

IN A

Nutshell

No. 140

Official community newsletter of the City of Walnut Creek

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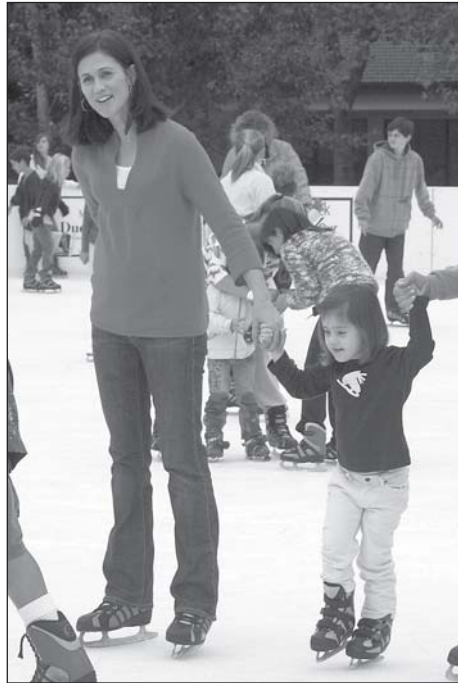
Join celebration of historic inauguration and get involved in 'Day of Service'

A community celebration to mark the historic inauguration of Barack Obama, the first African-American U.S. President, will be Jan. 20 at the Leshner Center for the Arts.

The event, which will include a live TV feed of the inauguration ceremony in the Hofmann Theatre, will be from 7:30 to 10:30 a.m.

The event is free; however, seating is limited and registration is required. To register, go online to www.walnut-creek.com.

The celebration is co-sponsored by the Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center, City of Walnut Creek, Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Association, **INAUGURATION, see page 3**



Rink in the new year

Tiffany Caiati of New York City, left, helps her daughter, Kate, 3 1/2, learn to skate at Walnut Creek on Ice, which opened its fourth season in Civic Park on Nov. 13 and will be open through Jan. 25. For details, go to www.iceskatewalnutcreek.com

City manager's message

Say 'yes' to WC by buying here

By Gary Pokorny, City Manager

I've been reminded recently what a really special place Walnut Creek is. As we've been celebrating Gwen Regalia's 21 years of service and Charlie Abrams's 12 years on the City Council, it reminds us of all the wise and selfless people who have gone before on our City Council.



Gary Pokorny

I've been reflecting as well on the hard economic times we're in now. This certainly isn't the first time we've been through a tough financial period, and we'll get through it again, but we will have to make difficult decisions in the short run.

I've been struck recently, in talking with people, that many residents don't understand the connection between our downtown businesses and car dealerships and the quality of life we enjoy. People ask me: "Why does the City spend so much time focused on improving the downtown?"

The answer is simple: A strong local economy translates into jobs and sales tax revenue — the single largest source of income for our city government (about 34% of our revenue). Many people mistakenly believe property tax is the main income source, but the fact is that annual property tax revenue (about \$16.7 million) doesn't even cover the annual cost of police services (\$19.6 million).

So, as we struggle through this difficult economic time — in which people are not buying as many cars and trucks or generally shopping as much — we're

SAY 'YES', see back page

Neiman Marcus plan to be improved

The owners of Broadway Plaza plan to improve their proposal to bring Neiman Marcus into the shopping center to make it better for Walnut Creek citizens.

The City Council on Dec. 16 supported Macerich's request that the Council repeal the general plan amendment approved on Sept. 16. The vote was unanimous.

Macerich indicated it would bring back an improved proposal through the City's customary approval process or take it directly to voters as an initiative measure.

A petition signed by more than 5,800 citizens, challenging the validity of the general plan amendment, was submitted to

the City on Oct. 16. If Macerich had not chosen to revise its proposal, the Council would have had to either schedule a special election to allow voters to decide the fate of the Neiman Marcus proposal or repeal the general plan amendment.

In a Dec. 1 letter to the City Council, Macerich Executive Vice President John Genovese said the company conducted a poll in mid-November that "demonstrated both local support for the Neiman Marcus addition as well as some understandable community concerns. The results highlighted specific opportunities to

Neiman Marcus, see back page

City Event Calendar

January

19

Martin Luther King Day
(See *What's Happening*)
City offices are closed
Inaugural Day of Service
(See story, page 1)

20

**Presidential Inauguration
Day event**
Leshner Center for the Arts
7:30 a.m.; admission free
Register:
www.walnut-creek.com

February

through 22
Illuminated Sculpture
Bedford Gallery
(See article at right)

16

Presidents' Day holiday
City offices are closed

City Meeting Calendar

City Council

Jan. 6, 20; Feb. 3, 10
7 p.m.
City Council chamber
City Hall, 1666 N. Main St.

Planning Commission
Jan. 15, 29; Feb. 12, 26
7 p.m.
City Council chamber

Arts Commission
Jan. 20 (no Feb. meeting)
4:30 p.m.
3rd flr. meeting room
City Hall

**Transportation
Commission**
Jan. 22, Feb. 19
7 p.m.
City Council chamber

Design Review Commission
Jan. 7, 21; Feb. 4, 18
7 p.m.
City Council chamber

**Park, Rec & Open Space
Commission**
Jan. 5, Feb. 2
7 p.m.
City Council chamber

 **City Council
meetings are televised
live on Comcast
Channels 28 and 26
(unincorporated), and
on Astound Channel 29.
They are repeated the
following Sunday at 1
p.m. on all.**

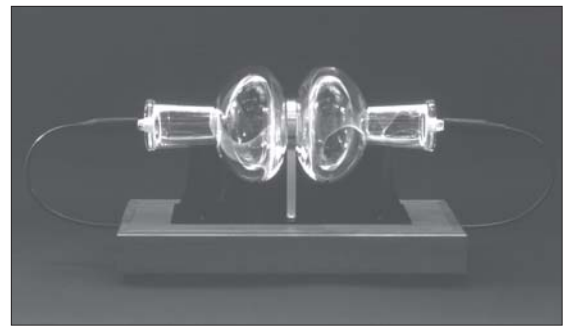
'Illuminated Sculpture' exhibition opens at Bedford

Lighting up the short, dark days of winter is an innovative exhibition, *Illuminated Sculpture*, at the City's Bedford Gallery, running from Jan. 11 through Feb. 22.

This luminous work is guest curated by Christian Schiess, an award-winning artist, author of *The Light Artist Anthology*, and Chair of the Light Art Department at the Bay Area's only nonprofit sculpture studio and educational foundry, The Crucible.

The artists in the exhibition use standard materials such as neon, argon, and electric light discharge as well as some of the emerging mediums such as LED's, electroluminescent wire, and photovoltaics.

Located in the Leshner Center for the Arts, the Bedford Gallery is open Tuesday-Sunday, noon-5 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday, 6-8 p.m. General



David Hollister, "Klecks" 2008

admission is \$3 (free on Tuesdays).

On Wednesday, Feb. 4 at 10 a.m., curator and author Christian Schiess and exhibiting artists will be featured in a presentation on the evolution and breadth of the light art field. Admission is \$7; space is limited, call (925) 295-1423 for tickets.

What's Happening

Martin Luther King Day observance

The Martin Luther King Day Observance will be held Monday, Jan. 19 at noon in the Civic Park Community Center Assembly Hall, 1375 Civic Dr. This free public event will be presented by the Social Justice Alliance of the Interfaith Council of Contra Costa County, in cooperation with the City of Walnut Creek. For details, call (925) 933-6030.

Time to recycle your Christmas tree

Allied Waste Services will collect your unwanted Christmas tree for composting the week of Jan. 5-9. Simply leave your tree at the curb on your regular trash collection day. Remove ornaments, tinsel, and other trimmings, and don't leave stands. Flocked trees will be collected for a \$10 fee. For details, call (925) 603-1144.



Free tax prep help at City locations

For the 2009 Tax Season, AARP Tax-Aide will again be offering free tax preparation services to low and middle-income taxpayers of all ages, with special attention given to seniors age 60+, at two locations in Walnut Creek:

- Civic Park Community Center, 1375 Civic Dr. — Thursdays, Feb. 5-April 9, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. For an appointment, call (925) 943-5851.
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1924 Trinity Ave., Mondays & Tuesdays, Feb. 9-April 14, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Call (925) 938-3387 (press #1) for appointment.

Bring a Social Security card or ITIN letter for all individuals to be listed on the return, copies of all W-2s, 1098s, and 1099s, any other income and deductions, and a 2007 tax return.

Antique appraisals at the Gardens

Learn the monetary value of your treasures from professional appraisers at the annual Antique and Collectibles Appraisal event on Sunday, March 1, 1-6 p.m. at the Gardens at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Dr. The \$15 admission fee includes three appraisals; additional appraisals are \$5 each; call (925) 947-1678.

2009 East Bay Women's Conference March 2

The 2009 East Bay Women's Conference, hosted by Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce, will be March 2, 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m., at the San Ramon Marriott. Distinguished author/activist Isabel Allende is the keynote speaker. The program includes a full lunch and afternoon reception. Cost is \$165/person; pre-registration required. For details, visit www.walnut-creek.com or call (925) 934-2007. Presented by The PMI Group, Inc., in association with Chevron Corporation.

Mayor to give State of City address

Mayor Gary Skrel and Chairman of the Board Sanjiv Bhandari will speak at the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce's annual *State of the City* luncheon on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 11:30 a.m., at Sunrise at Boundary Oak. To reserve a seat, visit www.walnut-creek.com or call (925) 934-2007.

Book sales to benefit new library

Rossmoor resident Lou Satz is donating all the proceeds from the sale of his memoir of military service in post-World War II Europe to support the new downtown library. His book, *Occupation Europe*, is available for a discount price of \$5 at the Friends of the Library Bookshop, 1910 Olympic Blvd.

Downtown library parking garage taking shape

Taking advantage of unseasonably dry autumn weather, construction workers in late November poured 760 tons of fresh concrete to create the floor of the underground, 121-space garage for the new downtown library at North Broadway and Lincoln Avenue.



Construction officials say the project is on schedule. The next major phase will begin in late February when the steel frame for the 42,000-square-foot library is built above the garage.

The library is scheduled to open in summer 2010.

YVR traffic signal timing upgrade

The City has received a \$1.4 million State grant for a new traffic signal synchronization project to further streamline traffic flows on Ygnacio Valley Road.

New technology will allow the traffic light timing to be adjusted automatically by computer as conditions change.

The Cheesecake Factory

Representatives of The Cheesecake Factory expect to open the new restaurant in the coming weeks in the former Andronico's building in Plaza Escuela.



Workers poured 760 tons of fresh concrete on to the floor of the underground garage at the new downtown library on Nov. 24.

Apply online for overnight motorhome parking permit

If you need to park a motorhome overnight on your street for guests, you can now apply for a permit on the Walnut Creek Police Department's website.

The application, which can be downloaded as a pdf file, is at

www.walnutcreekpd.com/RVPermitapplication.pdf

Permits are issued for two days to residents and three days to visitors. Consecutive days, over the initial 2, are not allowed.

City again providing free sandbags to residents

With the rainy season upon us, the City is again providing free sandbags at stations located at the north end of Heather Farm Park on North San Carlos Road and at the Larkey Park

parking lot, as well as on Lancaster Road near Orchard Lane.

Sand and bags will be available, although users must bring their own shovel. Call (925) 943-5855 for details.

Applicants sought for City commissions

The City Council will be accepting applications for four vacancies on three advisory commissions until Jan. 29.

The Council needs to find replacements for the following commissioners whose terms will expire:

- Park, Recreation & Open Space — Ed Montgomery (3-year term)
- Planning — Bob Simmons (4-year term)
- Transportation — Kish Rajan and Emily Chang (3-year terms)

Seven commissioners will be considered for reappointment to second terms on their respective commissions. They are: Jon Malkovich and Matt Francois,

Planning; Michael Fotheringham and Fritz Brunner, Arts; Dan Lawrence, Park, Recreation & Open Space; Mark Lopez, Design Review; and Kevin Wilk, Transportation.

The Council will interview the second-term candidates for reappointment on Jan. 6. Interviews for first-term candidates will be Feb. 10. The new commissioners will be sworn in on March 3.

Applications are available online at www.walnut-creek.org, or from the City Clerk's Office, 3rd floor, City Hall, 1666 No. Main St.

For details, call (925) 943-5818.

Inauguration

From page one

Broadway Plaza, and *Contra Costa Times*.

President-elect Obama and Vice President-elect Joseph Biden are planning to perform a service project on Martin Luther King Day to honor the civil rights leader and activist.

As a local tie-in, the Volunteer Center of the East Bay is organizing a local "Inaugural Day of Service" on Monday, Jan. 19 in keeping with Obama's suggestion that Americans honor the memory of Dr. King by participating in community service on that day.

Walnut Creek citizens are encouraged to visit the Volunteer Center's website at www.helpnow.org to learn of community service opportunities.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF SHELLIES



Lesher Center Manager Scott Denison holds a coveted, hand-crafted Shellie Award.

When the curtain came down on the very first Shellie Awards show back in February 1980, Scott Denison figured it would be the last time as well.

“I thought it would be a one-time event for people to dress up in their fancy clothes and celebrate and have fun,” said Denison, the creator and producer of the now-annual awards show. “But the actors wanted to continue the Shellies. They took it seriously. So it went to Year Number 2 and Year Number 3...”

On Jan. 17, the Shellies will complete its Year Number 30 on the Hofmann Theatre stage, where Denison will again orchestrate a gala celebration to honor outstanding achievement in performing arts in central Contra Costa County.

Denison, the energetic manager of the Lesher Center and a 35-year veteran of the City’s performing arts program, reflects on the beginning of the Shellies in his photo-studded office.

“I wanted to produce an awards program to highlight performing arts

activities in Contra Costa County,” said Denison, who has directed every Shellie Awards show. “Literally, the first night was just to celebrate and bring groups together to create a family.”

But what began in 1979 with a mere handful of regional theater groups, including Walnut Creek’s own Center Repertory company, has grown to 14 organizations who are happy to compete for the ceramic, hand-painted statuette of a harlequin that represents the best of Contra Costa theater. Nearly 800 Shellies have been handed out over the last 29 years, and there are 26 categories in which to compete.

Denison said the name “Shellie” is a take-off on walnut shell, and also a nod to the fact that when the actors are on stage, “they break out of their shell.”

“It’s a fun evening because you get a sampling of all the great shows that were produced in our area,” said Denison, noting each theater company will do a scene from a nominated show. “It’s very similar to the Tony Awards.”

If you’re going to the 30th Shellies...

When: Saturday, Jan. 17, 2009
7:30 p.m.

Where: Lesher Center for the Arts
Tickets: \$30, including a post-show reception

How to get tickets:
Go online at www.lesherartscenter.org
or call (925) 943-SHOW

A look at where your property tax dollar goes . . .

Schools

Walnut Creek School District
Mt. Diablo Unified School District
Acalanes Union High School District
San Ramon Valley Unified School District
Contra Costa Community Colleges
CC Superintendent of Schools

54 cents

Special Districts

Fire protection
Sanitation
Mosquito abatement
BART
Alamo/Laf. Cemetery
Bay Area Air Quality
Regional Parks

20 cents

County

Libraries
Flood control
General Services:
Health services,
courts, sheriff,
public works,
social services, etc.

17 cents

Walnut Creek

Police, Streets
Parks, recreation,
Open space
Cultural programs
Building upkeep
Planning
Engineering

9 cents



Patrolling the streets of Walnut Creek

It's just another quiet Friday afternoon on the streets of Walnut Creek for Lt. Steve Skinner. The first call is from a local bank where a woman is attempting to pass a bad check. The next call is a report of a female motorist being repeatedly punched by a teenage male passenger as she drives down Ygnacio Valley Road. The third call is from a downtown drug store, where a man is causing a disturbance. And that's all just in the first half hour of the afternoon shift.

Lt. Skinner, a 21-year veteran of the Walnut Creek Police Department, quickly dispels what he says is the most common misconception about a patrol cop — that the officer is aimlessly driving around.

"The reality is that officers are on their way someplace," said Lt. Skinner, who is also a watch commander for the department. "The majority of the time, they're doing something — going to a call, seeing someone."

And although Lt. Skinner is the first to admit that Walnut Creek is a relatively safe



Lt. Steve Skinner reports in on the radio from his patrol car (above) and questions a man reported to be causing a disturbance in front of a downtown store (right).



city to patrol, there is always the potential for injury or even death in the line of duty.

That explains the 223-calibre carbine rifle perched next to his car seat, and the .45 pistol, Taser, pepper spray, baton, and

handcuffs hanging from his 35-pound belt.

"It's something new everyday — you never know what could happen," he says. "The biggest thing we're always trying to get across to the public is that patrol cops really take their jobs seriously and they want to identify potential crooks and keep the streets safe."

The patrol car is literally the police officer's "roving office," as it is equipped with a two-way radio, a scanner, and a computer with fingerprints, Department of Motor Vehicle information, and mug shots.

The call suddenly comes in for a possible 5150 — that's cop talk for a person showing signs of mental instability.

Lt. Skinner and two other units arrive in front of Long's Drugs to confront a young man who had been yelling in front of the store. It takes about 20 minutes to determine why the man is acting irrationally and to resolve the situation.

"There's a lot of pride in this profession," says Lt. Skinner, adding he enjoys being on patrol. "You're out, dealing with people, solving problems. You do see a positive result for all your efforts."

600-pound Chinese warrior on duty in City Hall lobby

A life-size figure of a Xi'an Warrior, a gift to the City for the new downtown library from the Walnut Creek Chamber of Commerce and Leo Liu of the Inland Empire International Business Association, is now greeting visitors in the City Hall lobby. The sculpture, based on ancient figures buried centuries ago alongside China's first emperor, was cast in terra cotta from a mold of an original warrior in Xi'an, China. It will stand guard at City Hall until it can be moved to its permanent home in the library in 2010.



City Council Update

New mayor, mayor pro tem chosen

Gary Skrel, an eight-year veteran of the City Council, was selected by his colleagues to serve his second term as mayor of Walnut Creek on Dec. 2.

Skrel, who was mayor in 2005, is president of a consulting firm that specializes in planning and construction management.

Sue Rainey, who has been on the Council since 1997, was chosen as mayor pro tem for the new year.

Further study OK'd on JCC plan

The City Council on Nov. 18 unanimously voted to direct staff to continue processing the Contra Costa Jewish Community Center's application for a general plan amendment that would allow 80 apartment units on its property on Tice Valley Boulevard.

Following a two-hour public hearing, Council members agreed that more information about the impacts of the project was needed before a final decision could be made.

The JCC's original 2005 plan called for 138 units, but that was pared to 120 in 2006 following neighbors' complaints. The Council rejected that proposal in July 2007.

City cancels plan to extend downtown meter enforcement

City officials have decided not to make any changes to downtown parking meter enforcement after considering the concerns of business owners who believe this is not the time to extend meter hours.

The City Council was originally

Regalia, Abrams end City Council tenures

Gwen Regalia, who served as mayor of Walnut Creek more than anyone in City history, stepped down Dec. 2 after a historic run of 21 years on the City Council.

Fellow council member Charlie Abrams, who twice served as mayor during his 12 years on the Council, also retired from a career in public service that began in 1983.

Regalia served an unprecedented five terms as mayor, in 1991, 1996, 1999, 2003, and 2008. She was the 46th person to serve as mayor of Walnut Creek since it became a city in 1914. Since 1957, when the mayor position was first rotated among council members on an annual basis, she is the only person to serve a fourth and a fifth term in the post.

A 50-year resident of Walnut Creek, Regalia was formerly a member of the Walnut Creek School Board (1978-87) and president of the Association of Bay Area



Outgoing Mayor Gwen Regalia and Council member Charlie Abrams at their final City Council meeting on Dec. 2.

Governments (2002-04).

"In the 21 years that I've been here," she told the audience on Dec. 2, "the bookends of my career have been the building of the Leshner Regional Center for the Arts and ... the building of the Walnut Creek Library — two grand gems in our arts and culture environment in this community."

Abrams, who served as mayor in 2000 and 2004, was first elected to the Council in 1996 after serving terms on the Transportation and Planning commissions.

A 20-year resident, Abrams owns a local traffic engineering firm.

Qualified borrowers can get low-interest home rehabilitation loans through City

The City of Walnut Creek has funding available for low- and moderate-income Walnut Creek homeowners who need repairs to their home.

The City offers low interest, deferred rehabilitation loans of up to \$60,000 and emergency repair grants up to \$10,000, approved on a case-by-case basis.

Eligible applicants must be within program income limits. Loan funds may be used for various improvements, but are required to fall under the category of health and safety, property maintenance, functional obsolescence, energy effi-

ciency, or removal of architectural barriers for the disabled.

Common repairs permitted under this loan program include, but are not limited to: new roofs and gutters, insulation, central heating, remodeled kitchens and baths, electrical and plumbing upgrades, painting, ramps, grab bars, and concrete or deck repair.

To apply, call the Neighborhood Preservation Program at (925) 335-1137 at Contra Costa County for information. The City contracts with the County to administer this program.

ciency, or removal of architectural barriers for the disabled.

To apply, call the Neighborhood Preservation Program at (925) 335-1137 at Contra Costa County for information. The City contracts with the County to administer this program.

businesses.

Currently, parking meters only operate from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday-Saturday.

City Manager Gary Pokorny said that the City decided not to make any changes given downtown merchants' concerns about the difficult economy and their request that no changes be made in the meter hours.

The City may revisit the proposal at a future time when the local economy improves and if local businesses request it, he said.

The proposal originated from concerns that downtown business employees were monopolizing on-street parking spaces, thereby limiting the amount of parking available to customers.

Pokorny added that before any changes to meter operating hours will be considered in the future, the City will conduct an extensive public outreach effort to solicit the opinions of shoppers and downtown business owners.



By Officers Beth Hopkins and Mark Kan

Don't be a victim of identity theft

Identity theft occurs when a "crook" steals a piece of personal identifying information, which may include your name, address, date of birth, or social security number, to gain access to a person's financial accounts. Armed with this information, an identity thief may open new credit accounts, apply for loans, rent an apartment, or set up utilities in someone else's name.



Identity theft is the fastest growing crime in the US. There have been 27.3 million victims in the last five years. Why? Well, every credit card or loan you've applied for, or college you've attended, or job you've had, every magazine you've ever subscribed to may have your personal information which makes up countless databases that can be compromised.

Here are some tips to avoid becoming a victim:

- Promptly collect your mail after delivery.
- Deposit outgoing mail at the post office or give it directly to the mail carrier. NEVER give personal information to anyone over the phone unless you initiated the call or verified his or her identity and the validity of the call.
- Shred all financial paperwork.
- Get rid of extra credit cards.
- Beware of mail, phone, or internet solicitations disguised as promotions offering instant prizes designed to obtain your personal information.
- Be suspicious if the caller is being pushy and trying to force you into a quick decision. Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!
- Watch your credit report and immediately report any suspicious activity. For more information, visit www.walnutcreekpd.com.

CDD director departs

Valerie Barone, right, who served over six years as Walnut Creek's Community Development Department Director, received a royal sendoff Nov. 19 from colleagues and friends before she assumed her new post as assistant city manager in Concord. Planning Manager Sandi Meyer, left, was named interim CDD director by City Manager Gary Pokorny.



Photo by Andrew M. Smith

Volunteer docents sought for historic tours

The Walnut Creek Historical Society is seeking interested adults to lead third grade classes on fun walking tours of historic downtown Walnut Creek.

The 60-90 minute tours will be continued for classes of 20 Walnut Creek third graders, their teacher, and accompanying parents in the fall and spring starting in the 2009-2010 school year. The tours are conducted on weekday mornings and are completed by 11 a.m.

The Historical Society will sponsor this popular activity, which has been provided by the City of Walnut Creek since 1991.

The organization is seeking applicants who have an interest in history and an aptitude for relating to children. Teaching experience is desirable but not required.



Third graders learning about historic district.

Applications are available by e-mailing wchstours@sbcglobal.net or by calling the Walnut Creek Historical Society at (925) 935-7871. Applications must be received by Jan. 31. Interviews will be scheduled for all interested applicants.

Informational handbooks, training and practice will be provided to those persons selected starting in March 2009.

Public input needed on Bike Master Plan

The first draft of the new Walnut Creek Bicycle Master Plan is nearly complete. Following much work by the Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Bicycle Master Plan Advisory Committee, the new master plan will set goals and policies for improving and expanding bicycle facilities in Walnut Creek.

Although the committees have reached an important milestone for completion of the first draft, the public's participation is needed. Public input is an important factor in establishing new bicycle facilities.

In early 2009, the draft plan will be presented to the Transportation

Commission, the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Commission, the Planning Commission, and the City Council for review and feedback.

Your comments, suggestions, and opinions will play an important role in adopting the plan. Please come to one or more of the public hearings and help make Walnut Creek a better place for all cyclists.

For the latest status on the new Walnut Creek Bicycle Master Plan, or for more information on the next public meeting, please contact Jeremy Lochirco, Senior Planner, at (925) 943-5899 ext. 2251 or email lochirco@walnut-creek.org





U.S. Army veteran honored by City

U.S. Army Sgt. 1st Class Will Harlan, formerly of Walnut Creek, was greeted by well-wishers following the City's Veterans Day Observance on Nov. 11, when he received a City Council commendation for his work with injured and wounded soldiers. Wounded himself in Afghanistan in March 2007, Harlan was named "2008 Soldier of the Year" by the *Army Times*.

Say 'Yes'

From page one

going to have to make some tough decisions on the levels of services we can provide. After all, the City of Walnut Creek exists largely as a service-providing agency, and those services — whether they be police or arts education — have a price tag.

We need to encourage people to shop in Walnut Creek and we need to help our auto dealers and Broadway Plaza to remain viable — both of which help to make the city a better place. If the retail core is strong, we can use the resulting revenue to maintain the City services and programs people value.

So as we make our way through the difficult months and years ahead, it's vital

that we come together as a community.

We need to continue to expect wise and prudent leadership from our Mayor and Council, hard work from our dedicated City staff, and participation from community members to help us make the right decisions. And we need to encourage citizens to do more volunteering to help keep our community the best place it can be.

In short, we need to work together for Walnut Creek. You can do your part simply by saying "Yes to Walnut Creek" when you are deciding where to spend your shopping, dining, and entertainment dollars. Remember, every dollar you spend in Walnut Creek is an investment in your community. And I believe that's the best investment we can make.

Neiman Marcus

From page one

rethink our Neiman Marcus plan so that it makes greater sense to us, and particularly, for Walnut Creek residents."

The plan calls for putting Neiman Marcus in the space formerly occupied by David M Brian from 1983 until October.

In a related move, a lawsuit filed on Oct. 17 challenged the validity of the City's environmental review of the plan.

The Environmental Impact Report, also approved by the Council Sept. 16, showed that the new store would have no significant impacts on parking or traffic.

As part of the project, Macerich had proposed to improve parking and traffic conditions through a variety of measures, including providing off-site parking for employees, extending the hours of the free downtown shuttle, and making various traffic and pedestrian improvements.

"The lawsuit is completely without merit," said City Attorney Paul Valle-Riestra. "The City conducted an extremely thorough environmental analysis of this project and stands by the EIR."

Valle-Riestra added, "This appears to be an attempt funded by interests outside of the city that are determined to delay this project for reasons completely unrelated to the environment."



CITY COUNCIL
Gary Skrel, Mayor*
Sue Rainey, Mayor pro tem
Cindy Silva
Bob Simmons
Kish Rajan

* For appointment: Call 256-3504

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PUBLIC SERVICES
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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.

For past issues, go online at www.walnut-creek.org



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