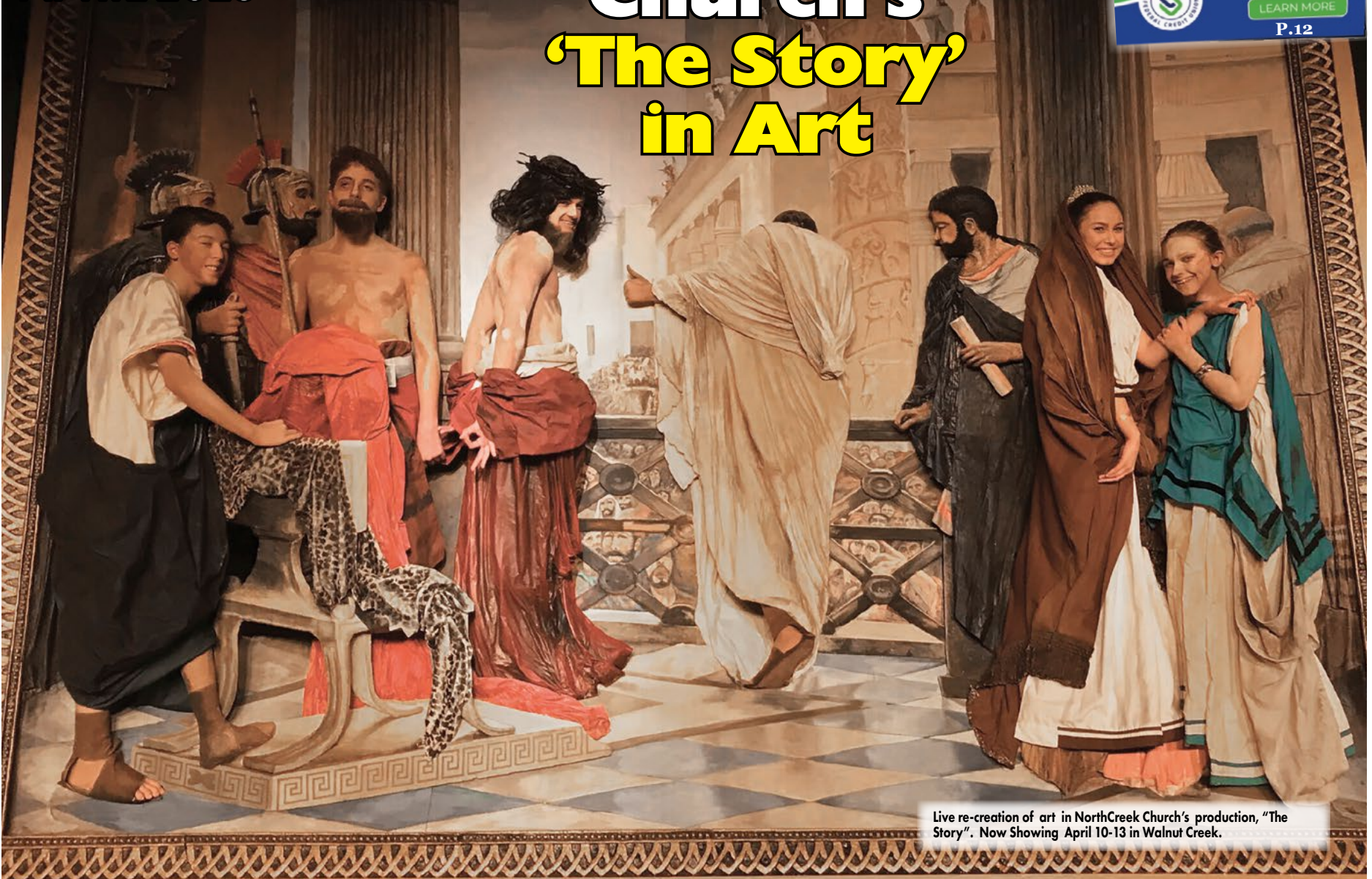


The Diablo Gazette

Arts, Entertainment and All That's *Good* in Our Communities
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APRIL 2025

NorthCreek Church's 'The Story' in Art



Live re-creation of art in NorthCreek Church's production, "The Story". Now Showing April 10-13 in Walnut Creek.

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P.12

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Spectacular “The Story” is More Than An Art Show by David King

What “Nutcracker Suite” means for Christmas, NorthCreek Church’s living art production of, “The Story” should be its equivalent for Easter. It is a one-of-a kind must see tableau-vivant performance.

Tableau vivants, also known as living pictures, are static scenes containing one or more actors or cast members, depicting artwork.

Before radio, film and television, tableau-vivants were popular forms of entertainment. In this form of art, cast members are motionless and silent, in costume, and are carefully posed with props and/or scenery.

“The Story” 2025 will include 12 of these living pictures. Each depicting biblical themes from the prophets of the Old Testament to the apostles of the New Testament. The living re-creations are striking.

“The Story” shares the story of the Bible from beginning to end. With music, narration, and reproduced works of art, scenes are created directly from the pages of scripture that summarize the Old Testament, illuminate the



From performers and costumes, artistic set design construction and sculptures, to its musical arrangements and story narration, “The Story” is simply a remarkable experience to witness year after year.

nativity, focus on Christ’s life and ministry, bring a greater understanding of his death and resurrection, and explore how the New Testament church spread like wildfire around the globe.

The Story began in 2012 and quickly became a NorthCreek tradition. For 11 years “The Story” had been presented during the Christmas season. In 2024 it moved to Easter Palm Sunday weekend.

“The Story” is more than an art show, it is an experience that brings beautiful orchestrated musical arrangements and narration that connects the

storyline from each beautiful, recreated painting and sculpture. Some pieces of art you will find familiar, like Leonardo Da Vinci’s Last Supper, and some of the pieces are not-so-well-known works that still clearly illustrate a scene right out of the pages of scripture.

More than 70 volunteers have worked year-round to bring “The Story” to life. From the construction crew, sewing department, fabricators, welders, artists,

make-up teams, cast members, choir, and orchestra, with the sole purpose of carefully preserving not just the artistry of the pieces that you will see but most importantly, the truth of the Scriptures.

Perhaps just as spectacular as the performance experience is the pictorial

presentation of the production process. These images can be viewed on the website, where you can also purchase tickets. www.TheStory.art.

Performances run April 10-13 at NorthCreek Church, 2303 Ygnacio Valley Rd. in Walnut Creek. Running time is approximately 2 hours.

Thursday, April 10 at 7pm

Friday, April 11 at 7pm

Saturday, April 12 at 3pm & 7pm

Sunday, April 13 at 2:00pm & 6:00pm

Tickets are available online or can be purchased at NorthCreek Church. \$15-\$30. Discounts are available for students, seniors, groups, law enforcement, medical, and military.

THE STORY APRIL 10-13

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Carlyn Obringer
Concord Mayor
cityofconcord.org

What Does a Councilmember

Do Anyway?

At my March “Coffee with the Mayor,” I was asked, “What does a Councilmember do?” The constituent was surprised to learn that not one city in Contra Costa County has a full-time Mayor or Councilmember, even those cities where the Mayor is directly elected. All city elected officials in our county have a full-time job in addition to their public service, are independently wealthy or are retired.

Here in Concord, the full City Council typically meets on the first, second, and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Each Councilmember also serves on two sub-committees they are assigned to for the year, by the Mayor. This year, I am serving on the Housing & Economic Development Committee and the Policy Development & Internal Operations Committee, which always comprises the Mayor and Vice Mayor. Other committees include Infrastructure & Franchise; Recreation, Cultural Affairs & Community Services; and Youth & Education.

In addition, all Councilmembers serve on external bodies, to ensure that Concord is represented at a regional level. We have Council representatives to the Association of Bay Area Governments; the Contra Costa Transportation Authority; County Connection; the Green Empowerment Zone Board; League of California Cities; Marin Clean Energy (MCE); and the Transportation Partnership and Cooperation Regional Committee.

Some of us serve on additional regional bodies. Councilmember Hoffmeister



and I are members of the Airport Land Use Commission. I chose to serve on this body since my City Council District is physically adjacent to Buchanan Field Airport, and I wanted to have awareness and weigh in on airport land use issues that could impact my constituents. Councilmember Hoffmeister also serves as an alternate to the Contra Costa Countywide Redevelopment Successor Agency Oversight Board. Vice Mayor Nakamura was recently appointed to the Local Agency Formation Commission and also serves on the MCE Board.

Because creating and keeping jobs here in Concord is very important to me, I serve on the Executive Committee of the East Bay Economic Development Alliance to gain a regional perspective as to emerging industries and ideas for business attraction and retention. I also decided to serve on and chair the East Bay Regional Park District Park Advisory Committee because I am a park lover and wanted to be deeply involved with the development of the new “Thurgood Marshall Regional Park—Home of the Port Chicago 50,” here in Concord. You see, there is much more to the work of a Councilmember than the Tuesday night meetings, especially because Concord is the largest city in the county. So, it is important for us to be regionally engaged.



Kim Trupiano
Mayor, Clayton
kimt@claytonca.gov

Clayton Community Library Celebrates 30 Years

Thank you Joyce Atkinson, Jeanne Boyd (posthumously) and Diana Bauer for dreaming big and making the hope of a library in Clayton a reality over 30 years ago. These women, with the help of the Clayton Branch of the AAUW (American Association of University Women)

decide in 1989 that the Clayton community needed to build a library. They formed a steering committee made up of many organizations across the community and in July of that year formed the Clayton Community Library Foundation, created to raise money for the project.

Over the next five years fundraising takes place, including book sales, crab feeds, and a multitude of grant applications resulting in one large grant of \$2.8 million from Prop 85 in 1991. A groundbreaking ceremony happened on March 12, 1994, and later that year, the City approved \$542,000 for book collection. After all of the demanding work, extraordinary vision and determination, on March 4, 1995, the Clayton Community Library opens its doors.

It is because of the efforts of these three women and lots of other volunteers and donors who supported the library then and continue to do

so today, that we celebrate 30 Years of the Clayton Community Library this month.

Today the library is testament to the community and visited by thousands of people a year who will find, besides a vast assortment of books and publications, a variety of activities and classes including Tai Chi, Chair Yoga and Meditation, Story Time for children, Art Classes and Teen events, Book Clubs and so much more.

To coincide with the 30th Anniversary of the library, the City will be embarking



In Case You Missed It..

Local News Items from Claycord.com and Other Sources

50 Years of Rock n' Roll and More at the Pavilion



The Toyota Pavilion at Concord turns 50 this year and wants us to reminisce about all the good times we've had there. Live Nation has created a website where the public can share their memories of concerts at the Pavilion.

In-person ticket sale on April 12 — This is Live Nation's one-day, in-person kickoff celebration event from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Pavilion Box Office, 2000 Kirker Pass Road. For one day only, you can buy two tickets for \$50 that will cover a select number of shows throughout the season. Look for food trucks and entertainment and have some fun buying tickets in person again.

Earth Day Celebration Sunday, April 27

The first Earth Day was held on April 22, 1970, when San Francisco activist John McConnell and Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson separately asked Americans to join in a grassroots demonstration. Dealing with dangerously serious issues concerning toxic drinking water, air pollution, and the effects of pesticides, an impressive 20 million Americans—10% of the population—ventured outdoors and protested together.

Join Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden for a fun-filled afternoon learning about our beautiful planet. Activities include exhibits, interactive workshops, talks, and garden tour Sunday, April 27, from 12:30-4:30 p.m. Learn how small efforts can make a difference to help the Earth, reduce your impact on climate change, and improve your sustainable practices in your garden.

Walnut Creek Yacht Club Closing After 28 Years

One of Walnut Creek's favorite legacy restaurants is closing. The Walnut Creek Yacht Club will be closing after 28 years. Their

on a refresh project later this year that will include new paint, carpeting, improved lighting, furniture and other design elements and CCLF is hoping to have some celebratory events throughout the year to commemorate the anniversary. Also, save the date for the next Book Sale, on May 17 and 18 (May 16 for members only).

The Clayton Community Library stands as a testament to the strength, commitment and caring that so many of our residents perform day in and day out to make our community a better place. Thank you Joyce, Jeanne and Diana



last day of service will be on their anniversary, May 7.

“Since the beginning, WCYC has been about more than just food, wine, and cocktails—it's been a place where friendships formed, celebrations took place, and stories were shared.

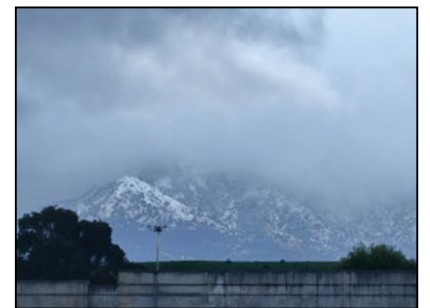
We invite you to stop by in the coming weeks to celebrate, reminisce, and toast to this incredible journey.” Owners and Chef Kevin Weinberg and Ellen McCarty said in their announcement.

City of Concord Seeking Proposals For The Purchase And Development of Picket Fence Property on Galindo

The City of Concord is seeking proposals for the purchase and development of Town Center II (picket fence property) on 3.1 acres of commercial land in downtown Concord. Proposed projects should be consistent with Downtown Mixed-Use zoning, which could include multi-tenant commercial space, a hotel, or multi-family residential, among other possible uses.

Proposal deadline is May 12, 2025. Register on the Public Purchase website: <https://www.cityofconcord.org/431/Bid-Opportunities>

LOOK! That's A Lot Of Snow On Mt. Diablo.



March 14 rain and cold spell gave us another scenic snowcapped Mt. Diablo to enjoy.

For more stories visit Claycord.com

for being shining examples of that.

Other City News

Each month the City is awarding an Unsung Hero Award to someone making a significant difference in our community. We honored Linda Pinder for the month of January and Paul Jordan for the month of February. For March, we will be honoring Joyce Atkinson, Jeanne Boyd (posthumously) and Diana Bauer. If you have suggestions about future Unsung Heroes, please feel free to contact me at 925.673.7324 or kimt@claytonca.gov.



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Aging in Place? Plan on Renovating for Senior's Safety

Several studies have shown that most people want to age in place. Fifty-five percent of baby boomers have no plans to move says a Leaf Home and Morning Consult report, "2024 Generational Divides in Homeownership Report."

- The top reasons for baby boomers staying put include:
- No need to move (79%)
 - Close to family (friends and clubs, etc.) 34%
 - Too expensive to move (33%)
 - Low crime (25%)
 - Weather or climate (18%)
 - Interest rates (12%)

The challenge they face is 68% of boomers live in homes over 30 years old, and many have done no renovations, nor intend to, says the report.

For example, among those in their home for more than 25 years, 85% have no plans to add safety or accessibility features, 83% say they are not planning to replace the furnace or air conditioner, 80% won't replace roofing or siding, and most are not upgrading large appliances. They are essentially living in time capsules. That is a problem for them and future generations. "The housing market is caught in a generational tug-of-war," says Jon Bostock, Leaf Home's CEO.

For the residents, the homes are missing critical safety and accessibility features, and future buyers will be burdened with renovating these dated properties. "With an aging and ignored inventory of homes available in the next decade, we may see a crisis that will overwhelm the home improvement industry and strain the budgets of inheriting millennials, (or opportunity for affordability and sweat equity) impacting the housing market," he adds.

Design For Future Needs

The 2024 U.S. Houzz Kitchen Trends Study emphasizes the importance of designing with longevity in mind and accommodating aging household members' future and current needs. More than half anticipate special needs arising within the next five years.

Among renovating homeowners, special needs in the kitchen were the reason to renovate, as was addressing future needs. More than a quarter expect a future need to arise in the next 12 months, and 50% half anticipate a need in the next five-plus years.

Those renovating for aging purposes looked to universal design elements to introduce safety and functionality. Other common changes to accommodate aging in place were to install nonslip floors and remove trip hazard throw rugs, pullout cabinets, wider door pulls, extra lighting, rounded countertops, wheelchair accessible doorways and pathways, lower fixtures and countertops.

Most homeowners prefer to replace all appliances during renovation choosing those with high-tech capabilities such as appliances with Wi-Fi connectivity, and models controlled by smartphone or tablet. (Yes, seniors today are embracing technology.)

These can enhance seniors' quality of life, allow remote control and monitoring so they can manage appliances remotely or from another room. Certain refrigerators include features such as food expiration monitoring and automatic grocery list creation, streamline to-do lists. Newer appliances are more energy efficient, environmentally friendly, and reduce utility bills.



Struggling with Pain? Try Moving the Opposite Side of Your Body

If you're dealing with stiffness or pain that just won't go away, especially in your joints, you might be surprised to learn that the solution could be as simple as moving the opposite part of your body.

It sounds strange, but this idea, called opposing joints, is one of the most exciting new discoveries in brain and movement science. This simple concept can help people reduce pain and move more freely—with no special equipment or intense exercise required.

Your brain is always coordinating movement across both sides of your body. When you walk, for example, your right foot steps forward as your left arm swings forward. This natural, built-in "cross pattern" helps keep your body balanced and your brain connected. But we can also use that pattern to hack pain and stiffness.

Let's say your left ankle is bothering you. Try this: gently make small circles with your right wrist for 30 seconds. Many people feel an improvement in their ankle almost immediately!

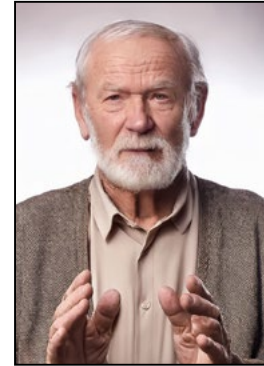
It sounds odd, but it works!

This concept has helped people regain mobility, ease pain, and even avoid surgery. Best of all, it's gentle, safe, and easy to try at home.

Here's how to start.

Pick the joint that's bothering you (for example, your left knee) and see how it feels to move it. How far can you move it without pain? Does it feel limited or stuck?

Find its opposing joint (in this case, your right elbow). Try some light, pain-free circles in that opposing



joint. Then recheck your original joint and see if you notice a difference.

If you notice an improvement, move the opposite joint before you need to use the troublesome joint. If possible, you can also use opposing joints at the same time— for example, if you are dealing with ankle pain, you can circle the wrist while walking to avoid

pain.

If you do not notice an improvement, this is most likely because your brain needs more specificity in the movement. Try moving slower and making the circle as large as possible. Sometimes adding sensory stimulation, such as rubbing the moving joint can help as well.

Give this a try. Remember, our bodies are deeply connected, and sometimes the fastest way to feel better isn't by pushing through pain but by working around it in a smart, brain-friendly way.

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calendar of events

Clayton

April 13, 14, Auditions. Clayton Theatre Company auditions for production of "Tootsie" April 13th 4-6pm, April 14th 7-9pm. Endeavor Hall 6008 Center St., Clayton. No appointment necessary. Download the audition form and more info- Claytontheatrecompany.com

April 13, Art & Music in the Afternoon, 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm Meet Ester Benbanaste and Special Guest Mert Ozel. 1026 Oak Street, Suite 102 Clayton. Free event. jorfineartgallery.com

April 26, 27, 2025 CBCA Clayton Art & Wine Festival, 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Sat) 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Sun). Stroll down Main Street and enjoy arts & crafts vendors while sipping your favorite wine or beer. Stop by the food court for a host of different foods. The little ones will have a blast in the kids play zone. Live music throughout the weekend. www.claytoncbca.org

Concord

Bambino's Free Live Music - Every Saturday 6:00 - 9:00 PM. Comedy Nights, last Tuesday each month. 1895 Farm Bureau Rd. Concord. www.bambinosconcord.com

April 1-30, Restaurant Bingo, Visit Concord presents a thrilling month-long bingo game that will take you on a delectable journey through the city's finest restaurants! For details visit VisitConcordCa.Com Each bingo = an entry into the raffle. Winners announced on May 5.

April 7, The New Economic and Social Realities of Immigration 2025, 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. A Community Conversation webinar. The panel will address legal hurdles immigrant neighbors face in Immigration Court and offer resource information on how attendees can offer their support. Register for the webinar www.lwvdv.org

•April 12, Egg-Straordinary Egg Hunt, 1:30 - 3:30 PM. Splash around, hunt for eggs in our shallow water short course lanes. Once you have gathered all your eggs, enjoy arts and crafts and games on the grass! \$13 Residents of Concord/ \$18 Non-Residents of Concord. Concord Community Pool, 3501 Cowell Rd. Concord

•April 19, The Bay's Cutest Easter Egg Hunt! 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Kids 12 and under will have the ultimate Easter experience searching for Easter Eggs surrounded by some of their favorite characters! Our EXCLUSIVE Easter Harajuku Tote will be filled with candy and fun items from Pokemon, Labubu, Sonny Angels, Cappybara, Stitch, and more! Plus you don't want to miss a photo



opportunity with the Easter Bunny and TOTORO! Admission: \$0 - \$24 Todos Santos Plaza, 2175 Willow Pass Rd., Concord

April 26, Earth Day Celebration. 10AM - 1PM. Family friendly event. Mt. Diablo Resource Recovery, 4080 Mallard Dr, Concord www.mdr.com

May 3, Bay Area Springfest, Our 4th annual Bay Area SpringFest celebrates spring with arts & crafts, plants, live music, beer & wine garden and food in Downtown Concord at tree-lined Todos Santos Plaza in the largest city of upscale Contra Costa County. There will be no-stop music on the Todos Santos stage. Vendor registration deadline April 25.

May 3, 4, Concord Historical Society's Spring Tea, Two Seatings. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. \$55.00 per person. Reservations required by 4/26/25. Call Carole Kelsch 925.899.9737

Pleasant Hill

April 12, Author Donna Levin at the meeting of the California Writers Club—Mt. Diablo Branch. 11AM. Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill.

April 16, AAUW Pleasant Hill-Martinez April Meeting: 7 PM. Fact or Fiction? How can we navigate the news in this age of mis/disinformation? The League of Women Voters Diablo Valley will help you decipher, understand, and manage media messages, mis/disinformation, how to spot it, how to report it. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church located at 1601 Mary Drive, Pleasant Hill

•April 18, Annual Easter Celebration. 3:00 - 5:00 pm Free, family-friendly event. The Plaza near Jack's Restaurant & Bar, 105 Crescent Drive, Pleasant Hill.

•April 19, Pleasant Hill: "Egg-Citing" Egg Hunt. 9:30 AM - 11 AM. This year, there will be one giant egg hunt for kids ages 5-10 yrs at 10:00 am and will continue until egg supplies last. A lively dance party will follow the giant egg hunt. Bring your baskets and the best dance moves.

Pleasant Hill Park, 147 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill.

April 27, Earth Day Celebration, 12:30 - 4:30 PM. Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden (PHIG) 1 Santa Barbara Rd. Pleasant Hill. Tickets: facebook.com/p/Pleasant-Hill-Instructional-Garden-

Martinez

April 6, 54th Martinez Brickyard Run, 4 and 8 mile Run, 8:30 AM - Noon to benefit the Alhambra High School and the Martinez Recreation Department. The 4 and 8 Mile race is "out and back" on Carquinez Scenic Drive. The course is entirely on pavement with rolling hills. 7AM registration. Rankin Park (Aquatic Center). 100 Buckley Street Martinez

April 17, Martinez State of the City Address 2025, 8:30 -10AM. Each year, the Martinez Chamber of Commerce in partnership with the City of Martinez host the annual State of the City Address. This annual event will feature an update from Mayor Brienne Zorn about the current state of our city, plans for upcoming projects, and vision for the future. Breakfast is included. Advanced tickets are required. IBEW Local 302, 1875 Arnold Drive Martinez martinezchamber.com

•April 19, Annual Easter Egg Hunt, 10 AM. Free. Waterfront Park, 245 N. Court St, Martinez

April 26, Bay Area Craft Beer Festival: Boots & Brews. 11AM. Join us for a day filled with craft beer, wine (new), and live music as you immerse yourself in the vibrant flavors of the Bay Area. With over 40 local breweries and wineries showcasing their finest creations, you'll have the chance to sample unique brews, seasonal releases, homebrews, and experimental flavors that highlight the creativity of our region's craft scene. Martinez Waterfront. 245 N Court St, Martinez downtownmartinez.org

At the Martinez Campbell Theater

> **April 6** at 2:30 PM. "Partners in Crime"

> **April 6, 2025** at 6:00 PM Open mic at the Campbell Theater!

> **April 11,** The Uninvited and Special Guests, The Taylor Brothers and Friends. 7:30 PM

> **April 27,** Onstage Presents, The Lowell Ensemble, 3 PM

Martinez Campbell Theater
636 Ward St, Martinez,
www.campbelltheater.com

Walnut Creek

April 2, The Echo Club at Rossmoor, Join us for a morning of lively discussions and engaging activities. 9:30-11:30AM. The Club Room at The Creekside Clubhouse. 1010 Stanley Dollar Drive Walnut

Creek. Tickets. echo-ca.org

April 10-13, The Story, God's Redemptive Plan Thru Living Art. Northcreek Church, 2303 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek. www.TheStory.art.

•April 19, Easter Eggstravaganza, 9 - 11 AM, Bring your family and friends for a morning full of free fun! Enjoy a pancake breakfast, egg hunts. Saint Matthew Lutheran Church, 399 Wiget Lane, Walnut Creek

April 19, Walnut Creek Earth Month, 10AM - 2 PM. Embrace the spirit of sustainability and community creativity at Sustainability in Motion: Earth Day Murals Walk! Civic Park, 1375 Civic Dr, Walnut Creek. www.sustainablewalnutcreek.org

April 26, 27, Contra Costa Crystal Fair, 9:30 AM - 6PM. Over 35 vendors with minerals, crystals, beads, and jewelry. Civic Park Community Center. 1375 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. www.crystalfair.com

April 26, Grand Champagne Tasting, Noon - 1:30PM. Taste 8 different champagnes from small producers to big houses! Enjoy Small bites prepared from our kitchen. Ticket price. \$65.00 - \$75.00. Fizz Walnut Creek, 1652 Bonanza St, Walnut Creek. www.fizzwalnutcreek.com

At the Leshar Center

> **April 3-13,** Synergy Theater brings Improvised Dungeons and Dragons.

> **April 4,** Come Together: The Beatles Concert Experience 7:30-9PM

> **April 6,** The Neil Diamond Concert Experience. Presented by West Coast Performing Arts Presenters, 3 - 5 PM.

> **April 12,** Hello Gorgeous! A Live Tribute to Barbra Streisand Presented by West Coast Performing Arts and Cruisin Oldies Concerts

> **April 18, 19,** Best of San Francisco Stand-Up Comedy Presented by Force Majeure Media LLC

> **April 23,** Newsmakers: Martin Luther King III Presented by the Leshar Foundation, 7:30 - 9PM.

> **April 27,** The Amazing Bubble Man Presented by Louis Pearl,

Leshar Center for the Arts 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. Tickets: (925)943-7469 Wed-Sun Noon to 6:00 p.m. www.lesharartscenter.org

Other Areas

DANVILLE: May 17-18, 'Primavera,' 48th Annual ADAS Spring Show. 3416 Blackhawk Plaza Circle. www.adas4art.org

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

Around Martinez



Celebrate Earth Month: Sign up for a Community Cleanup Event

by Brianne Zorn, Mayor, City of Martinez

April is Earth Month. The City of Martinez continues to increase implementation of sustainability initiatives. The City has already received two sustainability awards from the Institute of Local Government acknowledging our efforts this past year. Celebrate Earth Day with us on Saturday, April 26.

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
for Arbor Day planting at Hidden Valley Park

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
for John Muir Earth Day Birthday at John Muir National Historic Site

Residents and businesses can find information and incentives to reduce waste, save energy, install solar, and conserve water on the City's sustainability webpage at www.greenmartinez.org, or by following the City on social media. Stay tuned for additional sustainability events on the City's events calendar.

In line with our Climate Action Plan, we recently established a Sustainability City Council Subcommittee to help the Council further highlight sustainability initiatives in our City.

I am looking forward to discussing the SolSmart program (which aims to streamline solar permitting in Martinez), aligning our plastic bag ban with new state regulations, and making updates to our climate action plan.

We will also be working with staff on the bike rack installation plan. As a cyclist, and someone who regularly uses my bicycle for transportation to downtown Martinez, I am very enthusiastic about this program.

Additionally, we received an update on the rollout of City-wide community cleanups. As part of our renewed contract with Republic Services, we have a sustainability coordinator who works with local businesses to help them with Senate Bill 1383 on organic waste. This



coordinator has also taken responsibility to coordinate up to 10 community cleanups each year at locations throughout the city. It's a wonderful opportunity for volunteer hours for students, and for our residents to join together to keep our community clean.

I have participated in numerous cleanups in our city organized by groups such as East Bay Regional Park District, Friends of Alhambra Creek, or just a group of concerned citizens. I am really looking forward to leveling up this program for more regular cleanups. Republic Services will provide dumpsters, garbage pickers, bags, and reflective vests; you just provide the elbow grease and the enthusiasm. Our first cleanup will be on May 3. Everyone is welcome to join. Sign up here: <http://www.republicservices.com/MartinezCA>

Do you have a location in your neighborhood where you would like to schedule a cleanup? If so, send me an email at bzorn@cityofmartinez.org.



Credit Unions vs. Banks: Evaluating Financial Choices

by Bonita Vega, Marketing/Bus. Development Manager, Shell Western States FCU swsfcu.org

As economic uncertainties loom over Contra Costa County, including rising tariffs and potential inflation, consumers face critical decisions about their financial institutions. Understanding the differences between credit unions and banks can help residents choose the option that best fits their needs.

The primary distinction between credit unions and banks lies in their ownership. Credit unions are member-owned, not-for-profit entities designed to serve their members' interests, which often results in lower fees, better loan interest rates, and higher savings yields.

Conversely, banks operate as for-profit institutions accountable to shareholders, leading to higher fees and interest rates as they prioritize profit maximization. With rising inflation concerns, many residents are turning to credit unions for financial relief. Amid evolving monetary policies, credit unions typically offer more competitive interest rates and lower fees, benefiting those looking to purchase essential assets like homes or cars.

Additionally, credit unions are known for their strong community ties and tailored services, fostering trust among members. Although

some may perceive credit unions as less accessible, shared branch networks allow members to access thousands of locations nationwide.

While credit unions provide significant advantages, it is essential to recognize what banks can offer. Banks usually present a broader range of financial products, including international banking services, which are vital for individuals or businesses engaged in global transactions. They also tend to have more direct locations and advanced online or mobile banking options, catering to a wider array of financial needs.

While tariffs begin to exert pressure on prices, consumers must choose financial institutions that can help mitigate these effects. Credit unions, with their lower fees and member-focused approach, present appealing alternatives for safeguarding savings.

As Contra Costa County residents navigate economic uncertainty, evaluating financial options is crucial. Credit unions stand out for their member-first approach and competitive rates, while banks deliver diverse services and global accessibility. Recognizing these differences empowers residents to make informed financial decisions.

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April Community Events

4/05/2025 8:00 AM	45th Annual Seafarers Regatta
4/06/2025 8:30 AM	Martinez Brickyard Race
4/12/2025 10:00 AM	Knots and Found 7th Birthday
4/12/2025 2:00 PM	Del Cielo Brewing Co. Cornhole Tournament
4/17/2025 8:00 AM	Martinez State of the City
4/19/2025 10:00 AM	Annual Easter Egg Hunt
4/20/2025 1:00 PM	Bikes & Bunny Hops, Del Cielo B.C.
4/21/2025 7:00 AM	Flag Raising Ceremony Sgt Tom Tarantino
4/26/2025 6:00 AM	Ride 4 A Reason
4/26/2025 8:00 AM	Arbor Day Tree Planting Event
4/26/2025 10:00 AM	John Muir Earth Day Celebration
4/26/2025 1:00 PM	Bay Area Craft Beer Festival: Boots & Brews

More event details at www.cityofmartinez.org/events

City Council meets on the 1st & 3rd Wed of month: Full City Council Calendar www.cityofmartinez.org/meetings

Follow Us on Social Media for more!



by Craig Lazzeretti,
Martinez News and Views

NPS Closures on Sundays and Mondays Now in Effect

The John Muir National Historic Site is now closed on Sundays and Mondays. The site will be open Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The closures took effect March 23, according to the National Park Service website. The move comes after the Trump Administration fired 1,000 NPS workers as part of its federal workforce cost-cutting initiatives.

Computer Docent Help Offered Twice A Week At Martinez Library

Computer help sessions for all ages are now being offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Martinez Library, 740 Court St. The Tuesday sessions this month, from noon to 2 p.m., are April 1, 8, 15, 22 and the 29, and Thursdays, April 3, 10, 17 and 24. Volunteer computer docents are available to assist with basic computer skills as well as printing and copying. Need a little extra help getting your tech questions answered? Sign up for a 15-minute appointment, and docents can assist. Drop-in help is available as time allows.

Martinez Summer Camp Guide Now Available

The city has released its guide for 2025 summer camps, including details for the Beaver Meadow Camp, the city-run day camp for kids ages 4-11, along with other youth activities throughout the summer. Summer camp registration opens for residents

on Monday, April 14, at 10 a.m., and Summer Camp Registration opens for non-residents on Monday, April 21, at 10 a.m. More information is available at www.cityofmartinez.org/activities

Special Election Fight Sends Martinez Unified School District into Turmoil

by Craig Lazzeretti and Tom Lochner



The Martinez Unified School District is engulfed in turmoil over what's shaping up to be a bitter fight to fill a vacant school board seat, with competing groups organizing around an unprecedented special election that has upended the board's January appointment.

On the same week that members of the district's teachers union showed up in large numbers to a school board meeting to speak about their dedication to students and the community amid a growing furor over who and what is driving the June 17 special election, supporters of Brittany Ayala turned out for a rally and march from City Hall to the district offices to denounce the petition that terminated her appointment to the vacant seat after only two board meetings.

For full stories, please go to Martineznewsandviews.substack.com

Thursday, April 17, 2025
8:30-10am

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Who's the Best of Martinez 2025!

It's official, the 2025 Best of Martinez Awards race is on. The Martinez Chamber introduced the Best of Martinez contest in 2024 seeking citizens choices for the best in each of various categories of businesses.

Community members nominated operators among the categories and spent weeks voting their favorite.

"We had unprecedented participation with over 28,000 votes for the first The Best of Martinez Campaign! It was very gratifying to see how excited and engaged businesses, patrons and residents were," reported then Martinez Chamber of Commerce President, Lisa Bonnington.

Once voting was tabulated, awards were given in an extravagant ceremony for all the nominees. To the winner, award certificates were cherished, but the bragging rights remain supreme.

This contest is a celebration of excellence, community spirit, and friendly competition. The "Best Of" contest, seeks the best restaurants, shops, services, and more, as chosen by community members.

Nominations are now open. To nominate a business or vote for your favorite business, go to thebestofMartinez.com. Peruse the categories for listed nominees and vote for your favorite.

If you don't see your favorite operator listed in a category, you can nominate



them. They would certainly appreciate that. Nomination is open until April 23. Voting period ends May 2. The sooner a business is nominated the more votes they can accumulate.

Save the date for May 22 when the BEST OF MARTINEZ Award Gala announces the winners. The location is yet to be determined.

There is only one vote per category per person. IP addresses are tracked, so if more than one person wants to vote within the household, each voter must use a different device. Do not use the same computer, tablet, phone, or shared network.

This contest also seeks nominations for Citizen of the Year Awards.

For more information, rules, or tickets to the Awards Ceremony, contact the Martinez Chamber of Commerce at 925-228-2345. Email, bestof@martinezchamber.com. Or go to the website www.thebestofMartinez.com.

Something New Is Brewing...

The Bay Area Craft Beer Festival returns to the beautiful Martinez Waterfront on April 26. Get ready to kick up your heels at this year's countrified festival— Boots & Brews!

Boots and Brews promises to be a day of tasting craft beer, and or wine (also new), from over 40 breweries and wineries. Listen and dance to four hours of live country music from Jewels Hanson from Noon to 1:30 p.m. and Vegas McGraw, a tribute band to Tim McGraw from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

You'll have the chance to explore unique brews, seasonal releases, homebrews, and experimental flavors that highlight the creativity of our region's craft scene.

Country music lovers will rave over this highly talented country bands. Vegas



Vegas McGraw Country Band

McGraw has opened for Taylor Swift, Trace Adkins, Jason Aldean, Charlie Daniels, Blake Shelton, Josh Turner, Luke Bryan, Eric Church, Tracy Lawrence and others.

And what's a festival without food? Satisfy your appetite with a selection of festival flavors with popular food trucks and local vendors serving everything from savory bites to sweet treats.

Throw on your favorite boots and make it an unforgettable day of country fun, community, and cheers.

This event is for ages 21 and over only. Unlimited beer and wine tastings and event tasting glass included in ticket price.

Attendees are strongly encouraged to use a rideshare service or arrange for a designated driver. There's a drop-off zone right in front of the event entrance for convenience.

Host Families Wanted for Martinez Sturgeon Players



The Martinez Sturgeon Professional Baseball Team is currently searching for Host Families for our 2025 season. Players travel from all over the United States to spend a summer here in Martinez and play for the Sturgeon Baseball Team.

A vital part of a successful season is to have host families provide housing for the players and to create a family atmosphere for the summer. These young men will have a positive influence in our community and in

your home.

To be a Host Family you will need to be able to provide a player with their own room for the season. They will need access to a bathroom, and a kitchen and preferable a washer and dryer. Above all, provide our players with a safe and comfortable environment.

If you can be a host, please call 510-205-3409 or email. MartinezSturgeon1@gmail.com.

"Giants of the Faith"

by Matt Sieger

Now that baseball season has begun, and Easter just a few days away, this is as good a time as any to introduce a book about a small band of mid-70s San Francisco Giants players who were publicly scorned by the league, media and baseball fans for making open faith pronouncements.

The book was written by Matt Sieger, a retired sports reporter and columnist who now lives in Martinez.

"In 2023, I was driving to the Martinez Public Library one day and was thinking that I'd like to write a book. Hmmm . . . what to write on? How about the God Squad?" says Sieger.

"I reached out to Lavelle and another God Squad pitcher, Bob Knepper, as well as to Lowell Cohn and Henry Schulman, a San Francisco Chronicle writer who covered the Giants.

All of them were candid and open when I interviewed them."

His book "God Squad: The Born-Again San Francisco Giants of 1978" is one that Giants and baseball fans and historians are certain to enjoy.

The media and the public are now accustomed to hearing athletes thank God for the abilities He has given them. But that wasn't always the case. In baseball in the 1950 and 1960s it was extremely rare to hear such pronouncements from athletes. Then in the 1970s in San Francisco, one of the great culture clashes between religious athletes, the media and the fan base erupted over a group of born-again ballplayers on the Giants who became known as the "God Squad."

Giants' relief pitcher Gary Lavelle became a born-again Christian in the winter of 1976. When he returned to the club the next year, he gradually and quietly began to share his faith with his teammates when they showed an interest. Several, including Bob Knepper,

Jack Clark, Rob Andrews, and Randy Moffitt (brother of tennis great Billie Jean King) came to faith, and by the 1978 season there were eight or nine professing Christians on the team.

The Giants, who had suffered through several losing seasons, came to life that year and led the National League West for much of the season, only to fade in a September swoon and finish third. In post-game interviews, the players frequently thanked God for the ability he gave them, and the press raised no objection.

But when the Giants' fortunes faded on the field in 1979, the media was quick to blame the born-again players, claiming their newfound faith had made them passive. The press derisively referred to them as the "God Squad."

The cornerstone of that accusation was a quote attributed to pitcher Knepper, who supposedly told manager Dave Bristol it was "God's will" when he yielded a home run that lost a game. Knepper and his Christian teammates have always denied the quote, as did Bristol. But the false story continued to hound them for years.

The media was merciless at times. San Francisco Chronicle columnist Glenn Dickey wrote, "It may be that the Giants will have to trade one or two of the most obvious born-again on the club, to break up the clique. At the very least, their lockers should be separated in the clubhouse."

However, Chronicle sports columnist, Lowell Cohn, known for his biting satire, penned one of his most provocative pieces, "Can Satan Save the Giants?" in which he recommended that one of the Giants sell his soul to the devil since God didn't seem to be helping the team too much!

Not only did the media blame the God Squad for losing, but it also alleged

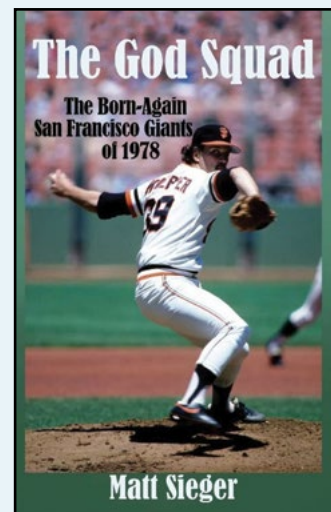
that the Christian athletes caused division in the clubhouse and got two managers fired. These false claims spread to the national media, where prestigious columnists Peter Gammons of The Boston Globe and Dick Young of the New York Daily News repeated them. One of the more ridiculous accusations was that the Giants had two team buses to take players to the field, one for the God Squad and another for the others.

Mike Ivie, one of the God Squadders, returned to the club from a stint of mental exhaustion and had made a comeback from physical injury.

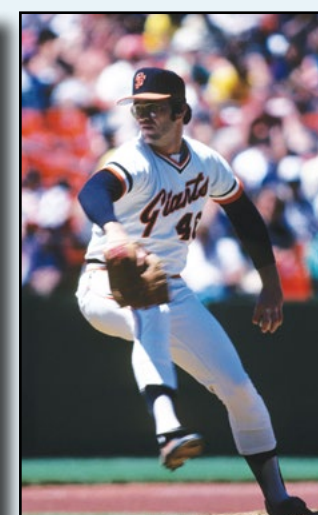
"He'll put you through trials and tribulations and He'll use every resource to help you find happiness in your heart," said Ivie. "It would have been twice as hard for me to come back if I hadn't believed in the Lord."

Ivie and his teammates commonly made such pronouncements in a liberal San Francisco atmosphere and era that was not conducive to talk about faith. Cohn felt the tension and in his memoirs made this fascinating statement, "Until that day, I believed I was covering a baseball team. I was wrong. I had wandered into the middle of a deep religious debate, one that defined the Giants at that time."

The God Squadders were spiritual pioneers who bore the brunt of attacks by the media. They paved the way for other Christian athletes to speak boldly



Bob Knepper, of SF Giantson the cover of Matt Sieger's book.



Gary Lavelle, became a born-again Christian in 1976



Mike Ivie had made a comeback from a physical injury.

about their faith.

"One highlight to my journalism career: In the summer of 1974 while at Cornell, I wrote for the Ithaca New Times. I hitchhiked to Oneonta, New York, to write about the town's minor league New York Yankee farm team. To my surprise, Joe DiMaggio was in town for the team's annual Famous Yankee Night. I got to interview DiMaggio. Who knew that 44 years later I would be living here?"

The book "God Squad" is available on amazon.com.

A version of this column first appeared in *The Vacaville Reporter*.



Why Do Mortgage Rates Sometimes Rise When the Fed Cuts Rates?

You may have noticed an odd pattern: when the Federal Reserve (the Fed) cuts interest rates, mortgage rates sometimes increase instead of decreasing. Shouldn't lower Fed rates mean cheaper mortgages?

To understand why this happens, let's take a closer look at how mortgage rates are determined and their relationship with Fed policy.

The Federal Reserve doesn't directly set mortgage rates. Instead, it controls the federal funds rate, which is the interest rate banks charge each other for overnight lending. This rate influences short-term loans, such as credit cards and home equity lines of credit. However, mortgage rates are tied more closely to long-term bond yields, particularly the 10-year Treasury yield.

Lenders price mortgage rates based on several factors, including:

Bond Market Movements: Mortgage-backed securities (MBS), which are bundles of home loans sold to investors, play a significant role in mortgage rates. Investors compare MBS yields with the 10-year Treasury yield, a key benchmark. When investors anticipate rate cuts, they might shift investments, influencing mortgage rates.

Inflation Expectations: Inflation erodes the value of future fixed-rate returns, so when inflation is expected to rise, mortgage rates tend to increase to compensate lenders.

Market Sentiment and Economic Outlook: If the Fed cuts rates in response to economic weakness or uncertainty, investors may demand higher returns on mortgage-backed securities, leading to higher mortgage rates.

If the Fed lowers rates aggressively, it may

signal concerns about rising inflation in the future. Since inflation diminishes the real return on fixed-income assets, lenders and investors demand higher yields, pushing up mortgage rates.

When the Fed cuts rates, bond yields may increase due to expectations of future economic growth and potential inflation. Since mortgage rates follow bond yields, they might also rise.

Sometimes, a Fed rate cut creates uncertainty in the financial markets, leading investors to pull money from mortgage-backed securities and into other investments. This decreases demand for MBS, requiring higher mortgage rates to attract investors.

Banks and mortgage lenders factor in the spread between the interest rate they pay to borrow money and the rate they charge consumers. If the Fed cuts rates and banks anticipate higher costs elsewhere, they might raise mortgage rates to maintain profitability.

While a Fed rate cut can sometimes lead to lower mortgage rates, the relationship isn't direct or guaranteed. Mortgage rates depend on various economic factors, including bond market trends, inflation expectations, and investor behavior. Understanding this dynamic can help homebuyers and real estate investors make informed decisions instead of assuming lower Fed rates always mean lower mortgage costs.

So, the next time you hear about a Fed rate cut, watch the bond market and economic indicators to get a clearer picture of where mortgage rates might be headed.

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Clayton Market Update

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
43 Nottingham Pl	\$900,000	1926	4/2	2/17/2025
26 El Molino Dr	\$1,155,000	1781	3/2.5	2/21/2025
21 El Molino Dr	\$1,070,000	1648	3/2	2/28/2025
705 Acorn Dr	\$1,475,000	3079	4/3	3/4/2025
3801 Coyote Cir	\$800,000	1595	3/2.5	3/7/2025
4775 Morgan Territory Rd	\$1,310,000	2840	5/3	3/10/2025
200 Condor Way	\$1,040,000	1911	3/2.5	3/10/2025

Concord Market Update

Address	Sales Price	SF	Bed/Bath	Sales Date
5209 Lodato Ct	\$715,000	1080	3/2	2/24/2025
1441 Saint James Pkwy	\$660,000	1576	4/2.5	2/27/2025
1028 Bermuda Dr	\$980,000	1563	4/2	3/4/2025
2298 Flagstone Way	\$1,150,000	2668	4/3	3/5/2025
1127 Via Doble	\$1,075,000	1868	4/2	3/7/2025
1007 Fox Meadow Way	\$875,000	1849	4/2.5	3/13/2025
1757 Elmhurst Ln	\$960,000	2247	5/3	3/18/2025

Based on information from CCRAR/Paragon MLS® as of 3/19/25. 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.



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Clayton Valley Athletic Hall of Fame: 2025 Class of Inductees

The Clayton Valley High School Athletic Hall of Fame (CVCHSHOF) has announced its 2025 class of inductees to the Athletic Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame induction ceremony will be on Friday, May 2, 2025, at Centre Concord, 5298 Clayton Rd. starting at 5:00 p.m. with a (beer and wine) social, followed by dinner and the induction ceremony.

Family, friends and CVHS sports fans are invited to attend. Tickets are available through the Clayton Valley Charter High School website or via U.S. Mail. Dinner tickets are available by scanning the QR code.

Your receipt will be emailed to you and that will be your ticket to the event.

You can also purchase tickets via check. Tickets are \$60 each for adults, Kids 12 and under are \$30. Your name will also be on our Will Call list at the door. Kids tickets can only be purchased by U.S. Mail - they are not available online

Make check available payable to CVHS HOF, mail to: CVHS Hall of Fame, P.O. Box 90, Clayton, CA 94517.

The induction ceremony will include a short introduction and acceptance speech. The written program will include biographies on all inductees.

Bocce Tournament

The CVCHS HOF will also be having a bocce tournament at the Ipsen Bocce Park in Clayton on April 12, 2025, to help support the induction ceremony.



Adam Elliott Clayton Valley Charter Class of '02 Ugly Eagle football and baseball player will be inducted to the Athletic Hall of Fame this year.

Everyone is invited to play or watch. To register your team today, email Herc Pardi @ herc_pardi@hotmail.com for registration form and more information.

This years inductees are:

Mitch Buich ('77) Football, Basketball,

Tennis, Baseball

Rocco Cardinale ('77) Wrestling

Laura Langraff-Wilson, ('78) Gymnastics, Diving

Brett McNamar ('81) Wrestling

Steve Warren ('90) Track & Field

Brian Foreman ('98) Football, Basketball, Track

Mike Gausman ('99) Swimming

Adam Elliot ('02) Football, Baseball

Lindsay Vanderstraeten ('06) Cross Country, Soccer, Track

Kelsey Chambers ('08) Basketball, Softball

Lindsey Chambers ('08) Basketball, Softball

Bill Nelson, Coach, Athletic Director

Mikey Hamilton, Team Manager

1990 Girls Soccer Team

1998 Football Team

2002 Baseball Team



Mexican Grill-Out

The weather in Northern California is finally warming up, so it's time to fire up the grill and get outside. While most people stick to classic BBQ favorites like chicken and burgers with potato salad and coleslaw, let me introduce you to a truly fiesta-worthy BBQ that's sure to impress.

To start any party, you can't go wrong with Prosecco. It's light, bubbly, and a little sweet, and it pairs perfectly with almost any appetizer. The sweetness of this sparkling wine creates a great contrast to the spicy Scallop Ceviche. Be sure to have extra bottles of bubbles on hand, because sparkling wine goes down way too easily. Count on four full glasses from each bottle. To make it even better, serve it with some good-quality tortilla chips, guacamole, and pico de gallo.

Now, creating a menu that everyone will love can be tricky, especially when you are hosting a big gathering. In my family, we have vegetarians and people who only eat fish or chicken. So, I decided to go with a fajita extravaganza.



Grill up some shrimp, chicken, and flank steak, and serve them with caramelized peppers and onions in flour tortillas. Top it off with Mexican rice and beans, and you've got a complete meal.

A perfect pairing for this meal is a fruity, slightly sweet California Zinfandel. The bold flavors stand up to the intensity of the food, and the light touch of sweetness found in many California Zins balances the chili heat.

After a big Mexican fiesta, dessert should be light. Rosemary Shortbread cookies paired with good-quality lemon sorbet is a sweet finish that won't take up too much space. If your guests have had enough wine, serve some sparkling water with wedges of lime. If not, pop another bottle of the prosecco that started the party. It will be a delicious bookend to a festive evening.

So, go on. Pair Up!

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

SPICY SCALLOP CEVICHE

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs. scallops

Juice of 12 limes, enough to cover scallops

2 red bell pepper, chopped



1 large red onion, chopped

2 jalapeño pepper, seeded and diced (less if milder is desired)

Large handful of fresh cilantro, chopped

2 tbsp. olive oil

1tsp. kosher salt

Ground black pepper, to taste

4 tbsp. tequila

DIRECTIONS

In a medium bowl, combine scallops and lime juice. Cover and refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight.

When finished, drain off all but 2 tbsp. of the lime juice and stir in bell pepper, onion, jalapeño pepper, and cilantro. In a small bowl, combine olive oil, sea salt, black pepper, and tequila. Pour over scallop mixture, mix well, and refrigerate for at least another hour.

Yield: 4 cups



ROSEMARY SHORTBREAD

INGREDIENTS

1½ cups unsalted butter, room temperature

2/3 cup sugar

2 tbsp. fresh rosemary (minced), or 2 tsp. dried (crushed in mortar and pestle)

2¼ cups all-purpose flour

½ cup white or brown rice flour (or just add an extra ½ cup of regular flour)

¼ tsp. salt

2 tsp. sugar for topping

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375°. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

Cream the butter until pale yellow and light. Add the sugar and continue mixing until fluffy.

Add the flours, salt, and rosemary. Mix until thoroughly combined. The dough will be somewhat soft. Refrigerate for 1 hour to make firm for rolling.

Roll the dough out until ¼" thick about 10 X 14 inches in size. Cut into 1½" X 2" rectangles. Place about ½" apart on prepared sheets. Sprinkle them with sugar and bake until golden at the edges, 12 to 15 minutes.

Remove to racks to cool. Pack in airtight container to store. The flavor improves with age (best two days after) keeping about a week.

Yield: 3 dozen



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Once Upon a Wardrobe

"Once Upon a Wardrobe" (Harper Muse, 2023, paperback, 320 pages, \$10.29) by Patti Callahan is the tale of a seventeen-year-old sister, Megs, and her desire to grant her terminally ill, eight-year-old brother George's dying wish. More than anything, George wants to know where the idea for C. S. Lewis' Narnia came from in his novel "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe." Set in Worcestershire, England in the 1950s, the novel is a mixture of Lewis' biography and a heart-warming (and sometimes heart-wrenching) coming-of-age story with a sprinkling of romance.

When Megs, a gifted student of mathematics and physics at Oxford University, seeks out C.S. Lewis, a professor at her college, to get an answer for George, little does she know her quest will alter the course of her life. George is a charmer, and it is no surprise that he and Megs share a special bond, and she wanders out of her comfort zone to please her little brother.

During her first encounter with Lewis, he invites her to tea to tell her about Narnia. Instead of giving Megs, a firm believer in logic and reason, a direct answer to George's question, Lewis recounts his life story. His tale ends up taking place over many afternoons of tea. After each session, Megs jots down what Lewis has said in her own narrative style. Each story begins with "once upon a wardrobe." George loves hearing her sister's interpretation of Lewis' stories, even though his primary question remains unanswered. As Megs becomes immersed in hearing Lewis' memories, she lets go of her tendency to attribute logic to everything and embraces the joy of entering a fanciful world.

The novel is a delightful blend of fiction and historical details that is sure to please fans of Lewis or anyone who enjoys a story that tugs at the heart-strings. It is not necessary to have read Lewis' "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" or any of his other books to enjoy this novel. Besides those who love Lewis' novels, fans of "The Night Circus" by Erin Morgenstern and "Stardust" by Neil Gaiman would likely enjoy this book.

Patti Callahan Henry is a "New York Times" and "USA Today" best-selling novelist. She has written fifteen novels, including "Becoming Mrs. Lewis—The Improbable Love Story of Joy Davidman and C.S. Lewis." Her work has been awarded The Christy Award—A 2019 Winner "Book of the Year", The Harper Lee Distinguished Writer of the Year in 2020, the Alabama Library Association Book of the Year for 2019, and was an RNA UK finalist for Romantic Historical Fiction. She resides in both Mountain Brook, Alabama, and Bluffton, South Carolina with her husband.





The Naked Gardener
David George, UC-Certified
Master Gardener

Scouts Refurbish The Clayton Library Sensory Garden Box



Scouts refurbishing Clayton Library Sensory Garden- Courtesy Linda Cruz

Do you enjoy the fragrance or feel of a sensory garden? How about its sight, taste, or sound? You should check out the newly refurbished and all-natural Sensory Garden Box at the Clayton Community Library at 6125 Clayton Road. Spearheaded by Clayton Valley Garden Club (CVGC) members Heather Goza and Linda Cruz, the Sensory Garden Box has been rejuvenated thanks to the collaborative work of local Scout Pack 262.

Originally established in 2007 and lightly refurbished in 2017, the soil had been greatly depleted of nutrients, leaving only two succulents still living, an Aloe and a Sedum.

The wooden planter box and signage showed obvious signs of natural breakdown. In February, Heather called upon Scout Pack 262 to descend upon the dilapidated garden box and eagerly restore it.

The scouts' parents, some of whom are members of the garden club, assisted. After scouts carefully removed the remaining live plants, the parents sanded the wooden box. Scouts weeded then conditioned the soil. Using hand trowels, they added perlite, an all-natural water saver, potting soil, and compost to reestablish nutrient-rich growing conditions.

Linda says, "It was so funny when the kids smelled the composted soil. They were all worried that it was cow manure. I read the label to them and told them it was (seasoned) chicken manure. One scout asked me if she had to take a shower after touching the chicken manure!"

Scouts then planted rooted cuttings from the CVGC greenhouse, each to stimulate one of the five senses: Stachys (Lamb's Ear) for its soft feel, Bergenia (Pig's Squeak), named for the squealing sounds its leaves make when rubbed together, Spearmint for taste, Rosemary for its aromatic scent, and Dwarf Lavender for both its fragrance and vibrant color.



Linda Cruz teaches about sensory plants, Photo courtesy Heather Goza

The scouts took turns applying a protective stain to the wooden box. The used stain was obtained for free from the Hazardous Waste Reuse store at 4797 Imhoff Place in Martinez. Temporary plant labels were installed, with plans for the scouts to craft permanent wooden signs, along with the original 2007 and 2017 markers. Soil amendments and plantings were donated by the CVGC, a group dedicated to all-natural gardening techniques.

Linda adds, "This rewarding community service project provided the scouts with a hands-on educational experience, teaching them about plant life and sensory engagement while reinforcing teamwork and stewardship of the natural world."

Magnificent work, Linda, the Clayton Valley Gardening Club, and the scouts of Pack 262. You've revitalized an interesting sensory and exemplary experience for all-natural gardeners.

Seasonal Notes: The Annual Contra Costa UC Master Gardener Great Tomato (and other Veggies) Plant Sale is being held this year on Saturday and Sunday, April 5-6 from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and on Wednesdays, April 9 and 16 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.. The Central County location is at the Walnut Creek Demonstration Garden at the corner of N. Wiget and Shadelands Dr. Over 25,000 veggie seedlings are looking for a new home (\$4 each).

Your comments and questions are welcome at: NakedGardener@diablogazette.com.

Clayton Valley Village Offers Diamond Terrace Tenants Resource Options

Diamond Terrace, the independent living facility in Clayton announced that it was discontinuing all amenities including meals, shuttle services and apartment cleaning, effective April 30, leaving many tenants in a state of uncertainty.

With these amenities gone, residents will no longer be required to pay for these services which will reduce their monthly rent by more than half in some cases depending on the unit. The cost of services has ranged from \$1,400 to \$1,700 which they will now use to cover their personal needs, such as transportation and meals. Although, they do have a microwave and small cooktop in their units' tiny kitchens.

But with no in-house services to rely on, many tenants will find this a life-altering and worrisome turn of events. Some say they will be just fine. Others plan to move elsewhere.

One volunteer organization is offering to step up with a solution. Clayton Valley Village (CVV) is a non-profit entirely run by vetted volunteers that supports the needs of seniors in Clayton.

Fiona Hughes, a volunteer for CVV, has reached out to Regional Vice President Mary Kershishyan of the Michael Organization who owns Diamond Terrace and proposed how they would be available to help tenants with services and community resources.

Services CVV can provide include transportation to medical or self-care appointments, stores, events, and social gatherings, etc.

To help with meals, Hughes' idea is to organize private chefs to prepare meals hopefully with the use of the Diamond Terrace facilities.

CVV members can engage in social activities such as monthly mixers, educations programs, parties, movie outings, walking and travel groups, and even bocce



Clayton Valley Village host afternoon tea at Diamond Terrace.



teams.

CVV volunteers are available to help with light household chores such as changing batteries in smoke detectors, fixing toilet flappers and other honeydew items.

Hughes says they have hosted afternoon tea and additional sessions at Diamond Terrace to introduce the organization to the tenants.

For tenants to receive this support, they must become a member of CVV, which is a mere \$40 per person per month.

It sounds like a workable solution for many of the tenants. "With our synergy of community resources, it really makes a lot of sense," Hughes says.

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CVCHS News
 Bill Morones, Executive Director
 Clayton Valley Charter High School

Every 15 Minutes: A Powerful Lesson in Choices and Consequences

At Clayton Valley Charter High School (CVCHS), we take our responsibility to prepare students for life beyond the classroom seriously. Academic achievement is critical but so is equipping our students with the wisdom to make sound decisions that will protect their futures. One of the most powerful programs we hosted this year was Every 15 Minutes, a dramatic, two-day event designed to confront students with the stark realities of impaired and distracted driving.

In March, CVCHS presented this program to our Junior and Senior students, immersing them in an unforgettable experience that underscores the life-altering consequences of reckless choices. Despite knowing the statistics about drunk driving, many teenagers believe, "It won't happen to me." This program is designed to challenge that dangerous assumption by making the consequences feel real in a way that no lecture or statistic ever could.

The CVCHS program was a collaborative effort, bringing together the California Highway Patrol, California Office of Traffic Safety, Concord Police Department, Contra Costa Sheriff's Department, John Muir Hospital, American Medical Response, Contra Costa Fire Protection District, and Ouimet Brothers Funeral Chapel. Their involvement highlighted the reality that tragic decisions affect an entire community. With a simulated car crash, real emergency response efforts, and the emotional toll of loss played out in real time, students came face-to-face with the dangers of drinking and distracted driving.

Crash Day: The Reality of a Split-Second Decision

On March 25, the first day of Every 15 Minutes, students experienced a



harrowing reenactment of a fatal crash. Every 15 minutes throughout the morning, a somber heartbeat played over the PA system, symbolizing how often someone dies in an alcohol or distraction-related crash. During class, law enforcement officers and chaplains entered classrooms to pull students, representing the "Living Dead," whose lives would have been lost to a preventable crash. Their parents were visited at work or home, receiving the dreaded notification that no parent should ever have to hear. These students were removed from all contact for 24 hours to emphasize the real-life consequences of

being lost to their loved ones.

The climax of Crash Day involved a full-scale accident simulation on our stadium field. Juniors and Seniors witnessed the chaotic aftermath of a DUI crash—complete with emergency responders, a victim being life-flighted to the hospital, a coroner bagging the deceased, and a DUI driver arrested. The realism is intentional. It is emotional. It's heartbreaking. And it's a wake-up call.

That night, the "deceased" students and their parents attended separate retreats, where they reflected on the experience and wrote letters to their families—students writing as if they had died and parents expressing the grief of losing a child.



The goal of Every 15 Minutes is not to scare CVCHS students but to save lives. By engaging them in this deeply personal and emotional experience, we hope to instill a sense of responsibility and awareness that will stay with them long after they leave high school. Their choices matter—not just for themselves but for their families, their friends, and their community.

At CVCHS, we believe in the power of education to shape futures, and sometimes, the most important lessons are the hardest to teach. This year, we invite our students to confront the reality of impaired driving and to choose, always, to protect themselves and those they love. I want to thank all students, families, staff and our community partners who made this program an overall success.

Funeral Day: Facing the Finality of Loss

On March 26th, students gathered for a mock funeral, complete with a casket, funeral flowers, and an In Memoriam slideshow. The weight of the event was palpable as letters from students and parents were read aloud, capturing the profound loss and regret that followed a single reckless decision. A video presentation recounted the events, reinforcing the inescapable truth: no one is invincible.

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50 Years Ago, Concord High Marching Minutemen Kicked Off Bicentennial Ceremony

by David King



Concord High Marching Minutemen performs at 1975 Bicentennial Event in Concord, Massachusetts where President Ford addresses the nation.

John Harcharik, Concord resident and former member of the Concord High Minutemen Marching Band, reminded the Diablo Gazette that April 19 will mark the 50th anniversary of when the band was invited to Concord, Massachusetts to participate in the 1975 Bicentennial celebration of the 1775 Battles of Concord and Lexington, the start of the American Revolutionary War, also infamously referred to as the "shot heard around the world."

"I was a freshman that year. We were one of the best bands around. We were good enough to be invited to kick off the event. We marched over the Old North Bridge where the battle took place."

The band played "Father of Victory March" marching across the bridge with the Secret Service beneath securing it for

President Ford's National address a bit later.

"I myself even got to shake Gerald Ford's hand!"

It was quite the honor for Concord High and the Minuteman Marching Band to be invited—and certainly a proud moment for our city, but it was also quite the expense at \$50,000.

"It was a big deal to have to raise \$50,000 to take all the musicians, parents and escorts, the auxiliary, sign carriers and flag waivers and all those people."

They stayed at a Holiday Inn in nearby Waltham.

April 19 of this year will mark the Semiquincentennial (250th Anniversary) celebration of the battles.

OPINIONS: Opinions expressed here are submitted by our readers. They may not be reflective of the opinion of this publication but are offered in the interests of fairness. Send your opinions to DiabloGazette@gmail.com

Answers Not Challenged

Last month, my column “Questions Not Asked” focused on governing decisions made in which several relevant questions were not asked regarding the issue of amending Concord’s Rent Control ordinance. The answers to the missing questions may exist in reality, but unless the Council can present to the public supporting data, then the Council has not performed responsibly. That is not the way to hold office.

Equally disturbing, answers given by City Council or Staff reports used to drive decisions should be challenged but often are not. I am using Concord as a focus, but the techniques of manipulation or misdirection can be found throughout politics everywhere.

Political Posturing-Big Spin (P.P.-B.S.)

Concord Councilmember Benavente says that the reason he proposed a rent cap of 7% is because it is halfway between the city’s current 3% and the State’s 10%. No data was given (nor is it mathematically accurate—halfway would be 6.5%) to support the need for this increase.

And when Mayor Obringer powers down in response and says, “I will only accept 5%” and explains that is what the landlords would accept, both are perfect examples of answers that should be called out as not being data driven and clearly one-sided.

Is this what the tenants want? What is justified by data analysis? If there were data, the question that should be asked is, “Under what data analysis would a REDUCTION in the rent cap be justified?”

Playing Loose With Numbers Or Percentages

When a councilmember says that garbage rates are going up 9% and attempts to tie that as support for an increase in rent control caps, that equivalency should be challenged. This amounts to an increase of only \$3.00 per month or so, while a single-family home that is rented out at \$3500 per month at a 7% increase in rent would be \$245 more each month.

When quoting expenses to justify revenue increases of hundreds of dollars a month, a \$5,000 one-time charge for a fee to exceed the rental cap comes out to only 83 cents a month per apartment for a corporation having 500 units, or \$8.33 for a company that has 50 units.

Challenge Fear Of Threats

In the rezoning fight to increase affordable housing and density by adding 1000 apartments in a particular zone as mandated by the state, the staff says we cannot rezone parts of the College District and various parking lots because they are afraid that the state will not accept it and the College District does not want it.

What we should do here is find a 1000 units space elsewhere and then rezone the College District and parking lots anyway. Then in addition, make it so that we can pressure the District to change its position. After all, there are three elections in the eight-year time limit mandated. We can elect a more favorable board and even state legislators to get what we want.

Likewise, when the state demands higher density affordable housing, we should challenge this.

For example, 20 acres of affordable housing would require 6-story buildings to get 1000 apartments. That would generate a massive impact on the neighborhoods. But if we designated 40 acres, we could meet the mandate with 3- and 2- story townhomes. We should define the narrative battle—that we prioritize families fitting in with a neighborhood over 6-story buildings. That is a fight we can win in the public and the courts.

We do not have to roll over and play dumb when the answers by politicians need to be challenged.



—Edi Birsan, Concordian.
Opinions are that of Edi Birsan, not to be confused with the Referee Association of the Major Baseball League or instant replay advocates. EdiBirsan@gmail.com

Concord Should Follow Its Own Data on Rent Control

For years, activist groups have organized Concord to demand rent control. When their initial efforts were unsuccessful, they pressured the city council to adopt a rent registry.

In January 2021, the Concord City Council succumbed to pressure and approved a new bureaucracy called the Rent Registry, requiring housing providers to submit private rental data. Activists claimed this tracking was necessary to “guide housing policies” despite demographic data being readily available from multiple sources. Many opposed this as unnecessary government intrusion into private information.

Councilmember Laura Hoffmeister cautioned supporters: “If we come out with data and it doesn’t prove your concepts that all the rents are going out of control in Concord and everybody is being evicted, and we got a problem, and we need to do rent control and it doesn’t show that, you need to stand by the data that comes out of it.”

Twenty-one months later, the city released its October 2022 Rent Registry report, which found:

- Rents in Concord are among the lowest in the Bay Area
- Rent increases fell below the statewide rent cap
- No mass evictions were occurring
- 94% of tenancy terminations in 2022 were due to renters voluntarily vacating their units
- 88% of owner-initiated terminations were due to non-payment of rent – a legal cause for termination

A September 2023 city report further confirmed that “Rents in Concord currently support households earning between 70% to 80% AMI, which is considered

to be accessible to low to moderate income households and is generally accessible to working families.”

The data was clear—there is no rent or eviction crisis in Concord. It’s a welcoming, diverse, and affordable community where rents are reasonable and arbitrary evictions are rare.

Yet in January 2023, the City Council ignored their own data and committed to adopting rent control. The question shifted from “Should Concord adopt rent control?” to “What is the strictest form of rent control Concord should adopt to appease activists?” Councilmember Hoffmeister’s warning came true, and an extremely restrictive version of rent control was later adopted.

Today, the same activist groups are pressuring the council to maintain this strict form, urging rejection of proposed amendments that would help protect naturally occurring affordable housing, housing quality, and housing diversity.

Their defense? Insufficient data – ironically, the very data they initially demanded in January 2021. It’s perplexing.

How do you ask for data to warrant a change in the law when the data didn’t exist to justify the law in the first place?

These are real questions that deserve thoughtful answers. The Concord City Council took the right action to correct course by adopting reasonable amendments based on the very data they commissioned. Using their own findings helps to ensure Concord remains affordable and well-maintained for years to come.

—Rhovy Lyn Antonio, Senior Vice President of Local Public Affairs, California Apartment Association

Chants, Threats, Outrage Disrupt Concord Council Meeting

by David King

Concord City Council faces its second consecutive contentious meeting on March 25, over the proposed amendment of the existing Tenants Protection Ordinance. The 4 1/2-hour meeting ended with shouting and angry chants, with personal attacks to Councilman Pablo Benavente and his family causing the Concord Police to step in and escort the offenders out of the chamber.

A maximum of 121 people is permitted in the Council Chamber including Councilmembers and City Staff, and on this night, many had to watch from the Council’s overflow room. Those who wished to make public comment, of which were many, were granted temporary admission into the Chamber to give their 2-minute comment if they were not already seated in the chamber.

The meeting can still be viewed on the City website for those interested in hearing the comments from both sides of the argument, Landlords vs. Tenants.

The disturbing aspect of this Free Speech exercise is the unsafe and belligerence of many of the activists who fear the Council is on their way to amending the ordinance

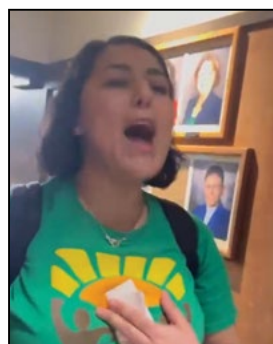
under the premise that the original verbiage went too far in its restrictions.

Councilman Benavente is especially being called out by the activists as it was his motion to amend the ordinance.

“Many of the people who supported me also believed the original ordinance went too far and wanted to see it changed. I heard that loud and clear while walking my district. This wasn’t just coming from landlords, but from everyday residents, including renters, immigrants, and working families who felt the policy was out of balance. My job is to listen to all voices and make decisions that reflect the broader needs of our city—even when the conversations are difficult,” Councilman Benavente stated.

As far as the threats made against Councilman Benavente and his family, he has responded with a great deal of class.

“It was deeply upsetting—not just for me, but for my family. Public service comes with scrutiny, and I accept that. But there’s a line between disagreement



Tenant activists from Concord and Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE) disrupt meeting prior to vote as police officers move in to prevent them from taking over the chamber. Chants began with: “Council shame on you” followed by “Bandito Pablo.”



Shut out due to a full house, former Mayor Edi Birsan stands outside the Concord Council Chamber peering in as Council deliberates over amending the Rent Stabilization Ordinance he spearheaded and passed in 2024.

and bullying or intimidation, and when someone crosses that line by doxxing or threatening a family, it stops being about policy and becomes something much darker... I won’t be intimidated, but I also won’t normalize or excuse that kind of behavior. Bullying has no place in our civic discourse. I’m committed to engaging with our community through respectful, honest dialogue—even when we disagree—and I hope others will

continue to do the same.”

The City is already receiving letters from citizens concerned over the deficient control of the meeting and safety of those who attend. The second reading of the amended ordinance is tentatively scheduled to occur at April 22 and if passed, would be in effect 30 days later.

The Arts Page

Liberty Beckons “Come Home” at aRt Cottage



Late Afternoon Benecia State Park by Mark Jezierny

I'm always amazed at how young one can express their thoughts through art that will evoke an emotional response from the admirer.

Remembering Liberty through the art of a child hit home for me. It was when Scarlett, a 5-year-old student at aRt Cottage, showed me a painting she did in her kindergarten class, that I was filled with strong memories.



Scarlett with her painting

She was proud to show me what she painted. When I asked her to tell me about it, she said, “This is Liberty, a big statue in the water.” When asked what Liberty was holding, her answer was, “A big light, a torch.”

“Why?” I asked. She was quick to respond, “She’s holding a big light for people to see the way and she’s saying, ‘Come Home.’”

Somehow this little girl and her kindergarten teacher have painted hope, love, and empathy in my heart. I remember passing by that statue in 1952 when we immigrated from Germany, wondering what was it going to be like in America.

I am always surprised by my students at aRt Cottage with the work they do here and by the work they show me that they’ve done elsewhere. This is true of both my adult students and the children. We all continue to learn from each other and are not afraid to share our artwork with each other.

Come see our working studio and gallery Wednesday - Saturday. We are open 11-5. Our current exhibit features Mark Jezierny and his adult students. Our

Spring is in the Air at Main Street Arts

Main Street Arts is celebrating a change in the seasons with an exhibit dedicated to Spring. Connie Millholland is April’s guest artist. Her exhibit is called “Stories”, and each painting is worth a thousand words. www.conniemilloholland.com.

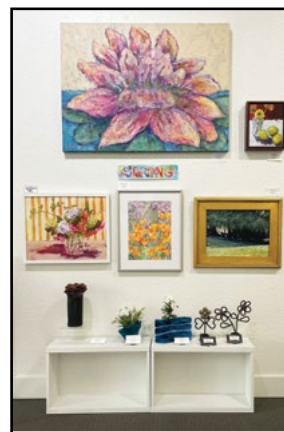
For Martinez’s April First Friday on April 4, Main Street Arts will remain open till 9:00 p.m. serving refreshments. Remember to enter to win Main Street’s monthly prize whenever you visit the gallery. April’s Free Drawing prize is a painting by Pam McCauley.

Next month guest artist will be Robert Anke. His paintings will be on the guest wall in May and June. www.robertanke.com

Main Street Arts is located at 613 Main Street, Martinez. Open Wednesday-Saturday 11-4, Sunday 10:000 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and Martinez First Fridays 6:00 -9:00 p.m. mainstreetarts.net



Dragonfly Vase by Pam McCauley Free Drawing Prize April 2025



Spring Wall April 2025

Blackhawk Gallery Call for Artists

CALL FOR ARTISTS!

PRIMAVERA
48H ANNUAL ADAS SPRING ART SHOW

Saturday, May 17th, 2025
10am to 8pm
Sunday, May 18th, 2025
10am to 6pm

Reception on Saturday, May 17th,
from 5-7 pm

adas4art.org/primavera

Alamo Danville
ADAS
ARTISTS SOCIETY

Black Hawk Gallery is inviting artists of all mediums (2D and 3D) to participate in Primavera, an upcoming exhibition in May at Blackhawk Plaza featuring paintings, photography, and sculpture in a large-scale showcase. Plein air painters are also invited to create live in the Plaza. For deadlines and more details please visit: <http://adas4art.org/primavera>.

Art & Music in the Afternoon at Jor Fine Arts Gallery

Meet Ester Benbanaste and Special Guest Mert Ozel at this creative gathering on Sunday, April 13, from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m. Discover Ester’s artwork and enjoy musical performances by both Ester and Mert at 1026 Oak Street, Suite 102, Clayton. The event is free and open to the

public. jorfineartgallery.com

While there, explore the solo exhibition featuring the work of renowned artist Don McCartney. McCarthy blends watercolor, typography, and digital collage into contemporary fine art. This exhibit ends April 27.



Mert Ozel and Ester Benbanaste



Artist Ester Benbanaste next to one of her works on display at Jor Fine Art Gallery.

Verdant Valley Closing Reception at the Gallery at Studio 55

Studio 55 in Martinez is inviting all to meet the artists of Verdant Valley exhibit on April 20 at the exhibit’s closing reception from noon - 4:00 p.m.

This is a fantastic opportunity to meet the talented artists behind the works and engage with fellow art lovers and share your thoughts. Light refreshments will be served while enjoying the beauty of nature-inspired art.

Verdant Valley exhibits works from the following artists: Pat Calabro, MaryLou Correia, Renee Doty, Sylvia Fones, Mark Jezeirny, Jill Landau, Karen Leoni, Karen Mason, Archie McJones, Marion Menon, Susan Carr Otten, Barbara Rebhan, Charlene Steen and Mary Yonekawa.

Whether you’re an art enthusiast or simply curious, the Verdant Valley Closing Reception promises to be a delightful experience for all.

This is a free event. Located at 55 Howe Road, Martinez.

VERDANT VALLEYS

MARCH 14 - APRIL 20

Closing Reception
March 20 12pm-4pm

PRIMAVERA
48th Annual ADAS Spring Show

Saturday, May 17 10:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Sunday, May 18 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Artists Reception & Awards
May 17 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Join us for our annual Primavera Art Show, featuring a large artist exhibit at Blackhawk Plaza in Danville. Artists will be plein air painting throughout the Plaza. Come meet the artists! See the magic of a painting develop.

For more information: adas4art.org/spring-show

3416 Blackhawk Plaza Cir, Danville

ADAS is a nonprofit corporation helping fund local school art programs



County Board of Supervisors Preparing Ballot Measure to Extend Urban Limit Line to 2051

Have you ever gone cherry or peach picking in Brentwood? Or admired the beautiful green hills surrounding the Diablo Valley? These landscapes and historic farms are protected through the Contra Costa County Urban Limit Line (ULL).

Measure C, adopted by county voters in 1990, created the ULL to prevent sprawl and preserve open space by establishing a boundary beyond which no urban land uses – residential, commercial, or industrial – can be planned. It helps focus growth within existing communities, where infrastructure and services are already available while preserving open space and natural areas.

The County ULL applies to unincorporated areas; each city has adopted its own ULL. It plays a key role in enforcing the 65/35 Land Preservation Standard, also created in 1990, which ensures that no more than 35% of Contra Costa County is designated for urban use. The remaining 65% is reserved for non-urban uses such as agriculture, parks, conservation, and water resources.

In 2006, voters extended the ULL until December 31, 2026. Now, a new measure is needed to maintain its protections. On February 25, 2025, the Board of Supervisors accepted a report on the ULL from the County's Department of Conservation and Development (DCD) and took the first steps in preparing a 2026 ballot measure for ULL renewal. The Board directed DCD to conduct public outreach, indicated that the new ballot measure should likely extend the ULL for 25 years (until 2051), and explored the possibility of reviewing the ULL

every eight years in conjunction with updating the Housing Element of the General Plan.

Adjustments to the ULL are rare—it has been moved only six times since its inception in 1990. The DCD report included 50 maps showing proposed ULL adjustments that move restricted development areas, protected open spaces, and areas with significant development constraints outside the line and simplify the ULL along shorelines. The adjustments align the County ULL with the boundaries of cities that adopted their own urban limit line and with preexisting developments and parcel lines. The adjustments also eliminate isolated “islands” of land outside the ULL that are surrounded by cities and unincorporated land inside the ULL. As currently proposed, about 9,150 net acres would move outside the ULL.

DCD is gathering public input. Your feedback is essential. Please visit <https://envisioncontracosta2040.org> to learn about upcoming events and view detailed information about the ULL. Share your comments by 5:00 PM on June 2, 2025, at advanceplanning@dcd.cccounty.us.

Comments will be addressed in a follow-up report to the Board of Supervisors. DCD anticipates that by the end of the year, the Board of Supervisors will vote to place the ULL renewal measure on the ballot for the June 2, 2026, Primary Election ballot. By continuing the ULL, Contra Costa County can preserve open space and encourage smart growth in accordance with the General Plan.

County School Board Accepting Applications for Student Members

The Contra Costa County Board of Education (CCCBOE) is accepting applications for a student member for the 2025-26 school year from rising juniors and seniors until Friday, April 18, 2025, at 5 p.m.

Eligible applicants are any student enrolled in a public high school in Contra Costa County who will be a junior or senior in the 2025-26 school year.

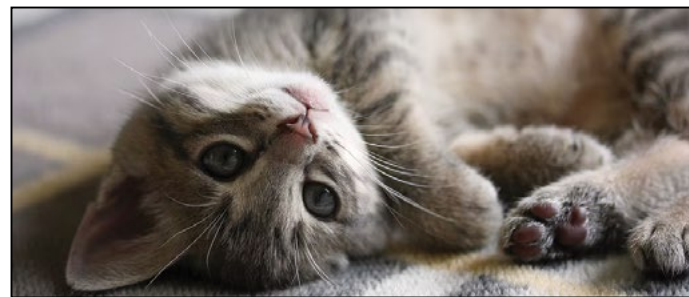
Applicants will be interviewed by an ad hoc committee of the CCCBOE and voted on by the full Board. More information can be found at <https://bit.ly/3oq9NEK>.

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

For the Love of Pets by Jill Hedgecock, Jillhedgecock.com

Why Does My Cat Do This?

Let's face it, cats are quirky. From the stink-eye stare to kneading bellies to chirping and teeth chattering, these marvelous creatures provide mind-boggling entertainment. Does anyone really know what a cat is thinking?



Actually, some common behaviors, such as kneading and licking have some logic to them, whereas others such as staring and rolling over, do not always seem to have any rhyme or reason. And then there are the truly crazy things, like engaging in the midnight zoomies or eating cat litter.

Kneading. Congratulations! If your feline is giving your lap or belly a massage with its front paws, it is a sign of happiness. This behavior is often considered leftover from its nursing days when this action encourages the release of milk from their mothers. The kneading also releases the cat's scent, and, thus, marks its territory.

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Licking. Anyone who has been on the receiving end of a kitty lick knows those little pink tongues can feel like sandpaper. The barbs on their tongues face backwards to support grooming their fur. While a cat's lick may not always seem like a pleasant experience, take comfort in that the kitty is showing you affection in her own special way.

Staring. Here is where it gets tough deciphering a cat's behavior. Wide-open staring can mean many things. Sometimes their gaze might be the equivalent of being ogled by a love interest, and the cat is letting you know how much it loves you. Other times it might be a “Hello, human. I'm hungry, and did you forget to feed me?” Or it could be something entirely different.

but there could be other explanations. Cats have scent glands on their heads and paws and rolling can transfer their scent to the ground beneath them. They may also do it just for the fun of it or to cool off if it is hot. Some medications may irritate their skin, and they may be scratching an itch.

Zoomies. Some cats literally bounce off the walls (often at inconvenient hours in the middle of the night) and yelp while they are running around. These cats might only be naturally energetic or triggered by catnip. Far less common reasons might be a thyroid problem, a reaction to fleas, or senility.

Eating Cat Litter. Sometimes the litter is edible, and the cat is simply curious or bored. Some cats have a condition called pica where they regularly eat nonfood items. However, there are serious medical issues that may cause the behavior, such as feline leukemia, a brain tumor, or diabetes. To make sure your litter-eating cat isn't sick, a trip to the veterinarian may be in order.

Regardless of a cat's quirks, if there are no medical problems behind their eccentricities, don't worry about understanding their behavior. Just sit back and enjoy their uniqueness.

Jill Hedgecock is a local author of a Doberman trilogy series “Between Shadow's Eyes”, “From Shadow's Perspective” and “In Shadow's Reflection” which are available on amazon.com.

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Michael Barrington 'Your Neighbor's Shoes' www.mbwriter.net

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Novocaine

Nathan Caine (Jack Quaid) leads a careful life. He suffers from a condition called CIP (Congenital Insensitivity to Pain), which makes him unable to feel physical pain. His parents raised him in a protective environment and Nathan carries this cautious way of life into adulthood.

Currently employed as the assistant manager of a small bank, Nathan is a good guy who goes the extra mile to help his clients and he harbors a secret crush for bank teller Sherry (Amber Midthunder). It is this affection for Sherry that leads Nathan to go against his instincts and accept a coffee date with the outgoing young woman.

The date goes surprisingly well. With the support and humor from Sherry, it appears he just might be able to turn a corner and start living a braver life. Then the bank is robbed and Nathan's love is taken hostage.

Nathan uncharacteristically decides he must take matters into his own hands to rescue Sherry before the police do. Audiences love a fish-out-of-water story and this one allows us to follow this risk-adverse character as he navigates a dangerous world of criminals, car chases, weapons, and cops that are hot on his tail. It is important to note that even though Nathan cannot feel pain, this does not prevent him from being injured. Nathan, however, finds creative ways to stay in a fight despite not having prior experience wrestling with thugs.

Once things begin to spiral, Nathan calls on his longtime video gamer companion Roscoe

(Jacob Batalon) to help him in real



life. Roscoe provides much needed comic relief and helps to keep a good balance between the plot and the action.

There are some surprising twists which will keep you fully engaged until the end. Quaid, Midthunder and Batalon all shine in their roles and they each bring vulnerability and humor to their characters. They help raise the bar of what otherwise could be a throwaway action flick. Instead, this is an entertaining, bullet and blood fueled adventure.

Rated R
In Theaters



The Gorge

In an undisclosed location of the world sits an enormous gorge. Although the territory is not claimed by any country, it has been decided that the chasm will be protected by two representatives, one from the western part of the world and one from the East.

Each guard is stationed at the gorge for one year and they are chosen for their marksmanship and lack of close personal relationships. For the current assignment, the western side enlists ex-sniper Levi Kane (Miles Teller) and the eastern side chooses Lithuanian operative Drasa (Anya Taylor-Joy).

The guards are not supposed to have contact with each other, but boredom and the fact that they are both young and attractive, lead Levi and Drasa into a quick connection. They hold up notes and peer at one another through their telescopes. At first, time appears to pass in a slow and uneventful manner, but this is where the film takes a turn. Levi and Drasa realize they are not simply guarding territory. There is something in the gorge and it is vital that it does not get out.

Action fans get a treat with Sigourney Weaver as the suit in charge of the western portion of the mission. She manages to do a lot with her small role and sets the tone for the overarching tension throughout the film. Why has the gorge been kept a secret for so long and just what does the mission truly entail?

The action-thriller dips its toe into science fiction and even romance. There is something for everyone and in the capable hands of Miles Teller and Anya Taylor-Joy, you can be assured



of a white-knuckled roller coaster. The pacing is just right and the action is doled out in the proper amounts to keep the viewer fully engaged throughout the film's running time.

Oftentimes, this type of film backs itself into a corner, creating an interesting premise but failing to tie the story threads together. Fortunately, this plot delivers on its promises. Even if it all seems far-fetched, it is satisfying as a viewer to receive explanations and closure. This one is a movie buffet, a bit of this and a bit of that to create an entertaining thrill ride.

Rated PG-13
Steaming on APPLE+

LITTLE POLAND



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