



COURTESY OF BJORKQUIST FAMILY

Bridgette Bjorkquist, of San Diego, left, and her daughter, Claudine Galt, enjoy the return of Bjorkquist's 1965 Mustang that was stolen 40 years ago. A Pleasanton man bought the car last year and later discovered it was stolen.

Mustang stolen in '71 heads home

Pleasanton man bought classic on Internet last year, had it refurbished unaware of status

By Sophia Kazmi
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DUBLIN — Forty years ago, Bridgette Bjorkquist's heart was broken when her maroon 1965 Ford Mustang was stolen in Los Angeles. She loved that car, but gave up hope of ever seeing it again.

But around the New Year's holiday, the San Diego resident got a call from California Highway Patrol officers from Dublin. They gave her news she never expected to hear: They had found her car.

"I almost fell over," Bjorkquist said by phone from San Diego.

Not only was her car to be returned to her, but it had been painted a jazzy red and is in fair condition thanks to

the car's most recent owner, a Pleasanton man who bought it on the Internet last year and had the classic restored.

The man brought the car into the California Highway Patrol's office in Dublin on Dec. 29, said CHP Officer Jeff Piccinini. The owner was concerned after he noticed some old maroon paint on inside parts of the car, and he wanted to make sure the car had all its original parts.

The man, whom the CHP did not identify, bought the car last year. He saw it online and went to Los Angeles to see it. He liked it, bought it and had it shipped to an auto shop in Nevada, where the man lived at the time, Piccinini said. The car spent the next year being restored.

Piccinini checked over the car for the man and found that the "confidential" vehicle ID number tucked away in the car's innards didn't match what was on the car's registration papers. He checked the original ID number and made a startling find.

"It returned stolen from March 23, 1971," Piccinini said.

Piccinini and Special Agent Roger Hogan, from the National Insurance Crime Bureau, found Bjorkquist.

"It's unbelievable. ... Forty years later, it's unreal," she said.

Bjorkquist said she bought the car in 1969. It disappeared in March 1971 while she was away in Palm Springs.

"It will never be seen again," she remembered thinking at the time. "I just had to accept the car was stolen and that was it."

Officer Steve Creel, the Dublin CHP office spokesman, said the investigation is ongoing and officers are trying to track the car's ownership through the years. It's possible the Pleasanton man could recoup his losses through civil proceedings, he said.

How much the restored Mustang is worth depends on the condition, the type of Mustang and its amenities,

said Ray Banks, vice president of the Sunnyvale-based Northern California Region Shelby American Automobile Club.

He said classic-car enthusiasts have heard stories like this before.

"It (has) happened to people in the club, and it's just heartbreaking. You're devastated," he said.

Altering the public VIN number on a 1965 Mustang is easy, he said, adding that a new number can be put on the door panel.

The car is being returned to Bjorkquist because she was the last legitimate owner, Creel said. If she had been paid an insurance claim, the car would go to the insurance company.

The car left for San Diego on Wednesday, but Bjorkquist isn't sure she will keep it.

"Once you get older, you like more comfort," she said.

Contact Sophia Kazmi at 925-847-2122. Follow her at Twitter.com/sophiakazmi.

Tax

From Page 3

next door to us that turned out well," Shields said. "We have similar qualities (to Fremont), so it gives us some indication as to what might be approved in Newark."

But first, the school dis-

trict must hear feedback from residents, and TBWB consultants will be updating Newark school board members with regular progress reports, Heath said.

"We're just starting this process," he said.

Contact Chris De Benedetti at 510-353-7011. Follow him at Twitter.com/cdebenedetti.

Mental

From Page 3

"She's filling quite a need for the community because it's the only place where Indian Americans can go and get mental health resources," said Simi Markar, a therapist from San Jose.

The more Deshpande studied psychology, the more she realized she wanted to work with South Asian patients, many of whom came to her with court mandates to get therapy.

"I just felt like I was in this really unique position of being trained clinically, but also being brought up in the South Asian culture so that I could bridge both worlds," she said.

Treating South Asian patients requires a good deal of cultural sensitivity, Deshpande said. Symptoms of depression often include headaches and stomach pains rather than listlessness and sadness, she said, noting that many South Asians are taught not to express emotions and not to seek treatment for the more typical signs of depression until they manifest physically.

And because South Asians are taught not to talk about their families, traditional therapy methods don't always work.

When one client was giv-

ing superficial answers, Deshpande had her tell stories using fictional characters. That ultimately helped them make progress.

Deshpande started the website thinking it would help South Asians learn about issues such as depression and anxiety in a private setting.

She surveyed about 100 South Asians on the most important mental health issues they faced and were willing to discuss. Because of their answers, she found herself writing a lot about relationships when the website went live last July.

MySahana now has 19 volunteers plus Deshpande, who donates her time to run the nonprofit and the website from her Milpitas home.

For now, she's partnering with other organizations, such as the South Asian Heart Center, to refer patients to the website and also to sponsor booths at health fairs.

But eventually she wants the nonprofit to start raising money and providing therapy, including free treatment for people who can't afford it.

"There's a need for this," she said. "We're trying to reach people in a way that they aren't being reached yet."

Contact Matthew Artz at 510-353-7002. For more Fremont news, read his blog at wwww.ibabuzz.com/tricitybeat.

Richards

From Page 3

A: That is what a CHP officer recommended, but it was wrong. You are to steer in the direction of the skid.

Q: We have a huge safety concern and I really need your help. Union City Boulevard is a major street in Union City with a 45 mph speed limit. When heading north, there is a left-turn lane for Bay Colony Way.

When heading south there is a left-turn light for Delores Drive. The problem is when heading in opposite directions, there are no turn lanes — yet people often stop to make U-turns. Not only are they risking being rear-ended, but they could also be T-boned by oncoming traffic. There are no signs saying it's illegal, but common sense dictates it is. Can the city put up proper signs so people will know they're in the wrong?

Steve Rackley
Union City

A: This is illegal at these streets. The city has installed a "No U-turn" sign on the southbound side and will install one northbound shortly.

Q: We need crosswalk markings to walk safely across the 101 northbound freeway onramp going east on Ralston Avenue in Belmont, especially now that the sidewalk on the other side is closed for construction of a pedestrian overpass.

Karen Cutter

A: Caltrans reviewed this area and said a marked crosswalk is not needed. Marked crosswalks are placed at intersections with signals and where it is not clear to cross. The state believes it is clearly understood where to cross at this ramp, so markings are not needed.

Contact Gary Richards at mrroadshow@mercurynews.com or 408-920-5335.

Plant

From Page 3

second trickling filter.

Shortly after the renovations were completed, the plant earned the city an energy conservation award for its redesign.

According to Pacific Gas & Electric, the energy-efficient technologies cut the city's power costs by about \$78,000 annually.

The plant processes about 13.1 million of gallons of raw sewage each day, pumping the treated water out into the Bay.

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POLITICAL BLOTTER

Mideast at center of dueling BART ads

This is a sampling from Bay Area News Group's Political Blotter blog. Read more and post comments at www.ibabuzz.com/politics.

Jan. 18

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict — the rhetorical side of the conflict, at least — is visible in the Bay Area again as organizations for and against Israeli policy have bought dueling ads in several BART stations.

Jewish Voice for Peace — an Oakland-based group that "seeks an end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem; security and self-determination for Israelis and Palestinians; a just solution for Palestinian refugees based on principles established in international law; an end to violence against civilians; and peace and justice for all peoples of the Middle East" — co-produced an ad launched Dec. 5, urging commuters passing through the downtown Berkeley, Oakland-12th Street and San Francisco Civic Center BART stations to "End U.S. military aid to Israel."

"Our ads are not about repeating the same old

paradigms, where one side (Israelis or Palestinians) is good and the other (Palestinians or Israelis) is bad. Our ads are about the common ground that we have," Sydney Levy, Jewish Voice for Peace's campaigns director, said today via e-mail. "It is about asking Americans to stand together with Israelis and Palestinians on the same side, not opposite one another."

StandWithUs, a Los Angeles-based international pro-Israel group, this week launched ads of its own in the same BART stations plus three more — Embarcadero and Balboa Park in San Francisco, and Oakland's MacArthur — depicting both the "rage-filled eyes of a terrorist" as well as Palestinian and Israeli children playing soccer together, directing readers to a website that blames Palestinians for obstructing the peace process.

"The anti-Israel ad confuses and deceives the public. It declares it represents the side of 'peace and justice' and shows happy pictures of an Israeli father and a Palestinian father with their little sons. These images and words appeal to all people of good will. But the

real message is that Israel is the obstacle to peace and that the U.S. should stop all financial assistance to Israel," StandWithUs CEO Roz Rothstein said in a news release. "The ad tries to hide the real obstacles — Hamas, Palestinian terrorism, and decades of anti-Israel, anti-Jewish hate education. We cannot let this message, with its deceptive, velvet-gloved rhetoric, influence unsuspecting commuters who may not know the facts. Our ads will provide the needed facts."

Levy, of course, disagrees. "Sadly, the Stand With Us ads are simply about demonizing and delegitimizing Palestinians. They say that Israel has no partner for peace. They ignore all the Palestinian nonviolent anti-occupation activists languishing in Israeli jails, including Abdallah Abu Rahmah, an Amnesty International Palestinian prisoner of conscience."

— Josh Richman

Jan. 20

Rep. John Garamendi, D-Walnut Grove, has lost his seat on the House Transportation Committee and will serve instead on the Natural

Resources and Armed Services panels.

The shift is in response to the reduction in the number of seats Democrats hold on committees under Republican leadership in addition to the GOP's overall cuts in committee sizes.

Garamendi is a good fit for resources. He served in President Bill Clinton's Interior Department and his congressional district includes vast portions of the Delta. It also means the East Bay will regain representation on the key committee after neighboring Congressman George Miller, D-Martinez, also lost his seat on Natural Resources.

Miller is ranking member of the Education and Workforce Committee and could not hold both positions.

Garamendi's predecessor, Ellen Tauscher, served on the Armed Services Committee; the district includes Travis Air Force Base and two national laboratories.

Nonetheless, Garamendi expressed disappointment over losing the transportation seat, a policy area he views as critical to his commuter-heavy home district.

— Lisa Vorderbrueggen

EAST BAY ROUNDUP

OAKLAND

OFFICER KILLS STABBING SUSPECT: An Oakland public schools police officer fatally shot a 20-year-old man Saturday night who was stabbing another school officer with a screwdriver, authorities said.

The name of the dead man was not released. Authorities said he had addresses in San Francisco, Daly City and Alameda.

The names of the officers also were not released.

The suspect was inside a Honda that had been stolen earlier in the evening in Oak-

land, authorities said, and a pistol was found inside the vehicle not far from where the man was.

A 20-year-old woman, an Alameda resident who was driving the car, was not hurt. She was arrested Sunday on suspicion of auto theft and possession of stolen property.

The incident happened about 9:15 p.m. Saturday on Joaquin Miller Road near Crane Way.

The site is across the street from Joaquin Miller Park, where Skyline High School students were at a dance at a park facility.

— Harry Harris

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