

Life in LAMORINDA

Want to Stave off Home Burglary? Know Thy Neighbor

By Jennifer Wake

On the Monday of Memorial Day weekend, Carole Hagglund and her husband, Jay, decided to return early to their Lafayette home after their weekend trip. It was 1 p.m. when Hagglund went through her back gate to check on her plants while her husband brought their bags in through the front door.

In the backyard, Hagglund was greeted by two large men, whom she assumed were there to work on the pool or were part of her gardener's crew. "I am a very naïve and trusting person," she said. "I am used to seeing unfamiliar guys in our backyard. I asked what they were doing and they gave me the standard line: They were looking for the Johnson's."

As they walked past me towards their car parked on the street, I began to follow them."

Her husband yelled for her to get back in the house and to call 911. "That's when I knew something was wrong," she said. The Hagglund's master bedroom sliding door had been forced open with a crow bar; pillow cases and duffle bags sat filled with the couple's belongings on the floor.

Although the Lamorinda area has one of the lowest crime rates in California, it is not immune from crime. Between January and April 2007, Lafayette had 23 home burglaries and 23 car thefts, according to the Lafayette Police. And Police Chief Mike Hubbard says when summer vacations ramp up, so does criminal activity.

"This is the time of year that most folks start to gear up for the vacation season. Unfortunately the burglars start to gear up for the season as well," Hubbard wrote on the City Manager's Web site. With 42 sworn police officers on staff in the three Lamorinda communi-

ties, neighborhood watch programs are an important component to crime prevention, but neighbors need to get involved.

Lior Rubin, owner of Global Security Systems in Moraga, says if you do not have an alarm system, a key deterrent to home burglary is to know your neighbors. "Some victims of burglary have had their homes completely emptied by what appeared to be a moving company. The neighbors saw the truck arrive and watched the men empty the house," Lior said. "They didn't call the police because they assumed the neighbor, whom



they hardly knew, was moving."

Lior suggests informing each other when workers are scheduled to be at your home so impostors can't steal valuables. "If your neighbor hasn't informed you of the work to be done, call the police," he said.

Chief Hubbard suggests having someone pick up your newspaper or mail (burglars are now able to find out who has discontinued a newspaper while on vacation); set light timers at alternate times and different locations throughout the house; trim foliage near entryways; don't announce vacations on voicemail; unplug your garage door opener and lock all windows and doors.

The Hagglund's did lock their house, but admit they did



some things wrong: they left newspapers on the driveway, mail in the mailbox, and parked their second car in the garage versus the driveway. Hagglund applauded the police response to their call, but feels there are not enough police in Lafayette.

"Although we wrote down the license plate number [of the burglar's vehicle], and found the owner of the car, no one has been able to follow up," said Hagglund, who was disappointed about the recent failure of Measure P, which would have funded more police officers in the area. "The police who came were terrific, but there just aren't enough of them to investigate this further."

The Hagglands are considering hiring a retired police officer to continue their investigation. They have also installed an alarm system and have started a neighborhood watch program.

For more information about what you can do to protect your home, contact your local police department or view home safety tips at www.globalsecuritysystems.net.

Golf - MCC vs. OCC?

By Cathy Tyson

What a dilemma, a free afternoon and a desire to play golf. Where does one go in Lamorinda? The decision is easy if you're a member of a club, it not, you need to get an invitation from a pal at either the Moraga Country Club or the Orinda Country Club.

Moraga Country Club (MCC), located on Moraga Way is hard to miss, as part of it fronts this busy road, and winds along behind Miramonte High School. The other, Orinda Country Club (OCC), is tucked away on winding Camino Sobrante off the beaten path. Both clubs have tennis courts, pools and golf courses that will be buzzing all summer long. The golf, however, is distinctly different between the clubs.

Moraga Country Club was initially founded in 1973 as a 9-hole course according to Randy Kahn, the Director of Golf. Homeowners in the "Club" automatically are members, and their monthly dues reflect charges for upkeep of the golf course as well as the tennis courts and the pools. Around 1992 - 1993 the Board of Directors decided to expand the golf course to 18 holes and created a new group, Associate Members, which are equity members but don't live on the premises. Right now there are 521 Homeowner members and 380 Associate Members.

"Some of the best things about the Club are its friendly members, its location in the hills - the visuals are unmatched in the valley, and the greens on 12 and 14 - which have very unconventional designs," reflects Kahn. When he first started working here 13 years ago, the average age of the membership was solidly senior, but there has been

a continual shift toward younger families joining, reflecting the turnover of homes inside and outside the club.

Bob McLaughlin, former Men's Golf Association President says, "I like the course because it's challenging. It makes you a better golfer because there are so many difficult holes. The people are great, too. A bunch of family-oriented guys that like to have a good time."

The Orinda Country Club has been around since 1924. Willie Watson, who had just finished the Olympic Club in San Francisco, designed the 18-hole course. But the Club history goes back even farther. Way back in 1887, the deLaveaga brothers, Miguel and Jose bought 1,178 acres north of what is now Highway 24. Miguel's son, E.I. deLaveaga developed the community including the Haciendas del Orinda subdivision, water plant, firehouse, and village to serve the residents of the small enclave. The stately clubhouse has the classic look one might expect of a country club, and has only gotten more attractive over the years with necessary renovations and upgrades.

"I love the course, its steeped in tradition," says Mike Vigo, longtime member, who had served in the past on the Greens Committee. "What you see is what you get, its not tricked up. The golf course is competitive, but fair. Before the 1940's courses were designed that melded with the landscape, there were no bunkers in the middle of the landing area that you might see with a course designed today. It's a challenge every time you play it." He adds the friendly members and staff make it special.



Shim LaGoy at Orinda Country Club Photo by Tod Fierner

Shim LaGoy, Head Golf Professional at the Orinda Country Club says, "the clientele is the best thing about the Club. Members include business executives, kings of corporations, great athletes, a real cross section of professional people." OCC is unique in that it is a private equity club. The members own it. To play you must be invited by and accompanied by a member.

Recently two other golf courses have come and gone, at least on paper. Wilder, formerly the Gateway development and Palos Colorados had at one point, golf courses included in their plans. Nowadays, MCC and OCC are the only games in town.

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Applications accepted and interviews conducted throughout
the summer. Final deadline to apply is September 14.

Please return applications to LLLCF, PO Box 1472, Lafayette, CA 94549
For further information call 925.283.6513