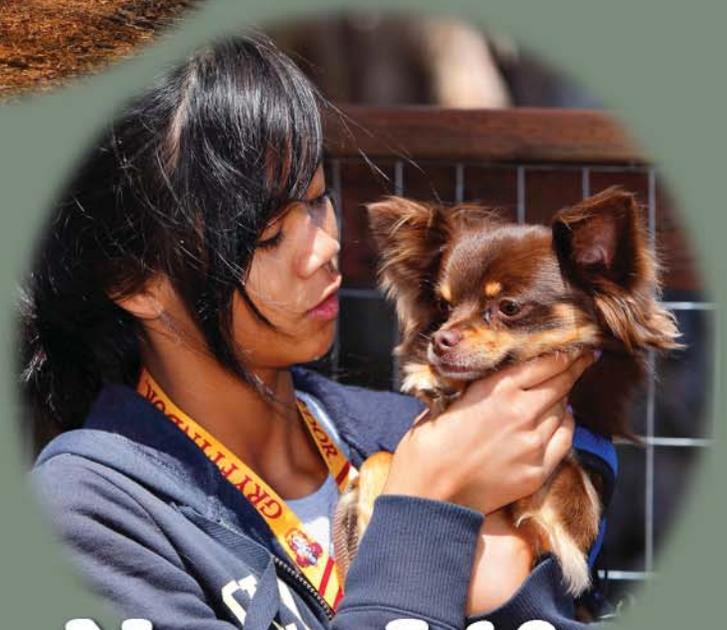
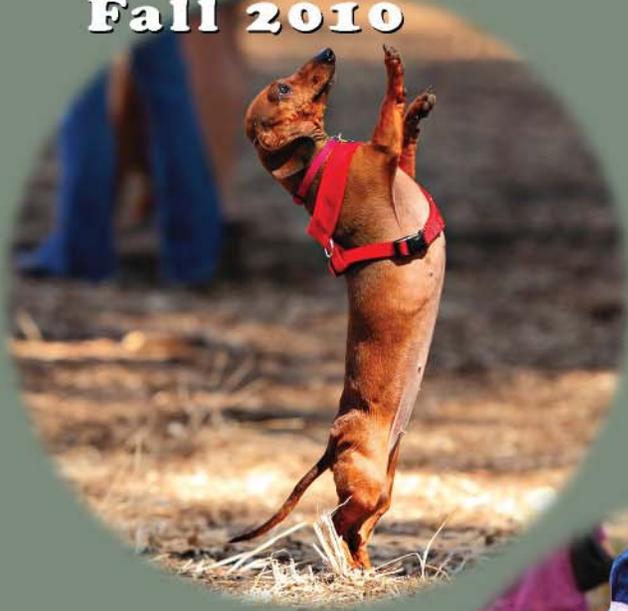


The Herculean

Fall 2010



Ohlone Gets New Life



Things to do before the end of 2010!



- Holiday shopping*
- Get in touch with old friends*
- Use up your vision insurance
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**CITY HALL HOURS:
MONDAY - FRIDAY
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

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CITY DIRECTORY

City Manager	799-8206
City Hall-General Information	799-8200
City Hall Fax	799-2521
Community/Swim Center	799-8291
Parks & Recreation Department	799-8291
Hercules Municipal Utility	799-8285
Hercules Senior Center	799-8219
Finance Dept/Business License	245-6509
Business/Community Development	245-6529
Public Works & Engineering	799-8241
Inspection Request Line	799-8240
City Clerk	799-8215
Police Department	799-8260
Rodeo-Hercules Fire District	799-4561

City Council 799-8206

Meets the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

Kris Valstad, Mayor	Joe Eddy McDonald
Ed Balico, Vice Mayor	Joanne Ward
Donald Kuehne	

Planning Commission 245-6529

Meets the first and third Monday of each month.

Sherry McCoy, Chair	Cletia Hart
Myrna L. deVera, Vice Chair	Richard Mitchell
Jose Bibal	

Community and Library Services 799-8291

Commission

Meets the second Monday of each month

Sherry Madfes, Chair	Steve Kirby
Adoria Williams-Weinstein, Vice Chair	Jeff Wisniewski
Han Chen	Justin Jones
Nicole dela Vega	

For additional information, please visit the City website at www.ci.hercules.ca.us

Featured on cover:

Images from Ohlone Dog Park Grand Opening

Courtesy of Wing Lee

Images of Hercules Sustainable Community

Garden at Ohlone Park

Courtesy of the City of Hercules

Plants, Puppies, People Bring Life to Ohlone

Ohlone Park has continued to undergo a major transformation over the summer. In July, the City of Hercules' first ever dog park opened at Ohlone with over 400 people and their four-legged friends in attendance. The park has large and small dog areas with 5' fences, shaded seating and drinking fountains in and around the fenced park area, making it a wonderful new amenity for Herculeans.

Additional amenities were added in October including a large faux fire hydrant for the big dog park, agility jumps, a community message board and a base rock pathway to the benches and drinking fountains. The City also plans on adding grass to the big and small dog park areas next spring.

Also over the summer, the City hosted a community workshop to get input on additional park renovations. City staff had proposed adding an amphitheater, extending several trails around the park, expanding the community garden and relocating a renovated historic home that may be used for meetings and workshops at the community garden or as a facility rental for weddings and other events. Community members in attendance supported the changes and suggested a few of their own. Staff is currently revising plans to incorporate their ideas.

The City is also pursuing a grant for Ohlone Park to cover much of the cost of the renovations. The Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF) provides local agencies with approximately \$2 million total to enhance, restore and develop facilities for public recreation. The funds would be used to improve the trails, remove debris and add a pedestrian bridge across the creek. The grant would cover



Residents and their dogs enjoy socializing at the new dog park
Photo courtesy of Wing Lee

about a third of the total cost of the project, so it will be crucial to providing all the new desired amenities at Ohlone.

While not added this summer, the Community Garden continues to flourish under the watchful eye of community volunteers. On Saturday, October 2, the Community Garden hosted its 2nd Annual Harvest Festival which included plant sales, games, gardening information and lots of food. Garden regulars and first time visitors all came out to celebrate and support the garden.

Families, individuals, Scout Troops, and students all have plots at the garden and many are harvesting twice a year. Ohlone students have even been selling their produce to restaurant owner and executive chef Alexander Ong, who owns Betelnut in San Francisco. "It's phenomenal," says Ong. "Betelnut is 60% organic so slowly we have been moving in the right direction." Students are even receiving pictures of some of the dishes Ong has created with the produce he has purchased from the student's garden.

One of the garden organizers, Nita Sexton, is encouraged by the continuous flow of groups getting involved. "Ohlone has been selling their produce, Lupine is learning about chickens because of the garden and we have a garden club with the Teen Youth Council (T.Y.C.) that has grown to 36 students." Sexton adds that they are currently working on connection with seniors in the area. "As we grow, we just want to make more connections."

If you would like to find out how you can get involved in the Hercules Sustainable Community Garden, please visit their website at <http://sites.google.com/site/herculesgardening/>. ♦



Girl Scouts Skyler Vines (left) and Maia Mallari share what they've learned by having a plot in the Community Garden

Walking and Bicycling in Hercules

Intermodal Transit Center Project Will Provide Key Improvements

Walking and bicycling in the City of Hercules will become considerably more accessible with the construction of the Intermodal Transit Center project. In the first phase of the Waterfront construction – the Intermodal Transit Center (ITC) – bicyclists and pedestrians in the City and neighboring jurisdictions will be able to experience enhanced connectivity with opportunities to use these alternative modes of transportation for recreation and commuting.



San Francisco Bay Trail – As part of the 500 mile shoreline trail around the Bay, approximately two miles of Bay Trail will be completed from the City of Pinole to the Victoria-by-the-Bay development.

Due to its location above the railroad tracks, the Bay Trail will have scenic views of the Bay and beyond to such points as Mt. Tamalpais. The views over the trains will be spectacular with overlooks and seating areas provided along the way. For the entire length of the project, the Bay Trail will be separated from the railroad right-of-way by a series of retaining walls and decorative fencing. In the “heart” of the project at the station building, the Bay Trail will literally run along the back side of the station with level access into the Hercules Plaza and will be fully accessible from various points along the two mile section. As a shared trail (bicyclists, walkers, wheelchairs, strollers, etc.), signage and pavement transitions will slow bicycle traffic and encourage shared use of the path in the urban area.

Creekside Trail – The Creekside Trail provides access along Refugio Creek adjacent to Phase 2 of John Muir Parkway. The Creekside Trail will provide scenic views of the restored Creek and provide a direct connection to the Bay Trail at the Waterfront. The Creekside Trail is approximately 1,500 feet long and winds along the edge of the creek. The Trail is dedicated to bicyclists and pedestrians allowing them easy access to the Waterfront and ITC. Ultimately, the Creekside Trail will connect to the Ridge Trail in Hercules via bike lanes on John Muir Parkway, a planned “Boardwalk” along San Pablo Avenue between John Muir Parkway and Sycamore Avenue, and up Sycamore connecting to the Ridge Trail. The Bay Area Ridge Trail, when complete, will be over 550 miles of trail open for hikers, equestrians, runners, and cyclists. It will connect over 75 parks and open spaces around the Bay Area.◆



New Shops for our New Downtown

What are the right new shops and merchants for Sycamore Downtown

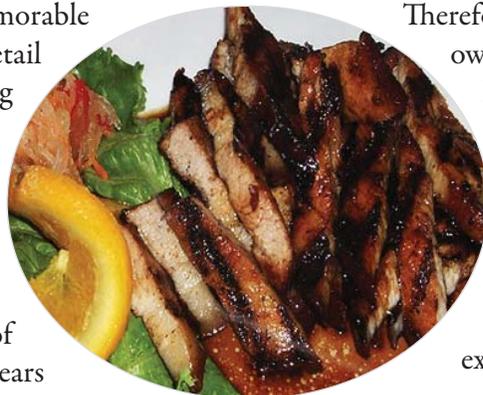
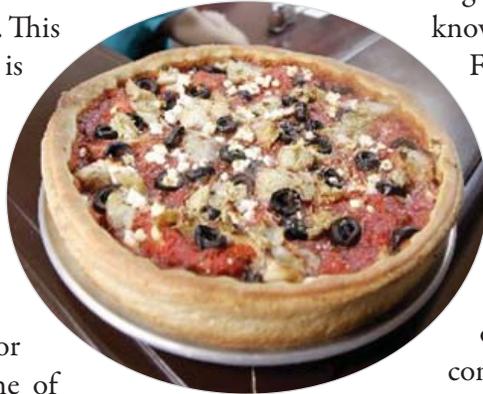
Construction of the large, mixed-use building complex is well underway on the north side of Sycamore Avenue with completion scheduled for next fall. This new building, called Sycamore North, is owned by the Hercules Redevelopment Agency. On the upper floors will be 96 residential units and the ground floor will contain about 14 shops, each one with an independent merchant.

Sycamore North is the first step in creating a “downtown district” for Hercules. It is planned to serve some of the retail needs of Hercules residents. More importantly, over time and with careful management, it can finally put Hercules “on the map” as a place in the Bay Area for people to visit, shop and spend time. Here’s how:

Like many other places, Hercules is well-supplied with two neighborhood shopping centers and two convenience shopping centers offering goods and services for most everyday needs such as groceries, dry cleaning, and banking. For many other categories of goods and services, Hercules residents must travel outside the city to big-box stores and regional malls.

People also need another kind of shopping: a “main street” or “downtown” retail and social experience. Bay Area people today use their local downtown retail districts to find unique, higher-value goods and services, and good value dining, offered in small, distinctive, memorable and pleasant places. Downtown retail districts also provide what shopping centers usually do not: people spending time with each other, in public places.

The typical downtown in an East Bay city was built around a streetcar stop, with buildings and shops directly fronting the public sidewalks instead of private parking lots. Often, over the years many distinctive merchants and restaurants established themselves in these downtown locations where people can discover shops on foot.



Each of these Bay Area downtown districts acquired its own “regional identity”, meaning that everybody knows where they are and what they offer.

For example, when you tell your friends that you’re travelling to shop in Walnut Creek or Emeryville, Berkeley or Napa, Crockett or San Rafael, they immediately know where you’re going and what kind of day you want to have. This “regional identity” depends on having unique shops directly fronting comfortable sidewalks with places for people, and merchants offering good value in merchandise, food, or services available nowhere else.

Because it does not have a downtown district, Hercules does not have a regional identity. For example, when you tell people where you live, often you’ll hear:

“Where is Hercules?” They don’t know where it is, or what kind of day they would have if they were to come here. So, people from around the Bay Area generally don’t know about or care to visit Hercules. And Herculeans have long sought a downtown district, as reported by the San Francisco Chronicle in the 2007 article “Long Way for a Latte”.

So, Sycamore North is the first step towards creating this identity. It will serve residents and also bring people (and their shopping dollars) from out of town. It can attract shoppers by giving them reasons to visit: unique shops in a pleasant place, available nowhere else.

Therefore, the Redevelopment Agency, as the owner of the building, faces a challenge. Instead of the years taken by other Bay Area downtowns, it must create a regional identity for Hercules almost overnight. To do this, it is actively but carefully recruiting merchants from around the Bay Area that can, all together, provide a downtown experience available nowhere else.

In 2009, the Agency retained an experienced retail manager to identify and attract retail businesses. That manager has spent countless hours searching for

❑ *Continued on page 4*

❑ *Sycamore Downtown continued from page 4*

businesses with consistent records of successful operation and distinctive, high quality merchandising. The diversity and combination of businesses is also important, because one business can generate customers for another. The Agency and manager are now in the process of signing leases with many of these businesses, securing their place as a part of Hercules downtown identity.

Hercules residents have for years asked for more dining options, and indeed the first three leases have been with restaurants. They are: Beanbag Café and Coffee House, Patxi's Chicago Pizza, and Boracay Garden and Grill. All are innovative establishments with strong management, financial resources and track records. Each is popular in the communities they serve.

Bean Bag Café, a neighborhood fixture in San Francisco, is one of the most anticipated arrivals. It is Herculean-owned. With an all-day, value-priced menu and a full-service coffee bar, it's not unusual to find a line out the door on weekends.

Loyal devotees refer to themselves as "the Beanbag Crew".

Patxi's Chicago Pizza was founded by a former principal of Zachary's Pizza, a Berkeley institution. Patxi's pizza recipe makes for a tender, flaky, pastry-like crust; they serve deep-dish and thin-crust styles. Patxi's two locations are neighborhood dining experiences, not pizza stores.

Boracay Garden and Grill offers affordably priced Filipino cuisine at its South San Francisco location. Regional favorites include Seafood Black Rice and the signature Green Mango Smoothie. Loyal patrons report being greeted like close relatives rather than customers.

These announcements are the first three restaurants, soft goods and service establishments that will comprise the shops of Sycamore North. The Redevelopment Agency, with the assistance of the retail manager, is confident it can meet the challenge of creating a regional shopping identity for Hercules. ♦



Over the summer, the Hercules Police Department erected a flag pole with donations received from members of the department.

Special thanks to the following:

Hercules Police Officers Association, Tim Stratmeyer, Darin Tellez, Fred Deltorchio, Tom Dalby, Bill Goswick, Connie and Peter Van Putten, Kin Kin Sandhu, and Billy Beason

Lewis St. & Clark St. Changed To One Way

As Sycamore North construction continues, residents of the nearby streets have seen a large increase in traffic. While the official detour loops motorists around S. Front Street to Tsushima, most motorists continue to cut through Lewis Street, ignoring the 'Local Traffic Only' signs.

To help alleviate this congestion, the Public Works Department has made Lewis Street and Clark Street, between South Front and Tsushima, one way. The speed limit has also been reduced from 25 mph to 15 mph. The parking available on both streets remains the same.

If you are traveling on Sycamore from the east (from San Pablo), turn right on South Front and then left on Clark Street, the second turn.

If you are traveling on Sycamore from the west (the Waterfront) turn left on Tsushima and then right on Lewis Street.

Once construction is complete and Sycamore North opens, both Lewis Street and Clark Street will be reconverted to two way streets.

During construction, be sure to follow all posted detour signs and always remember to obey the speed limit. ♦

HMU To Build Its Own Substation

In 1996, the issue of deregulating public utilities was placed before the California Legislature. Similar to federal deregulation of the telephone industry in 1984, the concept was to create more competition, additional business opportunities for smaller companies and lower costs for the consumer.

Once approved by the Legislature and signed by the Governor in the fall of 1996, deregulation required Investor Owned Utilities (IOU's) such as Pacific Gas and Electric and Southern California Edison to divest themselves of ownership of all three segments of the utility business including: generation, transmission, and distribution.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) was charged with the responsibility of creating a framework around which newly formed utilities could access the transmission system, including municipal owned utilities.

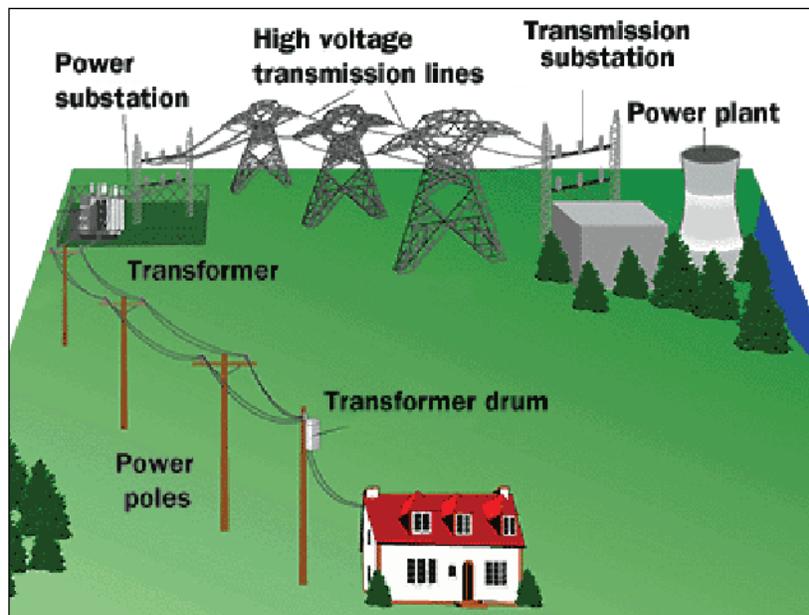
In 1999, the City began an earnest effort to study the issue of creating a number of municipally owned utilities including cable television, natural gas and electricity. The City investigated the feasibility of each and how each would serve the City as a source of income. Over the next two years and a number of public meetings, the City Council decided to create the Hercules Municipal Utility (HMU) to provide electricity to new developments being built in the city.

At first, HMU was small and without a backbone infrastructure, which means it did not have the needed transformers, electrical lines, vaults, or conduits to deliver electricity. In 2002, the City Council made the decision to finance the backbone system, enabling the HMU to distribute electricity to the Bayfront, Baywood and Promenade neighborhoods.

The only component of the distribution system that was not included in the HMU's backbone was a substation. Because the system was just getting started, construction of

a substation would have been too costly and was therefore delayed. However, when the City Council first approved the formation of the utility, the future need for a city owned substation was clear.

The California Independent System Operators (CAISO), which facilitates the electrical market, enabled the city to enter into an agreement with PG&E to use their substation, located along Willow Avenue. A Wholesale Distribution Tariff (WDT) Agreement was signed by the City and PG&E, which allows our locally owned utility to take power from this substation and deliver that power to its customers. When the City entered into that agreement a



The electrical business is divided into three segments: generation, transmission and distribution.

limit on the amount of electricity the City could take from that substation was set at 3.1 megawatts. At the time, PG&E believed that they could safely deliver that amount of power without requiring substantial improvements to the substation.

Because HMU uses the PG&E facility, a monthly fee is charged for that use. The charge is based on the amount of electricity that is sent through the distribution

lines to HMU customers. At the present time, the City pays PG&E approximately \$130,000 per year which is about 2.6 megawatts daily. When the city reaches the limit of 3.1 megawatts the annual payment to PG&E will exceed \$165,000 per year. This limit will also trigger the need for improvements to PG&E's substation.

Over the past seven years, the HMU has continued to move forward. The HMU has increased the size and length of the backbone system and now serves businesses in the North Shore Business Park, including a number of buildings for Bio-Rad. Although the world-wide financial crash of 2007 has slowed the growth of the City and its utility, the HMU has continued to grow and customers have continued to increase their demand for electricity. During the summer of 2009, the utility experienced several days when demand

❑ *Continued on page 6*

□ *HMU continued from page 5*

equaled 2.86 megawatts. Thus, the time has come to decide whether to improve upon the PG&E substation or to create our own substation.

If the city does not build its own substation, the city will be obligated to improve the PG&E substation at a cost which is estimated to be between \$700,000 and \$1.2 million. In addition to the cost for improvements, the City will still be required to pay an increased monthly fee to PG&E for the actual electricity. Since this fee is based on usage, the cost would continue to increase

as HMU grows. Furthermore, PG&E has the authority to change the rate it charges at any time, thus continuing to use their substation is a risky and costly endeavor, especially given the City's planned growth.

By creating our own substation, the HMU will have the ability to distribute electricity to our customers without limitation and provide the HMU with a fixed cost for distribution that is not controlled by volume. Since the distribution costs will be fixed with a city owned facility, additional customers do not increase the costs to serve them.

Due to these benefits, over the past eighteen months, the City Council has proceeded with plans for the construction of a new substation. A number of different sites were analyzed before the current site at the end of Palm Avenue was selected. The site is approximately 1.25 acres and is located between the Caltrans Service Facility and Valley Bible Church, both on Willow Avenue. The City has retained Mr. Glenn Reddick to oversee the design and construction of the new substation. Mr. Reddick has extensive experience in electric utilities and has worked with the HMU in a variety of capacities since 2005. The design of the new substation will allow for Hercules Municipal Utility to serve all existing customers and create additional capacity to serve future development in the City.

On August 25, 2010, the City completed a bond financing

of \$5.9 million to provide funding for the new substation. Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has been completed and engineering is underway. It is anticipated that construction of the new substation will

be completed in the fall of 2011.

Once the substation is complete, the HMU will no longer be connected to the PG&E distribution system, which will increase the system's reliability and ability to serve its customers. However, the system will still rely on the PG&E transmission system. City staff is already working with PG&E staff to complete a new

interconnection agreement for the use of the transmission system.

As new development occurs at the Waterfront, the Hercules New Town Center, Sycamore North and Sycamore Crossings, the City and the HMU will be prepared to serve the new customers with reliable electrical service. ♦



Site of proposed HMU substation, between Valley Bible Church and Caltrans Maintenance Station, at the end of Palm Avenue

City CAFR Receives High Honor

The Hercules Finance Department was recently awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for Fiscal Year 2009. This is the highest form of recognition in the area of governmental accounting and financial reporting and represents a significant accomplishment by the City of Hercules.

An impartial panel judges an agency's CAFR based on its "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story and motivate potential users and user groups to read the CAFR.

The GFOA is a nonprofit professional association serving approximately 17,500 government finance professionals.

Two New Principals Lead Hercules Schools

Last spring, Hanna Ranch Elementary School Principal Anita Hayward and Rodeo Hills Elementary School Principal Linda Steensrud both retired after decades of service to their respective schools and district.

While they will be missed, their schools are left in good hands. Principal Greg Santiago served as principal for five years in the district before coming to Hanna Ranch and Principal Steve Trotter served as the vice principal at John Swett High School before coming to Rodeo Hills. Community Relations Officer Michelle Harrington sat down with them to learn more about their goals and ambitions for the future.



New Hanna Ranch Principal Greg Santiago in his office

Hanna Ranch Elementary Principal Greg Santiago

Tell us about your background:

I graduated from the University of New Mexico in 1992. After I returned to the East Bay and decided to continue my education. I received my AA from Diablo Valley College in early childhood education. I spent three and a half years as a Preschool Teacher and Director in Walnut Creek. I wanted to open my own preschool but really began to enjoy working with students at various grade levels and decided to pursue a teaching credential. I received my elementary teaching credential from California State University, Hayward. I then went on to get my M.S. from the University of California Berkeley. I was Vice Principal of Downer for two years and Principal at Riverside for five years before coming to Hanna Ranch as Principal.

What are your goals for Hanna Ranch Elementary?

I want to get acclimated to the school and the community.

Not just to learn about it, but become a part of it. I plan to continue Hanna Ranch's well founded academic tradition as well as focus on nutrition, character building, and other skills kids need to succeed. Students need to learn to be collaborative and independent, but also interdependent. There continues to be huge competition for jobs, and that is only going to grow. I want to make sure students are ready for that competition and adapt to overcome barriers they may encounter.

What challenges do you face?

I see challenges as opportunities. If we do need to make improvements, let's look at solutions. I believe we can maintain our high expectations by bringing folks together on issues and working through them. It is a collaborative effort. I have a "never say fail" attitude. I believe that any child, anywhere, at anytime, can be whoever they want to be. I think it was Henry Ford who said "Failure is the opportunity to begin again more intelligently." If you have that mentality, you can't be beat.

What do you think is the best aspect of Hanna Ranch?

Hanna Ranch has a very positive atmosphere and climate. We have a strong teaching staff and a very supportive community.

What are you passionate about?

I'm really passionate about moving all students to proficiency. Our school is rich in culture and I believe with school and community support, we can bring that to the forefront and learn from each other. I really like the diversity at Hanna Ranch, it is one of the reasons that brought me here. I have a passion for student achievement and I really enjoy working with students, teachers and parents to create an atmosphere that develops students into lifelong learners. I'm also passionate about building relationships. There is no more important relationship in a school than between student and teacher. When a teacher knows a student, their strengths and weaknesses, they can differentiate the instructive process to meet those needs and thus, move them towards academic progress and social success. In this area we are fortunate to have such a devoted staff.

What would you want the community to know?

I enjoy meeting with parents, discussing students and student work. I'm collaborative and want to provide a well rounded support system for our kids-meaning mine and yours. **Continued on page 8**

□ *Principals continued from page 7*



New Principal Steve Trotter in his office at Rodeo Hills

Rodeo Hills Elementary Principal Steve Trotter

Tell us about your background:

I was born and raised in Rodeo and attended John Swett Schools. I received my BA from U.C. Berkeley and my teaching credentials from San Francisco State University. After teaching in Daly City for a year, I returned to John Swett High School in 2003. I was a history teacher at the High School until last year when I finished my Masters in Educational Leadership from CSU East Bay and became the Assistant Principal. Then this year, I moved to the elementary school as the Principal. My wife also grew up in Rodeo and we have two young daughters.

What are your goals for Rodeo Hills Elementary?

I want us to have a positive school culture. We are a great school with high expectations and a hard working staff, and we need to stress the positive all the time. We need to get to know our students by developing relationships with them and reaching out to parents in a way that is effective for the individual family. I've assembled a team that is committed to creating the best possible environment for all students, all the time.

I also want us to have a laser like focus on reading. We constantly need to evaluate how we are measuring learning and there is always room for improvement. Reading is instrumental to all other education areas, so it is vital for student success.

My third goal is to assist students with using and learning about technology. Funds are tight, but we can't just let technology go by the way side. Even at the high school, a lot of students still don't know how to use computers. They may know how to use video games, cell phones, but not necessarily computers. We need to change that and it may mean getting creative, such as using Donors Choose,

working with the PTA and being selective in where we use technology funds.

What do you think is the best aspect of Rodeo Hills?

The kids. They love learning and they're excited about coming, even if they're struggling. They have friends here and it is a safe place for them.

Our teachers are also amazing. They have spent so much time making this a good school and a safe place. For them, it is home, it is family and it really shows. Even if they have a concern or complaint, it is because they care so deeply for these kids.

What would you say is your greatest career accomplishment so far?

I'm really proud of assisting teachers with learning from their peers. When I was in graduate school, I started a program at the John Swett High, where teachers could observe each other in the classroom. There is a lot of pressure on teachers right now. The system is very rigid, but teachers are human beings. So if a teacher has a concern about an area, or they just want to see a different way of doing something, they have that opportunity, without the fear that it will be used against them. Often times we think 'no one can understand what I'm going through' and we need to break through that isolation to improve. Schools are better off when teachers can learn from one another and can feed off of each others' talents and passions.

What are you passionate about?

I'm passionate about helping peers work together, coming up with solutions and making kids excited about school and feel successful. If I can make a kid excited about learning, that they feel safe and become passionate about school, that could be the stepping stone for success. Another passion I have is analyzing data and trends. When we dig deep to see why things are the way they are, we can try to replicate that success or eliminate repeating those mistakes.

How do you see Rodeo Hills in the future?

I see us as the center of the community. Even though the community has gone through rough times, we are on our way to making this school a source of pride, and not just for parents, but for the entire community. I want to see collective recognition that this is a great school, where people recognize 'wow, we have wonderful schools here.' The school is able to support the community in unique ways such as volunteering, cleaning up neighborhoods, even offering classes for adults and when we do that, we really become the heart of the community. ♦

Duck Pond Park Almost Complete

Bocce ball courts, horseshoe pits and a new picnic area will all be enjoyed when the long awaited Duck Pond Park finally opens next month. Construction crews have been working nonstop since July to open the park, which brings new amenities to Hercules.

The park is slightly less than 3 acres in size and will have a large grass area, gazebo, a picnic area and walking path on the perimeter of the park in addition to Hercules first bocce ball courts and horseshoe pits. The park will also have a Memorial Grove where Herculeans can dedicate a tree in honor of a loved one. More details on the Memorial Grove program will be available in the next Herculean and on the City's website.

Additionally, Duck Pond Park has a space reserved to be the future home of the historic Queen Anne, currently sitting on City property off of Willet Avenue. The Queen Anne



Hercules newest park, Duck Pond Park, is scheduled to open just in time for the Holidays

will eventually be restored and moved to the site to be used as a community building. A date for completing this phase of the project has not been determined. In the meantime, the reserved space will serve as a second grassy play area.

Prior to construction, the area was mostly dirt and open space, but is quickly transforming into a beautiful park. The majority of the hill on the south side of the

park was removed, including numerous non-native eucalyptus trees, however, these trees are being replaced with native trees that are less prone to breakage and fallen debris. Furthermore, the change in the topography has allowed for an additional walking path while expanding the overall area of usable park space for Herculeans to enjoy for years to come.

At the time of print, a grand opening date has not been set. Please check the City's website for grand opening details.

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LIC:073406767

RHFD Welcomes New Member to Team

On September 1st, the Rodeo-Hercules Fire District held a badge pinning ceremony at the Hercules City Hall Council Chambers. Interim Fire Chief, Alan Biagi, announced two promotions and introduced the newest member of the Rodeo-Hercules Fire District. Rick Perez began his career with the District in 1994 and was promoted from the rank of Engineer to Captain in June of 2010. Jack Clapp began his career with the District in 2000 and was promoted from the rank of Firefighter/Paramedic to Engineer/Paramedic in June of 2010. The newest member of the District, Matthew Estrada, was a Reserve Firefighter before becoming a full-time Firefighter/Paramedic in August 2010. Chief Biagi extended his congratulations for the hard work and dedication these individuals have provided to the District and for their continued success in their fire service careers. Family and friends enjoyed a brief luncheon after the event. ♦



(From left to right) Rodeo-Hercules Fire District promoted Rick Perez to Captain, Jack Clapp to Engineer/Paramedic and new hire Matthew Estrada to Firefighter/Paramedic

Think You Can't Afford Auto Insurance?

Before you hit the road, make sure you're covered

The California Department of Insurance (CDI) has a timely reminder for drivers as the holidays approach and Californians take to the road: the State of California offers an affordable insurance program so all qualified motorists can drive with confidence.

“California’s Low Cost Automobile Insurance Program provides you with the liability insurance required by law, so that you and your family are covered for the upcoming travel season,” said Commissioner Steve Poizner. “The economy is tough, but this program is affordable and it may be just right for you. With California’s Low Cost Automobile Insurance Program, you can get where you’re going safely and legally.”

The California Low Cost Automobile Insurance Program was established in 1999 as a pilot program in Los Angeles and San Francisco. Senate Bill 20, passed in 2005, authorized the Commissioner to launch the program statewide and in 2007, the program was made available to every county in the state.

The holidays are approaching and more and more Californians will plan to get out and drive. But for many it may not be a safe trip. Currently, eighteen percent of California motorists are uninsured. That number is expected to increase as unemployment rises. Many drivers can afford California’s Low Cost Auto Insurance program – a state sponsored program for struggling Californians

who have a good driving record – and payment options are available. In many areas of California, the program costs around \$400 a year, making it even more affordable. And it’s easy to qualify. The eligibility requirements include:

- An applicant must be a “good driver” – no more than one at-fault property damage only accident, or one point for a moving violation in the past three years.
- Applicant must be at least 19 years of age or older and a continuously licensed driver for the past three years.
- No at-fault accident involving bodily injury or death in the past three years and no felony or misdemeanor conviction for a violation of the Vehicle Code.
- Family meets income eligibility limits of \$27,075 for a single person, \$36,425 for two persons and \$55,125 for a family of four.
- The value of an insured vehicle must not exceed \$20,000.

While the economic benefits are substantial and more drivers are eligible, the CDI also wants to remind drivers that they need insurance; it’s the law. Driving without insurance can lead to actions such as a suspended license, an impounded car or a fine. It’s not worth the risk.

To learn if you qualify for California’s Low Cost Automobile Insurance Program, visit www.insurance.ca.gov/LOWCOST, or call (866) 60-AUTO-1. ♦

Code Compliance Corner

What type of work requires a permit?

Most work requires that a permit be obtained before beginning the project. The California Building Code states, "Any owner or authorized agent who intends to construct, enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure, or to erect, install, enlarge, alter, repair, remove, convert or replace any electrical, mechanical or plumbing system, the installation of which is regulated by this code, or to cause any such work to be done, shall first make application to the building official and obtain the required permit." As you can see, there isn't much that doesn't require a permit.

There is however, work that is considered exempt. The "Code" identifies the following as not needing a permit:

1. One-story detached accessory structures used as tool and storage sheds, playhouses and similar uses, provided the floor area doesn't exceed 120 square feet. (Please be advised that all structures whether exempt or not must still meet zoning setback requirements.)
2. Fences not over six feet high.
3. Oil Derricks.
4. Retaining walls that are not over four feet in height measured from the bottom of the footing and not supporting a surcharge.
5. Water Tanks. (Does not include water heaters)
6. Sidewalks and driveways not over thirty inches above

grade and not part of an accessible route.

7. Painting, papering, tiling, carpeting and similar finish work.
8. Temporary motion picture, television and theater stage sets and scenery.
9. Pre-fabricated swimming pools accessory to a residential structure that are less than 24 inches deep.
10. Shade cloth structures constructed for nursery or agricultural purposes.
11. Swings and other playground equipment accessory to one and two-family residences.
12. Window awnings supported by an exterior wall that do not project more than 54 inches from the exterior wall of residential occupancies.
13. Non-fixed and movable fixtures, cases, racks, counters and partitions not over 5 feet 9 inches tall.

In addition, portable heating devices, portable cooling devices, self-contained refrigeration systems containing 10 pounds or less of refrigerant, the stopping of leaks in drains, and the clearing of stoppages in waste pipes are exempt.

Work being done without the proper permits is subject to a double fee penalty, so it is always a good idea to call the Building Division to see if your project needs a permit or not. We can be reached at 510-799-8244. We look forward to working with you to make sure your project is everything you hoped it would be. ♦

Receive Text & Email Alerts with Nixle

The Hercules Police Department is now a registered contributor to the Nixle® community notification service. The web-based service, provided by Nixle LLC, is a geographic-based public notification system available free of charge to residents of Hercules. You are invited to register by going to www.nixle.com.

Once you are at [Nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com), simply click on the "Residents Sign Up Now" button to begin your registration. You will be asked for your name, address, e-mail address, and cell phone number. The address is required as the basis for sending messages relevant to your neighborhood. You will also be able to register additional addresses in order to receive alerts based on more than one location. Once registered, you will receive e-mail alerts and text messages from authenticated agencies like ours who serve your community. From within

your Nixle account, you always have the option to define what notifications you receive and from whom. You may opt out of receiving messages from any participating agency.

The Hercules Police Department intends for Nixle to be an additional source of information for residents of Hercules.



20 Things Your Burglar Won't Tell You



1. Of course I look familiar. I was here just last week cleaning your carpets, painting your shutters, or delivering your new refrigerator.

2. Hey, thanks for letting me use the bathroom when I was working in your yard last week. While I was in there, I unlatched the back window to make my return a little easier.

3. Love those flowers. That tells me you have taste... and taste means there are nice things inside. Those yard toys your kids leave out always make me wonder what type of gaming system they have.

4. Yes, I really do look for newspapers piled up on the driveway. And I might leave a pizza flyer in your front door to see how long it takes you to remove it.

5. If decorative glass is part of your front entrance, don't let your alarm company install the control pad where I can see if it's set. That makes it too easy.

6. A good security company alarms the window over the sink. And the windows on the second floor, which often access the master bedroom - and your jewelry. It's not a bad idea to put motion detectors up there too.

7. It's raining, you're fumbling with your umbrella, and you forget to lock your door - understandable. But understand this: I don't take a day off because of bad weather.

8. I always knock first. If you answer, I'll ask for directions somewhere or offer to clean your gutters. (Don't take me up on it.)

9. Do you really think I won't look in your sock drawer? I always check dresser drawers, the bedside table, and the medicine cabinet.

10. Here's a helpful hint: I almost never go into kids' rooms.

11. You're right: I won't have enough time to break into that safe where you keep your valuables. But if it's not bolted down, I'll take it with me.

12. A loud TV or radio can be a better deterrent than the best alarm system. If you're reluctant to leave your TV on

while you're out of town, you can buy a \$35 device that works on a timer and simulates the flickering glow of a real television.

13. Sometimes, I carry a clipboard. Sometimes, I dress like a lawn guy and carry a rake. I do my best to never, ever look like a crook.

14. The two things I hate most: loud dogs and nosy neighbors.

15. I'll break a window to get in, even if it makes a little noise. If your neighbor hears one loud sound, he'll stop what he's doing and wait to hear it again. If he doesn't hear it again, he'll just go back to what he was doing. It's human nature.

16. I'm not complaining, but why would you pay all that money for a fancy alarm system and leave your house without setting it?



17. I love looking in your windows. I'm looking for signs that you're home, and for flat screen TVs or gaming systems I'd like. I'll drive or walk through your neighborhood at night, before you close the blinds, just to pick my targets.

18. Avoid announcing your vacation on your Facebook page. It's easier than you think to look up your address.

19. To you, leaving that window open just a crack during the day is a way to let in a little fresh air. To me, it's an invitation.

20. If you don't answer when I knock, I try the door. Occasionally, I hit the jackpot and walk right in. ♦

Serious Injury • Auto Accident

Donald E. Patterson

Attorney at Law

Plaza Two, Hilltop Office Park
3260 Blume Drive, Suite 410
Richmond

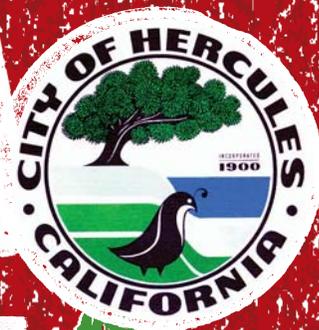


FREE CONSULTATION 510-262-2120

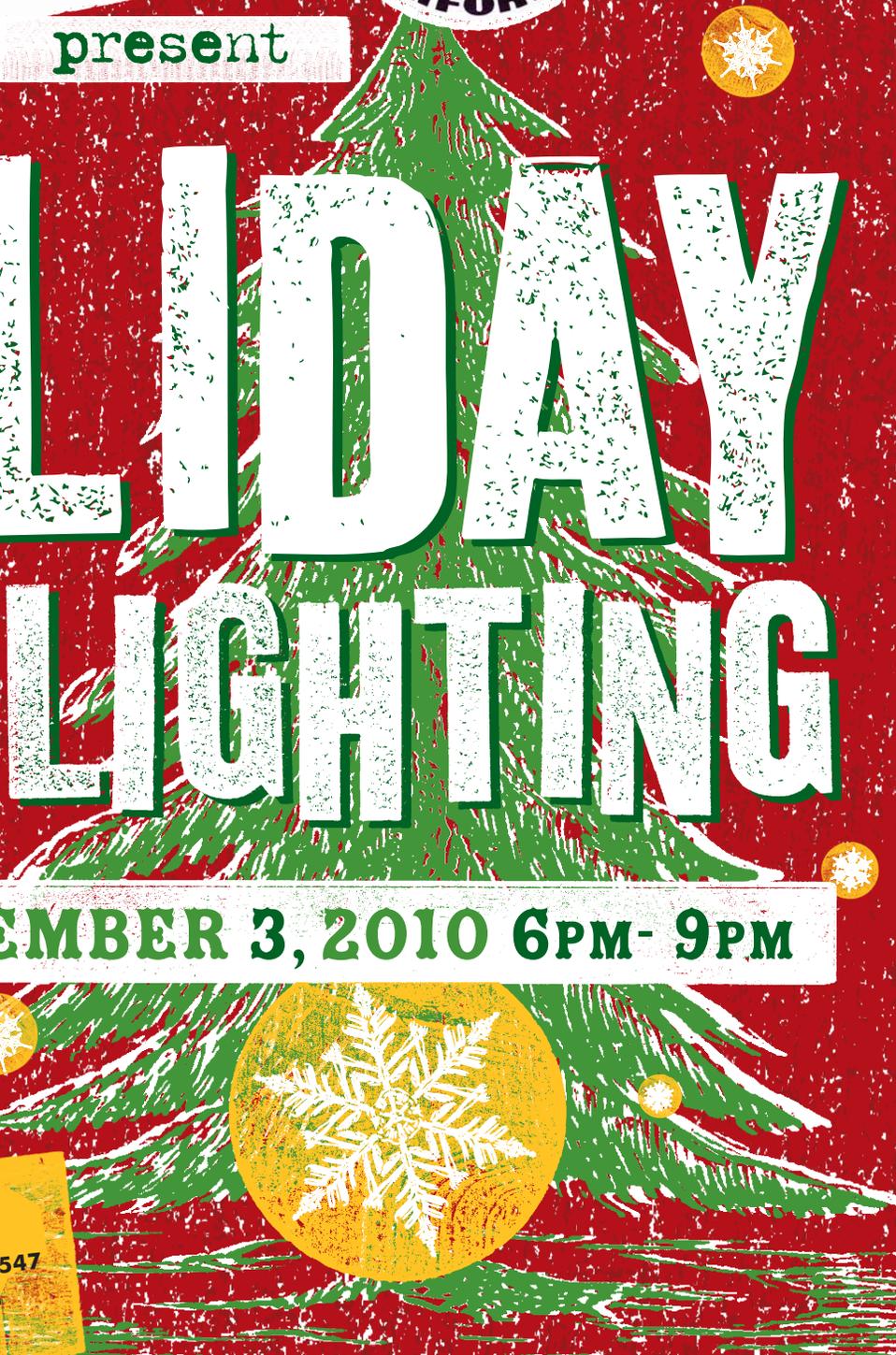


MARKET
HALL

and



present



HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2010 6PM- 9PM



NEW EVENT LOCATION!

MARKET HALL
4000 San Pablo Avenue Hercules, CA 94547
events@herculesmarkethall.com



WestCAT's LYNX Receives Transit Excellence Award

The Western Contra Costa Transit Authority's (WestCAT) LYNX transbay express bus service was honored at the 45th Annual Fall Conference & Expo of the California Transit Association (CTA) as the 2010 recipient of CTA's Small Operator Award for Transit Excellence. The WestCAT LYNX is a direct express bus service across the San Francisco/Oakland Bay Bridge between Hercules and the Transbay Terminal in San Francisco's financial district.

CTA is a statewide association representing virtually all public transit agencies in California. CTA's Small Operator Award for Transit Excellence "recognizes an outstanding program or service that demonstrates innovative concepts or effective problem-solving techniques, or promotes a positive image of transit in the community". WestCAT's General Manager, Charles Anderson and the Vice-Chair of WestCAT's Board of Directors, Joanne Ward were both on hand to receive the award.

WestCAT began operating the LYNX service after the passage of Regional Measure 2 (RM-2) increased tolls to support additional transit operations to relieve congestion on Bay Area bridges. The service was an immediate success, meeting its goal of removing 100,000 peak trips from Interstate 80 (the region's most congested freeway) in its first year of operation. The LYNX continues to attract new riders, and is projected to carry more than 160,000 passengers this year.

The LYNX now holds the honor of being the most successful RM-2 project in the San Francisco Bay Area. According to WestCAT's General Manager, Charles Anderson, "The combined revenue collected from LYNX passenger fares and an exterior advertising agreement with the City of Hercules covers more than 92% of total LYNX operating costs, leaving less than 8% to be supported by RM-2 toll revenue. While the LYNX accounts for only a tenth of WestCAT's total system hours, it generates more than a quarter of annual farebox revenue for the system."

On July 1, 2010, WestCAT added peak trips and introduced midday LYNX service to coincide with the toll increase on



WestCAT LYNK honored as the Small Operator of the Year by the California Transit Association

Bay Area bridges and introduction of a toll for carpools. The service expansion was targeted at providing additional capacity and transportation options to move commuters out of private automobiles in the Bay Bridge corridor. On August 31, 2010 the LYNX reached a service milestone, 769 passengers transported in a single operating day.

All LYNX vehicles offer complimentary Wi-Fi internet access. WestCAT has recently completed implementation of a real-time information system offering passengers the ability to download departure times for the LYNX and its other express and local routes directly to their cell phones via the regional 511 system.

For more information about the LYNX or any other WestCAT service visit www.westcat.org or call (510) 724-7993.

ST. PATRICK PRESCHOOL

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CONTACT:
MS. STEPHANIE CAMPBELL
DIRECTOR
510-799-6683

abcde

City of Hercules ANNUAL CLEAN-UP DAY



**Saturday, November 20, 2010
8:00am-11:00am
for Hercules residents only
*Must show ID***

**We will be collecting non-perishable food items
for the Contra Costa County Food Bank**

For more detailed information, call Mindy Niualiku at
(510) 799-8230 or visit us online at www.ci.hercules.ca.us

**ELECTRONIC WASTE THAT IS NOT ACCEPTED AT THE
CLEAN-UP DAY DROP OFF SITE MAY BE DROPPED OFF
AT THE E-WASTE COLLECTION SITE LOCATED AT THE
HOME DEPOT PARKING LOT**



Saturday, 11/20 from 9am-3pm & Sunday, 11/21 from 9am-3pm

Hercules' Boy Scout Troop 76 Celebrates A Century of Making a Difference

For 100 years, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) has created a strong foundation of leadership, service, and community for millions of America's youth. Even though many things have changed over the last century, the basic tenet of building good, productive citizens has remained consistent. And there's no better place to create productive citizens than in our own neighborhood. Since 1976, Hercules Boy Scout Troop 76 has served its community and families. In celebration of 100 years of scouting, the troop has participated in several special events over the past few months, including Adventure Base 100, a travelling expo showing the many aspects of scouting with interactive activities, games, displays, videos, a climbing wall and ropes course.

Troop 76 also served the Hercules community by helping to clean up Hercules Middle and High School on Hercules City Wide Clean Up Day. During the holidays, they collected a car load of groceries from generous families and donated them to Boy Scouts annual "Scouting for Food" program, which helps feed families in need. And they proudly marched in the Hercules' Fourth of July parade and helped with the festivities at Market Hall.

The scouts in Troop 76 are go-getters: they are actively pursuing the Boy Scouts of America's Year of Celebration award. Program participants can earn recognition for making a difference in their communities by showing their dedication to five of Scouting's core values: leadership, character, community service, achievement, and the outdoors. Through this commitment, participants can earn five award ribbons that can be displayed on the BSA's 100th Anniversary commemorative patch.

Their goals for this year are to help with many more Hercules community events and programs, including the Hercules Lions Club Annual Crab Feed, Hercules City Wide Clean Up Day, East Bay Regional Parks District Coastal Clean Up Day, the Hercules Business and Consumer Expo, and the Hercules Tree Lighting Ceremony.

Troop 76 meets every Tuesday at 7:15pm at Hanna Ranch Elementary School (2480 Refugio Valley Road, Hercules) in the Multi-Purpose Room.

Need a scout? Give them a shout! If you are interested in finding out more about Boy Scouts or wish to join the troop, please contact Mr. Jim McMillan (510) 724-0566 or email: jmmcmillan@katewwdb.com. ♦



Hercules Boy Scouts Troop 76 Participating in 2010 4th of July Parade



Troop 76 holding Bridging Ceremony to welcome new Boy Scout into program



Troop 76 serving as color guard for UC Berkeley baseball game

Market Hall Continues to be a Place for the Community to Get Together

Since the grand opening in May, Market Hall has quickly become a great place for the community to gather with an array of events ranging from family oriented, to entertainment, to educational.

Market Hall hosts weekly community activities, including local Mom's groups, like The Busy Bees of Contra Costa County, who utilize the playground adjacent to Moschetti's Coffee Shop to entertain their children while enjoying a cup of freshly brewed organic java. Every Saturday local vendors with the Hercules Certified Farmers Market set-up shop on the Market Hall parking lot, offering the community local, fresh, and organic produce from the bountiful surrounding agricultural area. Accompanying the Farmers Market on the Market Hall stage, customers were treated to free live music from local Bay Area artists including Acoustic S + M, Ian Franklin, Seasons of Us, Steve Meckfessel, Hawaiian Kaju, and Deborah Crooks.

During the warm summer Herculean nights, Market Hall hosted their Movie Mania series on Saturdays, showing free screenings of films such as Cars, 17 Again, and Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs. The Movie Mania events gathered hundreds of local families together with their blankets and lawn chairs creating long lasting memories.

In addition to family oriented activities, Market Hall plays an active role in supporting local, community driven programs. The Richmond High School Law Academy hosted a Mentor Day at Market Hall, where students in the Law Academy partnered with local law officials, including police, judges, lawyers, paralegals, and other legal professionals to expose them to the many facets of a successful legal



Market Hall has it all, shopping, food and unique places to relax

career. The American Cancer Society's Hercules Relay for Life hosted several fun karaoke fundraisers at Market Hall, raising thousands of dollars for a great cause. Meanwhile, the local chapter of the Asian American Donor Program hosted a bone marrow drive to find a match for a local child. And the City of Hercules hosted a special farewell luncheon at Market Hall for the Sister City Program participants.

Holiday events got customers of Market Hall into the spirit of Halloween with Pick of the Patch Pumpkins, a wonderfully fun family friendly pumpkin patch with inflatable rides, a variety of pumpkin options, and a spooky Haunted House organized by the Hercules T.Y.C. Market Halloween Fest on October 30 brought together little ghosts and goblins for trick-or-treating, live music, costume and pumpkin carving contests, and a free screening of the film Hocus Pocus.

Starting November 20th, ABC Tree Farms, will offer a variety of holiday trees including the Douglas Fir, Noble Fir, Grand Fir, and Frasier Firs from Oregon and Washington at Market Hall. Herculeans may also purchase their holiday wreaths, garlands, tree stands, and bowls at ABC Tree Farms. The shops and food trucks at Market Hall are all owned and operated by local entrepreneurs and offer a variety of gifts perfect for the holiday season, including catering for holiday parties.

Other future events at Market Hall will include their first Holiday Craft Bazaar, offering hand-crafted items by lo-

❑ *Continued on page 18*



Hercules first ever Bocce Ball courts have been a big attraction at Market Hall, in addition to the many events

❑ *Market Hall continued* *from page 17*

cal artisans for sale and will feature live music, food, and s'mores by the fire. The event will take place on several dates including, Saturdays, November 6 and 13 and December 4 and 11. Additionally, the Holiday Bazaar will be held on Friday, December 3, during the Hercules Annual Holiday Tree Lighting event. Interested artisans may email: arts@herculesmarkethall.com or submit an application at www.herculesmarkethall.com. Market Hall is also available for rent for private parties and events; inquiries can be sent to events@herculesmarkethall.com. ♦



Students from the Tsushima Sister City Association enjoying lunch at Market Hall During their recent visit to Hercules

Avoid Becoming a Victim of ATM Skimming

What is ATM skimming? For those who might not already know, it essentially involves a card-reading device placed over the real card slot on an ATM.

This device captures account information from the card. Meanwhile, the victim's PIN is captured, either with a small camera hidden on the machine or with a keypad overlay that can be removed later.

The criminal creates a new card using blank plastic card stock (even gift cards that haven't been activated), which are then used to drain victims' accounts. All of these devices can blend in extremely well with the real ATM hardware and can be hard to detect.

So, how do you avoid ATM skimming? First, only use ATMs in well-lit areas, and that have security cameras installed. The machine outside a financial institution with a camera and a bank of floodlights is going to be a lot harder to retrofit than the one at the corner of a poorly lit parking lot.

Second, pay attention. Put the phone down when you're at the ATM. For one thing, you need to be alert for suspicious devices. For another, it's always a good idea to be alert to your surroundings any time you're handling a wad of cash in public (for your physical safety). You can't do either with a cell phone on your ear.

Before you even take out your card, check the machine and everything around it. Look for parts that seem crooked, or decals that are partially covered. This is just one possible sign of skimming. A reader that's a different color than the rest of the machine can also be a clue. However, some of these devices are small enough to only cover the slot itself. A lot of machines have lights around the slot; if these are not

visible, it could mean a device has been attached. Basically, if something doesn't seem right, find a different machine.

Also, check out any brochure racks or other items on or near the ATM. Cameras can be hidden just about anywhere these days. As an extra precaution, when you're entering your PIN, cover your hand with your other hand.

Try jiggling the machine a little before inserting your card. Give the card slot a little tug to make sure there isn't any "bonus hardware". Don't attempt to rip the reader out of the machine. Just give it a little push to make sure it's part of the machine.

These devices are usually held loosely in place with glue or tape, as the thief must remove them later. Give the keypad a once-over. If it sticks out to far or looks strange, it could be a warning sign.

If you do this, and a skimmer detaches itself from the machine, either contact the financial institution (if it's nearby) or the police. Whatever you do, don't just throw it away or keep it. That would tend to make it look like you're the one running the scheme.

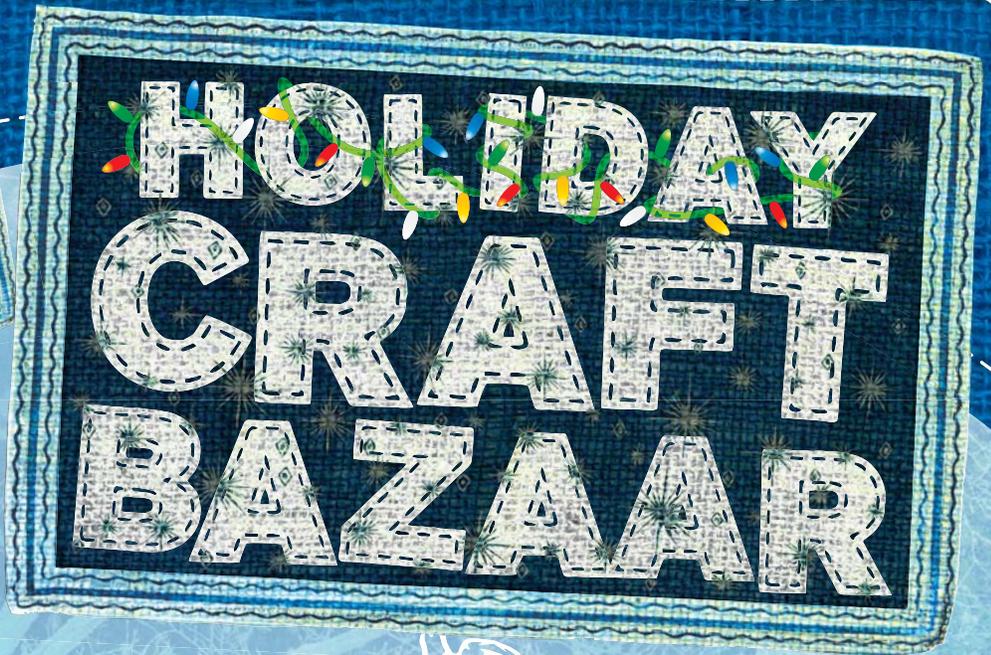
Skimming devices have also shown up on gas pumps. If you are going to use your debit card for gas, make sure to look before you swipe. Gas pumps are an easy place to stick a skimmer because card readers in this case vary from station to station, and many of them look like they're about to fall apart anyway. It's hard to tell what's legit and what isn't.

A few precautions and being alert while using an ATM can keep your information safe.

So the next time you visit an ATM, think about ATM skimming and beware so that no fraudster can take advantage of you. ♦



**HAND CRAFTED
ARTISAN ITEMS!**



Saturday

November 6 & 13 10am - 5pm

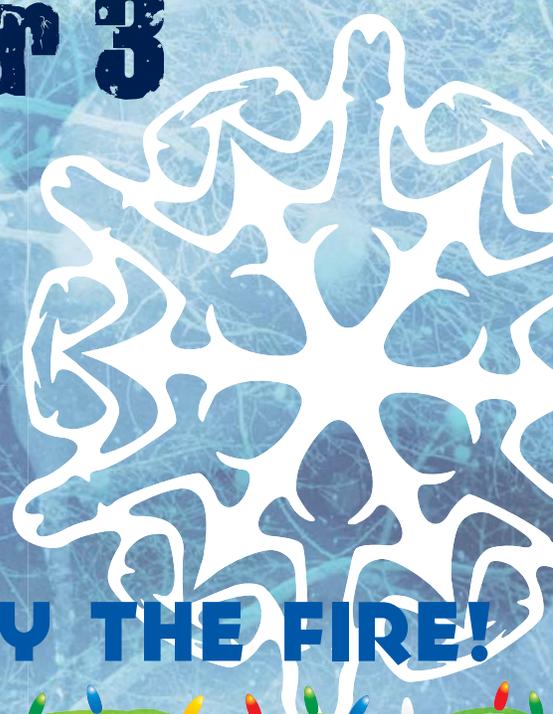


Friday

**December 3
8pm - 9pm**

Saturday

**December 4 & 11
10am - 5pm**



LIVE MUSIC! SMORES BY THE FIRE!

Applications, info on booth rentals, and more details regarding the Market Hall Holiday Bazaar available at www.herculesmarkethall.com or contact arts@herculesmarkethall.com

Market Hall :: 4000 San Pablo Avenue :: Hercules, CA 94547

 www.facebook.com/HerculesMarketHall  <http://twitter.com/HercMarketHall>

www.herculesmarkethall.com

Smoke Alarms Can Save Your Life

Why are smoke alarms important?

Every year in the United States, about 3,000 people lose their lives in residential fires. In a fire, smoke and deadly gases tend to spread farther and faster than heat. That's one reason why most fire victims die from inhalation of smoke and toxic gases, not as a result of burns. A majority of fatal fires happen when families are asleep because occupants are unaware of the fire until there is not adequate time to escape. A smoke alarm stands guard around the clock and when it first senses smoke, it sounds a shrill alarm.

This often allows a family the precious, but limited time it takes to escape. About two-thirds of home fire deaths occur in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. Properly installed and maintained smoke alarms are considered to be one of the best and least expensive means of providing an early warning of a potentially deadly fire and could reduce the risk of dying from a fire in your home by almost half.

Where should smoke alarms be installed?

Smoke alarms should be installed on every level of the home, outside sleeping areas, and inside bedrooms. A smoke alarm should be installed and maintained according to the manufacturer's instructions. When installing a smoke alarm, many factors influence where you will place it, including how many are to be installed. Consider placing alarms along your escape path to assist in egress in limited visibility conditions. In general you should place alarms in the center of a ceiling or, if you place them on a wall, they should be 6 to 12 inches below the ceiling.

Which Smoke Alarm Type is Better?

Although there are several choices to make in selecting the right smoke alarms to buy, the most important thing to remember is that smoke alarms save lives. For that reason, you should make sure working smoke alarms are installed in your home.

There are two main types of smoke alarms, which are

categorized by the type of smoke detection sensor, ionization and photoelectric, used in the alarm. A smoke alarm uses one or both methods, sometimes with a heat detector, to warn of a fire.

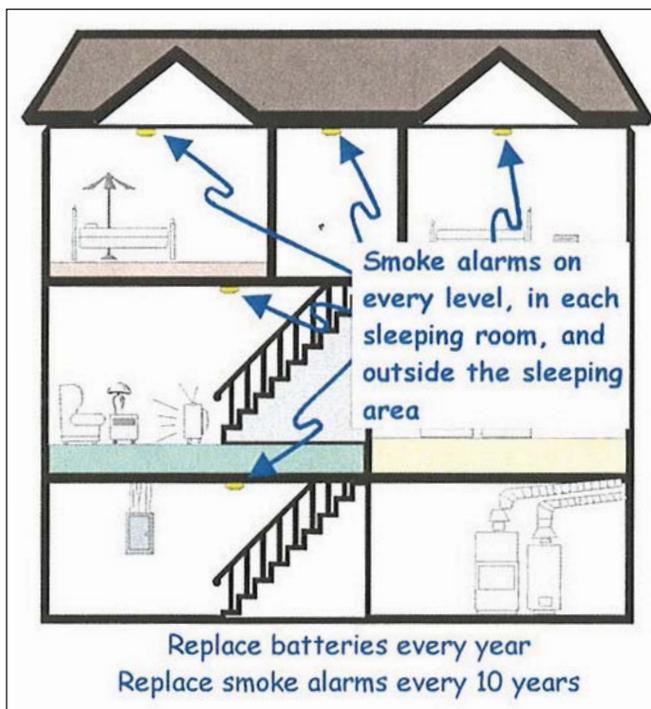
Ionization detectors contain a chamber with two plates that generate a small, continuous electric current. When smoke enters the ionization chamber, the smoke particles disrupt the current flow, which triggers the alarm.

Photoelectric detectors use a light beam and light receptor (photocell). When smoke is present between the light and

receptor, depending on the type of smoke chamber configuration, the reduction or increase of light on the photocell sensor triggers the alarm. Both ionization and photoelectric detectors are effective smoke sensors. Even though both types of smoke detectors must pass the same tests to be certified to the voluntary standard for smoke alarms, they can perform differently in different types of fires. Ionization detectors respond quickly to flaming fires with smaller combustion particles; photoelectric detectors respond more quickly to smoldering fires. There are combination smoke alarms also that use

ionization and photoelectric detectors in one unit, called dual sensor smoke alarms.

- Replace smoke alarm batteries at least annually, such as when resetting clocks in the fall or spring.
- Test all smoke alarms in your house once a month.
- Do not place a smoke alarm too close to a kitchen appliance or fireplace, as this may result in nuisance alarms.
- Avoid locating alarms near bathrooms, heating appliances, windows, or ceiling fans.
- Replace smoke alarms that are more than 10 years old. Smoke alarms don't last forever.
- Develop and practice a fire escape plan, because working smoke alarms and a fire escape plan will increase your protection in case of a fire. ♦



Fall is the Time for Ticks

By *Eric Ghilarducci, Vector Ecologist*

Contra Costa Mosquito & Vector Control District

Most people believe summertime is when the risk of being bitten by a tick is the greatest. After all, most folks increase outdoor activities as the temperatures increase. However, it's during late fall and winter that Contra Costa County residents are more likely to encounter adult ticks that potentially carry bacteria that cause illness, including Lyme disease.

There are three species of ticks in the county that most commonly bite people: the American Dog Tick, the Pacific Coast Tick, and the Western black-legged tick. Of these, only the Western black-legged tick is considered to be the carrier and transmitter of Lyme disease. In Contra Costa County, these ticks are most active during the cooler months of the year, between October and March.

Ticks can be found in all parts of the county including urban, suburban, and rural areas. They do not hop, jump, or fly. Instead, adult ticks climb to the top of grass or vegetation and wait for an animal or person to walk by and brush up against them. Ticks then grab hold of the passing person or animal and begin looking for a place to feed by sucking blood. During the time that the tick is attached and feeding is when Lyme disease and other bacteria are transmitted. Ticks can remain attached for several days or until feeding is finished, when they let go and drop off.

The Contra Costa Mosquito and Vector Control District recommends that people working or playing outdoors during these months watch for ticks and use precautions to reduce their exposure and risk of being bitten. Reducing the risk of ticks is as simple as wearing light colored clothing so ticks are more easily identifiable, wearing long sleeves and long pants to reduce exposed skin, tucking shirts into pants and pants into socks in a further effort to reduce exposed skin, and using appropriate repellent to repel ticks from clothing. Always be sure to conduct a tick check at the end of outdoor activity to make sure a tick hasn't attached to your clothing or skin.

Removing an attached tick within 24 hours reduces the risk of contracting Lyme disease. To remove an attached tick:

- Use fine or blunt-tipped tweezers to grab the tick as close to the skin as possible and gently, but steadily, lift the tick up and out of the skin. If tweezers are not available, fingers may be used.
- Clean the area with soap and warm water.
- Use an antiseptic at the bite location once the tick is removed.
- Do not squash the tick while it is still attached to the skin.
- Do not use a hot match, petroleum jelly, or other products

to coax the tick out of the skin. Do not twist or attempt to unscrew the tick from the skin. Doing so may increase the risk of contracting Lyme disease.

Early symptoms of Lyme disease may appear between 3-30 days after a tick bite and often include a spreading rash, which is usually accompanied by flu-like symptoms, such as fever and body aches. These symptoms may persist, change, disappear, and reappear intermittently for several

weeks or months. Most cases of Lyme disease can be successfully treated with antibiotics, but early treatment is important.

Lyme disease in Contra Costa County is fairly rare. On average there are two to four human cases reported per year, but the District does take the risk very seriously by collecting and testing Western black-legged ticks found in the County. We also identify ticks brought or sent to the District by members of the public who have been bitten. It is important to know that District staff do not diagnose health issues and recommend people who develop symptoms similar to those described for Lyme disease, after being bitten by a tick, to consult their physician.

For more information on Lyme disease, ticks in Contra Costa County, and the District's free services visit the District's website: www.ContraCostaMosquito.com.

For more information dial 925-771-6184 or to schedule a free presentation for a community group, contact Nola Woods at 925-771-6158 or nwoods@ccmvcd.net.



Western black-legged ticks like the one seen here is known to transmit Lyme disease

Herculean Writes Book About Life

Local Hercules resident Nalini Johal recently completed her first book: *The Life of Lotus Flower*. Below is an excerpt from an interview on her journey to becoming a published author.

What is your book about?

My book, *The Life of Lotus Flower* is about my life in India and then coming to the United States after I got married and not knowing what to expect. The beginning of the book depicts history as it was happening: when India divided into two countries, Pakistan and India, before my birth and the bloodshed that took place in the aftermath. And the rest is about my journey, coming to the United States, moving to the Bay Area and now living here in Hercules. The book really reflects my true and deepest innermost feelings and beliefs.

What made you decide to write a book?

I was laid off from my temporary job with the Contra Costa Appeals Clerk in Concord, which I held for five years, due to the California budget cuts, along with hundreds of temps. I was devastated, as this was not only a job to me, this unit was and still is my family. Then I held another temporary position with the County at the Hercules office at 151 Linus Pauling Drive. That came to an end in May of 2008 and I was left without a job and now on unemployment. I had always wanted to write a book, but never had the time, so I thought this would be a great opportunity for me. In February 2009, I worked another temp job for the San Francisco City Employees Credit Union until December 2009. This group also became like family to me and is where I finally finished my book. Writing a book was not only fun, but a healing process for me.

Tell us about your family?

My father was a Colonel in the Indian army. I have two sons, Billy and Edwin. My father passed away in April



Nalini Johal, center, with her family, daughter in law, Xandra Budd, son, Billy, husband Marc and step granddaughter, Taylor



Nalini Johal with her husband Marc Liebert and granddaughter Isabella

1998 at almost 95 years of age. My mother was his second wife and was 26 years younger than him. She could not get over his death and died a few years later. My youngest son, lives with his wife in San Antonio, Texas. He is in the U.S. Army and has completed 3 six-month tours of Afghanistan. I have one granddaughter, Isabella, who is the light of my eyes. My older son, Edwin, was shot and killed in Colorado Springs. He had recently got out of the army and got a job as a Deputy Sheriff of Douglas County, the largest county in Colorado. They have never solved his murder. My son's death totally devastated me as he was only 28 years old and had a great future ahead of him, which was cut short.

What are some life events that have really shaped you?

I believe that nothing is more painful than losing a child and can relate to parents who have lost one.

In May 2000, I lost an old boss to throat cancer, and my niece, who was only 37, died the following month. Right around that time, I also had to cancel a scheduled vacation and fly to New Delhi, India, as my mother, who was only 73, was gravely sick. The doctors suspected she had cancer, but she was too weak to do a biopsy on by them. She finally died on August 4, 2000, just over two years after my father's death. The thing that has sustained me through the pain of so much loss is my deep belief in the LORD (Guru Nanak).

Who has influenced your life?

The people who inspire me the most are the real go-getters. President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama are my inspiration along with my faith in God, which makes me strong. I also idolize Carlos Santana, who is the best

☐ *Continued on page 23*

❑ *Johal continued from page 22*

guitar player in the world. They are all so down to earth, and even though they are way up there they don't forget little people like you and me.

Tell us about your journey?

I moved to the Bay Area in 1981, far away from my ex-husband who lives on the east coast. My sister was a resident of Oakland and she took me and my two sons in for a month. Eventually, we got a cheap apartment in El Cerrito, and my boys went to school there. Being a single mom was very hard on me and my boys,

after living in the lap of luxury with my parents in India. I had no car and was dirt poor. I finally got a job processing credit cards. Although it did not pay much, it was a start.

I remember my first Christmas in December of 1981. I had no money to buy a Christmas tree or Christmas dinner. My sister joined us and we all had tacos for dinner, as it did not cost much. My boys were horsing around and I told them to settle down as "maybe that is why Santa did not bring them anything". That was totally the wrong thing to say to them as my sister and I think of Christmas like Christians do, as we are Sikhs, and do respect Christianity because of our Catholic school upbringing in India. My older son Edwin (deceased) cried and said "no mom that is not why Santa did not come, it is because we do not have a Christmas tree". How can you explain this to a seven year old and a five year old it is because we are poor. We all ended up crying.

In 1983, my job was going well and we moved to a better



Nalini Johal with her oldest son Edwin

apartment in San Pablo which had two swimming pools. I promised myself that I was going to give my sons a better Christmas that year. In the summer, my kids would travel to the east coast to spend their summer vacations with their dad. In 1985, they came back from their vacation and told me that they wanted to live with their dad. I felt like I was stabbed in the heart. He did not want to pay me child support and told my boys that if they lived with him, he would buy them everything I could not afford. That summer I lost my kids to my ex-husband

as I was having financial troubles. In 1994, my son Edwin who was stationed with the Army in Germany came home to Hercules for Christmas. He told me that I was the best mom, who really cared about him and not his father. This meant a lot to me. My son Billy was in Haiti with the army when the "Invasion of Haiti" took place in September of 1994. After six months there, he came home.

How has Hercules influenced your life and your family's?

My husband and I moved to Hercules in January 1994. We bought our first house in 1996 on Violet Road. We both fell in love with Hercules, as the neighbors and acquaintances were so friendly. Twice we left the house unlocked and the garage and front doors wide open all day, nothing was ever taken or touched, which was unbelievable, after living in other places in the East Bay. Hercules is my home and always will be. I love it here and hope to die here one day. I refuse to move anywhere else. ♦

Keep Track of Crimes Happening Near You

This month the Hercules Police Department added CrimeReports to the services provided to the community. Working with over 900 agencies across North America, CrimeReports is the largest online resource for accurate, up-to-date crime information. The CrimeReports network offers easy-to-use software tools for law enforcement agencies to understand crime trends and share current neighborhood crime data with the public. Community members can access the integrated crime map and receive email crime alerts for free at www.CrimeReports.com, empowering them to make informed decisions to help improve the safety of their neighborhood and community. The service costs \$99.00 per month, which is being paid for the next three years from a

recent grant obtained from the US Department of Justice. The service also allows citizens to sign up for email alerts, which deliver crime maps to the subscriber's email box.

CrimeReports allows users to filter maps based on time frames, type of police report, and other search factors. Hercules Police Chief Fred Deltorchio said, "This service will be very useful to my staff and members of the community. We routinely receive calls from residents asking about crime trends in their neighborhood and the city. Potential home buyers also call, asking about their prospective new neighborhood. CrimeReports will allow everyone to conduct their own search, based on criteria they choose." ♦



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