

# CLAYTON PIONEER

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**GREGG MANNING**  
**MAYOR'S CORNER**

## City looks at more recreation options

On Saturday, Jan. 12, Clayton's new downtown park, the Grove, will have its grand opening. The opening of the Grove will be interesting for me since I am having a total knee replacement on Jan. 10. The Grove will be the latest venue for recreation in the city, and I will be there with the rest of the City Council to cut ribbons and open the park. Festivities start at 1 p.m.

We already have a variety of recreation options in Clayton. We are nationally recognized for our well-used system of trails. We have playfields for baseball, softball and soccer. We have a variety of parks for people and dogs. Yet there are still unfulfilled recreation desires.

The challenge is how to determine those desires and what can be done with limited funds to fulfill them. People have expressed a desire for a number of additional recreation facilities, including:

**1. Tennis courts open and available to all citizens.** While there are private courts in Clayton, and neighboring Concord has public courts, people in Clayton want their own public courts.

**2. Bocce courts to accommodate the needs of the Clayton league,** which has trouble obtaining time on the very actively used Concord courts. Supporters say Bocce courts in town would greatly increase interest in the activity.

**3. Skateboard park to accommodate young people.** Again, Concord and other

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# Clayton Counts Down to 2008



Tamara Steiner/Clayton Pioneer

**CREATIVE EFFORTS PAID OFF** in the Clayton Counts Down Hat Making Contest for first place winner Caitlin Arango, whose feather trimmed sombrero sports a kangaroo atop. Confetti, bows and glitter brought in a second place win for Emily Wright. Third place winner, Mia Leonardy, seems to be waiting for a signal from a friendly alien.

TAMARA STEINER  
Clayton Pioneer

Whether your sights were set on a fancy hat, a fast turn around the basketball court or a bounce down the inflatable slide, you were sure to find something fun at the Clayton Counts Down celebration at the community gym on New Year's Eve.

This was the fifth year that the city has sponsored the no-alcohol, free family event which is supported by donations from local merchants and individuals.

An estimated 700 Claytonians and their friends polished off some 500 hamburgers and 800 hot dogs, all donated by local merchants, including major donations by Longs Drugs, A.D. Seeno Construction and Comcast.

After dinner, revelers played board games, watched movies, hit the basketball and volleyball courts, played on "the big bouncy stuff" or worked on their hat creations.

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## \$756,100 awarded to protect Irish Canyon area

ANDRÉ GENSBURGER  
Clayton Pioneer

It is not every day that a local group receives \$756,100 in grant money to preserve open space threatened by development.

Last month, Save Mount Diablo, an East Bay land trust formed in 1971, received an award from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the largest grant in the trust's history. The money was used to purchase the 320 acres known as Irish Canyon on the outskirts of Clayton.

The funding will allow the purchase as well as maintenance and oak woodland restoration. It will also help to speed preservation efforts along the Marsh Creek-Morgan Territory region northeast of Mount Diablo.

"This grant will permanently protect the Irish Canyon parcel," said Helen Kim, chief program officer for the San Francisco Bay Area Program of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. "It supports a

landscape-level, strategic effort to protect open space surrounding Mount Diablo."

An estimated 400,000 acres of open space in the Bay Area is at risk from development. "The Foundation seeks to protect the Bay Area's unique lands for future generations," Kim said.

"We're really pleased with the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation's confidence in our efforts," said Ron Brown, Save Mount Diablo's executive director.

"We take seriously the incentive that they have provided us to increase the speed of our work. The same day that we closed escrow on Irish Canyon, we purchased another small property east of Mount Diablo, nine acres which we're calling Marsh Creek I."

Prior to the award, the group conducted a BioBlitz in order to inventory all the species that could be found in the area as quickly as possible. A BioBlitz brings together scientists, naturalists and volun-

teers to document biodiversity present in the community. BioBlitz is a unique opportunity to explore, discover, educate and investigate biodiversity, cataloguing the species found in Irish Canyon as a first step in successfully understanding the environment. The study provides insight into the species that may need to be controlled or monitored on the property.

The preliminary count of 273 species found during the BioBlitz included 10 mammals, 61 bird species, three reptile and three amphibian species, 25 invertebrate species including three native ants; and 171 plant species.

Three different amphibian species were recorded in one pond, including the California red-legged frog, currently on the federal endangered species list, the Western toad and Pacific tree frog. In addition, three different owl species were recorded: Barn, Western Screech and Great Horned owls, as well as golden eagles

and sharp-shinned hawks.

Of the plant species, Balsamroot was also observed, according to the Web site. Balsamroot is a locally rare plant known from only a few regions of the East Bay's 40

plant regions.

The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation focuses its annual awards in three areas: science and technology,

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## High achieving city employees honored



Photo courtesy of Laura Hoffmeister

**OFFICER RICH ENEA** and Police Office Coordinator Lynn Christ took top honors at the city's annual Employee Recognition Dinner.

TAMARA STEINER  
Clayton Pioneer

Emergency Response Team training program. She also sits on the CERT Citizen Corps Council.

Clayton Police Officer Coordinator Lynn Christ received double honors at the city employees' annual awards banquet last month. Her peers in the police department honored her with the Police Non-Sworn Personnel Recognition Award. She also shared the Outstanding Achievement Award with City Manager Gary Napper.

Hired by the city only a year ago, Christ already has a long list of achievements to her credit, most notably the inauguration of the city's Community

She was also recognized for her efforts in researching, drafting and implementing the RV parking ordinance, as well as an agreement with the county for delinquent debt collections. Christ has been present at many community events this year, including being a judge for the Pioneer's Christmas Cookie Contest.

Characteristically, Christ's favorite task was the somewhat less glamorous housekeeping chore of cleaning out and

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Photo courtesy of Save Mount Diablo

**SAVE MOUNT DIABLO** members track and identify birds in Irish Canyon.