

IN A

# Nutshell

No. 118

Official community newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

MAY/JUNE 2005



## All aboard the Citizens Institute

Members of the Spring 2005 Citizens Institute got a firsthand tour from Gordon Laughland of the Walnut Creek Model Railroad Society's Diablo Valley Lines model railroad during an orientation bus tour of Walnut Creek on March 5. Twenty-eight residents took the nine-session training on how the City works this spring. Sign-ups are being taken now for the Fall 2005 Citizens Institute, which begins Sept. 10. To register or for more information, contact Community Relations Officer Gayle Vassar at 943-5899, ext. 189.

## City to honor seven servicemen at Memorial Day observance May 30

Seven Walnut Creek men who have returned from military service in the Middle East will be honored by the Mayor at the City's Memorial Day Observance in Civic Park on Monday, May 30.

This year's program will begin earlier than usual, at 10 a.m., to accommodate the 1 p.m. dedication ceremonies for the new Veterans Memorial Building in Lafayette.

Those scheduled to be honored with commendations are Sgt. 1st Class William Cleaves, Army Reserve; Maj. Aaron Davis, U.S. Army; Cpl. Michael Ergo, U.S. Marines; Specialist Richard Fehling, Army National Guard; AW2 Logan Knight, U.S. Navy; Sgt. 1st Class James McMurry, Army National Guard; and Maj. Robert Stern, Army National Guard.

Scheduled to speak is Walnut Creek Police Lt. Tim Barrett, a colonel in the U.S. Marine Corps. Col. Barrett served in Iraq from February to October 2004 and received a City Council commendation at last year's Veterans Day observance.

At the conclusion of the event Mayor Gary Skrel will place a wreath at the Veterans Memorial Plaza across the street from the park. North Broadway from Civic Drive to Lincoln Avenue will be closed to traffic during the ceremony to allow the participants and audience to cross the street for the wreath placement.

The Walnut Creek Concert Band, under the direction of Harvey Benstein, will perform a variety of musical selections throughout the ceremony.

## Public invited to help choose library designer

The public will have a unique opportunity in May to help select an architect to design the new downtown branch library.

The City on March 11 engaged four architectural firms to compete for the opportunity to design the new library, which the City hopes to begin building in spring 2007.

The firms selected for the competition were Field Paoli of San Francisco, Group 4 of South San Francisco, LPA of Irvine, and Noll & Tam of Berkeley.

The City and the Friends of the Walnut Creek Library will display the four design concepts from May 3 to 10 at the downtown library, the Ygnacio Valley branch library, and Rossmoor to solicit public input (see box below for dates and times).

LIBRARY, see back page

### When & where to see library designs

- May 3, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
Downtown Branch Library  
1644 No. Broadway
- May 4-5, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
Rossmoor, Fireside Room lobby  
Gateway Clubhouse  
(Rossmoor residents only)
- May 6, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Ygnacio Valley Branch Library  
2661 Oak Grove Road
- May 7, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Ygnacio Valley Branch Library
- May 8, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
Downtown Branch Library
- May 9-10, 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
Downtown Branch Library

## Community Calendar

### May

14-15

**26th annual Art on the Main**  
10 a.m.-6 p.m., Main Street  
166 vendors, free music  
walnutfestivalassociation.org

30

**Memorial Day Observance**  
10 a.m., Civic Park  
(See story, front page)

### June

4-5

**Art & Wine Festival**  
11 a.m.-7 p.m., Heather Farm  
WC Chamber of Commerce  
Call 934-2007 for details

## City Meeting Calendar

### City Council

May 3, 17; June 7, 21  
7 p.m.  
City Hall, 1666 N. Main St.

### Planning Commission

May 12, 16, 26; June 9, 23  
7 p.m.  
City Council chamber

### Arts Commission

May 16, June 20  
4:30 p.m.  
Leshner Center for the Arts

### Transportation Commission

May 19, June 16  
7:30 p.m.  
City Council chamber

### Design Review Commission

May 4, 18; June 1, 15  
7 p.m., City Council chamber

### Park, Rec & Open Space Commission

May 2, June 6  
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.

 **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 — Daily at noon and 7 p.m.

## 'Pots' exhibition to open June 1 at Bedford Gallery

**P**ots: *Objects of Virtue*, a National Juried Exhibition of Pots will be on view at the Bedford Gallery June 1 through Aug. 21. Admission is \$3.

A sale of pots to benefit the gallery's programs will take place in the Bedford's Annex Gallery June 1-26.

The Bedford Gallery is located in the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts. For details call 925-295-1417 or go online to [www.bedfordgallery.org](http://www.bedfordgallery.org).



James Markins  
Cruet, porcelain

## Volunteers needed for annual Creek Clean Up

**F**or the 16th year, volunteers can help remove a year's worth of debris from Walnut Creek's three downtown creeks during the annual Creek Clean Up Day on Saturday, May 14.

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 Lesley Hunt at 925-937-6791.

## What's Happening

### Civic Arts Ed sale event June 23-26

Civic Arts Education will sponsor an art sale June 23-26 at Shadelands Art Center, 111 Wiget Lane, and at Civic Park. Sale items will include paintings, jewelry, furniture, and a large selection of hand-crafted ceramics. The sale will be Thursday, June 23, 5-9 p.m. (opening receptions); Friday, June 24, 10 a.m.-9 p.m.; Saturday, June 25, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, June 26, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. For details, call 925-943-5846.

### Arts, Adventures & Academics for kids

Arts, Adventures & Academics is a unique summer school provided by the Walnut Creek School District and Civic Arts Education, a program of the City of Walnut Creek. Classes for boys and girls entering grades 1-8 will be held June 27-July 29, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Parkmead Elementary School, 1920 Magnolia Way. Child supervision option available before and after school. For more information or to register, call 925-943-5846 or go online at [www.arts-ed.org](http://www.arts-ed.org).

### Walkabout Downtown WC on June 23

The Walnut Creek Downtown Business Association will hold its 7th Annual Walkabout Downtown Walnut Creek on Thursday, June 23, 4:30-8 p.m. Walkabout showcases unique stores, gourmet restaurants, specialty shops and service businesses throughout Downtown. Tickets are \$15 and will be available downtown after June 5. Call 925-933-6778 or go to [www.WalnutCreekDowntown.com](http://www.WalnutCreekDowntown.com)

### Shadelands Antiques Show set June 12

Over 100 dealers will be selling their antiques and collectibles at the popular Shadelands Antiques Show on Sunday, June 12, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., at the Shadelands Ranch Historical Museum, 2660 Ygnacio Valley Road. The event benefits the Walnut Creek Historical Society. Admission is free. Call 925-935-7871 for details.

### Walk the Library benefit May 14

The 3rd annual Walk the Library walkathon to raise funds for children's reading programs will be Saturday, May 14, 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. Registration fee: \$25/person or \$30/family. Sponsored by Diablo Valley Lions Club of Walnut Creek. Call 925-646-6773.

### Aquanuts' 'Night of Champions' May 28

The Walnut Creek Aquanuts, one of the top synchronized swimming teams in the United States, is hosting its 18th annual "Night of Champions" fundraiser on May 28, 2 p.m. at the Clark Memorial Swim Center in Heather Farm Park. The Aquanuts will present a gala affair that includes fine food, wine, silent and live auctions and exhibition swimming. Gates open at 1:30 p.m. General admission, \$25; reserved poolside seating, \$50; and a reserved table for 8, \$400. Tickets will be available at the gate. Advance ticket purchase is recommended. For more information, call Melissa Rudder at 925-938-3831 or go online to [www.aquanuts.org](http://www.aquanuts.org).

### Sister Cities group seeks new members

Walnut Creek Sister Cities International welcomes anyone interested in a "people to people" style of diplomacy. Walnut Creek's sister cities are Siöfok, Hungary and Noceto, Italy. The group is in the early stages of adopting a Spanish city. For information, contact Theresa Roberts, President, at 925-938-8015 or [Jammers4@aol.com](mailto:Jammers4@aol.com).

### Not In Our Town program May 12

"Not In Our Town, Northern California: "When Hate Happens Here," a 60-minute film by KQED and The Working Group, will be shown Thursday, May 12, 7 p.m. at Concord Centre, 5298 Clayton Rd., Concord. Free. Information: 925-933-7850.



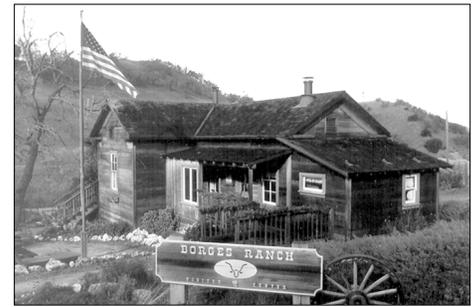
## Student for hire

Filling out a job application at the City's annual Summer Job Recruitment Fair on March 3 was Tess Gold-Jacobsen, 16, of Las Lomas High School, who was among the more than 350 teens who attended the event at Civic Park. Representatives from the City's various departments provided information on summer jobs during the three-hour fair.

## Heritage Day returns to Borges Ranch

A celebration of the history of Borges Ranch and Walnut Creek's open space is the theme of Heritage Day at Borges Ranch on Saturday, June 11, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Family activities will include bluegrass music, Portuguese folksinging, silent movies in the barn, square dancing demonstrations, sack races and other children's games, craftmaking, horse rides, and exhibits from the Lindsay Wildlife Museum, National Parks Service, East Bay Regional Park District, and California state parks. Admission: \$5 per



The original 1899 Borges ranch house, now a visitor's center, will be open on Heritage Day.

family. Parking will be available at Northgate High School, 425 Castle Road Road, and a shuttle will carry people to and from the ranch.

For more details, call 925-942-0225.

## City's emergency training sign-ups open

Learn how to be on your own for 72 hours in the wake of an earthquake by taking the City's free Community Emergency Response Team training.

Through CERT, you will learn how to shut off utilities, extinguish small fires, perform light search and rescue, carry out First Aid, and much more.

Spaces are still available in upcoming

CERT sessions. Classes meet 6-9:30 p.m. Tuesdays for six weeks and are coordinated by the Contra Costa Fire District in partnership with the City.

Upcoming class sessions are: May 24 - June 28; July 19 - Aug, 23; and Sept. 13 - Oct. 18. To register, call Gayle Vassar, 943-5899 ext. 189, or e-mail her at [vassar@walnut-creek.org](mailto:vassar@walnut-creek.org).

## Center REP offers potpourri in 2005-06 season

The biographical musical *Almost Heaven: John Denver's America* will open the 2005-06 Center REPeritory Company season at the Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts.

Center REP, the City of Walnut Creek's in-house professional theater company, will present seven plays in its 39th subscription season. For tickets and season subscriptions for as little as \$108 for all seven shows, call 943-SHOW.

The following shows are scheduled:

- *Almost Heaven: John Denver's America*. Sept. 8 - Oct. 8, 2005. "Annie's Song" and "Rocky Mountain High" are among the many John Denver songs that will be highlighted in the West Coast premiere of this production.

- *The Women* by Clare Booth Luce. Oct. 20 - Nov. 19, 2005. This modern classic offers a hilarious, kaleidoscopic view of the ruthless world of women.

- *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. Directed by Scott Denison. Dec. 8 - 18, 2005. A perennial favorite.

- *Around the World in 80 Days* by Jules Verne. Feb. 2 - Mar. 4, 2006. Center REP's production of Phileas Fogg's thrilling race around the world will delight audiences of

all ages.

- *Desire Under the Elms* by Eugene O'Neill. Directed by Lee Sankowich. One of O'Neill's most admired works, this drama invokes the playwright's own family conflicts and Freudian treatment of sexual themes. An American classic.

- *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* by Neil Simon. May 18 - June 17, 2006. This

Broadway hit is an homage to the author's early days in show biz when he worked on Sid Caesar's "Your Show of Shows."

- *Shirley Valentine* by Willy Russell. June 29 - July 29, 2006. Kerri Shawn reprises her Shellie award-winning role as the middle-class English housewife who ruminates on her life and ends up traveling to Greece for a mid-life adventure.

## More What's Happening

### Wine & Roses benefit on June 3

The Gardens at Heather Farm will hold its Wine and Roses Benefit Party on Friday, June 3, 6 p.m. at 1540 Marchbanks Dr. Enjoy an evening of hors d'oeuvres, wine tasting, and music to benefit the Gardens at Heather Farm. For details, call 925-947-1678 or go on-line to [www.gardenshf.org](http://www.gardenshf.org).

### Human Race at Heather Farm Park

The public is invited to participate in The Human Race on Saturday, May 7, 8:30 a.m. to noon at Heather Farm Park. This event, which benefits non-profit agencies, is sponsored by the Volunteer Center of Contra Costa. One- and three-mile courses are available. Call 925-472-5760.

### Opera in the Park June 27

Festival Opera will present its annual "Opera in the Park" on Sunday, June 27 at 6 p.m. in Civic Park, corner of Civic Drive and North Broadway. Solos, duets, and chorus ensemble selections from the world's favorite operas will be performed by stars from Festival Opera's 2005 Summer Season and the Festival Opera Chorus. Admission is free.

### Art in the Garden tour benefit

A self-guided public tour of four private gardens in Blackhawk to benefit the Diablo Regional Arts Association's Arts Access Program will be held May 6. Tickets: \$40. Call 925-932-1731.

# BRINGING IT HOME

## City makes headway in meeting housing needs of community

Housing construction is in full swing this spring as several projects, some of which include desirable affordable units, are either getting underway or nearly finished.

City officials helped break ground March 25 on the 17-unit La Casa Bonita apartments at the corner of Trinity Avenue and Oakland Boulevard. This project was made possible by a \$1.8 million contribution of federal HUD funds from the City of Walnut Creek. All 17 apartments will be rented to very low income families. The project will be open by spring 2006.

City Housing Manager Laura Simpson was instrumental in negotiating the acquisition of the site from Caltrans and finding the funding to make the \$7.8 million project happen.

The same developer, Satellite Homes, has also received City approval to build the 33-unit low-income senior housing Casa Montego II project on Montego.

Excavation also began in March on the 181-condominium Mercer complex on North California Boulevard between Trinity and Cole avenues. This project, originally called Metropole, will include retail shops on the ground floor.

Meanwhile, construction is nearly completed on the Citrus Walk project — a 47-duplex/condominium development on Citrus Avenue that will include five affordable units.

Among other housing projects currently under construction are the Bonanza Street Apartments, 24 units with two affordable, and Wilmar Apartments, 24 new units on Walker Avenue.

Housing projects that have been approved by the City and should be underway later this year are the 125-unit Windsor Apartments, to be built next to the Marriott Hotel, and Riviera Homes, 48 apartments with five affordable units.

**PROJECT**  
*Update*



City Housing Manager Laura Simpson surveys the future site of La Casa Bonita, a 17-unit affordable apartment complex (see inset) at the corner of Trinity Avenue and Oakland Boulevard. Ground was broken on this project on March 25, and the apartments should be ready for occupancy by spring 2006. At right, Citrus Walk, a 47-duplex/condominium development off Citrus Circle in the Woodlands area, will include five affordable units.



## Skate park underway



City workers Sean Coloma, left, and Dean Day install a sign at the site of the future Walnut Creek Skate Park, located at the corner of Heather and Marchbanks drives, across from Clark Swim Center in Heather Farm Park. Construction began on the facility following a groundbreaking ceremony at the site on April 9. The 12,250-square-foot skate park, designed by Purkiss Rose RSI, will open early this fall.

Photo by Jeff Tarpley

# THE BIG squeeze

## Feeling the pinch at the 44-year-old downtown library in Walnut Creek

**B**ooks are squashed into under-sized shelves so that the titles on the spines can't be read. The handful of computer terminals available to check the catalog are crammed tightly together near the check-out counter. The jam of book shelves, tables, counters and terminals creates a claustrophobic atmosphere that even a cockroach would find unpleasant. Wheelchairs can't maneuver into the restrooms. Staffers have little space to catalog books and materials. And parking is tough to find many days.

Welcome to the downtown library.

Squeezing in and out of the 44-year-old facility has created something of a sore spot for patrons as well as City officials, who are focusing their efforts this year on getting a bond measure passed in November to help finance a larger, state-of-the-art library for Walnut Creek.

Although the downtown library is the main branch for Walnut Creek in the Contra Costa Library system, it is actually 32 percent smaller than the Ygnacio Valley branch (which is 13,500 square feet).

Cindy Brittain, senior librarian for both the downtown and Ygnacio Valley branch libraries, calls it "one of the worst" libraries in the county.

"The overall problem is that it is completely inefficient for displays, books, programs, volunteer and staff space, and activities," said Brittain. "A lot of people come in and say 'I can't believe this is Walnut Creek's library,' because everything else in Walnut Creek is high quality."

She said patrons have told her they're "ashamed" to bring their grandchildren to the tiny library, which was opened in



**The crowded conditions in the downtown library: Book spines aren't visible on stuffed shelves (top), there is little space for patrons and staff to move around (above), and there are few and cramped computer stations (right).**

March 1961 when only 10,000 people resided in Walnut Creek. However, the 9,234-square-foot building has remained the primary library for a community that has grown to a population of 66,000.

Ironically, usage is way up. In 2004, 190,685 people used the library, compared to 121,345 in 2000 — a 57 percent jump, according to Brittain. That's largely due to the expanded hours that went into effect after voters passed Measure Q in 2002.

Once one gets over the nostalgic overtones — the same turquoise vinyl chairs that eager patrons used in the spring of 1961 and a ceiling design that is the library's architectural trademark — there is little about the library that garners praise.

Library workers are burdened by a lack



of adequate space in which to perform their tasks, which include cataloging new titles and reshelving books. Further, because of the lack of adequate parking for staff — only six spaces on the side of the library are reserved for their use — all employees must go outside at the same time to move their cars when one needs to leave, said Brittain.

Finally, the library is anything but a quiet oasis for reading and studying.

"Everything backs up into everything else," said Brittain. "There's no area in the library we can make quiet."

### Downtown library at a glance

**Address:** 1644 North Broadway  
**Hours:** 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Mon-Thurs  
10 a.m.- 6 p.m., Fri-Sat  
Closed Sundays  
**Opened:** March 1961  
**Size:** 9,234 square feet  
**Usage:** 190,685 visitors in 2004  
(57% increase over 2000)

## City Council Update

### Outgoing commissioners honored

In a special reception on March 1, the City Council honored two outgoing members of the Arts Commission for their service: **Phyllis Ceaser** (1999-2005) and **Kevin Wilk** (1999-2005).

Later, City Clerk Cathleen McKay administered the oath of office to **Carol Fowler** and **Jacquelyn Smith** as the newest members of the Arts Commission.

On April 5, the Council appointed Brian Krcelic to the Transportation Commission to complete the term of Ron Chesney, who resigned.

### Mayor recognizes bomb team

Mayor Gary Skrel opened the March 15 City Council meeting by acknowledging the Police Department's bomb team's outstanding performance during a regional exercise Feb. 14 at the Concord Naval Weapons Station. The team successfully disarmed a bomb that was strapped to a hostage. Team members are Sgt. **Mike McLaughlin** and officers **Lee Herrington, Steve Gorski, Stewart Lehman, Ted Chang, Tony Mangini, and Chris Stewart.**

## Council endorses beefed up arts fundraising effort

Completing its discussions on how to develop stronger community support for the City's multi-faceted arts programs, the City Council on Feb. 22 endorsed a plan for beefing up fundraising efforts.

The Council-appointed Arts Vision Task Force had recommended that the Diablo Regional Arts Association (DRAA) — the fundraising arm of the City's arts programs — hire a professional development director to help the organization carry out its fundraising goals.

The Council agreed with that recommendation, but stopped short of establishing an oversight council to better market and promote Center REPeritory Company shows. Center REP, as it is known, is the City's in-house theatre company.

Council members agreed that the highest priority is for the DRAA to expand its fundraising efforts to develop a stronger private base of support for the City's arts programs.



The Planning Commission, whose members include (from left) Bob Simmons, Bob Pickett, Jerry Kaplan, Cindy Silva, and Bob Jorgensen, will be holding several public meetings and workshops through September on the draft General Plan. (Not shown are Richard Larsen and Allan Moore.)

## General Plan revision now under review by Planning Commission

After nearly two years of study, planners and residents have made tremendous progress on the City's new General Plan. The process started in mid-2003, when a steering committee made up of City commissioners and other officials began the exhaustive discussions that resulted in 29 monthly meetings and a series of public workshops that yielded comments from nearly 800 citizens.

Out of this ambitious community visioning process, city planners were able to identify 20 areas throughout Walnut Creek that will be considered for land use changes. Half of these areas are in the downtown core. The steering committee also developed new goals, policies and actions in a 59-page document that represents the essence of the proposed new General Plan.

A general plan is basically the blueprint for development in the community. It specifies what can be built and where. The last time the city completely revised its General Plan was in 1989. Much has happened in the last 15 years, and City leaders decided it was time to take a fresh look at Walnut Creek from a community development perspective.

The steering committee passed its recommendations on to the Planning Commission in February, sparking the second phase of the General Plan Update. Now it is the commission's turn to delve into the many facets of the plan, hold public workshops, and prepare a final draft of the General Plan to recommend to the City Council later this fall.

The Planning Commission has scheduled several meetings and two public workshops this spring and summer to



discuss the General Plan and hear more citizen input (see box below). For a complete schedule, go to the City's website at [walnut-creek.org](http://walnut-creek.org) and click on "General Plan Update."

### General Plan meetings to be televised live

The Planning Commission will hold televised public meetings on the General Plan update on the following dates.

All meetings (except public workshops) will be in the City Council Chamber at City Hall, 1666 No. Main Street and aired live on Comcast Ch. 6 and Astound Ch. 29.

- Thursday, May 5, 7 p.m. 
- Monday, May 16, 7 p.m.   
(if needed)
- Thursday, July 7, 7 p.m. 
- Thursday, July 21, 7 p.m. 
- Tuesday, Aug. 9, 7 p.m.   
(workshop)\*
- Thursday, Aug. 11, 5 p.m. 
- Saturday, Aug. 13, 10 a.m.   
(workshop)\*
- Thursday, Aug. 25, 5 p.m. 
- Thursday, Sept. 29, 7 p.m. 

\* Location to be announced



By Officer Lee Herrington

## Airsoft gun rules

On December 29, 2004, management at a local hotel called to report finding a gun left behind in one of their rooms. Upon arrival officers found the weapon was actually a type of BB gun known as an airsoft gun. Last year a worker at a local fast food restaurant called the police when she saw a gun in a car driven by a young man. Further research revealed the gun to be an Airsoft replica. In November our officers responded to a local pizza restaurant after a citizen saw a teenage boy point a gun at the stomach of another teen. Further investigation revealed the gun was an Airsoft replica and the boys were just playing around. Imagine the potential for tragedy had our officer arrived earlier.



Airsoft is a hobby that is very popular in countries where real firearms are prohibited. Airsoft guns are typically replicas of real firearms which use spring, compressed air, or batteries to fire a 6mm plastic BB. Depending on the model of gun, some Airsoft products can pierce skin and inflict eye injuries. For safety purposes, most Airsoft guns are manufactured with a red or orange safety tip at the end of the barrel to help distinguish it as a firearm replica. Unfortunately, many Airsoft users remove or cover the orange tip leaving others to question whether or not the firearm is real. Other Airsoft guns are made with clear or colored plastics but can easily be made to look like a real firearm with a coat of black spray paint.

Walnut Creek Ordinance 3-6.01 places certain prohibitions on devices such as Airsoft guns. An Airsoft gun cannot be concealed on a person in public and or in a vehicle unless it is in the trunk or in a locked container that is not the glove box. Airsoft guns also may not be fired within the city limits.

Irresponsible use of Airsoft guns will lead to problems. Remember: If it looks real, citizens and police officers will believe the gun is indeed the real thing until proven otherwise.

# Students learn character DOES count in new Police Department program

Walnut Creek school children are learning that character does, indeed, count in a program provided by the Walnut Creek Police Department.

Using a set of guidelines developed by the Josephson Institute of Ethics, eight police officers have been going into classrooms this spring to talk to kids about how to be better people. By remembering to be honest, treat others with respect, play by the rules, and take responsibility for their actions, children will develop qualities that make up and distinguish a person.

“Character Counts” is a 10-week program based on the “Six Pillars of Character”: Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship. Each of these concepts is explored in classroom activities.

“Character Counts is a great program,” said Officer Stewart Lehman. “It builds a bond with the fifth grade students, the administration, and the parents. (Kids) see me as a real person. If I need to contact kids in the future, they know that police contact is not always a negative.”

Funded by the City of Walnut Creek, Character Counts replaces the traditional D.A.R.E. program that was used for many years to promote drug and alcohol awareness among elementary and middle school students.



Officer Stewart Lehman reviews the pillars of character with Walnut Acres Elementary School 5th graders.

“Character Counts” continues that dialogue by focusing on things like peer pressure, being able to say no, and identifying the types of illegal substances that might be offered to children.

“The Character Counts program is more about life skills that can carry them through the day,” said Sha Clark, Walnut Acres fifth grade teacher. “It’s more appropriate for Walnut Creek.”

As a framework for character education, “Character Counts” uses each of the six pillars to explain the moral fiber that creates a strong fabric, or quality of life, in Walnut Creek. The program will also be used by the City’s Recreation staff in its youth programs, including the rules for the new skate park.

For more information about the Character Counts program, contact the Police Department at 943-5844.

## Safe driving tips when around cyclists

By Chuck Kaplan  
WC Bicycle Advisory Committee

Automobile safety is an everyday challenge. A lot of accidents and conflicts can be avoided if motorists just *communicate* with those around us.

First: Always use turn signals.

Second: Only change lanes or make turns when it is safe.

Third: Watch those around us – autos, pedestrians and bicyclists, in front of us, next to us and behind us.

Fourth: Once we pass a cyclist or group of cyclists, don’t assume they are behind us forever and we no longer need to consider them. Remember before we make any driving maneuver or turn to look back in the right side and rear-view mirror to check their position.

Lastly: don’t hurry to pass bikes in order to make a right turn close in front of them – it is very dangerous. Signal your turn well

in advance and take the time to look before you turn.

We wish you happy and safe motoring.



# Library

## From front page

All four firms will make formal presentations of their designs on May 11 to the City's Architect Selection Review Team, which will then review the public comments and make a recommendation to the City on which architectural firm to hire

for the library design.

The City Council is planning to place a measure on the November 2005 ballot asking voters to support a general obligation bond to help finance the new library, which will replace the existing facility at 1644 No. Broadway (see page 5).

## Movies Under the Stars: 'Shrek 2', 'Spy Kids'

**B**reak out the blankets: "Movies Under the Stars" is back.

The City has scheduled two more entries in its popular free film series at Heather Farm Park in May.

The 2004 hit "Shrek 2" will be shown Saturday, May 7 and "Spy Kids" will be presented on Saturday, May 21. Both movies will be shown beginning at dusk on the front ballfield at the park, located at Ygnacio Valley Road and North San Carlos Drive.



Admission is always free. Come at least one hour early to reserve a lawn spot. Popcorn and beverages will be available for purchase. Low lawn chairs will be allowed in designated areas only.

For more information on the series, or to learn how businesses can be a sponsor, contact Sr. Recreation Supervisor Todd Trimble at 925-943-5899, ext. 420 or online to [www.walnut-creek.org](http://www.walnut-creek.org) under "Quick Hits."

## City responds to legal challenge over Comcast upgrade

**T**he City in March responded to a lawsuit filed against it by Comcast Communications over its inability to upgrade its cable television system in Walnut Creek.

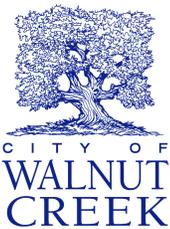
The cable company filed suit in federal court on Feb. 25 claiming the City has illegally refused to issue Comcast permits to upgrade its system while a franchise agreement is being negotiated.

On March 17, the City filed a counterclaim against Comcast saying the company needs City permission in order to operate in Walnut Creek.

Senior Assistant City Attorney Paul Valle-Riestra said the City has always been eager for Comcast to upgrade its 19-year-old cable system, but that it must have an agreement to do so while franchise negotiations continue between Comcast and a consortium that includes Walnut Creek, Concord, Danville, Pleasant Hill, Martinez, and the county.

The court was scheduled April 21 to hear Comcast's motion to allow the upgrade without a separate agreement.

Comcast has been given until May 19 to submit a formal proposal to Walnut Creek for a new franchise agreement.



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

\* For appointment: Call 256-3504.

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## IN A Nutshell

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Brad Rovanpera

We welcome your comments and questions.  
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