



IN A

Nutshell

No. III

Official community newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

MARCH/APRIL 2004

Traffic issues focus of next GP workshops

There will be two opportunities in March for the public to weigh in on traffic issues and transportation goals to be met in the City's new General Plan.

The City invites residents to attend either of the two following sessions:

- **Saturday, March 27**

10 a.m. to noon

Civic Park Community Center Assembly Hall in Civic Park; and

- **Wednesday, March 31**

7 to 9 p.m.

Lakeside Room at Heather Farm Park 301 N. San Carlos Dr.

These next public workshops will be the third and fourth in a series of discussion sessions that will assist planners, consultants, and the General Plan steering committee in revamping the General Plan, which is the City's blueprint for guiding its growth. The General Plan, to be completed in 2005, was last rewritten in 1989.

These sessions are part of an overall outreach effort that included a citizen's survey conducted in December. The results of that survey will provide valuable input to planners as they draft the General Plan to reflect the current and future needs and desires of residents.

Preliminary findings from the survey show that, overall, the vast majority of Walnut Creek residents like their downtown, their neighbors, their schools, and the city just the way it is.

They also indicated that their top five priorities are, in order: preserving open space, reducing traffic congestion, protecting the public from crime, controlling growth, and protecting city services from state budget cuts.



Governor visits Walnut Creek

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger made a visit to Rossmore on Jan. 29 to drum up support for his budget proposal, which requires a voter-approved bond of \$15 billion to fill a gaping hole in the state budget in 2004-05. Joining the governor was State Controller Steve Westly (left, on stool).

WC could lose \$1 million more to state in governor's budget

The City of Walnut Creek stands to lose an additional \$1 million in revenues in 2004 if Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's state budget proposal is approved by the Legislature.

The governor's proposed \$99 billion spending plan, which he released Jan. 9, was a mixed blessing for local governments. Although the governor stood by his December decision to continue reimbursing cities and counties for lost vehicle license fee revenues, his budget proposes to take even more property tax funds from local governments to pay for education.

This proposal would cost Walnut Creek \$539,234 in additional lost property tax revenues that are used to pay for vital

services such as police and road repairs.

Along with the governor's other proposed cuts (including redevelopment revenues and traffic relief funds), the City would lose nearly \$1 million if the budget is adopted.

The governor's budget continues the state's longtime practice of balancing its budget on the backs of cities and counties. Since the state began taking local property taxes to fill a large hole in its 1992-93 budget, the City of Walnut Creek will have lost a cumulative \$27,259,388 through 2004.

City officials are optimistic that the local economy will offset some of the

BUDGET, see back page

City Event Calendar

March

4
Teen Summer Job Fair
(See page 6 for details)

19-20
WC Senior's 2nd Hand Sale
(See *What's Happening*)

April

10
Spring Egg Hunts
(See *What's Happening*)

23-24-25
Fine Arts Sidewalk Art Show
Main & Locust streets
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; free

City Meeting Calendar

City Council 
March 2, 16; April 6, 20
7 p.m.
City Hall, 1666 N. Main St.

Planning Commission
March 11, 25; April 15, 29
7:30 p.m.
City Council chamber

Arts Commission
March 15, April 19
4:30 p.m.
Leshner Center for the Arts

Transportation Commission
March 18, April 15
7:30 p.m.
City Council chamber

Design Review Commission
March 3, 17; April 7, 21
City Council chamber

Park, Rec & Open Space Commission
March 1, April 5
7 p.m., City Council chamber

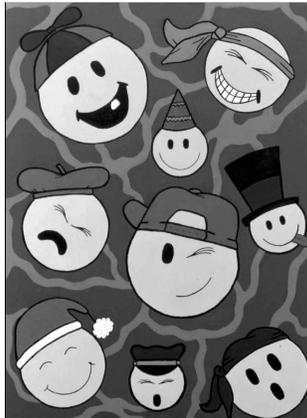
 **City Council meetings are televised live on Comcast Channels 6 and 26 (unincorporated), and on Astound Channel 29. They are repeated the following Saturday at 1 p.m. on all.**

 **Walnut Creek Currents, a City-produced 10-minute video digest on City activities and services: Comcast Channels 6 and 26 — Daily at 6 a.m., 9 a.m., noon, 3 p.m., and Wed. at 7:30 p.m. Astound Ch. 29 — 7 p.m. every day but Tuesday**

A youthful perspective

Art by area teens will be featured in *The World I See: Art with a Global Perspective* by Contra Costa Youth at the Bedford Gallery Feb. 29 through March 21.

This will be a county-wide competition open to all high school students, which will end with an exhibition of the winning works of art. For details, go on-line at www.bedfordgallery.org.



Miranda Franco, 'Emotions'

Spring band concert to celebrate Mexico & Spain

The melodies of Mexico and Spain will be celebrated by the Walnut Creek Concert Band when it presents "La Fiesta Mexicana" on Wednesday, April 7 at 8 p.m. at the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts.

The band, sponsored by the City of Walnut Creek, will be under the direction of Harvey Benstein as it performs H. Owen Reed's "La Fiesta Mexicana: A Mexican Folk Song Symphony" — one of the first symphonies composed for the wind band — along with works by Monteverde, Joaquin Turina, and Clifton Williams.

Tickets are \$10-\$12 and can be purchased at the Regional Center Box Office, 1601 Civic Dr., or by calling 925-943-SHOW.

What's Happening

WC Seniors' Second Hand Sale

The Walnut Creek Seniors' Club's annual Second Hand Sale will be Friday, March 19 and Saturday, March 20, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. both days, at the Civic Park Community Center, 1375 Civic Dr. A wide variety of items will be available for purchase, including clothing, toys, books, collectibles, and jewelry. (Note: Donations of these items will be accepted at the community center weekdays through March 19, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please, no furniture, computers, TVs, office equipment, or telephones.) All proceeds benefit the Seniors' Club. For more information, call 943-5852.

Spring Egg Hunts planned April 10

Children can participate in Walnut Creek's annual Spring Egg Hunts on Saturday, April 10 at Heather Farm Park or Larkey Park. The activity begins promptly at 10:15 a.m. at both parks for preschoolers through 5th graders; Heather Farm is accessible for disabled children. A pancake-and-sausage breakfast will also be offered before the egg hunt at Heather Farm Community Center from 8 to 9:45 a.m.; cost is \$5 per person.

Children invited to Spring Art Days

Children ages 4 to 10 are invited to celebrate the arrival and joy of spring during *Spring Art Days*, April 12-16 at Shadelands Arts Center, 111 N. Wiget Ln. The program, sponsored by Civic Arts Education, groups students by age with activities appropriate to each group. Sessions will be 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The fee is \$25 per child per session. To register, call 943-5846.

Walk the Library Walk benefit April 17

The 2nd Annual Walk the Library Walk is sched-

uled for April 17, 9 a.m. to noon, beginning at the downtown branch library, 1644 No. Broadway and ending at the Ygnacio Valley branch, 2661 Oak Grove Rd. The event is co-sponsored by the Diablo Valley Lions Club of Walnut Creek and the Walnut Creek Library Foundation. Shuttles will transport participants to the starting point. For more information call the Downtown Library at 646-6773 or the Ygnacio Valley Branch Library at 938-1481.

Free home composting workshops

Learn how to reduce your garbage by one-third by attending a free "Home Composting for Busy People" workshop in Walnut Creek. The program is offered on March 9 and April 6, 7-8:30 p.m., at The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr. "Master Composter Training" will also be offered on April 21 and 28 at The Gardens. Registration required; call 906-1806.

Host an international student

The International Student Center at Diablo Valley College is seeking host families to house international students on a temporary basis while they improve their English skills. Host families receive a \$650 monthly stipend per student and must provide a bedroom and two meals per day for the student(s). For details, contact Fia Parker at 925-676-4600, x. 103 or e-mail: fparker@dvc.edu

Spring benefit events for Gardens at HF

The Gardens at Heather Farm is hosting three benefit events this spring: The Art in Bloom Benefit Party, March 12, 6-9 p.m.; the Spring Plant Sale, April 17, 9 a.m.-noon at 600 No. San Carlos Dr.; and a self-drive Garden Tour, April 18 to view four private gardens. For details, call 947-1678.

Keep it moving

New signal master eases traffic flow

Big Brother may be watching you, but it's the kind of scrutiny you won't mind, especially if it keeps the traffic moving along Walnut Creek's busiest arterials.

With around 75,000 vehicles going up and down Ygnacio Valley Road each day, it used to be that even the slightest signal problem could cause a traffic jam of massive proportion. But in the last several months the City's Transportation Division has completed a \$1.65 million upgrade of its traffic signal equipment (most of which was funded through federal and state funds), giving Walnut Creek a state-of-the-art brain with cutting edge software to manage traffic at 96 signalized intersections.

"You're talking about a system that is continuously changing to accommodate the most efficient traffic flow throughout the day," said Traffic Engineer Rafat Raie.

In a small office off Lawrence Way, City staff can monitor traffic at any of 16 intersections outfitted with small video cameras — actually watch five intersections simultaneously — and make instant adjustments to traffic signals via computer.

"The system we have helps by monitoring real-time traffic on the street," said Associate Engineer Simin Timuri, part of the team that accomplished the upgrade.

In the old days, traffic engineers had to get in a car and drive to a problem



Associate Engineer Simin Timuri uses several large video monitors to check traffic flow at any of 16 signalized intersections in Walnut Creek.

How We Do What We Do

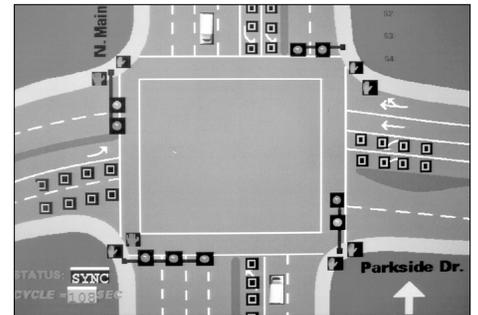
intersection to correct a signal timing problem.

Now, Timuri said, "you can spot check without driving all the way to the point of congestion. I'm accomplishing something major in a matter of minutes now."

Timuri and her team can monitor five intersections at once for signal problems.

"No other city does more in signal timing than Walnut Creek," said Raie, adding that the new signal master allows his staff to manage the traffic flow generated by special downtown events such as street festivals and other activities that attract large numbers of people.

"It is making Walnut Creek ready to meet the traffic challenges of the future," he said.



City transportation staff can now more easily adjust traffic signals by computer.

Bike advisory group seeks new member

Bicycle enthusiasts are encouraged to apply for a vacancy on the City's Bicycle Advisory Committee.

The BAC advises the Transportation Commission on bicycle issues. The group meets at 7:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of odd-numbered months at the Shadelands Arts Center, 111 N. Wiget Ln.

Candidates must work or live within Walnut Creek's "sphere of influence." The application deadline is March 10 at 5 p.m.

For an application, contact Julie Iamele at 925-256-3529 or e-mail her at iamele@walnut-creek.org. For more information on the BAC, go online at <http://www.walnut-creek.org/bicyclecouncil/BAC.htm>

Volunteers needed for Trail Day 2004

Volunteers who want to help improve the Sugarloaf to Shell Ridge open space trail are invited to join City staff for Trail Day 2004 on Saturday, April 24.

Participants should meet at 8 a.m. at Rudgear Road and Stewart Avenue. Work will also be done on the Franco Ranch Loop Trail

No experience is necessary (Note: This

activity is not for children under age 12 and pets are not permitted). Tools and a shuttle to the site will be provided. Be sure to wear sturdy footwear and bring water, gloves, a hat, and sunscreen.

Following the activity, a thank-you barbecue will be provided by the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation.

To sign up, call 943-5899, ext. 135.

Learn WC history on City Bus Tour

Visit some historic landmarks and learn more about Walnut Creek on the next City Bus Tour set for Saturday, April 3.

City Public Information Officer Brad Rovanpera will lead this 3½-hour excursion, which starts at 8:30 a.m. Stops along the way will include historic Borges Ranch, Shadelands Ranch Historical Museum, The Gardens at Heather Farm, Lindsay Wildlife Museum, and the Diablo Valley Lines Model Railroad.

Tickets are \$10 per person and must be reserved in advance by phone. Seating is limited to 24. To reserve up to four tickets, call (925) 256-3505 and leave your name, address, phone, and number of tickets.

City mourns sudden passing of beloved director Rosie Coan

City officials and employees were saddened at the passing of Administrative Services Director Rosie Coan, who died suddenly Feb. 5 at the age of 49.

Rosie, a 28-year veteran of the City staff, was beloved and admired by co-workers and elected officials for her effervescent and caring personality, tireless working style, and can-do attitude.

A graduate of Heald Business College, Rosie began her City tenure on May 10, 1976 as an accounts payable clerk. During the 1980s, her outstanding efforts earned her several promotions.

She was honored as Employee of the Year in 1992 and named Administrative Services Department Director in 2001 — only the fourth woman to be appointed a department head in the City's history.



Rosie Coan

A long-time Pittsburg resident, Rosie had just completed the City's first long-term financial plan in early February and was preparing the 2004-06 operating budget.

Rosie was the personification of her own personal credo: "Be all you can be." In a 1990 interview, Rosie reflected on her regimen of hard work: "My dad instilled it in me. He always said I could be what I wanted to be. I've worked hard, but it doesn't feel like I was battling the odds."

Foundation for the Aging lends a helping hand

When the challenges of being elderly become too much, volunteers with the Diablo Valley Foundation for the Aging can lend a helping hand.

"The good news is we're all living to be older," says Foundation Executive Director Sandy Medvedoff. "The bad news is — we're all living to be older."

But living longer doesn't have to mean living less, and for nearly 30 years the Diablo Valley Foundation for the Aging has been giving senior citizens throughout the area a new lease on life.

"We call ourselves a 'professional relative,' and that's just what we are," says Medvedoff, who has been managing the Foundation for nine years.

Since it was founded in Rossmoor in 1975, the Foundation has offered volunteer services to thousands of senior citizens, and currently serves 200 clients in their 70s, 80s and 90s.

"We are a unique organization in Contra Costa County in that we're one of only four in the state that are willing to act as power of attorney for health care and finance," says Medvedoff.

With a paid staff of five and an army of 60 volunteers, the Foundation has provided elderly residents throughout Walnut Creek and the county the kind of assis-

tance they can find nowhere else.

Medvedoff recalls one Walnut Creek client in her early 70s who had lost her husband. He had handled all their bills, and she was very depressed. A Walnut Creek police officer found her wandering around her neighborhood and took her to a local hospital. A welfare worker called the Foundation.

"We got her into her home," says Medvedoff. "She now has a personal assistant who takes her several places a week. She's living a happy life. The Foundation kind of adopted her; we provide a support network for her. She was very suspicious in the beginning. We had to gradually gain her trust."

Larry Mersmann, a 28-year resident of Walnut Creek, has been a volunteer with the Foundation for two years. A retiree himself, he assists two clients in paying their bills by coming to their homes and sorting out their financial affairs.



Executive Director Sandy Medvedoff, center, with Diablo Valley Foundation for the Aging volunteers Larry Mersmann and Louise Godet, both of Walnut Creek.

"It becomes a very personal relationship," he admits.

Volunteer Louise Godet of Walnut Creek visits a client in a rest home and pays her bills: "When you visit someone who is so lonely, it really makes their day."

The Foundation has received \$100,000 in grants from the City of Walnut Creek since 1987, which have helped the organization serve over 20,000 residents.

To learn more about the Foundation, or to become a volunteer, call 945-8040, ext. 13.

KEEPING AN EDGE

New economic plan spells out what WC needs to do to bolster its fiscal vitality in hard times

Taxable sales have been on a downturn. The state budget crisis threatens to severely deepen the fiscal wounds for cities across California. Other cities are vying for our lucrative businesses.

So, just how well is Walnut Creek faring through all of this?

A new study focusing on the economic well-being of Walnut Creek indicates that, while its robust downtown may be the envy of cities throughout the area, state budget policy shifts and the weak state economy are posing major challenges to the City's fiscal vitality.

To address these challenges, the City Council on Feb. 2 reviewed nine proposed goals recommended by an advisory group of 17 citizens that worked with City staff and a team of consultants.

The goals are the backbone of the City's new Economic Development Plan, which identifies ways to bolster Walnut Creek's long-term economic livelihood.

The study confirmed that, although Walnut Creek is the major retail center for the region, sales tax revenues have been down because taxable retail sales declined in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Sales tax is vital to Walnut Creek's economic health, accounting for more than a third of the City's operating budget. A significant portion of the City's sales tax revenues come from auto sales, along with department stores and smaller retailers.

Study consultant Janet Smith-Heimer told the City Council on Jan. 20 that Walnut Creek is "the town that other (cities) aim for. It's known throughout the region as a city that has developed a strong downtown."

However, the study indicated that Walnut Creek's competitive advantages

are threatened by three key weaknesses or threats to its livelihood:

- Shifting state fiscal policies
- Retail and businesses that are sought by other cities
- Difficulty in obtaining development approvals from the City

City officials are already looking at ways to streamline the project review process while maintaining the quality of developments.

But to maintain the City's economic edge, the following goals are proposed:

Goal 1: Foster a diverse economy

• Retain, expand, and attract firms with strong growth potential (i.e. health care/medical technologies)

- Assist auto dealerships to thrive
- Support expansion of the downtown retail area while ensuring that the impacts (i.e. increased traffic) will be lessened

Goal 2: Maintain and enhance Walnut Creek's fiscal vitality

• Continue to attract a balance of tax-generating businesses which support the City's economic vitality and diversity

Goal 3: Strengthen regional destination for arts and entertainment

• Continue to support local arts groups

Goal 4: Enhance quality of life

• Maintain a range of quality housing options

• Encourage the development of high quality spaces, both natural and man-made

Goal 5: Promote the Shadelands Business Park as a premier mixed-use employment center

• Strengthen its image, functionality

Goal 6: Maintain and enhance a vibrant downtown core

• Support small, independently-owned businesses

• Identify key development sites



Downtown Walnut Creek has become the retail center for the region.

Walnut Creek at a glance

Population: 65,883
Median age: 45.1 years
College graduated: 54%
Homes owned: 68.3%
Median household income (excluding Rossmoor): \$78,648
Jobs/Employed residents ratio: 1:1.49
Unemployment: 3.8%
Total jobs in WC (2002): 57,171
Number of businesses (2002): 3,482
Major employment sectors: Health care, Retail Trade, Professional/Scientific Services, Finance & Insurance
Median sale price, single-family home (Aug. 2003): \$635,000
Median sale price, multi-family home (8/03): \$335,000
Avg. apartment rent (6/02): \$1,247
Apartment vacancy rate: 4.5%
Downtown office vacancy rate: 10.5%

downtown for high density housing or mixed use projects (i.e. housing/retail)

• Support enhancements at Broadway Plaza

• Ensure adequate parking

Goal 7: Create identity gateways into the city

• Create signs and landscaping to welcome and direct visitors downtown

Goal 8: Develop North Main Street as a key economic corridor

• Assist auto dealerships to improve their facilities and maintain Walnut Creek's status as a major regional center for automobile sales

Goal 9: Support transit-oriented development at BART stations

• Foster development of office and residential projects at and around the Walnut Creek BART station

City Council Update

City OKs affordable housing rules

To help it meet its state-mandated affordable housing goals, the City Council on Feb. 3 approved new rules that require developers of rental housing projects with 10 or more units to set aside 10 percent of the units as low-income rentals. The ordinance also requires ownership projects with 10 or more units to reserve 10 percent of the units as moderate-income units.

Las Lomas players, teacher honored

Mayoral proclamations were presented Jan. 20 to the Las Lomas High School Knights Varsity Football Team and Instrumental Music teacher Norm Dea for recent outstanding efforts. The Knights, under coach Doug Longero, won the North Coast Section 3A East Bay football championship on Dec. 5 when they beat the Clayton Valley High School Eagles. It was the team's second consecutive championship and third since 1992. Dea, a 21-year Las Lomas veteran, is the 2003-04 Teacher of the Year in the Acalanes Union High School District and was named California Music Education Association Band Educator of the Year.

Commissioners reappointed

The City Council in January reappointed the following City commissioners to second terms: **Lisa Hotchkiss**, **Ann Flynn**, and **James Pezzaglia**, Arts Commission; **Dan Lawrence**, and **Ron Chesney**, Transportation Commission; **Robert Becker**, Design Review Commission; **Barry Slavin** and **Neil M. Gerstner**, Park, Recreation & Open Space Commission.

The Council was to interview 10 candidates for vacancies on the Planning, Design Review, and Park, Recreation & Open Space commissions and make those appointments in March.

New housing approved

The City Council in January approved the rezoning of property at 1548 Sunnyvale Avenue for 20 townhomes and property at 1310 Creekside Dr. for a 26-unit condominium complex. The Sunnyvale project will include two units that must be affordable to moderate-income households for 45 years.

City to hold teen summer job fair

Once again, the City of Walnut Creek this year will be hiring high school students for a wide range of interesting summer jobs. In order to recruit teen workers for upwards of 100 jobs (including lifeguards, summer camp counselors, and interns), the City will hold its annual Summer Job Recruitment Fair for teens on Thursday, March 4 from 3 to 6 p.m. at the Civic Park Community Center Assembly Hall at North Broadway and Civic Drive. The City will be accepting applications through May. Check the "Jobs with the City" link on the City's website, www.walnut-creek.org. For more information, contact Renée Zeimer at 256-3503 or Lisa Geerlof at 943-5899 ext. 424.



Longtime City staffers depart

City Clerk, Borges Ranch veterans retire

City Clerk Barbara Rivara, who fastidiously kept and chronicled official City Council records for over two decades and designed the new City flag, retired Jan. 23 after 23 years of service.



Barbara Rivara

Rivara, who had originally started working in the City Clerk's office as a confidential stenographer on Sept. 22, 1980, was appointed city clerk on May 18, 1982 to finish the term left vacant when Mary Lou Lucas was elected to the City Council.

Rivara was subsequently elected city clerk in 1985, 1989, 1994, 1998, and 2002, running unopposed in each election.

As city clerk, she served as liaison between the City Council and Walnut Creek citizens, recorded the actions of the Council at its meetings, preserved and safeguarded official City records and documents, and administered municipal elections.

Rivara also was the first secretary of Walnut Creek Sister Cities International and was part of the first official City delegation to visit Walnut Creek's sister city of Noceto, Italy in 1987. After the City logo was redesigned in 1999, she voluntarily designed the new City flag.

A resident since 1975, Rivara will be spending time with her two grandchildren.

The City also said goodbye Feb. 27 to Senior Open Space Ranger Ron White and



Marnie and Ron White in 1992

his wife, Marnie, an office assistant at Heather Farm Community Center. The couple have overseen the operation of the historic Borges Ranch in the Shell Ridge Open Space since 1978.

Ron was hired as the City's first ranger just four years after Walnut Creek voters passed the 1974 open space bond measure that resulted in the acquisition of the Shell Ridge and Sugarloaf open space areas.

Together, Ron and Marnie fixed up the 1899 redwood-framed house originally occupied by rancher Frank Borges and his family. Marnie founded the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation in 1979 and did the paperwork to get the Borges Ranch listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981.

While Ron managed the open space, Marnie organized an environmental living history program at the ranch to teach school children about ranching in the early 20th century. Together they secured a state grant to renovate the dilapidated Borges house and in October 1990 reopened it as a visitor's center, with historic Borges artifacts and other early period pieces.



By Officer Mike Adams

Motorized scooter rules

You bought your son or daughter a new “motorized scooter” for Christmas, only to find out they cannot ride it on the street. What is a



“motorized scooter” and who and where can it be ridden? Hopefully, when you purchased that new motorized scooter the store provided you with all this important information. If not, this article may be of interest to you.

California law defines a “motorized scooter” as any two-wheeled device that has handlebars, is designed to be stood or sat upon by the operator, and is powered by an electric motor that is capable of propelling the device with or without human propulsion. A device with a gasoline-powered engine is also a motorized scooter.

Well, then, who can ride such a device? California law states a person is not required to have a valid driver’s license to drive a motorized scooter but they must be at least 16 years old.

Every person who rides a motorized scooter on a public roadway has all the rights and is subject to all the provisions of the California Vehicle Code. Furthermore, the operator of a motorized scooter shall not operate a scooter without a brake nor ride on a roadway with a posted speed greater than 25 m.p.h., unless riding in a bike lane. The operator must wear an approved bike helmet. You cannot have a passenger or ride with any package that would not allow you to have at least one hand on the handlebars.

A motorized scooter may not be driven on a sidewalk or any pedestrian right of way. No scooter may operate at a speed greater than 15 m.p.h. or be attached to any other vehicle.

These are the basic laws that apply to all motorized scooters. They may seem limiting, but they are designed for your child’s safety. If you have any questions regarding motorized scooters, call me at 943-5899, ext. 7612.



Silver celebration for the Shellies

Lee Sankowich, left, received a Shellie Award for best direction of a play for Center Repertory Company’s production of “Fugitive Kind” from Elaine and Tony La Russa, manager of the St. Louis Cardinals and founder of the Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF) in Walnut Creek, at the 25th annual Shellie Awards on Jan. 17. The Shellie Awards, created by Center Manager Scott Denison in 1980 and sponsored by the Diablo Regional Arts Association, recognize outstanding achievement in the performing arts in central Contra Costa County. Sankowich is artistic director of Center Rep.

Photo by Adrian Boyer

Arts, Adventures summer school set

For over 20 years the City of Walnut Creek has worked with the Walnut Creek School District to provide a summer school program for children entering first through eighth grades. This year’s “Arts, Adventures & Academics” Summer

School will be for five weeks, from June 21 through July 23, at Walnut Creek Intermediate School. The sessions will be Monday-Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Child care is available. For details, call 943-5846 or check www.arts-ed.org.

You, too, can make a difference

We all know that lawn and garden activities can result in contamination of storm water through pesticide, soil, and fertilizer runoff. Proper landscape management, however, can effectively reduce water use and contaminant runoff and enhance the aesthetics of a property. Environmentally-friendly landscape management can protect our environment through appropriate plant selection, water use efficiency, use of mulches, and appropriate maintenance.

As we gear up for the spring planting, it’s not too late to do our part to protect the environment. Just like fertilizers, pesticides should be used on lawns and gardens only when absolutely necessary. Pesticide use can be avoided entirely by selecting hearty plants that are

native to the area and by keeping them healthy. It is also important to identify any potential pests to determine if they are truly harmful to the plant.

This and more gardening tips can be learned from one of the three FREE brochures now available at City Hall: *A Creek Care Guide for Walnut Creek Residents* (a four-color, 32-page booklet that correlates our daily activities to impacts to our watershed); *Grow It!* (a fan-fold brochure with tips on how to help create a vibrant garden the less toxic way); *Kid’s Guide to Backyard Bugs* (a full-color, fan-fold brochure that teaches children about beneficial creatures).

To obtain a free brochure, contact Judy Aspinwall at 925-943-5899, ext. 232.





Free Ride Sunday service expands

The City-subsidized 'Free Ride' shuttle service in downtown Walnut Creek has been expanded on Sundays to keep up with increased ridership. On Dec. 7, a second bus was added to Route 104 to lessen the time between buses from 30 to 20 minutes. The free service, operated by County Connection and offered by the City since 1987, runs weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and weekends between 9 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

Budget

From front page

losses to the state this year, but nothing is certain. Sales tax revenues are down this year, as they are in every city, but Walnut Creek is positioned for a strong recovery with its rich mix of retail establishments.

Even though the state budget crisis will mean less City funding for new capital projects, Walnut Creek is able to build such long-planned amenities as a skate park and traffic roundabout using funds from dedicated sources.

However, expenditures are now outpacing revenues, which is a change from what Walnut Creek has seen over the past several years. This challenge has

prompted the need for a creative approach to the City's financial planning.

The City Council on Feb. 2 reviewed a Long Term Financial Plan as a new tool to assist the City in providing a clear path to a successful financial future.

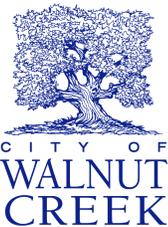
The long-term plan, initially a seven-year forecast, will be updated every two years. The plan will be used to detect potential fiscal pitfalls and allow the City to quickly respond to changes in the economic climate and thoughtfully plan for the future.

City staff is preparing the new operating budget for 2004-06 this spring. It will be ready for Council approval in June.



City Directory

Arts Education classes	943-5846
Bicycle registration	943-5844
Building permits	943-5834
Business licenses	943-5821
Cable TV questions	943-5895
City Clerk's Office	943-5818
City Hall main number	943-5800
City Manager's office	943-5812
Civic Park rentals	943-5853
Community Connection	943-5899, x116
Crime prevention	943-5885
Employment hotline	943-5817
Fingerprinting	943-5844
Flood zone info	943-5899, x215
Garbage collection	603-1144
Graffiti reporting	943-5834
Heather Farm Pool	943-5856
Heather Farm Park rentals	256-3575
Leisure Service classes	943-5858
Mayor's Office	943-5812
Open Space information	943-5854
Old Borges Ranch	943-5860
Planning/Zoning hotline	256-3558
Police/Fire emergency	911
Police (non-emergency)	943-5844
Pot holes	943-5854
Public Information	943-5895
DLRCA Ticket Office	943-7469
Senior citizen activities	943-5851
Street light outages	943-5827
Tree removal permit	943-5854



CITY COUNCIL

Charlie Abrams, Mayor*
Gary Skrel, Mayor pro tem
Kathy Hicks
Sue Rainey
Gwen Regalia

* For Thursday appointments between 10 a.m. and noon, call 943-5812

ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

CITY MANAGER
Michael Parness
CITY ATTORNEY
Thomas Haas
CITY CLERK
(To be appointed in March)
CITY TREASURER
Ronald Cassano

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Valerie Barone, Director
ARTS, RECREATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES
Gary Pokorny, Director
POLICE
Tom Soberanes, Chief of Police
PUBLIC SERVICES
Dan Richardson, Director

IN A Nutshell

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Editor:
Brad Rovanpera

We welcome your comments and questions.
Please call 943-5895 or 943-5800
Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Go on-line at www.walnut-creek.org



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