



PIEDMONT Post

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SERVING THE CITIZENS OF PIEDMONT

Witter Field 6-month renovation starts this week

Disruption to neighborhood anticipated; no public meetings planned

By Selen Ozturk

The project to renovate and prevent flooding at Witter Field began Tuesday, June 6, and is expected to last for six months.

“No parking” signs will be in place from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on portions of Palm Drive and Park View Avenue, and specified blocks of El Cerrito and Winsor Avenues. Signs were installed on June 1. The affected locations are:

- All of Palm Drive (even side)
- 400 block of El Cerrito (odd side)
- 1100 block of Winsor Avenue (even side)
- 1159 Winsor Avenue
- 255 Park View Avenue

“Officially, the approved working hours for Piedmont School District’s contractors during this project are 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.; however, the contractors won’t be working past 4 p.m.,” confirmed Public Works Director Daniel Gonzales. “We’ve been in discussions with the district about altering those hours to be a little earlier, while preventing significant parking burdens on local residents. We’ve also been reaching out to [the school district] about clarifying these details on their website and answering community questions in future meetings.”

Only one public meeting was [See Witter Field on page 30](#)



Piedmont High School seniors, the class of 2023, toss their graduation caps in the air at Witter Field after relieving their diplomas.

Piedmont High School and the graduating Class of 2023

By Jay Russell

Piedmont High School’s seniors, the Class of 2023, took their final steps as high schoolers on Friday, June 2 during a graduation ceremony at Witter Field. The 185 graduates began their high school journey with a Covid shortened freshman year, a sophomore year learning from home, a junior year in masks, and now finally, as transcendent seniors.

The 102nd graduation ceremony was witnessed by a near capacity crowd of proud family members and friends. Ten graduates from Millennium High, also were part of the ceremony.

The crowd buzzed with antic-

ipation on the warm, beautiful day. While the school band played Elgar’s “Pomp and Circumstance,” the traditional graduation music, a cheer erupted as the Seniors began walking down the bleachers to take their seats on the field.

Piedmont Troubadours, including seniors from the musical “Hello, Dolly!” took center stage on the field to sing the “Star Spangled Banner”. First-year PHS Principal Sukanya Goswami offered congratulations to the Class of 2023

The first speaker of the afternoon was Senior Speaker Skye Yeh, who made the crowd laugh and pontificate, taking them

in her speech back to Friday, the 13th of March, when Covid caused the school to suspend classes initially for “two weeks.”

Co-Salutatorians Lucy Filler and Alex Aubrecht took turns delivering their speeches. Filler highlighted the talents of her colleagues and Aubrecht spoke about developing an unlikely friendship online during the grips of the Covid pandemic.

Valedictorian Jasper Zietlow’s speech waxed philosophical, asking about the value of learning in itself and how it differs from the pursuit of a career.

“In its purest form, learning doesn’t ask us to seek the prom-” [See PHS Graduation on page 11](#)



Witter Field in 2007, the last time the field turf was replaced.

Fundraising campaign by PRFO generates \$2.1 million for pool

By Selen Ozturk

Piedmont Recreational Facilities Organization’s fundraising effort has paid dividends once again. It recently announced that it reached its fundraising target of \$2.1 million for the new Pied-

mont Community Pool.

PRFO initiated the capital campaign in partnership with the city in August 2022 to bridge a gap caused by construction costs which have inflated since Piedmonters approved Measure UU in November 2020, which allocated \$19.5 million in general bonds toward pool construction.

This funding effort builds on the success of previous PRFO fundraising for the renovation of Hampton Park in 2018 and the creation of the Corey Reich Tennis Center in 2022.

Alongside the contributions of more than 200 individual donors, the campaign received support from many community groups, including Piedmont Beautification Foundation, Piedmont Scout Council, Piedmont Education Foundation, PHS Boosters Club, Piedmont Soccer Club, and Piedmont Swim Team.

“The support we saw from community groups was just amazing,” said PRFO Fundraising Committee lead Eric Havian. “The broad and generous contributions from non-sports groups was unprecedented. It reflects the large slice of the community who will enjoy this remarkable facility.”

[See PRFO Fundraising on page 30](#)

By Jay Russell

Piedmont Middle School 8th graders – all 170 of them – were honored on Thursday, June 1 at Witter Field at the graduation ceremony in which they received certificates of completion.

The ceremony began with a Land Acknowledgement by 8th grader Lily Riley, an acknowledgement that they were standing on land originally habited by Ohlone Native Americans.

Students themselves actively welcomed the crowd filling most of the Witter grandstand, with messages in many foreign languages. First year Principal Karyn Shipp acknowledged the journey of the class.

“Your middle school years have equipped you with the foundation to become compassionate, responsible and empathetic individuals,” said Shipp.

First year Assistant Principal Angela Barrett then honored the

many extracurricular activities, programs and clubs by asking students to stand for each category.

Student speeches were given by Zoe Snyder, Colin Amen, Asher Takazaka and Sophia Harris.

“Every year until now I never hesitated to sprint out of school on the last day celebrating the arrival of summer, but it feels different today,” said Amen “I real-

[See PMS Graduation on page 22](#)

Middle School celebrates its 8th grade graduates

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The PMS class of 2023

OPINION

Letters to the Editor

Net positives of pickleball

By Lisa Tuck

Editor:

The benefits of pickleball social interaction and cooperative behavior have been described by many players. As a Piedmont resident, I would like to add my two cents. Open play, open courts and strong guidelines create an atmosphere of welcome, community and contentment. Guidelines might include: park far enough away not to bother the Linda Beach neighbors; walk three to eight minutes to the four pickleball courts; find the steps and the gate on Linda and you're in.

These players use special quieter balls provided on site and bring paddles from an approved list to act like the good citizens they want to be. When newcomers arrive, some regulars will politely point out the city-provided quiet balls and explain the reason. I saw this happen three different times last Sunday afternoon. After a friendly explanation we could see the appreciation. It's about communication and being willing to help others, giving back to the sport and the community.

We live in a city surrounded by a bigger city and times are uncertain. Often it feels unsafe for

people to be out and about. One great counter-balance is joining a group of nice people who happen to be athletic, accomplished and accepting. They work hard on their games and work equally hard on their friendly decorum. It's a panacea.

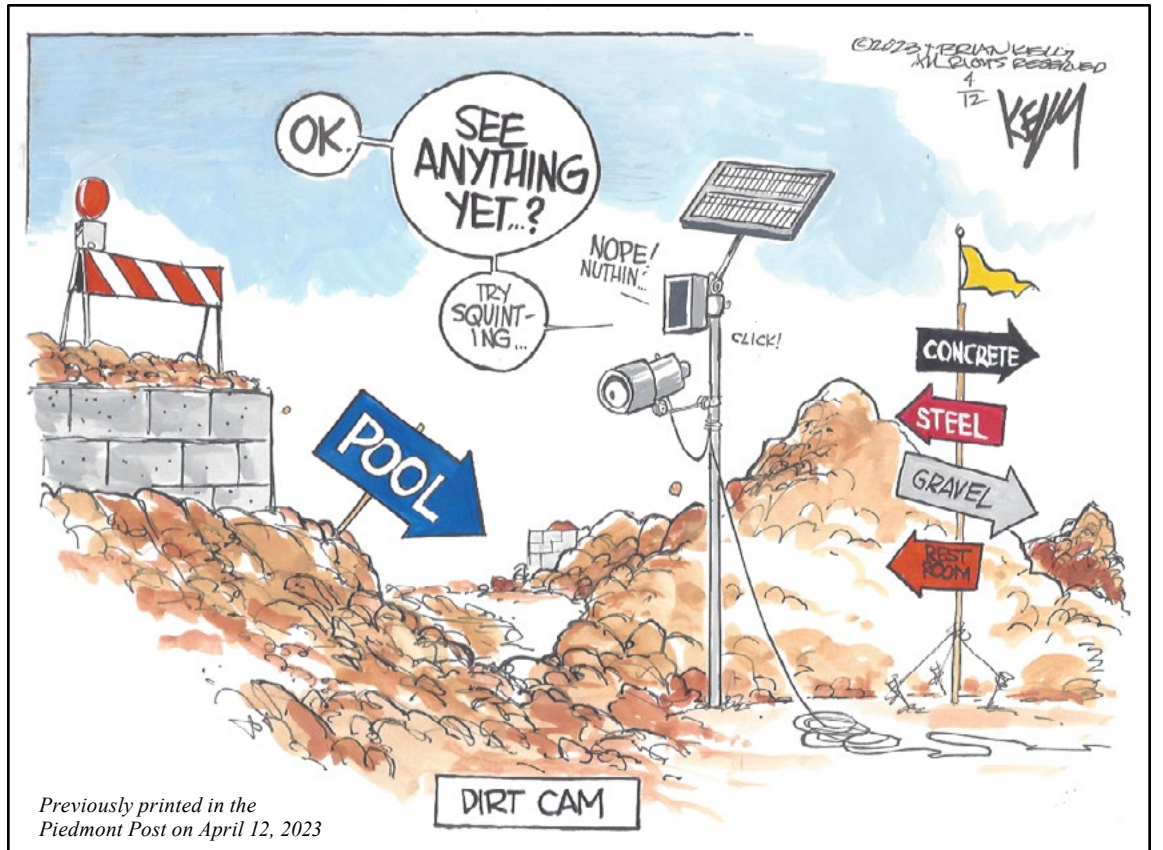
Our pickleball community is growing, adding many students and those that work full time. They need relief from daily screen time. They need the opportunity to play during daylight hours with equal access. Please encourage the Piedmont Recreation Commissioners to make pickleball permanent at Linda Beach. They vote soon and they can be reached at beachpickleballtrial@piedmont.ca.gov. A short three-sentence email might say it all.

Pickleball bridging the age gap

Editor:

In regards to the pickleball trial at the Linda Beach courts, I have previously weighed in on the physical and mental benefits of this sport for its players, with an emphasis on seniors. Of late, I have observed a new phenomenon with unforeseen benefits to the larger community.

See [Letters on page 30](#)



Religion Corner

Comfort for the mourning

By Pastor Jim Hopkins

I don't have a way of being absolutely certain, but I think it is very likely that the bible verse I have used most over the course of my nearly 40 years of ministry are the words of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 5:4, "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

This is somewhat surprising. When I began my career, I would have predicted that evangelical standbys like John 3: 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave

his only begotten son..." and Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace you have been saved through faith..." would be my most used verses.

Yet, in our grief-filled world, it is Jesus' promise of comfort to the grieving that I find myself sharing with others. In our loss-filled existence, it is his words of assurance that seem to say what most needs to be said.

Biblical scholars debate the meaning of the Greek word *makarioi*. Is it best translated blessed, happy or favored by God? They analyze the word

penthouses. Does it refer to sadness for sins committed or lament for the death of a loved one? They scrutinize the phrase *paraklithesontai*. What form does the encouragement take? What does the consolation look like? Does the comfort come in this life or the next?

These discussions will continue. And, while I find them interesting, what I find essential and what I have experienced to be life giving, is Jesus' promise that those of us who feel searing grief can, at the same time, feel an encouraging presence. Those of us who know heart-rending pain, can, at the same time, know the embrace of a caring community. Those who are seeing the worst that life has to offer, can, at the same time, sense a peace that passes understanding.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted." I am most grateful for these words of Jesus. They express the compassion he has for the world. They provide a minister, who often does not know what to say, with something worth saying.

Jim Hopkins is Senior Pastor at Lakeshore Avenue Baptist Church, 3534 Lakeshore Avenue in Oakland.

Collecting photos for Where in the World

For 24 years, Piedmont residents have made sure their travels are well documented, with photos of family members reading the *Piedmont Post* in far-off places throughout the world, and some nearby.

The *Post* invites families to send photos with the *Post* from near and far for publication in *Where in the World Are We* on the back page of the paper. With people able to travel once again, there is no better time to have your photo in the *Post*.

Send photos as jpg. files to: news@piedmont-post.com, and be sure to include a brief description of the location where the photo was taken.

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The *Piedmont Post* welcomes its readers to express their opinions on any topic. Columns in the *Piedmont Post* are exclusive and may not be reprinted without permission.

The *Post* reserves the right to edit any pieces or letters submitted. Opinion pieces should be limited to 400 words, letters to the editor to 200 words.

Photo submissions: Please submit photos at 6 inches in width and at a resolution of 200 dpi in jpeg format.

Do you have some news? Send your photos or stories to 1139 Oakland Avenue, Piedmont, CA 94611, or email them to news@piedmont-post.com. It's that easy. (Send us an attachment or cut and paste your text into the body of the email.)

The deadline for submitting news, photos and opinion items is Friday.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"People don't notice whether it's winter or summer when they're happy."

— Anton Chekhov
1860 – 1904
Russian playwright,
author

Pool update: Century-old fuel tank found on site

By Selen Ozturk

A fuel tank estimated to be at least 100 years old was found by excavators at the site of the future community pool the week of May 24. As the city waits for Alameda County to remove the tank, contractors continue to excavate and haul away soil and debris.

Public Works Director Daniel Gonzales said the buried tank, which measures about five feet by 36 inches, “was used to fuel the home of private residents about 100 years ago, before the advent of natural gas lines.”

Because the tank still contains gasoline, it is considered toxic and the city is required to submit an inspection and plan for its removal.

Gonzales said that Public Works staff submitted this plan to the Alameda County Department of Environmental Health. It typically takes two to three weeks for the county to authorize the removal of a toxic substance.

The subcontractor GEOCON tested the soil around the tank, which was discovered five feet underground near the Carriage House.

“After the initial soil testing,” Gonzales said, “we found no evidence of the tank in any of the soil samples we took. GEOCON had been testing on-site soil already as part of regular procedures, and it wasn’t until we actually dug deep enough that we came across the tank. This is



Orange posts and nets section off the area where a century-old fuel tank, still containing gasoline, was found buried at the pool site.

a good thing. If our samples had been contaminated, it would have been significantly worse for the project’s progress.”

Soil polluted with diesel fuel will be hauled to a landfill in Livermore.

The general contractor, Wickman Development & Construction, is nearly halfway through hauling soil away from the pool site. The process, which Gonzales said was the “single most critical part of the pool project,” is expected to last about four more weeks, through the month of June. Afterward, contractors will build a 385-foot retaining wall by adding concrete to, reinforcing,

and waterproofing the temporary wood, steel, and concrete shoring which is currently drilled into the pool site.

This is the fifth week out of an estimated eight to nine weeks of trucking activity. The hauling work is limited to two to three truckloads two to three days a week.

For more information on the Piedmont Community Pool project, visit piedmont.ca.gov/new-pool. Those with questions about the project may contact Construction Manager George Sanen of Griffin Structures by email at gsanen@griffinstructures.com, or by phone at 415-858-8582.



Soil is piled to be hauled off from the community pool site.

VIEWPOINT

Social media and our youth

By Sherry Jacobs

Editor:

We’ve heard so much on the news in the past on how much social media has impacted the frenzy and craziness in our country over the past few years. TikTok, Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, have all come under scrutiny by the Senate Committee. But to what avail? What real changes have we seen?

My 101-year old father is blown away by how quickly information is spread across the globe. In his day, it took up to 4 days to hear that Japan had a 7.0 earthquake, or that fires were destroying much of Australia. Now with social media and cell phones, we know as it’s happening.

The worst part of social media is that horrendous events are taken by the press and TV and shown over and over again until we have such anger and unrest

that it explodes into riots and destruction of what we all have spent our lives building.

What’s wrong with this? Four weeks ago I and 34 others were assaulted over a week’s time by teenagers. These teens were angry and out for retribution. Social media’s continued videos of how young Black men were beaten and kicked without real provocation in many cases by police.

These teens are targets for social media. They infer to our youth that it is their “right” to seek retribution or in many cases revenge on white women who are just as vulnerable as the young Black men.

So who’s to blame? The teens, social media, the press, TV? Whoever you believe is responsible for damaging the lives of our youth – the future of America – *let’s once and for all do something to stop it.*

COMMENTARY

Beware of con men & women: a cautionary tale

By Lester Ellis

This is a little embarrassing and a little alarming. On May 26 I drove to the Piedmont Branch of Bank of America to use their ATM. I completed my transaction and was standing by my car door, when a woman approached me and said she had seen money drop out of my wallet. I had put the cash from my transaction in my pocket but had my receipt and debit card in my hands.

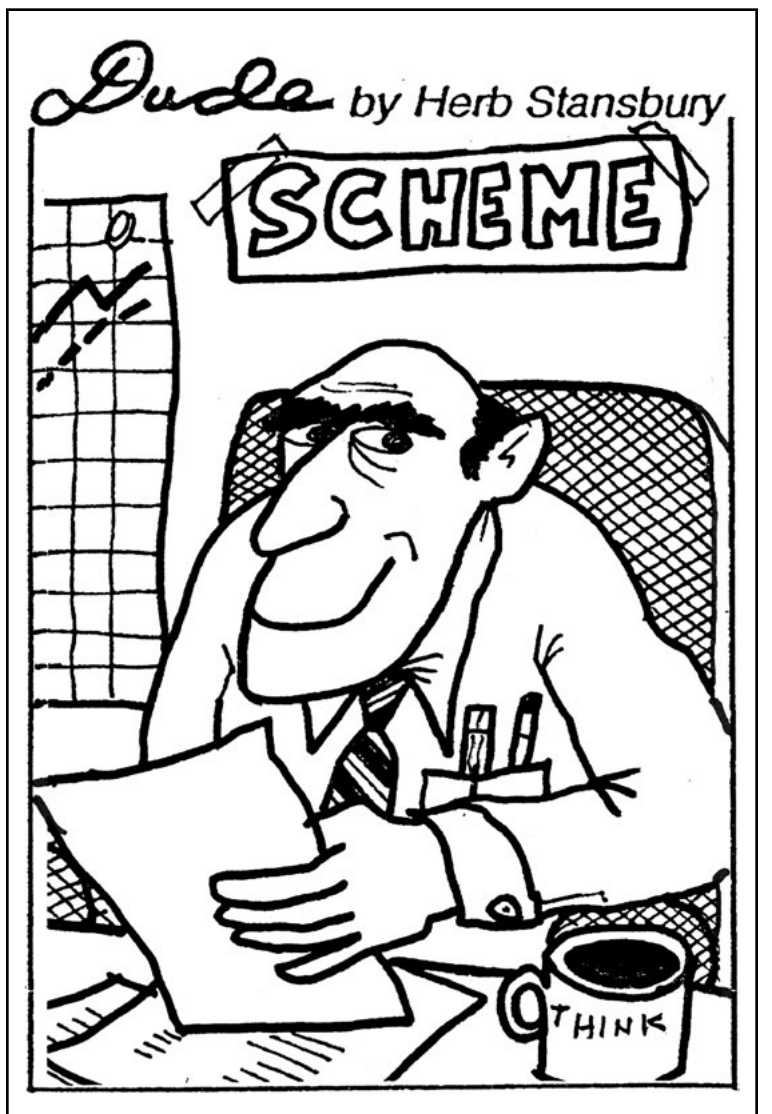
She insisted that she had seen this happen and presented me with a perfectly folded \$10 bill. Initially I took it but then handed

it back to her saying I was sure it wasn’t mine.

I have a small wallet and never put money in it but I hesitated, wondering if I had slipped a \$10 bill in my wallet. She was so insistent that in our final back and forth I accepted the money. When I got to my next destination and reached for my VISA card it was in my wallet but the debit card, that should have been next to it, was not.

The woman had stolen my card in the course of our give-and-take over the \$10 bill.

I would describe her as a *See Commentary on page 30*





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LOCAL ITEMS

Montclair Beer, Wine & Music Festival on June 17



Montclair Beer, Wine & Music Festival in 2022 Photo by Peter Marcus

By Jody Colley

The 9th Annual Montclair Beer, Wine & Music Festival will be bigger and better than ever this year. On Saturday, June 17 from 12:00 to 6:00 p.m. people can sample from 40 craft beers and 50 wines. Festival attendees can purchase an Unlimited Tasting Package (\$50 in advance or \$60 at the door) which includes commemorative glassware. Tickets for tasting are online at MontclairVillage.com.

The Mister Beaver's Paws & Claws Stage powered by Meet Your Core Pilates will feature live performances by three bands:

- 12:15 p.m. Mio Flores and His Latin Jazz All-Stars
- 2:15 p.m. Big Sticky Mess
- 4:15 p.m. Bicicletas Por La Paz

Family-friendly attractions are abundant. Participate in the innovative pedal-powered sound system provided by Rock the Bike. The Montclair Cares Club presents Kids' Play Palooza Fun Zone featuring interactive enter-

tainment, including face painting and bubbles. Kids can get creative with crafting and chalk drawing and climb on a fire truck from Oakland Firefighters Random Acts. Performances by the Montera Cheer Squad will help energize the crowd.

Visitors can browse artisan vendors offering natural body products, handmade jewelry and clothing, paintings, sculpture, stained glass, and more. Tante's Catering will be offering hand-dipped corn dogs, grilled chicken shawarma wraps, sausages, falafels, and garlic fries. Non-alcoholic beverages and mocktails will be available.

Parking will be available in the Montclair Parking Garage at 6235 La Salle Ave. Download and try the ParkMobile app and use code FREEMV for a full day of free parking for first-time users. Visit ParkMobile.io to add the app to your mobile device.

For full event details and to purchase tasting packages, become a vendor, or volunteer, please visit MontclairVillage.com.

Proceeds benefit the Montclair Village Association, a 501(c)(3)



May 24 – May 28

Wednesday, June 7

6 a.m.

May 24 School Board mtg.

9 a.m., 8:30 p.m.

June 5 City Council mtg.

1 p.m.

May 17 Recreation Commission meeting

5:30 p.m.

Park Commission mtg. - Live

Thursday – Sunday, June 8-11

6 a.m.

May 24 School Board mtg.

9 a.m., 6 p.m.

June 5 City Council mtg.

1 p.m.

May 17 Recreation Commission meeting

3:30 p.m.

June 7 Park Commission mtg.

10 p.m.

May 8 Planning Commission meeting

For more information on future programming, call KCOM at City Hall at 510-420-3083.

nonprofit serving The Village business district and surrounding community for 75 years. Festival sponsors include: CityHealth, Meet Your Core Pilates, Mister Beaver's Paws & Claws, Flair Travel, AmaWaterways, Montclair Sports Tennis, Farmstead Cheeses & Wines, Crown Wines & Spirits, and Winter Williams Presents.



By Jay Russell

QUESTION: What do you have planned for this summer?

Asked on Monday, June 5, in Central Piedmont.



ANDREW DORMAN, Calvert Court

I've got a couple of trips planned. I'm headed to Hawaii and am doing some camping with friends throughout the summer.



EVAN McCONATHY, Scenic Avenue

I'm back in in town from college. I'm planning on working to make money to go on adventures with my friends.



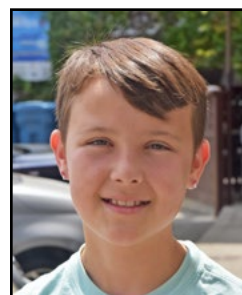
GRAHAM REICHER, El Cerrito Avenue

I'm a film college student in LA. I'm working on a few music videos and commercials. I'm also going to Vermont to see family and to work on a feature film I'm writing.



GALEN ROBERTS, Wildwood Avenue

I'm working all summer. We will be taking one break in August, to go to Tahoe.



CONNER SORENSEN, 5th grade

My family and I are going to Spain and New York. It will be my first time for both.



DAVID BIRNBAUM, Sandringham Road

We haven't been to Austria in a long time, so we are going to Vienna and Salzburg. We went to Germany last June but got Covid, so we are finishing the tour on our own.

The Question Man asks a prescient question each week at an unannounced location.

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City budget shows \$2 million more than projected

By Selen Ozturk

The City Council held a public hearing on Piedmont's proposed 2023-2024 budget on Monday, June 5, ahead of its expected adoption on June 20.

Finance Director Michael Szczech told the City Council that, compared to the current 2022-23 projection of \$35,651,366, the 2023-2024 General Fund revenue projection for Piedmont is \$37,928,132.

Last year's revenue is estimated to exceed budgeted figures by \$1.7 million and to be under budget by \$2.1 million, netting for Piedmont a surplus of \$3.8 million. This is mainly due to property tax receipts, building permit and planning fees, and utility tax collections.

The city's primary revenue source are property-related taxes, which constitute \$25,883,000, or 68%, of this year's General Fund revenues. Nevertheless, this year's property tax revenue is a decrease of \$263,000 over last year's currently projected revenue.

Significant factors in the 2023-2024 fiscal year include:

- Housing Element costs**
 \$1.3 million is allocated this year.
- The Piedmont Community Pool Project**
 \$24.4 million total is available, less than an estimated total cost of \$28,981,000 due to inflation; the rest "will be primarily funded by major private donors, the Piedmont Recreational Facilities Organization fundraising campaign, support from the Kroger estate, [and] a loan associated with the electrification of the pool and internal capital funds," per the budget report
- Expansion of the Police Dispatch Center**
 \$1.5 million from the Facilities Capital budget is allocated this year to relocate the center. Dispatcher staffing will be increased at an "estimated cost of \$1.5 million over the next five years."
- Upkeep of "Piedmont's essential services buildings"**
 "Future address of aged facilities is also on the horizon." Although "no funding is currently allocated to substantially address these needs in the immediate future, an ad hoc subcommittee of the City Council has been named to revisit work per-

formed to date and advance the policy topic with the entire governing body."

Feedback at public hearing

At the June 5 meeting, Deborah Leland of the city's Budget Advisory and Financial Planning Committee told the Council, "We are not adequately funding the city's long-term needs," particularly when it comes to infrastructure.

"Even if we solve the big-ticket items with bond measures ... we will still have ongoing facilities [and] infrastructure needs on an ongoing basis that exceed what we just are generating from occasional surpluses," given that the city's facilities capital funds are projected to run out in "four to five years, and that's without doing the big-ticket items," she continued.

She suggested that the city consider an updated Utility User Tax, and an increased Real Property Transfer Tax, which was last raised in 1993 and is currently one of the lowest transfer taxes compared to neighboring cities.

Piedmont resident Bob Lally, the only other member of the public who spoke at the hearing, said "Two-thirds of the [city's] revenue come from property, transfer, and parcel taxes. High and rising home values enable us to finance the services that we've come to expect here in Piedmont, especially around fire, police, and infrastructure."

Given that Piedmont faces a threat to property values "that I haven't really seen in the 25 years that I've lived here, which is the issue around crime in the town," Lally continued, the city should direct more funding to the police department than the fiscal year's current \$98,087 increase.

He suggested three possible sources of revenue to fund more police officers at "about \$150,000" each: user fees from Recreation Department programs, building permits, and money which is currently used for the city's communications program.

The City Council is expected to adopt the budget at the next public hearing, during its meeting on Tuesday, June 20 at 6 p.m. at City Hall (120 Vista Avenue). Community members are invited to provide feedback on the budget in-person at the meeting, or by email at CityCouncil@piedmont.ca.gov.

For questions about the proposed 2023-2024 budget, contact Michael Szczech by phone at 420-3045, or by email at mszczech@piedmont.ca.gov.

Ayyana Chakravartula awarded 2023 Maker of the Year

Piedmont Makers awarded Ayyana Chakravartula its Maker of the Year Award at a gathering last week. A quiet star in the Maker world, she was honored for her decade of tireless volunteer work and mentorship of young Makers in the Piedmont community.

Chakravartula joined Piedmont Makers as a founding board member in 2014 and co-founded the monthly Tech Social series shortly thereafter. Part TED talk, part tech show-and-tell, part social hour, Tech Social is a Piedmont commu-

nity event for K-12 students and their parents. On the first Friday of the month during the school year, Tech Socials have been a formative community-building activity for the group.

Chakravartula served as President of Piedmont Makers from 2017-2020 during its boom in membership before the Covid pandemic. Its programs expanded to include monthly Makerspaces, the annual School Maker Faire, and the growth of Robotics teams.

After stepping down as pres-


ident in 2020, she continued on the board, helping organize the return of the School Maker Faire as a pop-up mobile event at the elementary schools before it returned to the Piedmont High campus in 2022.


Chakravartula has continued serving as a robotics coach in FIRST LEGO League and FIRST Tech Challenge. Now in sixth season as a coach, her impact will continue undiminished. She will be coaching three robotics teams this fall for her three sons.



Ayyana Chakravartula (center) is presented with the 2023 Maker of the Year Award by Piedmont Makers board members Regina O'Connor (left), David Schleuning, Ken Khouri, Lorraine Seiden, Alex Seiden, David Ragonas, Lara Chu, Margaret Bridges, Paul Morrison, Pat Holder, Scott Miller, Joel Tornatore, Ben Stein, Kevin Clark, Greg Wolff, and Keren Khouri.

ADVERTISE IN THE POST



PIEDMONT
56th

4th of July Parade



2023 PARADE ENTRY FORM

We hope your group will be a part of this year's 4th of July Parade in Piedmont.

This year's parade theme is

Paint the Town Red White and Blue

The parade will take place on Highland Avenue starting at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, July 4.

As a reminder, candy may be handed out on the parade route but not thrown from vehicles.

Send the completed form to:
Kathy Kelleher, 9 Monte Avenue, Piedmont, CA 94611
email: kjkelleh@yahoo.com Phone: (510) 915-8842

Date: _____

Group Name: _____

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Day: _____ Evening: _____

Fax: _____ Email: _____

Group description: (# of people, vehicles, music, etc.) _____

Special needs: (problems with hills, turning corners, parade placement, etc.) _____

READ IT IN THE POST

Calling all musicians

Come join the Piedmont Community Band, the city's only musical organization that has only one rehearsal during the year. The band is a past winner of the Highland Cup, the highest award given at the July 4th Parade.

The band is comprised of amateur and professional musicians – all volunteers – most who live in town and can't resist the challenge of playing music while marching in formation.

Dressed in blue pants, white shirts and a red kerchief, they are led by Ken Kawaichi, who, dressed as Emperor Norton, has the distinction of walking the length of the parade route backwards.

It's time to get out your instruments – trumpets, trombones, tubas, clarinets and drums – and help celebrate Independence Day in Piedmont. If you are new in town, it's an ideal way to meet people. To sign up, contact Greg Slatoff at gostatoff@yahoo.com, or call Jane Reed at 654-2670.

SCHOOLS



The Millennium High School class of 2023

Millennium class of 2023 celebrates graduation

By Jay Russell

Millennium High School seniors received their diplomas and recognition of four years hard work on Thursday, June 1, during their graduation ceremony in the Alan Harvey Theater. The class of 2023 had 21 graduates.

The ceremony also marked Principal Shannon Fierro's final year at the school.

Every year, the MHS commencement evokes emotions, as each student on stage is honored by an MHS teacher or staff member and then has an opportunity to speak about his or her experience. Tears were the norm, not

the exception, as the tight knit class forged tight bonds with teachers and with one another. Some teachers have taught students a subject for four years.

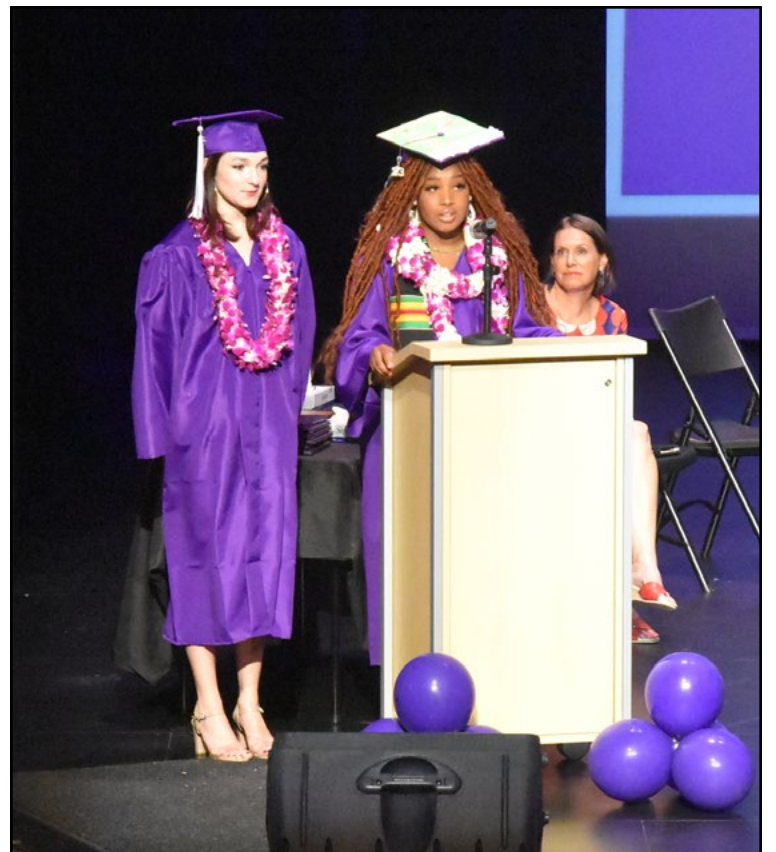
In 2019 as freshman, many in the class bonded at a school welcoming event held at Camp Augusta. Halfway through the second semester in their freshman year, Covid interrupted their high school routine and their lives. Much of their four years in high school was spent figuring out how to return to normal.

"I had the pleasure of meeting many of you when we were all just a little picture in a box on a screen," said English teacher

Elise Marks.

Shannon Fierro celebrated the last moments of her six-year tenure as Millennium High Principal with the class. She will pursue a doctorate degree in Education for Social Justice at CSU East Bay and return to the classroom next year as an 8th grade Spanish teacher at Piedmont Middle School.

"We've had a hundred and one little moments together that I will remember, sometime crying, but mainly laughing," said Fierro. "It's time for us to leave the physical place that is Millennium. Let us take the names of the people in this room who have pushed us, [See MHS Graduation on page 30](#)



Millennium HS ASB Co-Presidents Neve Cohen and Madison Hill address the crowd at graduation ceremony in the Alan Harvey Theater, with Principal Shannon Fierro in the background.



Ava Luna Floisand laughs at the podium as a family member cheer from the crowd.



Shannon Fierro (left) shakes hands with Xiaowei Elias as he receives his diploma.



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Class of 2023 College Matriculation

The following list represents colleges that students from Piedmont and Millennium High School graduating class of 2020 will be attending in the fall. It also includes names of students who will be studying abroad, working, or taking a gap year, or entering college in the second semester.

The senior editorial board of Piedmont Highlander, the student newspaper, returned to the tradition of publishing a matriculation list. “We believe this information is valuable because it provides our class the opportunity to celebrate our collective accomplishments and serves as a connective resource for the greater Piedmont community.”

Of 199 seniors in the Class of 2023, a total of 188 chose to have their responses published. 182 Piedmont High seniors and 17 Millennium High seniors responded. Names on the list are as of May 22.

Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ
Alexander Zalewski

Barnard College
New York City, NY
Anna Gotto

Bates College
Lewiston, Maine
Eden Lorin

Berkeley City College
Berkeley, CA
Angel Perez

Boston University
Boston, Mass.
Gabriela Kong
Daniel Malecki

Brigham Young University
Provo, Utah
Noa Peltzer

Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island
James Brayer
Audrey Lam

California College of the Arts
San Francisco, CA
Vanessa Pereira Elliott

Chabot College
Hayward, CA
Zachary Sy

Chapman University
Orange, CA
Paden Andrews
Kevin Blodgett

College of Charleston
Charleston, South Carolina
Lila Town

College of the Holy Cross
Worcester, Mass.
Owen Grippando

College of Wooster
Wooster, Ohio
Ryan Stokes

Columbia University
New York City
Benjamin Kra-Caskey

Cornell University
Ithaca, New York
Evan Manolis
Jasper Tripp

Dartmouth College
Hanover, New Hampshire
Julia Banuelos

Diablo Valley College
Pleasant Hill, CA
Justin Kerwin
Charles Lucas
Ian Shea
Charles White

Drexel University
Philadelphia, PA
Ziyang Li

Emory University
Atlanta, Georgia
Austin Harris

Gonzaga University
Spokane, Wash.
Elaine McAuliffe
Siena Riddell
Matthew Riordan

Hamilton College
Clinton, New York
Thomas John O’Neil

Howard University
Washington, DC
Morgan Hunt

Imperial College London
London, England
Jasper Zietlow

Leeds Beckett University
Leeds, West Yorkshire, England
William Daniel

Lehigh University
Bethlehem, PA
Mina Handelsman
Sofia Johnson

Lewis & Clark College
Portland, OR
Michael Aikawa
Jonas Kra-Caskey

Loyola Marymount University
Los Angeles, CA
Emeline Nadell

Macalester College
St. Paul, Minn.
Rachel Scher

Marquette University
Milwaukee, WI
Gretchen Gerhardy

McGill University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Griffin Stein

McGill University
New York City, NY
Milo Castronovo

Mercyhurst University
Erie, PA
Elizabeth Winnacker

Michigan Technological University
Houghton, MI
George Winn

Northeastern University
Boston, Mass.
Quinn Reilly
Andrew Szerdy

Oberlin College
Oberlin, Ohio
Eleanor Lavin

Occidental College
Los Angeles, CA
Holden Canty Hilchey

Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio
Jordan Miller

Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon
Coltman Knapp
Aleksi Valkonen

Parsons School of Design, The New School
New York City, CA
Ashley Hennessey
Tyler Knapp

Pennsylvania State University
University Park, PA
Odessa Dando

Rice University
Houston, TX
Benjamin Kim

Rocky Mountain College
Billings, Montana
Madison Hill

Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ
Samantha Violich

Saint Mary’s College
Moraga, CA
Alex King

STATE COLLEGES

California Polytechnic State University, Pomona
William Campbell
Jacob Gallagher

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
Ava Adarkar
Elena Blanco
Shelby Cavanaugh
Brianna DeYoung
Myles Gray
Kai Lambert
Parker Long
Farris Saffouri
Max Schleuning
Isabel Szerdy
Wilson Wong

California State University East Bay, Hayward
Reece Lawrence

California State University, Fullerton
Eva Levingston

California State University, Long Beach
Milani Juarbe

California State University, Los Angeles
Kiralyn Ma

California State University, Northridge
Roman Reyes

Sacramento State University
Sacramento, CA
Leah Bell

San Diego State University
San Diego, CA
Ryan McConathy
Trinity Zamora

San Francisco State University
San Francisco, CA
Sohrab Ford
Perseas Gioukaris
Andres Roberts

San Jose State University
San Jose, CA
Harold Pasion

Sonoma State University
Rohnert Park, CA
Isabel Corson

Santa Barbara City College
Santa Barbara, CA
Lily Meeks
Max Murdock
Adelaise Neel
Ava Nicholas
Brianna Sotelo
Ava Floisand Ward
Hanna Ward
Charles EW White

Santa Clara University
Santa Clara, CA
Teagan Haddawy

Santa Monica College
Santa Monica, CA
Mara LaForte

Savannah College of Art and Design
Savannah, GA
Krysta Tsukahara

Seattle University
Seattle, Wash.
Neve Cohen
Peter Simonetti

Stanford University
Palo Alto, CA
John Gross Whitaker

Texas Christian University
Fort Worth, TX
Audrey Harmon

Trinity College
Hartford, Conn.
Xiaowei Elias

Tufts University
Medford, Mass.
Anne Jumper
Noah Lindenbaum
Eva Swei

Tulane University
New Orleans, LA
Lindsay Kottle

University of Arizona
Tucson, Ariz.
Molly Ashton
Sonny Brennan

University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC, Canada
Talula Denison

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

UC Berkeley
Callan Mitchell
Rahimeen Shah
Aryana Fisher
Nathan Fredericks
Chelsea Yi

UC Davis
Bautista Costa-Claudio
Macie Gard
Anne Marie Gibbs
Maya Louise Huffaker
Carson Meaux
Christian Taylor
Stephanie Tsung

UC Irvine
Barry Balasingham

UCLA, Los Angeles
Alexander Aubrecht
Michaela Bini
Lucy Filler
Ginger Gardner
Hamza Mahmood

UC Riverside
Andrew Dacanay
Matias Greene
Matthew Lee
James Manguyen

UC San Diego
Emily Fitzgerald

UC Santa Barbara
Tara Kothari
Hailey Ronen

UC Santa Cruz
Aoife Cain
Theo Evans
Conor Kim
Violet Lemley
Eric Olaru-Hagen
Charlotte Strovink

University of Colorado
Boulder, Colo.
Brady Colbert
Matteo Costa-Claudio
Rosemary Aldridge
Jack Nelson
Payton Panico

University of Georgia
Athens, GA
Julia Shalev

University of Hawaii
Honolulu, HI
Samantha Newsom

University of Miami
Miami, Fla.
Sophia Kalamas

University of Oregon
Eugene, OR
Bailey Cain
Brayden Day
Sophie Hebert
Will Shelby
Marek Wilk

University of the Pacific
Stockton, CA
Ethan Pham

University of San Francisco
San Francisco, CA
Aidan Hickman

University of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA
Soren Dixon
Maya Hollingsworth

University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA
Artun Duransoy
Simon Lins

University of Washington
Seattle, Wash.
Kyra Dang
Eleanor DeVan
Holland Feinberg
Annika Nilsson
Luka Rivas Cate
Heather Stoneman
Ethan Tran
Alexander Ware
Kuan Wo Zhou

University of Wisconsin
Madison, WI
Miles Corcoran
Rose Feldman
Brady Hinsch
Cameron Lorin

Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN
Elizabeth Wiesbrock

Washington University
St. Louis, MO
Sadie Rosen

Willamette University
Salem, OR
Orson Young

Yale University
New Haven, Conn.
Sofia Prieto Black

Gap year
Nico Caputo
Gianna Yan
Skye Yeh
Jack Zirkelbach-Ngai

Semester abroad – entering 2nd semester
Zachary Berg
Boston University

Year abroad
Devon Moxley
University of Denver in 2024
Talia Blumberg
USC in 2024

Undecided
Mayo Arbues
Adrienne Blackwell
Marcos Filho
Isaac Guan
Alex Guevara
Rocco Hodgkinson
Samiya Jones
Darius Kashani
Owen Kelly
Iori Lear
Miguel McKay
Laurel Mosley
Maddox Phillips
Mykaylah Sawyer
John Steimle

Working
Lina Lawrence

Working abroad in Europe
Cullen Peters

Grand opening of Engineering Lab celebrated

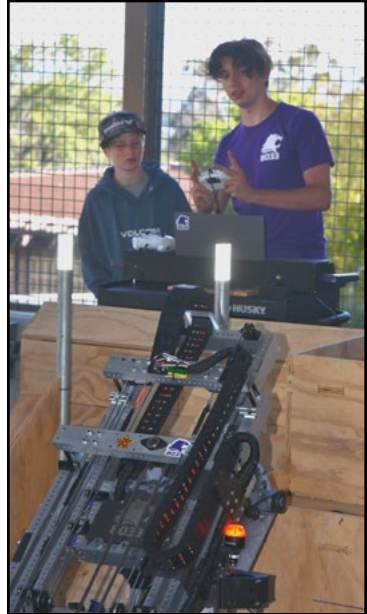
By Jay Russell

The Piedmont Makers took time to thank the donors of \$420,000 on April 29 with a Grand Opening of the Engineering Lab at Piedmont High School. Along with a donor reception across the street at the Piedmont Center for the Arts, the event featured tours of the new facilities by students, the unveiling of plaques naming the three labs after notable women in STEM, and a ribbon cutting ceremony by PHS Principal Sukanya Goswami.

“The new Mary Ross Engi-



Dave Ragonis gives thanks at a Grand Opening ceremony to the donors who contributed to the engineering and computer lab.



Team driver of the Highlanders robot, Vaughn Khouri, shows 6th grader Dylan Wallway how to drive the robot with an Xbox controller during a demonstration.

neering Lab has the potential to become a game changer for STEM education in Piedmont,” said Helen Potter, a co-founder of the Highlander Robotics Team.

Three plaques created by students of the Piedmont Makers organization were unveiled at the grand opening, celebrating the three women’s lives and accomplishments.

The Annie Jump Cannon patio honors one of the first women to contribute to the field of astronomy. Cannon’s instrumental classification system for stellar bodies is known as the “Harvard Classification Scheme.” The Engineering Lab is named for Mary Golda Ross, the first known female Native American engineer. She contributed to an elite and highly secretive aerospace project, and to the Agena Rocket. The PHS

computer lab is named after Raye Montague, one of the first Black female naval engineers in history.

The grand opening culminated with an exciting demonstration of the Makers robot “Paddo the Frog.” School Board members, community donors and kids alike marveled at the speed and dexterity of the robot as it zoomed across the patio picking up bulky traffic cones and delicate inflatables.

“The Engineering Lab is a capstone facility for the STEAM Building that enables differentiated courses like guitar engineering and accelerates the world championship-qualifying Highlander Robotics team with world-class digital fabrication tools,” said Co-Founder and President of Piedmont Makers Dave Ragonis.



Principal Sukanya Goswami cuts the ribbon at the Grand Opening of the Engineering Lab at Piedmont High School on April 29.



“Paddo the Frog,” the Highlander Robotics’ robot for the 2023 season.

FUN4KIDS

Event Calendar

By Jay Russell

Lindsay Wildlife Center

Lindsaywildlife.org

1931 First Ave. Walnut Creek, (925) 935-1978

Summer Camps

Registration spots are still open in Lindsay Wildlife’s exciting summer camp programs. In Prehistoric Pals Camp, 5-7 year old participants will explore the world of dinosaurs, mammoths, and other prehistoric animals. Campers will get a chance to create their own fossils, take part in a fun fossil dig, and will get to meet modern-day animals with up-close experiences. Each week-long session runs Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Chabot Space & Science Center

Chabotspace.org

10000 Skyline Blvd., 336-7300

Chabot is open Wednesday-Sunday during the summer months. Enjoy the exhibits and the shows in the planetarium and megadome to experience space and science on the biggest of big screens. Every Friday and Saturday night the Chabot Observatory Deck has a free telescope viewing from 7:30-10:30 p.m. weather permitting.

Albany Bulb

Albanya.org/recreation/waterfront/albany-bulb

1 Buchanan St, Albany, CA 94706

Watershore Hike / Art Walk

Remember the Red Baron and other wooden sculptures sticking out of the Emeryville Bay Mudflats visible from Hwy 80? The sculptures have sunk into the Bay, but a hike around Albany Point reveals many similar driftwood or metal sculptures still intact. Bring the kids, the dog and a camera for the art walk.

Integem Holographic Summer Camp

Camp.integem.com

MLK Middle School, 1781 Rose St, Berkeley

Integem Camp is a unique experience that focuses on teaching K-12 students holographic augmented reality (AR), coding, design, digital art, animation, game design, 3D modeling, outer space exploration, nature exploration, STEM, and more. The camp alternates computer time with indoor activities, and outdoor playtime to keep campers on their toes and having fun. Spots are still available, register now.



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Thinking Outside the Classroom

Summer is here; outdoor play is the top priority

By Kymberly Miller

Here comes the summer, and adults and children alike want to have outdoor fun.

Engaging in play is an important part of early childhood and contributes to healthy brain development—the benefits are cognitive, physical, social, and emotional. Honestly, it's good for people of all ages. For children it helps with language, communication, and emotion control. For adults, play reduces stress, and improves brain functionality. And playing together—departure from the structured segmentation of the pandemic – enhances learning and creativity benefits for both.

According to Richard Louv, author of the *Last Child in the Woods*, playing outside, due to its relatively unstructured nature,

also has the added benefit of feeding creativity and imagination. When children spend time playing outside the opportunities to invent, discover, pretend, and problem-solve are bountiful. This kind of break allows children (and adults) to attend to structured participation and formal zoom-room in a much more effective way.

While working at Children's Fairyland I have had the benefit of looking out of my magical window to see children become swashbuckling mates on a pirate ship, play peekaboo with a donkey, climb on the back of the happy dragon, or catch bubbles blown by an elf. I also see their adults running behind them full of glee, smiles, relief, and a cup of coffee.

Everyone deserves this moment to explore, imagine, create, play,

scream, and run. Invest in restorative self-care for the whole family—get outside and play.

Kymberly Miller is Executive Director of Children's Fairyland, America's first storybook theme park. Created in 1950, it is located on the shores of Lake Merritt in the heart of Oakland. A nonprofit community organization, Fairyland offers children and families a safe, stimulating environment for play and imagination with fairy tales, fantasy sets, performing arts, animals, and unique children's programming focused on early childhood education and literacy.

This article was originally printed in 2021.



Dragon fun at Children's Fairyland in Oakland

Survey: Schoolmates seeks input on afterschool care

The Piedmont Recreation Department is conducting a survey to better understand how Schoolmates can support the childcare needs of families. City staff and the Recreation Commission's Schoolmates Subcommittee will use the information to shape future programming.

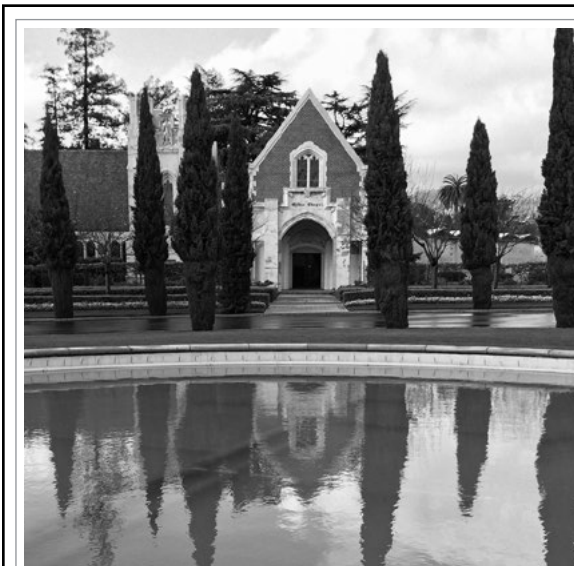
The survey asks families who have participated in Schoolmates

for feedback on their experience with the program, including the registration process. The survey is available at piedmont.ca.gov/SchoolmatesSurvey and will remain open through June 19. It should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Current afterschool offerings include the Schoolmates program at all three elementary school

sites, the Minimates program for Transitional Kindergartners at Havens and Beach schools, and classes spanning a broad range of subjects, from carpentry to creative arts to taekwondo.

For questions about the survey or Schoolmates programs, contact Recreation Supervisor Katrina Morris at kmorris@piedmont.ca.gov.



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PPD Blue

Excerpts from the Piedmont Police Department Log
May 26 - June 2

The Week by the Numbers

- 1 Report of Vandalism
- 2 Arrests
- 2 Catalytic Converter Thefts
- 2 Auto Burglaries
- 3 Reports of gas-powered leaf blowers
- 19 Automatic License Plate Readers (ALPR) triggered by stolen vehicles or plates

Friday, May 26

- 12:08 p.m. Oakland Ave. Report of pedestrian crossing signals not working.
- 3:56 p.m. Winsor Ave. ALPR triggered by Lincoln minivan.
- 5:03 p.m. Rose Ave. Report of person sleeping in front yard. Officer makes contact; person leaves.
- 6:31 p.m. Highland Ave. Report of Amazon truck speeding.
- 10:29 p.m. Moraga Ave. Report of kids walking in roadway; second call reports kids driving recklessly, yelling and hanging out car windows.

Saturday, May 27

- 1:20 a.m. Kingston Ave. ALPR triggered by white 2019 Hyundai Tucson.
- 7:41 a.m. Magnolia Ave. Officer stops bicycle for not stopping at stop sign, bicyclist submits to search. Officer gives citation for possession of methamphetamine.
- 11:26 a.m. Mountain Ave. Report of white and black BMWs speeding up and down street in last 2 months. Resident flipped off by one driver.
- 12:04 p.m. Grand Ave. ALPR triggered by silver Toyota 4Runner.
- 5:19 p.m. Artuna Ave. Report of suspicious Hyundai Elantra without plates occupied by 2 people in ski masks.
- 7:42 p.m. Grand Ave. ALPR triggered by white 2015 Mercedes C30.

Sunday, May 28

- 5:58 a.m. Rose Ave. ALPR triggered by unidentified vehicle. Officer locates car but driver refuses to yield.
- 11:48 a.m. Red Rock Rd. Officer assists citizen with cones and a-frame signs for block party event.
- 9:36 p.m. Grand Ave. ALPR triggered by unidentified vehicle with stolen plate. Officer locates vehicle but it speeds out of city.

Monday, May 29

- 11:22 a.m. Crocker Ave. ALPR triggered by blue 2014 Hyundai Santa Fe.
- 12:01 p.m. Sea View Ave. Report of red Hyundai Accent without plates; occupants are wearing masks and hoodies.
- 12:43 p.m. Moraga Ave. ALPR triggered by unidentified vehicle.
- 1:35 p.m. Wildwood Ave. ALPR triggered by black 2018 Hyundai Sonata. Officer locates car but driver fails to yield; no pursuit.
- 3:41 p.m. Moraga Ave. ALPR triggered by unidentified vehicle.
- 10:57 p.m. Harvard Rd. ALPR triggered by stolen vehicle. Unmarked police car attempts to pull it over on Lakeshore, but vehicle fails to yield.

Tuesday, May 30

- 2:29 a.m. St. James Dr. Catalytic Converter Theft. Report of converter stolen around 1:40 a.m.; surveillance video submitted to police.
- 6:58 a.m. Crest Ave. Catalytic Converter Theft. Converter stolen overnight.
- 4:14 p.m. Wildwood Ave. Auto Burglary. License plates stolen from Honda SUV.
- 7:42 p.m. Grand Ave. ALPR triggered by stolen vehicle.
- 8:01 p.m. Grand Ave. Arrest. Officer stops 2006 silver Infiniti M35 without front license plate. Driver arrested for warrants for Grand Theft and elder endangerment; taken to Santa Rita Jail.

Wednesday, May 31

- 10:09 a.m. Monte Ave. Report of gas-powered leaf blower.
- 10:59 a.m. Hampton Rd. Report of gas-powered leaf blower.
- 11:02 a.m. Estates Rd. ALPR triggered by 2004 gray Lexus L43.
- 1:10 p.m. Highland Ave. Report of gas-powered leaf blower.
- 6:06 p.m. Grand Ave. Vandalism. Report of neighbor's ADU unit being broken into. Officers find sliding glass door shattered; appears that no entry was made.

See PPD Blue on page 30

PICK OF THE WEEK

• What's next, "Dog is Driving" mode?

Wednesday, May 31

7:40 p.m. Wildwood Gardens. Report of dog left in a black Tesla. Owner of Tesla calls to say car is on "Dog Mode" which keeps the car at 68 degrees.

FLIP by Phil Witte



"So I'm like an emotional support animal, right?"

Valedictorian Jasper Zietlow's graduation speech

Senior Jasper Zietlow was named Valedictorian of Piedmont High School's class of 2023 as the student with the highest GPA. Zietlow was also recognized as a National Merit Scholarship semifinalist, a candidate in the 2023 Presidential Scholar Program and will be attending Imperial College in London in the fall.

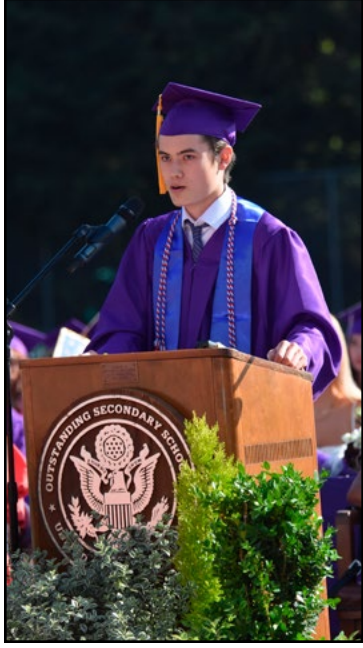
The following is the text of Zietlow's speech at the June 2 graduation ceremony at Witter Field.

By Jasper Zietlow

These past few weeks, I think we've all been guilty of being a little sentimental, looking back on the glory days of high school in rose-tinted rapture. But it's just as valuable to take a more holistic view, to see past those beautiful but dull reds and gaze at the scintillating rainbow of experience that our high school career was. In fact, at the risk of being considered presumptuous, were I to be asked, I might say that the overwhelming, predominant sentiment among us could be summed up in a succinct phrase: "Gosh, I'm glad it's over."

It's worth taking a moment to ponder that thought, and to perhaps question why we were even here?

For most, school, college, or the variety of other educational institutions an enterprising young person may attend, are a jumping-off point for the rest of their



Valedictorian Jasper Zietlow

lives, that is, a staging area that we trudge through together for a few years, eventually taking off and tasting what real life has to offer. We put ourselves through innumerable trials and tribulations, keeping our nose to the grindstone, to finally, ultimately get past that finish line – and to enter the Elysian fields of the nine to five.

Maybe our conception of self-development needs reframing: is the value of learning really in learning to work? Think of how far we've come, not just as a class of seniors of indeterminate fate, but as a species. Thousands of years of natural selection, of

fighting tooth and nail to claim our apex position and to make this age the Anthropocene: that innate desire to comprehend that has propelled us forward thus far wasn't placed in us simply to "make money" or to follow the well-trodden paths laid before us. These are acquired motivations.

In its purest form, learning doesn't ask us to seek the promised results of our labors but encourages us to examine why we want those undertakings in our lives. Your earliest childhood pastimes, plotting adventures, drawing pictures of your dreams, getting lost in a good book; you did those not for some perceived reward years down the road, but because doing them felt miraculous. And you kept coming back, seizing onto the manifestations of the magic you felt when you first experienced them, letting them beckon you to its source where hours there become minutes and minutes away become hours.

You may not have rediscovered that magic – yet. It may even take years to do so. But take heart in this fact: you, more than most people on this planet right now, have the gift of time. These next few years are yours to spend as you please. And should you choose to proceed with intent, with care, and with unflinching self-honesty, I think you will find that the impassable rift between what you do and what you are will, step by step, bit by bit, begin to mend itself.

Salutatorian Alex Aubrecht's graduation speech

Alex Aubrecht was named one of two salutatorians for the Piedmont High School Class of 2023. The following is his speech at the graduation ceremony at Witter Field on June 2.

By Alex Aubrecht

As I was sifting through moments here at PHS, I've realized that my happiest experiences come back to the people. The memories I make with friends are the things I value most in my life.

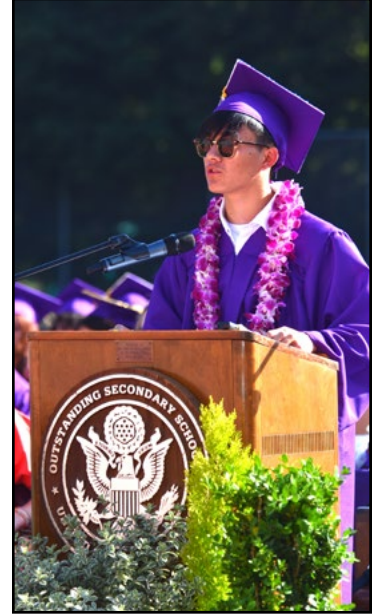
Running thousands of miles to train with Jack, Christian, Parker and Drew, backpacking with Nate, Jasper and Jasper, working out Calc problems with Tara, Kyra and Evan the math god, and being on the Camo roof team on the Mexico trip are some memories I'll always cherish from Piedmont. These are the kinds of relationships that we look back on fondly and are always grateful for.

The exciting experiences with these friends are what make them so memorable. But I'd like to tell you all about another kind of friendship that I, and probably many others, tend to overlook.

It was freshman year, and a friend and I had signed up for a writing camp at Berkeley that was moved online due to COVID. We'd never gone to a class through zoom, and the camp felt so formal being run through a university, so we didn't know what to expect. Ten minutes before joining the first class, we were both so nervous that we FaceTimed just to reassure each other. Eventually, we decided to mute ourselves but stay on the call throughout the entire class.

The next day we did the same: call, mute, and joined the class. And so it went for the rest of the program.

When classes stayed online for sophomore year, we continued to call every day. Some days, we wouldn't even talk. Other days,



Alex Aubrecht, a salutatorian for the PHS class of 2023, delivers his speech at graduation at Witter Field on June 2.

we would talk for hours. But what always stayed the same was that we would call. The few times we didn't, it felt weird. And even after we went back to in-person classes, we continued to call throughout junior and senior year.

These types of friends aren't always the funniest, the craziest, or the most adventurous, but offer their steady and enduring support. Friendship is not just making you laugh until you cry or telling you what you think you want to hear. It's also showing up to watch you receive an award, helping you with projects when you're scrambling at the last minute, and getting you snacks when you're sick. It doesn't have to be loud. It doesn't have to perform grand gestures or always be thrilling. The best support, I've found, is quiet and ever present. It's stable, and grounding. It provides a sense of constancy in a chaotic, turbulent, and ever-changing world. It's the FaceTime that's always on in the background – muted, but still there.

Salutatorian Lucy Filler's Speech

Lucy Filler was named co-Salutatorian at Piedmont High School graduation along with Alex Aubrecht for having the second highest grade point average in the class. Filler will be attending UCLA in the fall.

By Lucy Filler

You know one of my biggest regrets from high school? Not spraying someone in the senior assassin. I literally got eliminated in the first round. Another thing I wish I would have done is audition for the school musical. I definitely would have been cast as a singing tree or something – but it still would have been so fun.

Ugh, what am I saying right now? I am meant to be up here celebrating my accomplishments not complaining about my regrets.

What am I proud of? I'm proud I was able to pass French, even though the extent of my conversational skills reach no further than being able to say "bonjour, comment allez vous" in a really atrocious French accent. I'm also proud that I was able to actually enjoy playing badminton, a sport that I initially signed up for just for the P.E. credits.

Wait. I want to talk about the accomplishments of my classmates instead. I should be up here shouting out people like Ben Kim, whose musical abilities literally made the entire crowd at Phantasmagoria feel like they



Salutatorian Lucy Filler speaks at Piedmont High School's graduation ceremony.

were being transported into a mystical universe.

And people like Chelsea, Milo, Ashley, and Anne, whose ability to create art even leaves Ms. Bailey speechless.

Of course, I can't forget TJ and Evan. TJ may not understand Spanish completely, but his confidence while speaking makes it seem like he literally created the language. And Evan, who somehow knows the answer to every math question, even if Mr. Colburn calls it unsolvable.

I'm also awestruck by the people whose passions push them beyond limits. Like Eden and Milani in the school play, or Aryana, Jack, and John whose argu-

ing abilities give them the upper hand during every debate.

And who could forget all the athletes, like Jack, Simon, Henry, Audrey, Leah, and so many others who have led our school to countless victories. And in terms of victories beyond the field, Seb has won so many battles to make this school a better place every day.

Every single student in the class of 2023 is amazing and should leave high school proud of their accomplishments, not regretful of anything they didn't get to do. I want to leave PHS with no regrets either, so the next time there's an audition for a singing tree, I'll be there.

Senior Speaker Skye Yeh's graduation speech

Every year at Piedmont High's graduation ceremony the students with the top GPAs (Jasper Zietlow, Lucy Filler and Alex Aubrecht this year) deliver speeches to their classmates. One student is also chosen after auditioning before school staff to be the senior speaker for the class. The following is the text of Senior Speaker Skye Yeh's speech at the June 2 graduation ceremony at Witter Field.

By Skye Yeh

The class of 2023 has probably been dealt the worst hand in the game. There we were, halfway through our freshman year, March 13, 2020. It was a Friday and the school board announced that there would be a break from school for two weeks. We were ecstatic. We couldn't possibly know the extreme damage these two weeks would cause.

It was Friday the 13th. How did we not know?

We were told to social distance, wash hands, no more parties, no visiting family, and no hanging out with your friends. Toilet paper became as valuable

as diamonds. Store shelves were empty, and the hallways at school were deserted. All social interactions were now within the close quarters of our homes. Our birthdays? On zoom. Shopping? Amazon. No more indoor dining, only takeout and drive-thrus.

And the biggest thing for us was not getting to go to school.

It's strange to think that when the pandemic hit, we were suddenly cut off from the little things that made school feel like home, like, the fire alarm being set off every week, or waiting in long lines for the cinnamon buns every Thursday.

I missed those moments more than I ever thought I would.

The pandemic has without a doubt taken a toll on the entire world. However, during these challenging times, our community was fortunate enough to smoothly transition to online learning.

As we reflect, on the importance of social connections, we are reminded that high school is all about socializing. It's where we form friendships, share laughter, and support each other through ups and downs. It's [See Skye Yeh's Speech on page 32](#)

READ IT IN THE POST

PHS Graduation

Continued from page 1



Happy seniors of the 2023 class enjoying their commencement ceremony at Witter Field on June 2.



Milani Juarbe approaches Superintendent Donald Evans after shooting a flurry of confetti into the air.



Superintendent Donad Evans shakes the hand of Homecoming King Callan Mitchell.



Commencement speaker Dana Murray.



Valedictorian Jasper Zietlow approaches the podium to give his graduation speech.

ised results of our labors but encourages us to examine why we want those undertakings in our lives," said Zietlow.

The Commencement Address was given by Piedmont parent Dana Murray. Murray shared behind the scenes anecdotes about her experience advancing to become a Producer at Pixar Animation Studios.

Senior Class President Lindsay Kottle and ASB President Wilson Wong then announced that the class of 2023's gift to the school will be park benches between the new theater and STEAM building on campus.

See *PHS Graduation* on page 32



Kevin Blodgett, a longtime Piedmont Post delivery boy, with his family on Graduation Day.



Sofia Prieto Black, winner of the Susan Kawaichi Diversity Award, receives her diploma from first-year Principal Sukanya Goswami.



Alex Ware, captain of the championship Highlander Robotics, on graduation day.



Sohrab Ford, a talented writer and a *Piedmont Post* intern, hold his diploma.



PHS science teacher Shelley Seto-Rosen, hands her daughter, Sadie Rosen, her high school diploma.



Student graduates on Witter Field, many with their future college indicated on their caps.





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SPORTS

2023 Athletes of the Year: Natalia Martinez & Parker Long

Honorable Mention: Audrey Lam, A.J. Harris, Jack Nelson, Emily Fitzgerald

By Jonathan Comeaux

Another school year has come and gone. In 2022-23 Piedmont earned three North Coast Section during a magical winter season, won five league championships, earned 98 All-League honors, and six Western Alameda County Conference Player of the Year awards.

Every year provides difficult decisions for the *Post* in its selection of Athlete of the Year. With so much expertise and accolades across multiple sports, the *Post* is honoring three athletes for girls' and boys' teams.

Natalia Martinez and Parker Long are named as Athletes of the Year, while A.J. Harris, Audrey Lam, Jack Nelson and Trinity Zamora all receive honorable mentions.

See Page 15 for the Freshmen and Sophomores of the Year.

NATALIA MARTINEZ Basketball

Natalia Martinez was our 2021 Freshman of the Year, 2022 Sophomore of the Year, and is undoubtedly our 2023 Athlete of the Year as a junior after leading the girls' basketball team in scoring to a 27-1 overall record—it's highest win-total since the 2005 State Championship. Piedmont brought home the Division 4 North Coast Section championship and the WACC Championship in 2023; it marked the school's first section title since 2006 and its first WACC banner in school history after joining the league in 2012.

She was named the WACC's Player of the Year and earned first-team All-League honors. Martinez was also elected to the CIF All State Open Division first-team, All-Bay Area first-team, and the SF Chronicle's All-Metro first-team.

Piedmont earned the No. 1 seed in the D4 NCS postseason on its way to the title and also went into the CIF State Open Division with the No. 1 rank before falling to No. 5 Salesian narrowly 48-45 in the CIF Regional Semifinals. Martinez scored 20 points in both Piedmont's 75-49 win over Branson for the NCS Title and the loss to Salesian.

Martinez also notched top performances against rival Bishop O'Dowd on two occasions, scoring 29 points in a 69-62 win on January 18, and 25 points in a 62-47 win to clinch the league title on February 7.

She becomes the first underclassmen to win our highest honor since tennis player Makenna Thiel, now playing for California in Berkeley.

PARKER LONG Cross Country & Track

Parker Long concludes his career at Piedmont High among the best to ever run the 800 meter. He graduates with the third fastest time in school history at 1:53.25, set at the Dublin Distance Fiesta on March 18.



Staff Photo

Natalia Martinez was named Athlete of the Year by the *Piedmont Post* after leading the basketball team to a Div. 4 North Coast Section title and a 27-1 overall record.

His time placed him narrowly behind some of PHS track royalty, including The *Post*'s 2018 Athlete of the Year Reece Proctor, and Piedmont Sports Hall of Famer Gordon Johnson, while finishing .15 ahead of teammate Cooper Downing.

The school's top five half milers of all time are:

Gordon Johnson, 1:51.10 (1989)

Reece Proctor, 1:52.64 (2018)

Parker Long, 1:53.25 (2023)

Cooper Downing, 1:53.40 (2022)

John Weber, 1:55.26 (2010)

Long won the NCS Meet of Champions' 800-meter run with a time of 1:53.80 in a field of 12 finalists. He was also a member of Piedmont's 4x400 relay team that qualified for the CIF State Championship, where they clocked a time of 3:23.84.

He helped the relay team record a season-best 3:22.93, the third fastest time in school history. Last year's relay team with Parker Terrill, Luke Alban, Cooper Downing, and Long set the school record of 3:21.77.

In the fall Long finished sixth of 71 at the WACC Championship in 15:59.1. The previous year, he helped the team qualify for the CIF State Meet.

Honorable Mentions

AUDREY LAM Soccer

Audrey Lam helped lead the girls' soccer team to a 13-1-6



Staff Photo

Audrey Lam was named Honorable Mention for Athlete of the Year after leading the soccer team to its first North Coast Section championship in 20 years.

record and win its first North Coast Section championship in 20 years. She was named the WACC Player of the Year and earned back-to-back first-team All-League honors last year and this.

Lam's impact as a maestro in the midfield was easy to see — bringing flair rarely seen at the high school level. She possesses an array of skills with back heel flicks, shots from distance, long passing with pin-point accuracy, and technical footwork allowing her to weave between defenders.

She is possibly the most decorated female soccer player in PHS history as a three-time invite to the United States' Youth National Team. She was invited to train with the U18/U19 programs in April, trained in Kansas City in 2019 and played for the U17 Women's National Team in friendlies against Spain and Germany in August last year.

Lam signed her Letter of Intent to continue her soccer career at Brown University in Rhode Island. She has the potential to become Piedmont's first athlete to play in the National Women's Soccer League since Erin Greening.

A.J. HARRIS Basketball

A.J. Harris finished his illustrious Piedmont High career as the school's All-Time leading scorer with 1,570 points after playing in just two full var-



Staff Photo

Parker Long is the *Piedmont Post*'s male Athlete of the Year award after clocking the third-fastest 800-meter run in school history. He is the sixth runner to win the highest honor since 2018.

sity seasons and an abbreviated 2021 season due to COVID-19. Harris was named the WACC's Co-Player of the Year alongside Berkeley's Samir O'Brien.

The Highlanders went 19-10 with Harris carrying the load as the team's leading scorer and rebounder. They made it to the Division 3 NCS Semifinals as the No. 4 seed before losing to No. 1 Branson on February 21. To get there, PHS beat No. 5 Analy in the quarterfinals on February 17 and No. 13 Rancho Cotate in the opening round.

Harris scored 28 points in the semifinals against the Bulls and 37 against Analy to eclipse the all-time mark. He scored over 30 points six times last season, including a high of 37 against Division 3 State Champions, Oakland High.

JACK NELSON Lacrosse, Soccer, Football

In every sense, Jack Nelson was a true all-around athlete for Piedmont, and earned the school's Outstanding Male Senior Athlete Award. He helped Piedmont win its sixth consecutive WACC banner in lacrosse, was a member of NCS Championship soccer team, and was a key player on the varsity football team on offense and



Staff Photo

Basketball played A.J. Harris was named Honorable Mention for male Athlete of the Year after concluding his career as Piedmont's All-Time leading scorer.

defense.

The lacrosse team battled its way to the D2 North Coast Section title game, where they lost 10-9 in double-overtime to No. 1 Tamalpais as the No. 3 seeded underdog. He received two consecutive first-team All-League honors.

In soccer Nelson was a key member, helping the team win its second-consecutive D4 NCS Championship.

Although the football season was cut short, Nelson was the team's leading running back and linebacker.

See *Athletes of the Year* on page 13



Staff Photo

Jack Nelson also was named Honorable Mention for Athlete of the Year due to his strong role on lacrosse, soccer, and football teams.

Athletes of the Year

Continued from page 12



Staff Photo

Soccer player Emily Fitzgerald was selected as Honorable Mention for Athlete of the Year after scoring goals in four North Coast Section playoff games.

EMILY FITZGERALD Soccer, Track

Emily Fitzgerald receives an Honorable Mention after finishing as one of the best soccer players in the playoffs in school history. She helped Piedmont win the D4 NCS title and scored goals in all five postseason matches, including the CIF NorCal Tournament against No. 1 Sequoia.

As a four-year starter, she scored 11 goals in nine NCS appearances and logged Piedmont's first goal in CIF postseason-play history.

This year NCS she scored twice against Sacred Heart in the opening NCS round, once against Sonoma Academy in the quarterfinals, once in the semifinals, and netted the opening goal in the finals against University.

In 2022 she scored four goals in a 4-0 win against College Prep. As a freshman in 2020, she scored a goal in a 2-1 win over Urban.

She earned first-team All-League honors as a senior and is set to continue playing at UC San Diego.

Fitzgerald also ran on the track team this spring, helping the 4x400 relay team qualify for the NCS Meet of Champions.

FALL – INDIVIDUAL ATHLETES

DARIUSH KASHANI Water Polo

Dariush Kashani was a four-year starter for Piedmont High and earned the WACC's Player



Staff Photo

The boys' water polo team captured its second-consecutive WACC Championship in the fall of 2022.

of the Year with first-team honors as a senior. He helped Piedmont win its second-consecutive league title with a 13-4 win over Alameda in the WACC Championship game, where he recorded a resounding 15 saves.

TANYA KONONOVA Tennis

Tanya Kononova, a Ukrainian refugee and a standout tennis star at Piedmont High, was named the WACC Player of the Year after winning the league singles championship. She was undefeated against every league opponent this season.

A detailed article of her history was printed in the Post on August 30, 2022.

TOP TEAM PERFORMANCES

GIRLS TENNIS

The fall of 2022 marked a resurgence of Piedmont High varsity girls' tennis team. They earned its first league title since 2018 by going perfect 12-0 against league opponents, which marked a return to tradition of going undefeated versus league teams from 2000-2018.

Also in the WACC Tournament, Emma Eisemon and Cecilia DeFazio placing second in the doubles brackets after entering as an unranked team. In the semifinals, the duo defeated No. 2 ranked Piedmont teammates Anne Jumper and Michaela Bini 6-2, 6-4.

In the NCS Team Championship, Piedmont lost narrowly to No. 2 Branson 4-3 in the semifinals on November 12.

BOYS' WATER POLO

The boys' water polo team was 20-7 overall, won its second-consecutive WACC Championship, was undefeated at 9-0 in league, and made a second-consecutive NCS Semifinal appearance.

They won the WACC Finals 13-4 over Alameda on October 29, when junior Peter Kruminis scored six goals. In NCS on November 9, they battled with No. 1 seed Marin Academy but narrowly lost 6-5.

Junior Declan Linnane was instrumental against Marin Academy, scoring all five goals including three in a monumental fourth quarter performance.

WINTER – INDIVIDUAL ATHLETES

EVA LEVINGSTON Basketball

Eva Levingston was a major addition to the basketball team. After sitting out her junior year due to CIF transfer rules following her time at Alameda High, Levingston earned first-team All-League honors in her only year at PHS, regularly reeling in double-doubles in points and rebounds. She will continue playing basketball at Cal State Fullerton.

T.J. O'NEIL Soccer

T.J. O'Neil was a midfield general in Piedmont High's NCS championship team, helping

them finish with a 13-6-5 overall record. He received second-team All-League honors as a senior and first-team as a junior, where he was also a key player.

TRINITY ZAMORA Basketball

Trinity Zamora returned from injury to help the girls' basketball team win. Both the league and North Coast Section championships. She finished her high school career in the top echelon with over 2,000 career points and 1,400 rebounds, becoming one of the most accomplished four-year starters in PHS history.

She was the Post's 2022 Honorable Mention for Athlete of the Year in 2002, and its 21 Sophomore of the Year, and Freshman of the Year. Zamora was also named to the SF Chronicle's All-Metro first team in 2023.

She's set to continue her career at San Diego State. See *Athletes of the Year* on page 14



Staff Photo

Tennis player Tanya Kononova, who came to Piedmont as a Ukrainian refugee, played #1 singles all season and won the WACC Tournament as a junior. She was named the league's Player of the Year.



Staff Photo

Eva Levingston was a breakout performer for the basketball team in her first year as a starter.



Staff Photo

Trinity Zamora was a four-year starter for the basketball team and is regarded as one of the best players in Piedmont history.

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Photo by Todd Marshburn

Piedmont's boys' and girls' soccer teams meet on the field after both won the North Coast Section Championship at Beach Chalet Soccer Fields in Golden Gate Park.

Athletes of the Year

Continued from page 13

WINTER – TEAM PERFORMANCES

GIRLS' BASKETBALL

Piedmont's historic girls' basketball season saw them finish with a 27-1 overall record and winning the WACC title for the first time. They won the North Coast Section title with ease over No. 2 Branson 75-49 on February 25, defeated No. 5 McKinleyville 67-29 in the semifinals and 81-29 over No. 9 Lick-Wilmerding in the quarterfinals.

They received the No. 1 seed in the CIF Open Division tournament but lost to No. 5 Salesian 48-45 on March 4.

They received six All-League selections: Levingston and Martinez earned first-team honors, Perseas Gioukaris and Maddie Hill earned second-team selections, while Adrienne Blackwell and Shakila Zuberi earned honorable mentions.

Zamora and Hill graduate as four-year starters, while Levingston and Gioukaris were instru-

mental additions as seniors after having to sit out their junior year. Hill will continue playing at Rocky Mountain University, and Gioukaris will play at San Francisco State.

BOYS' SOCCER

Piedmont's boys' soccer team won its second-consecutive NCS banner in 2023 after defeating No. 2 University 1-0 on February 25 on a goal scored by William Daniel. Given a no. 8 seed, PHS upset No. 5 Healdsburg 1-0 in the semifinals with a goal by Max Schleuning; topped No. 1 Cardinal Newman 1-0 with a header goal by Miles Corcoran; and beat No. 9 St. Helena 2-0 in the opening round on goals by Aidan Woolwine and Enzo Bernales.

The Highlanders went on to reach the CIF NorCal Semifinals as the No. 4 seed, where their Cinderella season came to a close on March 2 against No. 1 Marin Academy.

In an earlier game, PHS defeated No. 5 Kimball 2-0 on February 28 with goals by Daniel and Bernales.



Photo by Todd Marshburn

T.J. O'Neil hoists the boys' North Coast Section plaque after the boys' soccer team won the NCS Championship.

GIRLS' SOCCER

The girls' soccer team finished 13-1-6 overall and won to its NCS banner in two decades. As the No. 3 seed, Piedmont upset No. 1 University 2-1 for the title on February 25. To get to the finals, it bashed No. 2 University 3-0 on February 22 in the semifinals, beat No. 6 Sonoma Academy 4-1 in the quarterfinals on February 18, and won 2-0 over No. 15 Sacred Heart in the first round on February 15.

In the CIF NorCal Regional Tournament, No. 8 ranked Piedmont nearly upset No. 1 Sequoia in the first round on February 28, losing 2-1 in sudden-death overtime.

They received seven All-League selections, including Fitzgerald, Cameron Lorin, and Lam earning first-team honors. Ellie DeVan and Hailey Marshburn were second-team selections, while Morgan Hunt and Elle Ruegg earned honorable mentions.

O'Dowd. Brayer is set to continue playing at Brown University.

MOLLY ASHTON Lacrosse

Molly Ashton was awarded Piedmont High's 2023 Outstanding Senior Award and received first-team All-League honors as the girls' lacrosse team's leading scorer in 2023.

Her team went 8-8 overall record and finished the league tournament with a nail-biting 11-9 loss to Bishop O'Dowd in the championship game. She had a season-high of six goals in a 11-9 win over Berkeley in the first round of the WACC playoffs. She also had four goals in a thrilling 11-10 overtime win over Las Lomas on March 28.

MICHAEL AIKAWA Baseball

Michael Aikawa was a key four-year starter on Piedmont's baseball team. He earned second-team All-League honors as a senior and was first-team in 2022. The Post named him Sophomore of the Year.

Aikawa contributed both as a shortstop and pitcher in 2023, closing the year Piedmont's leading hitter with a .357 average, 25 hits, 12 doubles, one home run, 13 RBIs and 22 runs scored. As a pitcher, he led the way with 37 innings, a 4-2 record, 44 strikeouts and a sterling 1.324 ERA – despite being the first year he ever appeared on the mound for the Highlanders.

He is set to continue playing at Lewis & Clark in Portland.

SPRING – TEAM PERFORMANCES

BOYS' LACROSSE

The boys' lacrosse team went 14-4 and won its sixth consecutive WACC Championship in a 14-6 win over Bishop O'Dowd. They went on to reach the NCS Finals as the No. 3 seed, beating No. 2 Acalanes 9-8 in double-overtime in the semifinals, and losing in the finals to No. 1 Tamalpais in another thrilling 9-8 double-overtime game.

Piedmont beat Acalanes in come-from-behind fashion after trailing 5-3 at halftime, when senior Soren Dixon rocketed in. See *Athletes of the Year* on page 30



Staff Photo

Henry Brayer won the WACC's Player of the Year award, helping Piedmont to its sixth consecutive league title. He'll be playing at Brown University next year.

SPRING – INDIVIDUAL ATHLETES

HENRY BRAYER Lacrosse

Henry Brayer was the leading scorer on the WACC Championship winning lacrosse team, and was named the league's Player of the Year despite ending the season with a shoulder injury and missing most of the postseason.

He carried the load for Piedmont offensively, including a seven-goal performance in an 18-1 regular-season win over Bishop



Staff Photo

Michael Aikawa is a four-year starter on Piedmont's baseball team.



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Freshmen of the Year: Lucas Smolko & Miranda Liu

Honorable Mentions: Diego Delventhal & Skylar Best

By Jonathan Comeaux

The *Piedmont Post* has selected tennis player Lucas Smolko and soccer and track runner Miranda Liu as the Freshmen of the Year. Honorable mentions go to freshmen Diego Delventhal for baseball and distance runner Skylar Best.

Lucas Smolko – Tennis

Lucas Smolko earned the role as No. 1 singles before the season started. He led the team to a 15-8 overall record and 11-2 against WACC teams. He reached the Finals of the Division 2 NCS Individual Tournament and reached the finals of the League Individual Tournament at Chabot College.

Smolko lost in the NCS championship match to freshman Gus

Grumet of University. Je earlier beat Bela Randles of Arcata in the first round in straight sets, and Nea Chai of O’Dowd, 6-3, 6-0.

In the WACC Individual Tournament, Smolko earned the No. 2 seed and fell to No. 1 San Leandro’s Elijah Cho in three-sets 7-5, 2-6, 7-5. He defeated O’Dowd’s Lucas Tanaka 6-1, 6-1 in the second-round after beating Colin Sweeney of O’Dowd in the opening match.

Miranda Liu – Soccer, Track

Miranda Liu proved to be a game-changer for coach Dan Chubbock’s soccer team as a scoring threat in every game.

She had an assist in a 2-1 loss to No. 1 Sequoia in the CIF Nor-Cal Tournament and scored three goals against No. 6 Sonoma Academy in the NCS Quarterfinals.



Staff Photos

Diego Delventhal stepped up as a freshman into the starting lineup on the varsity baseball team at second base.



Skylar Best made a big impact on the cross country team, reaching the State Championship in the fall.

On the track team this spring, Liu was a sprinter, helping the 4x100 relay team qualify for the NCS Bayshore Championship

with teammates Ella Yasar, Darcy McKee, and Breah Bell.

Diego Delventhal – Baseball

Diego Delventhal became a frequent starter on the varsity baseball team and helped the Highlanders finish with a 14-10 overall record. They nearly upset No. 5 Branson in a 11-10 extra-innings loss in the NCS Semifinals. He was the starting second baseman by the start of the postseason.

In 14 appearances, Delventhal had a .237 batting average with nine hits, two RBIs and three runs scored. He made his biggest impression in the NCS playoffs with two hits, a run scored and an RBI against Justin-Siena. In the first round, he recorded two hits and two walks in Piedmont’s 4-3 win in extra-innings against Branson.

Skylar Best – Cross Country, Track

Skylar Best made an impact on Piedmont’s cross country team last fall by qualifying for the CIF State Championship at Woodward Park. She was the 11th fastest freshman in the state.

To qualify for State, Best clinched a spot by finishing 11th of 110 runners with a time of 19:24.27 at the NCS Meet of Champions at Hayward. At the WACC Championship, which was also at Hayward High, Best finished fourth of 59 runners with a time of 19:25.22.

In track in the spring, Best helped the 4x400 relay team reach the NCS Bayshore meet with Ella Yasar, Jamie Schwarz, and Emily Fitzgerald. The same relay team placed second at the WACC Championships.



Lucas Smolko is the *Post*’s Freshman of the Year after advancing to the tennis finals of the WACC and NCS Individual Tournaments.



Miranda Liu was named Freshman of the Year after making a strong impression on the championship soccer team – and on the track team.

Sophomore of the Year: Enzo Bernales & Sonja ten Grotenhuis

Honorable Mentions: Markos Lagios & Mei Assalian

By Jonathan Comeaux

The *Piedmont Post* has awarded soccer player Enzo Bernales and Sonja ten Grotenhuis of the swim team as our 2022 Sophomores of the Year. Honorable mention recognitions go to Markos Lagios in baseball and football, Mei Assalian of the golf team.

Enzo Bernales – Soccer

Enzo Bernales helped lead the soccer team to the NCS Championship. He burst onto the scene on coach Todd Sullivan’s team as a forward. He scored a penalty kick against No. 5 Kimball in their 2-0 win in the D3 CIF Nor-Cal opening round. Bernales also sent the game-winning assist on Mile Corcoran’s goal in the NCS

Quarterfinals to upset No. 1 Cardinal Newman 1-0. He has a goal and assist in Piedmont’s 2-0 win over No. 9 St. Helena in the opening round.

Sonja ten Grotenhuis – Swimming

Sonja ten Grotenhuis was named the *Post*’s female Sophomore of the Year. She was also Freshman of the Year in 2022. She was a key member of both the 200 medley and 400 freestyle relay teams that went undefeated against WACC teams on their way to winning the league championships in both events.

Ten Grotenhuis swims the anchor leg of the 200 medley, which defeated eight teams for the WACC title with a time of 1:54.74. In the 400 freestyle relay,

Grotenhuis raced the second leg, resulting in Piedmont finishing with a time of 3:44.42, beating Castro Valley by .78 of a second and three other schools.

She was an All-League selection alongside her other relay teammates.

Markos Lagios – Baseball, Football

Markos Lagios receives an honorable mention as a talented member of both the baseball team (No. 2 hitter, center fielder, and third baseman), and quarterback on the football team.

This spring, Lagios helped lead the baseball team with a .303 batting average, with 23 hits, 11 doubles, three triples, 18 RBIs. He led the team with two home runs and 27 runs scored. In football team, Lagios scored six touchdowns before the team was disbanded.



Sonja ten Grotenhuis was named Sophomore of the Year after helping the girls’ 200 Medley and 400 Freestyle relay swim teams win undefeated league titles.

He received first-team All-League honors in baseball.

Mei Assalian – Golf

Mei Assalian had a strong season on the golf team and played in the North Coast Sec-

tion tournament in Petaluma. She qualified for the tournament by shooting an 18-hole round of 74.

Assalian earned an All-League selection and was named team captain as a sophomore.



Staff Photo

Enzo Bernales was named Sophomore of the Year after leading the soccer team in scoring for the NCS title.



Staff Photo

Markos Lagios was named Honorable Mention as Sophomore of the Year after being a leader on the baseball and football teams.



Mei Assalian gets an Honorable Mention for Sophomore of the Year after reaching the NCS Championship.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Bouquets to Art is this week at de Young Museum

By Allyson Aleksey

Bouquets to Art, the de Young Museum's premiere fundraiser and annual display of artwork-inspired floral installations, will be on display through Sunday, June 11.

More than 100 experienced floral designers have converged at the de Young to showcase arrangements inspired by the museum's vast array of paintings, sculptures, and architecture.

Now in its 39th year, Bouquets

to Art is one of the Fine Arts Museum of San

Francisco's most popular and well-attended events every year. The event is presented by the volunteer members of the fine arts museums - and draws nearly 800,000 visitors a year with net proceeds of more than \$7 million. Funds from the event help underwrite special exhibitions, conservation projects, and educational programming.

Visit <https://www.famsf.org/exhibitions/bouquets-to-art-2023> for more information.



Photo by Greg Lato

Woodside-Atherton Garden Club installation for 2013 Bouquets to Art at the de Young Museum, San Francisco. It is based upon *Berkeley #3, 1953*. Oil on canvas, by Richard Diebenkorn.

Giant West Coast Crafts Fair at Fort Mason this weekend

By Allyson Aleksey

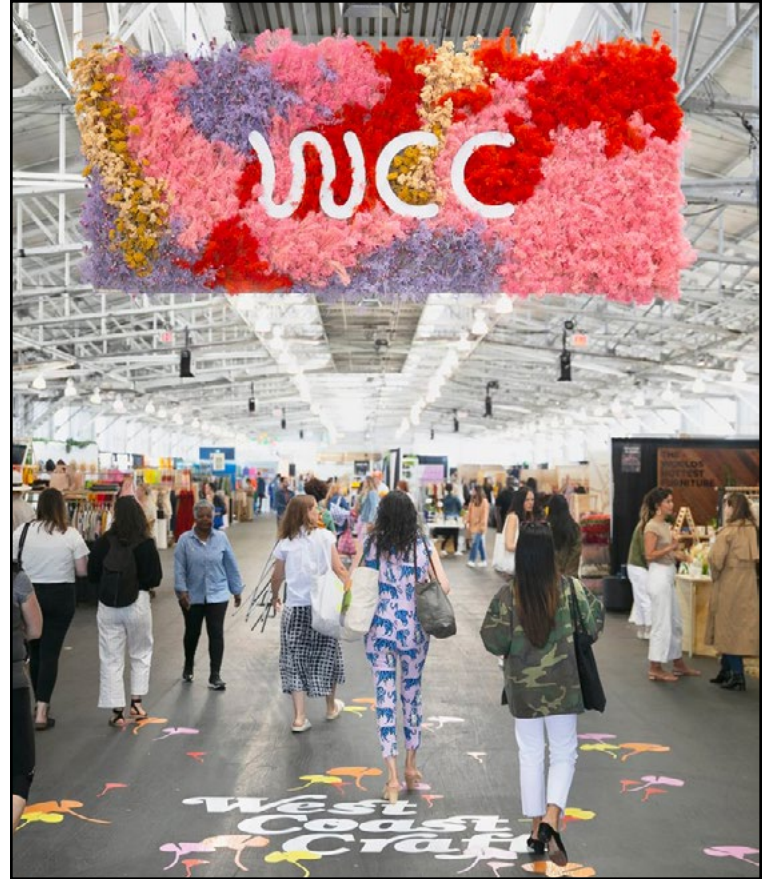
Visit the Festival Pavilion at Fort Mason Center in San Francisco this weekend, June 10 and 11, for the 10th anniversary of the West Coast Craft Fair.

West Coast Craft was founded in San Francisco in 2013 to create a space for independent artists and designers to sell and promote their artwork, which range from simple to craft to fine art and spans a variety of mediums. This year, artists are selling textiles, clothing, shoes, toiletries, jewelry, furniture and woodwork, and homemade libations.

It is considered the premiere West Coast crafts fair and is one of the largest of its kind in the country.

The fair will take place Saturday and Sunday, June 10-11 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day. Refreshments are available for purchase and food trucks will be onsite.

Visit <https://www.westcoast-craft.com/home/catalog> for more information.



Crafts Fair at Fort Mason, show on 2022.

Oakland Museum to celebrate Juneteenth on June 16

By Allyson Aleksey

Although Juneteenth is celebrated on June 19, the Oakland Museum of California (OMCA) will celebrate a few days earlier on June 16 by merging its weekly "Friday Nights" event with the holiday that commemorates the emancipation of enslaved African Americans.

The museum opens its doors

after hours for "Friday Nights at OMCA," with games for families and kids on the lawn, outdoor performances and food and beverage trucks. The free community event takes place every Friday from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. and includes free access to the museum's exhibitions and displays. Bring a blanket and lounge in the garden, which opens into Lake Merritt.

Visit on June 16 to see special

guests and performances by DJ Snake, Queen Iminah and African American Females of Excellence, Kingmakers of Oakland and Spear of the Nation. Interactive, family-friendly activities will be available.

Visit <https://museumca.org/event/friday-nights-at-omca-featuring-odun-ayo-a-juneteenth-celebration-with-ousd/> to learn more.

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San Francisco Opera is currently performing Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*.

SF Opera is performing *Madame Butterfly* through July 1

By Allyson Aleksey

San Francisco Opera's production of *Madame Butterfly* opened last weekend and will be performed through July 1.

Giacomo Puccini's spectacular and heartbreaking drama is conducted by Music Director Eun Sun Kim with all-new staging by director Amon Miyamoto. Costume designs are

by the late fashion icon Kenzō Takada. The cast includes Karah Son, Michael Fabiano, Hyona Kim, Lucas Meachem, and Julius Ahn.

The drama centers around a young Japanese woman, Cio-Cio-San, who devotes herself to her absent American husband, naval officer Pinkerton, only to discover that he is married to another woman. It is a tragic tale

and considered one of opera's most enduring stories of unrequited love.

The opera is sung in Italian with English supertitles. Performances take place on June 9, 18, 21, 24, 27, and July 1. Tickets are available online at <https://www.sfopera.com/operas/madame-butterfly/#performances> or by calling the box office at (415) 864-3330.

Julia Bullock to perform with SF Symphony June 29 - July 1

By Allyson Aleksey

Soprano Julia Bullock joins San Francisco Symphony Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen and the symphony orchestra for a program inspired by the music of George Gershwin and Margaret Bonds.

Bullock is an American classical singer, originally from St. Louis, who has regularly shared the stage with Salonen. The performance will include the San Francisco Symphony premieres of Reena Esmail's *Black Iris*, George Gershwin's "Somebody from Somewhere" and "Soon," and Margaret Bonds' "Winter Moon" and "The Negro Speaks of Rivers." Also on the program is Gershwin's "Summertime" and Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe*.

Performances are June 29 through July 1. Tickets are available at [https://www.sfsym-](https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2022-23/EsapekkaSalonenJuliaBullock)



Photo by Michael Orenstein

Soprano Julia Bullock will sing the music of George Gershwin and Margaret Bonds with San Francisco Symphony

[phony.org/Buy-Tickets/2022-23/EsapekkaSalonenJuliaBullock](https://www.sfsymphony.org/Buy-Tickets/2022-23/EsapekkaSalonenJuliaBullock), or by calling the box office at (415) 864-6000.

ACT presents *Wizard of Oz* through June 25

By Allyson Aleksey

American Conservatory Theatre's (ACT) production of the beloved classic *Wizard of Oz* is playing onstage in San Francisco now through June 25.

The classic tale by L. Frank Baum is transformed for the ACT stage by Tony Award-nominated director and choreographer Sam Pinkleton and Tony Award-winning designer David Zinn.

"The myth of Dorothy and

her friends, and their big adventure, means something different to every single person you ask – whether it's childhood nostalgia, queer survival, or an unhealthy obsession with flying monkeys," said Pinkleton. "I'm giddy and honored to enlist the brains, heart, and courage of the Bay Area, in collaboration with mega-genius David Zinn, to create an intimate, intergenerational, human-powered *Wizard of Oz* that is bursting with contradic-

tions and big beating hearts – just like San Francisco itself."

The play is a family-friendly and appropriate for young audiences.

The cast includes El Beh, Keiko Shimosato, Darryl Jones, Katrina McGraw, Kunal Prasad, Ezra Reaves, Cathleen Riddley and Travis Rowland.

For more information, and to purchase tickets, visit <https://www.act-sf.org/whats-on/202223-season/wizard-of-oz/>.



ACT is currently performing *The Wizard of Oz*, based on the book by L. Frank Baum.

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The Musical Gourmet

Abundance

By Joseph Gold

There were so many things going on last week, it's hard to know where to start.

The best place is our Piedmont Center for the Arts – a gem if there ever was one. You always see and hear a good performance, and in a beautiful venue for a reasonable price.

As a bonus, there often is a beautiful reception following the

performance with lots to eat.

On Friday evening I attended a pre-concert talk and sample performance featuring a new composition by Professor Josiah Catalan. It is entitled “Night of the South Winds: Concerto for flute and small ensemble.” The Friday program was like an open dress rehearsal. The Left Coast Chamber Ensemble performed the work in its entirety. Then the composer spoke to the audience,

explaining his thoughts on his own composition. We got to hear the piece once more. A reception followed.

It goes without saying that the performance was very good. Stacey Pelinka was the featured flute soloist.

As I listened to “Night of the South Winds”, I conjured up visions of Stravinsky’s earth-shattering ballet *The Rite of Spring*. My only suggestion is that performers should view any appearance before an audience as a performance. By this I mean that the performers should respect the performance itself, as well as the audience. Is it really so difficult for men to wear jackets and ties rather than a jersey and shorts?

The next day featured a concert by the Sierra Ensemble at the PCA. French horn player



Photos by Joseph Gold

The musicians of Chamber Music Society in Sacramento: violist William Barbini (left), Violinist Kineko Okumura, pianist Ryan MacEvoy McCullough, cellist Julie Hochman, and bassist Thomas Derthick.



Pianist Ryan McCullough and soprano Clarissa Lyons.



The Sierra Ensemble performed at the Piedmont Center for the Arts on Saturday, June 3. Pictured are oboist Felisa Simon, pianist Marc Steiner, violinist Matthew Vincent, and French horn player Janice Lieberman.

Janis Lieberman is the driving force. She has gathered around her excellent musicians, and she always chooses interesting programs. One of her wonderful ideas is to have a professional speaker present the program notes. In this case, it was Dr. Sarah Waltz of the University of the Pacific.

On Sunday, a third event presented itself rather unexpectedly. I learned that a concert in Sacramento was being presented by the Chamber Music Society of Sacramento. The program began with soprano Clarissa Lyons, who is well regarded in the Bay Area. She presented a program in Piedmont not so long ago, and it was a pleasure to hear her again and to confirm that she is a singer of high attainments. As a singer, Ms. Lyons has a voice of distinction which she combines with excellent diction.

Pianist Ryan MacEvoy McCullough joined her to form a fine ensemble. As a bonus, violinist William Barbini (formerly with the New York Philharmonic) played a thrilling violin obligato.

After intermission, pianist McCullough was joined by violinist Kineko Okumura, William Barbini (now on viola), cellist Julie Hochman and bass player Thomas Derthick. They played Schubert’s ever-popular “Trout Quintet” with brilliance and musical intelligence. There were many other things to enjoy. First and foremost was the lofty musicality. The tempos were chosen with intelligence. What a pleasure it is to hear a piece that doesn’t resemble a race to the finish. Every note was expressive.

The music scene in our area is truly panoramic. Enjoy!



Gypsies and Flamenco

By Jim Gleason

The origins of Gypsy culture and music in Andalusia (southern Spain), trace back to the Dom caste in north India. The core of Gypsy heritage is Romani Gypsies. The Romani people originated in the tenth century in northwestern Indian state of Rajasthan and the Punjab region shared between India and Pakistan. They now live predominantly in Europe and Anatolia (Asia Minor), but have diaspora populations located worldwide with significant concentration of 1 million in the U.S. Although there is no Romani “homeland”, one for the Romani has been proposed, under the name “Romanistan”.

Flamenco music and dance is based on the traditions of southern Spain, developed within the Gitano subculture of Andalusia in the adjacent Extremadura and Murcia regions). Flamenco is closely associated with the Gitanos of the Romani ethnicity who have contributed to its origin.

However, flamenco style is uniquely Andalusian and flamenco artists have historically included Spaniards of both Gitano and non-Gitano heritage. The oldest record of flamenco music dates back to 1774 in the book *Las Cartas Marruecas* by José Cadalso.

Though the Spanish “Gitano” originally meant “Egyptian”, the use of the Old Spanish word “Egiptano” developed in the same way that the English word “Gypsy” evolved from the English adjective “Egyptian” to refer to Romanis in Britain. Some Romanis upon their first arrival in Europe either claimed to be Egyptians for a more favorable

treatment by local Europeans, or were mistaken for Egyptians. The two peoples are differentiated in modern Spanish as “Egipcios” for Egyptians and “Gitanos” for Roma in Spain, with “Egiptano” being obsolete for either.

Linguistics show that roots of Romani language have grammatical characteristics of Indic languages. Linguistic studies in the nineteenth century by Pott and Miklosich categorized the Romani language as a New Indo-Aryan language, establishing that the ancestors of the Romani couldn’t have left the Indian subcontinent earlier than 1000 AD, and reaching Europe several hundred years later.

Although Flamenco music is Andalusian rather than Gitano in origin, it is strongly affected by Gitanos in interpretative style, it is commonly associated with Gitanos by many Spaniards. The fact that the largest population of Gitanos is concentrated in Southern Spain has led to a confusion between Gitano accents and those typical of Southern Spain even though many in the northern half of Spain (such as Galicia) don’t speak Andalusian Spanish.

Listen to “Don Juan de Egipto”, my contemporary flamenco composition (with a solo) for this column and music for my previous columns at: <http://www.guitarimprov.com/PostColumns.pdf>

Jim Gleason is a Piedmont-based author and guitar instructor. Call (510) 923-9522, text (510) 435-3997, or email jim@guitarencyclopedea.com for a videoconference or in-person lessons. His course is available for free online at www.guitarimprov.com.



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In Search of Beauty exhibit opens this Saturday in Piedmont

3 Artists, 3 Styles, 3 Visions

Art has always been a powerful tool for social commentary and political expression. This June, Elena Doronkina and two friends, Alexander Zimin and Galina Filimonova are having a fine art exhibit at Piedmont Center for the Arts. In addition to showcasing their work, they are using the exhibit to express support for Ukraine. Half of the sale proceeds from the exhibit will be donated to support children in Ukraine, specifically those in South Village in the Kharkiv

Region.

The exhibit will showcase three unique styles which blend classical techniques with modern ideas. Their work is renowned for the use of vibrant colors, intricate details, and emotive expressions. Each piece represents the artist's innermost thoughts and feelings, conveyed through various mediums, including oil and watercolors.

An opening reception will be held on Saturday, June 10, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. The artists have a loyal following; their

work has been exhibited in galleries, private collections, and museums worldwide. The exhibit will be a celebration of creativity, beauty, and the human spirit. After COVID, it will be a much-needed opportunity for people to come together and appreciate the joys of life. The exhibit will be a reminder of art's power to inspire, uplift, and connect us with one another.

Gallery hours are Saturdays and Sundays from June 10 to July 2 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Ro Sham Bo Jazz Vocal Sextet at Center for the Arts June 25

Ro Sham Bo, a dynamic vocal sextet, will perform at the Piedmont Center for the Arts on Sunday, June 25, at 4:00 p.m. with a reception to follow. The program includes original arrangements of jazz, Latin, bossa nova, R&B, and pop music, from timeless standards to recent releases, all *a cappella*.

This award-winning group

has been entertaining the Bay Area audiences for two decades. In 2013 and 2018, Ro Sham Bo took home the first place championship at the SF Bay Area Regional Harmony Sweepstakes and was awarded audience favorite at the National Harmony Sweepstakes in 2018. Ro Sham Bo has performed to sold-out audiences at Anna's Jazz Island

and the historic La Peña Cultural Center. You can also find them serenading listeners at the eclectic and personality-filled Omega Salvage, the quirky Van Kleef bar in Uptown Oakland, and the family-friendly Montclair Farmers Market.

For tickets go to <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/6032176>.



The members of Rho Sham Bo

Father's Day Concert Welcoming the first day of summer!

Featuring the *In the Tradition* Piano Trio

Sunday, June 18, 2023, 5:30 p.m.

Tickets: \$25 at the door, or \$23 at <https://bpt.me/5691334>

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Piedmont Center for the Arts

Come enjoy the music, the art and events at the Center this summer.

Saturday, June 10, 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m.

In Search of Beauty Fine Art Exhibition

Elena Doronkina and two friends, also well-known artists, Alexander Zimin and Galina Filimonova, have mounted a fine art exhibition which will be open Saturdays and Sundays through July 2 at the hours above. In addition to showcasing their work, they will use this event to express support for Ukraine. One-Half of all sale proceeds from the exhibit will be donated to support children in Ukraine, specifically those in South Village in the Kharkiv Region. The art on display will consist primarily of still life and landscape paintings in watercolors and oils. The artists will host an Opening Reception on Saturday afternoon, June 10, from 4 to 7 p.m.

Sunday, June 18, 2023, 5:30 p.m.

In the Tradition Piano Trio

In the Tradition Piano Trio – Bill Jackman, Rich Trevor, and Albert Brooks – will perform a concert celebrating Fathers' Day and the beginning of Summer! Dedicated to the preservation of the classic trio of piano, bass, and drums in the East Bay, this concert will be loaded with jazz and blues favorites and other classics, from *Summertime* and *Easy Living* up to *Girl from Ipanema* and *Days of Wine and Roses!* Tickets are \$23 in advance at <https://bpt.me/5691334>, or \$25 at the door. Seating is limited to the first 70 attendees.

Sunday, June 25, 2023, 4:00 p.m.

Ro Sham Bo Jazz Vocal Sextet

Ro Sham Bo is a dynamic sextet singing original arrangements of jazz, Latin, bossa nova, R&B, and pop music, from timeless standards to recent releases, all *a cappella*. This award-winning group has been entertaining the Bay Area for two decades. In 2013 and 2018 This afternoon concert will be followed by an evening reception. In 2013 and 2018, *Ro Sham Bo* took home the first-place championship at the SF Bay Area Regional Harmony Sweepstakes and was also awarded audience favorite at the National Harmony Sweepstakes in 2018. *Ro Sham Bo* has performed to sold-out audiences at Anna's Jazz Island and the historic La Peña Cultural Center. You can also find them serenading listeners at the eclectic and personality-filled Omega Salvage, the quirky Van Kleef bar in Uptown Oakland, and the family-friendly Montclair Farmers Market. For tickets go to <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/6032176>.

All public events at Piedmont Center for the Arts require photo ID and valid proof of full vaccination for entry, as well as proper masking while inside.

Support the programming of Piedmont Center for the Arts by donating generously to the Tip Jar at these events.

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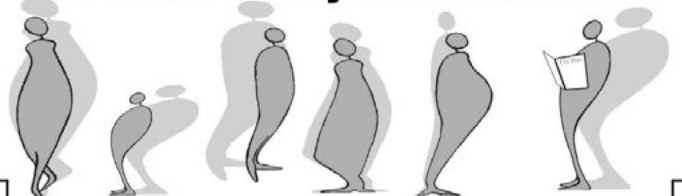
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MOVIES FOR ADULTS

Extremely Loud/Incredibly Close a lovely story of one boy's journey after 9-11

By Chris Honoré

The film *Extremely Loud/Incredibly Close* opens with what has become an iconic image of 9/11: the falling man. We bear witness to an individual dropping some 125 stories through the air, escaping a consuming fire but unable to escape the final outcome.

Another image captured in the film, one that will forever be with us, is the scene of a brick wall. It's only been a few days since the Twin Towers collapsed. In the dark of night the camera slowly moves from right to left, revealing countless photographs of the missing, along with messages, many a plea to call home. At the foot of the wall are lighted candles and bouquets of flowers. The wall is a heartbreaking memorial to those who will never return, lost forever amid the rubble that now lies where the skyscrapers once stood.

But there is more to this haunting and extraordinary film that tells the story of a nine-year-old boy, Oskar Schell (Thomas Horn), who lost his father on what he refers to as "the worst day."

School had let out early on Tuesday, September 11, for reasons that are initially unclear to Oskar. He arrives home and as usual checks the family's message machine. Unexpectedly, message one is his father's voice (Tom Hanks), a call from the 125th floor of one of the towers where he has been attending a meeting. Something has happened, but he



Thomas Horn and Tom Hanks in *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close*.

is just fine and everyone has been told to remain in place. Message two has an edge of uncertainty to it, yet remains reassuring. There are six calls in all, each seeming more fraught than the previous one, until the last message ("hello...are you there? Are you there?") abruptly stops, followed by a long moment of silence.

Oskar, who has turned on the television, watches in disbelief as the towers fall, as if in slow motion, each vanishing into billowing clouds of dust. Horrified, he runs to his room and crawls under his bed, waiting for his mother, Linda (Sandra Bullock), to return. Finally, she arrives, and knowing what has occurred

coaxes him out and into her arms.

Oskar is incapable of accepting the loss of his father, his grief immeasurable, and when his mother has an empty-casket funeral, he refuses to attend, observing the ceremony from a distance, his denial palpable.

And so, a year passes. Finally, reluctantly, Oskar enters his father's den and begins to look through his things. And when taking down a box, he knocks a blue vase off the shelf, breaking it. Among the fragments he discovers a small envelope with the name "Black" written on it. Inside he finds an unusual, corrugated key. Oskar holds the key in his hand, and it is in that moment that

he becomes convinced that the key fits a lock, a box perhaps, that contains a message from his father.

And thus we learn, through flashbacks, that over the years Thomas has created what he called "reconnaissance expeditions," a scavenger hunt of sorts, which sends Oskar out into the streets of New York in search of what they call "the sixth borough."

Attaching the key to a lanyard, which he wears around his neck, Oskar is inspired to begin his own expedition. He starts by looking through a massive NYC phone book and finds that there are 472 Blacks listed. Keeping it secret from mother, his mission is to visit all of them, asking if they

recognize the key.

His first stop is at the home of Abby Black (Viola Davis), and it's during his conversation with her that he mentions he has been tested for Asperger's Syndrome with inconclusive results. We know that Oskar is precocious, at times brusque, highly verbal, but we soon learn that Thomas' expeditions were about much more than simply a sixth borough hunt, but a way of sending his son into a world in which he is inherently uncomfortable.

Abby has no idea about the key, and so Oskar continues, from Black to Black, showing each of them the key, and using his father's vintage camera to take their photograph, which he keeps in a notebook.

To refer to *Extremely Loud/Incredibly Close* as a work of art may verge on hyperbole. And yet it represents the use of images and narrative, as only film can, to explore the depths of grief and loss while focusing on the emotions of a young boy who struggles to find meaning in what he angrily judges is meaningless. The key becomes a metaphor for Oskar's arduous search for answers to questions that are timeless: to what purpose? To what end? And, ultimately, why?

Extremely Loud/Incredibly Close. Directed by Stephen Daldry. Starring Thomas Horn, Tom Hanks, Sandra Bullock, Max von Sydow. 2 hrs., 9 min. Rated PG 13.

In Search of Beauty: three Artists, three Styles, three Visions.

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MOVIES FOR KIDS

Life as We Know It a so-so romantic comedy

By Chris Honoré

Life as We Know It is so solidly formulaic that it should be taught to budding screenwriters as the quintessential, contemporary romantic comedy (aka rom-com). It is a slick and predictable film, absent any real depth.

Here's how a rom-com is set up: couple meets cute or not so cute. In *Life as...* it's not so cute. Holly Berenson (Katherine Heigl) and Eric Messer (Josh Duhamel), are set up on a blind date by their best friends, Peter and Alison (Hayes MacArthur and Christina Hendricks). Instantly they discover they are oil and water. He is an arrested development jock, irresponsible, a womanizer, and – what else? – rides a motorcycle. Holly is responsible, runs a bakery shop, and has had precious few dates for reasons that are never clearly explained.

Because Peter and Alison include them in family events, especially the first birthday party for their daughter, Sophie, Messer (as he's called) and Holly have multiple opportunities to reinforce their disdain for one another.

And then the dark hammer falls (this is all in the trailer). Peter and Alison are killed in a car accident. Messer and Holly

are told by the family attorney that according to the will they are Sophie's designated co-guardians and, if they agree, must live in the family home and raise her together. Let the games begin.

Now, according to the formula, their mutual distaste for one another runs headlong into their commitment to Sophie. Naturally, since this is a rom-com, there are issues – lots of issues. Some are slightly comedic. There's even a crisis that results in a separation. But this film long ago telegraphed the ending. It's just a matter of waiting and watching as two attractive people solve and resolve their differences and not so latent fears while discovering that all that anger just might be reframed into something far more positive. And so on.

As formula rom-coms go, well, *Life as We Know It* is good enough. It follows nicely in the tradition of *Baby Boom* and *Three Men and a Baby* – easy to watch with good-looking people who were looking for love in all the wrong places. Until now.

Life as We Know It. Directed by Greg Berlanti. Starring Katherine Heigl, Josh Lucas, and Josh Duhamel. 1 hr., 54 min. Rated PG-13.



A scene from Disney's *Secretariat*.

Secretariat – the greatest all-time horse

By Chris Honoré

Secretariat is a 2010 Disney film about a magnificent chestnut racehorse nicknamed Big Red, also known as Secretariat, thought by some to be the greatest racehorse of all time. In 1973, Red won, against all odds, the Triple Crown: the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness and the Belmont Stakes. It was then, and remains still, the Holy Grail of horse racing, a trifecta that is rarely attained.

No one does movies about animals better than Disney and *Secretariat* is filled with excitement: tight shots of jockeys clutching the reins as horses weighing some 1,200 pounds charge around an oval track more than a mile long. It's intense, even thrilling. Of course, it's irresistible for Disney not to give Secretariat a sentient intelligence. In one scene, Penny Chenery (Diane Lane), owner of Secretariat, stands holding the horse's bridle, looking the horse in the eyes, while he looks back and conveys to Penny that he's ready to race. Disney loves to anthropomorphize animals (Bambi, et al); however, thankfully, director Randall Wallace shows restraint. A horse by any other name is still a horse.

While the hub of the film is Secretariat and his ability to run, the focus throughout is on Penny, a Denver suburban housewife who tenaciously takes a huge

gamble on Secretariat when others, the old boys' network, suggest that she is a fool. It's only because of her determination that she not only manages to keep control of her father's Meadow Farms, in Doswell, Virginia, but enters Secretariat in races that will eventually lead to the Triple Crown.

Of course, Disney has always been enamored with Jiminy Cricket characters like Penny (animated or otherwise) who wish upon a star, insisting it makes no difference who you are, while believing that dreams can come true. That theme is woven through countless Disney films and, truth be told, it's a nice thought and has resonated with audiences for more half a century.

The real treat in this film is watching Diane Lane make the character of Penny Chenery her own. Lane is a hugely gifted actress, nominated for an Oscar

for her performance in *Unfaithful* (a tour de force film for her). She carries *Secretariat* from the first frame.

Of course, Lane is helped by John Malkovich who portrays Lucien Laurin, the colorful French-Canadian trainer, and Margo Martindale as the long-time family secretary. Both are exceptional character actors. Malkovich's breakthrough film was *Places in the Heart*; he was extraordinary.

Secretariat is top-drawer family entertainment, especially for kids, say, eight and older. Adults will also be engaged by the sometimes sentimental yet compelling story of this remarkable horse and its equally remarkable owner.

Secretariat. Directed by Randall Wallace. A Disney film. Starring Diane Lane, John Malkovich, Scott Glenn, and Margo Martindale. 2 hrs., 3 min. Rated PG.

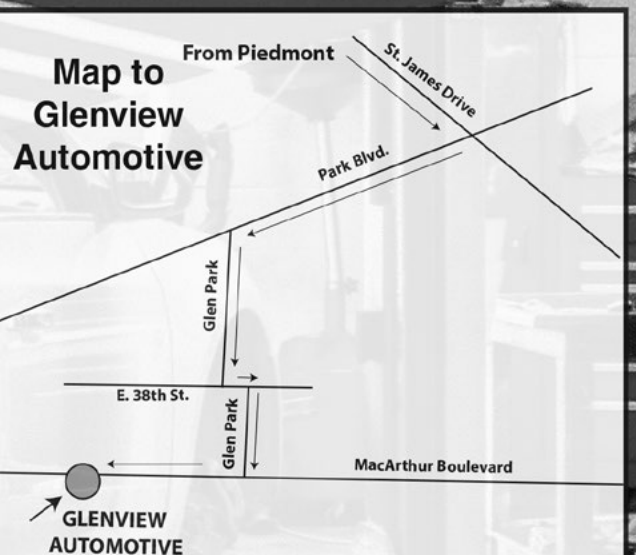


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PMS Graduation

Continued from page 1

ize what's most important right now is to live in the moment; our graduation is right now. So, let's not spring out of here too quickly," he added.

"All Dem Leaves" by Ryan Adamson.

As each student's name was announced, they received their certificate of completion – the equivalent of a diploma.

The PMS Jazz band performed



Photo by Aaron Aubrecht

Claire Aubrecht welcomes the crowd with a greeting in Mandarin.



Anjali Bowers receives her 8th grade graduation certificate.



Students enjoying the moment in at 8th grade graduation.



ASB member Elsa Wallway receives her graduation certificate from Karyn Shipp.



Piedmont Middle School's 8th grade graduation was held at Witter Field on June 1, 2023.



Family and friends filled up the stands of Witter Field to honor the graduating Piedmont 8th graders.



Colin Amen delivers a student speech.



Sophia Harris at the podium.



Students run in celebration.

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FEATURES

Piedmont Seniors attend Guide Dogs for the Blind Graduation Ceremony

On a beautiful Saturday morning, April 15, An energetic group of 16 members of the Piedmont Seniors ventured to San Rafael for a delicious lunch, followed by a wonderful visit to the Guide Dogs for the Blind graduation ceremony. They first were treated to a scrumptious brunch/lunch at San Rafael Joe's, which is a throwback Italian restaurant with "down home" fare.

After lunch the group headed to the Guide Dogs for the Blind's beautiful, spacious facility near downtown. The grounds are so serene that it is easy to picture trainers working their magic with the dogs.

Guide Dogs was founded in 1942 to provide guide dogs to World War II veterans who lost their sight from injuries sustained in the war. The organization has grown to become the

largest guide dog school in North America. To date, Guide Dogs have partnered nearly 16,000 people of all ages, and from all walks of life, with guide dogs. It is a rigorous selection process, and many dogs fail to qualify. They need to learn to obey only their owner and cannot run up to other people or animals. Dogs learn to guide their owner through public transportation sites, airport terminals, and public streets.

All of the services for their clients are provided free of charge, including personalized training and extensive post-graduation support, plus financial assistance for veterinary care, if needed. Their work is made possible by the generous support of donors and volunteers. They receive no government funding.

The dogs that do not qualify

are put up for adoption. Television icon Betty White was one of the fortunate recipients. She adopted a golden retriever, Pontiac, from Guide Dogs. Betty also advocated for those with disabilities, notably blindness. The president of Guide Dogs stated, "Betty's legacy of compassion, activism, and love of the human-animal bond will live on for years to come".

Having a guide dog has allowed so many people to become independent and live a more meaningful life. For those wanting to observe a Guide Dogs ceremony, be prepared to bring Kleenex. It is a very moving and emotional time to watch the dogs go from their trainers to their new owners.

For more information about Piedmont Seniors' activities, contact Janet Epstein at jepstein@piedmont.ca.gov.



Piedmont Seniors in attendance at the Guide Dogs for the Blind graduation ceremony in San Rafael are (front): Yorkman Lowe (left), Mona Jamieson, Lois Hirsch, Larry Singer, Miriam Friedman, Gloria Wilmer; (back) Jim Ayotte, Jan Yager, Sandra Curach, Piedmont Seniors Coordinator Janet Epstein, Ann Morales, Ann Cox, Gregory Jurin, and Barbara Cox.

Big turnout for police public safety meeting



A photo of the audience at a May 24 public meeting on community safety.

By Janet Epstein

The Piedmont Seniors hosted a Community Safety Meeting at the Piedmont Community Hall on May 24 with more than 100 on hand to hear Police Chief Jeremy Bowers address issues of concern.

With recent nefarious events, including a couple of brazen attacks on seniors, it was no surprise there was so much concern.

Chief Bowers covered several topics, focusing especially on community safety and crime concerns. He explained that the City of Piedmont Police will be implementing foot patrols starting this month so that officers can become more familiar with Piedmont neighborhoods. He offered several tips: don't walk after dark and walk with a friend when at all possible.

He said that the police will come to any house to take a report of a crime, and the importance of

having an accurate accounting of incidents. The Chief also mentioned that the police department is using social media, including Facebook, Instagram and Next Door, to inform the public.

Lisa Douglas, the department's Support Services Coordinator, reminded audience members that it is the "behavior" of the suspicious person that needs to be reported; not how he/she appears. Douglas explained in detail what "suspicious behavior" is, i.e.: if one believes a specific crime may be occurring; if someone appears to be in physical danger; or if someone is peering into cars or yards.

Douglas also said that Piedmont has at least one dispatcher on duty at all times.

It was a very informative and useful presentation. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the City of Piedmont Police at its non-emergency number: 420-3000.

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Girl Scouts support alma mater Beach School



Girl Scouts Sicheng Wu (front), Sai Ahuja, Emma Syhabout (standing), and Zayda Weber in Troop 33943 painted murals at Beach School's Garden on May 20.



Girl Scouts Zayda Weber (left), Emma Syhabout, Troop Leader Amy Valerie, and Sai Ahuja showing the Monarch Butterfly life cycle.

By Amara Rizk

Although they have moved on to Piedmont Middle School, the Girl Scouts of Troop 33943 continue to give back to Beach School. This spring they painted murals for the Beach School Garden.

In April, the Scouts helped the annual Beach Revue by selling raffle tickets, operating concession stands, selling apparel, and handing out programs. They also helped the show's producers, Dana Murray, Heidiann Pillsbury and Rebecca Ackerman, where needed. Through their front of house efforts, Troop 33943 helped to raise more than \$3000, helping make this year's Revue the most profitable in its 53-year history.

On May 20, Troop 33943 completed their Service Project at the Beach Elementary Garden. They focused throughout the year on learning about and supporting butterflies that migrate through Piedmont.

Scouts planted a variety of butterfly-friendly plants in the Beach School Garden. They also painted murals on various planter boxes in the garden, one of which displays the life cycle of the Monarch Butterfly.

Troop Leader Amy Valerie cut paper stencils for the painting. The Scouts hope butterflies will return to this space soon and in future years.



Girl Scouts in Troop 33943 show Beach School students how to plant butterfly-friendly plants.



Sai Ahuja paints alongside Troop Leader Amy Valerie.



A Girl Scout mural is part of a planter at Beach School.



Raffle announcements were made at the Beach Revue on April 1 by Girl Scouts Emma Syhabout, Phoebe Hess, Zayda Weber, Elizabeth Ackerman, Violet Schrieve and Producer Dana Murray.

Pickleball Courts Schedule

FORMAL DROP-IN PICKLEBALL

Linda Beach Tennis Courts
Sun. – Mon.: 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Piedmont Middle School
Sat. & Sun.: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

INFORMAL PICKLEBALL

Available first-come, first-served

Linda Beach Tennis Courts
Mon. – Fri.: 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. & 1:00 – 9:00 p.m. (dusk)
Sat. & Sun.: 9:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. (dusk)



Please make sure to follow basic hygiene, social distancing and face covering requirements while at the courts. Do not play if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 or have been around anyone with symptoms. Check the city website (<https://www.piedmont.ca.gov/cms/one.aspx?portalId=13659823&pageId=15809367>) for the latest information.

Walking on Wednesday



Walkers climb to top of Crest Road

By Dick Carter

On May 31, a robust group of 36 Wednesday Walkers were ready for some exercise and camaraderie on a cool and cloudy morning, perfect for a long walk. It had been some time since the group had walked on Crest Road, which is off Hampton Road and parallels La Salle Avenue past Hampton Park.

Crest is a long, slow climb. It is not easy, and anyone who wanted a shorter walk could return to the city center. The group went up Highland, Sheridan, and Wildwood Avenues, through the Hall Fenway to Crocker Avenue, to Hampton Road and Hampton Park. The walkers regrouped at the park where they stopped for a group photo.

Drawing on information from Piedmont Historical Society President Gail Lombardi's research, the group was told that the park was part of 50 acres that were purchased in 1911 by Louis Titus, a Berkeley real estate developer. He intended to build a mansion, but the new City of Piedmont raised property taxes dramatically in 1912, and Titus dropped his plans.

In 1914 James Tyson, a lumber and shipping businessman bought 30 acres of the land for his

home. He was a strong supporter of Piedmont Boy Scouts, which was founded in 1910, and in 1921 he made the land (now Hampton Park) available to the scouts for an outdoor camp. During the Great Depression in 1938 the Tysons also made the land available to Piedmont schools. A WPA project leveled the land, which was intended to be the site of a future East Piedmont school, which was never built. In the 1950s and 60s the area was a dusty, sometimes muddy youth baseball field. Later, youth soccer was played there often on a soggy field, as underground water was an ongoing problem.

In 2000 the Piedmont Play School building was constructed at the back of the park. Dramatic improvements were made during 2017 in a \$2 million public-private partnership. Drainage and artificial turf were installed that made the field much more serviceable during the year. Some walkers headed back to the Exedra while the majority crossed La Salle Avenue, passed through the two white columns that marked the main entrance to the 1920s St. James Woods real estate development. The group walked a steep block on the development's brown tile inlay sidewalk to the foot of Crest Road.

The neighborhood is governed by the St. James Wood Homes Association that was founded in 1926 and represents 185 homes in Piedmont and Oakland. The CC&R's require board approval of changes to homes' color scheme changes and when owners want to remove trees. They must also seek approval to changes in the location or height of structures, including walls and fences.

It was then time to start the accent of Crest. The group continued their climb on Crest to Somerset Road, and looked for a hidden path to Huntleigh Road. The path seems to have been swallowed up by a yard, and no longer exists. The walkers crossed the Oakland/Piedmont city line twice before emerging on Estates Drive with a view of San Francisco in the distance. Going down Estates to the top of Hampton Road started the group's decent return to the Exedra. It was a nearly four-mile walk, longer than usual.

The Walking on Wednesdays group meets every Wednesday at the Exedra (Highland & Magnolia Avenues) at 10:30 a.m. Everyone is invited to join the group and there is no charge. Registration with the Piedmont Recreation Department is required at <https://tinyurl.com/3ethkehu>.



Walking on Wednesdays members pictured at Hampton Park on May 31: Marion Lim Yankowitz, Jennifer Peltzer, Nava Shahan, Lisa Euphrat, Cherry Li, Gloria DaSilva, Pat Keller, Kathy Rolefson, Helene Farber, Jim Kellogg, Elizabeth Richter, Jim Kuo, Kat Lang, Melba Yee, Charlene Louie, Alicia Rivera, Judy Love, Karin Fetherston, Nancy Henn, Christine Calliste, Peggy Schultz, Rob Smith, Ian Morgan, Adrienne Hamlin, Stella Houston, Phil Witte, Ann Quinby, Mike Henn, Edith Lee, Helen Dong, Quincy Dong, Mike Gallant, Jasmine Cai, Dick Carter, and Allie Pembleton, walking with the group for the first time.

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Sudoku Puzzle

Sudoku by Myles Mellor

		2	4					
9		4		6	7		2	
3				1	5			
1	2					6		
	4	9	3		1	5	7	
		5					4	3
			1	4				8
	3		9	5		2		4
					6	9		

Crossword Puzzle

Looking for a new opportunity

by Myles Mellor

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14				15						16				
17			18						19					
20							21							
22				23	24	25		26			27	28	29	30
31				32				33		34				
				35				36			37			
	38	39							40	41				
42						43								
44				45	46		47					48	49	50
51						52		53			54			
				55				56			57			
58	59	60	61					62	63	64				
65								66					67	
68								69						70

ACROSS

- 1. Windy City trains
- 4. Office worker
- 9. City of witch trials
- 14. Manuscript encl.
- 15. Comedy
- 16. Home security warning
- 17. More than a resume
- 20. God of war
- 21. Fencer's weapon
- 22. Calls something different
- 26. Napoleon opponent
- 31. 6-pointers
- 32. Over
- 34. Play ending
- 35. Arctic jacket
- 37. Prefix with phobia
- 38. You might present a 17 across during these
- 42. Peppermint, for one
- 43. Mongolians, e.g.
- 44. Get close to
- 47. "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" role
- 48. Bill
- 51. American marsupial
- 53. Moolah
- 55. Tres y tres
- 57. Peruvian civilization
- 58. One might come up during 38 across

- 65. Cinderella's Godmother
- 66. ...then we will
- 67. Evidence collectors, abbr.
- 68. Waitress' needs
- 69. Getz, et al.
- 70. Sault ____ Marie

DOWN

- 1. Take
- 2. Acclaimed
- 3. Canary cousins
- 4. Acupuncture regulated life force
- 5. Picard's middle name in 'Star Trek'
- 6. Flightless bird
- 7. Acting part
- 8. Man of steel
- 9. Stockpile
- 10. "Love Story", first name: ____ McGraw
- 11. Upper back muscle, for short
- 12. Pitcher's stat.
- 13. Madame, for short
- 18. Cellular stuff
- 19. Simple
- 23. Nail salon staple, slangily
- 24. School to many Brit. P.M.'s
- 25. In a way, slangily
- 27. High dice rolls
- 28. Bunch
- 29. Charged particles
- 30. Way back when
- 33. Country in Italian
- 35. Clergymen
- 36. Whale food
- 38. ____ Grand Cherokee
- 39. Yes ____ (choice words)
- 40. Subject used by Picasso in many paintings
- 41. ____ the buzzer
- 42. "Game of Thrones" channel
- 45. Subjects to chemical analysis
- 46. One having second thoughts
- 48. Loose fitting garments
- 49. Confront
- 50. Skull cap
- 52. Calf-length skirts
- 54. Little bird
- 56. Floor meas.
- 58. Back of a boat
- 59. ____ of words
- 60. Amanti is one
- 61. Somewhat twisted
- 62. A, in Argentina
- 63. Big time
- 64. Roads (abbr.)

See Crossword and Sudoku Puzzle Solutions on page 30.

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Children's Book Festival returns to Fairyland

By Selen Ozturk

Book-loving children and parents headed to Children's Fairyland for its annual Children's Book Festival last Saturday, June 3. Now in its sixth year, it attracted an estimated 1,400 people who enjoyed the work of 32 local book authors and illustrators.

This year's headline speakers included Angela Dalton, Christian Robinson, Mac Barnett, Nidhi Chanani, Danielle Anderson-Craig, and Shawn Harris. Oakland public school teacher and local "Story Time" web show reader Peter Limata served as the guest host.

Highlights of the festival

included read-aloud sessions by the authors, a book sale, and an autograph booth by The Collective, an Oakland bookstore. It also included a mindfulness space by Oakland Public Library, and an arts and crafts space by the Museum of Children's Art.

The Children's Book Festival, previously known as "Turn the Page," was created in 2016 by five people: Angela Moffett (librarian at Children's Fairyland), Margaret Rodriguez (librarian at the Oakland Public Library), Shana Barcus (formerly the Education Director at Fairyland from 2013 to 2017), Nina Lindsey (Associate Director at Oakland Public Library), and Luan Stauss (former owner of Laurel Bookstore



Photos by Morgan Rothenbaum

Children's authors and illustrators Mac Barnett (left), Christian Robinson, and Shawn Harris speak at the Children's Book Festival.



Children's book author Serena Allen at a story and craft booth at the annual Children's Book Festival.



Children's book author Danielle Anderson-Craig (right), looks at a drawing by a young fan.



Children's book author Susan Gal signs a book for a young reader at the annual Children's Book Festival.

in Oakland).

Moffett, who still heads the festival, said "The first year felt just as good as last weekend. Every kid deserves the opportunity to develop a lifelong love of reading, and it was wonderful seeing children's faces light up when they saw an author or illustrator just like them, in their community."

Moffett said that after a meet-and-greet and book signing by illustrator Christian Robinson and her own godson, both of whom are African-American, the young boy told her, "It was awesome to see someone that looked like him and that it made him excited to return to writing and drawing. What was originally a hobby opened up to be a real

career option for the boy."

Most authors at the festival, like Robinson, donated their time. Many, like the headlining author Mac Barnett – who used to play Peter Pan in theater productions twice a day as a boy at Children's Fairyland – frequented the amusement park during their own childhoods.

"Those who received the magic of this place as kids now want to pass that on and be the giver of magic, telling stories that resonate with children from all walks of life, all across the Bay," said Moffett.

Another highlight of the festival was the read-aloud presentation of contributors to the anthology published at the end of the annual, two-month Youth

Writers Workshop at Children's Fairyland. Held in January and February and headed this year by local children's author and educator Leticia Hernandez, the program gave 25 young writers and illustrators, aged 8-12, the opportunity to present their work to parents and other children attending the Book Festival.

"It was wonderful seeing the diverse backgrounds, ages, and income levels of people attending the readings and other exhibitions," said Moffett. "The magic of it for us this year was in seeing people – both children and young authors or illustrators very early in their professional career – getting to meet their idols and getting inspired to contribute to the children's literary world."



Author, illustrator, and art teacher Tiffany Golden (right), shares her work at the Children's Book Festival.

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Witter Field

Continued from page 1

held with neighbors in advance of the construction, on Monday evening, May 22, at Wildwood School auditorium. As of June 5, no community meetings have been scheduled or announced by the school district.

In a June 5 letter from Pete Palmer, the School District Facilities Director, it was announced that for the duration of the renovation project, "the district will provide updates on construction activity and parking restrictions monthly, no later than the 24th of each month." Accordingly, the letter told community members to expect information on July parking restrictions by June 24.

Controversy continues

An email to affected neighborhood residents circulated by Palm Drive resident Jason Alderman on May 31 noted that the notice of "no parking" restrictions released on June 5, one day before the Witter Field project was to begin, contradicted what neighbors were told at the community meeting on

May 22.

At that meeting, Palmer told the approximately 30 attendees that the major portions of the project will be completed in June, August and September. Residents were told that there would be eight days of truck activity (and parking restrictions) in June for the existing turf to be hauled out; "not a lot" in July when a new irrigation system would be installed, nine days in August for the installation of drain rock, and 10 days in September. Residents were also told that, over the course of these four months, 400 truckloads would be brought back and forth on Palm Drive.

Since the May 22 meeting, wrote Alderman, the school district seems to "have made several unilateral changes of note. Contrary to being told Palm residents would be surveyed for their preferred morning start time for the project, they now have decided to start at 8:00 a.m. ... The District now plans to restrict parking on

Palm from June 6-30, which are significantly more days than what was planned and presented [in the meeting]... In addition, the hydrology report that was promised is still in the approval process to be shared with us. Timing for delivery is unknown."

Palm Drive resident Anastasia Edel said that the district promised a hydrology report in response to concerns of neighbors at the meeting of new flood risks to their basements with the Witter Field renovation, given that the project involves rerouting an old storm drainpipe from its current location under the field, to follow the Wildwood side of the track through to the Bushy Dell Creek manhole.

Edel confirmed that, as of June 5, the affected residents had not received the report, nor received any notice of possible changes to the current morning start time.

To access current information about the Witter Field project, visit bit.ly/WitterField.

For questions, contact Pete Palmer by phone at 594-2877 or by email at ppalmer@piedmont.k12.ca.us.

PRFO Fundraising

Continued from page 1

"Piedmont is a community. Thriving communities need places to convene, to learn, to compete, to connect, to celebrate. That's what this project is all about," said lead donor Steve Ellis.

"I'm proud to be a part of the aquatic center located in the center of Piedmont," said Reid Settlemier. "This will serve as an anchor for the community for years to come," he added. "I

appreciate the overwhelming community support and hope that we can carry this momentum to help facilitate future community projects."

Construction for the long-awaited pool project began in late January after a community groundbreaking ceremony on December 17, 2022. The new pool complex is expected to be completed by summer 2024.

The completed pool facility will include a 27-meter competition pool with a diving well, a 3,177 square foot activity pool with three 25-yard lap lanes, a single-story building featuring locker rooms, an indoor multi-purpose room, two gender-neutral changing rooms, and a rooftop pavilion.

For more information, visit piedmont.ca.gov/newpool. To learn more about the PRFO capital campaign, visit prfo.org/piedmont-community-pool.

Letters to the Editor

Continued from page 2

I have noticed that an increasing number of teenagers are coming to play pickleball at these courts. In addition, there has been an influx of Piedmont families that come to play together with their teen and preteen children. It's not uncommon to see two different families arrive to compete against each other, with an adult and a child on each team. I assume that the arrival of these new groups has something to do with the fact that play is offered daily in the same location and lasts all day, thus allowing those with time constraints and other obligations to just show up for open play, knowing that a court will be available.

Since it remains "open play", these same preteens almost invariably end up playing with the older adults on hand. Thus, a nine year old may end up playing with a welcoming group of adults in their 60s and 70s.

This intergenerational play is a remarkable and heartwarming development, which is unique to pickleball. In our mobile society, many children have limited exposure to their grandparents and many don't realize that "senior" and "active" can describe one and the same person. I know of no other sport where preteen children are engaging competitively with senior citizens. These kids learn that not all "old" folks are

feeble, while seeing examples of friendly, but fierce, competitive play and good sportsmanship demonstrated by these adults.

As a bonus, the kids end up getting mentored if they want to improve their game. This is a win-win situation and truly an example of the proverb "it takes a village".

Since the tennis courts at Linda Beach are significantly smaller than regulation size, most tennis players prefer to play elsewhere. The conversion to pickleball courts would be the best use of this previously underutilized space for the city of Piedmont. Parks full of people, of all ages, being active and social is the best use of Piedmont's limited recreational space and helps achieve the goals we set when we, as a society, allocate resources for public park spaces.

-Neal S. Dickler, MD

Commentary

Continued from page 3

woman in her 40s with black hair, somewhat overweight and wearing a loose dress that fell to her knees. The dress had no pattern, and she wore no belt, necklace or scarf. I also realized later that she carried no purse.

She and her companion(s) immediately drove to Emeryville where they attempted to buy \$1600 worth of clothes at the

Nordstrom Rack. The card was rejected, possibly because the card security service recognized that I had never used the card for a purchase. She then attempted four cash withdrawals from a Patelco Credit Union. All were rejected.

I am now \$10 richer and have a new understanding of how easily one can be conned.

PPD Blue

Continued from page 9

6:44 p.m. Estates Rd. ALPR triggered by blue 2012 Audi S5.

9:55 p.m. Leimert Ave. ALPR triggered by white 2015 Hyundai Santa Fe.

Thursday, June 1

3:15 a.m. Grand Ave. Pedestrian stopped by police. Person submits to search; nothing found; given courtesy ride to Rockridge BART.

9:09 a.m. Estates Rd. ALPR triggered by 1989 Honda Motorcycle.

3:17 p.m. Grand Ave. ALPR triggered by white Infiniti.

4:59 p.m. Hillside Ave. Arrest. Report of man carrying bottle of

alcohol and talking to himself. Officer makes contact. Man makes spontaneous statement admitting he had warrants and would be going to jail. Warrants for burglary confirmed; man arrested and taken to Santa Rita Jail.

9:21 p.m. Trestle Glen Rd. ALPR triggered by stolen blue 2003 Acura TL.

Friday, June 2

9:44 a.m. Ramona Ave. Auto Burglary. Car rifled overnight. Registration and insurance documents stolen.

11:59 a.m. Linda Ave. ALPR triggered by gold GMC truck or SUV.

Athletes of the Year

Continued from page 14

the game-winner. Tamalpais battled back in the finals to force overtime.

They earned more All-League selections than any other team with 10: Brayer, Soren Dixon, Nate Fredericks, Jack Nelson, Rylan Nelson, Oliver Shafroth and Keita Clear as first-team recipients. Noah Lindenbaum was a second-team selection, while Curtis Hohener and Gus Von Metzsch were honorable mentions.

The 200 medley relay and 400 freestyle relay teams finished undefeated in the regular season, and won the WACC title in both events.

Their 200 medley team featured junior Josie Oesterer (backstroke), freshman Abigail Jacoby (breaststroke), junior Taylor Rolefson (butterfly) and sophomore Sonja ten Grotenhuis as anchor leg (freestyle) They won the league title with a time of 1:54.74.

The 400 free relay team had freshman Sydney Olson replace Jacoby while ten Grotenhuis raced the second leg, winning a second league title in 3:44.42.

All five swimmers earned All-League honors.

GIRLS' SWIM RELAY TEAM

Piedmont's girls' relay team in swimming was among the most successful squad in the school.



Piedmont's girls' relay 200 Medley and 400 Freestyle relay teams won WACC swimming titles and finished the season undefeated. Pictured are coach Colby Price (left), Abigail Jacoby, Josie Oesterer, Taylor Rolefson, Sonja ten Grotenhuis and Sydney Olson.

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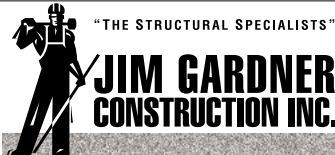
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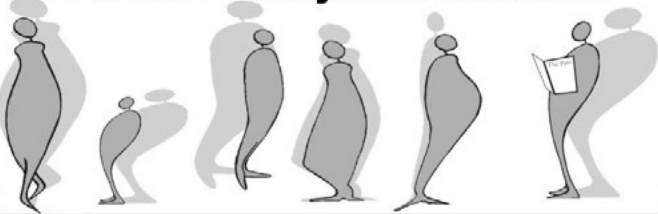
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MHS Graduation

Continued from page 6

supported us, cared for us, cried for us, educated us and loved us and write those names on our hearts.”

The graduating class had 16 of its 21 graduates present for the ceremony. Ten Millennium students chose to participate in the Piedmont High graduation ceremony the following day.

SENIOR AWARDS

The school presented perpetual awards to the following seniors:

Ken Yale Leadership Award:

Xiaowei Elias

Millennium Spirit Award:

Samiya Jones

Personal Achievement Award:

Alex King

Community Contribution Award: Madison Hill

Students gave brief speeches filled with joy, exuberance, and nerves. Some openly shed tears, and many opened their hearts.

“I would like to thank my parents, who took me in as a 10

and half year old boy, an orphan from China. I’m so grateful for this second opportunity at life,” said Xiaowei Elias, who will be attending Trinity College next year.

Millennium High School was established in 2000 by School Board member Art Hecht to provide families with a smaller and more flexible high school classes with individualized instruction.

MHS Class of 2023

- Mayo Arbues
- Adrienne Blackwell
- Neve Cohen
- William Daniel
- Xiaowei Elias
- Ava Luna Floisand
- Jacob Gallagher
- Perseas Gioukaris
- Alex Guevara
- Madison Hill
- Darius Kashani
- Alex King
- Isaac Kupisk
- Samiya Jones
- Jacob LaDuc
- Eva Levingston
- Angel Perez
- Maddox Phillips
- Stellan Stahl
- Elan Villareal
- Trinity Zamora



MHS graduates Eva Levingston (left) and Angel Perez are embraced by their teachers after receiving diplomas.

Skye Yeh’s Speech

Continued from page 10



Skye Yeh addressed the crowd at PHS’s graduation ceremony as the Senior Speaker for the class of 2023.

expected me to be standing here giving a graduation speech, including myself. But life has a funny way of surprising us.

After looking back on the repetitive days, logging onto our computers, constantly pulling up our masks, and anxiously waiting for a negative; so much has changed. We have all come back. We are new people, so much smarter and stronger than before.

I am so grateful for the teachers and amazing Piedmont staff that have guided, not just me, but all of us through our high school journey. We couldn’t have done it without you. Sure, we may have complained about homework, tests, and putting our phones in the phone prison, but deep down we know you had our best interests at heart.

To my fellow graduates: We did it! I am so, so proud of us. Since that Friday the 13th we have worked hard, grown together, and overcome challenges to get here today.

As we move on, I want to remind you that we are not alone. We have each other, and we have the support of everyone around us. And because of that, we will make a difference in this world. One thing we’ve learned in high school is that no matter what, we will always be okay.

these relationships and moments of connection that make high school, truly unforgettable.

It’s clear that the world around us has changed in ways we never could have anticipated over these four years, and we’ve had to adapt to a new world flipped upside down.

We’ve become experts at procrastination, perfecting the art of leaving assignments until the last possible moment. And let’s not forget the valuable skill of navigating through the treacherous hallways during passing periods,

without getting trampled.

Honestly, the Covid pandemic has taught us some really important stuff. We’ve learned how crucial it is to be able to adapt and go with the flow when things don’t go as planned.

On a more personal note, this pandemic has made me realize just how special and valuable the time spent with my classmates is. It’s taught me not to take those moments for granted and to cherish them with all my heart.

I must admit that anyone who knows me would never have

PHS Graduation

Continued from page 11

It was then time for every graduate’s 15 seconds of fame, to hear their name announced, shake the hand of Superintendent Donald Evans and then greet Principal Goswami who awaited with their diploma. From Ava Adarkar to Jack Zirkelbach-Ngai, the crowd roared and students beamed for each graduate.

After moving the tassels from right to left on their graduation

caps, the graduates were saluted musically with “March de Triomphe.” The newly minted graduates then raced to the far side of the field to toss their caps skyward – and then hug one another one last time before heading out into the world.

An eager crowd in the grandstands then flooded onto Witter Field, finding the kids they had known, now with diplomas.



Jack Zirkelbach-Ngai, was the last graduate to be announced alphabetically.



Gianna Yan, a Student Representative to the School Board, gives Interim Superintendent Donald Evans a hug.

Where in the World Are We?



The Stucka family – Tim, Victoria, Theo and Ana – spent the beginning of the year in Rio de Janeiro, about six months after becoming Piedmont residents. While in the local Botanical Gardens, they took a break to catch up on the news back home. The Post also doubled as a sunshade in the Brazilian summer heat. *Previously printed in the Piedmont Post on February 23, 2022.*

Send your photos of the Post in the far corners of the world, or of other communities named Piedmont, to: WITWAW, 1139 Oakland Avenue, Piedmont, CA 94611.

2023 Calendar of Events

JUNE 7 – JUNE 21

Meetings may be viewed on KCOM (Channel 27) and on the City’s website: piedmont.ca.gov.

Wednesday, June 7

5:30 p.m.Park Commission City Hall

Monday, June 12

5:30 p.m.Planning Commission..... City Hall

Tuesday, June 20

6 p.m.City Council..... City Hall

Wednesday, June 21

7:30 p.m.Recreation Commission..... City Hall