

CASTRO VALLEY FORUM

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SERVING CASTRO VALLEY SINCE 1989

YEAR 28

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2016

NO. 51

INSIDE YOUR FORUM

OUR TOWN



Give Us a Sign

Alameda County wants to hear from public about a new Castro Valley sign

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LIVING



Holiday Roast

Nothing quite makes the holidays season complete like a roast

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SENIORS



Home for Good

Tips for how to create an age-friendly home to 'Stay in place' as you age

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PHONE: (510) 537-1792

A Special Christmas

With sirens blaring, Santa arrived by fire truck last week for a very special Christmas party for kids and their families who are living in local shelters and other housing programs.

More than 50 children and 20 adults were at the Castro Valley Adult School to greet the Jolly Old Elf, as the Castro Valley Rotary Club hosted its annual special Christmas celebration in the school's multipurpose room.

Each child received a personal gift and words of encouragement from Santa. The gifts were provided through the California Highway Patrol's Chips for Kids toy collection program overseen by CHP Officer Dan Jacowitz and secured by CV Rotarian Ceta Dochterman.

Members of Girl Scout Troop 30528 (Ellie Moore, Juliana Vinciguerra and Shannon Murray) assisted Luc Dochterman organizing the gift distribution.

Joyce "The Clown" Miyoha entertained the guests and "Elf Dr. Heidi" (Hausauer) assisted Santa distributing the gifts.

Dinner was prepared by CVS General Manager Roland Williams and staff members of the Sanitary District.

see **CHRISTMAS** on page 15



PHOTOS BY MIKE KADY

Santa Claus is welcomed with plenty of hugs from the kids as he steps off a fire truck last Tuesday evening at the Castro Valley Rotary's annual Christmas party for families living in local shelters.

It's the Most Traveled Holiday Season Ever!

The upcoming Christmas and New Year's holiday season will see record-breaking travel in California, beginning this Friday, Dec. 23, and continuing through Monday, Jan. 2, 2017.

The latest travel survey from AAA Northern California predicts that more than 12.4 million state residents will celebrate the end-of-year festivities with an excursion out of town, and mostly on the state's freeways.

"More Californians will travel to celebrate the holidays than ever before," said AAA spokesperson Cynthia Harris. "Rising incomes and a desire to gather with family and friends should make this the most traveled holiday season ever recorded."

AAA estimates approximately

10.9 million of those California travelers will drive to their holiday destinations.

The air travel industry will experience an increase of 4.8% over last year, as more than one million Californians are expected to fly.

Airfares for the top 40 domestic flight routes are six percent lower this year, falling to an average of \$204 per round trip ticket for the top U.S. air routes. Daily car rental rates will average \$66, slightly lower than last year's rates.

More than 400,000 state residents are expected to travel on boats or trains.

According to vacation bookings, mostly warm weather destinations top the list of most popular holiday destinations, including Las Vegas, Orlando and San Diego.

BANQUET NEXT MONTH

Eden Award Winners for 2016 Named

The Castro Valley Eden Area Chamber of Commerce has announced the winners of the 2016 Eden Awards.

- First Responder of the Year: Sgt. Bret Scheuller, Alameda County Sheriff's Office
- Castro Valley Teacher of the Year: Lee Ann Chinn, Canyon Middle School
- San Lorenzo Teacher of the Year: Monique Coughran, San Lorenzo High School
- Volunteer of the Year: Aaron Freitas, founder of Produce 101
- Business Person of the Year: Satinder Grewal, Aroma Cuisine of India

"Choosing the winners proved to be a difficult task, after an overwhelming response from the community calling for nominations," said Chamber Manager Ashley Strasburg. "Members of the nomination committee would like to thank everyone who participated in the process of nominating and selecting this year's winners."

The nominees will be recognized on Saturday, Jan. 28, at the Eden Awards banquet that will be held at Redwood Canyon Event Center.

For more info about this event or to purchase tickets, please visit www.edenarea-chamber.com or call 510-537-5300.



PHOTO BY LINDA SANDSMARK

Long Lines at the Post Office

Lines at the Castro Valley Post Office were already long last week. Tomorrow some 30 million packages will be delivered nationwide, the biggest delivery day of the year. The Postal Service has hired more than 35,000 seasonal workers to help process and deliver what is expected to be a 12 percent increase in volume over last year.



PHOTO BY LINDA SANDSMARK

Alameda County Sheriff's deputies block Grove Way during investigation of the slaying of longtime resident Andrea St. John.

Sheriff's Office Investigating Homicide, Fire on Grove Way

The woman who was discovered dead in a fire at her home on Grove Way last week was a homicide victim, according to the Alameda County Sheriff's Office.

The body of Andrea St. John, 59, was found in her burning

home on the 1800 block of Grove Way just before 3 a.m. on Dec. 13. During the investigation of the one-alarm blaze, authorities determined St. John had been murdered and the fire set apparently to hide evidence of the crime.

The body was badly burned and covered in debris, according to County Sheriff's Sgt. Ray Kelly, who said the fire looked to be set to destroy forensic evidence.

St. John, an optician, lived in her Grove Way home for 30 years and raised two daughters there with her husband. She was widowed earlier this year.

Kelly said an autopsy concluded

that St. John was murdered but did not disclose the manner of her death or a possible motive. No arrests have yet been made.

In a statement released through the sheriff's office, St. John's family remembered her as a devoted mother and grandmother and generous member of the community, calling her loss "unbearable."

Authorities are asking anyone living in the area who has a security camera to review footage from their home video system from the hours of 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. on Dec. 12 and 13. If you have any information, call 510-667-3636.

—by Amy Sylvestri

CORRECTION:

In last week's Page One article, "A Whole New Era for Vocational Education," the 6th sentence, that began, "Castro Valley students on the south side of Highway 238..." should have read "...on the south side of I-580..."

Castro Valley Weather Dec. 21 - 25, 2016



Wednesday
Sunny
High 63° Low 58°



Thursday
Mostly Sunny
High 61° Low 45°



Friday
Rain
High 54° Low 35°



Saturday
Partly Cloudy
High 52° Low 34°



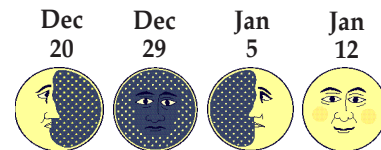
Sunday
Partly Sunny
High 53° Low 34°

Almanac



Past Week's Rain: 01.58
Season To Date: 10.91
Normal To Date: 07.27
Season Average: 21.22

Moon Phases



Sun sets at 4:54 p.m. today, rises at 7:22 a.m. Thursday.

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East Bay Regional Park District Seeks Input From the Public for its Park Emergency Plan

The East Bay Regional Park District is seeking the public's help in creating a long-term guide in preparation for such emergencies as earthquakes, wildfires, floods, landslides, droughts and other natural disasters within the 120,000-acre district.

Comments and suggestions for this Local Hazard Mitigation Plan will be taken at a public workshop

scheduled from 10 a.m. until noon on Monday, Jan. 23, at the Trudeau Training Center, 11500 Skyline Blvd. in Oakland.

The plan, funded by a \$100,000 grant from FEMA, will address ways to protect such District assets as Temescal Dam, the visitor centers, drinking water systems, Tide-water Boating Center, Shellmound sites and the Tilden Carousel.

Any person or group that wants to receive updates on the plan should contact the East Bay Regional Park District. The final draft of the plan will be submitted to FEMA in early 2017.

For more information, visit www.ebparks.org/about/planning/#FEMA-Local or contact Jeff Rasmussen at 510-544-2130 or JRasmussen@ebparks.org.

New Technology Means No More Back and Leg Pain for San Leandro Man

Technology Now Available in Pleasanton.. And It's Remarkably Affordable...

Poor Max! He has been complaining of back pain that radiates to his right leg for the longest time. He would feel all kinds of sensations on his leg like tingling, pin pricks and numbness.

"I sought medical attention from my Orthopedic doctor. I have tried steroid shots, taking pain medication, have gone to Physical Therapy, Acupuncture and Chiropractic services" said Max.

Fortunately, Max went to see Jerry Hsieh at Intero Chiropractic in Pleasanton. Jerry has helped hundreds of back pain and sciatica patients. He was one of the first in the United States to invest in technology that provides an extremely accurate diagnosis of the back pain.

The technology helps Jerry and his team pinpoint the cause of the back and leg pain. Using this information, Jerry puts into action a treatment program.

Max from San Leandro Gets Back to Enjoying Life

Max is now fully back to enjoying his life. No more back pain and discomfort. His life is back to normal. All thanks to the new technology found at Intero Chiropractic. And Max from San Leandro is not alone.

One patient wrote ...

"He relieved my back pain and symptoms after just one visit."

Another patient wrote ...

"I was shocked that after the first 2 months I was completely pain free. It was amazing how different this type of structural chiropractic care was. Dr. Jerry, I can honestly say has made my quality of life so much better!"

Suzanne from San Leandro had sciatica so bad that she had a lot of pain in her leg, knee and foot for over six months and the pain was becoming unbearable.

Her doctor tried to treat her with medication which initially took the pain away, but came back after 2 days which made her anxious and unable to sleep.

"When my doctor wanted to prescribe another medication for my anxiousness I knew I needed to try a more holistic approach. That is when I found Dr. Jerry at Intero Chiropractic. Now, just one month later, the pain in my leg is about 70-80% gone. I am so glad I found you!!

Hundreds of Patients are No Longer Suffering from Back and Leg Pain

Jerry and his team have helped hundreds of patients deal with the back and leg pain associated with Sciatica. And the number will increase as it becomes even easier to treat Sciatica — thanks to the new technology.

The team at Intero Chiropractic LOVE helping patients. Many patients were told by their GP, "there's nothing I can really do for you."

Yet Jerry's patients get back to their "normal" lives quickly. That's the power of the new technology at Intero Chiropractic.

Why Do People Visit Jerry and His Team?

Here are 8 reasons... based on my research speaking directly with their patients.

1. New technology brings relief in days... fast results.
2. Average 88% success rate.
3. No addictive pain-killers.
4. No surgery.
5. Proven results... hundreds of people helped in just one clinic.
6. Amazingly affordable.
7. It's easy to see one of Jerry's team and get on their schedule quickly.
8. Get back to enjoying your life on your terms.

It's Important to Start Your Treatment NOW

People who are experiencing even moderate back and leg pain should go to Intero Chiropractic immediately.

"After a certain point, it becomes harder to treat certain conditions, including Sciatica," said Jerry. "So it's vital to start treatment right away."

The treatment program usually provides relief within a few days. The first step is the initial appointment with Jerry and his team.

Initial Appointment Only \$20... Save \$80. Offer is Only Available for a Limited Time.

For a limited time, Intero Chiropractic is offering his initial consultation for just \$20. The fee is usually \$100. So you save \$80.

Here's what you receive.

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- A complete neuro-muscular examination using their new technology.
- Technical and biological analysis of the problem.
- A full follow-up report.
- Full personalized treatment program with no surgery and no prescription drugs.

They only have a limited number of these appointments available. So it's important to call right now.

Take These Next Steps for YOUR Health...

- Phone (925) 255 5805 right now.
- Schedule your \$20 new patient evaluation (a \$100 value).
- Cut out this article and take it to your appointment for the discount.
- Get ready to say goodbye to chronic pain!

Treatment programs are extremely affordable and payment plans are available. Phone (925) 255 5805 and mention discount code LOS49BPSM1.

A Possible New Sign For CV?

Wary of starting another "sign" controversy in Castro Valley, the Alameda County Arts Commission wants to hear from as many people as possible about a new, local Community Identifier Project.

The project involves designing and painting the town's name with other design elements on freeway overpasses in Castro Valley, and in San Lorenzo and Ashland-Cherryland as well.

The commission is inviting all community members who are interested, to take part in a survey and also to apply to serve on a committee that will select the artists and designs.

The overall goal is to "create community gateway markers that help support a positive and welcoming environment for both the community and visitors," according to a commission press release.

Practicing, professional artists will be selected through an open competitive process to design and paint the community identifiers. It will involve community feedback as well as reviews by local groups, Arts Commission members, the Board of Supervisors and Caltrans.

Community members are invited to respond to a short community survey available online at tinyurl.com/ztqzvan. The responses see **SIGN** on page 15



PHOTOS BY EDWARD GERVASONI

Fatal Sunday Fire

A woman died in a fire at her townhouse in the 20000 block of San Miguel Ave. this past Sunday morning. The victim, identified as Jacqueline Burns, 51, was carried from a second story bathroom (above). Paramedics were unable to resuscitate her. The two-alarm fire, reported just after 6:15 a.m., was only yards away from Alameda County Fire Station 25 (flag pole below right). It was extinguished within 20 minutes, according to department spokesperson Aisha Knowles who said a neighboring apartment building was temporarily evacuated and other nearby residents were ordered to shelter in place. The cause of the fire is under investigation.



SHERIFF'S REPORTS

COMPILED BY MICHAEL SINGER • SPECIAL TO THE FORUM



Hospital Trouble

Saturday, December 17: at 5:11 a.m., Sheriff's deputies arrested a 43-year-old man from Baxter, Minnesota on suspicion of failing to leave Eden Medical Center after being asked to leave by security. The man was on the campus but causing a commotion which prompted staff to call for security. The man was handcuffed and taken into custody.

Public Intoxication

Saturday, December 17: at 12:45 a.m., a 56-year-old man from Hayward was arrested on suspicion of public intoxication. Deputies caught up with the man at a fast food restaurant on Redwood Road near Redwood Court after a store manager called to complain about the man bothering his staff. The man also was wanted as part of a warrant issued for his arrest. The man was taken to Santa Rita Jail pending \$2,500 in bail.

He Fought the Law

Saturday, December 17: at 3:04 a.m., deputies arrested a 19-year-old man from Danville on suspicion of presenting a false ID to an officer and resisting arrest. The man was hanging outside a health care business on Stanton Avenue near La Don Court when deputies approached him for questioning. The man flashed the false ID and refused to cooperate. Deputies took the man into custody.

Driving Drugged and Drunk

Saturday, December 17: at 1:42 a.m., a 17-year-old boy from Castro Valley was attested on suspicion of driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol. Deputies stopped the teen for a traffic violation in front of a business on Redwood Road near Lessley Avenue. The boy failed his field sobriety test and was taken into custody.

Illegal Narcotics

Friday, December 16: at 7:10 p.m., deputies arrested a 45-year-old man with no permanent address on suspicion of possession of illegal narcotics and drug paraphernalia. The man was hanging outside a fast-food restaurant on Strobbridge Avenue near the Boulevard when deputies approached him and discovered his stash. The man also had a warrant issued for his arrest. Deputies took the man to Santa Rita Jail pending \$5,000 in bail.

Burglar Tools

Thursday, December 15: at 10:05 p.m., a 42-year-old man from Castro Valley was arrested on suspicion of possession of burglar tools. The man also had a warrant issued for his capture. Deputies were dispatched to a mobile home park on Castro Valley Boulevard near Marshall Street to serve the warrant when they discovered the suspect. The man was taken to Santa Rita Jail without incident and held on \$50,000 bail.

Park and Drink

Thursday, December 15: at 8:27 a.m., deputies arrested a 46-year-old man from Hayward on suspicion of public intoxication. The man was parked outside the Park & Ride commuter parking area on Center Street near Grove Way when deputies noticed him acting suspiciously. The man failed his field sobriety test and was taken into custody.

Refused a Breathalyzer

Thursday, December 15: at 11:50 a.m., a 40-year-old man with no permanent address was arrested on suspicion of public intoxication, possession of illegal drug paraphernalia, and resisting arrest. Deputies were called to a drug store on Castro Valley Boulevard near Marshall Street after a store manager called about a suspicious person in the store. The man refused to take a test to assess his sobriety. Deputies took the man into custody.

Suspended License

Thursday, December 15: at 9:30 p.m., deputies arrested a 38-year-old woman from San Francisco on suspicion of driving with a suspended license. The woman was traveling on Lake Chabot Road near Congress Way when deputies pulled her over. The woman was also wanted as part of a warrant issued for her arrest. Deputies took see **REPORTS** on page 15

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CHANUKAH Celebration on The Boulevard!

Monday, December 26 5:00 PM

at the **CASTRO VALLEY CREEK** (on Castro Valley Blvd. near Fremont Bank)

With the Participation of Dignitaries, including Alameda County Supervisor **NATE MILEY**

- Latkes!
- Doughnuts!
- Dreidels & Coins!
- Music & Dancing!
- Arts & Crafts!

FREE OF CHARGE!

Special Show! The 'Red Panda' Chinese Acrobats will perform!

CHANUKAH Celebration & Public Menorah Lighting

Wednesday, December 28 5:00 PM

at **SAN LEANDRO CITY HALL PLAZA** 901 E 14th St, San Leandro

With the Participation of City Officials & Dignitaries

- Latkes & Doughnuts!
- Dreidels & Coins!
- Live Music!
- Arts & Crafts!

FREE OF CHARGE!

CHANUKAH Wonderland!

AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Thursday, December 29 4:00 PM

at the **PALOMARES HILLS CLUB HOUSE** 6811 Villareal Dr, Castro Valley, CA 94552

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Community Calendar

Sunday / Monday, December 25-26 Christmas Schedules

- **Government:** Christmas will be observed as a federal, state, county and city holiday on Monday, Dec. 26. Except for emergency services, all government offices will be closed. The U.S. Postal Service, however, will be making some package deliveries.
- **Stores, Offices, Restaurants:** Some supermarkets, restaurants and pharmacies will be open, but most of those will be operating on a shortened schedule, so plan ahead for food and medical needs. All banks and nearly all business offices, including the Forum office in San Leandro, will be closed on Monday, Dec. 26.
- **Public Transit:** BART trains and AC Transit buses will operate on a normal Sunday and Monday schedule. For other transit schedules (ferries, etc.), visit transit.511.org/schedules/holiday.aspx
- **Garbage Collection:** Recycling, organics, and garbage collection services will occur as scheduled by Waste Management of Alameda County, Inc. (WMAC). For solid waste service questions, please call WMAC at (510) 537-5500 (residential) or (510) 613-8700 (commercial/business). WMAC offices, the 98th Avenue Cashier, Hayward Pay Station, and Call Center will be open on Friday, December 23rd and Monday, December 26th.
- **Castro Valley Sanitary District (CVSan)** offices will be closed Friday, Dec. 23, through Monday, Dec. 26. Call 510-506-5821 for sewer emergencies. For information regarding CVSan services and programs, visit www.cvsan.org.

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2060 Washington Ave., San Leandro 94577
Corporate Address: P.O. Box 2897, Alameda, CA 94501
Tel: 510-537-1792 • Fax: 510-814-9691

Fred Zehnder, Editor & Publisher
fredz@ebpublishing.com

Claudette E. Morrison, Business Mgr.
cm@ebpublishing.com

Howard Morrison, Assoc. Publisher
howardm@ebpublishing.com

Patrick Vadnais, Classified Ads / Obituaries
patrickv@ebpublishing.com

Helen Burkett, Advertising Design Mgr.
helenb@ebpublishing.com

Mary Florence, Advertising Sales
861-3270 mpominville4582@aol.com

Moxie Morrison, Layout Design
moxmore@yahoo.com

Linda Nakhai, Advertising Sales
915-1513 lnakhai@comcast.net

Contributors:

Amy Sylvestri, News
amys@ebpublishing.com
510-614-1561

Thomas Lorentzen
Winda Shimizu
Linda Sandsmark

Jim Carrizo, Sports
jimcvsports@gmail.com
510-967-3759

Linette Escobar
Terry Liebowitz

Trevin Smith
Simon Wong

Carl Medford
Michael Singer

Submissions to The Forum

To submit Calendar listings or news stories for possible publication, send information by the prior Friday in an email, or attach a document with photos to: fredz@ebpublishing.com, or fax information to 510-814-9691.

Monday, December 19: School Board Meeting

The Castro Valley Board of Education will hold a regular open meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday at the School District Headquarters, 4400 Alma Avenue. For the agenda, visit: bit.ly/CVUSDBBoardMeetings

Tuesday, December 27: Hanukkah Sing-Along

Join a sing-along at a special concert of classic Hanukkah songs from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Dec. 27. Master of Ceremonies Mikel Estrin will play mandolin and clarinet joining Josh Cohen on violin and vocals, Martin Gross on guitar and vocals, Jawxillion Loeb on guitar, Cary Nasatir on percussion and Ralph Sklar on vocals and guitar. No tickets are required for this free library event.

Saturday, December 31: Ambrosia New Year's Eve Concert

Say goodbye to 2016 and welcome in the New Year with the six members of '70s prog rockers "Ambrosia," well-known for their radio hits and multiple Grammy nominations, presented by Curtain Call Performing Arts at San Leandro's Historic BAL Theatre on Dec. 31. Smash Hits include "Biggest Part Of Me," "How Much I Feel," and "Holdin' On To Yesterday." Two shows – at 7:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Get rickets now (\$50, \$60, \$100) at www.BALTheatre.com! VIP tickets include a Meet and Greet.

Tuesday, January 3: CV Sanitary District Meeting

Castro Valley Sanitary District (CVSan) will hold its monthly Board Meeting at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 3 in CVSan's Board Room, 21040 Marshall Street. Visit cvsan.org/BoardAandM for the agenda.

Friday, January 6: Eden Area Village

Eden Area Village is developing a non-profit membership based neighborhood "Village" that will help people in the Castro Valley, Hayward, and the San Lorenzo areas stay in their homes as they age. Public outreach meetings are held the first Friday of each month at 2 p.m. at Hayward City Hall. Next meeting is Friday, Jan. 6.

Saturday, January 7: Getting Published

You wrote a book – now what? Four local writers will share how they navigated the publishing world at 11 a.m. on Jan. at the Castro Valley Library. Learn how they have worked with agents and publishers to get their work to bookstore and library shelves. You'll leave with a wide range of perspectives on the business of being an author and how to keep growing as a writer. Featured writers are: poet and fiction writer Giovanna Capone; Karin Kallmaker author of lesbian fiction; mystery writer Camille Minichino; and Mark Cotta Vaz author of movie companions. No tickets are required for this free library event.

REGULAR GOVERNMENT MEETINGS

• Castro Valley Municipal Advisory Council (MAC) meets on land-use issues on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month, and holds general purpose meetings on most 3rd Mondays. Meetings are at 6 p.m. at the Castro Valley Library Chabot Room, 3600 Norbridge Avenue.

• Castro Valley School Board usually meets at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month at 4400 Alma Ave.

• Alameda County Board of Supervisors meets every Tuesday at 10:45 a.m. in the Supervisors Chambers at the County Administration Bldg., 1221 Oak St. in Oakland.

Arts & Entertainment

CASTRO VALLEY CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Tickets for CFA events listed below are available online at www.cvartsfoundation.org; or at the Center Box Office, 19501 Redwood Road, Thursdays and Fridays 3-5 p.m. phone 889-8961; or at the CV Adult School, 4430 Alma Ave.

● **"Home for the Holidays,"** the Castro Valley Adult & Career Education Community Band's free holiday winter concert, will be presented at 7:30 p.m. this evening, Dec. 21, featuring songs of the season conducted by Kathy Maier and an audience sing-along. Refreshments will be served following the performance, courtesy of Castro Valley Adult and Career Education.

● **"Lighten Up New Year's Eve with Brian Copeland and Friends,"** an all-star lineup of comedians including David Alan Moss, Joe Klosee, Steve Barkley, Mickey Joseph, Irene Tu, Roon Vigh and Maureen Langan, will be presented at 7 p.m. Saturday night, Dec. 31. For tickets (\$45) see above.

● **"Monster Concert,"** – witness the excitement as 24 young pianists, many from Castro Valley, perform together on 12 Yamaha pianos at 2 p.m. on Saturday, January 7, at the Center for the Arts, presented by the Southern Alameda County Branch of the Music Teachers Association of California. Purchase tickets online \$10 (\$15 at the door) at: www.eventbrite.com/ (search "Monster Concert"). All proceeds from this concert will go towards student scholarships.

● **"Rhythm of the North,"** celebrating our 50th State – Alaska – will be presented at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 28. Take this boogie-woogie joy ride with John Bushell (Bishop O'Dowd Class of '70) when he presents this fast-paced, multi-media sensation, with stunning images, sizzling piano and hilarious stories to fill out the evening. (Audiences know his as "Johnny B.") For tickets (\$20), see above.

ART GALLERIES & EVENTS

● **"Local Botanical Beauties, Then and Now,"** an exhibit of watercolors showing the variety of plant life that once dominated the East Bay landscape as well as plants still seen in our foothills as curated by the Mary L. Hardin School of Botanical Illustration, is currently on display at the Museum for History and Culture at 22380 Foothill Blvd. in Hayward. The museum is open Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

● **"A Woman's View of the World,"** a variety of artistic techniques including watercolors, acrylics, pencil, ink and mixed media by the Diablo/Alameda Chapter of the National League of American Pen Women, continues through Jan. 27 at the John O'Laue Galleria in Hayward City Hall, 777 B Street at Watkins, open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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- Men's Haircut:\$12 & up
- Women's Haircut:\$20 & up
- Eyebrow Wax:\$10 & up
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- Gel Manicure (Shellac Manicure):\$25/set

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31

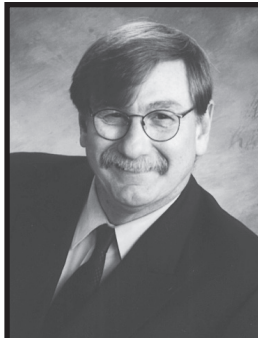
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A	M	I	R	I	O	E	N	O	S	
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Castro Valley Woman Working As Health Volunteer in Moldova

Peace Corps Volunteer Erika Parkins, 27, of Castro Valley, worked with her community in Moldova in Eastern Europe to install a new ventilation system in the kitchen of a local school, to ensure students' meals were prepared in a clean, safe environment.

The Republic of Moldova, bordered by Romania to the west and Ukraine to the north, east, and south, declared independence in 1991, as part of the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Parkins, who departed for Peace Corps service on June 2, 2015, is currently working as a Health Volunteer in the country, where she provides health education to primary and middle school students in her community.

"My decision to join Peace Corps was a culmination of what I had been working towards," Parkins said. "I had always been interested in international work. I studied it, wrote about it, traveled as much as I could, but I really wanted to put into practice all these things that I had learned. This has given me the opportunity to see the reality, both good and difficult parts, of working abroad."

Parkins is the daughter of Susie and Doug Parkins of Castro Valley, and is a 2007 graduate of Redwood Christian High School in San Lorenzo. She attended the U.C. Irvine, where she earned bachelor's degrees in political science and criminology, law and society in 2011.

Parkins went on to earn a master's degree in international peace and conflict resolution from American University in Washington, D.C., in 2014.

Prior to joining the Peace Corps, she volunteered as an English teacher in Guatemala and as a youth development volunteer in Haiti, as well as assisted with a human rights monitoring program in Rwanda.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PEACE CORPS WEST

Erika Parkins of Castro Valley is a Peace Corps health volunteer in the Eastern European Republic of Moldova.

During the first three months of her service, Parkins lived with a host family in Moldova to become fully immersed in the country's language and culture. After acquiring the necessary skills to assist her community, Parkins was sworn into service and assigned to the community of Ermoclia, Moldova.

"One of the reasons I wanted to join Peace Corps was to really delve into a culture in a way that a short trip just cannot do," Parkins said. "Learning how to work and live so differently than I ever have has made me a more creative and understanding person."

see **VOLUNTEER** on back page

Health District Grants

Eden Health District, headquartered in Castro Valley, is providing welcome gifts in the form of grants totaling \$250,000 to 13 local non-profit and government agencies during this holiday season.

The grants included \$24,608 to the Alameda County Fire Department for an all-terrain vehicle and trailer for the emergency transporting of victims from rural areas, \$20,678 to the George Mark Children's House in San Leandro, \$20,680 to the East Bay Agency for Children for its Child Assault Prevention Program, \$18,100 to Eden I&R for the 2-1-1 Alameda County Communications Program, and \$5,000 to the Castro Valley Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 9601 for the Veterans Relief Fund.

Over the past 16 years, the Eden Health District (formerly the Eden Township Healthcare District) has given more than \$12-million in health-related grants through its Community Health Fund Program to agencies that advance health and well-being of District residents.

BART Board Elects Officers for 2017

The BART Board of Directors last week elected Rebecca Saltzman as president, and Robert Raburn as vice president for 2017.

Saltzman said the directors have a tremendous amount of activity to look forward to in the new year.

"BART will put the first new train cars into service, issue the first portion of the recently-approved bond, work on transit-oriented development, and continue improving stations and access."

Saltzman has represented District 3 since 2012. She replaces Tom Radulovich who served as board president this past year.

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Create an Age-Friendly Home to Stay in Place as You Grow Older

By Jim Miller
SPECIAL TO THE FORUM

MANY RETIREES want to stay living in their own house for as long as possible. But being able to do so will depend on how easy it is to maneuver your home as you get older.

Here are some helpful resources you can turn to, to get an idea of the different types of features and improvements you can make that will make your house safer and more convenient as you grow older.

Home Evaluation

A good first step in making your home more age-friendly is to do an assessment. Go through your house, room-by-room, looking for problem areas like potential tripping or slipping hazards, as well as areas that are hard to access and difficult to maintain.

To help with this, there are several organizations that have aging-in-place checklists that point out

potential problems in each area of the home, along with modification and solutions.

Rebuild Together, for example, has a two-page "Safe at Home Checklist" that's created in partnership with the Administration on Aging and the American Occupational Therapy Association. Go to AOTA.org and search for "Rebuilding Together Safe at Home Checklist."

The National Association of Home Builders also has an "Aging-in-Place Remodeling Checklist" that offers more than 100 suggestions to can help homeowners age 50-plus live safely, independently and comfortably. Go to NAHB.org and search for "Aging in Place Remodeling Checklist."

Also check out AARP's excellent resource called the "HomeFit Guide" that's filled with 28-pages of tips and diagrams to make your entire home safe and easier to live in as you age. You can access it at AARP.org – search for "Home-

Fit," or call 888-687-2277 and ask them to mail you a free copy.

Personalized Advice

If you want more personalized help, consider getting a professional in-home assessment with an occupational therapist.

An occupational therapist, or OT can evaluate the challenges and shortcomings of your home for aging in place, recommend design and modification solutions, and introduce you to products and services to help you make improvements.

To find an OT in your area, check with your physician, health insurance provider or local hospital, or seek recommendations from family and friends.

Many health insurance providers, including Medicare, will pay for a home assessment by an OT if prescribed by your doctor. However, they will not cover the physical upgrades to the home.

Another option is to contact a builder who's a Certified Aging in



Make your house safer and more convenient as you age.

Place Specialist (CAPS).

CAPS are home remodelers and design-build professionals that are knowledgeable about aging in place home modifications, and can suggest ways to modify or remodel your home that will fit your needs and budget. CAPS are generally paid by the hour or receive a

flat fee per visit or project.

To find a CAPS in your area visit the National Association of Home Builders website at NAHB.org/capsdirectory where you can search by state and city.

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

Spot, Fix Mistakes On Bills

By Jim Miller
SPECIAL TO THE FORUM

Medical billing errors and overcharging are not uncommon. According to the American Medical Association, 7 percent of medical bills in 2013 had errors, and other groups estimate that figure to be much higher.

Unfortunately, untangling those mistakes is almost always up to you. Here are some tips and tools that can help.

• Check For Errors

To help you get a grip on your medical bills and check for errors, you need to familiarize yourself with what your insurance does and doesn't cover. Then you need to carefully review the explanation of benefits from your insurer, and the invoices you receive from your doctor, hospital and/or outpatient facility providers.

These invoices need to be itemized bills detailing the charges for every procedure, test, service and supply you received. If you didn't receive an itemized invoice, request it from your health care providers. And if the invoices contain any confusing billing codes or abbreviations that you don't understand, ask them for an explanation. You can also look up most medical billing codes online by going to any online search engine and typing in "CPT" followed by the code number.

Once you receive and decode the invoices, keep your eyes peeled for these mistakes:

Typos: Incorrect billing codes, a misspelled name or a wrong policy number.

Double billing: Being charged twice for the same services, drugs, or supplies.

Canceled work: Charging for a test your doctor ordered, then canceled.

Phantom services: Being charged for services, test or treatments that were never received.

Up-coding: Inflated charges for medications and supplies.

Incorrect length of stay: Most hospitals will charge for the additional days.

see **BILLS** on page 9

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Bills: What to Do if You Spot Any Errors

continued from previous page
mission day, but not for day of discharge. Be sure you're not paying for both.

Incorrect room charges: Being charged for a private room, even if you stayed in a semi-private room.

Inflated operating room fees: Being billed for more time than was actually used. Compare the charge with your anesthesiologist's records.

To make sure the charges on your bill are reasonably priced, your insurance provider may offer an online price transparency tool, or use the Healthcare Blue Book (healthcarebluebook.com) or Guroo (guroo.com). These are free resources that let you look up the going rate of many procedures, tests or services in your area.

• Make Corrections

If you find errors or have questions about charges, contact your insurer and your health care provider's billing office. When you call, be sure you write down the date, time and name of the person you speak to and a summary of the conversation, in case you need to refer back to it at a later time.

If there's a billing code error or some other mistake that's easily correctable, ask your health care provider to resubmit a corrected claim to your insurance company.

• Get Help

If you aren't able to resolve the dispute on your own, consider hiring a medical billing advocate to work on your behalf.

To find someone, try sites like billadvocates.com or claims.org.



If you find errors or have questions about charges, contact your insurer and your health care provider's billing office. When you call, be sure you write down the date, time and name of the person you speak to and a summary of the conversation, in case you need to refer back to it at a later time.

Most advocates charge an hourly fee – somewhere between \$50 and \$200 per hour – for their services, or they may work on a contingency basis, earning a commission of 25 percent to 35 percent of the amount they save you.

If you're a Medicare beneficiary, another resource is your State Health Insurance Assistance

Program (SHIP). They provide free counseling and can help you understand your medical bills and Medicare coverage. To find a local SHIP counselor visit shiptacenter.org, or call 800-633-4227.

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

New Law Empowers Disabled to Create Own Special Needs Trust

Q I hear that President Obama just signed a new law that makes it easier for disabled persons to create their own Special Needs Trust. Know anything about this?

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

A Yes. With strong bipartisan support, just last week President Obama signed a comprehensive piece of legislation called the 21st Century Cures Act, primarily designed to find a cure for cancer, Alzheimer's, opiate dependence, and other diseases.

Included was a short provision known as the "Special Needs Trust Fairness Act", designed to correct a decades old error in the law that presumed that all persons with disabilities under age 65 lacked the mental capacity to handle their own financial affairs.

Background: In 1993, Congress passed legislation to help ensure that individuals with disabilities could use money they had saved, or received by gift or inheritance, in order to provide for their own supplemental needs not covered by public benefit programs, while still maintaining their eligibility for Medi-Cal and SSI.

Congress did so by creating the "Special Needs Trust" ("SNT"). So long as these funds were held

inside a properly established SNT, they were not counted against the individual and did not impair his or her eligibility for public benefits.

In essence, the SNT allowed persons with a disability to live a better quality of life above the bare-bones minimum subsidized by public benefits.

There were, however, two "glitches:"

(1) the law made an artificial distinction between those individuals under age 65 and those over age 65; only the younger group could benefit from an individually customized, stand-alone SNT.

The older group was limited to joining an existing Pooled SNT, created and managed by a non-profit association for the benefit of

many individuals; and

(2) the law presumed that the younger individuals lacked the capacity to create their own SNT, instead requiring that the SNT be established by a "parent, grandparent, legal guardian, or the court".

For the younger individuals under age 65, this requirement presented problems for individuals who did not have qualifying family members willing or able to act; alternatively, the law required court proceedings with unnecessary legal fees, delayed implementation, and associated legal obstacles.

"Glitch" Now Partially Corrected: For the under age 65 group, that "glitch" has now been corrected, so that younger individuals with capacity may now create their own SNT without the need to rely upon a qualifying family member or the court.

see OSOFSKY on back page



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ATHLETES OF THE WEEK

Santiago and Marcelo Otero

This week's Athletes of the Week are Santiago and Marcelo Otero. Each of the brothers took gold at the Bay Area Jiu-Jitsu Championships on Sunday, December 11, in Alameda. Both attend Jiu Jitsu classes at Z-MATA Jiu Jitsu Academy in Castro Valley.

Marcelo, at just 4 years old, has been training Jiu Jitsu for 6 months and had two tough competitors to get through before taking first place.

Santiago has been training for 1 year and 8 months and had 3 hard-fought matches to get to first place.

Through the program the boys are developing self-confidence, self-defense skills and receive great amounts of exercise.



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SPORTS SCHEDULE

Girls Basketball

Thurs., Dec. 22, 5:30 p.m. JV vs. Pittsburg at CVHS
Thurs., Dec. 22, 7:00 p.m. Varsity vs. Pittsburg at CVHS

Boys Basketball

Wed., Dec. 21, 4:00 p.m. Freshman vs. Dougherty Valley away
Wed., Dec. 21, 5:30 p.m. JV vs. Dougherty Valley away
Wed., Dec. 21, 7:00 p.m. Varsity vs. Dougherty Valley away
Fri., Dec. 23, 4:00 p.m. Frosh vs. Archbishop Mitty at CVHS
Fri., Dec. 23, 5:30 p.m. JV vs. Archbishop Mitty at CVHS
Fri., Dec. 23, 7:00 p.m. Varsity vs. Archbishop Mitty at CVHS
Tues., Dec. 27, 12:00 p.m. Freshman vs. Clayton Valley away
Tues., Dec. 27, 1:30 p.m. JV vs. Clayton Valley away
Tues., Dec. 27, 3:00 p.m. Varsity vs. Clayton Valley away

Girls Soccer

Thurs., Dec. 22, 4:00 p.m. JV vs. Albany at CVHS
Thurs., Dec. 22, 6:00 p.m. Varsity vs. Albany at CVHS

Boys Soccer

Thurs., Dec. 22, 5:30 p.m. JV vs. Piedmont away
Thurs., Dec. 22, 7:00 p.m. Varsity vs. Piedmont away

Girls Wrestling

Fri., Dec. 23, 7:00 a.m. CVHS All levels participating in the Brittany David Girls Wrestling Tourney at Liberty High School

Boys Wrestling

Wed., Dec. 28, 29 7:00 a.m. Varsity participating in the Sierra Nevada Classic held at the Reno Livestock Event Center

SPORTS NOTES

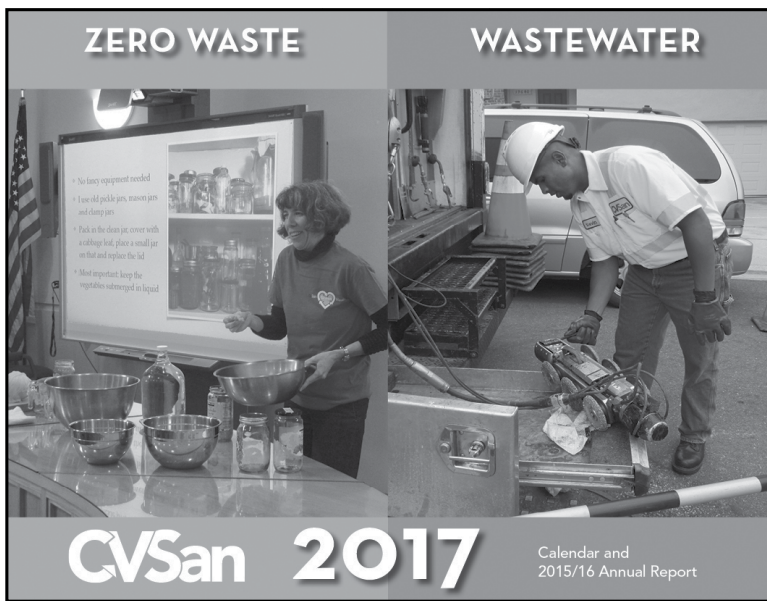
Baseball

Castro Valley Little League will be having live registrations for the Spring 2017 Season in the Multi-Purpose Room at Creekside Middle School, at 19722 Center Street. Sign-ups are for boys and Girls ages 4 to 16, on Thursday, Dec. 29 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. For more information about Castro Valley Little League visit www.castrovalleylittleleague.org/registration

Softball

Castro Valley Girls Softball League is accepting on-line registration for the 2017 spring season. Girls ages 5-18 are welcome to sign up at www.castrovalleysoftball.com. Cost is \$135 for ages 5-8, and \$175 for ages 9 and up. Ratings will be on Saturday, Jan. 7. The schedule for each age group will be posted on the website in January.

THE CVSan CALENDAR IS COMING



This week, the CVSan 2017 Calendar and 2015/16 Annual Report will be arriving in the mail. This edition highlights CVSan's Wastewater Department and Zero Waste initiatives. You'll find CVSan's 2015/16 Annual Report following the calendar page for December. We take pride in putting together this resource for the community and hope you'll benefit from it all year long.

If you'd like additional calendars, drop by CVSan's office at 21040 Marshall Street, Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

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Make Your Appliances Last Longer

By Nathaniel Sillin
Special to the Forum

This is the season for overflowing refrigerators and never-ending loads of laundry.

Many people ask their appliances to work a little harder than normal during the holidays, and proper maintenance throughout the year might be the key to avoiding an untimely breakdown.

Here are a few maintenance tips for refrigerators, dishwashers, laundry machines and dryers. Each of these major appliances has an average lifespan of 10 to 13 years and you might want to start budgeting for your next purchase around the nine-year mark.

Regular maintenance could help ensure your appliance's longevity, let you avoid expensive service calls and lead to lower utility bills.

The most important part of refrigerator maintenance is keeping the condenser coils clean. A dirty coil won't release heat as well, causing the compressor to work harder, which in turn shortens its life and can cost you money in higher utility bills. Luckily, the process takes about 15 minutes and only needs to be done once or twice a year.

Start by unplugging your refrigerator. Units that have coils underneath them will likely have a cover that needs to be removed and a condenser fan that should be cleaned. Other units have uncovered coils on the back. Using a brush or vacuum carefully clean off the dirt and dust. If you use a vacuum, check for and empty or dry out the drip pan, which is common on units with a built-in defroster.

The inside of a dishwasher needs cleaning as well. Mineral deposits and leftover food scraps



Handling household appliances with care and keeping them clean can greatly extend their lifespan.

can build up, leading to clogged or leaky components. Running an unloaded dishwasher on a cleaning cycle with white vinegar could do the trick.

Next, gently wipe down and inspect the plastic gasket around the door, a break or leak could lead to an expensive mess. While gaskets cost about \$10, labor costs can be between \$75 and \$150 an hour and damage from the water could be significantly more.

Respect the load limits of your washer and dryer. Too much weight can cause parts to wear out and break prematurely. Plus, you could wind up with detergent residue on clothes and need to rerun the cycle (a waste of time, water and energy), or damp clothes that still need to be dried.

Also, gently close washer and dryer doors. Too much force could break the switch — the small part that signals to the machine the door is closed. The average cost to fix common washing machine problems is \$50 to \$150, while dryers' more expensive parts push repairs costs to about \$100 to \$400.

Even with proper maintenance, appliances can break. Unless you have a repairman in the family, you will likely spend \$75-plus an hour to hire one. You might consider trying to save a little money by doing the repairs yourself.

Appliance manufacturers, ap-

pliance parts dealers and independent handymen post helpful video guides with step-by-step instructions that you can follow.

Bottom line: While every appliance will eventually need to be replaced, keeping the components clean and handling machines with care can help extend their lifespan.

Nathaniel Sillin directs Visa's financial education programs.

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5224 Proctor Road	94546	\$770,000	3 BD - 1,518 SF - 1947
2273 Reading Avenue	94546	\$523,500	2 BD - 1,018 SF - 1948
20917 San Miguel Avenue	94546	\$610,000	3 BD - 1,277 SF - 1948
3145 Terry Court	94546	\$745,000	3 BD - 1,476 SF - 1961
22037 Vergil Street	94546	\$490,000	2 BD - 864 SF - 1949
17823 Walnut Road	94546	\$835,000	4 BD - 2,607 SF - 1951
20111 West Ridge Ct #1	94546	\$458,000	2 BD - 1,467 SF - 1977
6498 Boone Drive	94552	\$940,000	3 BD - 3,068 SF - 1986
16912 Columbia Drive	94552	\$900,000	4 BD - 2,098 SF - 1987
17716 Columbia Drive	94552	\$872,000	4 BD - 2,098 SF - 1986
17749 Columbia Drive	94552	\$878,000	3 BD - 1,890 SF - 1984
4627 Crow Canyon Road	94552	\$784,000	3 BD - 1,776 SF - 1995
25630 Gold Ridge Drive	94552	\$1,020,000	5 BD - 2,475 SF - 1997

TOTAL SALES: 16
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$458,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,020,000
MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$783,250
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$763,938

San Lorenzo

16160 Hesperian Blvd	94580	\$475,000	4 BD - 2,088 SF - 1944
17932 Via Arriba	94580	\$585,000	4 BD - 1,310 SF - 1948
772 Via Mariposa	94580	\$550,000	3 BD - 1,000 SF - 1944
1952 Via Sarita	94580	\$570,000	3 BD - 1,031 SF - 1954
17505 Wickman Place	94580	\$374,000	2 BD - 1,168 SF - 1971

TOTAL SALES: 5
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$374,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$585,000
MEDIAN AMOUNT: \$550,000
AVERAGE AMOUNT: \$510,800

REAL ESTATE REALITY

By Carl Medford, CRS
Special to the Forum

GUEST COMMENTARY



Increasing Home Prices Provide Holiday Cheer

It doesn't seem possible, but Christmas is just a few days away.

It's been another crazy year in the California real estate market, and with all of the frenetic activity, it's a bit of a shock to look up and realize the year is practically over.

Another shock is a year-end evaluation of where home prices have ended up after five consecutive years of upward market gains.

A seller's dream since the market tuned around in February, 2011, prices have surged higher and higher each consecutive year. With the local economy booming and people moving here in hordes to fill job vacancies, there has been a severe shortage of available homes, both to purchase and to rent.

In a classic display of supply-and-demand economics, prices have spiked towards the stratosphere.

As an example, the average price for a Castro Valley single-family home in 2011 was

\$468,000. In 2016? ...\$685,000, an increase of 64.93 percent. San Leandro did even better, beginning with an average of \$323,000 in 2011 and rounding out 2016 at \$544,000, up 88.97 percent. Faring better yet is San Lorenzo, with a 94.35-percent same-period boost from \$289,000 to \$515,000. Coming out on top is Hayward, where prices more than doubled: homes that averaged \$288,999 in 2011 were selling this year for \$591,000 — a staggering 101.99 percent average gain.

If you're a homeowner who has owned the same home since 2011, those price increases are the best Christmas present you could hope for. And, as we end 2016, the economy remains strong and prospects are good for 2017.

While no one can predict the future, based on the current metrics, we do not see the market taking a significant dip any time soon.

The Realtors of the Central County want to wish you and yours a wonderful Holiday Season, and specifically, a Merry Christmas. As a family that has been blessed with so much, my wife and I, along with our adult children, have adopted the tradition over the past few years of foregoing Christmas gifts to the adults, and instead donating the funds to organizations like World Vision, the Salvation Army and others. Many of our friends have picked up the idea as well. It's so easy to forget that we are so blessed here in the Bay Area.

Let's make this the season we remember others who, through no choice of their own, cannot experience the blessings we take for granted.

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 at www.ccmgtoday.com.

Mortgage Rates Move Higher

Average fixed mortgage rates moved higher last week for the seventh consecutive week, according to Freddie Mac's weekly nationwide survey.

The 30-year fixed-rate mortgage averaged 4.16 percent, up from 4.13 percent a week earlier.

Fifteen-year home loans last week averaged 3.37 percent, up from 3.36 percent.

Adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs) were also higher last week, rising to 3.19 percent from 3.17 percent the previous week.

There Are No Open Homes This Weekend
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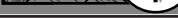
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Community Vigil Mourns Recent Deaths

By William Lao
and Megan O'Brien
SPECIAL TO THE FORUM

In an emotional vigil, about 20 community members gathered on Monday evening to remember five people who have died in Castro Valley in recent weeks.

"I think it's unusual for Castro Valley to have so many deaths," said teacher Todd Finlay. "It's important for people to show they care, it's part of building a caring community. If you just let it go, more is going to happen."

The vigil, which began around 6:30 p.m. at the corner of Redwood Road and Castro Valley Boulevard, was held in honor of the recent deaths of Cesar Plascencia, Eder Marroquin, Betty Roosevelt, Andrea St. John, and Jacqueline Burns. The event was organized by the Eden Area Interfaith Council, an organization dedicated to promoting understanding and respect for all faiths.

Plascencia, 37, was shot and killed outside his home on Wilson Avenue on Nov. 28. Marroquin was shot after an argument with another man in a garage of a home on Denning Court on Dec. 4. St. John was



PHOTO BY MEGAN O'BRIEN

Vigil organizer Julie Greenfield addresses the vigil's audience.

brutally murdered before her house was set on fire as on Dec. 13. Burns died in a home fire on Dec. 18. Roosevelt also died recently of an unknown cause.

"With all these religious groups getting together, and the council getting together for this, that was reason enough to show up here," said Mary Lassack of the Starr King Congregation.

Vigil attendees hope that the community could find peace and understanding in the wake of these tragic events. At the end of the service, the community gathered in a

circle and sang the song "Swing Low Sweet Chariot," written by Wallis Willis.

"This is what we're all about, to try to join together and to support each other. We are here together partly in grief and recognition" said organizer Julie Greenfield. "I've lived in Castro Valley for around 20 years and I like to think of it as a peaceful, loving, and tolerant place."

"Things happening like murders and people dying on the street, it disturbs me. I want to keep our community going in a positive direction and this is just a way to

gather and support each other," Greenfield said.

One person lost was part of the homeless community and was especially loved by all who knew her.

"As we lost sister Betty Roosevelt we lost one of our own," said Pastor Jake Medcalf of First Presbyterian Church of Hayward.

"I actually met Betty before I knew her name," said Michael Kusiak. "I didn't know her name until I heard of her death. She was my neighbor, and that was important for all of my boys to know, that the people who live next to the creek, they're our neighbors, and that we should respect them. She always made me smile-she would do really creative things with some of her stuff along the creek."

The fact that a majority of the deaths was a result of homicide is disturbing to most community members, enough to get the community to gather together.

"We know that in the end we are family across all humanity. Help us to remember that we belong to each other," prayed Medcalf.

William Lao and Megan O'Brien are Castro Valley High School student journalists.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FREDZ@EBPUBLISHING.COM

Electoral College: Constitution Allows Each State to Choose Electors Any Way it Pleases

Editor:

In response to "'Radical Democrats' Called 'Criminals' for Trying to Pressure Electoral College Members," (The Forum, Dec. 14), Peter Hauer educates us about state law and the possibility of faithless electors changing their votes after an election.

By the Constitution, each state chooses electors any way it pleases. Two states allow their electors to vote their conscience; 17 can instruct their electors to vote for the winner of the national popular vote. Those electors could then become faithless to their instructions to be faithless.

The founders copied the Electoral College from European institutions to prevent elections from becoming popularity contests financed by political parties. The founders feared the mass of people and sought to protect government from them. Originally, only propertied males were permitted to vote and always for other propertied males.

Calling the unnamed democrats 'criminal' and 'radical' for daring to come to the courts to exercise their legal rights is a radical statement.

—Jim Strophe, Castro Valley

'Anything that Compromises Bay Area, California and American Ideals Should Not Be Tolerated'

Editor:

In response to Peter Hauer's letter (see above), he should be aware that the purpose of the Electoral College electors was to provide a Constitutional last measure to stop a dictator or unfit leader from taking office as President.

In fact, America fought a bloody Revolutionary War against the same type of corporate influence of the government as is occurring right now within the Trump Administration.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, where roughly 3/4 of the people voted for Hillary Clinton, we were not bamboozled by the false populism of the shyster Trump.

In California, Democrats have a super-majority in both houses of the legislature and very successfully run the 6th largest economy in the world. We have a chance to lead the nation and say no to the terrible and hurtful Republican agenda that is planned for us. I believe the nation and the world are counting on us.

Coast to coast across America, a large majority of the people want to protect the environment, control the excess greed of giant corporations and the very rich like Trump who don't pay taxes.

The majority are in favor of equal rights for all and want good government to ensure that we all can have good jobs, affordable health care and clean air, water and food as the Constitution mandates.

Anything that compromises these Bay Area, California and American ideals is immoral and wrong and should not be tolerated.

—David Siegel, Castro Valley

Correction Noted on Beginning Date of Castro Valley BART Station Service

Editor:

I'm enjoying the series about Castro Valley history by Thomas E. Lorentzen and looking forward to the fifth installment.

Erratum, per Wikipedia (and my memory):

"Castro Valley is a Bay Area Rapid Transit station serving Castro Valley, California. The station consists of an island platform located in the center median of Interstate 580, with the concourse mezzanine located underneath the freeway's westbound lanes. It was built as part of Bay Area Rapid Transit's Dublin/Pleasanton extension, and service began on May 10, 1997."

—Richard Cox, 39th year in Castro Valley

THE FORUM CROSSWORD

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ACROSS

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- 30 Bother
- 31 Addict
- 32 Supporting
- 33 Cruising
- 34 Aries
- 35 Despondent
- 36 Square dance group
- 37 "It's a Wonderful Life" director
- 40 Hearts, for one
- 41 Phone function
- 45 "Simpsons" creator
- 47 Groening
- 49 Yoko of music
- 49 Nervous
- 50 Help a hood
- 51 Debtor's letters
- 52 Early period
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- 54 CD successor
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DOWN

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- 2 Out of control
- 3 Emphatic assent in Acapulco
- 4 It gets a load from a lode
- 5 Scout group
- 6 Bro or sis
- 7 "Lilies of the Field" actor
- 8 Brown tone
- 9 Norma Rae, for one
- 10 Paul of politics
- 11 Superlative ending
- 19 Chesapeake, e.g.
- 21 Spinning stat
- 23 "Mary Tyler Moore Show" spinoff
- 24 Genealogy chart
- 25 Old card game
- 26 Look for a website
- 27 Despot
- 28 Digitize an old LP, e.g.
- 32 Bit of trivia
- 33 College life
- 35 Tackle moguls
- 36 4-Down contents
- 38 Eccentric
- 39 Pleased with oneself
- 42 "American ____"
- 43 City in India
- 44 Loretta of country music
- 45 Periodical, for short
- 46 Lawyers' org.
- 48 Thanksgiving mo.

ANSWERS ON PAGE 4

Letters to the Editor must include writer's first and last names, phone number, city of residence, and must be under 300 words. Email Letters to: fredz@ebpublishing.com, or mail to: The Forum, P.O. Box 2897, Alameda, CA 94501.

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Missing Cat

"Blue," a Lynx point male white cat with grey tail and blue eyes, went missing on Saturday, Nov. 12, on Alma Ave. in Castro Valley. A reward is offered for his return. If you have any information, please call 510-305-4524



CV Sanitary District Employees and members of the CV Rotary Club provided a banquet.

Christmas: RCHS, CVHS InterAct Clubs

continued from front page

RCHS InterAct Club members wrapped the packages for the children and CVHS InterAct Club members joined in to provide entertainment, doing face painting, balloon animals, coloring books and playing games.

The RCHS InterActers were Nick Lam, Cody Fryling, Hayley Martinez, Olivia Clauson and Noelle Tilly. The CVHS InterActers were Nathaniel Ortiz, Jessica Wong and Mika Yoshida.

The party was chaired by Rotarian Mark Poniatowski with help from other members of the Club and the community.



Dr. Heidi the Elf, Santa Claus and Joyce the Clown.

Many Questions of CV's Past

By Thomas E. Lorentzen
SPECIAL TO THE FORUM

To wonder about history is to wonder about ourselves, which includes our lives here in Castro Valley at this moment of time.

What was this area like before the first settlers – the Ohlone Indians? What followed them in the flow of history? How did Castro Valley get its name? What does a land grant from Mexico have to do with our town?

Why did various individuals and families purchase large acres of parcels here before there was a town called "Castro Valley?" What was the first governmental entity in CV? When was the first school started and how did our school system develop into what it is today?

Why is the library in CV not the first, but the third or fourth in our town? Why was the first one domiciled in a former chicken coop? What do chickens have to do with Castro Valley?

These questions and answers, as well as many more, can be pursued at the exhibit on display at the A.B. Morris Adobe Art Center until January 7th.

Titled "200 Years of Castro Valley History," the exhibit provides a wonderful opportunity to both learn about our town as well as our lives in this town at this present time.



Castro Valley Boulevard of yesteryear.

The late historian, Geoffrey Parson, wrote a series of books decades ago that were titled "The Stream of History." His writings were based upon an understanding that history has not ended, nor is part of the past, but part of a continuous flow.

The creeks here in Castro Valley are a testament to that perception, for they flowed here before there were people, and have continued to flow in our valley for not only hundreds of years, but perhaps thousands.

Where do we fit in upon this steam of nature's history as well as that of human history? With the holiday period upon us there is an opportunity to gain a glimpse of that flow for our town, and to obtain a sense of how our town emerged and developed over the

lasts two centuries. It is a Christmas present that can be given to your family and friends, and at no charge!

If you want to reward yourself and others to understand the mystery of the history of Castro Valley the exhibit will remain open until January 7th. It is at the A.B. Morris Adobe Art Center at 20595 San Miguel Avenue. It is open on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. (except for December 24 and 31).

School classes are encouraged to attend by calling 510-881-6735 at the Hayward Area Recreation District (the host of the exhibit).

The exhibit has been prepared by two of our town's most knowledgeable historians, Lucille Lorge and Randy Vanderbilt. It is a gift for Christmas that all can enjoy.

Sign: For CV

continued from page 3

will be shared with the selection committees from each town who will be choosing artists and also with the artists who are invited to make proposals for the projects.

Responses to the survey will be collected through Jan. 15.

Residents with diverse experiences and perspectives who are actively involved in their communities are sought for the selection committees. No experience is necessary, but they must be 18 years or older.

The committees will meet for two all-day meetings – the first in March, the second in September. Those interested in serving should complete a response form at tinyurl.com/zka9nnk. The forms are also due by Jan. 15.

More opportunities for community involvement are being planned for the future including community roundtables with the artists making proposals for the projects in the spring, and public displays and comments about the artists' proposals next summer.

Residents can request updates on the projects by sending an email to artscommission@acgov.org.

For more info, contact the Arts Commission at 510-208-9646.



PHOTO COURTESY OF AL PROIETTI

Gifts of Warmth

Bags and stacks of coats (more than 250) and other warm stuff being packed up for distribution to the homeless and needy in the Oakland area this Saturday by a coalition of East Bay churches. The coats, scarves, caps, gloves and mittens were collected during a three-week drive at Village Barbershop which is thanking the community for all the donations.

Reports: CV

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the woman to Santa Rita Jail pending \$2,000 in bail.

Domestic Dispute

Wednesday, December 14: at 7:58 p.m., a 911 call about a loud and aggressive-sounding argument sent deputies to a home on Judy Street near Mira Loma Street. There, they arrested a 24-year-old woman from Castro Valley on suspicion of assault on a family member and destroying private property. The woman was taken into custody. The victim was treated at the scene.

Vandalism

Wednesday, December 14: at 8:54 a.m., a 46-year-old man who refused to give his address was arrested on suspicion of vandalism at an apartment complex on Wisteria Street near Somerset Avenue. Deputies were called to the scene after a neighbor spotted the man throwing things around. The man was handcuffed and taken into custody.

Bicycling While Under the Influence

Thursday, December 15: at 12:13 a.m., deputies arrested a 57-year-old man from Castro Valley on suspicion of operating a bicycle under the influence of alcohol, providing false ID to an officer, and resisting arrest. The man was traveling on Lake Chabot Road near Congress Avenue when deputies pulled him over for questioning. The man failed his field sobriety test but refused to cooperate further with deputies. He was taken into custody.

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Help Find Buster the Lost Cat



I miss my family. Please help me return to my home on Pepper St. in Castro Valley. My name is Buster. I'm a 10 month old smoky gray cat with white feet, chest and 1/2 white mustache. A reward is offered.

Please Contact
Di-Ann or Don at:
510-688-0675 or 886-5455

Volunteer: In Moldova

continued from page 6

Parkins works in cooperation with the local people and partner organizations on sustainable, community-based development projects that improve the lives of people in Moldova. This, in turn, helps her develop technical and cross-cultural skills that will give her a competitive edge when she returns home. Peace Corps Volunteers return from service as global citizens well-positioned for professional opportunities in today's global job market.

Parkins is one of 915 California residents currently serving in the Peace Corps. Nearly 30,000 Californians have served in the Peace Corps since 1961.

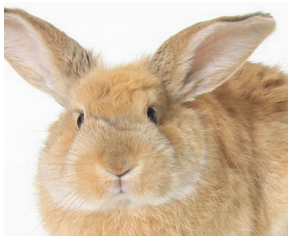
There has never been a better time to apply to Peace Corps, and reforms have made the process simpler, faster, and more personalized. Through a one-hour online application, applicants can now choose the countries and programs they'd like to be considered for. Browse volunteer positions at www.peacecorps.gov/openings.

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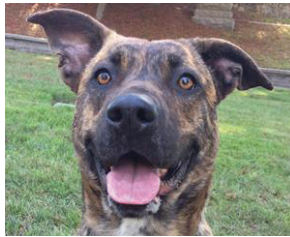
ADOPT-A-PET



REESES is a sweet young bunny who just wants to relax, and snack on timothy hay and cilantro. He's neutered and ready to go home with you. Info: Hayward Animal Shelter. (510) 293-7200.



DUCHESS is a shy young bun who's getting used to people and to being handled after a hard life on the street. With a loving, patient family, she'll blossom. Info: Hayward Animal Shelter. (510) 293-7200.



PRADA is affectionate with people - she bestows kisses and likes to snuggle and be petted. She knows the basic obedience commands. Complete an on line application at: www.dustypawsrescue.org.



OLIVER is a DSH, about 11 months old, he is initially a bit shy, he will soon warm up to you. He loves to play and is good with other cats. Also okay with dogs. Complete an app at www.dustypawsrescue.org

Three CVSD Employees Are Honored

Castro Valley Sanitary District (CVSan) honored three Waste Management employees for their outstanding service during the past six months at a Driver Appreciation Breakfast and Awards Ceremony last week at the WM offices in Oakland.

Driver Daniel Gutierrez was recognized for Fewest Missed Pick-Ups on Recycling Route VY. Driver Eugene Crusto was recognized for Outstanding Customer Service for Organics Route V3.

Driver Mike Alarid was recognized for Excellent Cart Handler (fewest Carts Down and Lids Open) for Recycling Route VX.

CVSan officials thanked all Waste Management drivers and staff for service in the collection of recycling, organics, and garbage.

Two Local Students on Dean's List

Two local students have been named to the Dean's List at Biola, a Christian university in Southern California.

Lyndsey Mueller and Jeffrey Yuen, both from Castro Valley, were placed on the honor list for having a grade point average of 3.60 or higher while enrolled in 12 or more credit units.

"Inclusion on the Biola Dean's List is an indication that these students are performing exceptionally well in a rigorous academic program," said Patricia Pike, Vice Provost for undergraduate education.

Biola University has more than 6,300 students at its Los Angeles-area campus and around the world.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE BRAHA FAMILY

Happy 100th Birthday

Over 200 friends and family members gathered this past Sunday to celebrate the 100th Birthday of Laverne Blaha, a Castro Valley resident since 1947. Her gala brunch at Faith Lutheran Church included singing and barn dancing. Well-wisher's traveled from as far as New York and Idaho to be with Laverne as she celebrated her birthday and the publishing of her memoir, "The Life God Gave Me." The memoir is available on Amazon.com. "I feel so fortunate and so grateful to have my health, my wonderful, beautiful family and this life God gave me," said Mrs. Braha.



PHOTO BY FRED ZEHNDER

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CAT GROOMING: \$55 (Exp. 12/31/16)

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Osofsky: A New Law Is in Effect

continued from page 9

Unfortunately, the law still limits those persons over age 65 to the option of joining a Pooled SNT, with its associated management fees.

President Obama signed the law on December 13, 2016, and it became effective on that date. So, if you are under age 65, you can now sign your own Special Needs Trust and plan your financial affairs like everyone else without worrying that you may jeopardize your Medi-Cal or SSI and fall further into poverty.

You should, however, seek out a knowledgeable Elder Law or Special Needs attorney to assist you in creating your SNT.

Gene L. Osofsky is an elder law and estate planning attorney in Hayward. Visit his website at www.LawyerForSeniors.com.

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