

Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year from all of  
us at the Pioneer

# CLAYTON PIONEER

IT'S YOUR PAPER

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GREGG MANNING  
MAYOR'S CORNER

## New mayor looks to city's future

With the end of every year, we have change and contemplations. City government is no different than the rest of life. The city has a new mayor, but it is not my first time with the job.

In fact, the last time I was mayor I made a point of never missing one of these columns. That standard has been carried on since then, so I have to follow what I established.

In some ways, I am sad to see 2007 fade into history. It was the city's sesquicentennial and every month we had an event that recognized this milestone. I would like to thank all of the people who partook in those events, but especially Mary Spryer of the Clayton Historical Society who has a view of history similar to my own.

We do not know what the new year holds, but it will be a mixture of good and bad and a lot in between. Whether it's good or bad often depends on your view and that is up to the individual.

In the beginning of each year, the City Council has a meeting to go over the goals the council would like to achieve as a group. We don't always meet all of these, but it is a target.

Some of the things I see happening in 2008 include the opening of the Downtown Park and the Village Market. Cities are always exploring additional sources of revenue,

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## Clayton homes light up the night



Tamara Steiner/Clayton Pioneer

A SYNCHRONIZED LIGHT AND MUSIC SHOW put this home on Pine Lane in first place in the Pioneer's Home Decorating Contest. The display was designed by 16-year-old Jeffrey Holmes who plans to expand it next year.

TAMARA STEINER  
Clayton Pioneer

It is that time of year, when many Claytonians pile into their cars and head out to "go look at the lights." Once again, throughout our community, there are many beautifully crafted and well-presented outdoor holiday displays that are a joy to see.

Last Thursday, the five judges (some with Starbucks in hand) piled into one car and headed out across town to "look at the lights."

Judges Alise Lacosse of Applause Staging and Pioneer publisher Bob Steiner were the experienced voices of the group, since both judged last year's contest. Joining them were Leanna and Kevin McLaughlin, whose cleverly decorated home won first place last year, and Lorraine Henney.

There were 13 entries this year and competition was tough. One home after another elicited

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## New landscape district key event in Clayton for '07

TAMARA STEINER  
Clayton Pioneer

Without a doubt, the story of the year was the 83 percent voter approval of a new landscape maintenance district in June.

The old district, created in 1997, expired in June of 2007. The first effort to replace the district was defeated by the voters in 2005. Had the second effort failed, there would have been no money for watering and weeding.

The new district will be funded by an annual parcel tax of \$197 and calls for a citizens oversight committee, the Trails and Landscape Maintenance Committee, to monitor quality and spending.

### CCC AND THE TCSP

In January, the Clayton Community Church's

announcement of plans to buy the downtown parcel adjacent to their offices on Main Street for a worship center touched off a community debate over the proper use of commercially zoned land in the town center.

Things heated up in November, when escrow closed on the property at about the same time the Planning Commission approved an amendment to the Town Center Specific Plan that removed meeting halls and places of assembly as preferred land uses in the town center.

The amendment will go before the City Council with more public hearings sometime after the first of the year.

### PARK CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

In April, construction began on the new downtown park that the voters approved in November 2006. Projected

opening was October 19.

The project has been plagued by a series of delays that pushed the opening date back to December 1 and then again to January 12, 2008.

The park has been described as "the crown jewel of Clayton," with the focal point being the gazebo grandstand donated by the Clayton Business and Community Association. The park also has a deluxe play structure and water feature for the children, a plaza with game tables and picnic areas. A statue of seven children playing "Ring Around the Rosie" by noted artist Gary Lee Price stands at the southeast corner of the park.

### FIRST CERT CLASS GRADUATES

Clayton graduated its first Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) class in

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Tamara Steiner/Clayton Pioneer

## Broken hydrant sends up geyser

TAMARA STEINER  
Clayton Pioneer

Center Street was hit by heavy showers last week and the water came not from the sky, but from the ground.

The scene looked a lot like Old Faithful when a pickup truck, coming out of the post office parking lot, cut the corner a little too close the afternoon of December 13 and took out the fire hydrant in front.

The storm drains on that end of Center Street were covered with a fine filter to catch construction debris

from the Village Market and the park and the street quickly filled ankle deep with water. It was too tempting to pass up for a few hardy Clayton kids bent on some mid-winter water sports.

It took about 15 minutes for Contra Costa Water District to arrive and locate the shut off valve on the flooded street.

The driver of the pickup, a Livermore man, was none too happy with the damage to either the fire hydrant or to his truck. He will soon get a bill from Contra Costa Water in the neighborhood of \$750 to \$1,000 for repairs.

## Council reorganizes for new year



Tamara Steiner/Clayton Pioneer

GREGG MANNING, left, accepts congratulations and the gavel from outgoing mayor Bill Walcutt.

TAMARA STEINER  
Clayton Pioneer

The City Council observed their traditional "changing of the guard" when outgoing mayor, Bill Walcutt, handed over the gavel to new mayor Gregg Manning.

In a unanimous vote of the City Council, Manning was elected mayor and Julie Pierce was named Vice Mayor. The position of mayor typically rotates among council members with the Vice Mayor traditionally occupying

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