

Lights, camera, Christmas

*Pleasanton is aglow
with holiday happiness*

BY DOLORES FOX CIARDELLI
PHOTOS BY CAMMIE CLARK

Decking the halls is alive and well in Pleasanton. Even the grumpiest Scrooge must smile driving through town these days — from the charming downtown fare to the neighborhoods, not to mention the mall with its Santa centerpiece.

Bob's World has been presented by "Santa Bob" Stanley at his home at 2612 Calle Reynoso for more than 20 years. He works for five weeks of the year installing old favorites and new inspirations to offer a display that is complete with music.

Stanley says he keeps going because of the feedback he receives from charmed visitors.

"They say, 'I never thought you could outdo last year, but you did!'" Stanley said one holiday season. "It just keeps growing. Each year I try to make it different. It just keeps growing."

Stanley credits the website LightsoftheValley.com for much of the increased traffic. Alex Dourov, a Livermore resident, started the website in 1999 as a go-to guide of the best decorated homes in the Tri-Valley. It now includes much of the Bay Area and Northern California but its entries for Pleasanton and the Tri-Valley remain a valuable resource.

Dourov spends a lot of time on the website — along with volunteer elves — and his motivation echoes that of Santa Bob.

"It's about making people smile," Dourov said. "Not only the children, but also the adults."

Malcolm and Sandee McNeil have been decorating their home at 1279 Hearst Drive for more than 30 years, both inside and out. Each year they hold a party for the neighbors so everyone can enjoy their inside decorations, which include a display of festive nutcrackers, Christmas trees and Santas.

Also attracting throngs this year is the Widmer home at 3671 Chelsea Court. Susan Widmer says her family has been putting together the display for more than 30 years and the homemade displays now cover their entire 1-acre lot.

"It's a way for our family to give back to other families and make their holiday memorable," Widmer said. ■

Light up your life

Following are addresses of special holiday displays in Pleasanton. They will also be at www.Pleasanton-Weekly.com, and we welcome your additions to the list online.

- 📍 1279 Hearst Drive
- 📍 2283 Sea Eagle Court
- 📍 2612 Calle Reynoso
- 📍 2773 Corte San Blas
- 📍 2793 Calle Alegre
- 📍 3671 Chelsea Court
- 📍 3679 Hawaii Court S
- 📍 4148 Walnut Drive
- 📍 5926 Via Del Cielo
- 📍 6855 Singletree Court
- 📍 802 Gray Fox Circle



For more than 20 years "Santa Bob" Stanley has transformed all of the land around his house on Calle Reynoso into "Bob's World," a fantasy wonderland to make the holidays special for families. This year (top) his garage features trains and whimsical characters, while his back yard is the North Pole. On Hearst Drive, Malcolm and Sandee McNeil decorate inside and out, with their nutcracker collection nestled next to the curving staircase and a candy cane theme this year in the front yard.