

WHAT'S
IN THE

NEW TAX LAW?



CASTRO VALLEY FORUM

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SERVING CASTRO VALLEY SINCE 1989

YEAR 30

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2018

NO. 1

INSIDE YOUR FORUM

NEWS



Finally, Rain!

Possible rain showers are forecast for this afternoon through Saturday

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OUR TOWN



Death Cap

The Bay Area is home to two of the world's most toxic mushrooms

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LIVING



Cold Season

Nothing picks up your spirits like a steaming bowl of chicken soup

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PHONE: (510) 537-1792

THE FIRST BABY OF THE YEAR

Prince Abraham McElligott was born at 2:11 a.m. on New Year's Day, Castro Valley's first baby of 2018. Prince, weighing 7 pounds and 2 ounces, was delivered at Eden Medical Center by Dr. Sonia Badheka. Prince's father, Reuben M. McElligott is not only from Castro Valley, but his family has lived here for generations. Prince's mother, Edlyn P. Rodriguez, is from San Leandro and still has family in the area. In addition to mom and dad, Prince will be welcomed home by two brothers (Jayden and Reuben III) and three sisters (Anaisa, Lili, and Ruby). The family currently lives in Discovery Bay but hopes to move back to Castro Valley soon.



PHOTO BY EMMA DUGAS / SUTTER HEALTH

Longtime School Board Member Kunio Okui Dies

Former Castro Valley School Board member Kunio Okui, 72, passed away December 19 at Kaiser San Leandro Hospital.

A CPA by profession, Okui was known for his integrity on the school board and his watchful eye over district expenditures.

Former Castro Valley Unified School District superintendent Jim Negri remembers Okui as a friend as well as a colleague.

"I was saddened to learn of Kunio's passing. I first met him at a California School Boards Association (CSBA) training in the 1990s when I was working for the Pleasanton School District. We remained friends throughout the year," said Negri.

"As a board member, Kunio was fully committed to ensuring that every student had access to a quality education and quality teachers. While fiscally conservative, Kunio understood the challenges of balancing the budget during the difficult years, while maintaining quality programs," Negri continued. "He worked diligently to pass the bonds that upgraded and provided new facilities."

Bruce D. Johnson, Superintendent Emeritus of Redwood Chris-



Kunio Okui
1945 - 2017

tian Schools, said Okui "leaves a marvelous legacy of service and commitment."

"He was a true Christian gentleman and all who knew him were blessed by his steadfast faith and love for all kids regardless of their age or what school they attended," said Johnson.

Okui left the school board in 2012 after 21 years of service, including the position of President. Besides his school board service, he was active in the San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church. He also played bridge and was a devoted Golden State Warriors fan.

Kunio Okui is survived by his wife Patti, three children, and six grandchildren. His full obituary is on page 14.

Legal Pot's First Day

By Amy Sylvestri
CASTRO VALLEY FORUM

New Year's Day was the first day for legal recreational marijuana sales in California and two cannabis shops in the unincorporated were open for business.

We Are Hemp on East Lewelling Boulevard in Ashland and Garden of Eden on Foothill Boulevard in Cherryland say business is booming, especially with new customers.

"We had someone in here on Monday who'd never smoked a cigarette before or any cannabis," said Sarah Morgan, a manager at We Are Hemp. "He wanted to try it out. We've had a few first-time customers ask for recommendations."



We Are Hemp, left, on East Lewelling Blvd. in Ashland, and Garden of Eden on Foothill Blvd. in Cherryland did a booming business on the first day of legalized recreational sales of marijuana in California.

But Morgan added that most people who have visited the shop have medical marijuana cards and aren't buying pot for the novelty.

"We still serve primarily a medical base," said Morgan.

Over at the Garden of Eden, one employee estimated that they had



PHOTOS BY FRED ZEHNDER

three times as much business this week as they did prior to legalization.

"We are extremely busy right

now," said the woman. "It's chaotic."

Legal recreational marijuana see POT on page 15

Castro Valley Weather Jan. 3 - 7, 2018



Wednesday
Afternoon Rain
High 63° Low 54°



Thursday
Showers
High 65° Low 53°



Friday
Showers
High 61° Low 48°



Saturday
Possible Showers
High 58° Low 45°



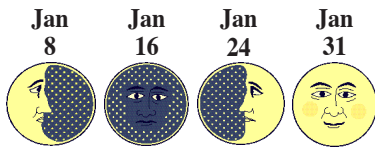
Sunday
Partly Sunny
High 57° Low 43°

Almanac



Past Week's Rain: 00.00
Season To Date: 03.58
Normal To Date: 08.08
Season Average: 21.22

Moon Phases



Sun sets at 5:04 p.m. today, rises at 7:25 a.m. Thursday.

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SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Proulx is Hard to Pronounce But Even Harder to Contain

Sixth in a series profiling the 16 new members of the Castro Valley Sports Hall of Fame. The induction banquet will take place April 21 at Redwood Canyon Event Center.

By Dave Del Grande
SPECIAL TO THE FORUM

FOR A GUY NAMED "PRO XL," it's really no surprise that Mike Proulx has had a lot of success playing football.

Except for one thing: You don't really pronounce his name that way.

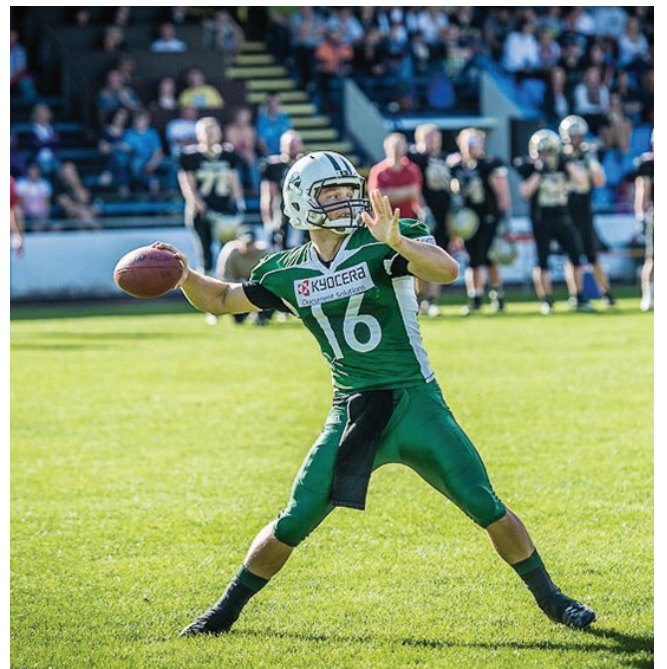
"I've heard, 'Prue Licks,' a lot, too," the former Castro Valley High award-winning quarterback noted. "I'm used to it."

Rest assured his name will be pronounced correctly when Proulx is among 16 standouts inducted into the Castro Valley Sports Hall of Fame on April 21.

Actually, figuring out that Proulx is a complicated way of spelling "Prue" is about as difficult as figuring out how to stop his passing attack while he was at Creekside Middle School, Castro Valley High and finally Humboldt State.

In all three cases, he joined a football program that had its hands full with a particular rival.

But by the time he was done,



MARK HARRIS PHOTOGRAPHY 2012

Mike Proulx led the Humboldt State offense after leaving Castro Valley High School.

Creekside had its first-ever win over Canyon, Castro Valley had knocked off Bishop O'Dowd, and Humboldt had shocked U.C. Davis.

It's been 14 years since that win over Canyon, but Proulx, now 28 years old, remembers it like yesterday.

"All my friends from elementary school, we all played together on the schoolyard, and we all went to Creekside together," the former Chabot Elementary student recalled. "We weren't surprised (to beat Canyon); we knew we were pretty good."

see SPORTS on page 8

Weather: Finally, Some Winter Rain!

Possible rain showers are forecast for the East Bay this afternoon through Saturday and again in the middle of the month, but they will do little to ease concerns that the state may be facing another dry year.

This December will go down as one of the driest on record, with many parts of the East Bay only receiving a few hundredths of an inch of rain for the entire month because of a stubborn high-pressure ridge that hovered over the coast.

Castro Valley is more than 4 inches below normal with the half-way point of the rainy season looming on Jan. 20. And there's not much good news from the Sierra, where the snow-pack is only about a third of normal. The Department of Water Resources will conduct the season's first official snow survey today at Phillips Station.

The drought-like conditions have already taken a heavy toll on the state. Combined with high winds this fall they helped to cre-

ate the worst fire season on record in the state. More than 40 people died and more than 10,000 homes were destroyed in the North Bay, while Southern California experienced the largest wildfire in the state's history. And the risk of fire will remain wherever tinder-dry conditions continue to exist.

The good news is that even if this turns out to be a drier-than-normal year, most of California's reservoirs have plenty of water to meet demands for 2018.



BY ROBERT ROSAS

If YOU suffer from low back pain, according to National Institutes of Health, you are among

four out of five Americans who will suffer from disabling back pain during their lifetimes.

Shooting, stabbing and burning pains from the low back, sometimes with additional pain through the buttocks and down the legs are all symptoms of a pinched nerve often called "sciatica".

In severe cases, it can lead to muscle wasting, numbness and constant tingling down to the tip of the toes. Left untreated, the intense pain can rapidly wear you down and drain the joy out of life.

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Recent advances in the treatment of sciatica and lower back pain have led to the development and huge success of Non-Surgical Re-Constructive Spinal Care.

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Because the treatment is non-surgical, safe and easy, many patients report an almost immediate relief from their pain.

Your invitation for a comprehensive consultation and evaluation to pinpoint the cause of your low back pain and sciatica...

Pleasanton Weekly has teamed up with the spine therapy team at Intero Chiropractic, to help readers find relief from their

persistent back and sciatic pain.

All you have to do to receive a thorough diagnostic evaluation with the most advanced technology in the world and a comprehensive easy to understand report on your state of health is **call (925)255-5805.**

Mention this article (CODE: BOS37SCID5) and Dr. Jerry Hsieh, D.C. will happily reduce his usual consultation fee of \$100 to just

\$20. But hurry, due to obvious reasons – this is a time limited offer – with only 100 reader consultations available at this exclusively discounted rate.

My advice, don't suffer a moment longer...

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They actually treat the cause of your health problem, not just your symptoms.

That's why hundreds of grateful

patients tell them "You gave me back my life!"

Over the years, they've treated hundreds of patients with back problems and sciatica. The vast majority of them have enjoyed superior, lasting relief. In fact, many who've suffered and have tried other remedies have told them they gave them back their lives!

Call them now and get a full and thorough evaluation to pinpoint the cause of your problem for just \$20, the normal cost of such an exam is \$100 so you will save \$80!

Don't suffer from the pain and immobility any longer. Discover the natural treatment that can eliminate the cause of your problem and give you the safe, lasting relief you deserve.

Call them now at (925)255-5805 and cut out or tear off this valuable article now and take it to your appointment. You'll be entitled to a comprehensive evaluation to diagnose the cause of your problem – and you'll be on your way to safe, lasting relief! Don't



delay your important diagnosis and treatment another moment!

You can even call on the weekend and leave a message to secure your spot as they promise to return all calls; and during the week they are very busy, so if they don't pick up right away, please leave a message.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT

Beautiful & Deadly: Poisonous Mushrooms in East Bay Parks

With the rains that are expected over the next few days, the East Bay hills will come alive with mushrooms sprouting in an array of dazzling colors. While they can be beautiful, some of them contain deadly toxins.

The Bay Area is home to two of the world's most toxic mushrooms – *Amanita phalloides* (death cap) and *Amanita ocreata* (western destroying angel).

“Both are robust mushrooms that grow near oak trees,” said East Bay Regional Park District Naturalist Trent Pearce. “Both are very dangerous and contain lethal toxins.”

Symptoms don't usually appear until up to 12 hours after consumption, beginning as severe gastrointestinal distress and progressing to liver and renal failure if treatment is not sought immediately.

Amanita phalloides is a medium-to-large mushroom that typically has a greenish-gray cap, white gills, a white ring around the stem, and a large white sac at the base of the stem.

Though the death cap is mainly associated with oak trees, it has been found growing with other hardwoods.

Amanita ocreata is a medium-to-large mushroom that usually has a creamy white cap, white gills, a white ring around the stem that disappears with age, and a thin white sac at the base. It fruits from late winter into spring, and is associated exclusively with oaks. It is a native California mushroom.

“Park visitors should know mushroom collecting is not allowed anywhere in the East Bay Regional Park District,” said



KEEP AN EYE OUT

Amanita Phalloides (Death Cap) mushrooms above, and the Amanita Ocreata (Western Destroying Angel) at left, are two of the most toxic mushrooms in the world, and both grow in Bay Area parklands.

Photos courtesy of the East Bay Regional Park District

EBRPD Public Information Supervisor Dave Mason. Visitors should also keep their dogs away from them.”

While the death cap and western destroying angel mushrooms are responsible for most cases of

mushroom poisonings in California, deadly amatoxins can also be found in *Galerina* and *Lepiota* species, both which occur in the Bay Area as well.

For more information, visit bayareamushrooms.org

SHERIFF'S REPORTS

COMPILED BY MICHAEL SINGER • CASTRO VALLEY FORUM



Illegal Drug Paraphernalia

Thursday, December 28: at 12:07 a.m., Sheriff's deputies arrested a 22-year-old man from San Francisco on suspicion of possession of illegal drug paraphernalia. The man was hanging outside a business on Castro Valley Boulevard near Redwood Road when deputies stopped him for questioning and discovered his stash. The man was taken into custody.

Wanted Man

Wednesday, December 27: at 9:53 a.m., a 33-year-old man from Castro Valley was arrested on suspicion of two counts of possession of illegal narcotics and two counts of possession of illegal drug paraphernalia. The man was also wanted as part of a warrant issued for his capture. Deputies handcuffed the man and took him to Santa Rita Jail pending \$10,000 in bail.

Heroin at Abandoned House

Tuesday, December 26: at 10:54 p.m., deputies arrested a 36-year-old man from CV on suspicion of possession of an illegal knife, illegal narcotics, and an illegal amount of marijuana. The man was sitting behind the wheel of a car parked in the driveway of a residence on Seven Hills Road near Lamson Road. Deputies were on scene checking out a report of activity at an abandoned house and found the suspect with an illegal switchblade in his pants. The man failed his field sobriety test. The man said he lived in the house. Further investigation found the home had been abandoned and signs of vandalism. Deputies also found a syringe full of heroin drugs. The man was handcuffed and taken into custody.

Flashed His False ID

Tuesday, December 26: at 10:50 a.m., a 52-year-old man with no permanent address was arrested on suspicion of presenting a false ID to deputies, possession of illegal drug paraphernalia, and violating the terms of his parole. Deputies caught up with the man behind a bar on Castro Valley Boulevard near Redwood Road. The man claimed to be someone he was not to avoid going back to jail. Deputies also found a broken glass pipe used for smoking drugs nearby that the man admitted was his. He was taken into custody.

Public Nuisance

Monday, December 25: at 10:58 a.m., deputies arrested a 24-year-old man with no permanent address on suspicion of causing a public nuisance and trespassing on private property. The man was caught in a restricted area of a business on Anita Avenue near Castro Valley Boulevard after

neighbors complained about a loud commotion in the area. Deputies handcuffed the man and took him into custody.

Too Much Christmas Merry

Monday, December 25: at 4:55 p.m., a 59-year-old man from CV on suspicion of public intoxication. Deputies caught up with the man in front of a home on Clements Drive near Bowie Way when they stopped him for questioning. The man failed his field sobriety test and was taken into custody.

Assault with Deadly Weapon

Sunday, December 24: at 2:20 a.m., deputies arrested a 65-year-old man from Castro Valley on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon. The man was at a home on Eagle Street near Stanton Avenue when deputies arrived following a report of an aggressive argument at the home. Deputies took the man into custody. The victim was treated at the scene.

NEWS TIP?

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What's In The New Tax Law?

Q: I hear a lot about the new tax law that Congress passed and President Trump just signed, but I am unclear as to how it might affect me and my family. Can you give us a summary?

By Gene L. Osofsky, Esq.
SPECIAL TO THE FORUM



A: Sure. While much of the new "Tax Cuts and Jobs Act" was designed to reduce the corporate tax rate from 35% to 21%, here are some of the principal features that affect families:

Standard Deduction and Personal Exemption: the standard deduction increases to \$12,000 for Individuals, \$18,000 for those filing as Head of Household, and \$24,000 for Joint filers, all adjusted for inflation.

As an apparent trade-off, miscellaneous itemized deductions are eliminated.

Home Mortgage Interest Deduction: the limit on deducting interest on up to \$1 million of a home acquisition loan stays in effect for existing mortgages in effect as of December 15, 2017, at least for the next 8 years.

However, the interest deduction on mortgages placed thereafter will be subject to a \$750,000 limit, which will also become the new cap on existing mortgages beginning January 1, 2026. So, if you have a mortgage above \$750,000, it would be wise to try to pay it down over the next 8 years to an amount below the \$750,000 cap, so all of your interest payments made thereafter will continue to be deductible.

Medical Expense Deduction: after much public concern, the medical expense deduction actu-

ally survived. In fact, it was temporarily enhanced: for 2017 and 2018, medical expenses above 7.5% of adjusted gross income ("AGI") will qualify for the deduction. After 2018, only amounts above 10% of AGI will be deductible, as under existing law.

State and Local Tax Deduction: the combined deductibility of the payment of state income taxes and real property taxes will now be capped at \$10,000 per person. This will likely have a big impact on residents of California, with its higher income and property taxes as compared with residents of other states.

Estate and Gift Taxes: the new law more than doubles the existing exemptions, going from \$5.49 million per person for those dying in 2017, up to \$11.2 million per person for those dying thereafter,

and up to \$22.4 million for a married couple (where the survivor makes a timely election on her estate tax return). The new rates will be indexed to inflation, just like the current exemptions.

Tax Rates: individual tax rates will be slightly reduced and the brackets adjusted, with the top bracket dropping from 39.6% to 37%.

Step-Up In Basis: the new law keeps intact the current rule which permits the recipient of property transferred upon the donor's death to be adjusted to its date of death value as the new "cost basis". This favors property which has increased in value over the donor's lifetime by reducing the capital gain that would otherwise be payable when the gift recipient later sells the property.

Individual Mandate Eliminat-

ed: the new law eliminates the tax penalty for failure to maintain "minimum essential" health care coverage, which many believe will significantly weaken the Affordable Care Act signed into law by President Obama.

Except for the corporate tax rate cut, almost all of the new features "sunset" at the end of year 2025, with the changes reverting back to their current form in 2026 unless Congress acts to extend them.

Of special concern for seniors and the disabled, is that these tax cuts will add up to \$1.5 trillion to the deficit, and may then be cited as "justification" for reductions to Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security to pay for them.

Gene L. Osofsky is an Elder Law and Estate Planning attorney in Hayward. Visit his website at www.LawyerForSeniors.com.

Resources to Help Home-Care Bills?

Q: Do you know of any resources that can help with my mother's home-care bills? Mom is recovering from a stroke and needs in-home care, but I understand Medicare doesn't cover it, and she doesn't have long-term care insurance.

By Jim Miller
SPECIAL TO THE FORUM



A: Depending on your mom's circumstances, there are a number of government and not-for-profit programs that can that either subsidize or pay for your mom's home care or offer aid in other ways. Here's where to look for help.

Medicare Coverage

If your mom is recovering from a stroke, the first thing you need to know is that Medicare does cover a variety of in-home health care services.

To be eligible your mom must be "homebound," and her doctor will need to approve a "plan of care" confirming that she needs skilled-nursing care or skilled-therapy services from a physical or speech therapist.

Her doctor can also request the services of an occupational therapist and a non-medical home aide to assist with activities of daily living like bathing, dressing and using the bathroom.

But, be aware that Medicare will not pay for non-medical home aide services alone, if your mom does not need skilled-nursing or skilled-therapy services too. Homemaker services, such as shopping, meal preparation and cleaning are not covered either.

For more information on how this works, call 1-800-MEDICARE or see Medicare.gov/cov-erage/home-health-services.html.

Medicaid Options

If your mom's income is low enough, she may qualify for Medicaid, which offers different programs that can pay for non-medical home care, home health care and other in-home support services.

These programs, often referred to as Home and Community Based Services, are state-specific and their eligibility and benefits will vary. To find out if your mom is eligible, contact her state Medicaid agency (see Medicaid.gov).

State Programs

If your mom doesn't qualify for the Medicare or Medicaid options, check to see if her state offers any state-funded home-care programs which may provide caregivers or vouchers that can help pay for care. To find out about these services, call the Area Agency on Aging near your mom - see Eldercare.gov or call 800-677-1116.

Also investigate PACE, which stands for "Programs of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly." PACE, which is currently available in 31 states - though not in every community - provides in-home care, including help with activities of daily living, such as meals, dental and medical care, prescriptions, and chaperoned transportation, among other benefits.

Medicaid-eligible patients get PACE for free, but if your mom is not eligible for Medicaid, she may be charged a monthly premium, though far less than she would pay a private service. To see if PACE is available in your mom's area, see NPAonline.org.

Veterans Benefits

If your mom is a veteran, or a surviving spouse of a veteran, the VA also offers some benefits that can help pay her in-home care.

One is "Aid and Attendance or Housebound Allowances," which are supplemental monthly benefits for veterans already receiving a monthly VA pension and requiring healthcare.

Veterans and surviving spouses qualify if they have certain disabilities or need help with activities such as dressing, bathing, and feeding, among other criteria. Go to Vets.gov/pension for more info.

Another option is the "Veteran-Directed Care" program. This program, available through VA medical centers in 38 states, as well as in Washington, D.C., provides as much as \$2,000 a month that can be used to pay a professional or family member or friend for home care. The program is open to any veteran who meets the criteria, including requiring help with three or more activities of daily living. Visit the "Home and Community Based Services" section at VA.gov/geriatrics for info.

To look for additional programs in your area that can help pay your mom's home care, go to Paying-ForSeniorCare.com and use their Eldercare Financial Assistance Locator tool.

Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

Tips: How to Divvy Up Family Belongings

By Jim Miller
SPECIAL TO THE FORUM

Divvying up personal possessions among adult children or other loved ones can often be a difficult task. Deciding who should get what without showing favoritism, hurting someone's feeling or causing a feud can be difficult, even for close-knit families who

enter the process with the best of intentions.

Here are a few tips to consider that can help you divide your stuff with minimal conflict.

Problem Areas: For starters, you need to be aware that it's usually the small, simple items of little monetary value that cause the most conflicts. This is because the value we attach to the small personal possessions is usually sentimental or emotional, and because the simple items are the things that most families fail to talk about.

Family battles can also escalate over whether things are being divided fairly by monetary value.

So for items of higher value like your jewelry, antiques and art, consider getting an appraisal to assure fair distribution. To locate an appraiser, see Appraisers.org or AppraisersAssociation.org.

Ways to Divvy: The best solution for passing along your personal possessions is for you to go through your house with your kids or other heirs either separately or all at once.

Open up cabinets, drawers and closets, and go through boxes in the attic and/or basement to find out which items they would like to inherit and why. They may have some emotional attachment to something you're not aware of. If more than one child wants the same thing, you will have the ultimate say.

Then you need to sit down and make a list of who gets what on paper, signed, dated and referenced in your will. You can revise it anytime you want.

You may also want to consider writing an additional letter or cre-

see DIVVY on page 7

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Divvy: Tips

continued from previous page
ate an audio or video recording that further explains your intentions.

You can also specify a strategy for divvying up the rest of your property. Here are some methods that are fair and reasonable:

- **Take turns choosing:** Use a round-robin process where your kids take turns choosing the items they would like to have. If who goes first becomes an issue, they can always flip a coin, draw straws or roll dice.

Also, to help simplify things, break down the dividing process room-by-room, versus tackling the entire house. To keep track of who gets what, either make a list or use adhesive dots with a color assigned to each person to tag the item.

- **Have a family auction:** Give each person involved the same amount of play money, or use virtual points or poker chips to bid on the items they want.

It's also very important that you discuss your plans in advance with your kids so they can know ahead what to expect. Or, you may even want to start distributing some of your items now, while you can still alive.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org.



CHP's Senior Drivers Traffic Safety Seminar

The California Highway Patrol will be present a Senior Driver Traffic Safety Seminar from 2 to 4 p.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 17, at the Castro Valley Library, 3600 Norbridge Avenue. The seminar will include such topics as compensating for age-related changes, tuning up your driving skills, rules of the road and safe-driving tips. On completion of the seminar, participants will receive a certificate for completing the course which may entitle them to an automobile insurance discount. Registration is required for this free program. For more info., call the Library Information Desk at 510-667-7900.

More than a Quarter Million People Seen At New Eden Hospital in First Five Years

The new Eden Medical Center opened on Dec. 1, 2012 and in those five years more than 240,000 patients have been treated by the teams of doctors and nurses at the hospital.

Since the new seven-story facility opened, it has seen 5,842 babies born, 233,505 visits to the Emergency Room, 42,760 admissions and 4,449 patients in the Trauma Center.

The hospital is part of the Sutter Health network. As a not-for-profit,

its earnings are invested back into local communities. Last year Sutter invested more than \$2.3 million in its service areas of Castro Valley, San Leandro, Hayward, Cherryland, Ashland and San Lorenzo.

"Just as we invest in our community, our community invests in us" said Kathleen Jose Le, Director of Eden's Philanthropy. "The donations from our patients, families, and community members make it possible for our local hos-

pital to buy lifesaving equipment and enhance services."

Last year donors helped buy new quipment for complex brain and spine surgery at Eden, the first hospital in Northern California to employ the system. The technology has aided 32 neuro-surgical cases since it was installed in July.

The original Eden Hospital opened in 1954 and was the largest district hospital in California at the time. It was demolished in 2013.

Toll to Cross Bay Bridge Likely to Increase

Castro Valley residents would eventually be paying \$3 more to commute across the Bay Bridge under a proposal that will likely go on the ballot later this year.

A telephone survey conducted for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission found that transportation and housing were top-of-the-mind concerns among Bay Area voters and that there is widespread support for such a measure.

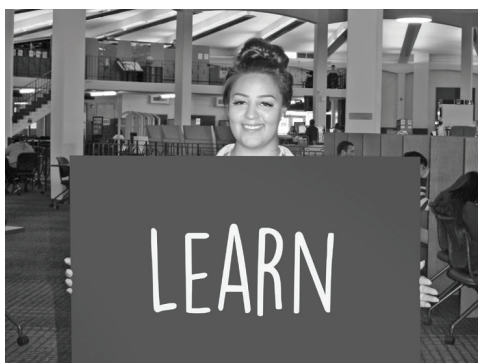
A total of 4,151 interviews of likely voters were conducted in the nine-county area over the past two months on both landlines and cellphones. Most respondents agreed that traffic around the Bay had gotten worse and that the amount of a toll increase – whether \$1 or \$3 – had little impact on their opinion.

Voters rated a wide variety of projects that would be funded by

the toll hikes. Those involving BART made up three of the five top projects.

The commission will decide later this month whether to increase tolls by \$3 over a period of years or ask for a smaller increase.

A \$3 increase would mean a \$9 toll for Bay Bridge motorists, \$8 for other bridges (not including the Golden Gate which is operated by a separate district).



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ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



CVHS Varsity Girls Basketball Team

This week's Athletes of the Week are the members of the Castro Valley High School's Varsity girls basketball team. They finished second in the Emerald Division Jamboree Tournament, held at CVHS, from Thursday, December 28 through Saturday, December 30.

Bailey Jones started the tournament scoring 28 points in an 82-62 win over South Medford,

on Thursday. They won on Friday in a 67-63 overtime win over Antelope, propelling CV to the Emerald Division Championship. The Championship game saw California defeat CV 53-41.

The team scored a season high and school record 110 points as they defeated Livermore 110-69, on Monday, December 18, and finished 2017 with a 10-1 record.

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A Pizza Party With Raiders

Raiders wide receivers Michael Crabtree, Amari Cooper, Seth Roberts, Cordarrelle Patterson and Isaac Whitney, joined in mingling with boys and girls from San Leandro's Davis Street Family Resource Center, during a pizza party held at San Leandro's Garfield Elementary School. The players presented the children with 80 new bikes, helmets, and locks so that each recipient would have everything needed to enjoy a safe ride, on Thursday, December 21.



Amari Cooper and Seth Roberts with a new bike recipient.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MIKE TAYLOR

Sports: Proulx Inducted into Hall of Fame

continued from page 2

Considering he had never played tackle football and was joining a run-oriented program, passing Castro Valley High over O'Dowd had to rank as a bigger shocker.

But a coaching change to Craig Nieves and a little help from former Cal coach Roger Theder made it possible.

"I remember going out to Pittsburg to attend his passing camps," Proulx said of sessions with Theder that featured several Division I quarterbacks, including Nevada-Reno's Colin Kaepernick. "That's when football really started to click for me."

Proulx was named the All-Hayward Area Athletic League quarterback after leading Castro Valley to a 7-3 season as a record-setting senior. He hoped that would be good enough to get him a shot at U.C. Davis.

It didn't work out that way, which turned out to be the Aggies' regret.

Rejected by Davis, Proulx accepted a partial scholarship at Humboldt. He was a starter by midseason as a redshirt freshman, and a school touchdown-pass record-holder – as well as Great Northwest Athletic Conference Player of the Year – by the time his senior season was complete.

Proulx recalled being happier for the Lumberjacks' program than for himself.

"I came into something that wasn't a very good program. At the end, it was one of the best programs in the nation," he said of the Arcata school. "That's something I am most proud of: building something from nothing, and with a coaching change. A lot of the core guys stuck together."

Turns out, Proulx was motivated by more than just the Davis snub.

"I remember in high school, I went to a passing tournament at Stanford," he said. "I remember talking to the head coach face-to-face. I shook his hand. He told me straight-up: He only likes his quarterbacks 6-foot-2 and above. I'm only 5-11."

"That comment always stuck



with me. It gave me a bit of an edge."

Between the Theder camps at one end of the Bay and the Stanford tournament at the other, Proulx noted he'd never have developed into the quarterback he became without the support of his mother and stepfather.

"I definitely tried to put in the extra work. I was always trying to stay active," he said. "My mom and my stepdad, they told me if I continued to play sports and get good grades, I wouldn't have to worry about getting a job, or paying for college, or any of that other stuff."

When Proulx finally got that job, it was in football. He played one season in the professional German Football League, something he called "one of the most rewarding experiences I've ever had."

"I got to live on my own in a foreign country, travel to other places in Europe, and we finished undefeated," he said. "It was great. But after one year, I decided to come home and get a real job."

Today, the Danville resident is flanked by a wife and three dogs, and works as a deputy sheriff with the Alameda County Sheriff's Office.

Graduations, Honor Rolls

Jaime Fong of Castro Valley recently graduated from Emerson College in Boston with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Media Arts Production. Fong was among the more than 97 undergraduate degrees and 90 graduate degrees awarded during the College's Commencement ceremonies for summer graduates.

Nicole Bagdadlian of Castro Valley and a Freshman majoring in Natural Resources at Oregon State University in Corvallis was listed

on the Honor Roll for maintaining a Straight-A Average.

Bryan A. Cmelak of Castro Valley, a Senior majoring in Mechanical Engineering at Oregon State, was placed on the Honor Roll for maintaining a 3.5-or-Better Average.

A total of 1,427 Oregon State students earned straight-A (4.0). Another 4,483 earned a 3.5-or-better Average. To be on the Honor Roll, students must carry at least 12 graded hours of course work.

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REAL ESTATE GALLERY



REAL ESTATE REALITY

By Carl Medford, CRS
Special to the Forum

GUEST COMMENTARY



Affordable Housing Becomes California's Number One Issue Heading into 2018

While the collapse of 2009 caused heartache for millions, it presented a small window of opportunity to buy a reasonably priced home in California.

Eight years later, that window appears to be permanently shut.

It's no secret California housing prices are rising faster than incomes, dramatically reducing the affordability index. According to Jordon Levine, Senior Economist, California Association of Realtors, "all 58 of California's counties have lower housing affordability than the rest of the nation: people are facing affordability challenges even in our most affordable areas."

Consider the facts:

Of the top 10 most expensive markets in the USA, five are in California, including the top two.

The home ownership rate has dwindled from approximately 69% in 2005 to 63.6% in 2017.

The percentage of income required to pay mortgages has increased to over 45%, even though interest rates are at record lows.

High rents are making it almost impossible to save for a down payment, effectively barring many from home ownership.

Put simply, California does not have enough homes to meet the current demand, and, in a classic example of supply-and-demand economics, limited inventory has pushed purchase and rental prices into the stratosphere.

Current homeowners are not putting their existing homes on the market for a multitude of reasons and new homebuilders are significantly off the pace required to meet demand.

As an example, the California

Department of Housing and Community Development issued a report revealing that between 2010 and 2016, California permitted less than 470,000 new housing units. During that same period, however, the state added 2.2 million jobs.

There is no easy way forward. As an example, one fundamental issue is the effect Prop. 13 is having on existing homeowners. Approved June 6th, 1978, Prop. 13 reduced state property taxes by approximately 57 percent.

The law locked in a tax rate based on \$1.25 per thousand dollars of purchase price and kept inflation increases to less than 2 percent per year. As prices

have soared, taxes have remained extremely low. Afraid of dramatically higher taxes on subsequent purchases, many sellers have chosen to sit tight.

California Realtors are calling for reforms to Prop 60 and 90 to help alleviate this problem.

This will be California's No. 1 challenge heading into 2018, and legislators must provide meaningful solutions to provide a way forward for ALL who live here in this wonderful state.

Carl Medford is a licensed Realtor with Keller Williams Realty and a licensed general contractor. This article is sponsored by the Central County Marketing Association.

RECENT HOME SALES

Castro Valley

2412 Austin Court	94546: \$650,000 4 BD - 2,202 SF - 1997
18562 Carlwyn Drive	94546: \$990,000 3 BD - 1,611 SF - 1955
4425 Cristy Way	94546: \$926,000 4 BD - 1,927 SF - 1959
22183 Dolores Street	94546: \$659,000 2 BD - 996 SF - 1948
17321 Ehle Street	94546: \$500,000 2 BD - 929 SF - 1946
4701 James Avenue	94546: \$800,000 3 BD - 1,770 SF - 1948
2228 Lessley Avenue	94546: \$675,000 3 BD - 1,200 SF - 1948
4132 Nichandros Street	94546: \$851,000 2 BD - 1,246 SF - 1908
19593 Parsons Avenue	94546: \$475,000 2 BD - 1,525 SF - 1969
19194 San Miguel Avenue	94546: \$450,000 2 BD - 1,184 SF - 1949
3899 Boulder Canyon Dr	94552: \$1,165,000 4 BD - 2,266 SF - 1997
23090 Canyon Terrace Dr	94552: \$680,000 4 BD - 1,463 SF - 1996
25615 Crestfield Drive	94552: \$1,230,000 5 BD - 2,992 SF - 2000

TOTAL SALES:	13
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$450,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,230,000
MEDIAN AMOUNT:	\$680,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT:	\$773,154

San Lorenzo

191 Loma Verde Drive	94580: \$440,000	2 BD - 1,056 SF - N/A
43 Paseo Grande #A	94580: \$420,000	2 BD - 1,056 SF - 1985
560 Pomona Street	94580: \$425,000	3 BD - 1,469 SF - 1950
17032 Via Alamos	94580: \$480,000	3 BD - 1,051 SF - 1947
17339 Via Annette	94580: \$600,000	3 BD - 1,640 SF - 1953
15923 Via Pinal	94580: \$632,000	3 BD - 1,090 SF - 1944
1722 140th Avenue	94578: \$550,000	4 BD - 1,604 SF - 1947

TOTAL SALES:	6
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$440,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$632,000
MEDIAN AMOUNT:	\$460,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT:	\$499,500



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Mortgage Rates Move Higher

Average mortgage rates continued to inch higher at the end of 2017, according to Freddie Mac's weekly survey.

Thirty-year fixed-rate mortgages averaged 3.99 percent last week, up from 3.94 percent a week earlier. A year ago at this time, the 30-year rate averaged 4.32 percent.

The interest rate on 15-year home loans averaged 3.44 percent, up from 3.38 percent.

Five-year hybrid adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) averaged 3.47 percent last week, up from 3.39 percent.

Can I Change Blooming Time of Easter Lilly?

By Buzz Bertolero
The Dirt Gardener

Q I planted an Easter Lilly in my garden several years ago. But, it blooms in July. Is there any way an amateur gardener can control the blooming time? I've been successful getting my poinsettia plants to re-bloom.

A There is no practical way to force an Easter Lily to bloom again at Easter. A poinsettia requires short days and long nights to bloom again.

Typically, you start in October by covering them at night with a box and removing it in the morning. Poinsettias have a long blooming period, and Christmas is the same date every year.

On the other hand, an Easter Lily requires the opposite treatment, long days and short nights. You'll need grow lights and a heat source as you begin during the winter months. The grow lights are essential as they provide the right light spectrum for plant growth. Also you'll need a heat source.

This leads to the final point as to when to start, because Easter is a different date every year. You're timing has to be exact as the blooming period is short. Personally, I wouldn't bother. This is one gardening task best left to a commercial grower.

Buzz Bertolero is an Advanced California Certified Nursery Professional and Senior Gardening Professional at Sloat Garden Centers (www.dirtgardener.com). Email dirtgarden@aol.com.



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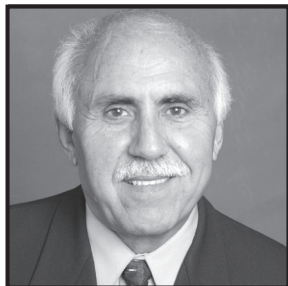
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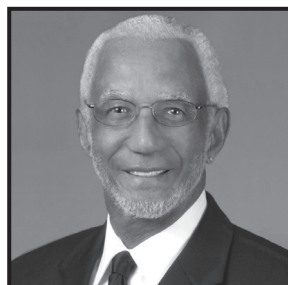
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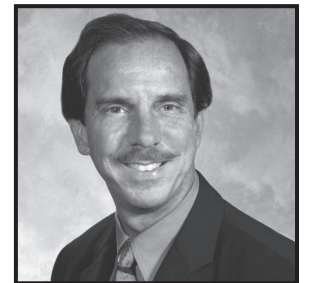
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Obituaries

Kunio Okui

April 24, 1945 ~ December 19, 2017



Kunio Okui passed away on December 19, 2017 at San Leandro Kaiser Medical Center, at the age of 72. At the time of his passing, Kunio was surrounded by love with his wife, Patti, his 2 sons and their families, his mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and friends from his church community. His daughter flew in from New Jersey the following day.

Kunio was born on April 24, 1945 in a World War II Japanese relocation camp in Manzanar, California to Jiro and Yaeko Okui. He was raised in San Fernando, California, completed his Bachelor's degree at California State University Northridge with a degree in Accounting. He married Patti in 1973. Their 3 children are Jason, Jared, and Akemi. Kunio was a self-employed certified public accountant for over 40 years.

Kunio was known for his humor, wit, and frugality. He was a Golden State Warriors season ticket holder and an active member of his church, San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church. He served on leadership roles in various capacities at his church and on the Board of Education in the Castro Valley Unified School District for 21 years. He helped pass bond measures to improve the schools and to construct the Castro Valley Performing Arts Center, new math and science buildings at Castro Valley High School, and the athletic stadium.

Kunio enjoyed giving people free Round Table personal pan pizzas, collecting bobbleheads, getting autographs, and playing bridge. He had a way of connecting with people of all ages.

Kunio is survived by his wife, Patti and his children, Jason (Jessica), Jared (Vy), and Akemi (Danny) Furuyama, and six grandchildren (Evan, Morgan, Ai, Tiên, Isaiah, and Michah). He is also survived by his brothers, Mas (Aki), Mitch, Tadao (Lois), nephews, and niece.

Kunio's celebration of life service will be held on Saturday, January 6, at 2 p.m. at San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church, 615 Lewelling Boulevard, San Leandro, CA.

Michael A. Langella

June 19, 1958 ~ December 19, 2017



Michael A. Langella, 59, of San Leandro, California, father, son and brother, passed away peacefully on December 19th, 2017, with his family and friends by his side.

Michael was born on June 19th, 1958 in Providence, Rhode Island, the son of John and Hilda Langella. He graduated from the University of Rhode Island with a degree in Plant and Soil Sciences. He later moved to the California Bay Area, married and had two wonderful children, Michael II and Monica.

While spending most of his working life as an insurance adjuster, Michael's greatest passions were his family, church, boy scouting, and landscaping. He demonstrated his passions for his volunteering, through teaching catechism at the Transfiguration Church, being an Eagle Scout and, later, a Scout Leader for his son's troop. He also had many friends, due to his gregarious and generous nature, often volunteering to do landscaping or provide any other assistance needed. Michael also loved traveling with his close travel companion, most recently a trip to Norway and northern Europe. His smile, laugh, humor, and kind spirit always left an impression wherever he went. Michael was a unique and vibrant individual and will be missed by all.

Michael is survived by his father – John Langella, children – Michael and Monica Langella, his brothers and sisters – Deborah Hunt, John Langella, Richard Langella, Kathleen Francis, Christine Olson, Cynthia Boulanger, and David Langella, his granddaughter Lorelai Langella, his many nieces and nephews, his scouting and church families, and his countless friends that included him as part of their families.

Michael is reunited in heaven with his mother Hilda Langella and cousin and close friend Woody Harwood.

Services to celebrate Michael's life will be held as follows: a viewing on January 2, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Chapel of the Chimes in Oakland, 4499 Piedmont Ave., the funeral will take place on January 3, at 9 a.m. at the Transfiguration Church in Castro Valley at 4000 E Castro Valley Blvd., with Father Mario officiating.

Please view the online obituary, send condolences, and share memories at Chapel of the Chimes website: Oakland.Chapelofthechimes.com. Memorials may be made out to the Transfiguration Church or Amnesty International.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR must include writer's first and last names, phone number, city of residence, and must be under 300 words. We reserve the right to edit as necessary. We do not withhold names or print unsigned letters. Email letters to: fredz@ebpublishing.com, or mail to: The Forum, P.O. Box 2897, Alameda, CA 94501.

Obituaries

■ Michael A. Langella
■ Kunio Okui

■ Bill Shipps
■ Minnie Marie Widlund

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Include a phone number.
For help, call Patrick Vadnais

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Minnie Marie Widlund

Feb. 9, 1915 - Dec. 27, 2017



Long time San Leandro resident Minnie Widlund (nee Di Giacomo) passed away peacefully in her sleep at the age of 102.

She was born in Missouri and grew up in Fresno, CA. She met Walter Widlund, the love of her life, while working in a cannery in Hayward. They married and raised their daughter Diane in San Leandro, CA. Minnie was preceded in death by her parents, siblings, husband and daughter.

She is survived by her son-in-law, Hugh Erbe; grandson, Michael Erbe (Kim); granddaughter, Michele Davis (Jim); great-grandsons, Curtis, Kyle and Justin Davis; and several nieces and nephews. Her witty sense of humor and kind heart will be missed.

Bill Shipps



Long time Castro Valley resident, William (Bill) Melvin Shipps Jr., passed away on Wednesday, November 22, 2017 of natural causes at the age of 85. Known by his friends as "The Real Bill", he was a frequent patron of Castro Village Starbucks and Rudy's Donuts. Bill's sense of humor and warm heart will be greatly missed.

Bill was born in Pacoima, California in 1932. He attended Pacoima High School where he was President of the student body and Captain of the football team. After attending Pierce College, Bill served in the US Army, worked as a sales manager for a metal company in Oakland, and eventually found his way to Castro Valley where he was owner of RPM (Real Property Management) for many years.

He is preceded by his son, Clayton and sister, Betty. He is survived by his son, Jason, daughter-in-law, Patty, and grandchildren, Jessica and Ryan.

Those that are interested in attending a gathering to celebrate Bill's life, please contact his son, Jason, at (510) 774-1333 or jason_shipps@yahoo.com so we are sure to include you.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FREDZ@EBPUBLISHING.COM



A Tribute to Kunio Okui

Editor:

Kunio Okui served for more than two decades on the Board of the Castro Valley Unified School District. He was a true Christian gentleman and all who knew him were blessed by his steadfast faith and love for all kids regardless of their age or what school they attended.

He leaves a marvelous legacy of service and commitment.

—Bruce D Johnson, Superintendent Emeritus
Redwood Christian Schools

Withholding Divisive Letters 'Violates Freedom of Speech'

Editor:

It seems to me that Mr. Jeffrey Zimmerman ("Says Forum Publishes Too Many Divisive Letters," *Letters*, Dec. 27) wants to stop the public from voicing what they believe in.

If, and I do say IF, the editor of this publication and all others began to do what Mr. Zimmerman asked, our freedom of speech would be violated. I can understand the editor's of publications not printing vulgar language.

No, Mr. Zimmerman, asking the editors to violate our freedom of speech is just not in the best interest of a freedom-loving nation.

I do understand that President Trump is not very well liked. However, since he has been president, you cannot argue that the stock market has not climbed to it's highest point in history. You must admit that employment is up! President Trump, like most former presidents, does have areas in his personality that grind against us.

—Dick Purdee, Castro Valley

Political Arguments 'Tend to Split Our Community'

Editor:

I agree with Jeffrey Zimmerman (*see reference above*) that publishing decisive letters is too much and does tend to split our community. I am real tired of reading political arguments and hope others feel the same way.

I also would like you to concentrate on local issues. Two subjects that I would be interested in are: (1) Why is it taking so long to finish the parking lot behind the bossiness on CV Blvd. and (2) We passed a school bond several years ago and the CVSD used \$ to put up solar panels. What was the cost of the panels, how much energy are they generating, what was the electric bill before and after the panels went up and how long before we recover the cost.

—Gail Lawton, Castro Valley

Forum Should Publish 'the Good, the Bad, the Ugly'

Editor:

I would like to congratulate the Forum Editor and his staff for doing a fantastic job on publishing, the good, the bad, even the little ugly of us citizens comments.

I take my hat off to all of you, for publishing the comments that exposes the reality of today's world, and leaving us citizens to make our own decisions and arrive to our own conclusions.

I am delighted to see everyone at the Forum doing their job, a great one at that, knowing that when the truth is exposed, it does ruffle feathers, for sure, making it impossible to please everybody.

My best wishes to you and your staff in the coming year.

Keep up the super job.

—Josie Pastorino, Castro Valley

Political Discussion 'An Important Community Service'

Editor:

I would like to praise The Forum for its public service by publishing letters with opposing political viewpoints. I agree with Jeffrey Zimmerman that Castro Valley local issues are important to report to the public and The Forum does an excellent job with its extensive coverage.

However, providing a local forum for political discussion through the Letters to the Editor is an important and critical community service. It allows us who understand that almost everything in life is involved with politics, to voice opinions and hear opposing ideas. And political issues directly affect our local community.

When a President starts a phony war in Iraq, it affects the lives of our sons and daughters in Castro Valley. When the Republicans pass a trickle down tax scam to benefit the rich, it affects the price of bread and eggs at Safeway.

Opposing political viewpoints has been part of our nation since the progressive patriots were trying to talk the Tories into going to war to fight for our independence. People need to be made aware of issues so that they can do research to discover the facts and be better able to make decisions about what it important.

Questioning government and corporate actions encourages the progression of our ideals, and protects our rights such as our ability to redress grievances. It helps us understand that change comes from the bottom and recognize how even local issues can be addressed by voting and our other involvements in politics.

—David Siegel, Castro Valley

Pink Ribbon License Plate: Breast Cancer Awareness

California drivers can now support breast cancer screenings by ordering a new Pink Ribbon license plate.

A portion of the fees that the Dept. of Motor Vehicles (DMV) collects from orders for the plates will go to the state's Health Care Services' "Every Woman Counts" program which provides mammograms, breast cancer diagnostic services, breast cancer education, and other breast cancer awareness services to California's underserved women.

"The Pink Ribbon license plate will increase breast cancer awareness and raise money to provide critical services to women. Early

detection saves lives," said DMV Director Jean Shiimoto.

To order a Pink Ribbon license plate, visit www.dmv.ca.gov. Standard numbering plates can be purchased for \$50. Personalized plates cost \$103. Renewal rates are \$40 and \$83, respectively. A motorcycle license plate also will be available for the same price.

The Pink Ribbon license plate was the idea of the "Survivor Sisters," a group of breast cancer survivors who wanted to promote early detection and help women survive breast cancer. More than 7,500 advance orders for the Pink Ribbon license plate were received to make the plate a reality.

County Announces 2018 Artsfund Grants Program

The Alameda County Arts Commission has announced its 2018 Artsfund Grants Program for nonprofit organizations for all types of arts programming, including literature, music, visual arts and dance.

Grants range from \$1,000 to \$2,500 each.

Last year's program awarded grants to 35 nonprofit organizations throughout the county. During the 2018 funding cycle, as many as 45 arts organizations may be awarded grants.

The application deadline is March 1, 2018.

The Arts Commission will host three free workshops to assist in preparing grant applications: Today, Jan. 3 from 5:30 - 7 p.m. at the Livermore Community Center; Wednesday, Jan. 17 from 3 - 4:30 p.m. at the Fremont Main Library; and Wednesday, Jan. 24 from 3 - 4:30 p.m. at the Alameda County Lakeside Plaza Building in Oakland.

Workshops are free and open to the public with no reservations required. Workshop information is also available online at www.youtube.com/user/AlamedaCountyArts or phone at (510) 208-9646.

Pot: Police Say that Legal Pot Won't End Black Market Sales

continued from front page

The California Police Chiefs Association, the Castro Valley CHP, and the Alameda County Sheriff's Office have gone on record about their concerns about stoned drivers, the risk of theft associated with the all-cash marijuana sales, and the thriving black market.

In December, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors created a last-minute resolution to authorize the sales at We Are Hemp and the Garden of Edens.

Last year, the Board of Supervisors also voted to allow up to five cannabis shops, an effort spearheaded by Supervisor Nate Miley whose recent reelection campaign received \$60,000 in donations from the cannabis industry.

According to USA Today, 13.5 million pounds of marijuana were produced in California in 2016 and 80 percent was illegally shipped out of state. Of the remaining 20 percent, only one-quarter as sold legally.

Police also say that the legal pot - which is taxed heavily up to 70 percent - won't end black market sales.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SUSAN JONES

Jamboree Champs

Bailey Jones and Payton Stanberry won All-Tourney awards after the Emerald Division Jamboree Championship game, held at CVHS, from Thursday-Saturday, December 28-30.

AAU Basketball Sign-up Dates

The Castro Valley-San Leandro based Bay Transitions AAU basketball program will be holding tryouts for the 2018 season the next two Sundays at John Muir Middle School in San Leandro. The schedule for the Sunday, January 7 and January 14 sessions is as follows: First through fourth grade will be held from 8-9 a.m.; fifth and sixth grade from 9-10:30 a.m.; seventh and eighth grade from 10:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. For further information, contact program director Bryon Pointer at 510-361-7513.

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PG&E Urges Customers: Use Caution When Heating Home

With more cold nights in the forecast, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) urges customers to be cautious when heating their homes.

Electric heating devices, such as space heaters, are a home fire hazard when not properly used or monitored. And fuel-burning appliances - gas furnaces, stoves and water heaters - can increase the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning when they are not working properly.

Heating equipment is the second leading cause of home fires in the U.S., according to the National Fire Protection Association. Nearly half of these fires occur from December through February.

The leading contributing factors to space heater fires are heating equipment too close to objects that can burn, such as furniture, clothing, mattresses or bedding, and leaving heating equipment unattended.

Place space heaters on level, hard, nonflammable surfaces, not on rugs or carpets.

Don't put objects on space heaters or use them to dry clothes or shoes.

Turn off space heaters when leaving the room or going to sleep.

Keep all flammable materials at least three feet away from heating sources and supervise children when a space heater or fireplace is being used.

Never use cooking devices for home heating purposes.

Install carbon monoxide detectors to warn you if concentration levels are high. As of 2011, all California single-family homes are required to have carbon monoxide detectors. Make sure they are installed near sleeping areas and replace the batteries at least twice a year. Never use products inside the home that generate dangerous levels of carbon monoxide, such as generators, barbecues, propane heaters and charcoal.

PG&E customers can schedule free gas appliance safety checks, have furnace pilots relighted and have fireplaces checked by calling 1-800-743-5000.

THE FORUM CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12			13				14			
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56					57				58	
59					60				61	

ACROSS

- 1 Winter woe
- 4 Movie fragment
- 8 Restaurant employee
- 12 Deteriorate
- 13 Stash
- 14 Head light?
- 15 Formed rust
- 17 Too
- 18 Felon's flight
- 19 Tasted
- 21 Miss Muffet's bugaboo
- 24 Prune
- 25 Candy in a dispenser
- 26 Deli buy
- 28 Rid of frost
- 32 Sandwich cookie
- 34 Yuletide quaff
- 36 Crucial time
- 37 Re ebb and flow
- 39 Existed
- 41 Individual
- 42 In medias
- 44 Libra symbol
- 46 Sweet girl in an old song
- 50 Yale student
- 51 Poi base
- 52 Worried greatly
- 56 Ear-related
- 57 Links warning
- 58 Detergent brand
- 59 Timid
- 60 Applications
- 61 Rep. rival

DOWN

- 1 To and
- 2 Bagel topping
- 3 Worked with
- 4 Doorbells, often
- 5 Claiborne of fashion
- 6 Mid-month date
- 7 Accelerator, e.g.
- 8 In need of balm, maybe
- 9 Corridor
- 10 Differently
- 11 Comestibles
- 16 Father
- 20 Chic, in the '60s
- 21 Location
- 22 Actress Gilpin
- 23 Take off
- 27 Violinist's need
- 29 Put on a pedestal
- 30 Chaplin prop
- 31 Spud's buds
- 33 U-shaped part of a rowboat
- 35 Petrol
- 38 Hawaiian souvenir
- 40 Parts of an act
- 43 Big glitch
- 45 Baba
- 46 Teeny bit
- 47 Piece of info on an invitation
- 48 Great Lake
- 49 Ids' counterparts
- 53 Raw rock
- 54 Before
- 55 Beavers' construct

ANSWERS ON PAGE 5

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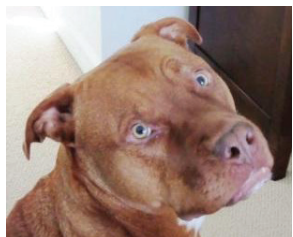
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JAX is a laid back 3-year-old boy. He's a quiet and calm love bug. Jax is neutered and ready for his loving, forever family to take him home. Info: Hayward Animal Shelter: (510) 293-7200



BAXTER arrived as a scared, emaciated pup who's fast becoming a sweet and curious dog after a little TLC. For more info, please call: Hayward Animal Shelter: (510) 293-7200.



KUDDI is very affectionate, friendly and playful 4-year-old Pit Bull Terrier/ Rhodesian Ridgeback. He is a big boy (around 75 lbs). More information, visit: dustypawsrescue.org.



WILLOW is a lovely, soft 5-month-old kitten who is all white except for the two dark grey marks above her eyes. For more information, please visit: dustypawsrescue.org.

Clipper Card: Teens Save Big on BART

Teens age 13 to 18 can get a Youth Clipper card for a 50% discount on BART rides, otherwise prepare to pay extra if you keep using a paper ticket.

Previously, the Youth discount only applied to ages 5-12; those 4 and under will continue to ride for free.

For a round trip 19th Street Oakland to Fruitvale journey, for example, the undiscounted fare for a teen will now be \$3.90. But with the Clipper Youth discount, that teen would pay only \$1.95 for the same ride.

Discounts aren't the only benefit of switching to Clipper, however. Have you ever had to stand in a long line just to buy a paper ticket?

Stand no further, as there are lots of places to get your Youth Clipper card, like the Lake Merritt BART Station Customer Service Center, or other locations you can find at www.clippercard.com. You can also download and mail in an application.

In both cases, you'll need proof



St. Rose Hospital's Christmas Donation

Every year, St. Rose Hospital in Hayward partners with The Salvation Army and the Angel Tree Program during the holiday season, gathering wish lists from local children. This year, St. Rose doctors and staff donated to more than 100 families in the community to make sure parents would be able to provide new clothes and toys for their children on Christmas.

of your age, such as a birth certificate, passport or California ID.

The process only takes about 5 minutes, so you'll soon be on your way to discounted BART freedom!

And with a Clipper account, card management has never been easier. Simply head to www.clippercard.com/ClipperWeb/index.do, and click "Register a card".

From there, click "I'm not a robot", and enter the 10 digit serial number on the back, that is unique to every card.

With a registered card, you can access "My Clipper," an online dashboard that allows you to control the value on your card, report it if you see a suspicious transaction, or even deregister it in case it goes missing.

Check out www.bart.gov/teens to discover fun, new places to explore just a BART ride away.

—Jiahao Huang
Contributing Teen Writer

HOLIDAY TREE COLLECTION

January					
M	T	W	Th	F	S
	2	3	4	5	6
8	9	10	11	12	

- Place trees next to carts for pick-up on your adjusted (week 1) or regular (week 2) collection day.
- Remove ornaments, tinsel, nails, and stands. Cut tall trees into lengths no larger than six feet.
- Flocked trees will be collected, but not composted.
- Multi-family residents: place in general collection area.



Questions? Contact Waste Management of Alameda County, Inc. at (510) 537-5500.

OTHER HOLIDAY RECYCLING TIPS & REMINDERS:

- Save holiday bows and ribbon and reuse them next year.
- Save foam packaging pellets and use them in the next package you send out.
- Recycle paper wrapping paper in the blue recycling cart or white recycling bin.
- Compost uneaten holiday leftovers (all food scraps and food-soiled paper) in the green organics cart.

For more great tips, visit www.pinterest.com/CVSan

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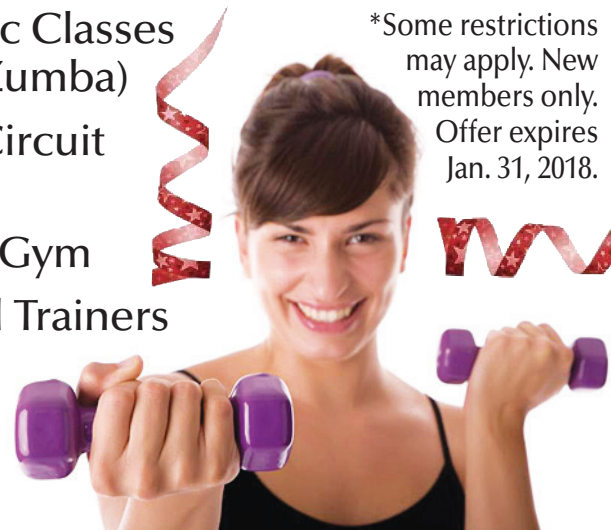
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