

Life in LAMORINDA

Making an Environmental Impact and Choosing Green

By Jennifer Wake



Members of the Holy Planet Task Force at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Lafayette (from left to right), Council Member Greg Wikler, Council Member and Vice President Bruce Veenstra, E-Waste Team Member Dick Enger, Council Member Joanne Tan, Church's Treasurer Bill Klapproth, and the Green Bag Task Leader, Roberta Klapproth
Photo Jennifer Wake

Each year before the holidays, Lafayette resident Joanne Tan goes through her two sons' toys to see which can be donated and which can be discarded. At the end of her venture last year, she was alarmed at the size of the pile of toys she had amassed.

Intent on making a difference, she wrote an article about our culture's excessive consumption, as well as ways to avoid it, and gave a copy to her pastor at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Lafayette. After reading the article, Pastor Dan Senter suggested that Tan start a "green" organization within the church to try to save energy, reduce waste, moderate consumption, and advocate a green lifestyle.

"We started simply, like using only ceramic mugs instead of paper coffee cups at church functions," Tan said. Since its inception in February, the group (which includes Bruce Veenstra, Greg Wikler and Bill Klapproth) has, among many other things, started an extensive process of installing motion sensors and compact fluorescent bulbs throughout the church, has distributed a monthly list of simple ideas that make an environmental difference, and is planning an e-waste

collection for the entire Lamorinda community on Saturday, Oct. 6.

Theirs is just one of many religious organizations within Lamorinda promoting green initiatives in order to make an environmental impact.

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Orinda started a group called "Caring for Creation," which sponsors speaking events, conducts energy audits of facilities, and has a goal of installing solar power.

The Orinda Community Church initiated a green committee that meets every other weekend to prioritize a list of initiatives and publish tips on living green. Members even rode scooters and walked with a green banner during the 4th of July Parade, and the church sewing circle is making eco-friendly bags that are sold to raise money for the committee.

"Every little step we take is truly related to the world," Tan said. "We want to educate and inspire. We're leading people into this lifestyle, and asking them to take the responsibility to do this for themselves."

Many of the local churches and synagogues that have organized these types of committees are

part of the California Interfaith Power & Light, an organization promoting green initiatives through religious organizations around the world.

But you don't need to be part of a house of worship to get involved. Organizations such as Sustainable Moraga and the newly formed Sustainable Lafayette have been actively involved in reducing the area's carbon footprint.

Last year, Marie Kahn, Myrto Petreas and Leslie Engler of Sustainable Moraga started a battery collection campaign and have since collected tons of batteries that require disposal at hazardous waste sites. Lafayette resident Kana Ryan decided to help her children "learn more about environmental efforts" by starting a battery collection community service project, collecting batteries from neighbors, friends, and their preschool.

The main thing, says Tan, is "to start individually with baby steps. Instead of forcing this on people, we offer a list of six suggestions (such as buying local organic food at the farmer's market, or using a toaster oven instead of the regular oven to cook smaller items) and suggest they try just three of them." Involvement is snowballing, with church members bringing green project suggestions to the group. "Roberta Klapproth sold 'green' bags to members," said Tan, "and Dick Enger brought the e-waste project to the task force."

For ideas on ways you can make a difference, and for hazardous waste site locations, visit the Sustainable Moraga and Lafayette Web sites (www.sustainablemoraga.org) or (www.sustainablelafayette.net).



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Art Show to Benefit Open Space Preservation

By Sophie Braccini

On the morning of September 8th, a group of eight artists met on the side of Saint Mary's Road in Moraga. There were oil painters, watercolor painters and photographers, all striving to create an original piece of art encompassing the beautiful view of Bollinger Canyon and the adjacent Saint Mary's College. An additional twenty-two artists will join the group from 10am-5pm on September 30th for the "Preserve Lamorinda Open Space" Art Show on the St. Mary's campus, in the courtyard near the Hearst Gallery. The exhibition is a fundraiser for the non-profit organization that seeks to protect Moraga's undeveloped areas and ridgelines.

About seven years ago, Lamorindans concerned with the environmental impacts of the Palos Colorados Development Project got together to form Preserve Lamorinda Open Space. The group focused on preserving local wild areas and the application of more stringent environmental controls for projects like Palos Colorados. Suzanne Jones, a member of the original steering committee, needed to raise funds for the new organization. Moraga painter Teresa Onoda contacted Jones and told her, "I know exactly what to do." Onoda had been active in the Martinez Carquinez Regional Environmental Education Center (CREEC) and had helped raise money to restore the Carquinez Strait. She knew that motivated and concerned artists can be effective in raising money for worthy causes. Saving open space for Lamorinda was a perfect rallying point for artists concerned with preserving open space for current



Left to right, Suzanne D'Arcy (painting); Sophie Braccini and Teresa Onoda talking to Suzanne Jones
Photo William Hinshaw

and future generations. Thus, the idea of an art exhibit was born.

The first art exhibition took place in Campolindo's multi-use room on a rainy day nearly five years ago. "It was quite an ordeal," remembers Onoda, "but my kids, who were students at Campo at the time, engaged their friends to help and they learned how one person can make a difference." Since those early days the art show gained considerable recognition and has moved to the Saint Mary's campus where the number of visi-

tors has increased year after year. "People come for the beautiful paintings, photography, and jewelry that local artists have created through the inspiration of our beautiful surroundings," says Jones, "most know that 40% of the sales go to our non-profit. We use the funds to support the protection of Lamorinda's remaining open space and we use the services of experts such as lawyers, engineers and environmentalists to prepare our recommendations."

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Donate E-Waste at One-Day Event

Residents and local businesses can bring electronic waste to Our Savior's Lutheran Church on Carol Lane in Lafayette on Saturday, Oct. 6 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. as part of a fundraiser to support the church's "green" program. The public is welcome to bring items such as TVs, monitors and laptops, flatscreens, cell phones, and ink jet cartridges for free recycling. There will be a \$5 fee (each) for CPUs, keyboards, printers, copiers, DVD players, fax machines, VCRs, stereos and video games. For more information, call Terry Cotteleer at C & T Recycling: (925) 549-1776.

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