

**The Last D-Day Survivor,  
 Martinez Papa Jake,  
 Meets World Leaders**

**Story on p. 4**



President Biden meets 'Luckiest Man' Papa Jake of Martinez in Normandy during D-Day celebration. Alamy images.

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

- Papa Jake, The Last Omaha Beach D-Day Survivor
- Washington DC; Our Incredible Nation's History on Display
- Diablo Gazette Art Gallery Page
- Best of Martinez Winners
- Water Quality Board Order to Cost Each Household \$5,500

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**Publisher's Notes**  
by David King

# May the Fourth Be With You!

The Fourth of July is one celebration that is difficult for Diablo Gazette to feature. Our release date comes just a couple of days before the day's events. June's edition is too early, August is too late.

So, in keeping with the spirit of celebrating our country, this edition is featuring a visit to the nation's Capital, and a story of a remarkable veteran from WWII, Papa Jake, who was an instrumental planner and survivor of the D-Day attack on Omaha Beach in Normandy that led to the defeat of Germany. He will also be a part of the Fourth of July Parade in Clayton.

Thanks to our correspondent Fabienne Ory of Normandy, France, for her help in reporting and photographing the D-Day celebration in Normandy involving our local celebrity from Martinez, Papa Jake Larson, age 101. (See cover photo, story on page 4). Ory will receive a copy of this edition, making her Diablo Gazette's most distant reader.

In regards, to Fourth of July, enjoy the local fireworks show of your choice, but remember, fireworks are illegal in Contra Costa County. They cause injuries and fires. The City of Concord now has a mobile app, Concord Connect, so that you can report illegal fireworks. Search Concord Connect online to download the app.

Speaking of fires, on June 5, the Kiwanis Club of Concord presented the Fireman of the Year Award at a special luncheon at Luna Restaurant in downtown Concord. That designation went to Josh Andrews. Congratulations to Josh.

Have a Happy Fourth and stay cool.



Firefighters Luncheon hosted by Luna's Habib Jacifi



Firefighter of the Year Josh Andrews is presented his plaque by Kiwanis Club of Concord member Sharon Jones

# Inspired Students Start Business As A Clean Way To Make Money

by David King

Schools are out for summer leaving many students with idle hands. But not for a group of Northgate graduates and upperclassmen; they have decided to start a window cleaning business called Pristine Window Services — and so far, things are going very well.

"I actually started this business myself last year, and it was just a small operation," says Ankit Chatriki. "Another friend of mine and I would go around knocking on doors with just squeegees and mops. We would do two to three houses a week."

After the first year, Chatriki did extensive research on window cleaning methods and tips on door-to-door salesmanship. "We wanted to go to a full-scale operation."

This year, the crew is up to 12 students, each trained in sales and as window washing technicians.

They have also invested in professional equipment, including the Xero Pure Water System. (Those who remember the show "Home Improvement can hear actor Tim Allen barking about now.)

This is a three-stage water filtration system that removes the minerals and particles that leave streaks and spots on windows. They can now wash windows of two- and three-story homes. They also purchased a water-fed pole and brushes.

"For some of the two and three-story houses, getting on a ladder, cleaning all the windows and squeegeeing them off tended to be dangerous, and most clients didn't want us to do that."

We serviced a few houses this year just using a squeegee and a mop and then from there, we bought the equipment. That ran us around \$4,000.

They chose to operate a business because they all have an interest in business administration and in owning a business in their future.

"A lot of us are teen entrepreneurs or aspiring entrepreneurs. We see possibilities!



Liam Barrett, Ankit Chatriki and Elijah Neil stand with their Xero Pure Water System



"My college doesn't start until September, and I didn't really see the point of wasting four months. I've always had friends that have the mindset to do something to keep ourselves busy and make some money."

Chatriki says they have learned many lessons from this that will help them in the future.

"Most of us do not believe in a regular 9 to 5 workday such as at a fast-food restaurant because it doesn't really build the long-term skills we are seeking.

While doing research they also explored market pricing and pledged to bring a better value. While competitive in per window pricing, their service includes cleaning inside and/or outside windows, frames, and screens. Best of all, they guarantee satisfaction.

When approached by their door-to-door salesperson at the Diablo Gazette office, I admired their self-determination and entrepreneurial spirit at such an early stage of life and wanted to support them. We have 34 windows here, and speaking as their client, we are very satisfied. They are the real deal. thepristinewindowservice.com

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# The Last Omaha Beach, D-Day Survivor

Having written two books about World War II, I couldn't wait to meet Papa Jake Larson, almost one hundred and two years old and one of our last remaining veterans of that conflict. And more incredibly, he was living close by in Martinez.

As I was about to discover, this amazing man and his extraordinary history might have gone unnoticed by most people had it not been for a small group of friends at the Bagel Street Café in Martinez.

In 2019, he mentioned he would like to go to Normandy for the 75th anniversary of D-Day, 6th of June. He wanted to pay homage to his fallen comrades. However, most of his military records had been destroyed in a fire at the National Personnel Records Center in St Louis in 1973. He couldn't prove he had fought in Normandy and been awarded a bronze star for meritorious service in a combat zone. The family did some investigation and finally found supporting documents.

In order to afford the travel, friends Linda Lannell and her daughter Janna started a GoFundMe campaign that got support from all over the world, which quickly exceeded \$10,000.

But how did a country boy from Minnesota attract such notoriety and survive some of the deadliest battles of the war? Self-labeled as the "Luckiest Man in the World," he pointed his finger upwards, saying, "Somebody up there is taking care of me."

It began in high school, where he took an option—learning to type—believing that it would help him progress in life, the only boy in a class of girls. It was a fortuitous decision.

His father at first refused to allow him to go to high school since he was needed for chores on the farm. But his older brother offered to take them on, and his father relented.

Later, penniless, he and his cousin decided to join the National Guard, soon to become the US Army after Pearl Harbor, to earn \$12 a month. Big for his age, he lied about it and was fortunate the recruitment officer never questioned it. He was only 15 years old. Four years later, he found himself shipped off to war.

While stationed in Northern Ireland with the 135th infantry as the company clerk, he was shocked when he was transferred from the infantry to the G 3 Operations—Training and Planning for Fifth Corps. Such a move was unheard of in the army, and it happened just because he could type 50 words a minute. He also got a promotion to corporal. Luck followed him soon afterward.

When most of the 135th were shipped out to North



Jake returns to Normandy in 2019 as the only surviving member of his unit



Troops wade ashore at Omaha Beach from a LCPV landing craft

Africa, because of his clerical skills, he was singled out by Colonel John Hill. "You and I are moving to Portsmouth, England," he said.

For the next two years, he found himself involved in the planning for the D-Day assault on Omaha Beach. "As a top-secret BIGOT (British Invasion of Germany Occupied Territory), I typed the name of every single man who landed on Omaha Beach," he said, holding out his hands— 34,000 names.

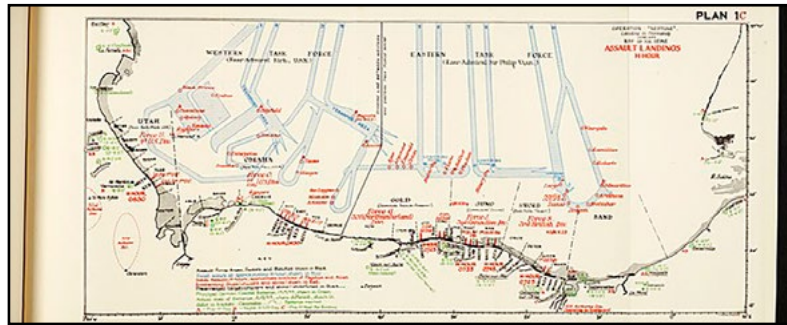
He later survived the landing on the beach because he was the first onto the landing craft and, therefore, the last man off. As the men ran single file up the mine-filled beach, dodging machine gun and mortar fire, he followed in the footsteps of the man in front of him, knowing he would be safe. There would either be no mines, or they would already have exploded!

Having dug a foxhole in which to pass the night, he was suddenly ordered by the colonel to take the night shift at the command post. Lucky for him. In the morning, he found that a huge piece of shrapnel had fallen directly into the hole. If he had slept there, he would most certainly have been seriously wounded and possibly killed.

When I asked Jake for more details about D-Day once he landed at 10:00 AM, it was curious that other than for the first hour and then at nightfall, his mind was almost blank. Advancing inland, and as the clerical assistant to Colonel Hill, he was involved in the battles of St Lo followed by that of Paris, where for this first time in two months he had a proper shower.

Finally, he fought at the Battle of the Bulge, where the US suffered 90,000 casualties and 19,000 killed. Miraculously, he was never seriously injured. After one near-death incident, Colonel Hill remarked, "You're like a cat with nine lives." When he was demobilized six months later at the age of 22, he had been a soldier for seven years.

Jake has returned to Normandy each year since 2019's 75th D-Day anniversary. This June he was flown in for the 80th anniversary of the invasion and as he told me, "The ones that did not make it back from the war are the real heroes." Then he repeated, "I'm



'D-Day' Normandy Landings, 6 June 1944 (42410920432). Jake was involved in the planning of the Normandy Beach invasion

the luckiest man in the world." And this man's your neighbor.

Michael Barrington writes mainly historical novels: *Let the Peacock Sing*, *The Ethiopian*

*Affair*, *Becoming Anya*, *The Baron of Bengal Street*, *No Room for Heroes*, *Passage to Murder* is a murder/mystery, *Magic at Stonehenge*, is a collection of 42 short stories and *Take a Priest*



JMichael Barrington presents his WWII based novel to Papa Jake.

*Like You*, is a memoir. He blogs on his website: [www.mbwriter.net](http://www.mbwriter.net).

## Heartfelt Gratitude From France, 'Thank You Papa Jake' by David King

Papa Jake Larson, Martinez, was virtually a forgotten veteran up until 2019, when he decided to attend the 75th D-Day Celebration in Normandy to pay homage to his comrades who died storming Omaha Beach.

The 10-day D-Day celebration there is extraordinary with re-enactments, flyovers, church bells ringing, sirens, refurbished equipment and soldiers dressed in American military apparel. Notable speakers included French President Emmanuel Macron, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III, and President Joe Biden. Each were personally honored to shake hands with Papa Jake and other Veterans.

Particularly impressive is the admiration the people of France expressed towards Papa Jake, and the Veterans. They cheered and chanted his name; they wanted to meet him and touch him. Many knew of Papa Jake due to his "Storytime with Papa Jake," on TikTok, which has close to 900,000 followers.

I spoke with Fabienne Ory, of Normandy, who attended this year's 80th anniversary celebration. She and her family met Jake for the first time.

"I am not registered on TikTok, so I didn't know Jake before this year. I heard about him in a

report on American veterans on the French channel in May," Ory says. "How is it possible that we didn't know of him earlier? He is so fabulous."

Other attendees were equally enamored.

"We all had the same feeling: admiration, respect, recognition. People were really happy to see the veterans. Jake was very nice and warm to all the people. His story, his kindness, it moved people.

The day before he left Normandy, Jake was interviewed on a Normandy channel. I remember Jake's words: 'Forget negativity!'

"He gives us a lesson in life. In these difficult times, it restores confidence and hope.

"Thanks, Papa Jake. Thanks to his family for sharing his history with us. Thanks to all the veterans. Thanks to those who have died for freedom.

"American people, take care of them, and take the time to talk to them. We have too little time to spend with them.

"I hope to see them one more time in Normandy. I will always keep their memory."

France has love for Americans and our Papa Jake.



Papa Jake and Grand daughter McKaela who started the TikTok for him catapulting Jake to celebrity status.



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**MAY 25 | LEO VIGIL & THE "ROCKIN' HORNS"**  
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OR CHECK OUT [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CITYOFCLAYTONCA](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CITYOFCLAYTONCA)

# calendar of events

## JULY 4th EVENTS

**Clayton July 4th, Clayton's Annual 4th of July Parade**  
"Celebrating 60 Years of Community"  
10 AM, pancake breakfast at 7 a.m.

**Concord July 4 Parade, 8:00 am:** Kids Fun Run, 8:00 am: Rotary Pancake Breakfast, 8:15 am : 5k Run & Walk, 10:00 am: Independence Day Parade, Events at Mt. Diablo High School, 4:00 PM: Festival Gates Open, 9:00 PM: Fireworks over Concord. Todos Santos Plaza & Mount Diablo High School, 2175 Willow Pass Rd. Concord

**Martinez July 4, Annual Downtown Martinez 4th of July Parade.** Over 40 spirited entries march down the heart of downtown Martinez in a dazzling display. A fireworks show dazzles spectators at the Waterfront Park Martinez Shoreline at 9pm. 245 N Court St, Martinez

**Pleasant Hill July 4, Pleasant Hill July 4th.** Firecracker 5K Race/ Kids 100-yard dash, 7:45 AM -10 AM. Parade, 9:30-10:30 AM. Party at Pleasant Hill Park with live music, food and fun for the kids, 10:30 AM-1:30 PM, 167 Gregory Lane. Fireworks, 8:45 PM, College Park High School, 201 Viking Dr. For more information, visit <https://phjuly4.com>.

**Walnut Creek July 4th Woodlands Parade & Pool Party, 11 AM - 5 PM.** The parade starts promptly at 11:30 at Valle Verde School on Peachwillow, and heads to The Woodlands Cabana Club for the biggest party of the year, with free swim, boat races, food trucks, ice cream, games, and the Cabana bar will be open. This is open to the public. 111 Longleaf Dr. Walnut Creek. [www.SwimWoodlands.org](http://www.SwimWoodlands.org)

## CLAYTON

### EVENTS

**Thru August 31, Concerts in the Grove.** 6 - 8:30 PM. •July 6 Strange Brew 60's-90's Hits •July 20 Lavay Smith Red Hot Skillet Lickers 1930's-1940's swing & blues. •August 3 Pride & Joy R&B and Motown

**September 21, Clayton Special Car Show,** 12 noon to 2 pm. Downtown parking area near Clayton Historical Museum.

### LIBRARY

**July 31, Safeguarding Assets and Identity,** 11 AM. An attorney from Contra Costa County Senior Legal Services explains how to safeguard your assets and identity from scams and theft. Registration is required. *Clayton Library, 6125 Clayton Rd.* For more information please call 925-673-0659. <https://ccclib.org>

## CONCORD

### EVENTS

**Thru July 31, Veranda Unplugged,** 7 -8:30 PM, Come jam with us in the park and enjoy some great local bands! Bring a Blanket. Bring your friends & family. Stay for

fun. •July 3, Ukulenny & Dos Pogi Boys, July 10 Maximilliano Cortes, July 17 TBD, •July 24 August Lee Stevens, •July 31 Hear in Color. The Veranda, 2001-2003 Diamond Blvd. Concord

**Thru - September 26, Music and Market series** every Thursday(except July 4). •July 11 - Roy Rogers and the Delta Rhythm Kings (Blues)•July 18 - Zepparella (All female Zeppelin Tribute)•July 25 - Dirty Cello (Spin on Blues, Rock and Americana)•Aug 1 - Steve Snyder's Big Band (Playing the best from Concord Jazz Festival)

**July 11, The Groovy Judy Rocks!** 6-9PM. FREE. Legends at Diablo Creek Golf Course, 4050 Port Chicago Hwy. Concord

**July 13, Bike Rodeo,** Concord Police Department Presents Bike Rodeo! 10AM-3PM, Featuring Pro Flatland Rider: Pete Brandt. What is there to do at Bike Rodeo? Skills Course, Helmet Fitting, Free Bike Repair, Raffle & Prizes, OG Tacos! Music. New Hope Church, 2120 Olivera Ct. Concord

**July 18-21, Port Chicago 80th Anniversary Weekend 2024.** • July 19, Contra Costa County Bar Association Port Chicago Taskforce Workshop, 1 PM, to delve into the multifaceted history of Port Chicago. Concord Hilton, 1970 Diamond Blvd Concord. • July 20th, National Park Service's 80th Anniversary Port Chicago Commemoration. 10:30 AM, the annual Port Chicago Commemoration with a reception to follow the ceremony. The event will be held at Military Ocean Terminal Concord (MOTCO), an active military base, requiring all visitors to have a reservation and a security check. Visitors aged 17 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Reservation REQUIRED before July 12. Email:POCH\_General\_Info@nps.gov 925-228-8860 x6520

**July 27, The Billy Martini Show!** Rockin' Original tunes and a groovy 70's Band, 5 - 9PM, \$25 at the door. Gehringer Community Gardens, 3986 Beechwood Dr, Concord

### FARMERS MARKETS

**Pacific Coast Farmers Market**  
<https://www.pcfma.org>  
Todos Santos Plaza.  
Tuesdays, 10AM- 2PM Year Round  
Thursdays 4PM thru September 26

## MARTINEZ

### EVENTS

**July 7 (and every other Sunday), R & B Brunch,** 11 AM-3 PM. Join us for a lit R&B Boozy Brunch, where we'll groove to R&B, indulge in delicious food, bottles, and vibe with the coolest crowd in town! Inside Market & Main; 610 Main Street, Martinez

**July 20, English/Western Horse Show,** 8 am, Tri-Cities Horsemen's Assoc is hosting a CSHA approved E/W horse show at the equestrian arena in Radke-Martinez Park, Martinez. Arena located at end of Joe DiMaggio Drive. Show is part of CSHA Region 5 Buckle Series! 610 Ferry St, Martinez. [www.tricityhorsemen.org](http://www.tricityhorsemen.org)

**July 14 thru September 15,**

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**Martinez Open Air Market 9 AM-1 PM,** Join us on the 2nd Sunday of each month through September for the Downtown Open Air Market featuring Vintage, Collectibles, Antiques, Arts & Crafts, and more. You will find us on the 800 block of Main St. during the Farmers' Market. 800 Main St., Martinez

### FARMERS MARKETS

**Pacific Coast Farmers Market**  
<https://www.pcfma.org>  
Sundays, 9AM-1PM, Year Round.

## PLEASANT HILL

### EVENTS

**Thru September 1, Concerts By The Lake 2024** Every other Sunday. Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM By The Lake at City Hall, Pleasant Hill City Hall. 100 Gregory Ln, Pleasant Hill. •July 7 - The Big Jangle Family Fun Zone). • July 21 - Dirty Cello •August 4- Hot for Teacher

**Thru September, Thursdays, Downtown Pleasant Hill Annual Summer Concert Series,** 7 PM - 9PM. •July 18th ~ The Cheeseballs (Funk, Soul + R&B), •August 15th ~ Andre Thierry (Accordian Soul), •September 19th ~ Foreverland (Michael Jackson Tribute Band)

**2024 Pleasant Hill Blues & Blues Festival** •July 19 | Pre-Party | 6:00-9:00 pm •July 20 | B&B Festival | 3:00-9:00 pm. Be here for a FREE summer party in Pleasant Hill Park. Kick it in the park and vibe to a lineup of live music. Dance. 147 Gregory Ln, Pleasant Hill Tickets required. <https://bit.ly/BuyBeerTastingTickets24>

**July 28, That '70s Band,** 4:00PM to 8:00PM, 548 Contra Costa Blvd G, Pleasant Hill

## WALNUT CREEK

### EVENTS

**July 5, Sculpture Sip and Stroll,** 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM, Ruth Bancroft Gardens, invites you to indulge your senses as you leisurely wander through the enchanting garden pathways, adorned with an exquisite display of sculpture art from local sculpture artists. 1552 Bancroft Road, Walnut Creek

**July - The Merry Mixers of Contra Costa hosts regular dances** monthly @ 7:30-10pm Fridays, open to adult dancers of all ages. Spacious dance floor, no-host bar, and live music for only \$20 per person. •July 5 Natural Blend

preceded by dance lesson 7 PM •July 19 Bob Gutierrez Trio preceded by potluck dinner at 6:30 PM. at Walnut Creek Elks Lodge, 1475 Creekside Dr, Walnut Creek

**July 20, Open Air Artisan Faire | Makers Market - Walnut Creek,** 11 am-5 pm, Summer is in full swing and there's no better way to spend the day than shopping 50+ local artisans with friends! On Broadway Plaza in Walnut Creek, between Nordstrom & Macy's

### FARMERS MARKETS

**Contra Costa Certified Farmers Market**

<http://www.cccfm.org>

Sundays 9AM-1PM, Year Round. Locust Street between Cole and Lacassie St <http://www.cccfm.org/walnut-creek-market/>

**Diablo Valley Farmers Market** North Wiget Ln. and Mitchell Dr. Shadelands, Walnut Creek, Saturdays 9AM-1PM Year Round 1799 Locust St. [www.cafarmersmkt.com](http://www.cafarmersmkt.com)

### Rossmoor Farmers Market

Rossmoor residents and their families only. Fridays 9AM-1PM, Golden Rain Rd. <http://www.cafarmersmkt.com/rossmoor-farmers-market>

### LESHER CENTER

**July 11, Summer Sounds: Tom Rigney and Flambeau,** 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM. High energy, uplifting music.

**July 19, Spanish Harlem Orchestra,** 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM

New York style, hard core salsa.

**July 20, Best of San Francisco Stand-Up Comedy: Latinx Comedy Night,** 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM, Latinx comedy stars come together for this one-night-only event!

**July 27, FOREJOUR - Tribute to Foreigner & Journey.** 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM. Paying tribute to '80s mega bands FOREIGNER & JOURNEY!

Leshner Center for the Arts 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, <https://www.lesherartscenter.org>. Tickets: (925)943-7469 Wed-Sun Noon to 6:00 p.m.

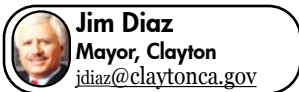
## Other Cities

### EVENTS

**CROCKETT: July 21, Crockett Sugartown Festival 2024,** 11:00 AM - 6:00 PM. 16th Annual Free Music Festival & Street Fair. Great Arts & Crafts, Food, Beer, and Two Stages of Live Entertainment. Crockett Chamber of Commerce event. 850 Pomona St., Crockett

**PITTSBURG: July 11, SIR Branch 19 Monthly Luncheon** on Thursday, July 11th, 11 AM with a social hour and lunch served at noon. It will be at the Pittsburg Elks' Lodge, 200 Marina Blvd., Pittsburg. Guest Speaker. SIR is a social organization of senior men who get together and participate in fun activities. Our motto is: "To make friends for life". [www.sirinc2.org/branch19](http://www.sirinc2.org/branch19) or call: 925 338-1996 for more information.

**SUBMIT YOUR CALENDAR ENTRIES** by the 20th of the month before Issue month. [diablogazette@gmail.com](mailto:diablogazette@gmail.com)



**Jim Diaz**  
Mayor, Clayton  
jdiaz@claytonca.gov

## Clayton Mayor

# A Letter from the Mayor

May 2024

*Dear Friends and Neighbors,*

Hello to All:

Here are some highlights for the City of Clayton happenings since our last Council Meeting on Tuesday, June 4, 2024.

Tuesday, June 4, 2024: The Council approved the Fiscal Year 2024-25 General Fund Budget, and related Fund Budgets, and the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Salary Schedule.

Also, the Council approved the Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan for Fiscal Years 2023/24 to 2027/28.

We did not have a Council Meeting on Tuesday, June 18, 2024.

Additionally, our 17th Annual Concerts In The Grove Season is off to a great start. The entertainment has been excellent. And, the attendance is also very good. The Season opened with Leo Vigil and the Rockin' Horns, then, R.W. Smith and the California Cowboys, and on Saturday, June 2, Mixed Nuts.

On Saturday, July 6 at 6:00 P.M., Strange Brew is set to perform.

Be sure to come out and join us at The Grove Park to attend

at least one of the remaining five Concerts. The complete Concert Schedule is available on the City website and on page 5 of this edition.

To continue celebrating Clayton's 60th Anniversary, Thursday, July 4th offers a fun day starting with the Clayton Valley Rotary Pancake Breakfast from 7-10 A.M. at Endeavor Hall. Then, the Annual July 4th Parade Downtown, with Ed Moresi as Grand Marshall. This will be wonderful way for the entire Community to celebrate Clayton and Independence Day.

Finally, the City Council continues interviewing for a new City Manager. We will keep you posted on the progress.

As your mayor, I will always continue to work hard to maintain Clayton's small town charm and character while running an open and transparent local government.

You can reach out to me directly with any questions or concerns at 925-673-7316 or JimD@claytonca.gov.

I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

*Jim*



**Edi Birsan**  
Concord Mayor  
cityofconcord.org

## Concord Mayor

# Podium Posturing

Some nine years ago I wrote a little guide, "How to Talk to the Council," which opened with one of my mantras: "Silence never moved a politician, they are either listening to you or to someone else, so what's it going to be?"

Since then, there have been some significant shifts in the culture of speaking from the podium that clearly has been counter-productive to the concept that talking is supposed to lead to listening.

Yelling, attacking and ranting at a Councilmember has a really bad track record at getting the cooperation of a Council to address your concerns. Toss in some fundamental racism, bigotry, cursing now and then and you must really wonder, "Do they think this works?"

Putting those incidents aside, let us proceed on the basis that you want to get something that is important to you done. Let us go through some basics.

### The Brown Act Clampdown

The Brown Act was started in the early 1950's to try to get more transparency and access to the general public while at the same time severely restricting elected officials from talking privately to themselves. Classically in a five-person Council, only two Electeds may talk together on any one topic unless it is on the agenda to be specifically talked about.

Each item on the agenda has a provision in the Brown Act, which allows the public to make comments on that item. So, you are not supposed to use public comment on an agenda item relating to the replacement of blue paint on city lamp posts to talk about the latest change in the property tax on sewer fees.

However, in Concord, there is the agenda item that typically comes first that calls for public comment for items not on the agenda. This is usually where the fireworks go and where people lose track of the link between talking and listening.

The Brown Act does not allow the council listening to your off-agenda issue to start a discussion with you or to take direct council action on it. At best they can turn to staff and say something like "follow up on this." They cannot say do this or that.

One of the biggest fails in this scenario is that the speaker has not attempted to talk directly to one of the councilmembers, ideally their specific district councilmember.

If in a city where all are elected at-large (no districts), then speak to one of the folks that might have a better understanding of how to do what you want done, regardless of their support for it. But if you think they would support it, that is a really good starting place.

Talk to the Elected about your issue one on one, face to face. This



helps develop your concept of the issue and the action you want. It also brings the councilmember on board to hopefully support turning your future public request into an agenda item, assuming they cannot resolve it directly with staff. Thus, avoiding the whole podium show in the first place.

This face to face is important when you have an item that may be critical of them since you may find out that the fundamental issue at stake is not what you think or was already resolved or that your perception is simply wrong.

For example, one person came upset that there was a \$250 donation from a developer to a councilmember and there was a million-dollar check given. After being critical of the councilmember in public they were subsequently corrected when it was pointed out that the funds were by award of the State to the Non-profit run separately from the company and the city was simply the pass-through vehicle for the funds. The speaker thus lost credibility as 'jumping to conclusion' was clearly seen as just an attempt to attack the councilmember.

If you are going to take a throw at someone, make sure you are not using a boomerang and missing the target.

You will be pleasantly surprised that when you approach a councilmember one on one with a concern how willing they are to deal directly with you and maybe bring it up with the city manager or to privately correct your misunderstanding of the facts or the dynamics of what is going.

Always remember the real goal in talking is to get them to listen and then to act.

*Comments above are by Edi Birsan and are not part of an official government statement but it is a pity that cities do not leave guides out on how to talk to the council. If you want one, let's talk about it at Peet's Coffee on a Saturday at 11:00 a.m. at Oak Grove and Treat — my office away from City Hall. EdiBirsan@gmail.com*

# Contra Costa Crisis Center Holds Open House

On July 24, the Contra Costa Crisis Center will host an open house from 3:00 -6:00 p.m. Of course, you are invited.

This is your opportunity to see firsthand what makes Contra Costa Crisis Center unique. Enjoy tasty bites and refreshing drinks as you tour the center and get to know more about the Crisis Center and what they do. Spend quality time with the Board of Directors and staff as they answer questions.

You will learn about vital programs such as the 988 Crisis and Suicide Prevention,

Help Me Grow, Grief Counseling Service and 211 Social Services and Resources.

The newest pilot program, Contra Costa Services Network (CCSN) extends the capabilities of Contra Costa's 211 resource system directly to service providers throughout the County.

You will see beautiful pieces from our friends at ARTCCC (Arts Contra Costa County), a grassroots service and advocacy arts organization whose top priority is an equitable and sustainable arts organization for Contra Costa County. They connect the Latinx artist communities of Contra Costa County through public



artwork, community celebrations, and exhibitions. Works shown at the event will include art by Jesse Hernandez and Richard Muro Salazar.

### You must RSVP to attend.

The event is free, but donations are requested of \$20 or more to support their mission. Your contributions will help the most vulnerable populations in Contra Costa County during times of crisis.

Contra Costa Crisis Center is located at 307 Lennon Ln, Walnut Creek. They look forward to seeing you there.



## Seniors Can Stay in Their Home

### with Some Safety Planning

“I’m not going anywhere,” say 92% of seniors whose primary desire is to stay in their homes. They do not want to move unless they have to. Staying in your own home is ideal, but how to accomplish that safely takes some forethought and planning.

‘Unless they have to’ often means a fall, illness, dizziness, changing family situation, the pull of grandchildren, etc., all of which can come at a moment’s notice.

A fall, surgery, knee or hip issue can render our home a challenge overnight. Yardwork becomes harder to keep up as you have in the past. The roof is older; bathroom needs updating to be ADA-friendly (American with Disabilities Act). the kitchen becomes hard to navigate with a walker, and there are those stairs. Over time, your home can simply become less functional.

With a little pre-planning, you can avoid a sudden need to move.

Simple things can make your home more accessible and easier to navigate. Besides the common recommendations of taller toilets and grab bars, there are other things that work well.

Take the Stiltz Lifts (Stiltzlifts.com) for example, a plexiglass type elevator that I saw in a Rossmoor home I was showing to a senior client. We thought it would be claustrophobic and use too much room. We were wrong on both counts. More

importantly, it rendered the entire home completely accessible. It had a smaller footprint, did not require major modifications, and seemed affordable.



Another simple change that can make a dramatic difference is having pull-out drawers in your cabinets. Do you find yourselves on your knees pulling out something from a lower cabinet? Installing pull-out shelving can alleviate back problems and improve accessibility to things you want to use more often but don’t because they are difficult to get to.

Whether you are looking for improvements that will increase your home’s appeal later if you have to sell, plan on what you will do if you become immobile even for a short time, and figure out how you will navigate your home so that you do not have to move suddenly.

If selling is in your future, make the improvements that bring in more money. Those improvements should be no more than a couple of years old for the buyer of today to find them valuable. Remember your 1980 remodel is older than some of the buyers who might buy your home.



## Ten Things to Know Before Adopting a Kitten

July 10th is National Kitten Day. It was established to create opportunities for abandoned kittens to find loving homes. In honor of this special day, here are some tips about what to expect if you are thinking about adopting a purring fur ball.

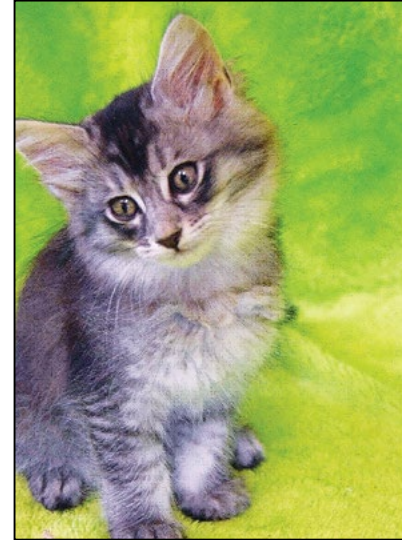


Photo by Diane Walsh, endlesspaws28.com

1) Manage your expectations. Cats do everything on their own terms. A shy kitten may want to hide under the bed by day and prowl by night until it adjusts to its new home.

2) Cats are easy to housebreak but be prepared to clean out the litter box.

3) Kittens do not like belly rubs or rough housing. They can get overstimulated and may use their claws or teeth to show their annoyance. Don’t panic, just distract them with your other hand with a toy, then disengage until they calm down.

4) Work with a rescue to find the feline personality that fits your lifestyle. Do you want an energetic one? Are you looking for a cuddly companion? Do you

find vocalizations appealing or do you want one that will never meow?

5) Learn what foods and plants are toxic to cats. Here are some common foods to avoid: onions, garlic, raw eggs, chocolate, alcohol, grapes, raisins, and, yes, warm cow’s milk can make a kitten sick. Seasonal plants like mistletoe and poinsettia, plus lilies, and aloe vera are toxic to kittens. Research the plants in your house and make sure the toxic ones are out of reach.

And speaking of hazards, secure cleaning supplies and human medications. Also, tape or hide electrical cords to keep your kitty from chewing on them.

6) Keep them indoors. There are a lot of hazards outside from coyotes, cars, to getting lost. Cats also pose a hazard to backyard birds. Create a cat run if you feel strongly that they need some outdoor time. Make sure you have a scratching post and an environment enriched with toys. Store breakables out of reach. If you are gone for long hours, consider adopting a bonded pair.

7) Cats can live up to twenty years. They will not remain that cute fur ball forever. Be prepared to commit to this kitten for a long time.

8) Talk with your landlord to make sure kittens are allowed if you live in a rental home or apartment.

9). Do not force a kitten into a cat carrier. Like dogs, they need to be trained, so go slow and make the cat carrier feel like a safe space.

10) Cat overpopulation is a big problem. Make sure you spay or neuter your kitten. Neutering prevents testicular cancer, prostate cancer, and some hernias. Spayed females have a reduced risk of breast cancer and fewer uterus infections.

Most evidence suggests that the domestication of cats occurred over 8,000 years ago. The longevity of the human-cat bond is a huge testament to the benefits the addition of a cat can make to a household.

Here is a selected list of local places to adopt kittens:

- Contra Costa Animal Services, Martinez
- Joybound (Formerly ARF), Walnut Creek
- Community Concern for Cats, Walnut Creek
- Cat Support Network, Walnut Creek
- The East Bay SPCA

Jill Hedgecock is a local author of several novels featuring animals. Her new release “In Shadow’s Reflection” is the third novel in her young adult Doberman series. This novel, along with “Between Shadow’s Eyes” (Book 1) and “From Shadow’s Perspective” (Book 2), is available on amazon.com.

### MONTHLY MARKET REPORT

#### MAY / 2024

CLAYTON	CONCORD
<b>Existing SFR Median Price</b> <b>\$1.34M</b> % Change from Last Year: <b>+23.2%</b>	<b>Existing SFR Median Price</b> <b>\$860K</b> % Change from Last Year: <b>+2.4%</b>
<b>MARKET COMPETITION</b> Median Days on Market: <b>12</b> Sales-to-List Price %: <b>103.9%</b> % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices: <b>22.2%</b>	<b>MARKET COMPETITION</b> Median Days on Market: <b>9</b> Sales-to-List Price %: <b>101.1%</b> % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices: <b>28.1%</b>
MARTINEZ	WALNUT CREEK
<b>Existing SFR Median Price</b> <b>\$840K</b> % Change from Last Year: <b>-1.2%</b>	<b>Existing SFR Median Price</b> <b>\$1.69M</b> % Change from Last Year: <b>+4.3%</b>
<b>MARKET COMPETITION</b> Median Days on Market: <b>11</b> Sales-to-List Price %: <b>102.5%</b> % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices: <b>37.9%</b>	<b>MARKET COMPETITION</b> Median Days on Market: <b>8</b> Sales-to-List Price %: <b>104.3%</b> % of Active Listings Who Reduced Prices: <b>40.4%</b>

SOURCE: Car.org

**Terrylynn Fisher**

REALTOR® | CRS, SRES, CSP Elite Agent  
 925.876.0966 | DRE# 00615420  
 Info@BuyStageSell.com | BuyStageSell.com

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For more information, contact the Concord Ambassadors (925) 672-4562  
concordambassadors@gmail.com





## Unlocking the Benefits of Certificates

If you're looking for a safe and secure investment option that offers predictable returns, then it's time to explore certificates. Whether you're starting your financial journey or planning for the future, certificates present a range of benefits that can help you achieve your financial goals. Let's delve into the key features and advantages of certificates and why you should consider adding them to your investment portfolio.

### Safety and security: Protecting your hard-earned money

One of the primary benefits of certificates is the safety and security they provide. Certificates are insured up to \$250,000 for credit unions by the NCUA, and at banks by the FDIC. This means that even if your bank or credit union were to face financial difficulties, your investment is protected by the government-provided insurance.

### Higher interest rates: Growing your money faster

Compared to traditional savings accounts, certificates often offer higher dividend rates. As a result, your money can grow at a faster rate, allowing you to maximize your earnings over the fixed term of your certificate. By choosing a certificate, you can make your money work harder and enjoy the benefits of compounding dividends. Compounding dividends means that you earn dividends on not only the initial amount of the deposit into your certificate (the principal balance), but also on the dividends that that are earned each month.

### Fixed term: Predictable returns and disciplined saving

Certificates come with a fixed term, which means you agree to keep your funds deposited for a specific duration, typically ranging from a few months to several years. This fixed term allows you to anticipate and plan for the returns on your investment. It also promotes disciplined saving habits, as early withdrawals from certificates may result in penalties. By committing to a fixed term, you ensure a reliable and predictable source of income while cultivating a savings mindset.

### Saving for future goals: Achieving financial milestones

Whether you are saving for a down payment on a house, funding a dream vacation, or preparing for a major life event, certificates can help you reach your financial milestones. By setting aside funds, you're taking a proactive step towards achieving your goals and protecting those funds from unnecessary spending. The fixed term of the certificate encourages long-term planning and ensures that your money is working toward your goals.

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*Written in conjunction with AI*

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# COME SEE THE WORLD CHAMPION CONCORD BLUE DEVILS

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SCAN ME



# Behind Every Great Artist...

Behind every great artist, there is almost always an artistic great who was a formative source of inspiration. For Georgia O'Keeffe, it was Arthur Wesley Dow. For Claude Monet it was Eugene - Louis Boudin.

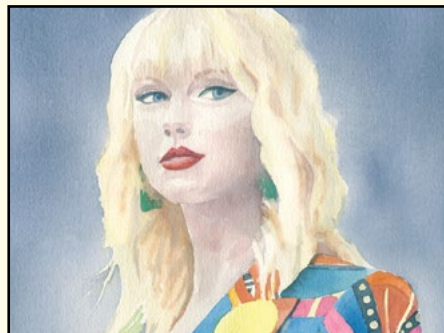
"Inspired by the Greats" is the theme for the upcoming exhibit at aRt Cottage. The exhibit will be showing July through August and has works by the LAA (Lamorinda Art Alliance). This theme, "Inspired by the Greats" gifts artists the opportunity to pay tribute to influencers each artist counts as a "great" for them - e.g., architects, artists, musicians, photographers, sculptors, literary figures, teachers, or a friend with the sum of all parts telling the story of style, temperament, individuality and respect for creativity in all its manifestations.

This show will feature original pieces of artwork in various media. Participating watercolor artist, Samantha McNally states, "I was inspired to paint Taylor Swift for this show because I am inspired by the good role model she is for my niece who loves her. Taylor inspires today's young people with her kindness and talent. She shows us what happiness looks like. She's Americana (the name of her documentary.)"

Robert Anke, on the other hand, is exhibiting a pen and ink drawing. Anke states, "I am inspired by his Holiness the Dalai Lama for many reasons, but mostly for the example he sets with his humility, and the huge role he's played in the global spread of mindfulness practice and kindness as a spiritual path."

Nora Krauss may share a moment of reflection on her childhood impression of her influencers. Her piece is an acrylic painting which has a bold playful feel to it. She credits two influencers, Miro and Calder. Nora gives "a bit of a nod to Miro." She says, "I found an affinity with his work as a child because I thought they (his works) were childlike, in a good way." Her painting, she states, "is also inspired by Calder because I love his playfulness and his mobiles."

You will want to see this exhibit and meet the artists. They will be available for



Taylor Swift by Samantha McNally



Dalai Lama by Robert Anke



Dangle Thoughts by Nora Krauss

questions and answers at our reception on July 13, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. Hear the stories about their influencers.

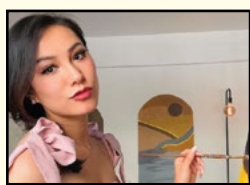
All are welcome to this is a free event. Feel free to bring your children so they can learn about art also. Refreshments and music are on the house. See you at the artist reception at 2238 Mt. Diablo St. in downtown Concord.

## JOR Fine Art Gallery Presents "Radiant Visions"

JOR Fine Art Gallery has announced its upcoming exhibit "Radiant Visions," displaying the captivating works of two exceptionally talented artists Yijun Ge and Patty Taylor. The exhibit will be open to the public from July 20 through October 27, 2024.



Award-winning artist Yijun Ge has mastered the art of Surrealism, bringing to life an enchanting interplay of light and shadow in her works. Yijun's artistic journey began with charcoal drawing during her grade school years in private studios. She pursued printmaking at the prestigious Hubei Institute of Fine Art University, where she also taught workshops in oil painting, charcoal drawing, and printmaking. Yijun further honed her craft by earning an MFA in painting from the Academy of Art University, San Francisco. Her art, celebrated by professors and



Award-winning artist Yijun Ge



Ceramic artist Patty Taylor.

peers alike, has transcended academic boundaries, reaching audiences both in the U.S. and internationally.

As a master of Raku and Pit Fire techniques, Patty Taylor's fascination with the texturing of clay and its transformative properties takes center stage in her work. Using clay like fabric, Patty creates pieces with stunning matte finishes that transition into high luster, reflecting dramatic colors and moods. "My heart is open to the splendor of mystery in the creative processes and I believe it is at the core of spirituality."

The exhibit will kick off with an opening reception on July 20, from 4 to 6 p.m.. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet the artists and discuss their work.

The JOR Fine Art Gallery is open Wednesday through Sunday, from 12 PM to 5 PM, and is located at 1026 Oak Street in Clayton. Admission to the exhibit is



## Main Street Arts Has A New Look

July will be a month of new beginnings for Main Street Arts. Bay Area glass artists, Jerry Hild, Jane Russell, and Carol Rose will present "A Touch of Glass" from July 3 to July 28. This show offers a unique array of glass pieces to the public.



Chris Granillo

Jane Russell has been working with glass since 2010 after retiring as a school psychologist for the Mt. Diablo Unified School District. She uses a variety of techniques in her work with glass but has also added other materials such as stone, brick, tile, beads, wire, and metal to create different textures and effects, sometimes embedding recycled or found objects. She creates wall art, wearable jewelry, and three-dimensional sculptures.



Jerry Hild fused glass

Carol Rose says, "I make glass beads, using Italian Moretti glass. This art form is called lampwork. The beads are formed over a torch using oxygen and propane, then placed in a kiln to anneal. The beads are slowly brought from 1000 degrees to room temperature. I also make recycled tempered glass mosaics using salvaged canvases such as vintage windows and mirrors. My lampwork beads are often imbedded in these pieces to give a more 3D appearance.

there working these little glass animals, and it's always stuck in my mind," Hild said. "Then when I retired, I had these glass rods laying around up at a ranch that I had, and I just heated them up with a welding torch and started doing stuff like that," he said. Hild began visiting glass stores and buying the appropriate tools, making pieces for family and friends and eventually selling his work at arts & crafts shows." Jerry has been a member of Main Street Arts since we first opened eight years ago.

Jerry Hild started making art glass 16 years ago. "I can remember all the way back to when Disneyland opened in 1955. I saw the glass blowers

Main Street Arts welcomes two new members who will be joining us in July. We look



John Tullis essential-business

forward to their exciting and unique artwork. We are honored to welcome Chris Granillo and John Tullis into the gallery.

"I'm an East Bay based painter, muralist and printmaker. Originally from the California desert, my desert upbringing has inspired me to build a body of work based on the use of bold palettes of brilliant colors to give my pieces deep contrasts, and movement,"

@ChrisGranilloArt.

"Art is really a conversation between you and me. As an artist I can only start the dialog -- I present the image. But the way you see it will be uniquely yours, and you will be the one who completes it," johntullisfinearts.com

Ingrid Marfoldi won a colorful portrait by Pam McCauley in our monthly art give-away. Be sure to sign up for your chance to win free art.

First Friday will be July 5, from 6:00 -9:00 p.m. See the beautiful glass show, our member show and meet the artists at 613 Main street.

For operating hours and other information visit us at www.mainstreetarts.net.

## New Art Exhibit and Opening Reception at Blackhawk Gallery

he Alamo Danville Artists' Society will host the opening of Blackhawk Gallery's new Exhibit

"Summer Radiance" featuring 25 local Blackhawk Gallery members. The exhibit will be open to the public Tuesday through Sunday from July 26 through October 20 and is free.

Members' artworks include paintings, drawings, sculptures, glassworks, photographs and handmade jewelry.

"Summer Radiance" features guest artist Dave Matthews from Pleasant Hill, a self-taught abstract and assemblage artist who grew up in Oklahoma in an old house filled with antique furniture and junkyard curiosities.

As a sculptor, Matthews likes to quote that "One man's trash is another man's treasure." Growing up, he loved going

free. Workshops and special events may have associated fees. For more information, please visit www.jorfineartgallery.com

on collecting excursions with his mom. Now Matthews uses such 'trash' to create freestanding, wall mounted or hanging sculpture work that can be playful, deeply personal or purely abstract works of art.



An Opening Reception will be held on Saturday July 27 from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Thursday from 12 to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Sunday 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

The Blackhawk Gallery is located at 3416 Blackhawk Plaza Circle in Danville in the Blackhawk Plaza Shopping Center. (925) 648-8023 www.adas4art.org/blackhawk-gallery

For more information, please contact Blackhawk Gallery Director Greg Starnes at gallery@adas4art.org



## Babes

The new film “Babes” is innovative in the way it celebrates adult female friendship and motherhood while also being a raucous and raunchy comedy.

Ilana Glazer plays Eden, a New York City yoga instructor, whose best friend Dawn (Michelle Buteau) prepares to give birth to her second child. Friends since childhood, the two women have a close bond.

Since motherhood, however, their friendship is strained as Dawn is pulled in many directions. Eden requires more energy than Dawn can currently summon and when Eden turns up pregnant and faces single motherhood, Dawn is overwhelmed.

Eden is excited and comforted to have Dawn, a mother of two, to lean on for support. The only problem is that Dawn feels Eden is relying on her a bit too much. Dawn is struggling with her own challenges of a second child, finding a nanny and settling back into work. Eden views her friend as the one who always has everything together and seems oblivious to Dawn’s plight. At the same time, Dawn backing away leaves Eden feeling alone in the scary journey of pregnancy and impending motherhood.

While the topics sound serious, this movie delivers laughs in a big way. It does not make fun of birth and motherhood, but instead gives an honest look at what the body experiences during pregnancy and what raising small children is like on a daily basis.



Anyone who knows Ilana Glazer from her television show “Broad City” should be familiar with the unapologetic, brazen humor she brings to this film. This is not a movie where you have a tiny smile on your face and nod knowingly. This is a laugh-out-loud, tears-streaming-down-your-face, belly-laugh great time.

Not to be outdone, Michelle Buteau is up to the comedic challenge and matches Glazer in brashness and enthusiasm. She creates a character you can simultaneously sympathize with and root for. Together, they are the ride-or-die friends you would love to have on your side.

Lots of comedians pop up for small roles, but no one tops John Carroll Lynch as Dr. Morris, the baby doctor who deals with a personal problem to hilarious effect.

The film also has a tender side and shows the complexities of lasting friendships throughout the various stages of our lives. It reminds us that all important long-term connections take work. It is important that we check in with each other, voice our needs, and offer a hand if we see our loved ones becoming overwhelmed. If we can do it while laughing along the way, then those are likely the friendships that will stand the test of time.

Rated R In Theaters



## Brats

If you are a lover of iconic 80’s movies, you will naturally be drawn to the new documentary, “Brats.” This film is a personal project from actor Andrew McCarthy. He knows his subject matter because he starred in the films “Pretty in Pink” and “St. Elmo’s Fire.”

In 1985, journalist David Blum penned an article for New York magazine where he labeled McCarthy and his other young stars, The Brat Pack. It was a riff on The Rat Pack, a term used to describe singers Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr. and Dean Martin. While The Rat Pack was considered a flattering reference, Blum described The Brat Pack as privileged young actors who did not take their craft seriously and enjoyed partying more than making art.

Almost forty years later, the term has stuck and the actors are still referred to by this moniker. In the documentary, McCarthy expresses he felt it stifled his career and decides to track down some of his co-stars to see how they feel today.

Most of the actors who sit down with McCarthy talk to him for the first time in decades. It appears that the friends-for-life characters they played on screen did not carry over into the real world. The actors also have differing opinions about how much the derogatory label



affected them.

If you are a fan of 80’s cinema, it is worth your time to see these actors in conversation and make a mental list of their works and decide for yourself how much you feel The Brat Pack label impacted their careers. When you recall that McCarthy went on to star in such films as “Mannequin” and “Weekend at Bernie’s,” you may agree with his fear that the damaging article would mean that Scorsese and Spielberg would not be calling.

Fame and longevity are hard things to predict.

Did we think Rob Lowe would still be relevant today? His pretty-boy looks and hard-partying ways certainly destined him to be a has-been. Yet here he is, still working regularly.

The films of The Brat Pack spoke to us and made us feel seen back in the day. They reflected what we were going through in our teenage lives. Now, McCarthy’s ruminations come at a time when we may also be glancing back to see what impact, if any, we have made on the world. Roads not taken and limitations we put on ourselves can only be looked at through an older lens. Is McCarthy trying to answer an unanswerable question? If you follow film and pop culture, he is a recognizable name, even today. For all the baggage the label invoked, it did offer a way to keep him in millions of people’s memories.

Not rated Now streaming on HULU



**Jill Hedgecock's bookends**  
Author *Between Shadow's Eyes* and *Rhino in the Room*.  
www.jillhedgecock.com

## Wrong Place, Wrong Time, by Gillian McAllister

“Wrong Place, Wrong Time” (William Morrow Paperbacks, 2023 reprint, paperback, 416 pages, \$10.99) by Gillian McAllister is a twisty suspense thriller full of tense moments and intriguing mysteries. Jen, a devoted mother and happily married wife, witnesses her son, Todd, do the unthinkable. In the wee hours of Halloween, eighteen-year-old Todd murders a man and is caught by the police while Jen watches in horror.

Just like in the movie, “Groundhog Day,” the next morning, Jen wakes up on the day that her son will commit murder. But unlike the famous movie, Jen continues to move backward in time each morning. With each revisit of the past, Jen finds clues she failed to recognize as signs that something was amiss. As Jen relives her life, regrets surface as she realizes she has been too caught up in her job and has neglected her son.

She begins to change certain things as she relives the past hoping to alter her son’s behavior. With each step back in time, Jen wonders if her meddling will be enough to stop her son from ruining his life as she worries that she might make things worse.

In one prior day, Jen removes the murder weapon, a knife, from her son’s backpack. Even so, she keeps regressing in time. One of Jen’s greatest regrets was not being there for her fa-



ther when he passed away. When she wakes on the day of her dad’s passing, she tempts fate by going to her father’s house and changes the past. But even correcting her worst regret is not enough to prevent her freefall as years gone by resurface as her new ‘now.’ What is she missing? There are definitely twists and turns that McAllister throws at the reader without compromising the fundamental heart of this family drama.

“Wrong Place Wrong Time” has been sold in 31 foreign territories and became an instant global best-seller. It was selected for the Radio 2 book club and was the Reese’s Book Club August 2022 pick. It debuted as Number Two on the New York Times Bestseller List. Fans of Matt Haig’s “The Midnight Library” and Audrey Niffenegger’s “The Time Traveler’s Wife” will enjoy this book. Part mystery, part time travel, and one hundred percent heart, this book kept me turning the pages.

Gillian McAllister was born in Sutton Coldfield and raised in Tamworth, England. She worked as a solicitor in two Birmingham-based legal practices, before focusing on her writing. She is a British Sunday Times and New York Times bestselling author. Her seven novels include “Everything But The Truth,” “The Evidence Against You,” and “Just Another Missing Person” which became an instant international bestseller, hitting the Sunday Times and Canadian Bestsellers list. Her work has been published in 37 languages. You can find her on X and Instagram at @gillianmauthor and at www.gillianmcallister.com.

## “Gruesome Murder in San Francisco Speakeasy.”

This headline would have made the headlines in the local press in 1931, except that in this case it refers to a Murder/Mystery novel, “Passage to Murder”, a unique book, published by eight local writers. The authors, Chris Chandler, Jennifer Granat, Denis Hoyer, Cindy Leonard, Bruce Lewis, Suzy Quenneville-Orpin, and Margie Witt, are all members of the California Writer’s club, Mt Diablo Branch. The concept was the brainchild of Michael Barrington, who wished to improve his own writing skills and also wanted to promote aspiring authors. He sought out volunteers, and the team eventually was comprised of five people who had never written a novel, and three seasoned and published authors.

Preferring to use a creative writing process rather than a detailed and fully developed story board, the initial premise was very basic. A wealthy businessman would be murdered on his own premises, a speakeasy, in San Francisco during prohibition. Such a place still exists, Bourbon and Branch on Jones Street, complete with underground rooms.

The team decided on a cast of characters and each member selected the one(s) they wished

to develop. The only directive was to write, write, and write. Initially, meetings took place each week, then as the plots and characters intersected, the writers formed smaller work groups. There was much



laughter, sadness, frustration and bonding as the pieces of the puzzle were slowly drawn together. Characters were changed, plots and subplots heavily edited.

The team called itself the JBV group (Joint Book Venture) and when the time came to select the name of the author, they opted for Jay Beevee, a play on the group’s initials. The cover design was done by Jennifer Granat, one of the writers.

The process began in January 2023 and ended with the publication of Passage to Murder in January 2024. It is available on Amazon.



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# Around Martinez



by Brianne Zorn, Mayor, City of Martinez

## ConFire Says Defensible Space Best Home Protection from Fires



At 9:00 am on Saturday, June 22, an alert from Martinez Alerts hit every registered phone in Martinez: City of Martinez Alert: TEST TEST – Martinez Police Department’s Evacuation Drill begins now! The exercise simulated the evacuation and response to a wildfire emergency. Activated by the alert and interested in the evacuation drill, residents began to arrive at the education expo at Martinez City Hall Ignacio Plaza.

This was not just a drill for residents—the Contra Costa County Fire Department (ConFire), the Martinez Police Department, and the Martinez Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers took this very seriously. The drill specifically evacuated Carquinez Way and a section of Green Street, chosen due to its actual wildfire risk. Officers began knocking on doors notifying them of the drill, and neighbors began to evacuate, house by house, and escorted by CERT members. As part of the evacuation, the fire department drove their rigs up Arlington Way, a narrow hillside street to identify potential accessibility issues before an actual emergency. This was the first event of its kind held by the City, and the only emergency response simulation currently scheduled for this year in Contra Costa County.

ConFire puts a remarkably high value on these public education exercises. ConFire states that the most important person in protecting a house from wildfire is not the firefighter but the actions taken by the property owner, such as developing defensible space around your home.

Defensible space is the buffer you create between the buildings on your property and the grass, trees, shrubs, or any wildland area that surrounds it. The more continuous and denser the vegetation is around a home, the greater the chance for the plants to ignite. Implementing three-zone defensible space is to selectively thin plants and prune larger trees and shrubs to reduce fuel volume. The first step is to ensure Zone 0 (0-5 feet from the home) is resistant to embers.

## MEDITERRANEAN FOOD AND MUSIC FESTIVAL

Saturday August 3, 2024  
Sunday August 4, 2024  
12 - 9 PM

Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church  
2370 Harbor View Dr,  
Martinez, CA 94553



Creating this space will slow or stop the spread of wildfire protecting your home from fire and will provide firefighters with a safe area to work.

ConFire also encourages neighborhoods to come together to become a “Firewise” community. “Resident involvement is key in protecting our communities from the threat of wildfire,” says Fire Marshal Chris Bachman. The Firewise program helps neighbors get organized and take action to reduce fire risks at a local level. For more information on fire

prevention with ConFire, visit: [www.cccfpd.org/wildfire-prep](http://www.cccfpd.org/wildfire-prep).

Are you interested in learning more about actions the City of Martinez and Contra Costa County is taking to prepare our communities for wildfire? Join us for our Martinez City Council meeting on July 17 for an update from ConFire on Wildfire Season Preparedness. City staff will also report on Fire Abatement activities conducted on City Property this year.

Sign up for County-wide emergency alerts at [www.cwsalerts.com](http://www.cwsalerts.com). Sign up for Martinez-specific alerts at [www.martinezalerts.com](http://www.martinezalerts.com) to receive the next alert by email or text from the City of Martinez.

In California, wildfires are an annual threat. But you can be ready by creating defensible space to better protect your family and home from wildfire.

### CITY MEETINGS

- Planning Commission  
Jul 9, 2024 - 07:00 PM
- Park, Recreation, Marina & Cultural Commission  
Jul 16, 2024 - 07:00 PM
- City Council Study Session  
Jul 17, 2024 - 05:30 PM
- City Council Regular Session  
Jul 17, 2024 - 07:00 PM

### JULY EVENTS

- July 3 Bike & Play
- July 4 July 4th Parade
- July 4 July 4th Fireworks
- July 11 Downtown Martinez Car Show
- July 12 Friday Splash Night: Aloha Luau
- July 14 Open Air Market
- July 20 Pine Meadow Park Groundbreaking
- July 26 Friday Splash Night: Under the Sea
- July 27 CERT: Wildfire Preparedness
- July 27 Movies in the Park: Encanto
- Fri & Sat Downtown Outdoor Nights
- Sundays Farmers Market on Main Street
- Ongoing Martinez Sturgeon Baseball

[www.cityofmartinez.org/events](http://www.cityofmartinez.org/events)

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JUNE-24				
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# Port Costa, Small Town, Big Vibes

by Courtney Ayers, Realtor

When it comes to quality living standards, the Carquinez Region is a beautiful region situated along the shorelines of Contra Costa and Solano Counties, characterized by waterfront access, enjoyable micro-climate, historic downtowns, quality of life, proximity to San Francisco and Oakland, and best of all, affordable housing.



Port Costa School

The Region as a whole is experiencing a renaissance with new restaurants, wineries, breweries, coffee roasters, art galleries and small retail boutiques opening across the region.

The quaint town of Port Costa is home to only 242 people. But do not be fooled by how small this town is, there is still a lot going on here.

You feel transported in another place and time when you are here, far away from the hustle and bustle of the Bay Area, yet only a 30-minute drive from Oakland.

The town is nestled in a valley between two steep hills in between Crockett and Martinez. You can easily hike into either of the neighboring towns or take a 5-10-minute car ride.

Port Costa was founded in 1879 as a landing for the railroad ferry Solano, owned and operated by the Central Pacific Railroad. Port Costa became the busiest port on the West Coast, primarily shipping wheat. Besides the railroad and shipping, another important industry in Port Costa was brick making.

The Port Costa School, a classical revival building designed by architect William Wilde, was built in 1911 and

operated until 1966. In 1988, it was added to the National Register of Historic Places. The popular Eckley Pier sits on their shores and was once home to a brick factory.

Porta Costa has been longtime home to the Warehouse, a popular bar and grill, overlooking Carquinez Strait. The well-known Bull Valley Roadhouse restaurant attracts foodies from all over the Bay Area for its delicious farm to table eats and eclectic decor.

The historic Burlington Hotel sits right next door to Bull Valley. It was the longest running hotel in California and was once upon a time a brothel. Unfortunately, the hotel shut down during Covid. Now it is finding new life with business and retail suites opening inside. Shopping is varied with Crystal Garden, Theater of Dreams, and a few vintage shops.

Moving here is challenging. It is hard to find a home in Port Costa as homes seldom go on the market here. In the last year, there have been four sales. The least expensive home sold for \$480k. It was a hoard house. The most expensive sold for \$1.92m and was designed by architect Julia Morgan.

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# Mi Casita's Traditional Mexican Cuisine Is Winning Over Martinez



Jorge, Alexandra, Jose of Mi Casita. Photos by Thomas Rimpel.

Mi Casita Mexican Cuisine opened at the start of the year and has already impressed the community. Nominated by a local resident as one of the Best Mexican food restaurants in less than three months after opening should get one's attention, which it has.

When speaking with owner Alexandra Romero, who hails originally from Colombia, Sofia Vergara of "Modern Family" comes to mind. She's not exactly a doppelganger, but with the accent, stature and energy, the essence is there which makes her the perfect host. Her two partners, Chefs Jose Moran and Jorge Romero, from Michoacan, Mexico, are longtime friends. Jose has 34 years' experience and Jorge has 24 years' experience in the kitchen, some at notable venues. They both worked together at the famous Maria Maria restaurant in Walnut Creek owned by musician Carlos Santana.

Alexandra also worked with Jorge and Jose at the same restaurant in Danville. "I just fell in love with their food. It wasn't a Mexican restaurant, but they would cook Mexican food, and I just thought, oh my god! What are you guys doing here? This food is absolutely amazing!"

She suggested that they should partner and open their own restaurant, which Jose and Jorge had already been considering.

"I have experience with the front of the house, so I thought it was just the perfect combination, and that's

how Mi Casita started. When Julian's Restaurant closed, we knew that was the place we wanted."

Their passion for Mexican food is evident in every dish they serve, each beautifully presented. Jose and Jorge use only the freshest ingredients to create traditional Mexican flavors.

"Our birria is our main dish. We serve several plate dishes featuring birria empanadas, quesadillas and burritos. They are just delicious. All our food is made out of love, out of passion."

They are also open for breakfast and have already established a reputation for exceptional desserts. Most are made from scratch such as their apple empanadas served with horchata ice cream, and the churros.

Two midweek dine-in promotions have been quite popular. Taco



Tuesdays begin at 11:00 a.m. and offers up \$1.50 tacos all day in your choice of: chicken, steak, carnitas, al pastor and veggie. Plus, five-dollar margaritas and \$4 Mexican beers, or \$24 Corona or Modelo buckets will energize any atmosphere.

Wednesday is Family Night. Kids under 12 eat for free — that is one kid per paid adult meal.

This place is large. Back rooms can host parties of up to 25 seated and up



to 50 comfortably. Or, as many have already experienced, call upon them to cater your private or company event.

"We love this community. We couldn't have picked a better city to open our restaurant. I can't believe we already have so many regulars coming in. We are very grateful!"

We can bet they are going to see a few more regulars as Mi Casita won "Best of Martinez" in the Mexican Food category announced Saturday,



June 29, at the Best of Martinez Bash, as voted by the community. Not a bad start after just five months' work.

See their ad on page 15. Give them a visit, 3210 Pacheco Blvd. in Martinez. You will be glad you did..

View their complete menu at [micasitamexicancuisine.com/](http://micasitamexicancuisine.com/).

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**JOURNEY-MAN'S JOURNAL**

by Jill Hedgecock, www.JillHedgecock.com

**Washington D.C., Our Incredible Nation's History On Display**

The US Capitol Building.

With the excitement of fireworks, picnics, and family get-togethers on the Fourth of July holiday, it's easy to lose sight of what this day represents. On July 4, 1776, the passage of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress opened a new chapter for the United States. The best way to learn more about the importance of this monumental milestone is to plan a visit or two to Washington D.C.

"Must dos" for first-time visitors to Washington D.C. include presidential monuments, war memorials, the United States Capitol Complex, the National Archives, and the National Mall. With so much history, Washington D.C. warrants multiple visits because there is too much to see in a single trip, and many of the Washington DC sights are free, making it an affordable destination.

As such, I recently returned from my second visit to this iconic part of the United States. Over two days, we visited sights missed on previous trips (National Portrait Gallery, Ford's Theatre, and the National Museum of African American History and Culture), and new attractions (International Spy Museum and the Extra Mile Pathway). We also returned to one of our favorites, the National Air and Space Museum, and went to two iconic restaurants and a speak-easy!

We began our exploration early in the morning not wanting to waste precious time and walked the few blocks to Ford's Theatre. Advance tickets are recommended, but luckily, tickets were available when we arrived. We planned to stay about an hour but spent three. The presentation in the theatre describing the sixteenth president's final hours was riveting. The balcony box where Lincoln was murdered remains decorated the same way as the night he was shot on April 14, 1865. Across the street, ticket holders can view the room in the red brick house where Lincoln took his final breath.

After a quick lunch, we headed to the National Portrait Gallery and were wowed by portraits of the presidents. Other notable people who shaped American culture, such as Toni Morrison, Oprah, Einstein, Catherine Hepburn, and Russell Means, an Oglala Lakota Sioux who led a protest at Wounded Knee in 1973, are also represented.

We took the Metro to the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum and gained entry without a reserved timed ticket, probably because it was late afternoon. We visited the museum in 2005, but there have been many changes since then, so this seemed like a completely new experience.

Women's and minorities'



The Wright Brothers' Lilienthal glider from 1894



Ford's Theatre, site of Abraham Lincoln's assassination by John Wilkes Booth



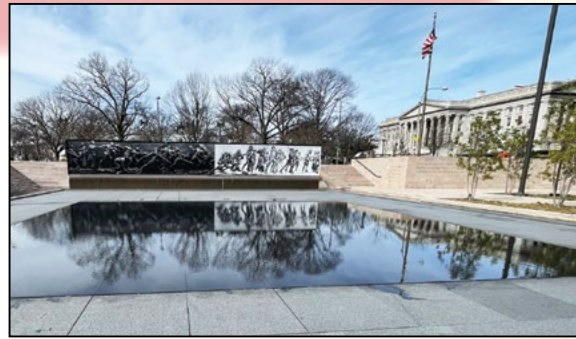
A pigeon with a spy camera from the Spy Museum

contributions were prominently touted, such as the Wright Brother's sister, Katharine Wright's importance to her brother's flight success. The Lilienthal glider from 1894 hanging from the ceiling was impressive. The space exhibits seemed familiar but seeing the Apollo 11 command module and Neil Armstrong's spacesuit still impresses me. We stayed until closing and were treated to an opportunity to take stunning sunset photos with the Nation's Capital and the 555-foot Washington Monument obelisk.

We ended our evening at a "speak-easy" called "Off the Record." The caricatures of current and past political figures gracing the walls and our politically inspired drink coasters were a delight. It was the perfect ending to an amazing and unforgettable day.

We organized our second and final day around our timed entry tickets to the National Museum of African American History and Culture and a coveted lunch reservation we secured at the historic Old Ebbitt Grill.

We took a chance at gaining access to the Holocaust Museum. The Special Exhibit was a moving recount of the Burma Genocide. We gained access to the downstairs which focused on the American Resistance World War II. It was fascinating to see similar patterns of



The World War I Memorial

American attitudes toward World War II refugees and today's immigration policies along our southern border.

On the way to the National Museum of African American History and Culture, we stopped at Perishing Park to view the unfinished World War I monument, which will bring long-overdue recognition to America's 4.7 million men and women who served in the Great War. Even though the sculpture is incomplete, the reflecting pool and completed portion is something to behold.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture offers a window into the lives of slaves and the slavery resistance movement. But there are lighter moments, such as the celebration of the contributions of Black people to American culture and highlights of Obama's election and time in office. The upper floor includes the dress worn by Rosa Parks when she was arrested in 1955. Photos are prohibited but the stoic statue of Elisabeth Freeman, known as Mum Bett, who was the first African American woman to successfully file a lawsuit to gain freedom in the state of Massachusetts, made quite an impression.

Old Ebbitt Grill, which has been in business since 1856, is the oldest saloon in Washington DC. It was once a boarding house and President McKinley is said to have lived there during his tenure in Congress. Presidents Ulysses S. Grant, Andrew Johnson, Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, and Warren Harding were reported to have partaken at the stand-around bar. The iconic restaurant has been mentioned in the TV drama "The West Wing" and was featured in the 1993 film "In the Line of Fire." The restaurant is known for its oysters, but the menu offerings include salads, burgers, and much more. The furniture, antique gas chandeliers and light fixtures, the paintings, and the overall ambience are unique. This was an unforgettable dining experience.

We stumbled across part of the mile-long points of light volunteer pathway on our way to the newly opened International Spy Museum. We only saw a small portion of it. Each bronze emblem embedded in the sidewalk honors regular people who have served their country. I would have liked to walk the full mile and view the tributes to Helen Keller, Booker T. Washington, and others. Perhaps on a third visit!

The newly opened International Spy Museum comes with a price tag of approximately \$30. There is an immersive game that you can play where you can pretend to be a spy, but I found the exhibits the most interesting. From miniature cameras to ink pens carrying secret maps and World War II carrier pigeons, the breadth of the tools used for spying was impressive, as were the



Washington Monument



The Apollo 11 Capsule from the moon landing



Neil Armstrong's spacesuit from the Apollo 11 mission

spies. Actor Hedy Lamarr, along with musician George Antheil, invented a spy hopping machine that serves as the basis for today's Wi-Fi, GPS, and Bluetooth systems. And who knew the renowned chef, Julia Child, was a spy?

Washington DC is a hotbed of sights and activities. Even as the political wheels continue to churn in our Nation's Capital, it's comforting to know that our country's history is preserved and that, for the most part, viewing America's journey only costs an investment of time.

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## Home Improvements with the Best ROI

When it comes to enhancing your home, making strategic improvements can significantly increase its value and appeal. Whether you are planning to sell your home soon or simply want to boost its market value, here are some top home improvement projects that can maximize your Return on Investment (ROI) and improve your living space.

**Attic Insulation** — Adding insulation to your attic is one of the most cost-effective home improvements you can make. It enhances your home's energy efficiency, reducing heating and cooling costs. This upgrade is relatively inexpensive and can provide a quick return on investment. ROI: 100%

**Deck Addition** — Outdoor living spaces are highly desirable. Adding a deck can expand your living area and provide a great space for entertaining. Choose durable materials and consider adding features like built-in seating or a fire pit to enhance the deck's appeal. ROI: 65-75%

**Smart Home Technology** — Make your home more attractive to tech-savvy buyers. Consider installing smart thermostats, lighting, security systems, and door locks. These upgrades can improve convenience, security, and energy efficiency. ROI: 50-80%

**Minor Upgrades and Maintenance** — Replacing old carpet, refinishing hardwood floors, or updating outdated light fixtures can refresh your home's appearance and increase its value. Regular maintenance such as ensuring the HVAC system is in good working order also adds to your home's appeal. ROI: Varies, but generally high.

**Kitchen Remodel** — The kitchen is often the centerpiece of a home, and a modern, updated kitchen can significantly boost your home's value. Focus on upgrading cabinets, countertops, and appliances. Choose energy-efficient models and timeless materials like granite or quartz for countertops. Even minor kitchen remodels, such as new paint and hardware, can provide a solid ROI. ROI: 60-80%

**Bathroom Remodel** — Bathrooms are another critical area for homebuyers. Upgrading fixtures, adding a double sink, or installing a walk-in shower can make a substantial impact. Even smaller updates, such as new tiles, fresh paint, and modern lighting, can provide a substantial return. ROI: 60-70%

**Curb Appeal Enhancements** — First impressions matter. Enhancing your home's curb appeal can attract potential buyers. Simple projects like painting the front door, planting new landscaping, and updating the exterior lighting can yield high returns. More extensive projects like replacing siding or adding a new porch can also add significant value. ROI: 70-100%

**Energy-Efficient Windows** — Replacing old windows with energy-efficient ones not only improves your home's comfort but also reduces energy bills. Homebuyers are increasingly looking for energy-efficient features, making this a smart investment. ROI: 70-80%

When considering home improvements, it is essential to think about both the immediate benefits and the long-term returns. These projects are among the best in terms of ROI, making them smart choices for any homeowner looking to enhance their property's value.

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Beautifully Maintained "Baltusrol" Model in Windmill Canyon at Oakhurst Country Club. 4 bedrooms plus loft, 2.5 baths, approx. 2536sf on an approx. .2 acre lot with an attached 3-car tandem garage.

**\$729,000**

1282 Shell Cir, Clayton

Gorgeous Townhome in Chaparral Springs at Oakhurst Country Club on a premium golf course lot with sweeping views. 2 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, approx. 1367sf with inside laundry & an attached 2-car garage.

**\$875,000**

1271 Vignola Ct, Brentwood

Sprawling Single Story Located in the Sought After Sage Glen Estates Neighborhood. 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, approx. 2133sf on an approx. .33 acre lot with an attached 2-car garage.

**PENDING \$849,000**

242 Stranahan Cir, Clayton

Charming Two Story Home Located on a Corner Lot tucked away at the end of the cul-de-sac adjacent & backing to walking trails. 2 bedrooms plus loft, 2.5 baths, approx. 1663sf on an approx. .1 acre lot with an attached 2-car garage. Fantastic location!

**Clayton Market Update**

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
1555 Ohara Ct	\$821,000	2014	4/3	5/7/2024
5106 Keller Ridge Dr	\$1,075,000	2053	3/2	5/17/2024
173 Brandywine Pl	\$1,610,000	3030	4/3	6/7/2024
3051 Miwok Way	\$1,381,000	2944	4/2.5	6/11/2024
109 Forest Hill Dr	\$1,525,000	2680	3/2.5	6/13/2024
1150 Waldamar Ct	\$2,475,000	3461	4/2/2	6/16/2024
136 Inverness Way	\$1,895,000	4076	5/3.5	6/18/2024

**Concord Market Update**

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
842 Royal Ann Ln	\$719,900	1339	3/2	6/3/2024
1734 Baywood Dr	\$1,000,000	1613	4/2	6/5/2024
731 San Bruno Ct	\$1,150,000	2092	4/2.5	6/6/2024
4485 Snowberry Ct	\$1,110,000	2351	4/2.5	6/7/2024
1420 El Dorado Ct	\$885,000	1531	3/2	6/10/2024
4207 Cobblestone Dr	\$745,000	1204	4/2	6/12/2024
1621 Eve Dr	\$775,000	1673	3/2	6/13/2024

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Based on information from CCRAR/Paragon MLS® as of 6/21/24. 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.



# There are Alternatives to Toxic Pet Pesticides

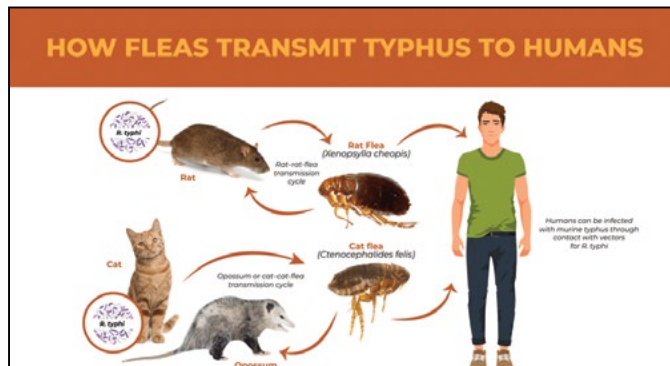
I was shocked recently when I viewed a UC Master Gardener webinar about the hidden pesticides in our lives. My Naked Gardener mantra is, “No chemical pesticides, herbicides, or fungicides in our all-natural gardens”. But what about the cozy spaces of our homes? Toxic pesticides could be lurking in our own kitchens, on our hands, and in our blood.

Throughout history, pests in homes have been a real danger to health. Research has documented that blood-sucking insects that infest rats, mice, and our own pets also prey upon humans. Fleas, mosquitoes, ticks, and biting mites are now known to transmit serious diseases such as Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and others. The most notorious examples were the several waves of Black Death plague (now called bubonic plague which is still found in California) that swept Europe in the middle ages, killing millions — spread from fleas that had fed on the blood of rats.

These insect-transmitted diseases are ample reasons to protect our pets and ourselves from blood-sucking pests. Before working in your garden, spray on a 25% DEET repellent, then change clothes and wash off when returning indoors. Plenty of flea and tick treatments also exist now to prevent our pets from carrying these insects inside our homes. What I did not understand were the fundamental differences in how pet flea and tick medications work.

Popular flea and tick treatments are pesticides designed to not just repel biting insects and arthropods (ticks/mites) but to kill them and their eggs. The market-leading product for dogs is based on the insecticide Fipronil, which is applied topically but then gets absorbed through the pet’s skin and into its bloodstream. When the pest feeds on your dog or cat it and its eggs will die. Human contact with Fipronil can happen in several ways. The effects of the toxin can range from skin rashes to seizures, depending on the level of exposure.

But as one who embraces all-natural, non-chemical alternatives in homes and gardens, this revelation was an eye-opener. I contacted our veterinarian



about safer topical flea and tick medications.

As an alternative, consider effective flea and tick repellents instead of insecticides. Essential oil repellents based on safe oils such as cedarwood or peppermint oil do not kill, but they can keep disease-carrying insects off your pets and out of your home.

Keep your family and pets safe with intelligent, informed flea and tick medication purchases.

**Seasonal Notes:** July harvests include plums, pears, peaches, apricots, and other delicious stone fruits. Keep your fruit trees pruned low, no higher than you can reach without a ladder. Trees fruit just as abundantly without the risks of falls and injuries. Pruning for shape can occur any month of the year as long as no more than 1/3 of the tree is removed annually. You may need to protect mature fruit from birds or rodents with netting.

Email your comments and questions to: [NakedGardener@diablogazette.com](mailto:NakedGardener@diablogazette.com).



# It's Bedtime, Time To Reset Your Brain

Did you know that just five minutes of breathing exercises and easy movement right before bedtime can have a significant impact on overall health and wellness?

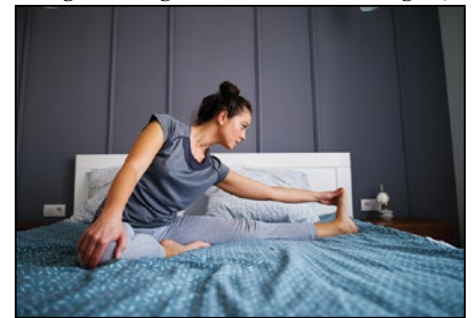
Self-care is valuable at any time of day but doing it right before going to bed can have an added bonus. Here’s why.

The concept of “sleeping on it” Surely you have experienced times when say you are trying to solve a problem, or you are in the middle of exploring a creative process but can’t quite synthesize it. You go to sleep and when you wake up, you have the answers. Why is that?

Because it is during sleep that the brain takes in all of the information from the day and processes it. Sleep is the time we lay down new neural pathways, literally connecting the dots.

This is happening on a physical as well as a cognitive level. Life changes us physically. We experience life, and we are impacted by whatever the day brings. Bodybuilders know that it is during sleep that muscles rebuild their tissues. Without quality sleep, increasing muscle mass is very challenging.

But this extends to every element of your physical body including your breathing patterns, balance and coordination skills, flexibility, and even autonomic patterns like blood pressure and heart rate. Your brain is the governing system of every element of your physical body, and it has “programs” to run each of these vital systems. These programs are necessarily flexible so that we can



adapt to the world around us.

Your brain is a prediction-based machine. The programs you run today are based on previous experiences. As you walk through the world today, you will experience things physically, and when you sleep, your brain processes your experiences and updates the programs to help you respond to those events more efficiently in the future.

This sounds great unless your day is anything less than optimal. If something stressful happens, if you spend the day staring at a screen for work, or if you simply do not get enough movement, those are the programs you will load into your sleep. Stress of any kind can impact your hormones, pH Levels, resting heart rate, and even temperature. It will shift the way you breathe, and how easily you move. And then when you go to sleep, your brain will use your sleep time to adapt to these new patterns, essentially so you can be stressed more efficiently tomorrow. That is not ideal.

But we can reverse this. Lifestyle changes are obviously especially important, but those are hard to shift overnight. A quick evening stroll or even just a few minutes of belly breathing, sensory work (like a dry brush or massage), and/or some easy movement drills like Tai Chi, yoga, or even just some ankle circles and shoulder rolls before you hop into bed can help reset those stress-induced patterns before they become locked in. And you will sleep better, too.

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# Mendocino Getaway

One of my favorite things to do is drive along the north coast of California. The views are amazing, and I love the wines from the region. A higher latitude and a closer proximity to the ocean results in wines with a touch more acid and tart fruit flavors.

In my opinion, Navarro Vineyards and Winery makes the best Gewürztraminer in California. Navarro's zippy wines pair perfectly with all kinds of cheese. Below you will find a selection of wines and some cheese recommendations to pair with them. Apples and grapes are good fruits to add to a cheese plate because they will not overpower the wine. The fruit does not really improve the taste of the wine, but it will taste good with the cheese. In fact, fruit pairs well with cheese for the same reason that wine does; the acids in fruit and wine cut through the fat in cheese.

Another fantastic Mendocino winery is Goldeneye. They have one of the most elegant properties in the area. Goldeneye specializes in Pinot Noir, and you will feel like one of the rich and famous while tasting on their patio. They pour Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and sometimes they have a Vin Gris (pronounced 'VAN GREE,' a rosé from Pinot Noir). While you are there, you can choose to pair the wines with cheese and charcuterie.

Do consider buying a Pinot Noir to take away with you. Because of its silky tannins and bright acidity, Pinot Noir works beautifully with a range of dishes from seafood to red meat. This makes Pinot Noir the quintessential wine to take to a restaurant or a party when not everyone is eating the same thing.



### Cheese & Wine Pairing Table

Sparkling Wine	Double Cream Brie
Sauvignon Blanc	Goat Cheese
Riesling	Monterey Jack
Chardonnay	Comte
Pinot Noir	Gruyere/Swiss
Sangiovese	Havarti with Dill
Zinfandel	Muenster
Merlot	Romano
Syrah/Cabernet	Aged Cheddar

This year, when I visit the area with my husband, we will be staying at the Sea Rock Inn in Mendocino. It is situated just a few minutes north of town and has breathtaking ocean views. They have a lovely lawn area with benches that sit right out over the bluffs. I plan to buy a bottle of Navarro 2007 Riesling dessert wine to pair with the breathtaking sunset.

So, go on Pair Up!

Maria Terry is a Certified Sommelier and Wine Educator in Northern California. LaSommelier@gmail.com

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# Commemorating History and Inspiring Change: Port Chicago Weekend Marks 80th Anniversary of WWII Tragedy

by Beth Javens, *President & CEO*

Visit Concord is thrilled to partner with the Port Chicago Alliance for the upcoming Port Chicago Weekend, a four-day festival commemorating the 80th anniversary of the historic Port Chicago disaster of World War II.

Scheduled to take place across various Bay Area cities, including Concord, from July 18 to 21, this multifaceted event features a range of activities including music, art, food, education, and commemoration. Port Chicago Weekend honors the legacy of those who lost their lives in the tragic 1944 explosion, highlighting the profound impact it had on our region and the broader trajectory of civil rights in America. The event will showcase the importance of this pivotal moment in history, and its contributions to shaping World War II and advancing equality.

## Event Schedule

### Thursday, July 18

**Justice in the Bay: Thurgood Marshall & The Bay Area's Role in Desegregation** An intimate reception celebrating Thurgood Marshall, known as "Mr. Civil Rights," and his monumental contributions to advancing racial equality and social justice in America.

### Friday, July 19

**Contra Costa County Bar Association Port Chicago Taskforce Workshop** Engage with the CCCBA Port Chicago



**Taskforce in a workshop** discussing the efforts of descendants and community organizations to seek exoneration for the Port Chicago 50, a group of African American sailors wrongfully convicted following the Port Chicago disaster.

**Port Chicago 50 The Play Experience** the powerful story of "Port Chicago 50," a theatrical performance that delves into the themes of patriotism, the American Dream, and the fight for equality and justice. Join us in honoring these courageous American heroes.

### Saturday, July 20

**National Park Service Presents 80th Anniversary Port Chicago Commemoration** Participate in a day of remembrance marking the 80th anniversary of the Port Chicago disaster. This National Park Service event offers a solemn opportunity for friends, family, and the broader community to reflect on the historical significance and ongoing impact of this tragic event. Register at [www.nps.gov/poch](http://www.nps.gov/poch).

**Port Chicago Youth Gathering** A free educational workshop for youth aged 10 and older, providing an engaging and informative experience about the history of Port Chicago and its legacy.

**Marcus Shelby Orchestra Live**

Enjoy an unforgettable evening at the California Theater in Pittsburg, California, with a live performance by the Marcus Shelby Orchestra, featuring smooth jazz melodies and soulful rhythms.

### Sunday, July 21

**Port Chicago Weekend HarborFest** Conclude the weekend with a family-friendly festival by the scenic Mare Island waterfront in Vallejo. Celebrate community, culture, and diversity with regional music, cuisine, and festivities, highlighting the unique spirit of the Bay Area.

Also, of note beginning July 1, Visit

Concord will host a Port Chicago 80th Pop-Up that includes interactive video presentations, original art, and more remembrances related to this historic venue and event. The exhibit is free and located at Salvio Square off Grant Street from 10 am to 4 pm.

Port Chicago Weekend promises to be a meaningful and enriching experience for all attendees, offering a blend of education, commemoration, and entertainment. Join us as we honor the past, celebrate the present, and inspire the future.

For more information and a full schedule of events, visit [www.portchicagowekend.org](http://www.portchicagowekend.org).

Visit Concord is proud to collaborate with esteemed partners including the National Park Service, BART, Concord Hilton, Contra Costa County Bar Association, Outdoor Afro, NAACP California Hawaii, Treasure Island Museum, and the City of Pittsburg.

For all things Concord, visit us at the Concord Visitors Center, in Downtown Concord at 2151 Salvio St., Suite T, on weekdays, 10:00am to 4:00pm, or online at [VisitConcordCA.com](http://VisitConcordCA.com).

## Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery Receives Environmental Stewardship RCI Certification

Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery (MDRR) has achieved certification from the Recycling Certification Institute (RCI) for the high diversion rate of its Construction and Demolition (C&D) line at the company's Material Recovery Facility.

This certification demonstrates MDRR's ongoing commitment to keeping material out of landfills and keeps Contra Costa County in a leadership position on the critical issue of environmental stewardship.

The RCI certification was granted following a comprehensive assessment conducted by external third-party auditor Nothing Wasted Consulting Group of the facility's procedures and guidelines. Additionally, it confirms the accuracy of the facility's recovery and recycling documentation.

"We are thrilled to achieve RCI certification because of what it means for our customers and for the community," said Gary Lazdowski, the Chief Operating Officer of Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery. "It makes a huge difference for contractors who need to transport construction and demolition waste to know the vast majority of the material they bring to our facility will be recovered or repurposed instead of going into a landfill."

The Pittsburg facility is among 16 C&D processing facilities in California that have achieved RCI certification. By responsibly disposing of C&D



CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION RECYCLING

waste at a third-party certified facility such as MDRR's, contractors can earn credits that count toward obtaining Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.

Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery serves over 250,000 residents and thousands of businesses throughout Contra Costa, Napa, and Solano Counties. Its operating recycling and recovery programs are designed to increase sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The company's Material Resource Facility in Pittsburg, Calif. contains the area's largest state-of-the-art recycling processing center and C+D line to ensure the vast majority of material can be recycled, reused, and kept out of landfills.

The C&D Material Recovery Facility (MRF) operation is located at 1300 Loveridge Road in Pittsburg. Additional information on the facility's performance specifically and RCI certification in general can be found at [recyclingcertification.org/](http://recyclingcertification.org/).



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**HAPPY JULY 4TH**  
from the **Diablo Gazette**



# Pride Month Is Deeply Personal For Me

On June 4, I was honored to lead the Board of Supervisors' Pride Presentation for the second time. This year's presentation honored Clayton Pride, PFLAG Clayton Concord, Pride Martinez, Rainbow Community Center, the Royal Grand Ducal Council of Alameda and Contra Costa, and the RYSE Center. Contra Costa Health (CCH) staff shared personal testimonies and highlighted the compassionate care CCH offers at the County's Gender Clinics. This recognition of services and advocates highlights the many ways that Contra Costa County strives to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment.

Over my lifetime, I have watched LGBTQIA+, + (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual) politicians and advocates work tirelessly toward safety and inclusion. Harvey Milk is

one of the most prominent advocates as he dared to be out of the closet and fight against hateful legislation on a statewide level. He famously fought against the Briggs Initiative in 1978, which was a ballot measure that would have banned lesbian and gay people from working in public schools. The famous Briggs Debate took place at our local Northgate High School between then-San Francisco Supervisor Harvey Milk and California State Senator John Briggs. The Briggs Initiative was defeated, and Harvey Milk's work left a lasting impression on the LGBTQIA+ community.

In the 1980s, HIV/AIDS was on the rise and the medical field needed to build trust and partner with our community to educate and safeguard every person, regardless of sexual orientation. This broke down more barriers for our community. Out of

the spotlight, advocates worked to increase the number of safe spaces for the LGBTQIA+ community by creating support groups, inclusive restaurants and bars, and eventually supplemental healthcare services.

In 1995, the Rainbow Community Center (RCC) was founded by a group of individuals that included Ben-David Barr. He was able to turn a social club into an inclusive healthcare clinic where services are rendered without prejudice. Mr. Barr served as Executive Director until 2017 and RCC continues to be a resource staffed with LGBTQIA+ individuals, allies and advocates.

When I came out in 2002, I knew that Contra Costa County had come a long way from the conservative community of my youth. I am honored to have been the first openly gay City Councilmember

in Pleasant Hill and now the first openly gay member of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors. I know that I am privileged to stand on the shoulders of Harvey Milk, Ben-David Barr, and numerous other advocates, and now it is my responsibility to be the "shoulders" for the next generation. I am honored to serve with many LGBTQIA+ public servants, city council members, and advocates.

As I reflect on this Pride Month, I want to invite Contra Costa County to create safe spaces where the LGBTQIA+ community can feel loved, supported, and be their authentic selves. To learn more about ways to support our community, I encourage you to reach out to one of the many organizations named above and ask how you can help.

## Wastewater Agency Urges Signing Petition On Regulatory Action That Will Cost Bay Area Residents Billions, \$5,500 Per Household

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (SF Regional Board) recently issued a tentative order on nutrients in treated wastewater that would have significant financial impacts for Bay Area wastewater customers, including customers of Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (Central San).

To meet the SF Regional Board's proposed steep nutrient reduction requirements, Bay Area wastewater utilities will need to spend more than \$11 billion, costs that ultimately would be borne by their customers. Central San customers alone would be on the hook for \$665 million, or nearly \$5,500 per household.

Central San is urging its customers to let their voices be heard through signing a petition on its website: <https://www.centrialsan.org/petition>.

Even with bond funding to spread costs over time, Central San residential customers could see their wastewater bills increase by 28% or nearly \$200 per year. Central San's business customers would see a similar percentage increase. Because the proposed requirements are not based on well-developed science, there is no assurance that these costs would have the intended benefit to the Bay.

Beyond financial impacts, the regulation's compressed timeline is also cause for concern, explains Central San Communications & Government Relations Manager Emily Barnett. "The short timeline limits our ability to implement win-win solutions," she says. "This includes regional recycled water projects that would reduce nutrient impacts to the Bay while also increasing our precious water supplies."

### What are nutrients?

Wastewater contains nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus from human waste, food waste, and various soaps/detergents. Even when wastewater is cleaned to required standards, some nutrients remain in the cleaned water that the Bay Area's wastewater treatment plants discharge to the Bay. Nutrients also enter San Francisco Bay through runoff from stormwater, industry, and agriculture.

Nutrients are essential to life, but there is a balance. Too many may contribute to excessive algae growth in the Bay. The proposed regulation was triggered by a 2022 algal bloom that killed thousands of fish.

"Central San cares deeply for the health of the Bay and is committed to reducing nutrients," says Ms. Barnett. "However, we must let the science guide the regulations to maximize the benefit to the Bay's health and to Bay Area residents' rate dollars."

Not all areas of the Bay are equally impacted by nutrients. The biggest nutrient problem areas are in the South Bay, where dissolved oxygen levels fall below 4 mg/L—the level that is too little for fish—more than 90% of the time. In contrast, Central San's discharge location in Suisun Bay experiences low dissolved oxygen less than 1% of the time. Despite this variation, the SF Regional Board's proposed regulation requires a "one-size-fits-all" 40% nutrient reduction. Based on the science to date, there is no guarantee the proposed regulation would have any benefit for Suisun Bay.

Region	Current	Wastewater Agencies Proposal (Existing/Planned Projects)	40% Dissolved Inorganic Nitrogen reduction
Entire Bay	40%	8%	4%
Lower SF Bay	92%	85%	3%
South SF Bay	90%	11%	9%
Central Bay	2%	< 1%	< 1%
San Pablo Bay	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%
Suisun Bay <i>where Central San discharges into</i>	< 1%	< 1%	< 1%

Source: RWQCB April 2, 2024; Memo to File by Richard Looker: Numeric Translation of Narrative Objective

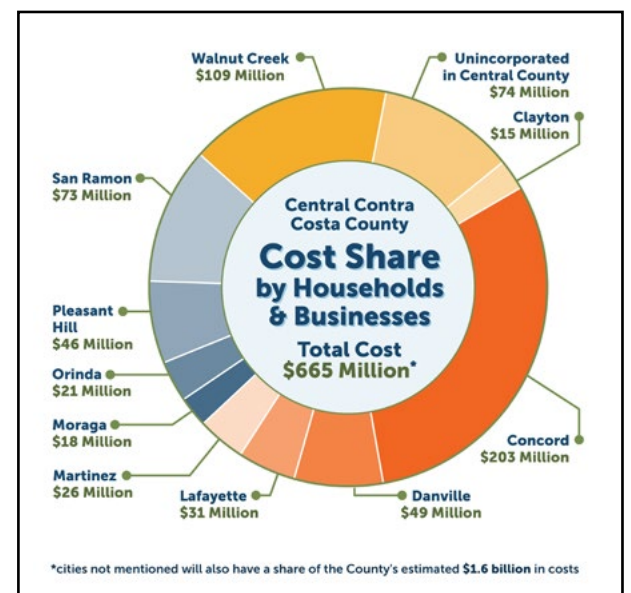
A table by the SF Regional Board shows the percentage of time each region of the Bay experiences low dissolved oxygen (DO). Suisun Bay experiences DO below desired levels less than 1% of the time in every scenario. In short, Central San's customers would face costs of \$665M with no discernable benefit to the Bay ecosystem.

With no Federal or State funding available to pay for the mandate, Central San customers would shoulder the full costs of meeting the proposed regulation.

"If our customers are required to spend \$665 million, we must ensure we're implementing science-based, multi-benefit solutions that will improve regional water supply resiliency while also reducing nutrients," says Ms. Barnett.

### What you can do

The SF Regional Board will hold a public hearing beginning at 9:00 a.m. Wednesday, July 10, 2024. Central San is encouraging its customers and other Bay Area residents to sign a petition



letter asking the SF Regional Board to support science-based, multi-benefit approaches to nutrient management in San Francisco Bay. Learn more at: [centrialsan.org/petition](https://centrialsan.org/petition)



# Don Jose De Jesus Martinez Lassoing Rope-160 Years Ago



July 1864, Jose Martinez met with a painful accident this week. He was engaged in lassoing some cattle near his home at Pinole. When by some means, he fell and cut his hand in the lassoing rope. The violent drawing of the rope tore off all the skin and much of the flesh on the hand that was caught, it was his right hand as we are informed.

To the utter shock of the family and community, Mr. Martinez has expired from these wounds.

Last week, we noticed the painful accident that befell this gentleman in receiving an injury upon his right hand while lassoing a wild cow or steer. Little did we think that this injury would prove fatal.

On Thursday night of last week, July 28, 1864, he died at the California Hotel in San Francisco, whither he had gone to obtain medical relief.

It seems that lockjaw supervened and mortification extended to the vital organs, and death followed. Only a few days before, we had seen him at his home. In the full enjoyment of his wonted good health and spirits. Now his body is a tenant of the tomb and his spirit has ascended to the Father of spirits to find its eternal home. His death has filled many hearts with sorrow, not only among those of his own household and family connections, but within a much larger circle of these who had long known him and had learned to love and esteem his many excellent characteristics.

He was not only a kind-hearted father and husband, but an upright and just man in his relations to the outside world. Nor did he lack those friendly impulses that softened the harshness of his judgment against those of his acquaintances that had been culpable and faulty towards himself and his friends.

He was good and generous in disposition, as well as just an upright in character. He belonged to an old Mexican family, the members of which had resided on the Rancho occupied by him, long before there was any county or state to embrace them as citizens of our new government.

The town of Martinez derived its name from this family, and it is situated in part upon the same Rancho. The death of Jose Martinez occurred when he was in the full vigor of manhood. He had but just reached the age of 49. The funeral took place last Saturday at the Catholic Church

**DEATH OF JOSE MARTINEZ.**—Last week we noticed the painful accident that befell this gentleman in receiving an injury upon his right hand while lassoing a wild cow or steer. Little did we think that this injury would prove fatal, even before our paper went to press. Yet so it was. On Thursday night of last week he died at the California Hotel in San Francisco, whither he had gone to obtain medical relief. It seems that lockjaw supervened and mortification extended to the vital organs, and death followed. Only a few days before, we had seen him at his home in the full enjoyment of his wonted good health and spirits. Now his body is a tenant of the tomb and his spirit has ascended to the Father of spirits to find its eternal home. His death has filled many hearts with sorrow, not only among those of his own household, and family connections, but within a much larger circle of these who had long known him, and had learned to love and esteem his many excellent characteristics. He was not only a kind-hearted father and husband, but an upright and just man in his relations to the outside world. Nor did he lack those friendly impulses that softened the harshness of his judgment against those of his acquaintances that had been culpable and faulty towards himself and his friends. He was good and generous in disposition as well as just and upright in character. He belonged to an old Mexican family the members of which had resided on the rancho occupied by him, long before there was any county or State to embrace them as citizens of our new Government. The town of Martinez derived its name from this family, and is situated in part upon the same rancho. The death of Jose Martinez occurred when he was in the full vigor of manhood. He had but just reached the age of 49. The funeral took place last Saturday at the Catholic church in the town of Martinez, and he was buried in the Martinez cemetery, on the borders of the town.

**DIED.**  
In San Francisco, 28th ult., Don Jose De Jesus Martinez, aged 49 years.

**ACCIDENT.**—Jose Martinez, Esq., met with a painful accident this week. He was engaged in lassoing some cattle near his home at Pinole, when by some means he fell, and caught his hand in the lassoing rope. The violent drawing of the rope, tore off all the skin and much of the flesh on the hand that was caught. It was his right hand, as we are informed.

Contra Costa Gazette: July 30, 1864 & August 6, 1864

in the town of Martinez, and he was buried in the Martinez cemetery, on the border of the town.

# In Case You Missed It...

Local News Items from Claycord.com and Other Sources

## Waitlist For Affordable Housing Units At Rick Judd Commons Coming Soon

The City of Concord is excited to announce pre-application and lottery information for Rick Judd Commons – the new construction of 62 affordable rental homes, including 10 units designed for residents with mobility impairments, located at 1315 Galindo St.

Rental pre-applications will be available through the Resources for Community Development website and the Doorway Housing Portal beginning on Monday, July 15 at 9 a.m. and will remain open through Monday, July 29 at 5 p.m.

There will be 48 apartments available via application and lottery, while 13 apartments are set aside for formerly homeless households, and one (1) one-bedroom apartment is available through the HOPWA program.

## Garbage Truck Fire Turns I680 Into A Hot Mess

By NEWS24-680



On June 25, a Garbage truck caught fire and burned to the rims on I680 north at Monument Boulevard in Pleasant Hill – pitching area traffic into chaos.

## Bobcat Rescued From Soccer Net At Boatwright Field In Concord



A bobcat was rescued from a soccer net today at Boatwright Field in Concord.

Concord Police, along with Fish and Wildlife management, were able to free the bobcat from the net, but it was able to escape after it bit a Fish and Wildlife Management employee.

## One Million Young Chinook Salmon Released Into San Pablo Bay



State wildlife officials hope one million fall-run Chinook salmon will think of San Pablo Bay as home after

they were introduced there this week.

Truckloads of the fish, known as smolts, were released Monday, but only after sunset to reduce predation by birds, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife said in a press release Friday.

“Our hope is for these fish to contribute to harvest and inland spawning returns over the next several years,” said Jason Julienne, a senior environmental scientist for the agency.

California has increased its hatchery production to compensate for poor environmental conditions in recent years that have contributed to low salmon stocks and closed recreational and commercial salmon fishing seasons, according to the wildlife agency.

The salmon were borne in tanker trucks from the Feather River Fish Hatchery in Oroville to the waterfront campus of the California State University Maritime Academy in Vallejo.

Twenty-five percent of the smolts carry coded-wire tags and a small dorsal fin is clipped to mark their hatchery origin. The coded-wire tags will help CDFW scientists and hatchery managers evaluate the release, the agency said.

## Free Summer Meals For Children In Contra Costa County

This summer, no child should go hungry in Contra Costa County as agencies team up with the United States Department of Agriculture’s SUN Meals program to offer free breakfast and lunch to kids ages 2-18 at various locations throughout the county.

The free summer meals are available to any child aged 18 and under, no application or other information needed.

“As food prices continue to rise, I hope families can take advantage of the Summer Food Service Program to help feed their families and stretch their grocery dollars during the summer months,” Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools Lynn Mackey said. Families can locate nearby meal distribution sites and pick-up details on the California Department of Education website and through local school district websites: <https://www.cde.ca.gov>

## Portion Of Los Medanos Ridgeline Between Concord & Pittsburg Annexed For Development

More than 600 acres of county open space along the Los Medanos Ridgeline between Concord and Pittsburg are set to become houses, following an annexation decision.

In a 5-2 vote with commissioners Charles Lewis and Scott Perkins opposed, the Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission approved a request by the city of Pittsburg and Discovery Builders Inc. — an Albert Seeno-owned developer company — to make 606 acres of undeveloped ridgeline part of the city for the construction of 1,500 market-rate homes.

The Faria/Southwest Hills Annexation Project, as it’s called, has been at the heart of controversy for decades, with housing proponents on one end and environmentalists on the other. During the meeting, Lewis said the city of Pittsburg had been willfully noncompliant with the orders of LAFCO to provide a project-level EIR.

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