

PIEDMONT POST

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER SERVING THE CITIZENS OF PIEDMONT

Ambassador Jeff Bleich provides Commencement address at high school graduation



Staff photo

Piedmont resident Jeff Bleich, the former U.S. Ambassador to Australia.

The following is an abridged version of the commencement address given by former Ambassador Jeff Bleich at Piedmont High School's graduation ceremony on June 2 at Witter Field.

My great grandparents faced persecution and poverty in Eastern Europe for years. At some point, they decided that even if their life elsewhere would be no better, they owed it to their children and grandchildren to at least try. They left behind everything they had, everyone they knew and loved, to come to America. Their family members who remained, our ancestors in Europe, perished in the Holocaust. I do not have heirlooms, or pictures, or distant cousins I can find on 23andMe. The only place our family exists is in America. It was the one nation that let my great-grandparents in and gave them a chance.

So I owe a debt to my great grandparents and to the people who welcomed them. Know this: I would not be alive today were it

not for the courage of my ancestors, and the courage of people from this country who were willing to take them in.

Each day is the gift that others' courage gave me. We don't stand on the shoulders of giants. We stand on the shoulders of people just like us – people who struggle with these decisions and who are uncertain. But in the end, they had a choice, and they chose to take risks and sacrifice for a greater good. And all they expected from us is to do the same.

Courage is measured not by how much people are willing to do to win. It is measured by how much they would be willing to lose.

When I was the U.S. Ambassador in Australia I was often asked about gun violence. For two decades leading up to 1996, there had been a mass shooting nearly every year in Australia.

But then in 1996, there was a mass shooting that shocked the entire country. Citizens from both [political] parties demanded action. And that moment of horror became a movement. Every political leader understood this. The time had come to stop this madness. Despite the threat of losing their [elective] seats, the conservative government voted to ban assault weapons, require complete background checks, and buy back and destroy these weapons.

This was controversial, and after it passed, several conservative politicians lost their seats in rural districts. But after it passed, there were no mass shootings that See [Jeff Bleich's address](#) on page 7

Cub Scout Day Camp generates excitement at Dracena Park

By Jay Russell

A Piedmont summertime staple, the one-week Cub Scout Day Camp took over Dracena Park after the last day of classes, extending the week of June 6. Sixteen Cub Scouts learned from 19 older Scouts. Every day began with a flag-raising ceremony, and the end of the week was capped off by the Scouts' famous Egg Drop, on Friday, with raw eggs in various containers being dropped, one by one, from the top of the Piedmont Fire Department's 75-foot ladder.

During the week the Cubs – boys and girls – soaked up the first rays of summer with a jam-packed schedule of fun. Archery returned to the camp this year, and for most of the youngsters, it was their first time drawing back a bowstring.

This year's theme was the "Wild, Wild West" and by affixing five-star badges, the kids See [Camp Dracena](#) on page 29



5th grader Rob Ashton of the "Bob is a Buffalo" Den stands by the results of his bowmanship at the archery range during the Cub Scout Day Camp in Dracena Park the week of June 6. See page 29 for photo coverage of the 5-day camp.



Photos courtesy of Scout Council

Archery returned to the quarry of lower Dracena Park during Cub Scout Day Camp in June.

Praise from community for all-electric pool

Report finds \$500,000 will be cost of full electrification

By Allyson Aleksey

Piedmont Connect, a community organization that supports city efforts on sustainability, released a newsletter on June 6 praising the city for moving forward with an all-electric aquatic facility.

"We are proud that our Council unanimously voted for an all-electric facility, powered by an on-site solar PV-thermal array, electric heat pumps, and supple-

mental clean electricity from East Bay Community Energy (EBCE), our county's Electrical Energy Aggregator," said Piedmont Connect Board Member Hope Salzer. "Our new aquatic facility will produce no greenhouse gas pollution directly, a significant step towards the City's goal of municipal facilities and activities emitting no fossil pollution by 2050."

The organization anticipated that city council's commitment to electrifying the aquatic facil-

ity will also inspire community members to electrify their homes.

City Council unanimously approved the plan to proceed with full electrification of the pool at an April 4 meeting. However, City Administrator Sara Lillevand noted at the time that upfront construction costs for the project could reach \$500,000, according to an updated energy use report. These costs include eighteen heat pump chillers, four heat exchangers, and HVAC related items, including seismic work, hauling and other building-related HVAC scope. Lillevand proposed proceeding with the project, and seeking additional funding from outside sources.

City Council adopted a policy entitled "acceptance of donations and naming of city owned facilities" at a meeting on May 2. The purpose of the policy is to encourage public-private partnerships that provide donations to support and enhance city services and facilities, which will help fund the all-electric facility.



Photo courtesy of ELS Architecture and Urban Design

An early design schematic of the proposed aquatic facility.

INSIDE

- Bleich Grad speech 1
- Letters to Editor..... 2
- July 4 Pancakes 3
- Question Man 4
- July 4 Parade preview..... 5
- PHS Senior Awards 6
- Graduation speeches 7
- PPD Blue 9
- Americans in Paris 10
- Sports 12
- Bouquets to Art 16
- Music 19
- Musical Gourmet..... 20
- PCA events 21
- Walking Piedmont..... 22
- Wine Corner 23
- Obituary 24
- Wed. Walkers..... 25
- Real Estate..... 26
- Camp Dracena..... 29
- Pied. Choirs on tour..... 32
- Where in the World..... 32