



# CASTRO VALLEY FORUM

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SERVING CASTRO VALLEY SINCE 1989

YEAR 32

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2020

NO. 49

## INSIDE YOUR FORUM

### OUR TOWN



#### Gifts Come Early

Rotarians donate iPads to seniors to stay connected during the holidays

Page 3

### LIVING



#### Sweetest Gift

Show loved ones how much you care with fresh baked holiday cookies

Page 4

### SENIORS



#### Tax Savvy Gifts

Giving a large gift? What you should know about Annual Exclusion Gifts

Page 15

## INDEX

Classified Ads .....	12
Crosswords .....	13
Holidays .....	6
Homes .....	8
Horoscope .....	14
Obituaries .....	14
Opinions .....	14
Our Town .....	3
Seniors .....	15
Weather .....	2

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## Season's Greenings



PHOTOS BY DEBBIE TEE

Nine local Scouts Troops opened their Christmas tree lot at Heyer Center in Castro Valley on Friday with everyone wearing masks and practicing safe-distancing. The annual fundraiser earns money for camps, camping, hiking and merit badges while teaching people skills, business skills and life skills. The lot is at 19201 Center Street and there are plenty of fresh-cut trees and wreaths available. But don't wait till the last minute!

## Expect More Restrictions if Hospitals Fill

By Michael Singer  
CASTRO VALLEY FORUM

Alameda County, and all of California, may see another round of COVID-19 related restrictions unless people take drastic actions to slow the spread, according to statements this week from Governor Gavin Newsom.

In his weekly update on Monday, the governor expressed grave concern for public health now that more than 1.2 million people in the state have contracted the coronavirus — up 1.2% since before the Thanksgiving holiday.

Alameda County saw an additional two thousand cases recorded in just one week, according to Public Health Department numbers.

Newsom was not specific on the more restrictive plans but hint-

ed that the state could see shelter-in-place orders similar to the ones initially rolled out in March.

"This is a dynamic week. This is an incredibly important week in the history of this pandemic for this nation, not just this state," Newsom said. "I can assure you that we'll be coming out with some additional information, additional recommendations, in the very, very near future."

The biggest concern is that there will not be enough room to support new infections that require hospitalization. On Sunday, California broke a record with more than 7,400 coronavirus hospitalizations. Over the past 14 days, hospitalizations have increased by 89% and admissions to Intensive Care Units went up 67%.

see **HOSPITALS** on page 2

## Special Patient Visits CV Veterinary Clinic

By Linda Sandsmark  
CASTRO VALLEY FORUM

A Castro Valley veterinary clinic had a very special patient last week: "Jazz," one of the two beloved coyotes at the Sulphur Creek Nature Center in Hayward.

Jazz wasn't ill, but he is an older coyote who had some loose and fractured teeth. It was time for him to have a complete medical exam and get the needed dental care.

At Castro Valley Companion Animal Hospital, doctors René Gandolfi and Charlotte Leong coordinated Jazz's anesthesia and treatments.

Coyotes are not just "big dogs," and dealing with wild animals has its issues, specifically safety for the patient and human caretakers alike.

As soon as Jazz arrived, he was given an injection with a combination of anesthetic and tranquilizer medications. Then, just like human surgery, he was placed on



COURTESY OF RENE GANDOLFI

**Sulphur Creek's coyote Jazz goes under anesthesia**

oxygen and an anesthetic gas, and was provided with IV fluids. Dr. Gandolfi, a certified Veterinary Acupuncturist, added to that support with a couple of well-placed needles.

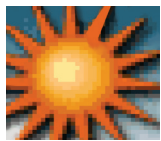
see **PATIENT** on page 2



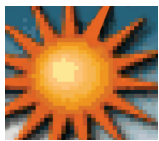
## Castro Valley Weather Dec 2 - 6, 2020



Wednesday  
Mostly Sunny  
High 58° Low 44°



Thursday  
Mostly Sunny  
High 59° Low 41°



Friday  
Sunny  
High 62° Low 40°



Saturday  
Sunny  
High 62° Low 40°



Sunday  
Sunny  
High 63° Low 43°

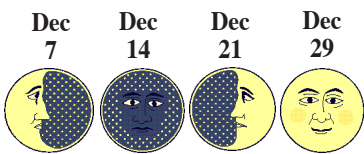
## Almanac



Sun sets at 4:51 p.m. today, rises at 7:08 a.m. Thursday.

Past Week's Rain: 00.00  
Season To Date: 00.71  
Normal To Date: 02.88  
Season Average: 21.22

## Moon Phases



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## Hospitals: Capacity

continued from front page

California Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly said the majority of hospitals in 51 of 58 counties will reach or exceed capacity in the coming weeks if those counties do not take decisive action to stem the spread of infections.

"We are looking at intensive care unit capacity as the primary trigger for deeper, more restrictive actions, because when that capacity goes away we know the quality of care sometimes takes a dip and we see outcomes we don't want to see."

Local hospitals, including Eden Medical Center and Kaiser San Leandro say they are able to accommodate an influx of new COVID-19 cases, but health officials are not taking projections for granted. Data released from the governor's office this week forecasts ICU capacity at 91% by early January, up from the current 72% capacity in the Bay Area.

"We expect unprecedented numbers of COVID-19 patients in next two to three weeks that will further strain limited resources, like PPE, testing supplies, and our frontline health care workers," said Carmela Coyle, president of the California Hospital Association.

To help already suffering businesses buffer themselves from additional restrictions, the state authorized \$500 million in new relief grants for small businesses. Temporary tax relief allows for an automatic three-month income tax extension for taxpayers who file less than \$1 million in sales tax.

Castro Valley  
Confirmed Cases = 822

Alameda County  
Confirmed Cases = 29,939  
Deaths = 512

California  
Confirmed Cases = 1,212,968  
Deaths = 19,141

as of November 30, 2020



Dr. Gandolfi inserting acupuncture needle in Jazz's paw

## Patient: Relatively Peaceful Experience for the Coyote

continued from front page

For Jazz it was a relatively peaceful experience, and the doctors and staff were very pleased to see him get through the anesthesia and dental surgery with little aftereffects. They were also quite relieved that no humans were injured in the process.

Dr. Gandolfi has been providing pro-bono veterinary services to Sulphur Creek Nature Center for over 30 years. The center is operated by the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District. Veterinarian Leong does all on-site veterinary care at Sulphur Creek.

Animals requiring more extensive care are brought to Dr. Gandolfi's Companion Animal Hospital at 2509 Lessley Ave. in Castro Valley by Sulphur Creek staff.

Sulphur Creek Nature Center, 1801 D St., Hayward, is a licensed and permitted native wildlife rehabilitation facility serving Castro Valley, Hayward, San Lorenzo. It is temporarily closed to the public due to COVID-19, but continues to care for its resident animal population with limited staffing. More information is available at [www.facebook.com/sulphurcreeknaturcenter](http://www.facebook.com/sulphurcreeknaturcenter).

### CORRECTION:

The front page article "Three New Faces Join the MAC Board" in the Nov. 25 edition of the Forum misspelled the name of Al Pardo as Al Pardo. The Forum apologizes for the error.

## Moss Named County Health Director

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors has appointed Dr. Nicholas Moss as the County Health Officer.

Moss has served as Interim Health Officer since July, when the Governor selected former Health Officer Dr. Erica Pan to serve at the state level. Moss has served as a leader in Alameda County's Covid-19 response since January, overseeing many aspects from data reporting to reopening policies.

"Dr. Moss brings extensive knowledge in communicable disease and nearly 10 years of experience in leadership roles," said Colleen Chawla, Alameda County Health Care Services Agency Director.

Moss is an infectious disease



Dr. Nicholas Moss

medicine specialist and medical epidemiologist by training. He joined the Agency in 2013 as the Public Health HIV STD Section Director and has participated in

county responses to measles, Ebola and Zika epidemics.

Moss received his bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and his Doctor of Medicine from UC Irvine. He trained in internal medicine, infectious diseases and public health at the University of Washington in Seattle.

"I am honored to serve the people of Alameda County and I thank the Board of Supervisors for entrusting me with the role of County Health Officer," said Moss. "My number one priority is to protect and improve health by achieving equity through partnership, fostering safe and healthy communities, and promoting fair and inclusive opportunities for all residents."





PHOTO BY MELANIE SIMMONS

**KEEPING FAMILIES CONNECTED DURING THE HOLIDAYS:** From left, Rotarian Dan Willits, Ombudsman Services Regional Supervisor Charmaine Brent, Baywood Court CEO Matt Neal, Rotarian Ceta Dochterman, Baywood Court Director of Operations Nate Runas, Rotary President Gary Howard, and Rotarian iPads Program Chair Todd Anglin.

## Rotarians Continue Holiday iPad Deliveries to Senior Care Facilities

The Rotary Club of Castro Valley donated five iPads to seniors at Baywood Court so that families could stay more connected during the holidays.

Baywood Court was the fifth senior care community to receive iPads from the Rotary Club joining Oak Creek, Redwood Road Care Home, Woodside Residential Care

Facility for Elderly, and Willow Creek Alzheimer's and Dementia Care Community. Todd Anglin, iPad Program Chair for Castro Valley Rotary, noted that there are still funds available for more. Senior care facilities can contact him at CVRotary@Icloud.com.

"The residents at Baywood Court are very appreciative of

the Castro Valley Rotarians' donation of five new iPads for the community's use and enjoyment," said Matt Neal, Baywood Court's Chief Executive Officer. "Fostering robust connections between our residents and their friends and family is a primary goal for us and this generous donation will help achieve that goal."

## PG&E Rolls Out Paperless Billing Service

This past summer PG&E rolled out a pilot program to change the billing preference for approximately 500,000 customers throughout the service area to paperless.

Customers with an online account who made an electronic payment and have not opted out of paperless billing in the past were part of this initial automatic trans-

sition, said PG&E spokesperson Tamar Sarkissian.

Going paperless does not affect the PG&E account and there is no fee. Customers can always change their billing preference at any time and choose to receive a paper bill at no cost by visiting pge.com.

Customers who were part of the pilot program can also refer to

PG&E's email communications providing easy instructions to opt out.

PG&E said that 2.5 million customers have already gone paperless and that number is growing. Paperless billing cuts clutter by avoiding the hassle of paper bills while helping protect the environment, the company said.

## SHERIFF'S REPORTS

COMPILED BY MICHAEL SINGER • CASTRO VALLEY FORUM



### Spousal Assault

Friday, November 27: at 5:38 p.m., Sheriff's deputies arrested a 44-year-old woman from Castro Valley on suspicion of spousal assault. An anonymous tip about an argument sent deputies to a home on Todd Court near Carlton Avenue. There, they took the woman into custody. The victim was treated at the scene.

### Driving Under the Influence

Thursday, November 26: at 11:36 p.m., a 48-year-old Castro Valley man was arrested on suspicion of driving under the influence of alcohol. Deputies stopped the man on Forrest Avenue near Clara Lee Lane after observing him driving erratically in the neighborhood. The man failed his field sobriety test and was taken into custody.

### Wanted Woman with Knife

Thursday, November 26: at 8:48 a.m., deputies arrested a 56-year-old woman as part of a warrant for her capture. The woman was at an apartment on Grove Way near Idena Avenue when deputies served the warrant. Deputies report the woman had a concealed knife in her possession that was longer than the legal 4 inches. The woman was taken to Santa Rita Jail.

### Public Intoxication

Wednesday, November 25: at 8:48 a.m., a 31-year-old woman with no permanent residence was arrested on suspicion of public intoxication and possession of illegal drug paraphernalia. Deputies stopped the woman for questioning outside a business on Center Street near Grove Way. The woman failed her field sobriety test and was taken to a sobering center.

### Street Fighting Man

Tuesday, November 24: at 8:31 p.m., deputies arrested a 42-year-old man from Castro Valley on

suspicion of fighting in public. The man was spotted in an altercation with another unidentified person outside a business on Castro Valley Boulevard near Strobridge Avenue. Deputies identified the suspect as the aggressor and took him into custody. The victim was treated at the scene.

### Busted for Drugs

Tuesday, November 24: at 3:18 a.m., a 34-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of possession of illegal narcotics, methamphetamine drugs, and related drug paraphernalia. Deputies stopped the man for questioning outside a business on Grove Way near Redwood Road when they discovered his stash. The man was also wanted as part of a warrant issued for his capture. Deputies took the man to Santa Rita Jail.

### Suspected Burglar Caught

Monday, November 23: at 10:58 a.m., a 27-year-old man from Castro Valley was arrested on suspicion of possession of burglar tools

and illegal drug paraphernalia. Deputies report the man had an outstanding warrant for previous charges of violating a court-issued restraining order, disorderly conduct, and possession of methamphetamine drugs. The man was traveling on Castro Valley Boulevard near Strobridge Avenue when deputies stopped him for questioning. The man was taken to Santa Rita Jail.

### Marijuana Grow House Shut Down

Monday, November 23: at 11:23 a.m., deputies arrested two people from Castro Valley on suspicion of illegally cultivating more than the allotted number of marijuana plants and packaging it for sale. A tip about a so-called grow house sent deputies to a home on Crow Canyon Road near Bellina Canyon Road. Deputies reported more than a dozen plants were being grown and prepared for sale. A 57-year-old man and a 50-year-old woman were handcuffed at the scene and taken into custody.

## DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT MEDICARE?

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### Winter Schedule

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| DEC 10 | <i>Living With Dementia: Understanding Behavior as Communication</i>           |
| JAN 14 | <i>Making Decisions About Caregiving</i>                                       |
| FEB 11 | <i>Navigating the Healthcare Environment and Advocating for Your Loved One</i> |

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## CASTRO VALLEY FORUM

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## December's Cookies

December is inevitably associated with cookies, the joy of baking them at home, and nibbling one the moment it is cool enough to be consumed without scorching either your tongue or fingers.

So tie on your apron strings and be prepared to put good intentions about self-control on hold till January.

### THUMBPRINT COOKIES

3/4 pound butter  
1 cup sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
3-1/2 cups flour  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 egg beaten with 1 tablespoon water, for egg wash  
7 ounces sweetened flaked coconut  
Your favorite jam or preserves

Cream together the butter and sugar until just combined, and then add the vanilla. Separately, sift together the flour and salt. With the mixer on low speed, add the flour mixture to the creamed butter and

sugar. Mix until the dough starts to come together. (Do *not* overmix.) Dump on a floured board and roll together into a flat disk. Wrap in plastic wrap and chill for 30 minutes.

Roll the dough into 1-1/4-inch balls. Dip each ball into the egg wash and then roll it in coconut. Place the balls on an ungreased cookie sheet and press a light indentation into the top of each with your finger. Drop 1/4 teaspoon of jam into each indentation.

Bake for 20 to 25 minutes, until the coconut is a golden brown. Cool and serve. Makes about 2-1/2 dozen cookies.

### TURTLE SHORTBREAD COOKIES

1 cup butter (no substitutes)  
1/2 cup dark brown sugar  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
3 (1-ounce)squares semi-sweet chocolate, melted, cooled 5 minutes  
2 cups flour  
1/4 cup cornstarch

1 (14-ounce) package Kraft Caramels  
2 tablespoons cream  
6 ounces (1-1/2 cups) pecans, chopped

Preheat oven to 300°F.

Mix butter, brown sugar and vanilla thoroughly using an electric mixer. Beat in melted chocolate. Gradually blend in flour and corn starch.

Form into 1-inch balls and place on ungreased baking sheets. Gently press down on each cookie to flatten using fingers or a flat bottomed drinking glass (dipped in sugar to prevent sticking).

Bake at 300°F for 25 to 30 minutes, or until bottoms begin to brown. Cool for 5 minutes; remove to a wire rack to cool completely. Melt caramels and cream in a small saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly.

Dip cookies in caramel sauce; roll dipped portion in chopped pecans. Place cookies on wax paper to cool. Yields about 3-1/2 dozen cookies.



### COCONUT POMPOMS

1 cup (2 sticks) butter  
1/2 cup sugar  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract  
2 cups flour  
1/4 teaspoon salt  
2 cups pecan halves  
1 cup shredded coconut

Beat butter until light and creamy. Gradually add sugar, beating until light and fluffy. Add vanilla and mix. Sift together flour and salt and add to butter mixture, stirring until incorporated.

Shape pieces of dough around pecan halves and roll in coconut. Bake on ungreased or parchment paper-lined baking sheet at 325°F until coconut is lightly toasted, about 20 minutes.

### HOLIDAY MOLASSES COOKIES

1 cup molasses  
1/2 pound butter  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
1 cup sugar  
1/4 cup hot water  
4 cups flour  
2 teaspoon salt  
1-1/2 teaspoon ginger  
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves  
1/2 teaspoon allspice  
2 teaspoons cinnamon

Heat the molasses to a boil. Remove from heat and add butter, stirring until melted. Place the sugar in a deep bowl and add soda to the hot water; pour water into the molasses. Pour the molasses mixture into the bowl of sugar and thoroughly mix. Add spices, flour and salt and mix with molasses and sugar. Pour into a loaf pan lined with parchment paper or waxed paper and refrigerate.

Preheat oven to 325°F. Cut dough as thin as possible and bake on a non-stick surface or a greased sheet for 15 minutes. Cool on a rack as soon as done.

### FLORENTINES

1/4 cup sugar  
3/4 cup heavy whipping cream  
1/4 cup all-purpose flour  
1/2 cup finely chopped almonds  
8 ounces chopped candied orange peel  
8 (1-ounce) squares semi-sweet chocolate

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Blend the sugar and the cream. Stir in the flour, almonds and orange peel. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto a heavily creased and floured cookie sheet. Spread mixture into thin circles with a spatula.

Bake at 350°F just until the edges are light brown about 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool a few minutes before removing from the cookie sheet, cool.

Chop the chocolate into small pieces and melt over low heat, or microwave on medium for about 3 minutes. Turn cooled cookies upside down and spread the bottoms with the melted chocolate. Let cookies stand at room temperature until chocolate is firm, at least 3 hours.

Store in a covered container at room temperature or refrigerate. Yields 5 dozen

### SPICY GINGERBREAD COOKIES

1 cup butter  
2 large eggs  
1 cup dark-brown sugar, packed

1 cup unsulfured molasses  
6 cups sifted flour  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
4 teaspoons ground ginger  
4 teaspoons cinnamon  
1-1/2 teaspoons ground cloves  
1/2 teaspoon finely ground black pepper  
1/2 teaspoon salt

In a large bowl, beat together butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs and molasses.

In another bowl, sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder, spices and salt. Stir flour mixture into butter mixture. Divide dough into thirds and wrap each third in plastic wrap. Chill for about 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Roll dough 1/8-inch thick between two pieces of waxed paper. Cut into shapes with cookie cutters. Transfer shapes to ungreased cookie sheets.

If desired, decorate with raisins, dragées, or red hot candies. Refrigerate about 15 minutes. Bake for 8-10 minutes or until crisp but not dark. Allow to cool on the cookie sheet for 1 minute, then remove to wire racks to cool completely.

### CHRISTMAS MERINGUES

4 egg whites at room temperature  
1 cup sugar  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract  
2 ounces unsweetened chocolate, finely grated  
6 ounces semisweet chocolate pieces  
1/4 cup milk  
1 cup finely chopped walnuts

Beat egg whites until stiff but not dry. Gradually add 2/3 cup sugar while continuing to beat. Add vanilla. Gradually fold in remaining 1/3 cup sugar and grated chocolate.

Shape into well-rounded ovals with teaspoon. Bake on nonstick baking sheets (or baking sheets covered with parchment paper) at 275°F until firm, 45 to 50 minutes. Cool in pan.

Melt chocolate pieces with milk in top of double boiler. Dip top of cooled meringues in warm chocolate then in chopped nuts. When chocolate hardens, store in airtight container. Makes 60.

# Holidays Around the Town

**Advertise Your Holiday Gift Ideas  
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### PUBLICATION DATES 2020

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12/2 12/9 12/16

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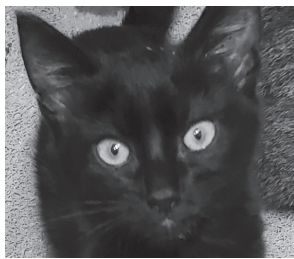
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**LONDON** is a darling 9 week old female medium/long haired kitten who is sweet but a little skittish. She allows handling but is still getting used to people. To adopt London please call Hayward Animal Shelter at: (510) 293 - 7200.



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**AUTUMN** is a beautiful 4-month-old medium hair calico. She's very sweet and friendly. Autumn is spayed, vaccinated, microchipped and FIV/FELV negative. For more information, please: email Loveallpawzrescue@gmail.com.

HOPE HOSPICE

## Dementia Behaviors Webinar

Hope Hospice in Dublin is presenting its popular Family Caregiver Education Series in the form of interactive webinars that will be presented over Zoom for the duration of the pandemic.

The next program, titled "Living With Dementia: Behaviors as Communication" will be held on Thursday December 10, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

As the conditions that cause dementia progress, communication becomes challenged and persons living with dementia increasingly rely on their behaviors to express their needs.

In this webinar, family caregivers will gain an understanding of how to assess, interpret, and respond to dementia-related behaviors in a manner that can improve communication and promote meaningful connections.

The Series is a free public service; participants do not have to have a loved one on our hospice service. To register, visit HopeHospice.com/family. For more information, call 925-829-8770.



## 5,000 Face Masks Donated

Tiburcio Vazquez Health Center, a safety-net community clinic in Hayward, recently received a donation of 5,000 face masks from the Taiwanese Chamber of Commerce of the San Francisco Bay Area through the efforts of Assemblymember Bill Quirk, shown at right with Health Center CEO Andrea Schwab-Galindo. Fremont Councilmember Teresa Keng helped direct the donation to the Southern Alameda County facility. Quirk thanked the Taiwanese Chamber, saying, "Our health clinics are the front lines of this pandemic and having these extra face masks for their medical staff and patients will make all the difference."

## 2021 CVSAN CALENDAR AND ANNUAL REPORT



Be on the lookout for the CVS San 2021 Calendar and 2019/20 Annual Report arriving soon by mail. This edition features CVS San's most valuable asset, our staff. CVS San's 2019/20 Annual Report precedes the calendar pages and offers you information about what CVS San has accomplished during this past fiscal year. We take pride in putting together this resource for the community, and hope you will benefit from it all year long.

Be sure to take our outreach survey for your chance to win free solid waste services for a year! Details can be found on page two of the Annual Report, or take the survey now at [cvsan.org/outreachsurvey](https://cvsan.org/outreachsurvey)

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# HOLIDAYS AROUND *the* TOWN

## CHP Toy Drive Underway

The annual California Highway Patrol toy drive "CHiPs for Kids" is underway. Drop off new, unopened and sealed toys for all ages that will benefit local kids, through the CV Rotary Club. Collection bins are located in several Castro Valley retail locations, including Walgreens, Rite Aid, CVS, T.J. Maxx during store hours and at our office located at 21020 Redwood Road, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## Great Bikes at Great Prices

Billy Bradford's Bad Business Model Bikes in Castro Valley will be holding a bicycle sale and fundraiser from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. this Saturday, Dec. 5th, at 19554 Jaydine St. in Castro Valley, rain or shine. All bikes are in near-perfect and ready-to-ride condition. Road bikes will go for \$125, adult bikes for \$100, and youth bikes for \$50. First come, first served, no holds. All money collected from this fundraiser goes directly to AIDS/Lifecycle to assist those living with HIV/AIDS.

## Virtual Hanukkah Celebration

Join Tri-Valley Cultural Jews for a secular humanistic menorah lighting and naming ceremony from 7 to 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 11. Bring your menorah and candles. We will also play dreidel virtually. We ask for a donation of \$10 for non-member adults. Please contact Jamie at culturaljews@gmail.com for the registration link.

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**Location:** 19554 Jaydine St. in Castro Valley  
**Weather:** RAIN or SHINE  
**Safety:** MASKS REQUIRED/ BIKES KEPT SANITIZED

**DETAILS:**  
**Road Bikes** ... \$125  
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**Youth Bikes** ... \$50

All money goes directly to AIDS/Lifecycle to assist those living with HIV/AIDS  
All bikes are in near-perfect, ready to ride condition  
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# REAL ESTATE GALLERY



There's a lot to love about this contemporary 2 bedroom, 1-1/2 bath Townhouse! The remodeled kitchen features quartz counters, recessed lighting and stainless steel appliances. Living room has upgraded flooring, stone fireplace and an abundance of natural light fills the open floor plan. The bedrooms are generous in size and complimented by the large closets and lovely upgraded bathrooms. Spacious backyard with patio, 2-car garage with epoxy coated floor and low HOA. Located on a private lane near highly-rated Castro Valley schools and close to downtown village shopping, restaurants, library, BART and freeways. Such a sweet place to call home!



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## REAL ESTATE REALITY

By Carl Medford, CRS  
Special to the Forum

GUEST COMMENTARY



## Staging to Fit Any Budget

**I**t is no secret staging a home for sale has a positive impact on price and time on the market.

While staging is optional in some parts of the country, locally it is understood and expected by both sellers and buyers.

Having watched hundreds of buyers while showing homes, I can unequivocally state staging makes a positive difference.

While becoming commonplace for listing agents to cover the cost of staging, there are still regions in the Bay Area where the seller is expected to pay. Fortunately, there is a level of staging to fit every budget. Levels 1 and 2 apply to occupied homes, levels 3 through 6 are for vacant homes.

### 1: Organizational

This is Staging 101 and includes two steps. First, the home is extensively decluttered with all personal pictures, collections, knickknacks and so on removed. The rule is "No more than 3 items on any horizontal surface." Second, the home's belongings are moved around to optimize the look and feel of the home.

### 2: Partial

This level also starts with decluttering, but includes a stager bringing in additional pieces from their inventory to upgrade the overall look of the home. This could include pictures, plants or pieces of furniture as needed.

### 3: Vignette

This is the entry level for vacant homes. Rather than bringing in extensive furniture and accents, key areas are highlighted with groupings of objects. As an example, a collection of objects on a kitchen counter or fireplace mantel.

### 4: Symbolic

Instead of using real furniture, "prop" or "faux" furniture made of plastic or cardboard is used to define a space. Rather than a moving truck pulling up with

real furniture, the stager shows up in a car with flats or bags of "furniture" that are assembled on site. For examples go to www.cubiqzusa.com.

### 5: Virtual

With the advent of COVID-19, many of us were forced to look for alternatives to staging. We turned to companies such as www.boxbrownie.com/virtual-staging - we take pictures, send them off and they are returned with furniture photoshopped in. The cost is dramatically less than full staging.

### 6: Full

This is still the gold standard, and the one that resonates the most with buyers. When they see a gorgeously staged home online, they fully anticipate being able to visit and experience the home with the staging in place.

Shakespeare stated, "All the world's a stage." Staging brings the show home.

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.

## Traumatized Apple Tree

By Buzz Bertolero  
Special to the Forum

**Q** My Apple tree was traumatized last year by black aphids. I kept cutting off the affected leaves, but the trees looked bad all summer long. I had controlled the Aphids in the past by putting a ring of the sticky stuff around the trunk. This year it didn't help at all. Would dormant spray help in creating an Aphid-free season next year?

**A** Aphids are a spring pest problem on apple trees and other fruit

trees and plants. They come in different colors; green and black are the most common.

Aphids cause the leaves to curl up like one of those Italian cookies. The leaves then dry up and remain on the tree until the fall when they drop off.

Many gardeners confuse this curly leaf with peach leaf curl, but they are not the same. Peach leaf curl is a fungus that attacks only peach and nectarine trees. Copper spray applied in the fall and in January and February is the recommended control.

Copper spray and other

types of dormant spray don't prevent aphids from returning. They are mobile and are present year-round so the barrier alone will not prevent the problem.

Your best method of controlling them is being diligent and checking trees for curly leaves in the spring as the leaves are emerging.

Once you see a few curly leaves, pick them off and spray the tree with insecticidal soap, making three applications a week apart. That prevents the problem from continuing.

I would still apply the

sticky stuff (also known as Tanglefoot or Pest Barrier). Aphids are ferried around by ants which feed on off the clear sticky residue called "honey dew." The early detection and preventive action will keep the apple tree aphid free. step-by-step pictures are great.

Buzz Bertolero is an Advanced California Certified Nursery Professional. The Dirt Gardener's website is www.dirtgardener.com and questions can be sent by email to buzz@dirtgardener.com.



## Mortgage Rates Hold Steady for the Holiday

Long-term mortgage rates were unchanged heading into last week's long holiday weekend, according to Freddie Mac's weekly nationwide survey.

The 30-year fixed-rate mortgage remained at 2.72 percent for the week ending Nov. 25. A year ago at this time, the 30-year rate averaged 3.68 percent.

Fifteen-year fixed-rate mortgage averaged 2.28 percent, also unchanged from the previous week.

Five-year hybrid adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) averaged 3.16 percent, up from 2.85 percent.

"Mortgage rates remain at record lows and while that has fueled a refinance boom, it's been driven mainly by higher income borrowers. With about 20 million borrowers eligible to refinance, lower- and middle-income borrowers are leaving money on the table by not taking advantage of low rates," said Sam Khater, Freddie Mac's Chief Economist. "On the homebuying side, demand continues to surge, and it has created a seller's market where inventory is at a record low and home prices are rising, beginning to offset the benefits of the low rates."

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# Celebrate Smart: 5 ways to Upgrade your Home Tech for the Holidays

This holiday, people around the world are getting ready for a season that looks dramatically different from past years. As millions decide to stay home, the desire to make the most out of the holiday festivities is driving people to find more creative, convenient, and memorable ways to enjoy the season and eliminate unnecessary stress.

Whether you're relaxing at home or celebrating with family, a smart home can help take care of daily tasks around the house, giving you more time to enjoy the things that matter most. Not only can smart home products enhance the holiday ambiance, but they can also simplify daily tasks and help you keep your home and family safe. These affordable devices provide the perfect blend of good cheer and peace of mind that are exactly the combination in high demand this year.

Here are five ways smart home devices can take the stress out of the season and help you enjoy a safe, relaxing holiday.

## 1. Automate holiday lights

### with smart plugs

Using an automatic timer for holiday lights is nothing new, but smart plugs take convenience to the next level. They're easy to setup and, unlike fussy old-school timers, give you greater control. With smart plugs, you can simply use your smartphone to turn on holiday lights right from the couch, without kneeling behind a tree to plug in a power cord or stepping out in the cold to turn on lights or inflatable decorations in your yard.

## 2. Upgrade to a Smart Christmas tree

If finding, transporting, and composting a live tree is too much hassle this year, consider upgrading to an artificial tree with smart lights built in. A smart Christmas tree comes with lights pre-installed and, using your smartphone or Amazon Alexa, you can easily select the lighting color, turn lights on or off, or schedule the lights to turn on at a certain time each night. Many smart Christmas trees even let you change light-

ing modes with a simple voice command like "set Christmas tree to blue," or "set Christmas tree to sparkle" to create a flawless festive mood.

## 3. Keep track of comings and goings with smart security cameras

For the holidays and beyond, one of the best investments you can make is a smart home security camera. As online shopping for everything from holiday presents to daily household essentials continues to increase, having a smart home security camera can alert you when your purchases arrive and help keep them safe.

Popular smart home security cameras like Blink Outdoor are wireless, weather-resistant, and offer up to two years of battery life, making them easy and convenient to install anywhere around your home. For indoor settings, Blink Indoor security cameras can help you check in on your home day or night with motion alerts and infrared night vision.

The full range of features

are detailed at [www.amazon.com/blink](http://www.amazon.com/blink), but their cameras also provide two-way audio and live video, so you can check in on your family, accept deliveries, and greet visitors remotely. Not only does this help encourage social distancing, it also means you stay cozy with fewer trips to the front door.

## 4. Protect against winter hazards with smart alarms

Upgrading to smart alarms is another top strategy for staying safe during the winter. You might not associate fires with winter, but house fires are actually more prevalent with the increased use of fireplaces and heaters. Smart smoke alarms alert you to problems even when you're not at home, ensuring you get help as soon as possible.

Winter also means keeping your home sealed up tight. While this saves energy and keeps you warm, it also increases the risk of carbon monoxide build-up. Smart CO detectors give you up-to-the-moment information about the air quality

in your home, allowing you to breathe easy.

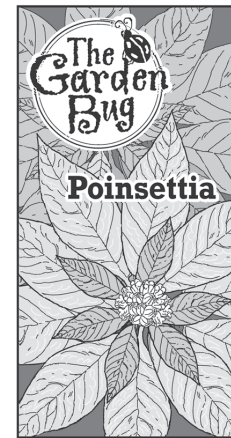
## 5. Sink into a holiday soundscape with smart speakers

Finally, smart speakers are the best choice for immersing yourself in the sounds of the holidays. People are missing the cheerful carols and soaring classical music that normally fills the air when you're out and about this time of year. Capture that feeling with smart

speakers. Use them to sync your music throughout your home, and transform it into a winter wonderland in no time.

While this winter will certainly be different, smart home devices can help encourage holiday cheer while keeping everyone safe and sound. From security cameras to dazzling lights, there's a smart solution out there that can make your holidays even brighter.

-Brandpoint



The plant called "Flor de la Noche Buena" grows in the wild as a shrub from Mexico down to South America, covering the hills with its bright red foliage. Dr. Joel Poinsett, a United States minister to Mexico in the early 1800s, was visiting an area south of Mexico City and noticed this plant's showy mid-winter color. Cuttings of it were sent to a nursery in the United States, and by 1836 the plant was widely known as the "poinsettia" and sold as a Christmas houseplant. - Brenda Weaver

Sources: [www.sundaygardener.net](http://www.sundaygardener.net), wikipedia.org

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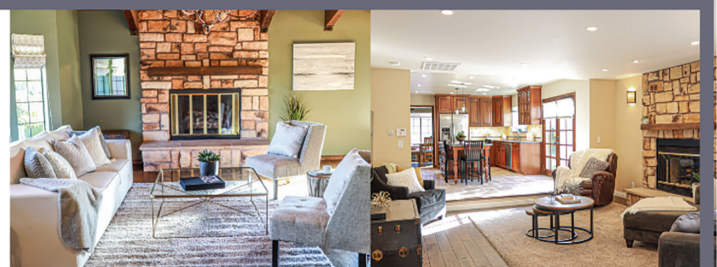


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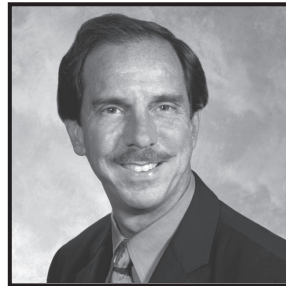
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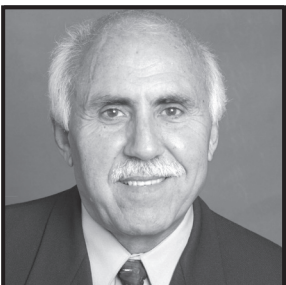
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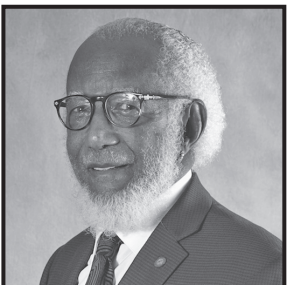
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## 5 Quick Tips for Improving the Airflow in your Home

With COVID-19 cases up in most parts of the country families are weighing the pros and cons of gathering. Experts encourage maintaining a steady flow of fresh, quality air within your home to help slow the transmission of coronavirus.

Proper air circulation is crucial in any home, because airflow regulates temperature and creates a more pleasant and safe breathing environment. By contrast, poor air circulation can actually endanger your health. In fact, the levels of indoor air pollutants are often two to five times higher than outdoor levels, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Here's how to improve the airflow in your home.

Open your windows

Only 57% percent of homeowners open their windows in the winter, according to a study conducted by Pella Windows and Doors. However, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state health departments agree - opening your windows is a simple way to help to reduce the spread of coronavirus.

"Opening windows is one of the easiest and most affordable ways to encourage air flow and limit the spread of germs, and potentially COVID-19, within



your home," said Nicolle Picray, brand communications and public relations manager at Pella Windows & Doors.

The company says the simple act of opening windows for 15-20 minutes a day, even in the winter months, can not only help to slow the transmission of COVID-19, but it can deliver a powerful lift to physical and mental health, as well as help clear homes of indoor pollutants and odors.

Turn on ceiling fans

Whenever possible, keep fresh air circulating in your home. Turning on ceiling fans can keep air moving, and combined with opening windows, can help cross-ventilation.

Check your air filter

A dirty air filter will reduce clean airflow from your home's heating and cooling system. This makes your home less comfortable, raises your energy bills and can lead to costly heat-

ing and air conditioning repairs.

Add houseplants

Put that green thumb to work. The benefits of adding houseplants to your home decor go far beyond aesthetics. Houseplants are natural air filters that purify your home. And, research shows that greenery reduces stress and creates a more tranquil and relaxed environment

Rearrange your furniture

Create a direct pathway through and around the rooms of your home, especially gathering spaces like the dining room. Make sure there isn't anything blocking air flow from the windows or covering any of the vents on your floors, walls or ceilings.

By making simple adjustments you can improve the air circulation and ventilation in your home, ensuring you - and your guests - breathe clean air.

-Brandpoint

## WEEKEND GARDENER

### Frost Protection

Freezing nighttime temperatures have already hit most parts of the East Bay. The coldest time is from 4 a.m. to sun-up. If you haven't already done so, here's what to do right away:

Move tender container plants under the eaves of a roof, on the porch, or even in the house if necessary.

Cover anything you can't move with an old sheet, a tarp or cardboard boxes. The covering should be anchored by stakes above the plant so there is an air gap between the plant and the covering. Cloth gives more protection than plastic. Remove the covering in the morning.

Mist garden plant foliage at night and again in the morning. The thin layer of water on the foliage helps to insulate the leaves. The morning sprinkling washes away the frost before the sun hits it when most of the actual damage is done.

Keep garden soil moist. Dry plants are easy victims of frost.

If a plant is damaged by frost, don't prune away the damage. Wait until the plant begins its spring growing cycle, then prune off any dead parts.

Temperatures have to drop below 26°F to damage hardy, mature plants.

## Forcing Bulbs in Containers

By Buzz Bertolero

Special to the Forum

**Q** How would I force bulbs in containers? Should a novice gardener attempt this?

**A** Forcing bulbs in a container is a gardening project for people of all ages and skills. It's simple to do with a high degree of success. Paperwhite narcissus and hyacinths are the best bulbs for forcing. Water is the primary medium, while commercial growers use sand.

You will need a shallow container, like a saucer, and polished rocks, pebbles, or gravel. The bulbs are set on the pebbles, and

water is added. You need to be sure that the water level is just below the bulb's base to avoid rotting. The bulbs are placed next to one another. Although they're loose to begin with, roots will form quickly and anchor the bulbs in the container. They can grow in direct or indirect light. You should see shoots developing within four to six weeks and flowers after that.

To extend the blooming period, stagger your planting by starting new ones every three weeks. Once they finish blooming, the bulbs are discarded. Bulbs are a storage chamber, so they recharge themselves for the following year by storing nutrients from the soil, but hat's not possible in water or sand.

Buzz Bertolero is an Advanced California Certified

Nursery Professional. The Dirt Gardener's website is [www.dirtgardener.com](http://www.dirtgardener.com) and questions can be sent by email to [buzz@dirtgardener.com](mailto:buzz@dirtgardener.com).

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### Let Caltrans Know

Editor:  
Over the last several months, I have noticed increased amounts of garbage, litter and debris alongside Highway 580 heading westbound and eastbound from San Ramon Valley Blvd. to Crow Canyon Road in Castro Valley. I would like to encourage concerned citizens to request maintenance service reports to keep pressure on Caltrans for clean highways. Apparently their resources are limited, but I feel we cannot afford to continue ignoring this growing problem. The Caltrans website is easy to use.

—Mary Fells, Castro Valley

### Stay Healthy for 2021

2020 has been quite a year: devastating fires (e.g., SCU Lightning Complex), violent protests and a record-breaking heat wave. What about the COVID-19 virus? A light shone in early November 2020: Pfizer made a 90% effective vaccine for COVID-19. Don't throw away the masks just yet! Vaccines go through safety tests which can take years and it will not be available to everyone overnight. A virus did not damage my gait, hearing and speech.

—Lori Martin, Castro Valley

### Power of the Community

Editor:  
To the Great hearts of Castro Valley, I believe in the power of this community, I believe in God and I know we will overcome Covid! In 1997 I moved back to Castro Valley. I was broken by a divorce and angry at the world. Exercise and little hope was keeping me alive. I was riding my bike up Mattox Road when a group of partying punks swerved their car towards me and yelled to scare me. I caught up to them outside the Chabot theater, where we exchanged words. Four of them jumped out of the car to confront me, and I squared off with the "mouth" in the back. Three residents jumped out of line to restrain the other three. Because of them I escaped the assault with minimal damages to my 43 year old body. "Some say the world will end in Fire, Some say in Ice," Robert Frost said. He was alluding to the apocalypse View of believers or the scientific fears like those shared by doomsday environmentalists.

Now on my third venue in Castro Valley, I have to say, neither the pandemic, nor the movements, nor the isolation, nor economic turn down will overcome the American heart! In comparison to the Plagues of the past, The Bubonic Plague, venereal disease that killed over 10 million in the middle ages or the Spanish Flu of 1918 – this is just a warning to "Love one another."

Good people are here and are the moral majority! Do not let

small differences divide us but take up the challenge ahead. In his Nobel Prize Speech, William Faulkner said in the '60s during the insanity of the Arms race, the fear of nuclear annihilation would not overcome the human Spirit. "Because man has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion, and sacrifice and endurance ... Man will endure!" We will not only survive, we will thrive.

—Frederick Spiller, Castro Valley

**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 publish anonymous or unsigned letters. Email Letters to: fredz@ebpublishing.com, or mail to: The Forum, P.O. Box 2897, Alameda, CA 94501.

### HOROSCOPE by Salomé

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- ARIES (March 21 - April 19):** You might feel that you have all the answers right now. But it might be wise to listen to other ideas before you decide to close the lid on other possibilities.
- TAURUS (April 20 - May 20):** Bovines give and expect loyalty, so it might not be easy to reconcile with someone you feel let you down. Why not ask a neutral party to set up a clear-the-air meeting?
- GEMINI (May 21 - June 20):** Anticipating the holidays with family and friends fuels your must-do Gemini energies. But try to pace yourself so you'll be up for whatever comes along later.
- CANCER (June 21 - July 22):** More background information might come through regarding a decision you expect to make. Be sure to check the source carefully before you move.
- LEO (July 23 - August 22):** The strong, nurturing nature of the Lion comes through this week as you reach out to family and friends in need of your warm and loving support.
- VIRGO (August 23 - Sept. 22):** A relationship that has almost totally unraveled could be close to being restored with more effort on your part to be more patient and less judgmental.
- LIBRA (Sept. 23 - October 22):** Your sense of fair play is strong this week, which can cause a problem with a longtime relationship. But in the end, you'll know what decision to make.
- SCORPIO (October 23 - November 21):** You might not know all the facts behind an unwelcome development, so keep that Scorpion temper in check and resist lashing out at anyone.
- SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21):** This is a good time to reinforce relationships -- family, friends, colleagues -- that might have been overlooked in recent years.
- CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19):** Family situations continue to thrive. Business associations also improve. Some holiday plans might have to be shifted. Be flexible.
- AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18):** Avoid any influence of negative energy in this week's aspect by not allowing small problems to grow into large ones. Work them out immediately.
- PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20):** A friend might need advice on how to deal with a challenge to his or her moral values. And who better than you to give the honest answer? Good luck.

## Obituaries

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CASTRO VALLEY FORUM OBITUARIES may be emailed to: obits@ebpublishing.com or faxed to: 510-483-4209. Include a phone number. Brief notices are published free. For help, call Patrick Vadnais at 510-614-1558

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### Harold Scott Lewis

May 13, 1939 ~ November 20, 2020

Hal spent his early years in Southern California. As a young man, he moved to the Bay Area and enjoyed living in Castro Valley for the past 35 years.

Hal died at home with his loving wife Joan Lewis at his side. The cause of his death was metastatic cancer. Hal was truly beloved by all who knew him, but especially by his daughter Sue Gill, his son Mike Lewis and his grandsons Aaron and Ethan Lewis.

Hal served in the Air Force in Hawaii where he was a plane crew chief. He was a general contractor and one of the founding partners of Blymyer Engineers in Alameda.

In retirement, Hal volunteered for more than 15 years on the USS Hornet Museum in Alameda.

He was on the Aircraft Restoration Team and was very proud of the work he did to return WWII aircraft to pristine quality! He also volunteered with the Alameda County Food Bank delivering food to residents through the county.

Hal was an avid sailor, small plane pilot and RV traveler! His ashes will be spread in the Bay with his family saying goodbye to our dear guy!!



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## Be 'Tax Wise' When Making Large Gifts

*Q: My wife and I are considering making large gifts to our two children and four grandchildren, and we would like to do so in a way that is "tax wise". Do you have any advice for us?*

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

A. Yes. Many people mistakenly believe that one cannot gift more than \$15,000 per year/person without incurring a gift tax. Not so. In fact, an individual can actually currently gift more than \$11 million during lifetime without incurring a gift tax. Here is the way gift taxes work:

### Annual Exclusion Gifts: No Gift Tax Return Required:

1) \$15,000 Per Year: You and your spouse can each gift up to \$15,000 per year per recipient without the need to file a Gift Tax Return.

Such gifts are called Annual Exclusion Gifts and you can make such gifts to as many individual persons as you wish each year, provided that you make only one such annual gift to each recipient.

2) "Doubling Up": If you and your wife are in a position to do so, together you can actually double that amount for each gift recipient. So, together, you could gift a total of \$30,000 to each recipient for a total of \$180,000 to your loved ones (\$15,000 x 2 donors x 6 recipients), again without the need to file a Gift Tax Return or incur any actual gift tax.

3) Year End Straddle: On or after January 1, 2021, you and your wife could do the same thing once again, as you would then be in a different tax year.

So, over the course of a period as short as a calendar week – provided that the week straddles both the last days of this year and the early days of next year – the two of you could gift a total of \$360,000 (\$180,000 x 2 Donors) to your 6 recipients without the need to file a Gift Tax Return or use any of your lifetime exemptions. I call this strategy the Year-End Gift Straddle.

### Gifts Above Annual Exclusion: Gift Tax Return Required

1) Lifetime Exemption: If you choose to make gifts above the Annual Exclusion Amount ("AEA"), then you can still make the gift tax free by using a portion of your Lifetime Exemption (also called the "Unified Credit").

see **GIFTS** on back page

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## Keeping a Watchful Eye on an Aging Parent

*Q: Can you recommend any services or technology that help me monitor my elderly mother who lives alone? Since the coronavirus pandemic started last March, my sister and I have noticed that my mom's health has slipped a bit, so we would like to find something that helps us keep tabs on her when we're not around.*

**By Jim Miller**  
SPECIAL TO THE FORUM

A: Depending on how closely you want to monitor your mother, and what she's comfortable with as well, there are check-in call services along with some new monitoring technology devices you can turn to for help. Here are several to consider.

### Check-In Calls

If you just want a simple check to make sure your mom is OK every day, consider signing her up with a daily check-in call service program. These are telephone reassurance programs run by police or sheriff's departments in hundreds of counties across the country and are usually provided free of charge.

Here's how they work. A computer automated phone system would call your mom at a designated time each day to check-in. If she answers, the system would as-

sume everything is OK. But if she didn't pick up or if the call goes to voice mail after repeated tries, you (or her other designee) would get a notification call.

If you are not reachable, calls are then made to backup people who've also agreed to check on your mom if necessary.

The fallback is if no one can be reached, the police or other emergency services personnel will be dispatched to her home.

To find out if this service is available in your mom's community, call her local police department's nonemergency number. If it's not offered, there are other organizations or companies you can turn to that provide similar services.

One that I love that's completely free to use is Mon Ani (monami.io, 650-267-2474), which offers a volunteer phone bank that provides phone or video calls daily, weekly or anything in between. The volunteer will connect with your mom, provide companionship and make sure everything is OK. And, they'll let you know if they detect a problem.

### Monitoring Technology

Technology also offers a variety of new ways to help you keep an eye on your mom when you can't be there.

One nifty new option is the Electronic Caregiver's (electronic-caregiver.com) "Premier" product, which is a wearable wrist device that provides activity monitoring, a 24/7 emergency help button, medication reminders and a GPS locator so you can determine your mom's whereabouts at any time.

It's also linked to a family caregiver app to keep you and other loved ones in the loop. The device is free with a monthly subscription that costs \$40 to \$60 a month, depending on the level of monitoring.

If your mom is primarily homebound, another option to consider is a sensor-monitoring system like Caregiver Smart Solutions (caregiversmartsolutions.com).

This uses small sensors (not cameras) placed in key areas of your mom's home to track her activities – everything from whether she used the coffee pot to how much she's watching TV – and will let you know if something out of the ordinary is happening. For instance, if she went to the bathroom and didn't leave, it could indicate a fall or other emergency.

You can also check up on her patterns anytime you want through the system's website or app. And for additional protection, it offers emergency call buttons that can be placed around the house. Caregiver Smart Solutions starts at \$99 for their activity sensors, plus a \$29 monthly service fee.

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## ATHLETE OF THE WEEK

### Andrew Lonsdale

Our Athlete of the Week is Andrew Lonsdale, a Castro Valley High School alumni who was recently named Athletic Director at Liberty High School in Brentwood, Calif.

Lonsdale played baseball for Castro Valley High School, then Cal State Monterey Bay.

Before coming to Liberty, Lonsdale coached baseball at Dublin High School. His hobbies include golf, mountain biking, and running.



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# SUSTAINABLE HOME

## Pack Zero Waste Essentials



### Practice sustainability anywhere!

Before heading out of the house, pack zero waste essentials to help you reduce waste while on the go.

**Cloth napkins** can be used instead of single-use paper napkins.

A **reusable water bottle** can hold more than just water! Fill it with your favorite juice, tea, or coffee before leaving the house.

Use **reusable take-out containers** for leftovers from restaurants.

**Reusable utensils** are a zero waste substitute for single-use plastic utensils.

Check out CVSan's 2020 Calendar for more tips on cultivating a sustainable home, available online at [cvsan.org/car](http://cvsan.org/car).



Visit [cvsan.org](http://cvsan.org) for an updated schedule of all CVSan events.

Visit [selectmyxpath.org](http://selectmyxpath.org) for more zero waste tips.

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## BWA Celebrates 35th Anniversary Socially Distanced at Lake of Pines

This year brought with it many challenges but through it all the BWA Brethren have stayed true to their commitment to one another.

Scott Christiansen, Scott Clare, Mike Engeldinger, Scott Paulsen, Dwight Roberts, Royce Valencia knew that the big celebration they were planning to commemorate their 35th Anniversary would have to be dialed back.

Due to new "Shelter in Place" regulations the guys knew they would have to choose a venue already accessible to them.

Lake of the Pines! To insure that the minimum safety guidelines would be met the brethren spread themselves out over three residences. Dwight's Family Home "The Cedar Box", Royce's "Bait and Tackle" and Scott Paulsen's "Tee Box", all nicknamed appropriately by their families who frequent them.

Unfortunately BWA member Mike Engeldinger was unable to attend as he chose to protect his family and friends by self quarantining in his basement.

In honor of his sacrifice a toast was made in his honor as all of the attendees wore masks and honored the social distancing guidelines set forth by the state.

Events were limited to a Golf Tournament at Auburn Valley Country Club where Scott Clare unseated 3-time winner Scott



PHOTO COURTESY OF DUSTIN ROBERTS

**'The Brethren' pose for a shot at Lake of the Pines.**

Paulsen, shooting a remarkable low net score of 64. Member Scott Christiansen shot well all day with a low gross score of 85 but unfortunately never had a shot playing blind bogey.

In addition to Golf the crew was able to put together a small fishing derby. In an effort to maintain social distancing guide lines each boat had a two man limit.

Royce Valencia and Scott Clare won with a 13oz bag. Dwight and Scott gave it their all but the fish seemed to be distancing themselves as well.

All in all it was a weekend to remember even if they couldn't celebrate the way they planned all that mattered in the end was they were together, well 6 feet from each other, for their 35th Anniversary!

## Gifts: Lifetime Exemption in Further Detail

*continued from page 15*

That Lifetime Exemption is currently \$11.58 million per person for U.S. citizens, and increases to \$11.7 million per person next year. AEA gifts do not count against this exemption, and can be made in addition to Lifetime Exemption gifts.

Also, by making a timely election after the death of a spouse, the surviving spouse can opt to preserve the deceased spouse's unused Lifetime Exemption for the survivor's own later use, thereby effectively doubling it. This is called "portability".

2) Gift Tax Return: To the extent that your gifts exceed the An-

nual Exclusion Amount, you must file a Gift Tax Return even though no actual gift tax would be due, so long as less than the Lifetime Exemption.

Reason: the IRS wants to track your use of your lifetime exemption, so that it knows how much you have left to use upon death.

Example: if you used \$1 million of your lifetime exemption to make excess gifts during life, then your remaining exemption to apply against estate taxes upon death would be \$1 million less.

Cautions: Before making large gifts, be sure that you can afford to do so. Lastly, if there is a pos-

sibility that either of you may need to apply for a Medi-Cal subsidy for nursing home care in the near future, you should consult a professional with special knowledge about the Medi-Cal program before making those gifts: Gift transfers may adversely affect your ability to qualify for a Medi-Cal subsidy unless those gifts are handled in a very special manner.

*Gene L. Osofsky is an Elder Law and Estate Planning attorney in the East Bay. Visit his website at [www.LawyerForSeniors.com](http://www.LawyerForSeniors.com). He wishes to thank Harry Margolis, Esq., of MA for permission to revise and publish this article.*

FILED OCTOBER 15, 2020  
MELISSA WILK County Clerk  
ALAMEDA COUNTY By-----, Deputy  
FILE NO. 573795

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Sections 17900-17930

The name of the business(es): Davis & Lohse Fine Cabinetry located at 35263 Fircrest St. Suite G, Newark, CA 94560, in Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Plastics Unlimited, Inc., 35263 Fircrest St. Suite G, Newark, CA 94560. This business is conducted by a corporation. This business commenced N/A.

/s/ Plastics Unlimited, Inc. This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.

Expires OCTOBER 15, 2025  
OCT 28, NOV 4, 11, 18, 2020  
297-CVF

FILED OCTOBER 20, 2020  
MELISSA WILK County Clerk  
ALAMEDA COUNTY By-----, Deputy  
FILE NO. 573923

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Sections 17900-17930

The name of the business(es): WynnesomeCreations, located at 4194 Krolap Road, Castro Valley, CA 94546, in Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Wynne Kong Coughtry, 4194 Krolap Road, Castro Valley, CA 94546. This business is conducted by an individual. This business commenced 07/12/2016.

/s/ Wynne Kong Coughtry This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.

Expires OCTOBER 20, 2025  
NOV 11, 18, 25, DEC 02, 2020  
300-CVF

FILED OCTOBER 27, 2020  
MELISSA WILK County Clerk  
ALAMEDA COUNTY By-----, Deputy  
FILE NO. 574097

### FICTITIOUS BUSINESS NAME STATEMENT

Pursuant to Business and Professions Code Sections 17900-17930

The name of the business(es): Animal Haus located at 4804 Seaview Avenue, Castro Valley, CA 94546, in Alameda County, is hereby registered by the following owner(s): Suzanne Epstein, 4804 Seaview Avenue, Castro Valley, CA 94546. This business is conducted by an individual. This business commenced 10/21/2020.

/s/ Suzanne Epstein This statement was filed with the County Clerk of Alameda County on date indicated by file stamp above.

Expires OCTOBER 27, 2025  
NOV 11, 18, 25, DEC 02, 2020  
299-CVF