Clayton

October 3 & 4 CBCA Clayton Oktoberfest plus Kids Carnival Friday evening October 2. 5:00 -10:00 p.m. Two full days of Live music on two stages, dancing, beer in the beergarten, food, pretzels, carnival. Saturday 12:00 - 10:00 p.m. Sunday 12:00 - 6:00 p.m..

>October 7 City of Clayton Town Hall Meeting Join City leaders for an open Town Hall discussion to learn more about the future of Clayton. topics include the finanical picture, and Landscape Maintenance. 6:00-8:00 p.m. Hoyer Hall 6125 Clayton Rd. Clayton.

>October 16-25 Clayton Community Theatre "Disaster"- A 70's disaster movie musical. Only 9 performances. $32 Adults, $28 Seniors, $25 students with ID. Purchase online at claytontheatre company.com or at the box office. Endeavor Hall 6008 Center St. Clayton.

October 17-18. Used Book Sale Clayton Library. Saturday. 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Most books $1.00. Sunday is half-priced; fill a bag for $5:00 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.Hoyer Hall. 6125 Clayton Rd.

October 24 Trunk or Treat 2:00 -4:00 p.m. Free. Come in costume to win prizes. Dog costume contest as well. Clayton Community Church.

October 30 Clayton Ghost Walk Returns. Friendly ghost walk 5:30 p.m. Haunted ghost Walk 7:30 p.m. Walk through town and hear the local ghost stries passed on for decades. Spirits indicate they have returned. Meet at the Clayton Museum. 6101 Main St.

Concord

Concord Chamber First Fridays Coffee - 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM at Gratitude Coffee Bar, 1655 Willow Pass Rd. Suite B (Park n Shop). Business leaders and community members come together to network, share updates, and hear the latest from the Chamber and the community. Members Free, non-members $10.

October 8 = Health Expo 9:00 a.m. 12:00 p.m. Featuring a wide variety of health and wellness services, including free haircuts and information on Medicare, transportation, assisted living, and more. Connect with local healthcare providers, nonprofits, and commjunity organizations.Concord Senior Center, 2727 Parkside Circle.

October 10 - Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Open House 9:00 a.m. through 1:00 p.m. Learn about ConFire's programs, firefighters, and watch live demonstrations. 2945 Treat Blvd., Concord.

October 11 Concord Historical Society Speaker Series Jacki Kohleriter, Ruth Bancroft Gardens 2:00 - 3:00 p.m. Learn the history and highlights of Ruth Bancroft Garden, a world class botanical treasure showcasing plants from arid climates across the globe, creating a lush dry garden that demonstrates the beauty and sustainability of waterwise landscaping 1928 Clayton Rd. Park behind the building on marina Ct.

October 11 Bossa and Beyond; The Brazilian Jazz Experience - by Brazilian jazz duo, Natalie Cressman and Ian Fanquini. Twp performances. 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. 1970 Grant St. Tickets at eventbrite. $25

October 16 Trick or Treat Trail 4:30-6:30 p.m. Baldwin Park. Kids will enjoy a hauntingly delightful evening of trick-or-treating, spooky crafts, and family fun for some great Halloween memories. Free

November 4 Building Trades Parent Night 5:30-7:30 p.m. at concord High Schnool Explore hands-on union career pathways for students through nteractive activities, apprenticeship pathways, industry speakers, and ree dinner! Register at tradespaywell.com or call 925-338-7586.

Pleasant Hill

Night Market First and third Friday of the month until Nov. 20.food trucks, desserts, beer and wine garden and activities for all ages. Face painting, petting zoo, bounce house and more.

October 8 Pride at Off the Grid in recognition of National Coming Out Day. Join the City of Pleasant Hill Diversity Commission to celebrate Pride. Off the Grid Food trucks, live music, and many LGBTQ+ support organizations. 5:00 - 9:00 p.m. 100 Gregory Lane

October 10 Pleasant Hill Harvest Festival 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Live music at the Back Forty Texas BBQ stage. Arts and crafts, pumpkin patch and pumpkin decorating contest, family activities, beer and wine. Free admission. Downtown Pleasant Hill.

November 21 From STEM to Service Walnut Creek City Councilmember Cindy Darling will be speaking to **AAUW Pleasant HIll-Martinez** about her STEM career and pathway to public servance on the Walnut Creek City Council. 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at El Tapito, 40 Golf Club Road, Pleasant Hill. Confirm reservations by Nov. 16. $30. Send check to AAUW Pleasant Hill=Martinez Branch, Attention Claudia Bass, 1706 Endriss Drive, Martinez, CA 94553.

Martinez

October 4, Free Microchip and Vaccine Services for your pets. 9:00 a.m. Contra Costa County Animal Services.

October 15 Contra Costa County Adult Educations Career & Training Expo at the Adult Education Campus at 600 F Street and Alhambra Ave. Connect with employers, apprenticeships, training providers, and career resources. 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

October 24 Halloween Spooktacular Downtown Martinez. 11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Games, Crafts, Treats. FREE COMMUNITY EVENT.

November 14 Psychedelic Bingo. Doors open at 5:00 p.m. Games at 6:00 p.m. A Soroptimist International of Martinez fundraiser. Martinez Refining Company 1635 Pacheco Blvd. $60 for 10 cards, box meal, and raffle. Ticket sales end Nov. 12.

For more Martinez Community events, go to Martinez Section, page 20.

At the Martinez Campbell Theater

636 Ward St.

>October 11 Open Mic 6:00-9:00 p.m. $3 Cover

>October 30-November 22 The Rocky Horror Show "The Rocky Horror Show" is the story of two squeaky clean college kids, Brad and his fiancée, Janet, on their way to visit their former college professor when by a twist of fate, their car breaks down outside a mansion. They meet the charismatic Dr. Frank-n-Furter, Riff Raff, Columbia, Magenta, Eddie, and Rocky. It is an adventure they would remember, for a very long time. Reserved Tickets $26

Walnut Creek

October 17 Move With MADD Bay Area A morning of remembrance, hope, and action., presented by AAA. This walk aims to raise $100,000 to support MADD's lifesaving mission, including victim and survivor services, impaired driving prevention, youth education, and community outreach throughout the Bay Area.Civic Park. 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Merry Mixers Dances

7:30 to 10:00 p.m. Free coffee and water, no-host bar, $20 corkage. Outside liquor prohibited.$20, Walnut Creek Elks Lodge 1475 Creekside Drive. 925-969-9693 Membership dues $25

>October 2 Natural Blend preceded by a Rumba lesson

>October 16 Claudio Medeiros Trio, preceded by potluck

>November 6 - Bob Gutierrez Trio, preceded by a Nightclub 2-step lesson merrymixers.life

Lesher Center

1601 Civic Dr. Walnut Creek. 925-943-7469.

>October 11 Grease Movie Sing Along 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

>October 16-18 Second annual Improv Festival - Four multi-troupe performance showcases, 11 workshops led by 12 instructors and two open improv jams, bringing together performers, teachers and audiences from across the Bay Area and beyond.

>October 17 Headliners The best of the Second City, one of the oldest and most celebrated theater troupes. 7:30-9:30 p.m

>October 21 Newsmakers: Colonel Eileen Collins, NASA Pioneer, First female Space Shuttle Pilot,

Crockett:

October 10 5th Annual Spooktacular by SugarCity Halloween and oddities Market Shopping, food, music and Trick-or-Treat. 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Scout Hall, 991 Loring Ave. More info, contact sugarcitymp@gmail.com.

October 11 Oktoberfest 2nd Street. German beer, wine, axe throwing, Yodelng contest, prizes, car show, pretzels, sausages, and more. 628 2nd St. Crockett

Lafayette

>**November 20 & 22. "Dream Radio"** The Diablo Women's Chorale fall concert. Songs about dreams, love, hope,memory and imagination. Nov. 20 at 7:00 p.m. and Nov. 22 at 3:00 p.m. at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive,. diablowomenschorale.org.

Pittsburg:

>**November 5 SIR Branch 19 Monthly luncheon.** 11 AM Social hour. Lunch at noon Pittsburg Elks' Lodge, 200 Marina Blvd., Guest speaker Ted Clement, Executive Michelle Rinehart, talking about wildlife mitigation for fire protection. All are welcome. www.sirinc2.org/branch19 or call: 925 338-1996 for more information.

San Ramon

>**October 16-18 Pacificon Ham Radio Convention** Ham radio license class, testing, forums, and vendors. Hosted by Mt. Diablo Amateur Radio Club. San Ramon Marriott. pacificon.org

.>**October 16 Mt. Diablo Amateur Radio Club** monthly meeting. San Ramon Marriott. mdarc.org

Library Events

CLAYTON
6125 Clayton Road, 925-673-0659.

October 7 Latinx & Hispanic Heritage Months Crafts with Rachel Palacios Children's Program. Celebrate Latinx & Hispanic Heritage Month with Rachel-Anne Palacios who will bring a medley of crafts for children to make: Masks, puppets, Guatemalan kites, and more! All supplies provided. Best for ages 5 and up. Generously sponsored by the Clayton Community Library Foundation. 2:00-2:45 p.m.

CONCORD - Mondays The Library Wellness Team 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Contra Costa County Health Services in partnership with Contra Costa County Library System are here to support library staff and patrons alike. The Library Wellness Team consists of a Community Support Worker and Mental Health Clinician

Clubs

Clayton Clubs

GFWC Clayton Valley Woman's Club 9:30 a.m. Serving the communities of Clayton and Concord, meets on the 2nd Tuesday of the month September - June. Clayton Community Church, 6055 Main St, Clayton. www.claytonvalleywomansclub.org

Clayton Valley/.Concord Sunrise Rotary meets Thursdays at 7:00 a.m. at the Clayton Valley Charter School Administration Building, 1300 Alberta Way, Concord
www.claytonvalleyrotary..org/

Clayton Valley Garden Club (CVGC) *Serves the communities of Clayton and Concord. Meets the second Wednesday of the month February through November at Diamond Terrace. 6401 Center St. Clayton at 6:30 p.m.*

SUBMIT YOUR CALENDAR ENTRIES
by the 20th of the month before Issue month. diablogazette@gmail.com

Spooky Wines

I like wines that surprise me; that do not taste like everything else on the shelf. That is exactly what makes them fun.

Traditional wines have their place, but a wine with brand-new flavors can turn a familiar pairing into an adventure. Just in time for the spookiest holiday, here is one wonderfully unusual wine and an appetizer with a twist.

To start, what could be more perfect for Halloween than an orange wine? Made from a variety of white grapes, like Ribolla, Vitovska, and Carso, orange wines are produced in northeastern Italy and its neighbors Slovenia and Croatia.

Often, these white wines are buried in clay pots and allowed to oxidize for weeks. Because of this aging, the yellow color we are accustomed to seeing in white wines darkens into a beautiful amber color. The oxidation process also creates unique flavors like dried apricot,camphor, cinnamon, and nuts.

Like most Mediterranean wines, they have substantial acidity but little or no sugar. Because of this, they taste good with recipes that have a little sweetness to balance the high acid. These wines are not easy to find, but Solano Cellars in Berkeley has them on occasion. While they are truly unlike any other wine, if you can't find one, a late-harvest white dessert wine will work in a pinch.

I like the Bacon-Wrapped Stuffed Apricots (see recipe) as their pairing partner. The apricots echo the stone fruit flavors of the wine and, along with the maple glaze, offers just the right amount of sweetness.

The result is an appetizer that feels right for October: smoky, sweet, a little sharp, and just unusual enough to match the wine.

So, go on. Pair Up!

Photo courtesy of Stylecaster

Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in Northern California. www.LaSommelierre.com

Bacon wrapped apricots appetizers, Photo courtesy celebrations at Home

Bacon-Wrapped Stuffed Apricots

INGREDIENTS

½ lb. (8 strips) quality smoked bacon

3 tablespoons pure maple syrup

Pinch of ground cayenne (to taste)

8 large, dried apricots stemmed

8 pecan halves, toasted

¼ lb. your favorite blue cheese

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Place bacon on parchment paper-lined sided cookie sheet; bake 20 to 25 minutes until partially cooked. This will allow you to easily wrap the apricots later, while bacon is still soft and won't break.

While bacon is cooking, combine maple syrup and cayenne and set aside for glaze.

Open hole of each apricot; stuff each with a pecan half and some cheese to fill generously.

Wrap one strip of bacon around each piece of fruit (enclosing the filling) and skewer with a toothpick. Place on parchment lined sided cookie sheet; brush with some maple syrup glaze and bake 10 minutes. Turn each piece over; brush with more maple syrup glaze and cook another 10 minutes until bacon is crisp.

Serve with any remaining maple glaze or make additional for dipping.

Yield: 4 servings, 2 per person

theRIGHTmove
by Terrylynn Fisher Broker Associate
buystagesell.com

To ADU or Not to ADU?

That is the Question

Accessory Dwelling Units, better known as ADUs, are becoming an increasingly important part of the housing conversation.

Once viewed mostly as a place for aging parents or grandparents to live nearby, ADUs and Junior ADUs are now attracting homeowners and buyers of all ages. With home prices and rents continuing to challenge affordability, many people see these smaller living spaces as a practical way to make a property work harder.

Today, buyers in their 30s and 40s may look for a home with an ADU for a sibling, friend or relative. In some cases, rental income from the unit can help offset the mortgage, and depending on the lender, that income may even help with loan qualification.

There is also the benefit of stability. Instead of depending on a landlord, facing rent increases or having to move because someone else's circumstances change, an ADU can provide a more predictable long-term housing option.

ADUs also add flexibility. Homeowners are staying in their properties longer, and their housing needs can change over time. An ADU might serve as a rental today, housing for an aging parent later, or space for an adult child, caregiver, nanny or home office in the future.

Not all ADUs add the same value. Important factors include whether the unit is permitted, the quality of construction, size and layout, separate utilities, rental history and how well the unit fits with the main house and neighborhood.

Garage conversions can be especially cost-effective because the basic structure already exists. A well-designed one-bedroom, one-bath unit of roughly 500 to 700 square feet can provide a good balance between construction cost, usability and potential return.

Before starting a project, check with your city. Many local cities now offer pre-approved ADU plans and can explain what may be allowed on a particular lot.

Whether used for family, rental income or simply more flexibility, ADUs are becoming more than a housing trend. For many homeowners, they are part of a long-term plan to make one property serve several different needs.

Those who work from home, home school, have live-in childcare or nanny, have parents, friends or relatives living with them, an ADU or JADU offers private space and can be a huge benefit and cost savings.

My intuition suggests that in years to come there will be more sales with ADU or JADU as a factor than homes without them.

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www.MacFloor.com
3191-J Crow Canyon Place, San Ramon
(Next to Sprouts in the Crow Canyon Plaza)
925-866-2200

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Add Color to Your Fall and Winter Landscape

Iceland poppies fill spaces with multiple colors. Photo courtesy Shutterstock

Fall and winter months need not be dreary and brown. Inject more color and interest into your winter landscape by trying these flowering favorites.

California Native Winter Flowers

California fuchsias produce bright red-orange tubular flowers now through late November. California goldenrod offers bright yellow flower clusters at its growth tips throughout fall (some people are allergic to it though). For late-winter color, plant California lilac (Ceanothus) shrubs for its light or deep blue flowers covering the shrub. Native manzanita bushes are also late-winter bloomers producing pinkish or white bell-shaped flowers and shapely mahogany-colored branches.

Seasonal Flowering Annuals

Pansies and violas produce a range of colors and love our mild winter temperatures and regular rains.

Calendulas offer bright orange or yellow flowers in winter and handle light frosts.

Iceland poppies are also fun to grow as they have various colored blooms on each plant.

Rounding out the winter blooming annuals are stocks with their pink-purple flower heads, and compact sweet alyssum that produces fragrant tiny white flowers in clumps. Choose a sunny or light shade area to plant. These annuals will die in hot late-spring weather, but most will return next year.

Fall and Winter Blooming Perennials

Asters offer lavender daisy-like flowers with a bright yellow core and come back every fall.

Japanese anemones produce pink or white blossoms at the top of tall, graceful stems. Liriope or "lilyturf" produce tall grasslike fronds in shady areas and spikes of purple or white flowers in fall. Fronds stay green throughout the year.

Gaillardia (blanket flowers) are full sun perennials that brighten fall and early-winter gardens with a multitude of daisy-like multicolored yellow-orange flowers. Blanket flowers need regular water.

Succulents and Bulbs

Succulents have an additional attraction; they love to grow in pots on decks or patios and can be taken indoors during cold spells. My favorites for our area are aloes that produce candy-stripe or coral-colored flower spikes in fall and winter.

Jade plants also bloom in winter with cream white flower clusters.

Sedum begins to bloom in late summer but flower heads persist into early winter and turn deep red or bronze in cooler weather.

Aeoniums or "cyclops" produce an impressive spike of gold flowers during winter months but are sensitive to cold weather. Plant them in pots and move them inside to avoid freezing.

Winter-blooming bulbs return year after year. Cyclamens tolerate part-shade and can be purchased by the flat to blanket a gloomy area with bright red, pink, or white colors. Amaryllis (belladonna) or pink ladies go dormant in hot weather then produce a naked stem of bright pink, bell-shaped flowers in fall.

Belladonna spreads to fill a blank area.

Fragrant narcissus normally blooms in early spring but can accelerate flower production into winter months by warm, dry weather.

If you are looking to add more color to your fall and winter landscape, there are plenty of choices.

Seasonal Notes: Don't deadhead your roses in October. Let them form rose hips. This process strengthens the plant and prepares it naturally for spring. October and November are the best months to plant California native plants so they can establish during our rainy season. Cut back summer vegetables to the ground but leave their roots to encourage soil microbe activity.

Native California fuchsias add color and attract pollinators Photo courtesy Shutterstock

Fall blooming asters return year after year

Different colored pansies can be clustered for good effect. Photo courtesy Shutterstock

Email your comments and questions to: NakedGardener@diablogazette.com.

October Is the Perfect Time to Put Down Roots

by Angela Dawne, Landscape Designer

October is an ideal time to plant hardy perennials like asters and sedum, as well as deciduous trees and shrubs

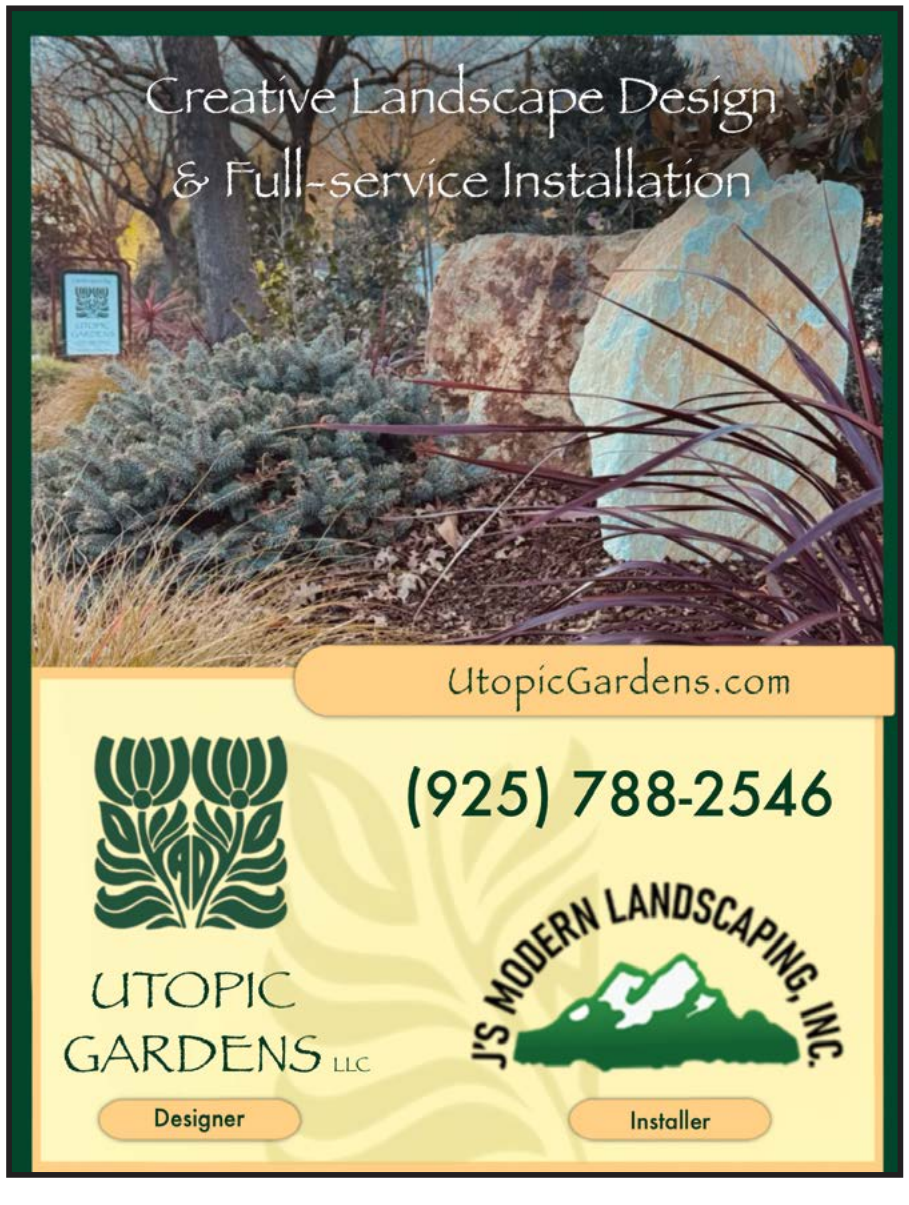
When most homeowners think about gardening, they picture the bright days of April. But as a landscape designer with 30 years experience- I'll let you in on a secret: October is the year's true 'golden hour' for planting.

While the air turns cooler, the soil remains warm from months of summer sun. This unique combination creates ideal conditions for root development. Without the stress of summer heat, newly installed plants can focus their energy on building strong, resilient root systems before winter arrives.

Now is an ideal time to plant hardy perennials like asters and sedum, as well as deciduous trees and shrubs. It is also the season to plant spring-blooming bulbs such as tulips and daffodils, tucking away small treasures that will erupt in color when spring returns.

Cooler temperatures and seasonal rainfall can also make it easier to help new plantings settle in, with less watering required than during the heat of summer.

So don't pack away your gardening gloves just yet. Embrace the crisp autumn air, grab a shovel, and invest in giving your landscape a head start. A little work now can mean stronger plants, healthier roots, and a garden ready to put on a spectacular show when spring arrives.



Around Martinez

You Don't Need to Be an Expert in Government to Have a Voice

by Brianne Zorn, Mayor, City of Martinez

I recently had the opportunity to lead a session at the California League of Cities conference on what it means to be an effective councilmember in a city manager form of government.

As I begin my second term as Mayor on the Martinez City Council, I was able to share some of what I've learned along the way. When I was first elected, I thought being a councilmember meant becoming part of "City Hall": responsible for communicating out and defending the city's actions. Over time, I've come to understand the role differently.

Councilmembers don't run the day-to-day operations of the city. That is the job of the professional city staff. Our role is to represent our community, set policy and priorities, provide oversight, and hold the organization accountable.

Most importantly, Councilmembers work for their constituents.

That's why I encourage the people of Martinez to reach out to your councilmembers, attend City Council meetings, ask questions, share your ideas, and participate in the process. You don't need to be an expert in city government to have a voice.

Here in Martinez, we continue to build a fair and transparent process where residents can understand how decisions are made and have meaningful opportunities to participate.

I believe we each share the same end goal: making Martinez a better city for all of us to live, work, and play. When residents, councilmembers, and city staff understand and respect each other's roles, we can work together more effectively—and create a stronger, more engaged community in the process.

Martinez Council Presses County Health Officials on Hospital Construction Outreach

by Craig Lazeretti, https://martineznewsandviews.substack.com/

Contra Costa County Regional Medical Center

Martinez City Council members expressed frustration at their Sept. 16 meeting over what they described as inadequate community outreach by Contra Costa Health (CCH) regarding a major, multi-year seismic retrofit project at Contra Costa Regional Medical Center (CCRMC) on Alhambra Avenue — a project that was just days away from beginning.

Following a presentation on the $173 million project, Medical Center CEO David Culberson faced pointed questions from Councilmember Jay Howard about why city officials and the public had not received more advance information about the potential impacts of construction, which is expected to continue through 2029 to meet California seismic requirements.

"Is it unusual you're coming to us at the last minute to discuss this?" Howard asked Culberson, noting that he was receiving texts from constituents during the meeting with questions about the project. "This is a $173 million project. I would think we would have been on your conversation list six months ago."

The project includes replacing the medical center's cafeteria and administrative offices with a new three-story building, replacing elevators and adding backup power and water systems.

Although a council subcommittee was briefed on the project late last year, council members voiced frustration that the full scope had not been presented to the entire council earlier. They also questioned the lack of community outreach before construction began.

Much of the concern centered on potential parking impacts in surrounding neighborhoods, construction noise and dust generated by the demolition of existing structures.

Alhambra High School sits next to the medical center, prompting questions about communication with the Martinez Unified School District (MUSD) regarding possible effects on students, classroom instruction and outdoor athletics. School athletic fields are located across the street from CCRMC at 2500 Alhambra Ave.

"There's a lot of people concerned about what's going on and are very worried about parking during construction, possibly 250 spaces being taken away," said Howard, whose district includes the medical center. "I am super excited about this project. I just want to make sure we're not going to overload the neighborhoods, because they're already packed."

According to a CCH fact sheet, patient, visitor and construction parking will remain on the medical center campus, while employees will use off-site parking and shuttle buses to reduce impacts on surrounding neighborhood streets. The city is also providing temporary staff parking at the Marina.

Vice Mayor Satinder S. Malhi echoed Howard's concerns.

"What I'm essentially hearing from you is that we are just days away from the project commencing, fencing is just going to go up, and then you're just going to be like, by the way Alhambra High School, and by the way neighbors, we're about to drop this massive five-year expansion project," Malhi said. "I just don't think that's respectively enough time. And I would say that if there is an opportunity here to provide some type of meaningful notice beyond just a cursory week or so ... I mean, this is a very, very significant undertaking."

"I'm not walking away from this meeting encouraged by the level of outreach I would have expected by now," Malhi added, questioning why broader outreach had not begun following the council subcommittee presentation last year.

Culberson acknowledged the criticism.

"We have not been to you or the community the way we should have," he said, adding that he would "commit to change that."

Martinez Unified Interim Superintendent Janelle Eye said she met Sept. 18 with CCRMC officials, along with the district's chief business official and Alhambra High School's principal.

"We reviewed the timeline of their project and potential impacts to the AHS campus," Eye said in an email.

Contra Costa Health also scheduled a virtual community information session for Tuesday, Sept. 29, at 7:00 p.m. for residents to "learn more about the project, what to expect during construction, and how they're working to reduce disruptions."

More information is available at cchealth.org/ccrmc-build. CCH has also established a dedicated email address for questions and concerns about the project: constructionccrm@cchealth.org.

Halloween Spooktacular Comes to Downtown Martinez Oct. 24

Downtown Martinez will come alive with costumes, candy and family-friendly fun during the annual Halloween Spooktacula on October 24, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Presented by Martinez Refining Company in collaboration with Downtown Martinez & Co. and local businesses. the free community celebration will feature activities throughout downtown, including inside participating businesses, along the street and at the Plaza on Main Street.

A highlight of the afternoon will be the Trunk-or-Treat, where creatively decorated vehicles will line the downtown area as local businesses and community members hand out candy and treats to costumed children.

Families can also enjoy a variety of kid-friendly crafts and games designed for young trick-or-treaters. Organizers encourage children to come dressed in costume and to bring a bag for collecting Halloween goodies.

The event is free and open to the public.

Local businesses interested in participating in the Halloween Spooktacular and trick-or-treat activities are encouraged to register through Downtown Martinez & Co.

Fourth Annual Martinez Pride Celebrates Inclusivity

By Tony Hicks, freelance, https://martineznewsandviews.substack.com/

Martinez resident Chuck Baird initially connected to his church a few years back at what some might say was an unlikely place: a Pride event.

Specifically, Martinez Pride, which celebrated its fourth year on September 19, on a sunny Saturday day at Waterfront Park.

"I met the pastor four years ago here, at this event," said Baird, who's lived in Martinez for 23 years. "And I wanted to go to the church."

Dancers from Starlight Performing Arts Center at Martinez Pride Festival on September 19

Baird was back at St. Mark's Lutheran Church of Pleasant Hill's booth with other congregation members Saturday.

He said he came from another local congregation where he was subjected to ridicule. "It was not a healthy church," he said.

The self-described flamboyant gay man says he now serves on two church boards and feels like a faithful member of its congregation.

"It's a wonderful church," Baird said.

Pastor Cary Bass-Deschenes said he's the church's first LGBTQ+ pastor.

"We've always marched in San Francisco for the Pride parade for many years, and we've come to every single Martinez Pride, for four years. We are endeavoring to be as inclusive as possible."

This year's event was well-attended and featured a stage with dance teams and music, food trucks, children's face painting and games, and more than a dozen LGBTQ-related groups in booths, providing information and dialogue.

Kevin Babeaux owns Pink Spots, a Bay Area resource directory for the queer community that he said is "like a gay Yellow Pages." The group sells LGBTQ-related items at various pride events from May through October.

Pastor Cary Bass-Deschenes of St. Mark's Lutheran Church of Pleasant Hill

There was another Pride event in Emeryville, but Babeaux chose Martinez, because they typically get an "excellent" reception there.

"I started it 2006 in my apartment on the Peninsula," Babeaux said. "And so, when they started doing Martinez Pride, we started supporting it.

"I like the smaller prides, as opposed to like San Francisco or Oakland Prides. We do those, but you can't really chat with people at those. They're so busy and people are drunk, and ... it's a whole different scene. They very much appreciate what we do because we provide resources, you know, safe spaces for them to check out."

Babeaux said in some areas, he's received death threats and seen other types of unsavory behavior. He can tell Martinez supports the LGBTQ+ community. He meets members of the City Council and other local officials whom he calls "really, really good people and really friendly."

"I've been impressed ... it makes a big difference."

There were booths from the Diablo Valley College Inclusivity Wellness Center, the Bay Area Queer Writers Association, and LGBTQ+ networks in other nearby cities and counties.

Martinez Unified School District had a booth, as did local businesses, including Marteenez Mini Golf and Arcade, which set up a pinball machines for attendees to play free.

"A lot of these folks that are out here are just our regulars," said owner Ryan Matthews. "We've kind of tried to make it a spot for everybody, no matter who you are, what you do, just come in, play, have fun. There's not enough of that going around right now."

Michelle Rose manned the booth for Rainbow Families Action, a Bay Area group advocating for trans youth healthcare, sports, school activities "just in general to try to make life better for our kids."

"We're gender non-conforming, and then we also try to build community around that," Rose said. "When your kid first comes out, a lot of parents aren't queer themselves, and so they've got to figure all that stuff out. And so it's nice to have a community and then once you're in the community, you can kind of get involved, make your kid's life better."

This was Rose's second time at Martinez Pride. "Last time was great, and this time was great," Rose said. "I like the community."

Dino and Angelina Castaldi gave out hugs for the national Free Mom Hugs nonprofit that supports the LGBTQ+ community.

"Our son came out as transgender and that got us into it to, to do the support that's greatly needed," Dino said.

"Our kid's friends didn't have support, and we've always wanted to be as supportive as possible," said Angelina, who grew up in Martinez. "It makes me so happy that this event is happening here.The couple now lives in Oakley. And, just for the record, they hug reporters, too.

Pleasant Hill Chamber Partners with HR Council to Expand Business Resources

For a small business owner, one employment-law mistake can become an expensive lesson.

That reality is behind a new partnership between the Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce and the HR Executive Compliance Council, which will give local businesses expanded access to human resources education, legal updates and workplace compliance resources.

Under the agreement, Pleasant Hill Chamber members will receive one year of complimentary membership in the HR Executive Compliance Council, or HREXCC. Benefits include expert-led webinars, employment-law and regulatory updates, leadership programs and networking with HR, legal and business professionals.

The program is aimed especially at small and mid-sized employers that must comply with the same complicated workplace rules as larger companies, but often without their own HR departments or legal teams.

"Small businesses don't get a different set of employment laws simply because they're small," said Jeremy Carlson, executive director of the Pleasant Hill Chamber. "Too often, an HR or compliance issue doesn't receive the attention it needs until it becomes a much larger and potentially costly problem."

Carlson said the partnership is intended to give Chamber members practical information before problems arise while adding another tangible benefit to Chamber membership.

HREXCC is a California nonprofit founded and led by President Marci Trevino. Its programs focus on employment and labor law, California regulatory changes, leadership development and professional networking.

"Our mission has always been about giving business and HR leaders practical knowledge they can actually use," Trevino said.

The partnership will extend beyond compliance training. The two organizations plan to collaborate on internships, employment opportunities, workforce development, job-search resources, talent connections and future educational and networking programs.

Their broader goal is to make Pleasant Hill a regional destination for business education and professional development.

"Pleasant Hill is exceptionally well positioned for this," Carlson said. "We're at the center of an incredibly active business corridor."

The partnership's first major event is scheduled for Jan. 27, 2027, at National University in Pleasant Hill.

The full-day California Legal Update will focus on employment and workplace issues businesses should be preparing for in the new year. Business owners, executives, HR professionals, managers and other organizational leaders are expected to attend.

Along with the main legal update, breakout sessions will explore specific workplace, leadership, compliance and organizational issues in greater depth.

The day will conclude with an evening networking mixer for attendees, presenters and participating organizations. Lunch and admission to the mixer are included with registration.

HREXCC members participating through the Chamber partnership will receive complimentary admission. A limited number of free registrations will also be available for HR professionals. General admission for non-members will be $100.

The event will also include a Strategic Partner Exhibition geared toward employers and HR professionals.

Carlson said National University provides the type of setting the Chamber hopes to build upon for future programs.

"It goes beyond gathering people in a room for a presentation," he said. "We're creating an environment where business owners, executives and HR professionals can learn from experts, discover resources and build relationships with one another."

For both organizations, the longer-term objective is bigger than a single event: creating a stronger business education network centered in Pleasant Hill while giving local employers easier access to the expertise they need to navigate an increasingly complicated workplace.

Remembering Martinez's First Female Mayor

by Tony Hicks, freelance, https://martineznewsandviews.substack.com/

When Rosalie Benson decided to run for City Council in 1966, her decision was met by laughter, said former City Council member and Martinez Historical Society Vice President Tim Farley.

"A woman? Never," Farley said. "She was warned. She was told she could not win. Nevertheless, she persisted."

Benson won and, three years later, became the first female mayor of Martinez.

Benson was 98 when she died Aug. 3 in Redding, where she lived with one of her sons.

"Rosalie Benson was the first and only other woman mayor in the 150 years of Martinez elected leadership," said Mayor Brianne Zorn, who became Martinez's second female mayor, and first to be directly elected to the post, in 2022. "When I was first elected in 2022, I had the opportunity to meet her. She was charming, intelligent, and had a sharp wit. She continued to follow Martinez politics even when she wasn't able to attend in person, and sent her support when she could.

Benson was born in 1928 in Glendale in Southern California. She married Jim Benson, with whom she had three children: Eric, Brian and Regina.

The family moved to the Forest Hill neighborhood of Martinez in 1959, when Jim, who worked for Standard Oil , was transferred north.

It didn't take long for Benson to get involved. She became president of the Forest Hills Homeowners Association and got down to business.

At the time, there was discussion about placing Forest Hills in a costly flood-control district," Farley said. "Because there was no flood threat to the neighborhood, the homeowners association opposed the effort."

As a neighborhood leader, Benson started attending City Council meetings, sometimes with her children.

"She was cantankerous," said Benson's daughter, Regina Benson. "(Former council member) Mark Ross said she 'gave her opinion unvarnished.' Part of it was a lot of constituents felt they had no representation on the council."

Farley , who considered Benson a friend and stayed in touch with her in her final years, said Benson "became increasingly concerned that the council did not treat members of the public with the respect they deserved."

"Rosalie assembled a diverse group of residents and ran a true grassroots campaign," Farley said. "She knocked on doors, held neighborhood coffees, wrote personal notes and postcards, and spent countless hours on the telephone talking with voters."

"All of us kids worked campaigns; we all went door-to-door," Regina Benson said. "In our family, if one person volunteers, you usually get the whole family. We all kind of clump in there."

Farley said her victory "stunned the political establishment. She was the top vote-getter."

"She worked for a community pool, even though she was scared of water," Regina said. "She was concerned about the environment. She was instrumental in keeping billboards out of the city, planting native plants, and the forming of the Martinez Arts Association and Art in the Park.

"In a lot of ways, she was really ahead of her time. She was really healthy, she cooked healthy. It was little things, trying to lead us to being responsible people and making things better around us."

Benson only served one four-year term on the council, which Regina chalked up to "dirty politics" opponents used against her mom.

"She was fighting the good old boy network, and fighting uphill," Regina said.

Benson lost but stayed involved during her post-council years. Her kids were involved in student government, Habitat for Humanity, World Central Kitchen, as well as other campaigns in which their mother was involved.

"If things are going on out there, you work together for the change," said Regina, who lives in Vacaville and works for the Solano County Transportation Authority. "We got involved. We grew up in the civil rights era. We were very anti-Vietnam (War). She helped one of my brother's friends apply for conscientious objector status.

"We were raised to be decent people."

She called her mother "an awesome mom." She said her parents put together the city's first holiday decoration contest during the '80s, of which the family were the judges.

"She supported us in every way," Regina said. "She taught us not to listen to the naysayers and to have a sense of community."

Benson also mentored other local women who followed in her footsteps, running for local office.

Benson lived around her children in her later years in places like North Carolina, Vacaville and Redding. She ended up with four grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren. The whole family gathered for her 98th birthday.

Farley said, during one of their last conversations, he asked her how she wanted to be remembered.

"Her answer was simple," Farley said. "I want people to know I loved my country.'"

San Ramon Teens Bring Free Youth Athlete Development to Two Cities

by Ayush Iyer, Founder, Krida Program

KRIDA coaches with players at an evening session in San Ramon. (Photo courtesy of the Krida Program)

San Ramon, CA — On summer evenings at neighborhood parks in San Ramon and Dublin, children ages 8 to 12 lined up in numbered pinnies for warm-ups, skill drills and scrimmages. The sessions are the heart of Krida, a free youth athlete development program run by coaches who are still in high school.

Drills first, then games: players work the ball through cones before a scrimmage. (Photos courtesy of the Krida Program)

Soccer is the program's vehicle, but its aim is broader: building skills, confidence, teamwork and resilience in young athletes. Krida was founded by Ayush Iyer, a Dougherty Valley High School student graduating in 2027. Sessions follow a consistent structure: warm-ups first, then focused skill development, then the small-sided games the kids wait all week for. The roster welcomes everyone from first-time players to children already eyeing competitive clubs, and there is no cost to families.

Iyer, the program's founder, started it after reflecting on his own path in competitive soccer, which began in 2019 and was disrupted by the pandemic. "I wished I had someone to guide me through those tough early stages," Iyer writes on the program's website. That experience became Krida: free structured training, real-game opportunities and mentorship for the age group he once was.

This past summer was the program's biggest season yet, with chapters running in both San Ramon and Dublin. Over the last two years, Krida has reached more than 100 young athletes in the community. Iyer is joined by head coach Abhinav Padaganur, a junior at Dougherty Valley, and the two are mentored by professional coaches.

There is a technology story here, too. Iyer built Krida Teams, a mobile app that gives parents the season's full schedule and lets them mark their child's availability for upcoming sessions, while coaches track attendance and post announcements. The free app is available at krida.us/app.

Parents have noticed the structure, and the results: several players from the program have since made their way onto competitive soccer teams. "He made sure players of all skill levels felt supported, included, and encouraged," said Yogitha, a San Ramon parent whose son is among them. Another parent, Keerthi, called the program "a great mix of fundamental drills and fun games" that was "definitely a big hit with kids."

Krida returns for its next season this fall, and its founders hope to help student-athletes in other communities start chapters of their own. Session information is available at krida.us, or by email at support@krida.us.

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2026 Move with MADD Bay Area Returns to Walnut Creek October 17

The Bay Area community is invited to come together for a morning of remembrance, hope, and action at the 2026 Move with MADD Bay Area, Presented by AAA, on Saturday, October 17, at Civic Park in Walnut Creek.

Hosted by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), Move with MADD brings together victims and survivors, families, law enforcement, businesses, community organizations, and supporters from throughout the Bay Area with one shared goal: creating a future with no more victims of impaired driving.

Participants walk for many reasons. Some walk in memory of a loved one whose life was taken by an impaired driver. Others walk in support of survivors and families whose lives have been forever changed. Many simply walk because they believe impaired driving is preventable and everyone deserves to make it home safely.

With AAA serving as Presenting Sponsor, this year's Move with MADD Bay Area aims to raise $100,000 to support MADD's lifesaving mission, including victim and survivor services, impaired driving prevention, youth education, and community outreach throughout the Bay Area.

Individuals, families, businesses, community organizations, and law enforcement agencies are encouraged to participate. Attendees can register individually, create or join a team, fundraise, donate, or volunteer.

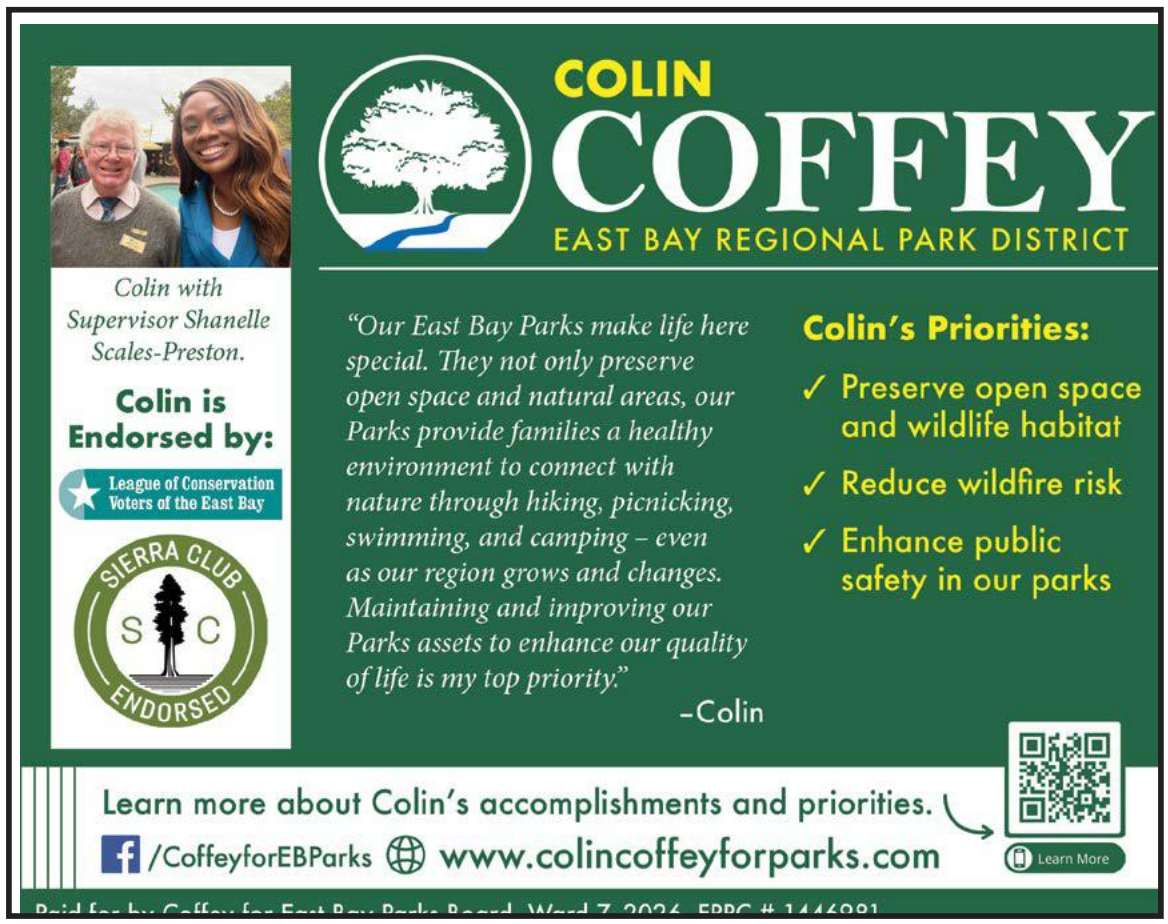
2026 Move with MADD Bay Area, Presented by AAA

Saturday, October 17, 2026

Civic Park, Walnut Creek

Every step has a purpose. Join MADD and Presenting Sponsor AAA as the Bay Area moves together to remember, support, and help create a future with no more victims.

Register, start a team, or donate at: https://give.madd.org/event/2026-move-with-madd-bay-area/e760935



SUPERVISOR KEN CARLSON
District IV
Contra Costa County

Why the County's Non-Cooperation Policy Matters

Last month, my colleagues and I on the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to revise the Equity Committee's July 2026 draft Non-Cooperation Policy. This policy governs how County employees interact with immigration authorities and I want to explain why this matters, and why I supported it.

Contra Costa County makes a difference in the lives of hundreds of thousands of residents every day through public health clinics, libraries, social safety net services, and more. For those systems to work, the public needs to trust that County offices handle their personal information with care and confidentiality. That trust is the foundation this policy is built on.

At its core, the policy gives County employees clear, consistent guidance on how to handle sensitive information. It limits the use of County funds, resources, and property to assist immigration enforcement, restricts what employees can disclose to immigration authorities absent a legal requirement, and protects access to core County services regardless of immigration status.

Most importantly, this policy will incorporate the model policy released on July 1, by California Attorney General Rob Bonta, developed under Senate Bill 580. That bill requires state and local agencies to adopt policies regarding interactions with immigration enforcement authorities by January 1, 2027. With the work of the Board's Equity Committee, Contra Costa County is doing this work thoughtfully.

To be clear, the County has already been doing much of what this policy requires. This action centralized all of our work into one clear document, for our employees and for our residents.

This work is a product of our local advocates who have helped strengthen the way the County protects personal information of those who rely on our services.

As we navigate uncertain times, Contra Costa will always lead the way it always has: with inclusion, compassion, and the trust of the people we serve.

Mt. Diablo High Halts Varsity Football Season

Courtesy Concord Patch

Mt. Diablo High School ended its varsity football season early, citing "safety issues."

Photo courtesy KTVU

The high school said their team roster lacks enough substitute players, leaving some athletes at risk of playing positions they have not trained for, according to reports.

Varsity Football Coach Fetuao Mua announced the decision to end the remainder of the season Wednesday, citing safety concerns. "I know this is incredibly difficult for our players and families," Mua said, "es-pecially after the time, effort, and heart they have invested in the pro-gram," KRON reported.

Mt. Diablo Unified School District Superintendent Adam Clark later clarified that the concern was an "insufficient number of substitute players," according to KRON.

Smaller players could have to play on the offensive or defensive line, Clark said, while quarterbacks who do not know how to protect themselves could risk being sacked, according to news reports.

Clark said the cancellation also affects cheerleaders, the band, and teams scheduled to play Mt. Diablo, KRON reported.

Mt. Diablo started the season 0-4 According to CBS News, at least five other schools have also canceled their varsity football season. J

ust under a year ago, the Las Vegas Raiders donated$250,000 to re-pair Mt. Diablo High's football field after illegal fireworks melted it.

October in Walnut Creek

by Kevin Wilk, Mayor, Walnut Creek *WalnutCreekCA.gov*

October is a busy and energizing time in Walnut Creek. From community events and public-safety initiatives to important opportunities for civic participation, there are many ways to connect with our city and one another this fall.

Elections

Registered voters should begin receiving ballots the week of October 5 for the November 3 election. This year's ballot includes two Walnut Creek City Council seats and the City Treasurer position. Voters will also consider City Measures T and U.

Measure T concerns whether the City Treasurer should become an appointed position, while Measure U concerns a proposed senior housing transit village. Measure RTM, a five-county regional measure that would establish a half-cent sales tax in Contra Costa County for 14 years to fund public transit, will also appear on the ballot. Be sure to read up on these important local measures in your Voter Guide.

Walnut Creek has four official ballot drop boxes: two at City Hall (1666 N. Main St), one at Shadelands Art Center (111 N. Wiget Ln near the rear of the building), and one at Grace Presbyterian Church (2100 Tice Valley Blvd). These secure outdoor boxes are available around the clock through 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. Additional voting information is available at WalnutCreekCA.gov/elections.

Civic Events

On October 7, the Walnut Creek Police Department will participate in National Coffee with a Cop, giving residents an informal opportunity to meet local officers, ask questions and have a conversation. Join the event from 9:00 -10:30 at Rooted Coffee (1321 Locust St).

The City has also welcomed a new class of residents to our 2026 Civic Academy. We received a tremendous pool of applicants eager to learn more about local government. Over the coming weeks, participants will meet City leaders, visit facilities and explore the services that support our community each day. Follow their experience on the City's social media channels.

From October 18 through 24, Walnut Creek will join communities throughout the region in recognizing "United Against Hate Week". The City Council will present a proclamation on October 20 reaffirming that hate has no place in our community. Every resident has a role in creating a city where people feel safe, respected and welcome.

Trunk or Treat

Families can close out the month with "Trunk or Treat" on Friday, October 23, at Civic Park. A low-sensory hour will be offered from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m., followed by the main event from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Bring your costumes and enjoy decorated vehicles, treats and family-friendly fun. Later that same night, an entertaining outdoor drone show will take place above the Lesher Center for the Arts in celebration of Diwali. Learn more at LesherArtsCenter.org.

Pedestrian Safety Month

October is also Pedestrian Safety Month and the beginning of our rainy season. Please slow down, remain alert and watch for people walking and biking, especially as daylight hours grow shorter. This is also a good time to clear drains around your property, review emergency supplies and explore the City's storm-preparation resources.

I encourage you to shop and dine locally. The dollars we spend in Walnut Creek help sustain local businesses and jobs while supporting the services that make our community a wonderful place to call home.

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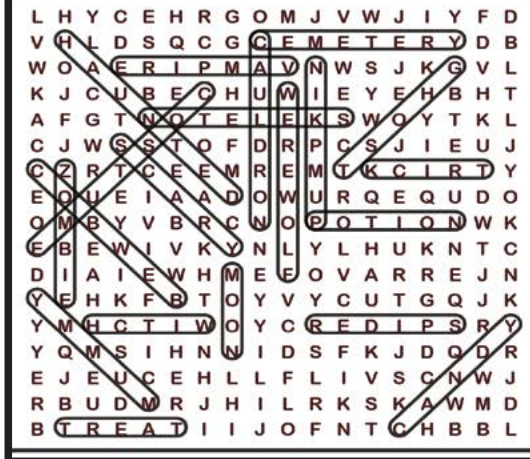
Solutions from Puzzles page 15

Puzzles by Marc Rokoff RokoPuzzles.com



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WORD SCRAMBLE

CEMETERY
CAULDRON
SKELETON
COSTUME
ZOMBIE

CRYPTOGRAM

The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown.
— H. P. Lovecraft

JOURNEY-MAN'S JOURNAL
by Dave Scholz

Clay Shapes New Memories in First Road Scholar Adventure

Tucked into the peaceful Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, my August Road Scholar trip offered exactly that kind of experience: a chance to travel somewhere new, learn something different, meet interesting people and, for a week, get my hands delightfully dirty.

I enrolled in "The Art of Working Clay by Hand," a Road Scholar program in Montreat, North Carolina. It sounded intriguing enough, spend several days learning pottery techniques in a mountain retreat, but what unfolded became much more than an art class.

It was an adventure built around doing.

Boston-based Road Scholar is a nonprofit travel organization specializing in educational adventures for adults 50 and older. Created from the Elderhostel movement, it has been sending lifelong learners across the United States and around the world since 1975.

And "learning" can mean almost anything.

Road Scholar offers domestic and international programs centered on art, history, music, nature, food, hiking, culture and countless other interests. Trips range from leisurely to highly active, with itineraries detailing activities, meals, lodging and prices for couples and solo travelers. There are women-only adventures, programs designed for solo travelers and even intergenerational trips created for grandparents traveling with grandchildren.

The common ingredient is participation. These are vacations where travelers are encouraged not simply to look at a destination, but to experience it.

Montreat proved a perfect setting.

Located about 15 miles east of Asheville and minutes from Black Mountain, the Montreat Conference Center rests in a secluded mountain cove beneath Greybeard Mountain. For more than a century, the nonprofit center, rooted in the Presbyterian Church, has welcomed visitors seeking reflection, community and renewal.

For our group of 13 pottery adventurers, renewal came through clay.

Co-instructor Becky Garrity began by putting the material directly into our hands. Our first assignment was the simplest of pottery forms: a pinch pot.

Mine might eventually serve as an ashtray, key holder or repository for loose change. Artistic masterpiece? Probably not. But that was beside the point.

The exercise allowed us to feel how clay responded beneath our fingers and discover how quickly a lump of earth could become something uniquely our own.

From there Garrity introduced slab and coil construction and pottery basics such as scoring and slip. Then came the best instruction of all: experiment and have fun. Soon everyone was creating.

I had not worked with clay since sitting in Kathy Barnes' art room at Brookfield Central High School in Wisconsin. Yet the feeling returned surprisingly quickly. Montreat became an escape into possibility, wondering what a piece might become, trying unfamiliar techniques and figuring out how to solve the inevitable problem when the clay had ideas of its own.

By midweek, tables around the studio were filling with bowls, containers, sculptures and assorted creations in various stages of drying before heading into the kilns. Every day seemed to bring another small adventure.

Co-leading the program was Ann Laird Jones, potter emerita at Montreat's Sally Jones Pottery, a position once held by her mother, Marilyn Jones. Garrity brought technical instruction and encouragement; Laird Jones added moments of reflection drawn from her 32 years as Montreat's arts ministry director.

Before lunch or at the end of a studio day, she might share a quotation or passage about creativity and artistic vision. Then came our group affirmation. "I am a great potter, you are a great potter, we are great potters," we declared together.

Whether all of our finished products supported that claim was open to interpretation. But by then, no one cared.

Laird Jones said her mother's mission at the pottery studio was straightforward: create a place where everyone could "come and fall in love with clay." Hospitality mattered as much as expertise, she said, and there was always a pot of coffee brewing.

Road Scholar had woven regional culture into the evenings. One night brought down-home, toe-tapping mountain music performed by three musicians and singers. Another featured a local storyteller spinning colorful tales.

Free time offered its own possibilities.

I returned to the pottery studio one evening to work on small pieces for a mobile I envisioned for my deck and ornaments for a Christmas wreath. Laird Jones was there, offering assistance and conversation.

During that quiet evening, our discussion turned toward my life in California and the passing of my wife, Lisa in April, 2024. I told Ann that this North Carolina trip also checked off one of only four states Lisa still needed to reach her goal of visiting all 50.

Sometimes an adventure creates space for unexpected moments like that.

Connections developed elsewhere, too — over buffet-style meals in the communal dining hall and during evenings on a deck overlooking tranquil Lake Susan across from Montreat Assembly Hall.

One friendship with Debbie, a Road Scholar participant from New Jersey, even led to exploring the nearby town of Black Mountain.

The final days brought glazing and another new challenge: throwing clay on a potter's wheel.

There is something uniquely entertaining about watching a carefully centered piece of clay begin to rise beneath your hands, and equally entertaining when it suddenly decides not to cooperate.

Eventually, the finished pieces were packed for the journey home. Somehow, everything survived the flights back to California inside a carefully stuffed Rick Steves carry-on and a grocery-store reusable bag tucked into the overhead bin. But those objects were only souvenirs.

What stayed with me most were the experiences attached to them: the mountain music, evening conversations, laughter in the studio, new friendships, quiet views across Lake Susan and the simple pleasure of attempting something I had not done in decades.

That may explain why experiential travel is attracting so many older Americans. For travelers with the time and curiosity to explore, vacations no longer need to mean simply sightseeing.

They can mean learning to paint in another country, hiking through a national park, studying history where it happened, cooking regional foods or sitting at a potter's wheel in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Adventure, after all, does not have an expiration date. Sometimes it begins with an airline ticket. Sometimes it begins with a lump of clay. For more information about Road Scholar adventures, visit roadscholar.org.

Montreat Assembly Hall on Lake Susan at Montreat, NC

Lake Susan at Montreat, North Carolina

Potter Ann Laid Jones, Dave Sholz, center, to the right is Potter Beck Garrity.

Becky Garrity demonstrating to the class

Above Becky Garrity working with clayl right, Garrity and Laid Jones. Photos by Dave Scholz.

German Occupation of the Netherlands May 1940 - May 1945

Part 9: Conclusion, Liberation of Holland

by Nell Fliehmann - Van Altena

Nell Fleihmann from Oakland is 103 years old and is the mother of Jack Fleihmann who lives in Concord. She is among the very few individuals still living who can recount the experience of enduring German occupation during World War II.

In 1933, Nell resided in Holland. At just 10 years old, she could not have realized that Hitler's ascent to power in Germany would soon dramatically alter her life. The change was abrupt.

On September 1, 1939, Hitler's armies invaded Poland starting World War II . She has documented her experiences living under the German occupation of the Netherlands in a 50-page booklet, which she has kindly shared with the Diablo Gazette.

This is the ninth and final installment of her journal. The first eight parts are available at diablogazette.com Past Issues starting with the February 2026 edition.

Residents welcome soldiers after the liberation of Holland, .Photo courtesy wikimedia commons.

Hidden Radios

I had been listening regularly to Radio Luxembourg which was broadcasting popular American dance music every weekday afternoon. Soon the Germans forbade us to listen to broadcasts from foreign stations. When people disobeyed the orders, everyone was to surrender their radios. My parents surrendered their big radio. My brother Piet had a small radio which he loaned to us. We continued to listen to the news from abroad. Severe punishment awaited those being in possession of a radio and soon my Dad found it too dangerous to keep the radio. At this point, it was too late to surrender it anymore without being punished for having kept it that long. Pict said he would remove it from our home.

However, he and my mother hid the radio under a plank under the carpet in the upstairs hall. All of us, except for Dad, continued to listen to the radio when Dad was not home. He often wondered how we were so well informed. We told him that the milkman told us the latest news. Eventually, when there was no more milk to deliver, this ruse stopped. Whenever my father was not home during the broadcasting of news, my mother and sometimes the two of us girls would listen to the BBC in London.

In 1944 when Allied troops entered the south of Holland, it seemed that the end of the occupation was near. Dad said "if only we had a radio, so we could hear the latest news". "Oh, but we have" we all shouted. He was so happy that everything was forgiven. Then when events turned, and only the south was liberated, not northern Holland, he was going to throw the radio into the river himself. But Pict said "since it is mine, J will take it away". Once again, back into its hiding place it went.

Most evenings my mother would relate the news to my father. Of course, he was highly interested, and did not know that the story about how she received the news, was a fabrication. When the war ended, Dad was tickled pink when the radio all of a sudden appeared and he was once again willing to forgive and forget the deception.

It was around this time that an American soldier, about 20 years old, traveled by troop transport on a train through southern Brabant and Limburg, to Germany. Neither he nor l would have thought that about fourteen years later we would get married in New York. Jack was sixteen years old when World War II started. He joined the Army shortly after graduating from High School at 18 and was sent to Europe. He was a year younger than me.

Allied bombardments now started in full force. The bombers were aiming at ammunition depots, located in the woods of the estate of the Queen mother, not far from our house. We had no safe shelter. During such an attack, I would sit squatted underneath the staircase. When it was a sunny day, soon Allied fighter planes were in the air, shooting even in our street. Many citizens were killed by the Allies. Strafing and shooting from Allied planes became routine and dangerous. The planes sometimes came over so low that we were afraid they would fly into our house. Now the Allied forces began their intense, heavy, devastating bombing of Germany. We saw hundreds of planes fly overhead days on end, until Germany collapsed. Their big cities were in ashes. Needless to say hundreds of thousands of their citizens had died.

THE LEADER-POST

HOLLAND FREE

NORTH REICH, DENMARK NAZIS ALSO SURRENDER

Hitler mystery veiled by flame

Canadian lives spared

No V-E holiday for bond workers

German people grimly start rebuilding

Netherlands liberation from Nazis on May 4, 1945

Liberation of Holland

On May 5, 1945, I heard a young voice outside yell: "mother, the war is over". My mother was at home and I called to her "I hear the war is over."

Obviously in the house behind us they had been listening to a forbidden radio. Germany had surrendered. Within a few days I watched the First Canadian Army, then the British Anny Corps, followed by the First Polish Armored Division, march along the freeway that ran through our town.

One could hardly see the soldiers in their tanks and army vehicles. They were hidden by masses of young citizens who had climbed on board these vehicles. People threw flowers at them and in return they threw candies and chewing gum in the air. Everywhere flags flew from houses and buildings. People danced in the streets, they hugged and sang and were overjoyed.

I also witnessed a small procession of people. Young women, with shaved heads were marched through the streets. They were forced to carry signs that read that they had fraternized with German soldiers. The girls were spat at and were called names. It was an ugly scene that many decent citizens did not approve of this treatment

The Red Cross, in conjunction with the Swedish Government, immediately started food drops in the west of Holland. Huge allied bombers flew low over our house to land at a small military airport nearby.

Right above us, we saw them open the hatches, and once over the airfield they dropped boxes of food, hanging from parachutes.

Operation Manna it was called. The grounds of the airport were roped off and distribution was very orderly. Shortly after the first drops, citizens could pick up white bread at their bakery, one small loaf for each person. The most prized bread I ever ate.

By now Holland was stripped to its bones. As the months went by, we learned of the many atrocities that had taken place. Of the occupied countries, per capita, our country lost the most citizens. Almost a quarter of a million persons had died, out of a population of a mere 9 million people at the time.

Conclusion

The occupation of Holland lasted exactly five years.

This story of my own experiences during the five years of occupation will give you a good idea about what was going on in The Netherlands. The popular name of this country is Holland.

Red Cross used allied bombers to make food drops into Holland.

A few months after the war had ended, I ran into Pete and he was instrumental in getting me a job in Germany with UNRRA, a United Nations Relief Agency. He urged me to apply even though my knowledge of English and German was not up to par for that job.

Half a year after the liberation I left Holland and never lived there again, neither did my younger brother. We both lived in various countries and eventually settled down in the United States. My sister, Truus, left Holland for many years, but settled back in Holland. We would visit our parents and the four of us would meet in Holland.

All historical images are not of or by the author but added simply for visual support of her story. All images are in the public domain unless otherwise stated

HAPPY 104th BIRTHDAY!

Thank you, Nell Fleihman, for sharing your historic and extraordinary journal with the Diablo Gazette. It is fitting that this nine part series ends just in time to recognize your upcoming birthday. Diablo Gazette and our readers wish you a Happy 104th Birthday on October 5. Remarkable!

Jack Fliehman of Concord, and his mother Nell Fliehman of Oakland Nell will celebrate her 104th birthday on October 5.

A Walk Through Time
with Misty Bruns

164 Years Ago

Bartholomew's American Circus

It is with no small degree of satisfaction that we record the arrival and subsequent triumph of Bartholomew's American Circus, which came off in our midst, according to previous announcement, on last Wednesday evening. Long before the hour appointed for the commencement of the exercises, a vast and respectable concourse of our citizens had assembled at the pavilion, eager to witness those celebrated wonders of the arena of which report hath spoken so favorably. We are gratified to state that the audience was uniformly surprised, delighted, and refreshed by the extraordinary scenes enacted before them.

The exercises of the ring commenced precisely at eight o'clock and afforded a remarkable example of what an astonishing force of muscle and physical capability the human body can attain by careful training and constant practice.

Among the constellation of star performers, the graceful movements of M'lle Selena Long, the accomplished Equestrienne and Pantomimist designated as the Sylph of the Arena, elicited the loudest plaudits. No less astonishing were the feats of M'lle Ella Cadiz, whose daring exploits as a Wire Dancer and Ascensionist caused many a breast to heave with mingled terror and admiration.

Yet, excellent as were these gymnastic displays, the crowning glory of the evening belonged indisputably to the Marvelous Trick Ponies, "WONDER" and "YOUNG AMERICA."

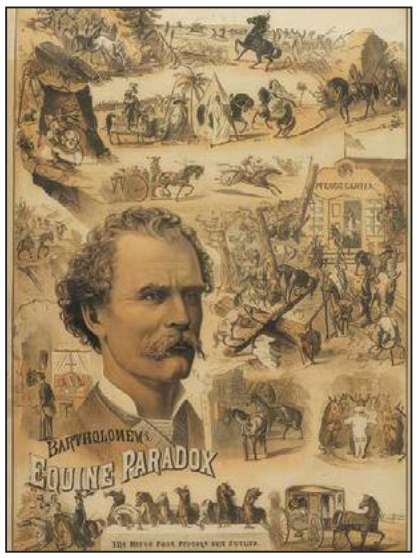
These noble animals, under the superior direction of their master, displayed an almost human intelligence, performing their wonderful feats with a docility that appears well-nigh miraculous. To see these creatures execute their intricate maneuvers is alone worth the full price of admission, proving as it does the natural intelligence and capacity to learn inherent in so common a domestic animal as the horse.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF PROF. GEO. BARTHOLOMEW.

The Eminent Animal Trainer and Director of Amusements.

In connection with this unparalleled exhibition, it is fitting that we lay before our readers a brief history of the proprietor and director himself, George Bartholomew. For years, this gentleman has stood at the vanguard of the American amphitheater, establishing a reputation second to none in the difficult and hazardous art of animal education.

Mr. Bartholomew is not a mere showman of the ordinary stamp; he is a philosopher of the equine mind. Long before organized troupes traversed our great frontiers by rail, Bartholomew was known across the territories for his Great Western



Circus. His early career was marked by a strict devotion to the training of horses. While other managers relied upon wild beasts or low buffoonery, he sought to elevate the ring by demonstrating what could be achieved through patience and systematic kindness.

His travels have taken him from the populated centers of the Atlantic states to the rugged mining camps of the Pacific slope.

Well do the citizens of Virginia City and the territories remember the grand parades of his company, when the major thoroughfares were lined with thousands of spectators admiring his beautiful stock to the inspiring music of his silver cornet band.

Throughout his long career, Professor Bartholomew has maintained that the horse is possessed of a higher order of sagacity than the world commonly admits. The perfection of his current champions, Wonder and Young America, stands as the glorious culmination of his life's work.

EDITORIAL NOTES & LOCAL ITEM.

The business management of the grand combination reflects the highest credit upon Mr. W. Bassett, the Advance Agent, whose energetic measures secured the universal satisfaction of our public.

The doors were opened at 7 o'clock, and despite the immense crush in the pit and boxes—the fees being fifty cents and one dollar respectively—the utmost order and decorum prevailed throughout the evening.

We can safely assure our neighbors in the adjacent townships that should Bartholomew's Circus appear in their vicinity, they will find its entertainment an ample equivalent for their time and money.

Articles found in the September 1862 Contra Costa Gazette, Picture from the Montana Historical Society

The Base Going Forward...

by Edi Birsan, Concordian edibirsan@gmail.com

The City of Concord announced on September 24 that the Navy has signed the Term Sheet that reflects the agreement of the City and Brookfield on financial and Phase Planning, the terms that was passed unanimously by the council on May 26, 2026.

Another step forward, I applaud this though urge caution. The signature is on a document titled "Non-binary Summary."

There will be a follow up document that will detail some more aspects that need to be worked out which might include something like the governing law, notification procedures, and the like.

However, the most significant factor is that this brings the Navy into an agreement with the City Council on the structure of the development. It also means that changes in the agreed phases give the Navy the right and duty to review and agree to any changes.

For example, the implementation of the recycled water purple pipes is not in the first build up phase.

That means that the streets laid out then will have to be ripped up again to put in the pipes later. While the current council has agreed to this, a future council may find the position untenable with the electorate. The Navy can then be used to veto the change.

But it could also be used the other way, the current phases also delay the provision of veteran services land to a later date, and pressure on the City could then be combined with Navy support to pressure Brookfield to step up and do right by our veterans earlier than they plan.

An interesting aspect is the treatment of Bunker City which has excess arsenic deposits. The agreement says that the Navy can store the removed soil on the base where there is no residential zoning required.

Take a look at the map and ask where would you put the equivalent of about 500 acres of soil that were removed about one foot deep. Wait. Bunker City is the last phase of development, meaning everywhere else is already built out.

This agreement will also limit the extent of what can be done in the community-involved Specific Plan. Whereas community members are inclined to ignore what hard work was agreed to by everyone that came before them and approach the Specific Plan as a means to redo things that they wanted in the first place.

Hopefully, it will not be a process of a death by a thousand cuts, and more significant issues will be presented for the battlefields that we are moving on.

I eagerly await the resolution of these issues as well as the creation of unintended challenges that will bring us some new "fun" in the future. Yes, we are a step closer, but I for one have waited long enough.

The opinions and any innuendo is the product of Edi Birsan at EdiBirsan@Gmail.com and not copyrighted by the National Football League and intended only for the entertainment of our audience. Go Niners.

Views of the Valley

Photos by Micah

It's starting to look a lot like Halloween. Seen on St, Francis St. in Concord. Photo by John Grubka.

Thanks to a connection between Concord Historical Society board member Mike Wendorf (right) and tule boat maker, Charlie Kennard of San Anselmo, there is a new exhibit in the Concord Museum. Courtesy CHS Facebook.

Magnificent Martinez Marina morning. Photo by Kevin Smith

Hispanic Heritage Days at the Grove in Downtown Clayton was quite the performances. Photo by Ann King

Above, Batman spotted at Flying Colors comic book store in Concord for Batman Days. Below, Martinez Refining Company Run for Education Fundraiser in Martinez. Photo by Thomas Rimple. Left, a gathering involving 14 different Concord Churches led by Sanctuary Ministries and Pastor Jim Shields, meet at Todos Santos for a September Saturday morning Prayer Walk.

Golden Mussels Detected at Lake Del Valle; Boating Rule Changes

The East Bay Regional Park District is notifying the public that highly invasive golden mussels have been detected in Lake Del Valle at Del Valle Regional Park in Livermore.

Effective immediately, boaters who launch at Lake Del Valle will be subject to a 30-day quarantine before their watercraft may be permitted at any other waterbody managed by the Park District. Boats that launch exclusively at Lake Del Valle and return with an intact Del Valle boat band will not be subject to the quarantine.

Waterbodies elsewhere in the Bay Area and beyond may have their own quarantine requirements, so boaters should check the websites of respective managing agencies for current rules.

The Park District has used the lake-specific bands since summer 2025. Golden mussels were first detected in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta at the Port of Stockton in October 2024. Golden mussels can thrive in water with much lower calcium levels, putting local water sources and aquatic ecosystems at greater risk of invasion. The species is native to rivers and creeks in coastal Asia and parts of South America.

Boaters who launch at Contra Loma in Antioch have been under the same quarantine rules that are now being implemented at Del Valle.

Current Inspection Policy

Boats without a Park District boat band are subject to inspection for the presence of quagga, zebra, and golden mussels. Inspection fees are $10 for motorized vessels and $5 for car-top watercraft and inflatables. Learn more at ebparks.org/mussels.

Watercraft requiring inspection include boats, kayaks, canoes, sailboats, inflatable craft, and any type of floating board. Inspections are required at the following locations:

Contra Loma Regional Park
Del Valle Regional Park
Lake Chabot Regional Park
Quarry Lakes Regional Recreation Area
Shadow Cliffs Regional Recreation Area

Clean, Drain, and Dry

Mussels can quickly contaminate the waterways and can rapidly spread. Golden mussels can attach to nearly any underwater surface, including boats, ropes, buoys nd aquatic plants that become entangled on anchors and trailers.

Inspect your watercraft, kayak, vests, paddles, and anything else that touched the water every time it is removed from a waterbody. Remove all debris, animals, and plants, and dispose of them in the trash. Drain all water from ballasts, bilges, and live wells. Allow all equipment to dry completely before entering another waterbody.

It Takes a Herd: How the Center for Elders' Independence and Connected Horse Are Redefining Whole-Person Care

by Aurelia Santos Photos by: Emma Boeckling, Paula Hertel, Aurelia Santos / Center for Elders'Independence

There is growing recognition that health is shaped by much more than what happens inside a clinic.

Research increasingly shows that social connection, meaningful activities, physical movement, and engagement with the community all play a significant role in health outcomes, particularly for older adults. This concept, known as social prescribing, is gaining momentum across the world as healthcare providers seek ways to support the whole person, not just a diagnosis.

Recently, participants from CEI experienced this approach firsthand through a partnership with Connected Horse, an organization that provides equine-assisted experiences for people living with memory loss and dementia, as well as their care partners.

Set against the backdrop of a peaceful stable in Pleasanton, participants were invited to slow down, engage their senses, and connect with horses through guided activities focused on mindfulness, trust, and non-verbal communication. The experience was less about learning a skill and more about creating opportunities for connection.

"People spend so much of their time communicating through words," explained Connected Horse co-founder Paula Hertel. "At the stables, participants learn about connection in a way that doesn't rely on verbal communication. For individuals living with memory loss, that can be incredibly powerful."

Participants began with breathing exercises, sensory walks, and mindfulness activities before meeting the horses. Over time, they progressed from observing the animals to grooming, leading, and interacting with them. The environment encouraged participants to focus on the present moment, build confidence, and experience a sense of calm.

The impact of programs like Connected Horse extends beyond a pleasant day outdoors. Research conducted in partnership with Stanford University and UC Davis found that care partners reported reduced feelings of depression, anxiety, and caregiver burden, along with improved social support and sleep quality.

Participants living with dementia experienced similar benefits, with positive outcomes still evident six months after participation. For CEI, these experiences reflect a broader philosophy of care.

"The PACE model has always been about caring for the whole person, not just treating a medical condition. Social prescribing is a natural extension of that philosophy.

Partnerships like Connected Horse help connect our participants to experiences that support their health, strengthen community, and remind us that healing can happens in many different ways," explains Sheryl Morasco, Director of Outreach and Enrolment at CEI.

Throughout the day, participants demonstrated just how meaningful these experiences can be. Emma Boeckling, Activity Coordinator at CEI PACE Concord, observed firsthand how quickly participants engaged with the horses. She shares, "I've seen the value of animal interaction, but it was amazing to see how horses connect with seniors." One participant, she noted, quickly earned the nickname "horse whisperer" after attracting the attention of nearly every horse in sight.

The partnership between CEI and Connected Horse demonstrates what becomes possible when healthcare organizations and community partners work together. By combining clinical care with meaningful community experiences, older adults can enjoy better health outcomes and improved quality of life.

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