

Serving the El Sobrante Business Community Since 1957



# About Town

The El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce Monthly Newsletter

March 2022

**NEW DATE**  
*Save the Date*

*you are cordially invited to attend  
El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce  
Dinner - Introducing the  
2022 Board of Directors and  
Awards to Business of the year and  
Citizen of the year for both  
2020 and 2021  
Saturday, March 26. @ 5:30 pm*

*\$50.00 per person. reservations req.*

**BAY CITIES MASONIC LODGE  
5050 El Portal Dr., EL Sobrante, CA 94803  
RSVP to [bevwallace1@aol.com](mailto:bevwallace1@aol.com) or call  
Marie Carayanis @ 510-387-0581**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

The big event of the month is our annual dinner, which will take place on March 26<sup>th</sup>. You are all encouraged to attend! The annual dinner was cancelled last year and postponed this year, because of the pandemic, and this year we are all looking forward to a safe, fun event. The new Board was sworn in by Supervisor John Gioia via Zoom at the February Board meeting. This means the dinner will introduce the 2022 Board of Directors, and announce and honor the 2020 and 2021 Businesses and Citizens of the Year.

Many of you may know the El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce gave a 50% discount on our already low membership fee to any business that was negatively impacted by the pandemic last year. We are doing so again this year. Unfortunately, this caused the Chamber itself to operate at a loss. We are not a for-profit business, but operating at a loss is not sustainable. We make about 10% of the fee charged for our dinner event and plan to use the money to enable us to continue to provide assistance to those business who are struggling financially by helping them become chamber members. For only \$50 you get a delicious dinner and help support a worthy organization, your El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce. You also get to be one of the first people to know who the Business and Citizen of the Year are. Most people have to wait to see them in the parade held in September at the El Sobrante Stroll.

I am looking forward to seeing old friends and meeting new people and hearing all of your ideas on how we can work together to make El Sobrante a better place for all of us. Please RSVP to [bevwallace@aol.com](mailto:bevwallace@aol.com) or call Marie Carayanis at 510-387-0581 as soon as you can. The event is limited capacity and you wouldn't want to miss out.

Nicole Donn, President

## **2022 Chamber of Commerce Officers & Directors**

President - Nicole Donn - U.S. Financial Mortgage Lending  
Vice President - Judy Ward - SPAWNERS, Friends of the El Sobrante Library  
Treasurer - Su Li - Lynden & Associates CPA Services  
Secretary - Beverly Wallace - West County Resident  
Marie Carayanis - Resident, retired business owner  
Jim Cowen - Farmers Insurance  
Mark Croda - Restoration Autobody – Immediate Past President , ESCC  
Susan McCloskey - Resident, retired business owner  
Naif Nudish - Central Foods  
Navneet Sandhu - Pizza Twist  
Bob Sharp- resident, commercial property owner  
Jose Velarde - El Sobrante Town Garage  
Cathy Werner - MPA Healthcare Professional  
Harry Wiener - West County Wastewater District Board Member  
Jury Zamora - Manager, El Sobrante Branch, Mechanics Bank

## 2022 Chamber Board Meetings

Board meetings are usually held on the first Monday of every month at 5:15 pm. **We are meeting by Zoom given recent COVID developments. Contact Nicole Donn for the Zoom link, at [ndonn@gemcorp.com](mailto:ndonn@gemcorp.com).** The 2022 meetings are scheduled to be held on the dates below:

January 3	February 7	March 7	April 4
May 2	June 6	July 11	August 8
September 5	October 3	November 7	December 5

## Business & Citizen of the Year

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR 2020  
El Sobrante Veterinary Hospital

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR 2021  
Central Foods

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2020  
Eleanor Nelson

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2021  
Dorcas Moulton


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DRE#01502148

**Diana Escobar**  
DRE#01893367

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**For more information or to visit a club meeting:**  
**Contact Larry Gebelein at (510) 222-3261**

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## Chamber Still Hosting Business Videos On Chamber Home Page FOR FREE

In an effort to support our business community, the El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce is offering to host videos promoting your place of business on our website. We are asking that you shoot a quick video, using your cell phone camera or a video camera, to describe your business and what you offer. We ask that this video be approximately one minute long, and follow the guidelines provided below. There are seven different business videos which we now host on the Chamber website home page (scroll down): <https://www.elsobrantechamber.com/>

Please feel free to send your video to my email address below and we will get your video online as soon as possible. If you have any questions, or would like some help with your video, please let me know by calling my cell number below.

### **Thomas Lang**

*Chair, El Sobrante Municipal Advisory Committee*

*Co-Chair, El Sobrante Stroll Committee, El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce*

*email: [tlangesmac.cc@gmail.com](mailto:tlangesmac.cc@gmail.com)*

*mobile: 510-364-5131*

### **Guidelines for making videos from your phone:**

- Landscape mode, not portrait (hold the phone or camera sideways)
- Have a product, logo or storefront in the shot
- Make sure there isn't a lot of noise in the background
- The light should be coming from in front to illuminate the face of the presenter
- The camera/cameraperson shouldn't be directly in front, which can cause a shadow on the presenter

### **Suggested script for restaurant or other business owners:**

Use this script for your business and modify it as needed.

Hi, I am <name>, and I am <title such as owner or manager> of <restaurant or business>. We want to let you all know that we're available through pick-up and delivery. Feel free to call in your order at <phone number> for pickup or use a delivery service <ubereats/doordash/grubhub, whichever you work with> to have your order delivered. We hope you're all safe and doing well, and we can't wait to see you in our <restaurant/business>. If you have any questions, you can call us at our phone number <xxx-xxx-xxxx>. We are practicing all safety protocols to protect our customers and staff, including masks, gloves, and distancing.

## Membership For 2022!

Thank you to those who have renewed your membership in our Chamber for 2022, and we welcome our new Chamber Members. Our membership year starts Feb 1, but if you haven't submitted your Membership Application, we encourage you to complete the form, included in this issue (page 14). Once again, we are offering a 50% pandemic discount to assist our business community and our resident members. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at: [mariecofces@yahoo.com](mailto:mariecofces@yahoo.com).

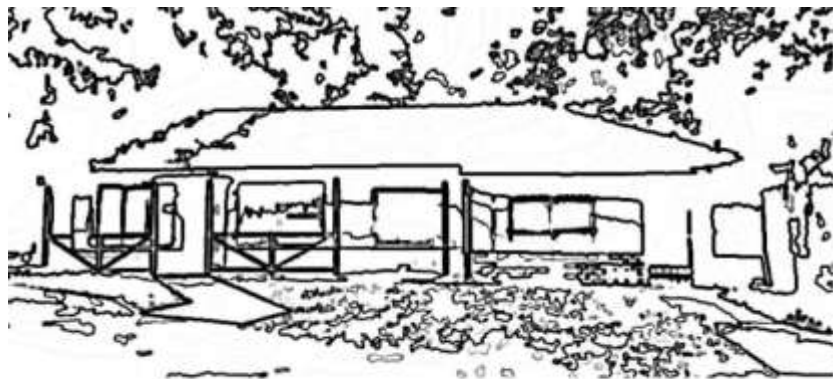
We wish you a safe and prosperous 2022!

Marie Carayanis, Membership Chair, at [mariecofces@yahoo.com](mailto:mariecofces@yahoo.com).

## BOOK SALE, Friends Of The El Sobrante Library Saturday, March 5, 2022

The Friends of the El Sobrante Library will hold a Book Sale on Saturday, Feb 5, from 10 am to 2 pm, at the Fahden House, at the back of the Library parking lot. Masks are required. The Friends will be selling Memberships. Member hours will be 10 am to noon, and the general public will be admitted to the sale from 12 pm to 2 pm.

We are featuring gardening this month. We also now have a whole shelf of large print books, plus many mysteries, romance novels, general fiction, fantasy and science fiction, biographies and autobiographies and other categories. Hope to see you there!



*Friends of the El Sobrante Library*



# Mortgage Minute

By Nicole Donn, U.S. Financial Mortgage Lending

The topic this month is reverse mortgages. A reverse mortgage is available to people 62 and over. The older the borrower is, the more of their equity they can get access to. The reason people like reverse mortgages is that they get to remain in their home without having to pay anything other than taxes and insurance. A reverse mortgage can be a lump sum, a line of credit, a monthly annuity or a combination. A lump sum is like a regular mortgage, in that the entire amount of the mortgage is disbursed upfront one time. A line of credit is where the borrower can access money when they need it and the annuity option provides monthly income to the borrower.

There are reasons to not get a reverse mortgage. The main reasons are that they tend to be expensive to get, although usually there is nothing out of pocket. The fees are added to the loan amount. Additionally, the amount owed goes up every month. Both of these things eat into the equity so when the property is sold or refinanced by the borrower or their heirs, the amount owed will likely be significantly more than the original amount borrowed.

A reverse mortgage is ideal for people who do not mind not having a property with a lot of equity to leave behind. A few years ago, we did a reverse mortgage for what is, in my opinion, the perfect reverse mortgage situation. It was an elderly childless couple in their 80's who needed a new roof and were barely making ends meet as their social security checks were not much more than their mortgage payment. We paid off their mortgage which was only about \$30,000, got them \$30,000 for immediate home repair needs, \$1000 a month additional income, and a line of credit for over \$100,000 in case they have future financial needs. The man died a few years later but they were able to go on cruises with their friends and enjoy their golden years in the house they loved rather than being forced to sell.

If a person is interested in getting a reverse mortgage, they talk to a mortgage company, such as US Financial Mortgage Lending right here in El Sobrante, give a little information such as their date of birth, debt and income details, to get a loan proposal. They then have to meet with a HUD approved financial counselor to go over the details and to make sure a neutral party lets the senior understand what they are applying for and answers any questions the senior may have. I always recommend that they have their heirs attend as well, as this affects their inheritance.

A reverse mortgage is not the best option for everyone but for some it is a lifeline that enables them to afford to stay where they want to be. Call Nicole Donn at US Financial Mortgage for information at 510-758-3035.

# **THE LAUREN HANLEY SCHOLARSHIP**

## ***presented by the Chamber of Commerce***

The El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce Scholarship Fund was established to support graduating De Anza High School Seniors who plan to continue their education by attending a community college after graduation.

Originally organized by chamber member Joe Saccheri of Joe's Pizza (now Champions Sports Bar and Grill) as "Brain Food" in 2000, the chamber raised funds from a community dinner and later awarded scholarships to applicants from the high school.

When Joe retired the fundraising took a hiatus from events and relied more on "add on donations" from memberships. In 2017 the chamber re-energized the scholarship program and began awarding scholarships again.

In 2020 Lauren Hanley was President of the EL Sobrante Chamber when she suddenly passed away in August. During her time with us in EL Sobrante, Lauren was very supportive and active in raising funds for the Scholarship. In January the following year, the Board elected to rename the Scholarship fund in her memory, and to include her interests as part of the criteria on the application.

Applications are received in the spring from hopeful graduating seniors. The applicants are required to present their academic accomplishments as well as write an essay on a choice of topics ranging from the applicants experience in community service, overcoming a challenge or other topics. Selection of a scholarship recipient is discussed by a committee made up of board members from the Chamber.

While financial need is not an expressed consideration in qualifying an applicant, it is recognized that the young scholars applying are continuing their education at the junior college level and may not have the resources at hand to begin a four year college journey.

Awards range in number and amount, but typically fall around \$500 per recipient—the number of scholarships awarded dependent upon both the number of applications received and the balance of the fund in a given cycle.

You can find out more about Lauren and the Scholarship Fund on the Chamber website.

# SPAWNERS and Green Team Looking Forward to Earth Day, April 23, 2022

## Earth Day Cleanup targets streets, creeks

**By Mikki Norris** *ESMAC member, El Sobrante Green Team*

What better way to honor Mother Earth this Earth Day than to do our part to keep her clean and beautiful? The El Sobrante Green Team and SPAWNERS are collaborating to host a special 94803 cleanup of our streets and creeks on Saturday, April 23. Staged from the El Sobrante Public Library, 4191 Appian Way, these civic-minded groups (sponsored in part by the ES Chamber of Commerce) invite the community and local businesses to join in and participate in this special event and celebration.

**Participants** can sign in, borrow equipment, and find designated locations to pick up litter starting at 9:30 AM. Cleanup is from 10 AM to 1 PM, with a fun celebration for the volunteers with food, drinks, music, speakers, children's activities, info tables (on getting rid of stuff, recycling, local organizations, etc.), from 1-3 PM. Some volunteers will also help with a gardening project at the library.

**How can your business or group help** support this Earth Day event? Easy! Make a special effort to clean up and beautify your own properties. Plant some flowers, clean up the trash and cigarette butts in your parking lots, sidewalks and gutters, add a trash bin, refresh paint on your properties. Or become a sponsor of this community-building event to show support and promote your companies' Good Neighbor practices. Any help with providing food, drinks, gifts, or funding is welcome and greatly appreciated.

**To be a sponsor**, please contact Mikki Norris at 510-215-8326 or [info@keepelsobrantebeautiful.info](mailto:info@keepelsobrantebeautiful.info). More info online at [SPAWNERS.org](http://SPAWNERS.org) and [KeepElSobranteBeautiful.info](http://KeepElSobranteBeautiful.info).



**By Lauren Iverson** *SPAWNERS*

**Help clean up your local creeks!** Join SPAWNERS for a public workday on Saturday 3/19. We'll meet at the Wilkie Creek restoration site (near 4805 Santa Rita Road in Richmond, CA) at 9:30 am and work until noon. Please bring sturdy shoes and a reusable water bottle; we'll provide gloves, water, and snacks.

**Want to learn more about SPAWNERS?** Check out our Spring newsletter at [www.SPAWNERS.org/winter-2022-newsletter/](http://www.SPAWNERS.org/winter-2022-newsletter/). From information about our upcoming Earth Day event to an in-depth article on San Pablo's Wildcat Creek Restoration and Greenway Trail, there's a lot of exciting work happening in our community to read about and get involved with!



# Business of the Month for March 2022

ToCo Tea  
4801 Valley View Road  
El Sobrante, CA 94803  
510-417-2788  
Hours: 10AM until 9PM

The Chamber of Commerce is happy to announce the Business of the Month for March, 2022, is one of the first examples of a ToCo Tea location outside of Vietnam. It's located at 4801 Valley View Road and is family operated by partners Tru, May and Phi. ToCo Tea company was created in 2013 in Vietnam to create fresh, nutritious drinks based upon Black Tea, Green Tea, or Oolong Tea. By 2018, there were over 200 ToCo Tea locations throughout Vietnam and they were looking to reach out and establish themselves in other countries. They were very excited about having a location in El Sobrante because of its relaxed, friendly community. And ToCo Tea has a lot to offer El Sobrante.

They also serve Vietnamese coffee, in various flavors, hot and cold. ToCo Tea offers a comfortable place to relax while enjoying free Wi-Fi. Students can study there and commuters can drop by for an iced coffee to enjoy on their way to work.

If you've ever had a problem with spilling your coffee in the car ToCo Tea has two creative solutions. Customers have the option of getting their beverage in a closed, sealed container that has a soda can type lid you open when you're ready to drink. The other option also has a sealed lid of plastic that you pierce with your straw when you're ready. And the straws are big enough so you don't get any of the toppings stuck if you're drinking a smoothie.

They serve all kinds of tea; Milk teas, Cream Cheese teas, and Fresh Fruit teas. They also have Fruit Freeze's. And you can order anything with delicious toppings like Tapioca Pearls, Aloe, Crystal Boba or Basil Seeds. Their extensive menu also includes snacks like chicken wings, onion rings, coconut shrimp and French fries. Stop by and check them out.



Exterior of ToCo Tea on Valley View



Interior of ToCo Tea

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AND NOTHING BUT  
HAPPINESS COME  
THROUGH YOUR DOOR.**

**-IRISH BLESSING**



The April issue of ABOUT TOWN will be published on April 1, 2022.

Ads or articles must be submitted not later than 5:30 pm on Tuesday, March, 2022, to guarantee inclusion in the publication. Written pieces must be sent in WORD format (no PDFs); art/ads should be a JPEG, GIF or PNG file. Send your submissions for consideration to [mlbooz@calnatives.com](mailto:mlbooz@calnatives.com). The newsletter's editorial committee has final determination on all newsletter content.



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**Nicole Donn**  
 Branch Manager



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FD 195



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San Pablo, California  
(510) 232-6552  
FD 881

# Benefits of Joining The El Sobrante Chamber Of Commerce

1. **El Sobrante Chamber Members get their own page on our website.** This page displays your logo, photos, and text with keywords for Search Engine Optimization (so you are found at the top in Google searches, aka SEO), a map to your location, links to your website and social media, and videos.
2. **Members are promoted on our social media accounts.** We will post about your sales, events, services, and anything else you would like us to promote.
3. **Members are promoted through our print and digital newsletters** that are sent out once a month.
4. **Members have monthly opportunities** to meet other community members and business leaders at our popular mixers, which will resume after the pandemic is over.
5. **Members receive a generous welcome package** with gifts and coupons from other Chamber Members.
6. **The El Sobrante Chamber provides an abundance of resources** about our local community.
7. **Members are offered discounted booth spaces at our annual El Sobrante Stroll,** which is attended by approximately 25,000 people per year. A decision on the 2021 Stroll will take place at the June Chamber Board meeting. The 2021 Stroll, if it takes place, will be virtual.
8. **The El Sobrante Chamber offers multiple workshops per year,** in which experts discuss topics that are helpful to business owners and their employees. Upcoming workshops include presentations on SEO, taxes, insurance, social media marketing, and more. More information on any 2021 Workshops will be announced later.
9. **Members often receive special discounts** from other Members' businesses.
10. **Current members in good standing receive a \$10 credit** towards future dues for each new member they refer who joins the Chamber.





# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Representative \_\_\_\_\_

Resident's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

New- Referred by \_\_\_\_\_

Renewal- year first joined \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to appear on published mailing lists?  yes  no

Would you like to serve on a committee?  yes  no

## MEMBERSHIP DUES

## ADVERTISING FEES

[Membership period February 1 through January 31 of following year, prorated only after August 31]

Paid annually as follows:

- Business  \$150
- [over 10 employees]  \$200
- In-Home Business  \$100
- Non-Profit Organization  \$100
- Resident  \$ 40

- Newsletter
- Full Page – per issue  \$100
  - full year  \$600\*
  - Half Page - full year  \$350\*
  - Qtr. Page - full year  \$200\*
  - Business card, full year  \$100

MEMBERSHIP DUES \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Pandemic Relief Disc 50% \$ - \_\_\_\_\_

ADVERTISING FEES \$ \_\_\_\_\_

DONATIONS:

Beautification \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Scholarship \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Complimentary website AD included for 2021\*

ADVERTISING ART:

- INCLUDED WITHIN
- TO BE SENT SEPARATELY
- USE PREVIOUS ART

**JOIN/RENEW online at [elsobrantechamber.com](http://elsobrantechamber.com)**

or

**COMPLETE FORM and RETURN WITH CHECK TO:**

**EI Sobrante Chamber of Commerce**

**4460 Fieldcrest Dr.**

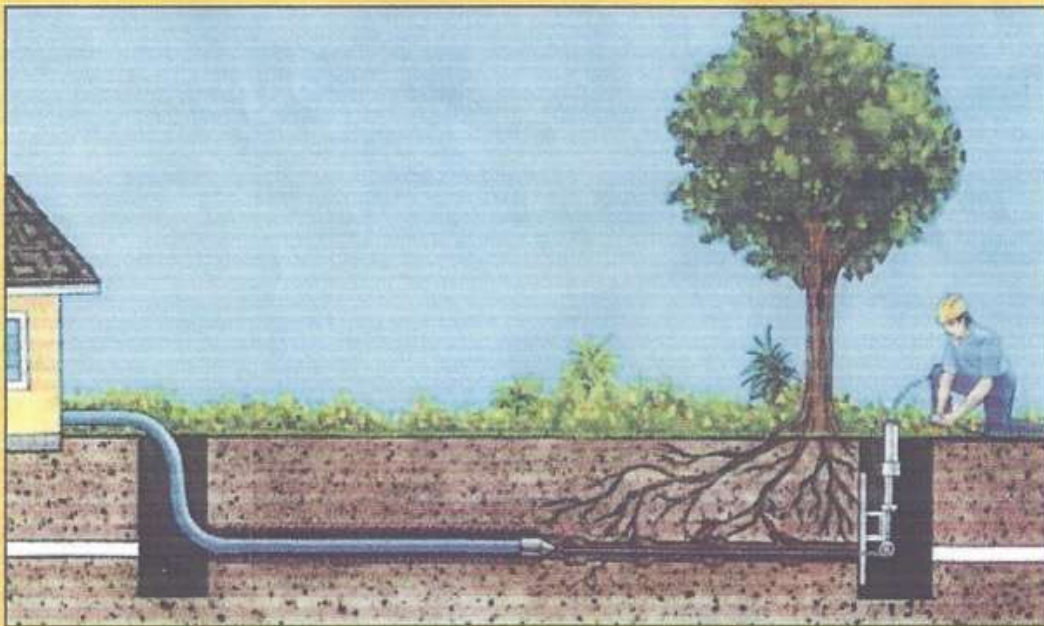
**EI Sobrante, CA 94803**

**ATTN: Membership**

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# El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce Members

<b>Business Name</b>	<b>Contact</b>	<b>Business Name</b>	<b>Contact</b>
Alameda-Contra Costa Transit	Ryan Lau	Rixen Chiropractic	Dr. Dan
**Alpha Tax Service**	John G. Kelso EA	**Rotary Club of El Sobrante**	Ruth Williams Rockey
Porter, Ritchie & Associates Ameriprise Financial Services	Mark Porter	Second2None, LLC	Ron Batton
**Bill's Underground**	Bill & Donna Schupp	**Security Public Storage**	Melissa & Enrique Serrano
Boys & Girls Clubs of Contra Costa	Lorna Padia Markus	**SPAWNERS**	Judy Ward, Lauren Iverson
Burgess Allard Group LLC	Karlen Schminke	St. Joseph Catholic School	Natalie Lenz-Acuna
Canyon Swim School—Closed for 2020	Fred Brown	State Farm Insurance	Sonny Randhawa
CASA of Contra Costa County	Gordana Zura	Sewer Connection	Cathy Brazil
**Castle Rock Wealth Management**	Bob Davis	Sinclair Financial	Lindy Sinclair
CEI - Guardian Adult Day Health Center	Heather Marcus, Center Director	**US Financial Mortgage Lending**	Nicole Donn
Cloverfield Organic Farm	Susan Abernathy	Vegan 'N Chicken	Shabaz Abbasi
Contra Costa Protective Services	Mr. M. Kahn	The Grooming Garden	Cyndy Patrick
East Bay Municipal Utility District	Sharla Sullivan	West Contra Costa Meals on Wheels	Rod Chiuu, Denise Quiros
El Sobrante Historical Society	Don Bastin	West County Wastewater District	B Martinez
**Farmers Insurance Agency**	Jim Cowen	Wilson & Kratzer	Celina Hernandez
Fisk Termite Control, Inc.	Robert Sibley	**Windermere Rowland Realty**	Scott Tuffnell
Godfathers Limousine Service	Tony Raffanelli	Resident	Martha Booz
**Little Wishes Spa**	Karla Amador-Daza	Resident	Y'Anad Burrell
**Lucy's Coin & Jewelry Pawn**	Adam Gross	Residents	Marie Carayanis
Lynden & Company	Thomas Lynden	Resident	Sarah Dunham
Meals on Wheels West Contra Costa	Rod Chiuu, Denise Quiros	Resident	John S. Koepke
Mechanics Bank	Jury Zamora, mgr.	Resident	Thomas Lang
Michael Pejza Insurance	Michael Pejza	Resident	Su Li
Moose Lodge	Larry Jordan	Residents	Susan & Dick McCloskey
Nerd Crossing	Jim Hammack	Resident	Lorna Padia Markus
Park Lane Jewelry	Dawn Biocca	Resident	Shirley Sharp
**Planchon Roofing**	Doug Planchon	Resident	Robert Sharp
**Plumbing Express**	Cathy Brazil	Resident	Beverly Wallace
**Professional Property Management	Diana Escobar	Resident	Cathy Werner
Republic Services	Bielle Moore	Resident	Harry Wiener
Restoration Auto Body	Mark Croda	Resident	Debbie Wold

# About Town Newsletter March 2022



El Sobrante Chamber of Commerce

**THE EL SOBRANTE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

[www.ElSobranteChamber.com](http://www.ElSobranteChamber.com)

3769 – B San Pablo Dam Road

El Sobrante, CA 94803

Office: 510-815-9307