



IN A

# Nutshell

No. 105

Official community newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

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## Happy 100<sup>th</sup>, Shadelands

Pioneer Hiram Penniman's grand old house at 2660 Ygnacio Valley Road, the Monarch of Walnut Creek homes, turns 100 in April and the Walnut Creek Historical Society is planning a family-oriented centennial celebration on Sunday, April 27. For details on this free event and on the history of the house, see page 5.

## State budget crisis could hit hard

By Mike Parness, City Manager

It may be a new calendar year, but it seems like old times as serious budget problems continue to mount for the State of California. As we reported to you last March, the State was then facing an estimated \$12 billion shortfall, due in large part to the shrinking economy and the electricity crisis of 2000. At that time, Governor Gray Davis insisted he would not balance the State budget "on the backs of local government."

However, this year the Governor estimates the State deficit will grow to \$35 billion. In January, he unveiled a controversial spending plan that, if carried out, spells dire consequences for local governments, including Walnut Creek.

Ten years ago, when Sacramento found itself in a similar, albeit less expensive hole, there was a raid on local government budgets to balance the State's books. That raid continued right on through the State's so-called "good times" of the late 1990s, when it built up a comfortable reserve because of a rejuvenated economy but never returned the property tax revenues it continued to take from cities and counties. Walnut Creek continues to lose \$1.3 million each year in property tax revenues to Sacramento.

Once again, the State is in deep financial trouble, and once again it is looking to balance its budget on the backs of local governments that provide such vital services for citizens as public safety

**STATE CRISIS, see back page**

## Council OK's ambitious set of 2003 goals

Assuring the long-term financial health of the City, updating the City's General Plan, and promoting economic development are the top priorities City leaders want to tackle in 2003.

During a daylong study session on Jan. 13, the City Council also decided that building a skate park would be one of the primary goals for this year (see related story, page 6).

The Council weighed nearly 60 important projects and initiatives aimed at improving Walnut Creek in its quest to establish the most important work for it and its staff to accomplish this year.

It was all part of City Manager Mike Parness's effort to get the Council's stamp of approval on what the City staff will do over the next 18 months.

"It also allows us to keep a focus on the long term," he told the Council.

The Council decided by consensus that its top six priorities for 2003 would be:

- Developing a long-term financial plan
- Preparing a General Plan update
- Economic development
- Developing a maintenance master plan
- Building a skate park
- Developing a park and recreation master plan

Parness said a long-term financial plan is necessary to preserve fiscal stability.

The Council on Jan. 21 approved a staff timeline for updating the General Plan, which has the land use blueprint for Walnut Creek since 1971. It was last updated in 1989.

The purpose of creating an economic development plan is to retain businesses,

**COUNCIL GOALS, see page 6**

## City Event Calendar

### March

13

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

21-22

**WC Senior's 2nd Hand Sale**

### April

26

**Spring Plant Sale**  
Rear of Heather Farm Park  
9 a.m. to noon; benefits  
Gardens at Heather Farm

25-27

**WC Fine Arts Festival**  
Main & Locust streets  
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; free

## City Meeting Calendar

### City Council

March 4, 18; April 1, 15  
7 p.m.  
City Hall, 1666 N. Main St.

### Planning Commission

March 13, 27; April 10, 24  
7:30 p.m.  
City Council chamber

### Arts Commission

March 17, April 21  
4:30 p.m.  
Leshner Center for the Arts

### Transportation Commission

March 21, April 17  
7:30 p.m.  
City Council chamber

### Design Review Commission

March 5, 19; April 2  
7 p.m., City Council chamber

### Park, Rec & Open Space Commission

March 3, April 7  
7 p.m., City Council chamber

 **City Council meetings are televised live on AT&T 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 AT&T Channel 6 and 26 at 6 a.m., 9 a.m., noon, 3 p.m., 6 p.m., 10:30 p.m.**

## WC Concert Band to present Spring Concert

The Walnut Creek Concert Band, under the direction of Harvey Benstein, will present its annual Spring Concert on April 9 at 8 p.m. at the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts.

Saxophonist Mary Fettig will perform *A Tribute to Rudy Wiedoeft*, who popularized the saxophone during the early 1900s.

The Concert Band will perform Shostakovich's *Festive Overture*, Adam Gorb's *Yiddish Dances*, Eric Ewazen's *Hymn for the Lost and the Living*, and a collection of international marches.

Tickets are \$12, regular; \$10, seniors/youths and will go on sale March 10. Call 943-SHOW.

For more information, call 376-7861.



### Open Gym for Teens offered at Tice Valley

**Open Gym for Teens** will be offered at Tice Valley Community Gymnasium, 2055 Tice Valley Blvd., each Friday night starting March 7. Drop-in hours are 7 to 10:30 p.m. Admission is free. One court will be available for this activity. For more information on future special events in conjunction with Open Gym for Teens, visit the [www.realwc.org](http://www.realwc.org) teen website.

## What's Happening

through eighth grades. This year's "Arts, Adventures & Academics" Summer School will be for five weeks, from June 23 through July 25, at Walnut Creek Intermediate School. The sessions will be Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Child care is available. To register or for details, call 943-5846 or check [www.arts-ed.org](http://www.arts-ed.org).

### 'Walk the Library Walk' fundraiser April 26

The Diablo Valley Lions Club of Walnut Creek, in partnership with the Friends of the Walnut Creek Library, the Friends of the Ygnacio Valley Library and the Walnut Creek Library Foundation, is sponsoring the first annual "Walk the Library Walk" on Saturday, April 26 from the downtown Walnut Creek Library at 1644 N. Broadway to the Ygnacio Valley Library at 2661 Oak Grove Road, a distance of approximately 5 miles. The route follows the easy and scenic trails connecting the two libraries. Registration will begin at 8 a.m. outside the library in Civic Park. Refreshments will be provided along the route and at the finish. All participants will be given a free commemorative t-shirt. Participants can sign up for the walk at the library or at the starting point. Registration is \$25 for individuals and \$30 for families. Participants are encouraged to seek sponsors to make donations in support of the walk. All proceeds will go to the Walnut Creek Library Foundation to enhance programs at both libraries. Call 932-2612 for details.

### 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 11 and April 8, 7-9:30 p.m., at The Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr. Registration is required; call 906-1806.

### WC Seniors' Second Hand Sale

The Walnut Creek Seniors' Club's annual Second Hand Sale will be Friday, March 21 and Saturday, March 22, 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 March 10-21 between 9 a.m. and 4 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 19

Children can participate in Walnut Creek's annual Spring Egg Hunts on Saturday, April 19 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 21-25 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.

### 'Arts, Adventures' summer school set

For 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

# New Castle Rock sports fields to open in April

Walnut Creek youngsters will have two more ballfields to play on when the new Castle Rock Youth Sports Fields are dedicated on Saturday, April 12.

The sports fields sit on the former playfield of what once was Castle Rock Elementary School on Hutchinson Drive, next to Northgate High School. The school was razed last year by the Mt. Diablo School District, which is leasing the property to the City for the next 55 years.

The organizers of the project — Jim Cattlin, Janet Abrams, Bob Simmons, Paul Causey, and Bill Bergvall — are anticipating opening day after five years of planning and six months of construction.

“We are so incredibly thrilled to be standing where we are today,” said Abrams, treasurer of the \$1.3 million project.

Built with \$962,000 in City funding and \$300,000 in donations from foundations, businesses, and private individuals, the sports fields will provide new playing space for more than 3,000 youngsters involved with Walnut Creek Little League



Project coordinators (from left) Jim Cattlin, Bob Simmons, and Janet Abrams at the new Castle Rock Youth Sports Fields on Hutchinson Drive, next to Northgate High School.

and Walnut Creek Soccer Club, which together are contributing \$150,000.

Northgate High School will have access to the fields during school hours. The Northgate Bronco Boosters have also contributed financially to the project.

The architect for the project was Martha Lee of John Nicol & Associates of Lafayette, and the contractor was Goodland Landscape Construction.

## Reserve seats now for City Bus Tour scheduled April 5

Some of Walnut Creek's most precious landmarks will be visited on the next City Bus Tour set for Saturday, April 5.

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.

## Volunteers needed for Trail Day 2003

Volunteers who want to help improve the open space are invited to join City staff for Trail Day 2003 on Saturday, April 26.

Participants should meet at 8:30 a.m. at Arbolado Park on Arbolado Drive.

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.

A thank-you barbecue will be provided at noon by the Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation.

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

## More What's Happening

### Free healthy gardening workshops

Free healthy gardening workshops, co-sponsored by the City, will be held this spring by the U.C. Cooperative Extension. The workshops are March 22, 9:30-11 a.m., at the Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr.; March 29, 10:30 a.m.-noon, Ygnacio Valley Library, 2661 Oak Grove Rd.; and April 26 and 27, 1:30-3 p.m., at Lindsay Wildlife Museum, 1931 First Ave. No reservations are necessary.

### Bancroft Garden spring opening

The Ruth Bancroft Garden at 1500

Bancroft Road will hold its 2003 Spring Opening and Plant Sale on Saturday, April 12, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call 210-9663 for more information.

### Soccer sign-ups for WC youngsters

The Walnut Creek Soccer Club will be holding registration for the fall season in March for recreational and competitive soccer programs for players ages 6-18. For time and location, check the WCSC website at [www.wcsc.org](http://www.wcsc.org) or call 930-0210. The Walnut Creek Soccer Club will be holding competitive tryouts for U9

through U14 boys and girls Feb. 23 through March 16. Check [www.wcsc.org](http://www.wcsc.org) for specific times and locations.

### 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 676-4600, x. 103.

# Downtown Rhythm

## Study shows culture is good business for WC

**C**ulture has turned out to be very good business in Walnut Creek. In the dozen years since the City opened the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts, downtown Walnut Creek has experienced a virtual renaissance of economic activity with the introduction of scores of new restaurants and retail businesses. This boom, in turn, has helped stimulate interest in the performing and visual arts in Walnut Creek, which has truly become the cultural hub of the East Bay.

In a recent study by Americans for the Arts, a non-profit organization that surveyed 91 cities across the United States in 2000, non-profit performing arts organizations in Walnut Creek generated \$34.2 million in sales. Most of that amount — \$21.3 million — was spent by audiences on things like meals and merchandise in downtown Walnut Creek.

In fact, the average amount spent by the estimated 1 million patrons who attended non-profit arts events was \$21.10

per person (not counting the price of a show ticket). And most of that was spent on meals. Is it any wonder downtown Walnut Creek boasts 90 restaurants?

Beyond the dollars and cents, Walnut Creek's arts activities generated 960 full-time equivalent jobs in 2000, including jobs associated with the performing arts productions at the regional center.

In 2002, the center hosted nearly 1,000 professional and community performances in its three theaters, drawing an estimated 300,000 patrons. The Bedford Gallery, located on the ground floor of the center, attracted huge numbers in 2001 for the *Linda McCartney's Sixties* photo exhibition, which made it possible for people throughout the region to see this major

show, which wasn't available anywhere else in California. The regional center also saw a remarkable jump in on-line ticket sales — from 24,700 tickets sold on the Internet in 2001 to an impressive 86,000 tickets in 2002.

The business community especially appreciates the value of the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts, which has attracted large audiences, spurred business development, created jobs, and generated substantial revenues for the City so it can continue to support the center's activities.

"I always say the Regional Arts Center gives us what no other downtown in the East Bay has," said Cheri Sprenger, executive director of the Downtown Business Association. "It's just so special."



The Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts has sparked a major rejuvenation of downtown Walnut Creek since it opened in 1990.

## Arts X-Change program open to teen performers

**W**alnut Creek's own Center REPeritory Company is offering its Arts X-Change Program to teens who aspire to perform on stage.

Theater is a vital part of the Walnut Creek community and the Arts X-Change Program is a way to inspire teens and keep the arts alive.

The Arts X-Change Program is an umbrella activity that includes Young REP, now in its 30th year in the City of Walnut Creek, the Center REP Acting Internship Program, and high school and community outreach.

Young REP is an intensive summer training program for students 14-19 years of age. Young Rep will meet Monday through Friday, June 23 to August 5, for



Young REP students during a class at the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts.

morning classes at the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts, with a workshop performance that comes at the end the program on August 4 and 5.

Young REP students will also have a chance to audition for a Shakespeare

Production Workshop that will be directed by Jeffrey Draper. Young REP actors will have the opportunity to explore and perform "Hamlet." This workshop will meet every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, 1-4 p.m., June 23 to August 1.

In the Center REP Acting Internship Program, teen interns meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, from June 24 to July 31, 1-4 p.m. This year's acting interns will be presenting a tribute to Tennessee Williams, "Sweet Birds of Youth," on Monday, March 24 at 7:30 p.m. in the Margaret Leshner Theatre at the Regional Center. Purchase tickets by calling 943-SHOW.

For more information or a Young REP brochure, call 295-1400 or e-mail Kerri Shawn at Shawn@dlrca.org.

# CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF SHADELANDS

**H**iram Penniman couldn't know it at the time, but when he moved his family into their new house on the Shadelands Fruit Farm in April 1903, he was creating a rich legacy for Walnut Creek. Today, 100 years later, his house at 2660 Ygnacio Valley Road is no longer a home to his family but a home for the Walnut Creek Historical Society. More importantly, it is a precious time



Penniman's home at the Shadelands Fruit Farm as it looked in 1903.

Photos courtesy of Walnut Creek Historical Society

capsule of Walnut Creek at the turn of an earlier century, when time was measured by the hands of a wind-up wall clock.

A century in the life of Shadelands, the house that Hiram built, is an illustration of how far society has come since the earliest days of the 20th century, when gas fed the ceiling lamps and the music emanating from a charming Stella music box was generated by the cranking of a handle.

One of Walnut Creek's most progressive early pioneers, Hiram Penniman came to the Walnut Creek area from Illinois in 1856 with his first wife, Sarah. There they raised three children: William, Charles, and Mary. In what today is downtown Walnut Creek, Hiram purchased 25 acres, surveyed lots, and laid out the first townsite. As the designated road overseer for "The Corners," he moved the old



Hiram Penniman, circa 1870

county road away from the creek and created a new alignment for Main Street.

At the same time, Hiram and his brother-in-law, George Potwin, took an interest in the Ygnacio Valley, particularly 370 acres of prime farmland (near what is today Ygnacio Valley Road and Oak Grove Road) that was part of a Mexican land grant called Rancho San Miguel. They purchased the property for \$5,000 and created Shadelands.

In 1880, Hiram (who had remarried following the death of Sarah in 1862) moved his family to Oakland, eight years after the birth of his second daughter, Bessie. In 1902, at the age of 78, he decided to move back to Shadelands, where he built a two-story, Colonial Revival-style house at a cost of \$7,200.

Hiram died in his bed there on Oct. 9, 1907 at the age of 83. His daughter, Mary, who ran the fruit farm, passed away two

years later, a victim of influenza at the age of 49. Hiram's second wife, Carrie, the last family member to occupy the home, died there in 1913.

Over the next several decades, Hiram's surviving daughter, Bessie Johnson, and her husband, Albert, oversaw the Shadelands property. Two years after Bessie's death in 1943, Albert formed the Gospel Foundation of California as a trust for the family home and property.

In the 1960s, the Gospel Foundation sold off the majority of the former fruit farm property to developers who created the Shadelands Business Park. The house was given to the City in November 1970, and the Walnut Creek Historical Society opened it as the Shadelands Ranch Historical Museum on Nov. 18, 1972.

The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

The museum is open Wednesday, Thursday, and Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. For more information, call 935-7871.

## 'Shadelands — 100 Years!' party April 27

**L**ocal history mixed with live music and food will highlight the 100th birthday party for Walnut Creek's most celebrated house on Sunday, April



27 at the Shadelands Ranch Historical Museum, 2660 Ygnacio Valley Road.

Admission is free to "Shadelands — 100 Years!," which be 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Free parking will be available behind the

museum (off Via Monte).

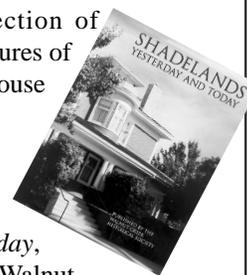
The Walnut Creek Historical Society, which has operated the museum since 1972, will host the event in conjunction with the City, which owns the former Hiram Penniman home.

As a virtual time capsule of 1903 Walnut Creek, it features the original furnishings, possessions, and apparel of the Penniman family. Tours of the museum will be given by volunteers.

For more information, call 935-7871.

## Shadelands history in pictures available

**A** rich collection of vintage pictures of the Shadelands house is presented in a new, 22-page booklet entitled *Shadelands — Yesterday and Today*, published by the Walnut Creek Historical Society. It's \$5 and available at the Shadelands Museum.



## City Council Update

### Council OK's housing/retail project

The City Council on Feb. 4 approved the construction of a housing/retail development consisting of 181 apartment units and 21,000 square feet of commercial space on the west side of North California Boulevard between Trinity and Cole avenues.

The Metropole project developers will pay the City an in-lieu fee of \$1.3 million to be used to build affordable housing.

### BART parking OK'd at Las Juntas

The City Council on Jan. 21 upheld a Planning Commission decision to allow BART to build a temporary parking lot on the former Las Juntas swim club site near the Pleasant Hill BART station.

The Council imposed a five-year limit on the use of the property at 1250 Las Juntas Way for BART parking, ending Jan. 22, 2008. After that, the County intends to develop the property for residential housing. The temporary parking would replace a portion of the parking stalls displaced by improvements to the adjacent Iron Horse Trail.

A majority of the swim club members have voted to sell the facility due to lack of use and insufficient funding.

### Commissioners reappointed

The City Council has reappointed four Walnut Creek residents to second terms on their respective City commissions.

The Council in January agreed to reappoint June Kirske, three-year term, Park, Recreation & Open Space Commission; Patricia Pava, three-year term, Arts Commission; Bob Pickett, four-year term, Planning Commission; and Stephen Harriman, one-year term, Design Review.

### 'Movies Under Stars' premiere on May 10 at Heather Farm Park

Families are invited to attend the premiere of a new film series, "Movies Under the Stars," to be presented by the City of Walnut Creek on May 10.

The animated feature "Shrek" will be shown at 8:30 p.m. on Ballfield #1 at Heather Farm Park. The field will open at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free; suggested donation is \$3/adults and \$2/children.

For details, call 943-5899 ext. 420.



### Teen summer job fair

The City of Walnut Creek is seeking to hire high school students for a wide range of interesting summer jobs (such as park landscape maintenance as shown). In order to recruit teen workers for upwards of 100 jobs (including lifeguards, summer camp counselors, and interns), the City will hold a Summer Job Recruitment Fair for teens on Thursday, March 13 from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Walnut Creek Library, 1644 N. Broadway (at Civic Park). The City will be accepting applications through May. Check the "Jobs with the City" link on the City's website, [www.walnut-creek.org](http://www.walnut-creek.org). For more information please contact, Renée Zeimer at 256-3503 or Kevin Safine at 943-5899 ext. 589.

### Skate park planning given high priority

Supporters of building a skate park in Walnut Creek got a boost from the City Council in January when council members ranked development of a skate park as a top priority this year.

The Council's Skate Park Task Force has recommended that the City build a 14,000-square-foot skate park at either Heather Farm Park or Civic Park.

Environmental studies are now under way to evaluate three possible sites: the ballfields at Civic Park, the north end of Heather Farm (near the Contra Costa Canal), and the grassy knoll near the Heather Farm Community Center.

In the meantime, community members are creating a Friends of the Skate Park organization to raise money and show support for the park.

For more information, e-mail [skatepark@walnut-creek.org](mailto:skatepark@walnut-creek.org)

## Council goals

### From front page

market Walnut Creek for potential businesses, and revitalize the business sectors, with the goal of further shoring up Walnut Creek's already strong economy to enhance the City's ability to meet growing demand for public services.

Preparing a maintenance master plan will provide a systematic approach to maintaining the City's various facilities, including the two swim centers, the corporation yard, and the Boundary Oak restaurant and golf complex.

Putting together a comprehensive park and recreation facility master plan by summer 2005 will allow the City to get a handle on its existing facilities and programs and to assess future community needs in order to better serve the public.

The City Council also wants to study the City's technology systems and take a fresh look at how the City departments are organized.

### Public input vital for latest update of City's General Plan

The City is beginning to update its General Plan, and City officials want to make sure that residents and business owners have plenty of say in this important undertaking.

Often referred to as a template for the future, the General Plan outlines requirements for such key areas as housing, transportation, open space, and commercial development.

The decisions a city makes about how it grows and what areas it preserves are determined through the General Plan. That is why it is so important that the General Plan reflects the desires of the community.

The General Plan update is coordinated by the Planning Division. The entire process is expected to take about two and a half years and will involve all City departments and commissioners.

A special page on the City website ([www.walnut-creek.org](http://www.walnut-creek.org)) will be dedicated to the General Plan process to help keep the public informed. It will have such information as surveys, meeting schedules and drafts of documents.

In addition, there will be town hall meetings and updates in the *Nutshell*.



**CopTalk**

By Officer Tony Keeler

## Police and your schools

There are five high schools, six intermediate schools, and over 10 elementary schools within three separate districts in Walnut Creek. On any given school day, there are about 8,000 students traveling to and learning at campuses within Walnut Creek.



Usually when schools needed police help in dealing with an issue, the “beat cop” would show up, conduct the business, and leave. This would be the last confirmed sighting of the friendly neighborhood cop until the next issue arose. The Walnut Creek Police Department believes it is important to develop and maintain a relationship with the school community before police issues arise.

As a result, we are involved in the school system in some non-traditional ways. Each month, members of our department meet with school administrators from the districts to discuss current issues, trends, and future events. We also provide training for school staff members on a variety of issues.

Throughout the school year, you’ll find police officers in the classrooms. Officers teach DARE to fifth graders, talk to high school seniors about topics such as the Fourth Amendment, and conduct a seven session awareness course for seventh graders. Officers are frequently on campus for less formal visitations with faculty and students.

We work closely with both Northgate and Las Lomas high schools to conduct the “Every 15 Minutes” program each spring, at which time students have an opportunity to consider the consequences of risky behavior. We also coordinate intruder drills for all of the schools.

Through our on-going, working relationship with the Walnut Creek school community, we are able to prevent potential conflicts and respond in a more meaningful way when issues do arise.

We believe it is an excellent example of our motto: “Working Together to Benefit Our Community.”

# Foundation seeking funds to improve aging Ygnacio Valley branch library

The Walnut Creek Library Foundation has undertaken a fundraising campaign to remodel the aging Thurman G. Casey/Ygnacio Valley Library, which opened in 1975.

The library, located at 2661 Oak Grove Road, serves a growing clientele with much of its original interior unchanged. Because of increased use and the demand for new technologies at the branch library, the Foundation has pledged to raise \$200,000 to fund interior improvements.

By Feb. 1, the Foundation had received funds and pledges totalling \$71,000, leaving \$129,000 to be raised. It is soliciting donations at a variety of levels of giving, ranging from \$100 to \$50,000 and over.

The need has never been greater, according to Marion Goodman, the Foundation’s executive director.

“The fact is, this library is aging and needs to be renovated in order to improve customer service, efficiency, and comfort,” said Goodman.

The library renovation would include: Redesigning the entrance and checkout areas, installing and expanding electrical and data lines, enhancing lighting, bracing all shelving to meet safety standards, replacing carpeting and upholstery, moving and redesigning the children’s



The 27-year-old Ygnacio Valley branch library

area to accommodate expanded children’s programs and collections, creating a quiet adult reading area, expanding the Investment Corner to include a computer for access to on-line investments materials.

The public is invited to see the plans and hear about the refurbishment project at a special event on Sunday, March 30 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the library.

Although the passage of Measure Q in March 2002 by Walnut Creek voters increased hours of service at both Walnut Creek branch libraries from 35 to 56 hours a week, no Measure Q funds may be spent for the Ygnacio Valley branch renovation.

For details on how to make a donation, call Goodman at 283-1791, or e-mail her at mgoodman@wclf.net or send a donation to: Walnut Creek Library Foundation, P.O. Box 4979, Walnut Creek, CA 94596.

## Tips for Earth-friendly spring cleaning

Springtime is nearly here... it’s that time again to do your spring cleaning.

Do you know that you don’t need harsh cleaning products to clean your home? Baking soda is a good all-purpose cleaner and vinegar can make windows sparkle.

There is a very good reason to make the switch — some commercial household cleaning products can be hazardous to you and your family’s health. The hazards can come from chemical fumes or improper mixing of more than one product.

Here are some safer methods:

• For stains on counters, squeeze fresh lemon juice, let sit for 45 minutes, sprinkle baking soda and rub with sponge or soft cloth.

• To remove built-up soap scum from glass shower doors, soak surfaces with diluted liquid soap and scrub with very fine steel wool. Rinse with cold water and if necessary, add vinegar to rinse. Buff dry.

• To clean vinyl floors, fill bucket with warm water and add 1/2 cup of vinegar.

Remember, many household products should not be poured down drains or thrown away in the garbage. Take it to the household hazardous waste recycling facility in Martinez (call 1-800-646-1431 for hours

and other details).

By buying and using fewer potentially hazardous products in the first place, you’ll create a safer place for you, your family and environment.



# State crisis

**From front page**  
and road maintenance.

In December, the Governor proposed a series of mid-year budget hits that included elimination of the funding the state has provided cities to make up for the lost motor vehicle license fee (VLF) revenues when the State cut those fees in 1998. The VLF — an annual fee on the ownership of a registered vehicle in California — has provided vital revenue for local governments since 1935.

Another source of revenue the Governor wants to take away from cities is redevelopment funds used to provide workforce housing. Walnut Creek stands to lose \$1 million of this funding that would be used to build as many as 46

more housing units. The irony is that the State has for years been telling us and other cities that they must provide more housing. Now the Governor is aiming to take away from cities the very funding source needed to provide new housing.

Walnut Creek has always been very prudent in its budget planning and frugal in its spending policies. As a result, the City has a healthy reserve that should get it through the next 18 months relatively unscathed. However, if the VLF and redevelopment funds are eliminated permanently, the loss of revenue to Walnut Creek will be several million dollars annually. And that's on top of the ongoing take-away of property tax revenue that has been happening since 1992. Taken all

together, it's a hit that will, without question, seriously affect the quality of life the City has been able to provide its citizens.

So, as we did last year, we are strongly urging all Walnut Creek residents to let our State legislators know how you feel about this situation. This is truly a critical time for citizens to speak out against the State's habitual practice of robbing from Peter to pay Paul when it can't balance its own budget. In this year's case, the potential impacts on local services, including police, roads, and libraries, could be felt for decades.

Write today. Here are their addresses:

Governor Gray Davis  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Hon. Tom Torlakson  
State Senate, 7th District  
State Capitol, Room 2068  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Hon. Guy Houston  
State Assembly, 15th District  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## Volunteers needed for creek cleanup

For the 14th year, volunteers are needed to help remove a year's worth of debris from Walnut Creek's three downtown creeks during the annual Creek Cleanup Day on Saturday, May 3.

Volunteers should sign up by 9:30 a.m. at Civic Park, where they can also

pick up plastic trash bags. A free barbecue lunch for all participants will follow the activity.

Be sure to wear old sneakers and gloves and plan to get wet.

This event is co-sponsored by the City and Friends of the Creek. For details, call Dave Wallace at 943-5829.



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

\* Available by appointment:  
Call 943-5812.

**CITY MANAGER**  
Michael Parness  
**CITY ATTORNEY**  
Thomas Haas  
**CITY CLERK**  
Barbara Rivara  
**CITY TREASURER**  
Ronald Cassano

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## 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.



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