

Concern about Public Access to Open Space

Trail advocate Dolores Bengston is concerned about public access to open space in the Oak Grove project. The developer is proposing to dedicate 497 acres of open space as part of the development proposal.

Bengston, a former Director of Pleasanton Parks and Community Services, points out that the Pleasanton Community Trails Master Plan approved in 1993 includes a network of internal trails on the property. It also includes a segment of the regional trail and several staging areas. She points out that when the Oak Grove project was first proposed it included 98-units, network of trails, and a well developed staging area that included the basic amenities of parking, a restroom, and water.

Now, all that remains is the regional trail segment. There is no staging area indicated in the plans, says Bengston.

She said the consensus on the plan was reached without public participation. She described the internal trials as a way to spread out use.

"These changes are very alarming to a number of us," said Bengston. History shows that adding the trails and staging areas after homes are built is very difficult. She notes that should the city accept the land but not have convenient access, the land "would simply be a private preserve for Kottlinger Ranch maintained by the City."

According to a website established by the developer, "A portion of a regional trail linking Callippe Golf Preserve with Shadow Cliffs passes through the 497 acres of Oak Grove open space. Approval of Oak Grove would preserve both the open space and the regional trail link. There is no staging area proposed on site at this time."

Bing Hadley, president of the Kottlinger Ranch Homeowners Association, said in an interview that any plans for Oak Grove are speculation at this point. "There are a lot of ongoing negotiations (in regard to Oak Grove)," according to Hadley.

Early in 2006, members of the City Council launched an initiative to find ways to minimize the amount of new housing constructed in southeast Pleasanton and maximize the amount of open space preserved within the eastern part of the city. About the same time, the city manager convened a set of meetings between the Oak Grove landowners (the Lin family) and Kottlinger Ranch Homeowners Association representatives to discuss a compromise development plan. The result was the 51-lot plan now under consideration.

The Homeowners Association and

the developer have endorsed the 51-lot plan. Hadley commented, "Some people wanted zero homes. The developer wanted 98. The final number is a compromise on both sides. However, the developer wouldn't be agreeing, if the project weren't still doable at the smaller number."

Hadley pointed out that the Oak Grove project has dramatic impact on Kottlinger Ranch. "We have been in discussion for a number of years. There is a lot of positive agreement in principle. Not everything has been iced. All of the details will come out when they are finalized."

Hadley said that a meeting is planned with trail advocates to discuss their concerns. "There is a continuing open dialog about aspects of the project that we are all embracing," Hadley added.

The property was first settled by John

Kottlinger, who was appointed the first Justice of the Peace for Murray Township in 1853. Kottlinger, along with Joshua Neal, set the precedent for development improvements that formed the City of Pleasanton. The Ranch was acquired by the Lin family in 1977. All but 562 acres of the Ranch were transformed by the Lins into a neighborhood of homes that retains its historic name, Kottlinger Ranch.

In 1991, the remaining 562 acres were annexed into the City. In 1992, the Pleasanton City Council approved a development plan called "Kottlinger Hills" that included 86 homes and an 18-hole golf course. In 1993, the voters turned down the Kottlinger Hills proposal in a referendum. Seven years later, the landowners submitted a Development Plan for Oak Grove for 98 lots and 495 acres

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Relatives Hope For Timely Gift To Save Livermore Native's Life

By Ron McNicoll

Relatives and friends of Charlie Stockley are hoping for a Christmas miracle.

Stockley, 38, is in the intensive care unit at Stanford Medical Center, awaiting a lung transplant. He is at the top of the list to receive a pair of lungs. However, it's more complicated than it sounds. Stockley must be compatible with the donor's blood and tissue type. So far, a match has not been found.

The ravages of cystic fibrosis, his lifelong disease, have shut down Stockley's lungs. A transplant is the only thing left for him. He is breathing with the help of a ventilator. However, if he is on it much longer, other complications could set in, problems that would nullify his ability to have the operation. A timely donation is crucial.

Stockley grew up in Livermore. He is still the drummer in a band with two of his best Livermore buddies, Dan Flores and Herb Toor. When they play Valley clubs, they are called Mad Dog Toor and the Milk Bones.

It's one of the things Stockley has done to keep active, refusing to have his disease put any limits on him, said his sister, Kelly Spruiell, who lives in Livermore.

Spruiell and other relatives have been sleeping on and off in the waiting room at Stanford for the past few days, hanging in there and pulling for Stockley. She said they realize that a newspaper story might not bring in the right match for him. However,

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Fred Erickson and Betty Boling have each seen 101 Christmas celebrations.

Photo - Doug Jorgensen

Two People and 202 Years Of Christmas Celebrations

By Ron McNicoll

Just two residents of Rosewood Gardens, an assisted living facility in Livermore, have enough birthdays between them to bring their combined total of Christmas observances to 202 years next week.

Both Fred Erickson and Betty Boling are 101 years old. They fool many people with their appearance. They both look about 20 years younger than they really are.

Boling has been hampered by arthritis for the past couple of

years, so she needs a walker to get around. Otherwise she could probably still be driving a car, her faculties are so sharp, said Sherri Douty, marketing director for Rosewood Gardens.

Like other residents of the facility, Erickson and Boling live in their own neatly maintained one-bedroom apartments. They attend the in-house special activities, usually performances by young singers and instrumentalists who donate their time to entertain them.

Erickson, who turned 101 in

July, speaks briefly, because he is hard of hearing, and must raise his voice to be heard. However, he is able to convey humor, and comes across as a great kiddier. He was teasing Boling and another woman on staff in a friendly way, letting an interviewer know that there was still plenty of spark left in him.

Erickson's arthritis prevents him from dancing now, but in his younger days, he and his late wife, Wilda, loved to dance in Oakland's ballrooms in the

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Pulido Trading School Board Seat For Bench

Steve Pulido is moving up to the Alameda County Superior Court bench. He will be leaving his seat on the Pleasanton school board behind.

Pulido told his fellow school trustees at their meeting Dec. 12 that he was appointed a few days earlier to the bench by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger. Pulido is an attorney with his own practice in Hayward. He specializes in family law. Pulido will leave his seat on the district board of trustees Feb. 2, the day that he will be sworn in as a judge.

The board voted 4-0 to re-

place him with an appointment, instead of calling a special election. Trustees Jim Ott and Kris Weaver said that normally an election might be a good thing. However, Ott was appointed in May to succeed Gloria Fredette, who resigned over time conflicts in her life. When the election rolled around in November, no one filed to run against the appointed incumbent, or the other incumbent, 10-year board veteran Pat Kernan.

Ott and Weaver interpreted this as an indicator that the com-

(See PULIDO, page 4)

Local Electeds in Place to Push for BART to Tracy

"BART to Tracy" is the new cry raised by elected officials in planning the future of Interstate 580's traffic congestion relief.

Alameda County Supervisor Scott Haggerty was the first to say it at a groundbreaking ceremony Dec. 15 at Dublin city hall. The earth-turning ritual next to I-580 kicked off the first of a series of projects for the next six years that will include widening both directions of I-580 to install HOV lanes and preservation of a transit median in the middle of the freeway.

The first phase of the project, due for completion next year, will be to install cameras, message boards, and other technol-

ogy that will enable CalTrans to monitor traffic flow on the freeway, and make adjustments to speed things up. Installing the vigilance hardware and software first will help monitor safety for the freeway-widening crews.

Assemblyman Guy Houston also said in his remarks that Tracy should be in BART's long-range plans.

Rep.-elect Jerry McNerney stated, "BART to Livermore, and possibly Tracy, are things I'm interested in."

He praised the attending politicians and staff people, who included CalTrans and the Congestion Management Authority

(See BART, page 4)

Film Festival Moves to April

The California Independent Film Festival (CIFF) is moving from October to April.

Festival founder Derek Zemrak explained that with the October date, CIFF was the last big film festival of the year. The film festival season kicks off at Sundance in January. Many film makers pulled their films from the CIFF festival in anticipation of submitting them to Sundance. All of the films shown at Sundance are required to be premieres.

Zemrak said the change in dates for the festival are already showing up in the numbers and types of submissions. Over 100 have been sent in. Of that total, 20 are feature films, a big increase for CIFF. "All are ex-

tremely high quality films," he stated.

The April 19-22 dates will also make it easier to bring stars in for special appearances. November is sweeps weeks. A lot of actors are working on television pilots at that time.

In addition, there are really no big major events in Livermore in April, added Zemrak. And, wineries aren't having to deal with the harvest.

He says he isn't too concerned about people being used to October and not ready for the films in April. There are plans to hold a lot of events over the next couple of months to let people know about the change.

There will be changes in the

(See FILM, page 4)

Report Says Consensus Missing on Nuclear Weapons

A report issued last week by a Defense Science Board Task Force concludes there is agreement that the "overriding priority for the US nuclear weapons enterprise is to provide and sustain a reliable, safe, secure and credible set of nuclear weapons needed to maintain the nuclear deterrent." However, the report adds, there is no national consensus on the nature of that need.

John Foster, former Director of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, co-chaired the committee along with General (ret) Larry Welch.

The report points out that there are sharp differences found on the role and complexion of the use of nuclear weapons as a deterrent. On one hand, there is an entrenched view held by an influential segment of the population that transforming the stockpile is the wrong way to shape the security environment and counter nuclear proliferation pressures. On the other hand, there are views that the task force says need to be more widely understood in order to transform the nuclear enterprise to one effective in meeting the security

threats of today.

"The result of this lack of consensus is an entrenchment of long-standing and strongly held views, with little genuine debate aimed at forging a new consensus. A new consensus would enable sensible and supportable choices on future nuclear capabilities and doctrine needed to move forward in providing the right nuclear weapons."

The report presents five competing views. The first is that lower numbers of U.S. nuclear weapons are preferable regardless of the starting point, with zero as

the ultimate goal. The alternative view to this view is that the desirability of a nuclear free world is irrelevant. A fundamental requirement for credibility is the belief by the potential adversary that the U.S. would execute its deterrent threat.

The second view is that U.S. nuclear development and sustainment activity causes other states to seek their own nuclear weapons, spurring proliferation. The alternative view is that nations pursue weapons of mass destruction because they have

(See NUCLEAR, page 4)

Condo Conversion Ordinance Sent Back for Additional Input

A proposed ordinance to regulate condo conversions in Pleasanton was sent back for more input from the public.

The Pleasanton City Council wanted to hear from such groups as real estate agents, affordable housing advocates, and the Chamber of Commerce before voting on the ordinance. The city's Housing Commission will host the workshop.

Councilmember Matt Sullivan pointed out that there needs to be a determination on what the council thinks the ordinance is trying to accomplish. "One thing missing is why we are doing this. Is it to maintain low and very low rental housing or do we want to create low and moderate for sale housing. These are two different objectives. I'm concerned about the fact that we're losing lower income rental housing. We need to have a conversation about our objectives."

A previous council discussion had looked at placing restrictions on converting rental units to condominiums in an effort to retain affordable housing in the city.

However, at last week's council meeting, members of the public suggested that allowing conversions provides an opportunity to create affordable "for sale" housing that might not otherwise be available in Pleasanton. They, along with Councilmember Jerry Thorne, called the proposed ordinance "too restrictive" in that it would discourage the conversions.

Mayor Jennifer Hosterman commented, "Anyway you look at it, we're losing opportunities for housing."

The proposed ordinance would require a development to conform to existing building code condominium standards. It would require notices to assure tenants are informed of conversion plans

(See CONDO, page 3)



Photo - Doug Jorgensen

The final performance of the Valley Dance Theatre's Nutcracker ballet will be presented Dec. 22 at 7 p.m. at the Livermore High School Performing Arts Theater, 600 Maple St., Livermore. Tickets are \$18 adults, \$15 students and seniors for ground floor reserved seats; \$15 adults, \$13 students and seniors for open balcony seating. For information or tickets call (925) 243-0927.

All Building In Livermore To Be Green

Green building will become mandatory for all new private property construction in Livermore starting on January 1, 2008.

The new ordinance, approved by the city council last week, will be phased in over the next year.

The idea behind green building is to promote resource conservation, consider environmental impacts and waste minimization, create a healthy and comfortable indoor environment, and reduce operation and maintenance costs. Green building can include, among other things, the use of certified sustainable wood products, use of high recycled content products,

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EDITORIALS

Medical Marijuana Issue

The Livermore City Council has voted to reconsider medical marijuana dispensaries.

Livermore currently has a moratorium on them, effective until next September 11. The council must decide whether to ban the dispensaries when the moratorium expires or enact an ordinance allowing but regulating them.

They voted earlier for a ban, but last week decided to rethink it in a 3-2 vote: Tom Reitter, Marj Leider and Lorraine Dietrich aye, Marshall Kamena and John Marchand no. Reitter initiated the discussion, giving an impassioned talk as he pointed out that some cities have learned to successfully oversee these dispensaries.

The pressure for the ban stems from the federal government's War on Drugs. The Federal Drug Administration (FDA) continues to come down on marijuana, even though the voters of California have legalized marijuana for medical use.

"There are a number of people for whom this is the only effective pain relief," observed Councilmember Dietrich. "There are more than we might think. If we fail to do anything to make their life easier, we are failing."

We think that history will show the FDA's crusade against medical marijuana to be one of the American government's low points. We agree with Lorraine Dietrich that the City Council should step up for the many chronically ill people who are able to enjoy some relief from their suffering thanks to this drug. In Livermore and all other California cities the distribution of medical marijuana should be regulated, not banned.

The Vine

The Vine Cinema is celebrating its 50th anniversary this week through Tuesday.

Popcorn and soda are on sale for 50 cents each. Last Saturday the Vine held a special sneak preview of "We Are Marshall," which opens nationwide tomorrow.

The Vine opened its doors on December 26, 1956, showing "You Can't Run Away from It" with Jack Lemmon and June Allyson.

It's hard not to feel a tender spot in the heart for this independent, hometown cinema, the elder among the Valley's moviehouses.

With a multi-screen movie theater opening only a few blocks away, the Vine management plans to be innovative in their scheduling. Among other special events, the Livermore based California Independent Film Festival will present monthly screenings.

Happy anniversary, Vine! We wish you fifty more.

BART

(continued from page one)

(CMA) for their "forward thinking" in bringing the whole project about. From his new seat on the House Committee on Transportation, McNerney said that he will "have the opportunity to help solve problems. I will have an open door. I expect to see officials (from the Valley)."

Inclusion of Tracy in BART service was studied in 2003 as part of a major report about a Livermore BART extension. However, neither involved a direct BART line, coming from Livermore along Interstate 580. Instead, the options to Tracy were either a diesel train or Bus Rapid Transit, which would use High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to speed the buses back and forth.

Haggerty's new advocacy is for the standard BART rail service to both Livermore and Tracy, said his transportation aide, Dawn Argula.

The 2003 BART study said that a rail extension to Livermore wouldn't be cost effective, because the area would not contribute enough riders. However, the economics of it could change, if Tracy were brought into the picture, said Stephan Garcia, a capital projects manager at the CMA. There is a huge potential market for BART commuters in San Joaquin County, perhaps enough to help financially carry any shortfall that might occur in a Livermore station, he told the Independent.

Argula stated that Tracy BART would require a new study. Officials have been so busy just getting the widening of I-580 into place that they haven't had time yet to study something like a Tracy BART extension, she added.

Normally BART service goes only to areas that are in BART's nine counties. However, Santa

Clara County has committed to buying into the BART system and paying for an extension from Fremont without annexing to BART. Tracy could follow the same model, if there is interest.

A rule-of-thumb estimate on BART cost has been approximately \$100 million per mile. Just bringing it to Livermore would cost about \$1 billion, BART officials say. When BART conducted its study in 2003, the consultants said that there would not be enough riders from either Livermore or San Joaquin County. However, that was assuming Livermore would be the terminus. It's possible that the picture could change with rail to Tracy.

Argula noted that traffic is expected to increase by 90 percent by 2030. "Scott thought the (BART estimate) was inaccurate. It seemed in his mind impossible with the growth projected for San Joaquin County that the projected number of riders was so low," she said.

The Valley has politicians who are well-placed to work more for a BART extension and other anti-congestion measures. In addition to McNerney, Rep. Ellen Tauscher serves on the House Transportation Committee.

Newly elected State Sen. Ellen Corbett, whose district includes part of the west Valley, told the groundbreaking audience that she has asked the Senate leadership to appoint her to the Committee on Housing and Transportation.

Assemblywoman Mary Hayashi, who replaces Assemblyman Johan Klehs in a district with most of Pleasanton, said that she will lend support from her new position as assistant majority whip.

Pleasanton School Cash Flow Deficit May Not Be As Bad As It Sounds

A look ahead to 2013 in the projected Pleasanton Unified School District developer fee cash flow shows a potential deficit of \$23 million for construction.

However, it's not as bad as it sounds, assistant superintendent Sandra Lepley told the school board at its meeting Dec. 12. "It doesn't mean that the district will spend more than it will take in. Various adjustments can be made," Lepley told the board.

Later she told the Independent, "We wouldn't spend ourselves \$23 million in the hole. We'd figure out our highest priorities, depending on the cash available. As long as we know what we're looking at, we won't be caught short. We may be short on money (at times). However, we won't be short in terms of over-committing," said Lepley.

Approximately \$14 million of the projected deficit comes from a revision of the district's expectation of how many homes will be built at ultimate build-out in Pleasanton. The district had been basing its developer fee expectations on 27,500 units for the past four years. However, in a liaison meeting with the city last year, Lepley was told that 27,315 is a more realistic figure, at least for now.

Lepley made that adjustment, saying it's a good idea to be on the same page with the city. However, that really isn't a solid number, until the city council makes a final determination about the city's general plan, said Lepley.

The revision itself is still up in the air, and is one variable in the whole view of the cash flow projections. It would appear to many people that a drop of only 385 homes shouldn't affect the district's income from developer

fees so much, but it does.

The fee today in the gift agreement, which was signed by all but two developers, is \$7.75 per square foot. New homes are so big in Pleasanton, that each home contributes a significant amount of money. Typically, homes are now 5000 or 6000 square feet, said Lepley. Some of them even approach the district's maximum 7000 square feet, the floor area cap on the fee.

If a home does pay the maximum today, the fee would be \$54,250. A 6000 square foot home would pay \$46,500. Computing a mix of various sizes, and lower fees for affordable housing, Lepley came up with her estimate

of approximately \$13 million to \$14 million less that would be coming in, with the lowering of the prediction from 27,500 to 27,315 units.

The shortfall would occur because of two big-ticket expenses for the district.

One is \$8.5 million, plus interest, that would be spent on construction of Neal elementary school, which is tied up in litigation with the developer that promised to build the school. The estimated cost of the school is \$13.5 million.

The other big price tag is expansion of the district's three high schools. Such things as adding more classrooms and ex-

panding the gyms at Amador Valley and Foothill high schools, or tearing down the gyms and building new ones, will be expensive. They are only a part of a long wish list for the two schools and Village High School, the district's continuation school.

"The assumption has been we will spend \$23.9 million on the high school expansion, and also pay for Neal and the interest. However, we don't have any master plan for high school expansion," said Lepley.

The cash flow picture will be much clearer when the board meets Jan. 23, and hears a staff report firming up projected high school expansion costs.

Politicians Factoring Changing Demographics Into Picture For 2016

Major business magazines such as Forbes and Fortune were telling readers 10 years ago that one of the best places in the world to live, work and do business was the Bay Area, which was rated second only to Singapore.

Wanting to make sure that Alameda County can continue to keep the luster polished, supervisor Keith Carson of Oakland brought together a convocation of city council members, supervisors, and city and county managers last week to see what new trends government needs to take into account in planning for the next 10 years. The conference was called "Summit 2016."

Carson told the Independent, "It was the first time that there was a comprehensive meeting of people from around the county about what to expect in the future right here. (One question it raised was) how do I make decisions that are better informed, because decisions have long-term ramifications."

The Bay Area received high marks 10 years ago for its diversity in jobs and ethnic groups, presence of world-class institutions of higher learning, a skilled workforce, and a good transportation infrastructure, said Carson. The balance among urban, suburban and rural lifestyles was also impressive. The county can build on those blocks, and look ahead to making plans to provide services for an aging and more ethnically diverse future population, said Carson.

The total geographic outlook is important, too. "When we had (a period of) interaction between attendees, one of the things that came out is the need to plan for how things fit into the bigger picture, and not just in Dublin, or Pleasanton, or Fremont, or Oakland, but all over" he said.

Two big considerations in

planning to 2016 will be the graying of the population, and the increase of people of color.

It is predicted that Livermore will see a rise in people age 65 and over from 8 percent now to 12 percent in 2016. Pleasanton will go up from 9 percent to 13 percent. The Hispanic population in the county will go from 19 percent of the county now to 27 percent. Asians will grow from 21 to 31 percent. The white population will decline from 41 to 24 percent, which will put it behind Asians and Hispanics. African American population will decline from 14 to 11 percent.

There will be an additional 100,000 people in the county by 2016. Some 29,000 of them will be in the 5 to 17 age group. A major portion will be 65 years or older. Looking at the demographics, it's obvious that more senior-connected services will be needed, said Carson.

Retirements will have consequences for the workforce. So will the fact that more seniors are working into their 70s. Cities will have to be flexible in handling planning for that, both on their own staffs, and looking at the consequences for business.

Livermore city manager Linda Barton, who attended the summit, said that the aging Boomer population is definitely a consideration for Livermore staff personnel planning. "We have to look into our organization, and help current employees with their roles (in the city staff) in the future. We're looking at leadership training, and also the expected timing (of the demographic changes in the workforce)," said Barton.

With a larger percentage of seniors, the city will "have to make sure we have enough housing and senior services," she said.

NUCLEAR

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concluded that acquiring them is in their national interest.

A third view is that nonproliferation is more important than nuclear deterrence in a post-Cold War era. The alternative view is that in the hands of others than a completely reliable and trustworthy friend, weapons of mass destruction capable of inflicting intolerable levels of destruction, the assured ability to deter such an act remains the first priority.

The fourth view is that nuclear weapons should deter only nuclear threats. The alternative is that in the modern world of chemical and biological weapons proliferation, U.S. nuclear deterrent capabilities have a broader purpose.

The final view is that any new nuclear initiatives are unnecessary for deterrence and would undermine the higher priority non-proliferation goal. The alternative is that it will not be possible to sustain the current weapons without replacing some current nuclear warheads with new nuclear warheads. It will not be possible to sustain a credible

nuclear deterrent in the 21st century with only Cold War capabilities.

One of the recommendations in the report is the creation of a National Nuclear Weapons Agency. The administrator would report to the President. The agency would be comprised of the secretaries of defense, energy and homeland security and the director of national intelligence. The core of the new agency's responsibility would be the three national nuclear weapons laboratories and the weapons production complex.

The task force report finds that there are programs in place focused on extending the life of existing weapons. However, the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program would provide for a path to a sustainable nuclear stockpile, in the opinion of the report's authors. The current nuclear organization, management and programs do not provide for a nuclear weapons enterprise capable of meeting the nation's minimum needs, according to the report authors.

In concluding a letter signed by Foster and Welch urges "senior leaders of this nation to understand the urgent need to act on the report's findings and recommendations."

Other recommendations include the following:

The national security leadership should declare, unequivocally and frequently, that a reliable, safe, secure and credible nuclear deterrent is essential to national security and a continuing high priority.

The Secretary of Defense and the Commander, US Strategic Command, should strongly advocate accelerated development of a full set of "New Triad" capabilities - missile defense, infrastructure and the strike triad, including a credible nuclear leg of the strike triad.

The national security leadership would demand that the weapons complex be capable of producing a predetermined number of RRW class warheads per year by 2012 for timely evolution to sustain a reliable, safe, secure and credible stockpile.

Tri-Valley to Get First Toll Lane Project

The Tri-Valley will host the region's first toll lane along a 14-mile stretch of southbound I-580 from Pleasanton to Milpitas.

It is projected work will begin on the high occupancy toll (HOT) lane in 2008. It would open in 2010. The HOT lanes are supposed to ease congestion by allowing single driver cars into the car pool lane if the driver wants to pay for the privilege.

The fee will be based on what is called "capacity pricing," according to Pleasanton Mayor Jennifer Hosterman speaking

during the Mayor's Report. The toll would rise and fall with the amount of congestion on the freeway; the more congestion the higher the fee.

Hosterman admitted the plan has social justice implications in that "those who have get to travel faster." At the same time, it is projected that allowing cars to pay to use the lane there would be a reduction in congestion on the freeway, she added.

Two additional toll lanes are planned. One along Highway

101 and the second on Route 85 in Santa Clara County. The idea is to have a loop of tollroads around the Bay Area.

Electronic sensors on the roadway will monitor the level of congestion. Prices for the I-680 HOT lane will start at \$1 and could top out at \$9. The tolls will be automatically deducted using FastTrack transponders.

The HOT lane will cost \$41 million, with most of the funds coming from federal highway dollars.

State legislation passed in 2004 authorizes the lanes, but only for four years each in Santa Clara and Alameda counties. After the four years are up, transportation planners will either scrap them or expand them to the rest of the Bay Area based on how successful they are.

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PULIDO

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munity seems fine with the appointment process and the board's direction. Ott and Weaver also said they were satisfied with the board's interviewing process, which includes a citizens' screening panel and an orientation workshop for would-be applicants.

Whoever is appointed will serve until the term expires one month after the November election in 2008.

Pulido won election in 2003. However, the board extended everyone's four-year term by one year, in order to realign the school board election with the national and state elections in November of even-numbered years.

Anyone interested in applying for the position should pick up an application packet from the superintendent's office, 4665 Bernal Avenue between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on weekdays. Applications may also be downloaded at www.pleasanton.k12.ca.us/

Downloads AppBoard.pdf.

The applications must be returned to the superintendent's office by 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 12. For more information, call Carol Fernandez, administrative assistant to the superintendent at 426-4333.

Pulido was the board's president this year. He resigned that office at the meeting Dec. 12. He suggested that Kernan replace him. However, Kernan, in a tribute to 27-year veteran board member Juanita Haugen, nominated her instead. She was a unanimous choice.

Haugen was attending the meeting via speakerphone from her home, since she was not feeling well enough to attend. Haugen has had treatments for cancer for the past three years.

Kernan was chosen board clerk and ran the meeting. He said he would be available to run meetings, if Haugen is not able to attend.

Haugen has been active in state and national school board

associations for many years. She urged her fellow trustees later in the meeting to nominate someone from the board to be a delegate to the county chapter of the California School Boards Association (CSBA).

Superintendent John Casey noted that Haugen's CSBA service has been valuable to the district, giving the district much insight into state education issues. Haugen expressed great appreciation when Ott volunteered to be a candidate for the CSBA post.

School boards throughout the county provide the nominations and vote on the candidates.

Casey also surprised Haugen with the announcement that the district will have an annual award named the Juanita Haugen Civic Engagement Award. Haugen's frequent urging for programs that encourage students to become involved in their community, and her own involvement with the school board associations made the award fitting, declared Casey.

MAILBOX

(Opinions voiced in letters published in Mailbox are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Independent. Letter Policy: The Independent will not publish anonymous letters, nor will it publish letters without names. Frequent letter writers may have publication of their letters delayed.)

Livermore Airport Brett Wayne Livermore

With regards to Evelyn Murphy's recent letter regarding the Livermore airport, there is nothing in the proposed regulations and minimum standards that have anything to do with creating a "jetport" or "expanding" the airport. That critics of the airport continue to use this loaded, emotive language every time the airport is discussed underscores that they are not interested in an honest discussion of the issues.

The fact is there are already several FBOs and aviation related businesses providing services at the Livermore airport. If the Livermore City Council adopts the proposed rules and standards, all they will be approving are a set of ground rules that would apply to both existing and future aviation related businesses that conduct their business on publicly-owned, city-managed airport property.

One motivation for adopting the new rules is to enable Livermore to relinquish the city-owned, exclusive fuel franchise. Ask yourself this, how many automotive service stations does the city own and operate? The answer is obvious - zero. Then why is Livermore managing full-service fueling at the airport? That answer is steeped in decades-old and antiquated decisions regarding how the airport is managed. Allowing an FBO to provide fueling services while collecting flow-based taxes would enable airport staff to focus on maintaining the airport without exposing the City of Livermore to the significant liabilities of pumping gas.

Opponents of the airport cling to the absurd notion that somehow city-owned fueling gives them leverage over the behavior of pilots and users of the facility. If Livermore started discriminating on who they sold fuel to, they would soon find themselves crosswise with the FAA and worse, expose the City to a huge legal liability should an accident occur as a result of their refusal to sell fuel on the basis of noise.

With respect to the arrival of very light jets - what critics of the airport fail to note is that those jets can already operate from the existing runways at the Livermore airport. No expansion is required to accommodate them. Fortunately, for residents concerned about noise, there is a huge difference between the noise generated by VLJs that weigh less than 10,000 pounds and the large, 85,000 pound Gulfstream's that occasionally arrive at Livermore. Most of the VLJs that have already achieved

FAA certification have noise profiles that are quieter than many of the piston-powered aircraft that currently use the field.

Definition Herbert H Marshall Pleasanton

I usually follow my father's advice and "never get in a squinting contest with a polecat." However; I could not let Janet Linfoot's exhibition of ignorance, published November 30th, go unanswered. She accuses my daughter of using foul language; I suggest she get her mind out of the vulgarities used for the human anatomy and see if she can find a dictionary. They are available at any book store or library. Quoting from my copy of Noah Webster's volume, published in 1834, ASS is defined "a dull, heavy, stupid fellow; a dolt". The current Websters include a similar definition (meaning). For the benefit Miss Linfoot the plural of ASS is ASSES.

Reply to Letter Gail Shearer Livermore

Oh dear! Reading proficiency seems to be declining everywhere, or perhaps there is a deliberate misunderstanding.

In his November 23 Letter to the Editor, Rich Buckley states that in an earlier letter of mine I implied that he represented Cedar Grove Community Church in their purchase of the South Livermore Avenue property and that I was wrong. He is mistaken. Nowhere in my letter did I suggest this. The facts are that Rich Buckley Realty represented the seller (not the buyer) in this transaction. It was his sign that was posted at the site, and it was Mr. Buckley who told me the "buyer was confidential" when I called his office on October 29, 2001, to seek information after "sold" appeared on the sign.

Mr. Buckley correctly states in his letter that "Churches are acceptable uses in any zoning district subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit." However he does not point out that this permit may be disapproved. Four conditions must be met before approval of a conditional use permit in Alameda County. On October 2, the County Planning Commission, after lengthy testimony and deliberation, voted 5 to 2 to deny the church application for a conditional use permit because these four conditions could not be met.

Churches are not "permitted" uses in the Agriculture-Cultivated Agriculture zoning that applies to this property. Instead they require a conditional use permit and, if certain findings are made, an Environmental Impact Report. Wineries and olive mills, for example, are permitted uses and do not require a conditional use permit. Since they conform to the South Livermore Valley Area Plan, they do not have to submit a new Environmental Impact Report, one having been done before the SLVAP was adopted.

The South Livermore Urban Growth Boundary Initiative passed by 82% of the voters in 2000, the South Livermore Valley Area Plan adopted by the

Alameda County Board of Supervisors in 1993, and the Agriculture-Cultivated Agriculture zoning for this property are very specific about encouraging and protecting cultivated agriculture, particularly on the land "classified as having the better quality soil for grapes," and limiting other uses. Finding pretty pictures on the internet of churches in Europe surrounded by vineyards will not change the wording of these planning documents, which apply to this property and legally must be followed.

People like Mr. Buckley have not done the Church a service by asserting that they do not think these planning documents mean what is clearly stated in writing. It would have been in the Church's best interest for their planners to have read these documents for themselves and to have thought about what is actually written before purchasing the property. Any prudent buyer of property who wants to add new uses would check out the general plan and zoning for themselves before making a financial commitment.

Mr. Buckley considers restrictions placed on site coverage, which relates to the size of the church, to be "subjective" and "arbitrary." On the contrary they are clearly articulated in the written ordinances cited above. There is nothing in these ordinances that exempts churches from having to follow the same rules and restrictions as everybody else. Mr. Buckley also does not point out that this is not an empty piece of property. It already contains three houses, which are grandfathered in on a 14 acre parcel, now zoned for one house per 20 acres with 90% of the site set aside for agriculture.

Mr. Buckley uses his own church, Asbury United Methodist, as an example of a church that successfully moved into a rural area. Again the old maxim "Location, location, location!" applies. This church chose a site which, although in the county at the time, was considered "Suburban Residential" in the City of Livermore's General Plan. Because it adjoined other residentially zoned properties on the west, it could be annexed to the city in 1989 and later, when their new sanctuary was built, could be connected to the city sewer system. On the east the Church adjoins the County "Rural Residential" area along Buena Vista Avenue.

This is a quite different location from the piece of property purchased by Cedar Grove Community Church on South Livermore Avenue outside the South Livermore Valley Urban Growth Boundary. It is surrounded on all sides by cultivated agriculture under permanent easement, to which it is adjacent on two and a half sides. Thus it is prevented from being annexed to the City of Livermore or receiving a city sewer connection. The area is classified as "Agriculture/Viticulture" in the Livermore General Plan.

Mr. Buckley is correct in writing that the City of Livermore finds churches "suitable" with a conditional use permit. During the past few years local realtors and the City Planning Staff have enabled numerous churches to

construct large new facilities within the City limits. Contrary to what some of its supporters feel, Cedar Grove Community Church would have encountered the same helpful attitude if it had looked for and found a new larger site within the City limits of Livermore. Generally Environmental Impact Reports have not been required for these new Church facilities, parking has been shared. City services, such as sewerage, are available. We urge the officers of Cedar Grove Community Church to consider seriously some of the alternative sites which have been suggested to their planners.

BART Costs Robert S. Allen Former BART Director Livermore

BART trackway costs about \$12 million/mile at grade in a freeway median or along the former railroad grade. That includes ballasted double track, traction power, train control, ductwork, and fencing/barriers. This figure is based on 2001 figures escalated to 2006.

People who should know better are throwing out the figure of \$100 million/mile, citing the cost of BART to SFO. That line was put in subway (over my strong objection) instead of at grade along SP's abandoned San Bruno branch. As a result, it cost close to \$500 million more than it should have. Subways are fabulously costly, and normally warranted only in a patronage-rich city core.

With a freeway median, little environmental, structural, or earth work is required. The major capital costs in addition to trackway are for land, cars, stations, special trackwork (e.g. crossovers), "implementation," and yards/shops (if really needed).

Having a freeway median or old railroad grade available is the key to getting a low cost BART line. That is why I so strongly oppose ACCMA's eastbound I-580 HOV project. The HOVs should be part of a freeway widening that accommodates both them and a future BART line. The ACCMA project would greatly increase the cost of getting BART to Livermore.

The project would make sense if it were revised to widen I-580 from Hacienda to the future Isabel interchange in Livermore and not block BART in the median to Greenville Road.

What we need now is a better freeway oriented bus link to BART.

Stoneridge Extension George Withers Fire Chief (Retired) Pleasanton

Prior to Christmas I delivered a gift to Huff Drive and then was off to see my mother in Livermore. Huff Drive is located near the Eastern most extension of Stoneridge Drive. After delivering my gift, I return to Stoneridge Drive and looked to the East and saw a Bright Star (OK, so it was only the lights of Livermore a short distance away to the East). But I could not drive toward it,

because the road had not yet been completed. I thought, if only we had 3, or more, Wise Men (or Women) on the City Council who could also see this vision in the East, and realize the urgent need to complete the extension of Stoneridge Drive, and save the rest of our City.

Instead of going east, I turned west on a vacant Stoneridge Drive and proceeded on to a heavily congested Santa Rita Road. I turned south and drove to Valley Ave, which was gridlocked all the way to Stanley Blvd. I continued south on Santa Rita Rd., past Alisal School, and Amador High School, and then turned left onto Stanley Blvd. and continued to the intersection of Stanley & First St. where I again turned left and finally headed toward Livermore. As I approached the intersection of Valley/Bernal and Stanley Blvd. I once again encountered gridlock traffic, where I joined up with the nightly caravan heading toward that Star in the East. We did proceed at a Camel's Pace!

Holiday Spirit Angelica Norman-Beltran Livermore

My name is Angelica. I have lived here in Livermore my whole life. I am writing to you because I thought you should know of a very thoughtful little boy who lives here in our town. I'm not sure of his name but, he has shown me that the Holiday Spirit is not fleeting.

These last few Christmas seasons it seems as though more and more people are fighting about religious beliefs, being offended when their place of work at puts up Christmas tree or anything that is indifferent to their spiritual beliefs during this holiday time of year. It seems as though we are all forgetting what the holiday spirit is all about. Last night around 6:30 pm, my grandfather answered the door to see a young boy of maybe 9 or 10 at our door. He said that he wanted to sing us a Christmas song, we stood there and listened to him sing "Jingle Bells."

After he was done singing I asked if there was any specific reason he was going around and caroling that night to houses. He said that he "just felt like it." He wasn't looking for donations, food or anything, he just wanted to go to people's houses and sing to them, putting smiles on their faces.

I thought to myself, that with all that is going on in our lives as Americans and all that's happening around the world this little boy, with just a song and his holiday joy, made me and my family's night by just singing to us. I had to stop and think. We all, no matter our spiritual beliefs, used to come together during this time of year and just be happy, hospitable and in the holiday spirit. Now it seems as though we are slowly losing sight of what the holiday season is about. It's the idea of putting a smile on someone's face just because you want to, being kind to others, and this little boy restored my faith in the holiday spirit.

Tips On How to Deal With Skunks

Alameda County Vector Control has been receiving a lot of calls from the Springtown area about skunks.

Daniel Wilson, community outreach coordinator, offers the following advice

Skunks are opportunistic foragers, and will eat almost anything. In neighborhoods, pet food is a significant component in their diet, and are not often deterred from a meal by dogs, other animals, or people. Skunks also dig for grubs in yards; lawns, meridian strips of grass, golf courses, and parks. A well-watered grassy area will be sites where larval insects develop that attract insectivores such as skunks. They use their nose to sniff out the larva and they dig them up and eat them. Reduction in watering, or turf treatment can reduce this food supply.

The stuff in skunk spray that stinks is a series of odorous compounds called thiols. Skunk spray also contains compounds called thioacetates, which slowly break down into thiols. When a skunk sprays a dog, thioacetates in the spray (and absorbed into the skin of the dog) break down and replace the old thiols, resulting in the skunk odor reappearing on the dog. Water seems to rapidly speed the process of thioacetates breaking down into thiols, but part of the release seems to be time-sensitive. Getting a dog wet repeatedly over several days will not "drain off" all the thioacetates.

To help discourage skunks do the following:

- Less watering of lawns, or turf treatment can reduce grub populations, resulting in less food for skunks and raccoons.

- Don't leave pet food out at night. Skunks set up a nightly foraging route and will repeatedly visit areas where they find food

Vector Control takes many wildlife calls and will render advice to help reduce skunk, and wildlife nuisances, and advise on pest-proofing, as well as environmental modification. Skunks are poor climbers; so securing a fence line will help keep skunks out of the yard. This advice often solves the problem. Trapping is not a favored approach because it does not get at the source of the problem: food.

In times past animal control agencies used to accept wildlife brought in by the public. Do not assume animal control will help if you trap an animal; always call animal control prior to beginning a trapping project. There is a tendency to think that you just need to re-locate the offensive animal. However, California Fish and Game regulations prohibit the relocation of wildlife more than a couple miles away. At that distance they are likely to return. Trapped animals must be euthanized.

There are many wildlife specialty pest control companies that will trap and try to help you resolve your wildlife problem, but they can be expensive \$100.00 and up.

One good reason for calling vector control is that there may be other neighbors calling, and investigation may turn up a core reason for many skunks or raccoons. Over a two-year period, one neighbor feeding skunks, or raccoons can result in very large skunk populations. Wilson's phone number is (510) 567-6826.

OBITUARIES

Shirley L. O'Callaghan

Shirley L. O'Callaghan died December 7, 2006 in Pleasanton. She was 79.

The native of Des Moines, Iowa had lived in Dublin for 5 years. Prior to that she had lived in Castro Valley for 20 years. She was a homemaker.

She is survived by her sons David O'Callaghan of San Leandro, Michael O'Callaghan of Pleasanton and Rourke O'Callaghan of Livermore; a sister, Sandra Fitzsimmons of California, seven grandchildren and one great grandchild.

Private services are planned. Arrangements by Graham-Hitch Mortuary.

Dorothy Virginia Innes

Dorothy Virginia Innes died December 13, 2006 at her home in Pleasanton. She was 84.

She was a native of Manilla, Philippine Islands. Virginia worked as a public health nurse for Alameda and Sacramento counties for 40 years and was school nurse at Marilyn Avenue Elementary School in Livermore. She also volunteered at Valley Memorial Hospital in Livermore. Virginia liked going on senior trips with the Livermore Area

Recreation and Park District, and loved music, art and reading.

She is survived by her children Joni Hirth and her husband Gregory Hirth of Pleasanton, Laura Fennell of Los Altos and Gerald R. Innes, Jr. and his wife Melodie of Ventura, and seven grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband Gerald Richard Innes in 1985.

Private services will be held. Memorial contributions may be made to Hope Hospice, 6500 Dublin Blvd., Suite 100, Dublin, CA 94568 or Alzheimer's Association, 2065 W. El Camino Real, Suite C, Mountain View, CA 94040.

Arrangements by Callaghan Mortuary.

Edward Eugene Heise

Edward Eugene Heise died December 14, 2006 in Livermore. He was 89.

He was born in Wakarusa, Kansas and came to California in the early 1940s settling in Los Angeles. He worked in motion picture studios before finding out he was a woodworking artist. He worked as a carpenter for 55 years and was a member of Carpenter's Union Local #1622. When he first came to Livermore, he

worked with Jensen Construction and Sunset Homes, building homes around Livermore. He loved to travel and visited several foreign countries. He spent ten years in retirement in Palm Springs and ten years in Modesto. He loved to watch football and golf. He always had a ready friendly smile and will be greatly missed.

He is survived by his wife, Irene Heise of Livermore, son and daughter-in-law Tom and Jackie Heise of Livermore, daughter and son-in-law Marie and George Bolis of Virginia Beach, VA, grandsons and spouses, Tom and Jean Heise, Don and Sandra Heise, Ron and Caroline Heise and George Bolis Jr., granddaughters Jackie Bolis and Christina Hart and seven great grandchildren.

Mass of the Resurrection was celebrated December 19 at St. Michael's Catholic Church in Livermore. Burial was at St. Michael's Cemetery in Livermore.

Arrangements by Callaghan Mortuary.

Richard "Red" Winters

Long time Livermore resi-

dent, Richard "Red" Winters passed away at his home on December 12, 2006. He was 65.

He was born in Grand Rapids, MI. He was a retired employee of Automotive Engineering in Oakland and a 35 year member of the East Bay Automotive Machinist Union. Red enjoyed collecting, photography and Sprint car racing. He was also a NASCAR fan. He loved his pet cats, Jackie, Big Red, Meatball, Bonnie and Beebus. His two grandchildren held a special place in his life. He was a devoted and loving grandfather.

He is survived by his wife of 42 years, Dianne Winters and by his children Richard Winters and wife Michelle of Livermore and Elizabeth Masoodian and husband Bobby of Patterson. Also surviving are his brother Donald Winters and his wife Marilyn of Redlands, nephew Dana Winters and wife Melanie of Colorado, nieces Julie Rakestraw of Reno, Linda Miller of Santa Rosa and nephew Don Phillips of Roseville and his grandchildren, Savannah Winters and Donovan Winters of Livermore.

Funeral services were held December 18 in Livermore. Burial was at St. Michael's Cem-

etry in Livermore.

Donations may be made to Hope Hospice or to the American Diabetes Association.

Arrangements by the Wilson Family Funeral Chapel.

Ka'rin Amerine-Oren

Ka'rin Amerine-Oren died December 14, 2006 in Vallejo. She was 44.

She was born in Oakland and grew up in Dublin. For the past 12 years, she lived in Solano County. She was a workers compensation claims examiner. Her main interests were her family, friends and being together. She was known for her love for God.

She is survived by daughters, Linda Churchill of Sacramento, Abby Amerine-Oren of Vacaville, Lucy Bush of Fairfield and Izzy Amerine-Markus of Sacramento, her father, Phillip Martinez Jr. of Dublin and a brother Phillip Martinez, II of Dublin, as well as two grandchildren.

Funeral services were held December 20 in Livermore.

Memorial donations may be made to the American Cancer Society.

Arrangements by Callaghan Mortuary.

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