City to hold line in face of tight 2008-10 budget

Slumping auto and retail sales and a downturn in the housing market will prompt the City Council to tighten its fiscal belt when it considers the new 2008-10 operating budget this spring.

The Council will consider the new two-year budget on May 20 and June 17.

While Walnut Creek is still in better financial shape than many municipalities across the state, the City is looking at creative ways to hold the line for the next two years, said City Manager Gary Pokorny.

“Because sales taxes account for nearly one-third of the City’s $65 million in annual revenue, the current downturn in our local economy is causing us to look at new ways to maintain services and

Armey corporal to be remembered on Memorial Day

The City Council will dedicate a plaque in memory of slain U.S. Army Corporal Sean K.A. Langevin of Walnut Creek at its Memorial Day Observance on Monday, May 26.

The public ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. in Civic Park, corner of North Broadway and Civic Drive. Cpl. Langevin, son of Drew and

MEMORIAL DAY, see back page

Celebrate City’s pioneer beginnings on Heritage Day at Borges Ranch

Join the City of Walnut Creek for a fun family celebration of its frontier days at the annual Heritage Day event on Saturday, June 14 at Borges Ranch in the Shell Ridge Open Space.

The event will be from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is $5 per family. Parking will be available at nearby Northgate High School, 425 Castle Rock Rd., where a shuttle will run to and from Borges Ranch throughout the day.

Family activities will include crafts and games for children, demonstrations by 4-H and craft guilds, music by the Jug Band, square dancing, and exhibits by the Lindsay Wildlife Museum, Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation, Save Mount Diablo, the East Bay Regional Park District, and state and national park services.

The Essanay Silent Film Museum will show Charlie Chaplin and Billy Bronco movies filmed in nearby Niles Canyon.

Food will be available.

For more details, call 925-942-0225.

Closing the book on the old library

Curious onlookers stopped to watch the razing of the Walnut Creek Library on Feb. 26. The seven-hour demolition cleared the way for the construction of the new library, which will begin later this spring. For more pictures, see page 5.

BUDGET, see page 6
Bedford Gallery Docents offer Public Art Tours

The Bedford Gallery Docents are once again offering guided walking tours of Walnut Creek’s prime public art works.

The tour provides an up-close view of works by Stephen DeStaebler, Yoshio Taylor, Bruce Beasley and others, as well as the Veteran’s Memorial Plaza by Cliff Garten and a recent mural by Josh Keyes. Bedford Gallery docents are trained by public art specialists and can offer information and insight appropriate for all ages.

A printable Walking Tour Map is available online at www.bedfordgallery.org

Tours will be offered at 11 a.m. every second Saturday of the month including May 10, June 14, July 12, Aug. 9, Sept. 13, Oct. 11, and Nov. 8. Admission is $5 and includes a free pass to the Bedford Gallery. Tour schedules are subject to change.

The 45-minute tour departs from the front of the Lesher Center at 1601 Civic Drive. Tours will be cancelled in the event of rain. Special group tours are also available for 15 or more by reservation only.

For more information, call 925-295-1417.

What’s Happening

Bridal dresses on display at Shadelands

With its picturesque gardens and grounds, the stately Penniman House, now the Shadelands Ranch Historical Museum, has hosted many lovely brides over the last 35 years. To honor that tradition, the museum has planned a special exhibit June 1-29 of wedding dresses from the past century. A Century of Brides will also include several dresses from local celebrities, including the dress of Mayor Gwen Regalia. The exhibit will also feature information about the history of matrimonial traditions in this country and photographs of the brides on their wedding day. The museum is at 2660 Ygnacio Valley Rd. and is open Wednesdays and Sundays, 1 to 4 p.m. Admission is $3 for adults and $1 for children. For details, call 925-935-7871.

Fiesta! fundraiser at Lindsay Museum

Families are invited to the “Fiesta!” fundraising event on Sunday, June 1, from 2:30 to 7 p.m., at the Lindsay Wildlife Museum, 1931 First Ave. in Walnut Creek. Children’s activities, tours of the museum, live music, food, and silent and live auctions. Advance tickets are $30, ages 10 and up; $5, ages 3-9. For more information, call 925-627-2961 or go online to www.wildlife-museum.org

Downtown WC Flower Stroll, Wine Walk

The Walnut Creek Downtown Business Association is planning two upcoming events:

• a free Walnut Creek Downtown Flower Stroll on Saturday, May 10 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. starting at City Hall, 1666 No. Main and ending at Plaza Escuela to introduce shoppers to quaint shops
• Downtown Wine Walk on Wednesday, June 25, 6 to 9 p.m. Tickets for the Wine Walk are $20.

For details on both activities, go to www.walnutcreekdowntown.com or call the Downtown Business Association at 925-933-6778.
Musicals & mirth highlight Center REP
Company’s 42nd season at the Lesher

W alnut Creek’s Center REPertory Co., the City’s professional theatre company, recently announced an ambitious schedule for its 42nd season at the Lesher Center for the Arts.

To kick off its new partnership with the Contra Costa Musical Theatre, Center REP’s new season will be highlighted with four blockbuster musicals, a Pulitzer Prize-winning drama, two comedies, and the traditional yuletide production of Dickens’ A Christmas Carol.

Center REP will launch its 2008-09 season with its production of “Fats” Waller’s Ain’t Misbehavin’, winner of three Tony awards, including Best Musical. It runs Sept. 4 through Oct. 11 in the Margaret Lesher Theatre.

Right on the heels of that show, CCMT will offer the Broadway classic 42nd Street in the Hofmann Theatre Oct. 10 to Nov. 8. It also won several Tony awards, including Best Musical.

The 2005 Tony and Pulitzer Prize-winning play Doubt, written by John Patrick Shanley, will be presented by Center REP Oct. 23 to Nov. 22 in the Margaret Lesher Theatre. Without taking a breath, Center REP’s general manager, Scott Denison, will direct, for the 11th year, the company’s perennially popular production of A Christmas Carol in the Hofmann Theatre.

To start the new year, the company will present 2 Pianos, 4 Hands, a comedy with music about two prodigies dreaming of concert pianist stardom, which will run Jan. 29 to Feb. 28, 2009.

Then CCMT will stage the seven-time Tony Award winner Evita from Mar. 27 to Apr. 26, 2009 in the Hofmann Theatre.

Rounding out this season will be Center REP’s production of Enchanted April, a heartwarming romantic comedy that will run Apr. 2 to May 2, and – for a climactic finish – the eight-time Tony Award winning musical Cabaret will close the season in style May 21 to June 27 in the Margaret Lesher Theatre.

Season subscriptions are available now from $128 to $377. For more information, to receive a free color brochure, or to reserve your place in the 07-08 season, call 925-943-7469 or visit the Ticket Office at 1601 Civic Drive or at Barnes and Noble, 1149 So. Main St.
**Youngsters learn how to go green in school activities**

Watch out, Mrs. Fields — the third graders at Murwood Elementary School have discovered a fun and inexpensive way to bake cookies that they say are better than store-bought.

Using the heat of the sun, students under the guidance of Science Lab teacher Daizy Asaravala recently baked a batch of tiny solar cookies made from fold-up solar ovens that heated the confections to a crisp 225 degrees over one hour.

“We learned that you could make things without using electricity,” said Naina Asaravala, 8.

“We don’t need to,” added Nadjlaa Benouda, 9. “All we need is the sun.”

Using a $5,000 grant from PG&E’s Solar Schools Program, Asaravala is creating an entire curriculum for kindergarten through fifth grade students. The funds will allow the kids to build solar cars and provide a solar water fountain in front of the school.

**Tour East Bay’s greenest homes**

The City of Walnut Creek will help organize a Build It Green Home Tour on Sunday, June 1 that will offer a glimpse inside some of the East Bay’s greenest homes.

From 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., 17 homeowners in Walnut Creek, Livermore, and Oakland will open their doors to showcase their green building techniques and products and share information about the materials they chose, installation dos and don’ts, and lessons learned.

Admission is $30/person or $50/two persons. A Tour Guidebook/ticket can be purchased online.

For more information/tickets, visit www.BuildItGreen.org or call 1-888-404-7336.

**Solar power lights Villa Vasconcellos**

Villa Vasconcellos, a new 70-unit apartment complex at 1515 Geary Road for extremely-low and very-low income seniors, features a variety of green amenities that promote energy conservation and healthy living.

Among the green features are common area electricity and hot water provided through solar power, Energy Star appliances, low E windows, and drought tolerant landscaping.

The complex, which opened in February, was designed for seniors over 55. All the units are affordable to low income people, with monthly rents ranging up to $734.

The City provided funding of $2.6 million through its Community Development Block Grant program to help make the $19 million project possible.
Going... going... gone!

In only seven hours the venerable downtown library at 1644 North Broadway was demolished Feb. 26 to make way for the new library, which will be built on the same spot over the next two years.

Groundbreaking for new library later this spring

The public will be invited to witness the groundbreaking for the new Walnut Creek Library in a ceremony that will be scheduled later this spring.

The event, to be announced soon, will take place on the spot where the 47-year-old former library stood until Feb. 26, when it was razed in a quick seven hours.

Construction of the 42,000-square-foot library will begin by June and be completed in spring 2010.

City officials were delighted to learn on March 18 that three construction bids for the project were lower than the estimated cost of $30.8 million to build the library and 121-space underground parking garage.

Fundraising reaches $4.2 million for library

The Walnut Creek Library Foundation announced April 15 it has raised $4.2 million toward the capital construction of the new Walnut Creek Library.

Foundation president Ed Del Beccaro told the City Council the Foundation expects to raise $7.5 million for the new library, $2.5 million more than originally proposed.

He added that the outpouring of donations so far is testimony to the community’s support of a library that will meet the community’s needs.

In 2007, when the City Council voted to move forward with the new downtown library project, the Foundation made a commitment to raise private funds for the project.

To date it has received $4.2 million in pledges, donations, and grants from the Lesher Foundation, John Muir Health, Thomas J. Long Foundation, J.M. Long Foundation, as well as other groups and individuals. The amount also includes more than $1 million raised with 100 percent participation from the Foundation’s board of directors and City Council members.

The public phase of the campaign, which will begin this fall, is aimed at obtaining smaller donations from individuals, families, schools and a variety of organizations in Walnut Creek.

Illustrations and a virtual tour of the new library are on the group’s website at www.NewWCLibrary.org.

To make a donation, go online to the website.

Sidne Long presents a $250,000 check from the Thomas J. Long Foundation to Ed Del Beccaro, president of the Walnut Creek Library Foundation, for the new library.
More funding for DBA approved

The City Council on Feb. 5 agreed to provide the Downtown Business Association $650,000 over the next four years to enhance the success of the downtown through beautification projects, special events and programs, and marketing.

The Council approved allocating $65,000 from the Downtown Parking and Enhancement Fund for 2007-08 to establish an energy-efficient tree lighting program. These additional allocations will also be made: $185,000 in 2008-09; and $200,000 each in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

New commissioners sworn in

City Clerk Patrice Olds, left, gave the oath of office to Walnut Creek’s newest batch of City commissioners at the March 4 City Council meeting. Sworn in were (from left) Brian Killian, Design Review; Dorothy McDonald, Design Review; Kevin Wilk, Transportation; and Richard Carlston, Park, Recreation and Open Space.

Council seeks flexible design plan for Locust St./Mt. Diablo retail area

The City Council wants to see some flexibility in a visionary “specific plan” to revitalize an older, 1 1/2-block area of the downtown.

Council members got a chance March 4 to comment on the draft Locust Street/Mt. Diablo Boulevard Specific Plan, a guideline for developers that encourages improvements to enhance the economic vitality of the area bounded by Locust Street, Mt. Diablo Boulevard, North California Boulevard, and Cypress Street.

Aspects of the specific plan have been debated and discussed since the Council initiated work on the plan in September 2004. The City’s comprehensive vision for the area would end piecemeal development that has resulted in the current patchwork quilt of businesses, some with large, underutilized parking lots.

City planners have pointed out a number of opportunities in the plan:

• enhancing the pedestrian-friendly character of downtown
• developing the former Mark Morris Tire, Chevon station, and McDonald’s sites into mixed uses with ground-floor retail and centralized parking
• converting the City’s small parking lot at the corner of Main Street and Mt. Diablo Boulevard into a two-level commercial building

Individual Council members suggested that the “specific plan” be kept flexible enough to permit excellent design that still meets plan objectives.

The Council unanimously voted to direct staff to prepare a final draft specific plan for its consideration later this year.

(To read the Council’s comments, go online to www.walnut-creek.org and click on the “Public Meetings Video/Audio” link. Scroll down to “Archived Videos” and click on “City Council Meetings”. Then click on “View Minutes” for March 4, 2008.)

Teens on job search

Jasmine McKinley, 17, a junior at Ygnacio Valley High School, sat down to apply for a summer job with the City at the annual Teen Summer Job Fair on March 6, which attracted over 350 local students. Upwards of 100 paid summer jobs (including lifeguards, camp counselors, and interns) are available to qualified Walnut Creek residents this year.
Vacation planning tips to safeguard your home, family

Summer is rapidly approaching. As you plan vacation getaways with your family, Walnut Creek’s Community Policing Team encourages you to consider the following security tips:

**Before leaving**
- ✔ Have good locks on all doors and windows, and use them.
- ✔ Engrave your valuables with your Driver’s License number, so that in the event they are stolen, law enforcement can find out that they belong to you.
- ✔ Never leave your house key hidden outside (eg. under a doormat, etc.).
- ✔ Make your house appear “lived in.” Use timers for lights and radios, have a neighbor pick up mail and newspapers, and keep the lawns mowed and watered.
- ✔ Leave your trip plans and an emergency phone number with trusted neighbors or friends.
- ✔ Consider installing a home alarm system for extra security.

**On the road**
- ✔ Never carry large amounts of cash; use traveler’s checks. If you must carry large sums of money, do not display it openly and keep it close to you at all times.
- ✔ Keep a record of traveler’s checks numbers and credit card numbers in a safe place. Have the telephone numbers to call in case your checks or credit cards are lost or stolen.
- ✔ Ask for directions at a hotel or tourist information center and stick to well-lit main streets and public areas.
- ✔ If older children go off separately, be sure they understand the importance of time and returning promptly at appointed hours.
- ✔ Ask if there are areas that should be avoided while traveling.
- ✔ Do not leave valuable items unsecured in hotels or motels. Take all cash with you, and lock up any other valuable inside a hotel safe or take them with you.
- ✔ Know where the fire escapes and emergency exits are located in your hotel.

**A Look Back: WC weathers the Great Flood of ‘58**

Fifty years ago this spring, Walnut Creek experienced one of its most devastating natural disasters when the downtown was flooded due to a day of heavy rains.

On April 2, 1958, a major storm caused the banks of Walnut Creek to overflow and back up into the storm drains along Main Street. Merchants tried unsuccessfully to block the flood waters from entering their businesses using sandbags, and the J.C. Penney store at Broadway Shopping Center (today’s David M. Brien store) suffered $100,000 in damage. As local commerce was brought to a standstill, homes were evacuated in the Bradley Drive area east of the creek.

The construction of the San Ramon Creek flood bypass channel by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Contra Costa County in 1990 has prevented similar catastrophic flooding.

**Time to Bike to Work on May 15**

California’s annual Bike to Work Day event is on Thursday, May 15. Please consider joining thousands of others in the Bay Area by cycling to work that day and enjoy the health benefits, reduced air pollution, and no waiting in traffic.

Start planning now by getting you and your bike in shape. There are citywide bike maps available at City Hall or check out your local bike shop for some advice.

Walnut Creek has outstanding paved trails which can help guide you around the area, many of these trails will have hosted energizer stations that day for your convenience.

Additional information on Bike to Work Day events and prizes can be found at [http://bicycling.511.org/](http://bicycling.511.org/). We look forward to seeing you on a bike May 15th.
‘Night at the Museum’ is next feature for Movies Under the Stars

To kick off its sixth season, the City’s popular Movies Under the Stars series at Heather Farm Park will feature the 2006 hit Night at the Museum on Saturday, June 7.

It will be shown on the front ballfield at the Park at Ygnacio Valley Road and North San Carlos Drive. The movie will be shown at dusk (approximately 8:30 p.m.).

Admission is always free at Movies Under the Stars. 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. No pets, please.

For further information about future Movies Under the Stars events, call the Recreation Division at 925-943-5858 or go to www.walnutcreekrec.org

Memorial Day

From front page

Roxane Langevin of Walnut Creek and a graduate of Ygnacio Valley High School, was killed in action on Nov. 9 while patrolling in Aranus, Afghanistan. He was 23. He is survived by his wife, Jessica, and a newborn daughter, Zoe.

Cpl. Langevin was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star for valor.

George and Florence Denison of Rossmoor, both World War II veterans, will be the ceremony’s keynote speakers, and the Walnut Creek Concert Band under the direction of Harvey Benstein will perform several patriotic pieces.

Renew business licenses online

Beginning this spring, most Walnut Creek businesses for the first time will be able to renew their City business licenses online.

For fiscal year 2008-09, business licenses can be renewed on the City’s website at www.walnut-creek.org (click on “Quick Links” and then “Business Licenses”). Details will be included in a flyer to be mailed with renewals on May 1.

Volunteers needed for Creek Clean Up Day

Volunteers are again being asked to help remove a year’s worth of debris from Walnut Creek’s three downtown creeks on the 19th annual Creek Clean Up Day on Saturday, May 10.

Volunteers should sign up by 9:30 a.m. at Civic Park, corner of Civic Drive and North Broadway, where they can also pick up plastic trash bags. A free barbecue lunch for all participants will follow the activity.

This event is co-sponsored by the City and Friends of the Creek. For details, call Pam Romo at 925-939-8979.