

Do You Remember?



By Anne Homan

Grain in the Field to Biscuits in One Day

Throughout the Tri-Valley, Ohlone and Bay Miwok peoples have unintentionally left evidence of their existence with quern-stones—stone tools for hand-grinding. Their quern-stones were the rotary type, with a pestle acting as the mobile handstone and a mortar as the stationary quern. Women fed acorns or grass seeds into the mortar and pounded them into flour with the pestle. Sometimes the mortar used was a small, portable one; others remain in bed-rocks scattered under the oaks.

Early Hispanic peoples also used quern-stones, but of a different type, to grind corn. The stationary quern in this case was shaped somewhat like a saddle; the handstone was either shaped like a rolling pin and used by both hands, or a sphere used by one hand. Probably Indian servants at the Las Positas Rancho of the Livermore family ground corn for tortillas using this method.

With the coming of the missions in California, grist mills began to take the place of hand grinding. Gradually, private mills grew up outside the mission walls.

Agustin Bernal evidently ran a flour mill at his adobe, built about 1848 on Foothill Road. According to James Delgado's *Sombras de la Noche*, early Pleasanton settlers were Bernal's customers, but the mill was dismantled about 1872. In the 1940s while Walter Johnson was restoring the Bernal adobe, one of the 200-pound grindstones was found. Although the Arroyo de la Laguna is nearby, most likely horses turned the stones.

When William M. Mendenhall laid out the town of Livermore in 1869, he gave five acres to Calvin J. Stevens to build a steam-powered flour mill. Probably wood was first used for fuel; later, coal, sometimes from local mines, was used.

The intersection of Livermore Avenue and First Street is sometimes called Mill Square because the Livermore Flouring Mill opened for business on the northwest corner in late September 1869. The 1878 *Alameda County Atlas* shows two buildings—a single story structure for the steam boiler and furnace, indicated by the smoking chimney; a three-story one for the mill itself.

The Laumeister brothers, William, Anton, and Charles, leased the Livermore mill; earlier they had been running the mill at Mission San Jose. Charles remembered a tour de force staged in one day: local farmer Jesse Bowles had his wheat cut, threshed, and hauled to the Livermore Flouring Mill in the morning. In the afternoon the mill ground it into flour, and the cook at the Livermore Hotel, then at the southeast corner of Mill Square, made the flour into biscuits and served them with supper in the evening.

On the night of October 17, 1882, Stevens' mill burned down. William and Anton Laumeister soon built a new one, the Livermore Roller Mill, farther east on First Street across from McLeod Street. The new name probably indicates that the new mill had steel rollers, which ground the grain more efficiently than grindstones. This mill lasted until November 1894, when it, too, burned down. The Laumeisters moved to San Francisco, where they ran a flour mill on Battery Street; the 1906 earthquake probably put them out of business for a while.

Mill owner Calvin J. Stevens served as a Livermore town trustee, including three years as mayor. On November 8, 1887 he was driving a buckboard on L Street in Livermore when he fell from the vehicle, striking his head with considerable force. An hour later, he died without re-

gaining consciousness.

After the 1894 fire, the town of Livermore was without a mill until 1906, when H.P. Hansen and a partner built the Diamond Flour Mill at the same site as the Laumeister mill. The structure had three floors, with a cement basement containing the line shaft and a 30-horse power electric motor. When the machinery was being installed on January 20, 1906, the millers had already bought 250 bags of valley wheat from Arroyo Road farmer Daniel M. Teeter to grind as soon as everything was ready.

According to the *Herald*, with the opening of the flour mill, local farmers would have not only a ready market for their grain but also the means for attaining their family's yearly supply of flour. The millers were ready to make white flour as well as to steam and roll barley.

By 1918 Hansen had bought out his partner and retired; his son Rasmus Hansen took over the business, eventually turning it into a grain-buying outfit. He used the mill for grain storage; the railroad was convenient for shipping. The mill was razed in 1936.

A grain elevator southeast of the railroad crossing on Santa Rita Road in Pleasanton was pictured in *A Pictorial History of Pleasanton* published in 1976. However, I have no idea whether milling was done or grain simply stored here. Many large one-story warehouses for grain storage were scattered along the railroad tracks in Pleasanton and Livermore.

Today, most of us in the Tri-Valley purchase a loaf of bread with no thought as to who grew the grain, who harvested it, who ground it, or who baked it.

(Readers can reach me at am3homan@yahoo.com.)

New Playground Equipment

The new playground structure for the kindergarten at Marilyn Avenue Elementary School will be formally dedicated by Principal Jeff Keller this Fri., Oct. 20. The opening will be at 10:15am – right about the time for the start of the recess for the school.

The new playground structure has been placed in the same location as the older version and will accommodate a larger number of students.

The new structure was financed by the City of Livermore using Measure "D" funds which are generated through a fee on garbage service throughout all of Alameda County with a specific share going to each city based upon their annual tonnage of landfill-bound garbage. One of the provisions within Measure "D" is to promote and provide recycled-content products for public venues.

What makes the new structure at Marilyn so trashy? The play-

Cota Leaving Post as Chabot-Las Positas Community College Chancellor

Susan Cota, Chancellor of the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District, has announced her retirement effective August 2007.

Citing a desire to spend time with family and friends, Cota expressed her thanks to the Board of Trustees and the district staff for their support during her six year tenure as district chancellor. "The thought of retirement fills me with excitement, yet it is also tinged with a touch of sadness," said Dr. Cota in a message to district and college staff members. "After more than 30 years in the California Community Colleges, 16 years in this district specifically, it is time for me to chart a new direction."

"Chancellor Cota has led this district with strength and integrity, always putting our students first in every conversation and decision," said Isobel Dvorsky, President of the district Board of Trustees. "Her leadership has been recognized at the national, state and local levels, and our district and communities are much better for having had her as our leader."

Named to the position in 2001, Dr. Cota has led the district, which operates Chabot College in Hayward and Las Positas College in Livermore. The two colleges together serve more than 22,000 students in the San Francisco East Bay Area. Dr. Cota was the first Hispanic female chancellor in California and in the district's 40-year history. She is one of only three female Hispanic chancellors in the California Community College system.

As Chancellor, Cota worked with college and district staff to launch a district wide strategic cost management study to establish ongoing fiscal stability for the district. In 2002 she worked closely with the Board and staff in the investment and purchase of the district office building in

Pleasanton.

In 2004, she led a massive district and community-wide effort in the successful passage of Measure B, a \$498 million facilities bond and the third largest bond in California Community College history. The strength of her leadership resulted in the passage of the bond by 59% of the voters. She also led the district through a successful accreditation visit, resulting in reaffirmed accreditation through 2009.

Prior to being named District Chancellor, she served as President and Dean of Students at Las Positas College where she was instrumental in forecasting the growth of the college and creating a culture that embraced growth and change. She worked with faculty and staff to implement online education, which continues to outpace other community colleges. She established a partnership with ValleyCare Health System to create the College's first comprehensive Health Center.

Before joining the district, she was the Dean of Students at College of Alameda, and served in the State Chancellor's Office as the Director of the Disability Services, where she established the disabled students' workability program for the State's 109 community colleges.

She has served on the boards of several state and national organizations including the American Association of Community Colleges and the Community College Leadership Development Initiatives organization. She is currently a member of the Pleasanton Rotary Club and the Tri-Valley Education Council. In 2004 she was named a Distinguished District Administrator by the Chabot College Faculty Senate and in 2005 she received the prestigious Harry Buttmer Award from the Association of California Community College Administrators for her exemplary service as a community college chief executive officer.

Cota received her doctorate from the University of San Francisco in Organizational Leadership in Higher Education, her master's degree in Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling from San Francisco State University

and a bachelor's degree in English from Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles. She is also a graduate of the Harvard Seminar

for New Presidents.

The Board of Trustees expects to launch a nationwide search for Cota's replacement.

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VALLEY ROUNDUP

Bicyclist Struck

For the second time in as many weeks, a bicyclist was struck by a motorist in Pleasanton. The most recent accident occurred October 14 at the intersection of Stanley Blvd. and Main Street. A pickup truck was making a right turn onto Main Street, while the driver was making the turn, a 26-year-old male bicyclist who was on Main Street was struck by the front end of the truck. The bicyclist was dragged under the vehicle and run over by one of the wheels. He suffered major injuries including a fracture spine and punctured lung. He was transported to Eden Medical Center in Castro Valley. The cause of the collisions is under investigation. Anyone who might have witnessed the accident is asked to call the Pleasanton Police Department at 931-5100 and reference case 06-6297.

Rangeland Monitoring Workshop

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) are sponsoring a technical workshop in Alameda County on California Rangeland Monitoring, Thursday, November 9, 2006. Jon Gustafson, State Rangeland Management Specialist, NRCS Davis, CA; Ceci Dale-Cesmat, Rangeland Management Specialist, NRCS Susanville, CA; Sheila Barry, Bay Area Natural Resources Advisor, UCCE; Tim Koopman, Certified Rangeland Manager, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, will present a workshop on the effective baseline report and monitoring plan development strategies for Califor-

nia Rangelands. The information conveyed will be useful in conservation planning for land trusts, public and private landowners, and conservation planners. Participants will receive training in establishing successful plans and baseline reports as well as ecological site descriptions and their importance. The workshop will consist of a daytime classroom session on November 9 at the Martinelli Center in Livermore and a field session immediately following. Registration is \$150 if received before November 1, 2006; \$175 thereafter. Participation is on a space-available and paid basis. Registration includes a light breakfast and a lunch on Thursday, November 9th. To request registration form and more information, phone or email Barbara Maroney, Workshop Coordinator, Alameda County RCD at 925.371-0154 x.115 or workshops@acrcd.org.

Total Wellness Program

The Pleasanton Chamber of Commerce will sponsor a "Total Wellness Discovery" program on Tues., Oct. 24 from noon to 1 p.m. This brown bag seminar will offer information on how to have more free time, work in your own home, own your own life, and have a balanced healthier life-style from the home. Dr. Ken Howayeck, medical intermediary in the area of Prevention and Wellness as well as Peter Patras, local businessman and marketing specialist, will present the program. The seminar will be held at the Pleasanton Chamber office located at 777 Peters Avenue. Space is limited please RSVP to Dawn Wilson at dawn@pleasanton.org.



Photo - Doug Jorgensen
Cyclists took part in the Tour de Vendage in Livermore over the weekend. Rich Mongarro, president of the San Jose Police Amateur Athletic Foundation, sponsored the ride that raised funds for children with hydrocephalus. Riders came from all over the Bay Area to take part in the ride. The goal is to make the ride one of the most popular in the Bay Area.

Study to Look at Restoring Fish

Studies to restore threatened steelhead trout within the Alameda Creek watershed will soon get under way. A formal agreement to collaborate on water flow and fish habitat studies was signed this month by 17 public agencies and nonprofit organizations. The agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding to conduct jointly-funded studies of how much water might be needed at critical times to support a viable steelhead population, while also considering other native fish and wildlife and minimizing potential impacts to drinking water supplies. The \$240,000 technical study will be conducted in two phases by an independent consultant. "These studies should iden-

tify how much water is needed, when it is needed, and in what stream reaches," said Jeff Miller, Director of the Alameda Creek Alliance. "We believe we can provide water to restore a steelhead run without compromising water supply, and in the process provide beneficial habitat for other native wildlife." Contributions of \$30,000 each were approved this year by four of the signatories - the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), Livermore-Amador Valley's Zone 7 Water Agency, Alameda County Water District (ACWD) and Pacific Gas and Electric Company. The \$120,000 provided by these four agencies will be matched by the California State Coastal Conservancy, for a total of \$240,000.

"The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding is a milestone in the process of restoring steelhead to Alameda Creek," said Paul Piraino, Alameda County Water District General Manager. "Water supply and environmental issues are not always seen as going hand in hand. In this case, however, all the parties agree that these studies are an important step in determining how to provide enough water for both steelhead and the residents of the Bay Area." Other participating organizations include the Alameda County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, Alameda County Resource Conservation District, Alameda Creek Alliance, American Rivers, California Department of Fish and Game, East Bay Regional Park District, National Marine Fisheries Service, Natural Resources Defense Council, San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Scientists Find New Element

Scientists from the Chemistry, Materials and Life Sciences Directorate at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, in collaboration with researchers from the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Russia (JINR), have discovered the newest superheavy element: element 118. It is the fifth new element discovered by the team. Dawn Shaughnessy, team member, said over 1000 hours of experiments were conducted during which two atoms of the element were discovered. Earlier, the team had observed one atom of the element, bringing the total to three. The average lifetime of each atom was .9 milliseconds, which Shaughnessy described as pretty normal. Asked why conduct such research, Nancy Stoyer said, "It's like any other journey to a new place. Why go to the moon or climb Mount Everest? It's about finding something new. It is something interesting. It helps theorists understand what really works in their theories."

The results will be published in the October 2006 edition of the journal, Physical Review C. "The decay properties of all the isotopes that we have made so far paint the picture of a large, sort of flat Island of Stability and indicate that we may have luck if we try to go even heavier," said Ken Moody, Livermore's team leader. "We're nibbling away at the shores of the island," he declared during a teleconference with reporters. The Island of Stability is a term from nuclear physics that indicates where elements could be found that have particularly stable "magic numbers" of protons and neutrons. This would allow certain isotopes of some transuranic elements (elements with atomic numbers greater than 92) to be far more stable than others, and thus decay much more slowly. Element 118 is expected to be a noble gas (inert gases) that lies right below radon on the periodic table of elements. It has been dubbed ekaradon. "The world is made up of about 90 elements," Moody said. "Anything more you can learn about the periodic table is exciting. It can tell us why the world is here and what it is made of." Other members of the Livermore team include Mark Stoyer, Philip Wilk, Jacqueline Kenneally, Jerry Landrum, John Wild, Ron Loughheed and former LLNL employee Joshua Patin. Livermore has had a long-standing heavy element group since the inception of the Labo-

ratory in 1952. The group has been successful in the discovery of several new elements over the years because it has access to unique materials to perform the experiments. In 1999 and 2001, the Laboratory announced the discovery of elements 114 and 116, respectively. In 2004, the Livermore-Dubna team observed the existence of elements 113 and 115. As for the future, the LLNL-Dubna team will continue to map the region near the "Island of Stability." In 2007, the team plans to look for element 120 by bombarding a plutonium target with iron isotopes. "The heavy element community will continue to search for new elements until the limit of nuclear stability is found," Mark Stoyer said. "It is expected that limit will be found." However, the limit isn't likely to be reached using tools currently available. Moody noted, "At this point it can't be done anywhere. The tools to conduct such research are not available."

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Efforts to restore steelhead to areas of the Alameda Creek watershed where there were historical trout populations are gaining momentum on other fronts as well. For example: Steelhead trout in the central California coast (including the Bay Area) were listed under the Endangered Species Act as a federally threatened species in 1997.

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Girls Softball League Concerned about Loss of Playing Fields

Members of the Livermore Girls Softball Association are up in arms about the potential loss of the softball field behind the Bothwell Arts Center.

In a letter sent to the Independent, the LGSA noted that it will have to turn girls away this year. The league must rent old fields behind existing schools. Last

year, the league registered over 650 girls on 53 teams. Approximately 75 girls had to be turned away, because of the lack of fields.

"This year we have been notified that we will possibly be losing the two fields at Sonoma School due to the Charter School. Now we have been notified that one of our fields at 7th and G Streets will be closed. This is going to have a devastating affect on our league."

Supporters of retaining the field have been sending emails to Livermore Area Recreation and Park District board members.

The emails led Director Steve Goodman to suggest that it is time for the district to hold a serious discussion about a bond measure to finance a sports park.

Goodman stated, "The need for fields is always there. The is-

sue is not going to go away." He pointed out that the public was willing to finance the construction of the community center through bonds. He thought it likely they would support construction of a sports park.

LARPD, which owns the site, has received over \$800,000 in funding to redesign the park surrounding the Bothwell Center. In addition to the softball diamond, there are two tennis courts and a small playground.

Neighbors want a more traditional neighborhood park with grass, trees and a tot lot.

The ball field has been there for more than 50 years. For the last couple of decades, baseball has been banned. The park is being used by the girls for both practice and games for the young age group division.

The Livermore Area Recre-

ation and Park District has been holding hearings on what the neighbors would like to see in the park.

The representative of the LGSA proposed a compromise. The ball field would be included in the new design initially with a plan to phase it out in the event new fields are provided in another location.

The LARPD will be discussing the Bothwell Park plans at its November 8 meeting at 7 p.m. at the Robert Livermore Community Center. LGSA plans to have over 200 league members present.

Carol Leasau, LGSA president notes, "The girls in this town have been discriminated against time and time again. We have Pony league, Livermore National, Granada Little League, and the American League. All of these

'boy' leagues have secured the parks and the girls get the leftovers. We will now be down to 4 fields for 53 teams. Impossible!

"Our league has been trying to work with the city for years to

get these girls permanent fields, but our hard work is always met with resistance. I could go on and on about how our league is treated in this town."



PET OF THE WEEK:

Bentley, named for his crooked tail, is a confident and fearless adventurer, ready for anything that life puts before him. Ready to tackle vacuum cleaners, show the dog who is boss in the house, or cuddle with his buddies, this 4-month old shorthair male is always up for the moment. He would do well in a home with other cats, dogs, or kids. For more information on Bentley, call Valley Humane Society at (925) 426-8656. Valley Humane Society holds mobile pet adoptions for dogs and cats at Pet Extreme in Livermore every Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Pet Adoption Faire Planned for This Weekend

Tri-Valley Animal Rescue and the East County Animal Shelter will host an adoption faire on Sat., October 21 from 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the shelter, 4595 Gleason Dr., Dublin.

This is the first adoption event to be held at the East County Animal Shelter (ECAS.)

Adopt a cat or dog and receive free items.

For dogs, those adopting one will receive dog training classes, a dog bed, leash and collar, a bag of Science Diet Dog Food, and a

coupon for Frontline Tick and Flea. Those adopting cats will receive a goodie bag filled with toys and more.

Sue James of TVAR explained, "We felt that some of the giveaways would provide incentive for people to adopt animals from the shelter and also help familiarize them with both TVAR and ECAS. We also thought that by giving away a series of free training classes for those adopting dogs that the potential for a successful adop-

tion also increases."

The faire will provide a dog trainer to help evaluate and modify dog behavior. There will be low cost spay/neuter certificates available, as well as lots of information.

Expert advice will be available in selecting the right cat, dog or bunny.

Free hot dogs and drinks will be available from 1:30 p.m. to 2 p.m.

For more information, call Susan James at 408-202-6708.

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