



IN A

Nutshell

No. 107

Official community newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

JULY/AUGUST 2003



Is this Walnut Creek's mightiest oak?

City arborist John Davis inspects what is considered to be the largest oak tree in Walnut Creek. At least that's the opinion of the Tree Committee of the Walnut Creek Action for Beauty Council, which recently checked out the most likely specimens and determined that this majestic valley oak in the parking lot at 925 Ygnacio Valley Road is the biggest around. Designated several years ago by the ABC as a treasured Heritage Oak, this tree is estimated to be 375 years old, has a whopping 132-foot spread and a trunk circumference of 13 feet.

Council reviews 1-year capital project budget

A lean, one-year spending plan for major capital improvement projects is being considered for the coming year by the City Council.

The proposed Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget for 2003-04 is \$10.5 million, which includes funding for a new skate park and drainage improvements on Lancaster Lane, Parkside Drive, and Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

As in prior years, a major portion of this budget will pay for on-going maintenance of streets, sidewalks, and buildings. Also planned is the replacement of a wooden sound wall on South Broadway, resurfacing of tennis and basketball courts at Larkey, Arbolado, Walden, and Northgate parks, and replacement of the orchestra pit lift at the Dean Leshner Regional Center for

CIP program, page 6

City braces for state budget impacts as deadline nears

Uncertainty is the watchword as Walnut Creek joins cities across California this summer in closely monitoring the Legislature as it struggles to meet a July 1 deadline for adopting a budget in the midst of the worst fiscal crisis in the state's history.

Even though Governor Gray Davis's revised budget of May 14 was considerably less damaging to local governments than the spending plan he unveiled in January, cities are still bracing for any number of hits the Legislature and governor may ultimately approve in order to balance the state's lopsided budget, which is addressing a \$38 billion deficit.

At the *Nutshell's* deadline (June 2), cities were breathing easier as it appeared

the State would restore the vehicle license fee to its pre-1998 level. This action is vital to Walnut Creek as it would preserve

\$650,000 in revenues used for local public safety and public services.

STATE BUDGET, back page

Celebrate July 4 with chili, music

Celebrate an old fashioned Fourth with the City of Walnut Creek at its 2nd annual 4th of July Chili Cook-Off on Friday, July 4 in Civic Park.

The festivities will begin at 12:30 p.m. at the gazebo, where live entertainment will be provided throughout the afternoon.

The Walnut Creek Concert Band under the direction of Harvey Benstein will present its 4th of July concert at 6 p.m.

Admission is free. Chili tasting books of six tickets will be sold for \$10. The

event will benefit the Lion's Center for the Visually Impaired and the Walnut Creek Library Foundation.

The Tice Valley Jazz Band will perform, and there will be children's games.

The event is co-sponsored by the City and the Walnut Creek Downtown Business Association. For details, call 933-6778.



City Event Calendar

July

4

Annual 4th of July Chili Cook-off
12:30-7 p.m., Civic Park
(See page 1 story for details)
City offices will be closed

30

Summer Pops concert
(See *What's Happening*)

August

16

Movies Under the Stars
(See *More What's Happening*, page 3)

City Meeting Calendar

City Council

July 1, 29; Aug. 5
7 p.m.
City Hall, 1666 N. Main St.

Planning Commission
July 10, 24; Aug. 14, 28
7:30 p.m.
City Council chamber

Arts Commission
July 21, August 18
4:30 p.m.
Leshner Center for the Arts

Transportation Commission
July 17, August 21
7:30 p.m.
City Council chamber

Design Review Commission
July 2, 16; Aug. 6, 20
7 p.m., City Council chamber

Park, Rec & Open Space Commission
July 7, August 4
7 p.m., City Council chamber

 **City Council meetings are televised live on Comcast Channels 6 and 26 (unincorporated), and on Astound Channel 29 the following day at 7 p.m. It is 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, can be seen seven days a week on Comcast Channels 6 and 26 at 6 a.m., 9 a.m., noon, 3 p.m., 6 p.m., 10:30 p.m.**

Big Tree Project honors life of ancient oak tree

More than 100 artists have used their talent and skills to memorialize a nearly 300-year-old oak tree through artworks that will be on display in *The Big Tree Project* exhibition at Bedford Gallery June 29 through Aug. 31.

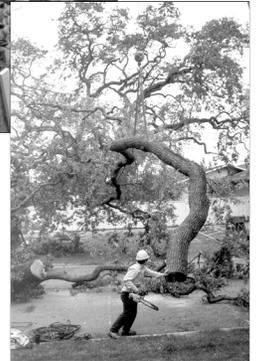
The majestic oak, which stood next to the Shadelands Arts Center near the corner of Ygnacio Valley Road and Wiget Lane, was removed on Oct. 31, 2001 because of rampant decay.

Artworks in *The Big Tree Project* use the tree's wood in many forms and in conjunction with a great variety of mediums.

The Gallery is in the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr. Admission is \$3, general; \$2, youth (17 and under); free, 12 and under. Free on Tuesdays. For hours, go online at www.bedfordgallery.org.



Artist Jeff King (above) in his San Francisco studio working on "Enso," made from the 300-year-old oak that was removed next to the Shadelands Arts Center in October 2001 (right)



What's Happening

Summer Pops Concert July 30

The popular Walnut Creek Concert Band will present its annual "Summer Pops Concert" on Wednesday, July 30 at 8 p.m. in the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive in Walnut Creek. The official band of the City of Walnut Creek, under the direction of Harvey Benstein, will perform light classics, marches and popular medleys, including Rossini's *Italian in Algiers Overture*, *Looking Upward Suite*, marches by John Philip Sousa, John Williams' *The Cowboys*, Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, and salutes to Richard Rodgers and Louis Armstrong. For tickets, call the Center Ticket Office at 943-SHOW.

Opera in the Park

The Festival Opera Company will present another in its popular series of "Opera in the Park" performances on Sunday, July 6 from 6 to 8:30 p.m. in Civic Park, corner of Civic Drive and No. Broadway. Admission is free. Come early to get a good spot on the lawn and enjoy the music.

'Jazz on Bonanza' returns this summer

The popular "Jazz on Bonanza" series will return this summer to downtown Walnut Creek starting July 31 and continuing every Thursday through August under the auspices of the Walnut Creek Downtown Business Association. Besides live jazz performances, there will be food, beverages, and produce booths provided by local farmers. The festivities begin at 5:30 p.m. at the corner of Locust and Bonanza streets with the music starting at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free. For more information about schedules and other activities planned by the Walnut Creek Downtown Business Association, call 933-6778.

Center REP's 37th season to begin

The City's Center REPeritory Company is celebrating its 37th season this year with six new productions at the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts. The season opens Sept. 11 with *The Countess* (through Oct. 11), followed by *Senior Class* (Oct. 23-Nov. 22), Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* (Dec. 11-21), *Rocket Man* (Feb. 5-March 6), Eugene O'Neill's *Anna Christie* (March 25-April 24), and the musical *Cowgirls* (May 13-June 12). For tickets or more information, call 943-SHOW.

PARKconcert series resumes this summer

Come enjoy free 6 p.m. concerts in Civic Park featuring the Walnut Creek Concert Band, under the direction of Harvey Benstein, and other performers this summer. The Concert Band will perform on July 4 and Sept. 1 (Labor Day). Two concerts featuring other performers will be Sunday, July 13, (artist to be announced) and Sunday, Aug. 10 (singer-guitarist Mike Fender will perform music of the 60s, 70s and 80s). Bring a picnic and a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy some summer sounds. For more information, call 295-1400.

All City Swim Meet July 19-20

The Clarke Swim Center at Heather Farm Park will be closed the weekend of July 19-20 for the All City Swim Meet. The pool center will also be closed Aug. 9-10 and 16-17 for other swim meets.

Correction

In the May/June issue of the *Nutshell*, we incorrectly identified the geese at Heather Farm Park as Canadian geese. They are, in fact, Canada Geese. We appreciate all who called or wrote to bring the error to our attention.

New Talbot's plan OK'd by Design Review Commission

The Design Review Commission has approved design plans for a new Talbot's apparel store in downtown Walnut Creek.

The 18,500-square-foot store will be built at the southwest corner of South Main Street and Olympic Boulevard. It will displace the Shoe Pavilion and Goodyear Tires.

A 42-space public parking garage will be built above the store, with an entrance off of Olympic Boulevard.

Following is an update on other projects in Walnut Creek:



Century Theaters' grand opening planned

The new 14-screen Century Theaters complex in the Olympic Place project will have its grand opening July 24 with a benefit for the Diablo Regional Arts Association and the Walnut Creek Library Foundation.

The special evening will start with a reception at 6:30 p.m. featuring gourmet delights from Walnut Creek restaurants, beer, wine, and entertainment. At 8 p.m. guests will enjoy a special movie screening. Tickets are \$50 per person and available now by calling 943-SHOW.

For more details, call the DRAA office at 932-1731.

Olympic Place saw the opening of its

Downtown signals to be flashing for repairs through August 29

Traffic signals at downtown intersections will be flashing red intermittently through Aug. 29 as the City replaces old traffic signal equipment with new technology to improve traffic flow.

The traffic signal master and controller upgrade will mean that traffic signals will be flashing red for periods ranging from five minutes to one hour between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. Motorists are reminded to treat a flashing red light as a four-way stop.

The federally-funded upgrade will cost approximately \$600,000.

For more information, call 943-5899, ext. 232.



Artist's rendering of the proposed Talbot's apparel store as it will look at the southwest corner of South Main Street and Olympic Boulevard.

first store, Cost Plus World Market, in May. Also opened was a 604-space parking garage with entrances from Locust, Olympic, and California.

The Corners

Pottery Barn Kids and The Apple Store in The Corners project at Main Street and

Mt. Diablo Boulevard are still scheduled to be opened by end of June and mid-July, respectively, according to the developer, Lamorinda Development and Investment.

Alma Avenue Park

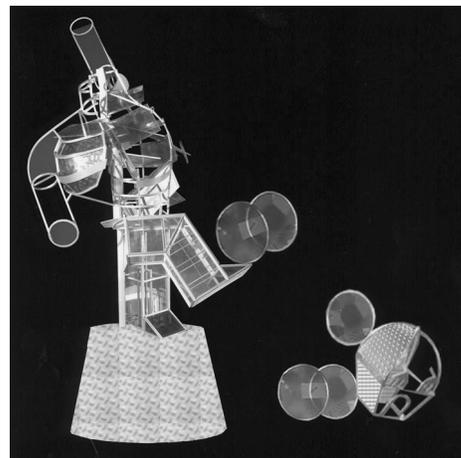
Progress continues on the new Alma Avenue Park off Botelho Drive, which is expected to be opened later this fall.

Arts Commission prefers Oppenheim sculpture for RCA

The City's Arts Commission has preliminarily selected a New York City artist to create a sculpture as a signature piece for the front of the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts.

Dennis Oppenheim, whose world-renowned reputation impressed the commission, was selected from three finalists for the \$80,000 commission.

Oppenheim's sculpture, called *The Performer*, would stand 18 feet high in the plaza in front of the arts center at Civic Drive and Locust Street. The piece is an assemblage of aluminum, concrete, porcelain, ceramic tile, plastic, fiberglass



'The Performer' by Dennis Oppenheim

and other materials.

The commission's recommendation to purchase the piece was to be considered by the City Council in June.

More What's Happening

Movies Under the Stars returns

Due to the overwhelming success of the first *Movies Under the Stars* event on May 10, the City will present "Toy Story 2" on Saturday, Aug. 16 beginning at 8:30 p.m. at the front ballfield at Heather Farm Park. Admission is free. Gates open at 7:30 p.m. More than 2,000 people came to the first *Movies Under the Stars* event, which featured "Shrek." Please, no pets. Call 943-5858 for details.

How to recycle electronic waste

Think before you throw that old computer monitor away. It's illegal to dispose of monitors and TV sets in the garbage, because they contain lead and could contaminate soil and groundwater. You may call Pleasant Hill Bayshore Disposal to arrange for curbside pick-up of your electronic waste. There is a \$25 fee for each monitor or TV collected. Call 603-1144, 8 to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Consultant to guide General Plan update

To guide the complex update of the Walnut Creek General Plan, the City has hired a professional coordinator to work with the Community Development Department to draft a new 20-year road map for the development, preservation, and revitalization of the community.

Naphtali H. Knox, a consultant with 45 years of city planning experience, has produced more than a dozen general plans in Bay Area and Northern California cities since the mid-1980s. Working with City staff, he will assist a seven-member steering committee and shepherd the entire process through the crucial stages of public involvement, data gathering, and production and review of major documents.

Knox said the exciting part of the process for the public is the continuing opportunity to become involved at any of the three stages.

“Residents’ experiences and opinions about Walnut Creek will be important in developing a positive quality of life for today’s residents and future generations,” he said.

The General Plan will set goals, policies, and action programs for amenities and services in a number of important areas, including: retail and office growth; traffic circulation; police services; parks, recreation, and open space; the arts; and city design.

The General Plan will be developed through a combination of public involve-

ment and technical work that will lead, over a three-year period, to the adoption of an Environmental Impact Report and a new General Plan 2025. The City hopes to adopt a new Plan in 2005.

The public involvement process was launched two years ago with Community Conversations, an ambitious outreach program that involved 360 people of all ages in small group discussions focusing on their Walnut Creek experience. During those sessions, members of the public discussed such issues as growth management, traffic, jobs, and housing.

In June 2003, the steering committee — comprising representatives from all five City commissions, plus the City Treasurer — was created to oversee the General Plan work. The committee will meet monthly until a public hearing draft of the general plan is prepared. During the



Naphtali Knox



next year the committee will host at least two community workshops and will assist in developing a citizen’s survey.

Late in 2004, the draft General Plan will be presented to the Planning Commission, the body charged by State law with preparing the General Plan. The commission will hold public hearings on the draft Plan and on an Environmental Impact Report prepared to evaluate the draft Plan. After review and modification, the Planning Commission will recommend approval of the plan to the City Council.

The public can follow the progress of the General Plan update on the web at www.walnut-creek.org/generalplan. There you will find a listing of General Plan meetings scheduled with various City commissions and links to related documents prepared this year.

For more information, call 943-5899, ext. 213.

Rotarians rebuild open space foot bridge



Members of the Walnut Creek-Sunrise Rotary Club assisted City workers in re-building a foot bridge in the Walnut Creek Shell Ridge Open Space off Wiget Lane earlier this year.

Rotarians who worked on the project were Leonard Jackson, Steve Richie, Tom King, Scott King, Tom Soberanes, Robert Martz, Tom Cranmer, Max Cranmer, Ross Abbott, and Mark Robson.

Photo by Rich Fudala

City lauded for its Clean Water Program

The City of Walnut Creek received an outstanding evaluation in May of its Clean Water Program from the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Agency inspector Christy Williams said the City’s program was the “most impressive municipal stormwater program” it had evaluated to date.

The City’s program seeks to keep pollution out of streams and creeks.

Shadelands celebrates centennial in grand style

More than 1,000 well-wishers enjoyed live entertainment, rode in horse-drawn carriages, and toured Hiram Penniman's stately former home as the Walnut Creek Historical Society celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Shadelands house on April 27.

The event was made possible through contributions from the City of Walnut Creek, the Contra Costa Times, Muir Orthopedic Specialists, John Muir-Mt. Diablo Health System, Pleasant Hill Bayshore, Hall Equities Group, Nor-Cal Moving Services, Old Republic Title, and Safeway.

Highlights of the celebration included the dedication of a walnut tree by Mayor



Hundreds of visitors lined up to go through the Shadelands Museum at its centennial celebration April 27.

Gwen Regalia and the awarding of prizes to winners of a third grade Historic Letter Writing Contest who imagined living on a ranch in 1903. The winners were: first

place, Trevor Durlfing, Murwood School; second place, Mahrad Saedi, Murwood; and third place, Marcus Nissam, Walnut Heights School.

The bank that Burgess built

It's easily the largest historic landmark downtown: an imposing, two-story, cement block edifice at 1376-1388 North Main Street that has served as a center of commerce, a post office, an apartment house, and even a billboard for soft drink companies and campaign signs over the last 90 years.



Burgess in 1942

Banker/entrepreneur Robert Noble Burgess was 34 in 1913 when he built what was then known as the First National Bank of Walnut Creek. It's stately appearance, punctuated by a Roman pediment and two-story-tall columns, made it an instant landmark in the pre-city days of Walnut Creek. Burgess was president of First National Bank, which issued \$5 bank notes that today are prized collector's items (see picture below).



This \$5 bank note issued by the First National Bank of Walnut Creek around 1917-18 is one of only three known to exist. Roger Cooper

Burgess lived in the town's oldest home, the former William Rice residence that was built in 1860 off Hacienda Drive. He also owned all of the territory on Mount Diablo and carved North Gate Road to the summit. He eventually sold the territory to the State of California in the 1920s.

In 1916, Burgess donated property at the northwest corner of Main and Civic Drive for the construction of Walnut Creek's first public library.

Perhaps Burgess is best known as the developer of the Lakewood Estates subdivision (off Homestead Avenue) in the 1930s and the Diablo Country Club in Alamo. He eventually moved to Santa Barbara, where he died in 1965 at age 87.

In 1925, First National Bank of Walnut Creek merged with the San Ramon Valley Bank (Walnut Creek's first financial institution, which opened in 1907), and eventually became Liberty Bank and then the Bank of Italy. In 1930, it was renamed Bank of America. When the bank moved out in 1947, local architect Leonard Ford redesigned the front of the building to



The First National Bank of Walnut Creek as it look in 1919 (above), and how the building looks today.



remove the pediment and columns.

In 2001, the former bank building got a new coat of paint (to cover the shade of brown it sported for 20 years). Today, the 11,500-square foot landmark has eight upstairs apartments and four retail tenants on the ground floor.

City Council Update

Council recognizes top WC schools

The City Council presented commendations in May to Las Lomas High School and Foothill Middle School for being honored as 2003 California Distinguished Schools by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Las Lomas and Foothill were among only 130 schools statewide to earn the designation, which is awarded to schools that have high academic standing.

New library commissioner named

The City Council in May appointed Deborah Burstyn to represent Walnut Creek on the Contra Costa County Library Commission. The 17-year Walnut Creek resident is a former Washington Post reporter and a current member of the Friends of the Walnut Creek Library and the Walnut Creek Education Foundation.

Civic Arts League donates \$1,000 to arts education

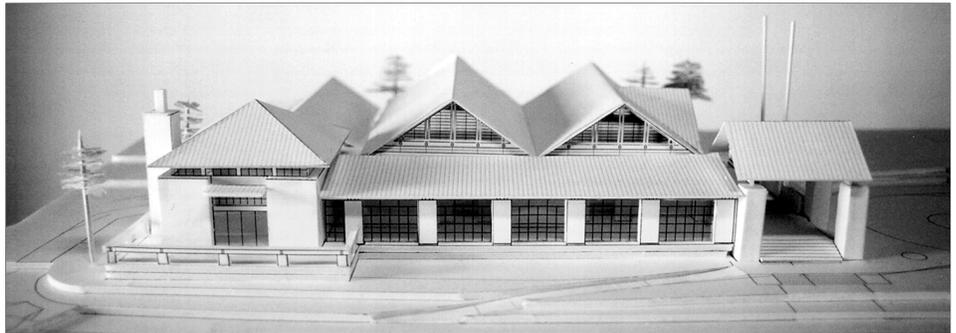
True to its mission to broaden interest in culture, the Civic Arts League has once again made a donation of \$1,000 to the City's Civic Arts Education program to further its classes and activities.

The Civic Arts League is an informal organization started in 1965 with the express purpose of broadening its members' cultural interest in the arts in Walnut Creek by study, public relations with the community, and developing an audience for the theater.

The 150 members of the League have no fundraising activities, but through their annual dues they have made substantial contributions to the Civic Arts Education program.

Civic Arts Education program manager Kathy Nelson estimates that the Civic Arts League's contributions to the City over the last 38 years exceed \$10,000.

"Education (in the schools) isn't doing it anymore," said League president Marie Wentz. "Although (funding arts education) was not our original mission, it fills a gap in the education of children."



Architect's rendering of the new Veterans Memorial Building to be constructed in Lafayette.

City to join in funding new vets building

A new veterans memorial building will be built in Lafayette to replace the two aging veterans buildings in Walnut Creek and Lafayette.

The City of Walnut Creek has agreed to purchase the site of the 78-year-old veterans memorial building at 1250 Locust St. and contribute a additional \$800,000 for relocating veterans to the new, \$6.7 million veterans facility at the northeast corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Risa Road in Lafayette.

The 9,100-square-foot building is anticipated to be opened by Veterans Day 2004.

The agreement was struck in May by the two cities, Contra Costa County, and representatives of two American Legion posts and the Veterans of Foreign Wars

post that use the existing buildings.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Walnut Creek Redevelopment Agency will purchase the site of the 78-year-old veterans building from the county for \$2.8 million. Once the veterans' groups have been relocated to the new facility, the existing veterans buildings in Walnut Creek and Lafayette will be turned over to those cities' redevelopment agencies. Lafayette will clear its property to build a new library, while Walnut Creek will, as an interim use, clear the Locust Street site for new surface parking to serve the busy pedestrian shopping areas that surround it.

Unlike the existing veterans buildings, which date to the 1920s, the new center will meet modern building codes and be fully accessible to those with disabilities.

Sister city soccer youth to visit WC in July

Teen-age soccer players from Walnut Creek's sister city of Siófok, Hungary will be arriving July 14 for two weeks of sightseeing and participation in various soccer events in Walnut Creek.

The visit of the 22 teens and three adults from Siófok is sponsored by Sister Cities International of Walnut Creek in conjunction with the Walnut Creek Soccer Club.

The group will be feted at a special

evening reception on July 15 at the Bedford Gallery in the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts.

Four days of soccer activities are planned for the visitors as well as sightseeing trips to San Francisco, Oakland and Santa Cruz boardwalk.

The teens will be staying with Walnut Creek Soccer Club families during their visit. For details about the Hungarians' itinerary, go on-line to www.wcsc.org.

CIP program

From page 1
the Arts.

For the first time since the Council first adopted a two-year CIP budget more than 20 years ago, staff in May proposed a one-year plan.

Going to a one-year CIP budget will allow staff time to complete long- and short-term master plans for finances and maintenance needs of the City.

2003-04 CIP Projects

Systematic Maintenance	\$3,484,000
Major Facilities (Rossmoor Detention Basin)	\$300,000
Parks, Recreation, Open Space	\$1,026,000
Traffic & Transportation (Walnut Blvd. Pathway)	\$50,000



By Officer Tony Mangini

Explorers are back

The Walnut Creek Police Department is pleased to re-introduce the Explorer Program. We believe the Explorer Program is a valuable asset to the department as well as an enlightening experience for the young participants.



The program affords an opportunity for young people between the ages of 15 and 21 who may be interested in exploring a career in law enforcement to learn about the every day workings of the police department in a volunteer service capacity. Additionally, the Explorer is able to experience some of the different types of training and varied functions and responsibilities performed on a daily basis by our police officers.

In order to become familiar with the field of law enforcement, Explorers will be given a variety of assignments and responsibilities. Each Explorer must volunteer a minimum number of hours each month and must attend meetings and regular training sessions. Explorers work special details, such as the Walnut Festival and school safety fairs. Explorers may also be asked to assist in search and rescue when needed.

Applicants must be currently enrolled in a high school or be a high school graduate. If enrolled in school, Explorers must maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.0 and have a clean criminal record.

Applications can be obtained from the WCPD at 1666 North Main Street. If you meet the minimum qualifications and pass a background check, you will be invited to attend an interview.

Qualified applicants who have passed all stages of the process will be invited to become a member of the Walnut Creek Police Department Explorer Program.



Kid-cuffing

While giving a tour of the Walnut Creek Police Department on April 16, Sgt. Tim Schultz demonstrated the art of applying handcuffs on Drew Gibson, a third grader at Parkmead Elementary School, as classmates (from left) Katharine Holzheimer, Maggie Ridenhour, and Tara Bani-Hashemi look on. The four students also toured the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts and City Hall as part of their "Dinner with the Mayor" activity, which was an auction item at Parkmead's recent fundraiser. The mayor and the children dined on cheeseburgers donated by Taxi's in Walnut Creek.

Weekend Warrior tips: Controlling erosion

Nature slowly wears away land, but human activities (e.g. construction, removing plants and not re-vegetating or other activities) increase the rate of erosion over 1,000 times! Erosion results in loss of topsoil and minerals, and it causes mud-clogged storm drains, gullied hillsides, and unstable stream banks.

Eroded soil containing nutrients — when carried into the creek — can trigger algae blooms that reduce water clarity, deplete oxygen, lead to fish kills, and create odors.

Most erosion and sediment problems can be avoided. Following are a few examples of what you can do to help prevent loss of soil:

- Preserve existing vegetation as much as possible.
- Examine your site carefully before disturbing the soil (be aware of the slope, drainage patterns and soil type).

- Minimize the length and steepness of slopes by terracing.
- Consider using attractive alternatives to impervious concrete (such as using bricks, interlocking pavers or flat stones).

• Plant vegetation as it stabilizes soil, intercepts rainfall and takes up water.

• Use mulches or erosion control mats to hold soil moisture and provide ground protection from rain damage.

Please remember: Even small projects may require consultation

with a civil or geotechnical engineer. In addition, before you begin an extensive landscaping or construction, contact the City's Current Engineering staff at 943-5899, x. 232 and inquire as to whether a permit is required. For silt fencing, mulching material, bark or topsoil, look in the yellow pages of the telephone directory under "Landscaping Equipment and Supplies."



State budget

From page 1

The Governor's budget also calls for shifting \$250 million in redevelopment funds from cities to finance the State's obligations. This takeaway would cost Walnut Creek \$175,000 that would be used to create new housing and jobs. This take-away would also continue and grow in future years.

Because housing and job creation has been a major theme in Sacramento over the last several years, the potential loss of these redevelopment revenues would be ironic and extremely detrimental, accord-

ing to City Manager Mike Parness.

Further, the City's costs are going up due to the need for heightened security.

"In government, you have service demands going up when the economy goes down," he said. "It's the time you can least afford to expand your service levels."

The Governor's revised budget would also cost Walnut Creek an additional \$60,000 in unreimbursed fees to book prisoners at County jail and \$120,000 in other State mandated costs. Together with the proposed vehicle license fee revenue loss and redevelopment fund loss, the total impact on Walnut Creek's budget in 2003-04 could be \$1 million, equivalent to 10

police officers.

Like everywhere else in California, Walnut Creek is experiencing a flat or negative economy, which means local sales tax revenues are dropping. That's troubling because sales tax represents the largest single income source (35 percent) in the City's operating budget.

At the same time, the City is faced with growing labor costs due to increased employee health care and retirement program payments and skyrocketing workers' compensation insurance premiums.

It's not a pretty picture.

The bottom line is that Walnut Creek has urged the State not to balance its budget on backs of local governments. It remains to be seen whether legislators will heed the City's admonition.

In the meantime, City leaders and staff intend to continue their tradition of maintaining a lean, efficient operating budget while still providing the high level of service Walnut Creek residents expect.

You can do your part by writing to:

- Hon. Tom Torlakson, State Senate, 7th District, State Capitol, Room 5061, Sacramento, CA 95814. E-Mail: senator.torlakson@sen.ca.gov
- Hon. Guy Houston, State Assembly, 15th District, State Capitol, Room 4208, Sacramento, CA 95814. E-mail: assemblymember.houston@assembly.ca.gov

Vandalism big concern at Gardens at HF

Vandals caused substantial property damage this spring at The Gardens at Heather Farm, and Walnut Creek police have been working with the organization to stem the growing problem.

The increased vandalism comes at a time when The Gardens, located at 1540 Marchbanks Drive, is enjoying national prominence. In its June issue, *Sunset Magazine* named it one of four "Best of the West — Free Public Gardens," and it was the only such garden so acknowledged in Northern California.

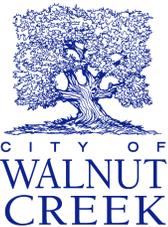
"This year has been a particular challenge," said Executive Director Elizabeth Fox. "We sustained over

\$15,000 in damage from vandalism this spring, and only part of that is covered by our insurance."

Among the areas damaged by vandals were the gazebo, the kiosk at the bridge that connects the Gardens with Heather Farm Park, several benches, the water garden, and one tree.

Police have arranged to have signs installed at each entry point to The Gardens that state the hours the property is closed, and have stepped up patrols.

Citizens can do their part by being alert and reporting any problems or suspicious individuals to the police on the non-emergency line at 943-5844.



CITY COUNCIL

Gwen Regalia, Mayor*
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Gary Skrel
Kathy Hicks
Sue Rainey

CITY CLERK Barbara Rivara
CITY TREASURER Ronald Cassano

* For appointment: Call 943-5812.

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Valerie Barone, Director

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IN A Nutshell

Published bi-monthly and mailed to
Walnut Creek residents and businesses

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.



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