

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Wednesday, November 28, 2007



Photo Tod Fierner

The city of Orinda, with funding and organizational support from the Orinda Arts Council, has a sculpture exhibit on display on the library plaza and around the community center and City Hall. Several large, museum-quality sculptures by local- and nationally-recognized artists comprise the year-long exhibit. "I've been a collector of art for many years, and I've always been fascinated by sculpture," explained Ted Urban, a member of the Orinda Arts Council. "The Council liked the idea of filling the plaza with art, and sculpture became the logical choice due to the outdoor location and exposure to weather and people."

The sculpture exhibit includes the work of 14 artists primarily from the Bay area. The pieces represent a broad expression of art subjects and styles and are made from a wide variety of materials including aluminum, painted and rusted steel, ceramic, redwood, bronze, and copper. A guide to the exhibit is posted between the garage and the plaza, and detailed information regarding the artist and the purchase price is available in the community center.



Sculpture Exhibit in Orinda

By Andrea A. Firth

Tree of Lights Ceremonies Help Those Who've Lost Remember

By Jennifer Wake

Tiny lights now twinkle on small trees along the center isle of Mt. Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette, but one tree shines tall above the rest.

On Nov. 11, in the parking lot across from La Fiesta Square on Lafayette Circle next to the Hen House, people from throughout Lamorinda gathered with candles in hand to listen to poetry, songs by the Springhill School Children's Choir, and to see the lighting of the giant oak at one of 16 Hospice Foundation of the East Bay's Tree of Lights Ceremonies – each light a symbol of the life of a donor's friend or family member.

Each year donations are collected for each light lit as a way to raise much needed funds for the Foundation which supports Hospice of the East Bay (Hospice). Funds raised help the organization care for all medically qualified patients without regard for their insurance status.

"The Foundation works to raise funds to pay for patients who are not fully covered," said Hospice Community Education Director Robin Jones. "While most Hospice patients have either private or public insurance such as Medicare or Medi-Cal, others are uninsured or underinsured. Even patients who are 'fully insured' benefit from the efforts of the Foundation when they receive services that are essential, but not covered by insurance."

Since 1995, the Hospice Tree of Lights has helped raise nearly \$900,000. Last year nearly \$90,000 was raised from more than 1,200 donors throughout the East Bay. These much needed funds also help to offset additional services that may not be covered by insurance such as frequent or lengthy visits, cost of gas to travel to patients' homes, in-home, pre-admission consults with a hospice nurse or medical social worker, and in-person bereavement support and counseling.

"We understand that death is both a spiritual and physical experience and that emotional, psychological and spiritual pain is as significant as physical pain," Jones said. "Patients, their families and loved ones are the unit of care. And bereavement care is critical to supporting surviving family members and friends. We are with the patient and family every step of the way."

... continued on page 17



Hospice staff member Robin Jones introduces the Springhill School Children's Choir at the Lafayette Tree of Lights Ceremony

Photo Jennifer Wake

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Saint Mary's Upends 12th Ranked Oregon Ducks

By Kevin D. Shallat



Gaels stun No 12 Oregon

Photo Tod Fierner

The Gaels looked to continue their unbeaten streak this season as they hosted the University of Oregon Ducks on Tuesday, Nov. 20. Freshman Patrick Mills made history by scoring 37 points, more than any other Gael freshman in history, as he led Saint Mary's past Oregon 99-87 in front of a sold-out crowd at McKeon Pavilion.

Every player who stepped onto the floor for the Gaels made an impact in this game, but none was more spectacular and jaw dropping than Saint Mary's freshman Patrick Mills. The Australian born point guard, who will be playing for Australia in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, put on a shooting display for a global TV audience (which aired on ESPN) – as well as for seven NBA scouts in the stands.

"I guess he knew it was on TV in Australia, so he was ready," said Saint Mary's head coach Randy Bennett. Mills shot 50 percent from the field, dropped 13-14 free throws, dished out five assists,

recorded two steals, scored 37 points in 37 minutes, and had only one turnover.

"I knew playing against guys like him, (Tajuan Porter) that it would also step my game up," Mills said, "so I'm very grateful to go to those guys and take it to them. It was just a great learning experience."

The Gaels did a great job to compete, basket for basket, against a speedy and athletic Oregon team. Sophomore center Omar Samhan contributed in the first half by making a number of difficult fadeaway shots to set the tone early in the game.

Forward Maarty Leunen started off hot for the Ducks and was able to keep Oregon in the game, as he totaled seven points and eight rebounds in the first half.

However, Oregon's standout guard, Tajuan Porter, was neutralized for most of the game by a stellar Gael defense.

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Lamorinda Community, Calendar, Agendas, Notes, News

Lafayette

| Calendar | |
|---------------------------|--|
| City Council | 7pm Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Monday, Dec 10 |
| Planning Comm. | 7pm Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, Dec 6 |
| Design Review | 7pm Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Tuesday, Dec 11 |
| Park, Trails, Rec. | 7pm Community Center 500 St Mary's Road Wednesday, Dec 12 |
| Circulation | 7pm Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Monday, Dec 3 |
| Emergency Prep. | 9:15am City Offices 3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite 265 Wednesday, Dec 12 |
| Senior Services | 3:30pm Community Center, Alder Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, Dec 6 |

check online:
Town of Lafayette:
<http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us>
• all meeting notes
• calendar updates
Chamber of Commerce:
<http://www.lafayettechamber.org>
• local businesses
• upcoming events

Downtown Dilemma

By Cathy Tyson

Because a key downtown property owners' tax that would have split landscaping maintenance among other things did not pass over the summer, the City Council recently had the difficult job of figuring out a way to reduce expenditures.

This fiscal year, projected costs will be \$558,079 to keep Lafayette's medians green and trimmed, as well as keep seasonal banners and the beloved twinkle lights, but property owners are only required to pay \$158,000. That's the problem, that the City's burden has increased over the years, but the portion paid by property owners has substantially remained the same. If passed, costs would have been split 50/50 between the Core Landscape and Lighting District and the City of Lafayette.

The City has spent a considerable amount of money beautifying these medians and providing the extra polish to Lafayette that arguably brings more shoppers and restaurant-goers to town. This in turn brings more sales tax dollars to the City, which accounts for 24% of general fund revenues.

"To cannibalize the downtown is to bite the hand that feeds us," summed up Lynn Hiden, one of the concerned citizens at the meeting.

City Staff took everything into account and came up with five scenarios to reduce expenses in the downtown core area. The options ranged from A to E. On the more severe end of the spectrum Option A proposed a 75% reduction in landscaping services and no plant replacements, having property owners repair their own sidewalks and maintain landscaping along their street frontage, turning off streetlights, and eliminating banners, twinkle lights and community events. Towards the other end was Option D, no reduction in landscape services, but sharing the cost of twinkle lights, banners and community events, with property owners repairing their own sidewalks and maintaining their own landscaping. Finally Option E was the status quo. It was suggested that the title of Option E be changed from "Do Nothing/Business as Usual" to "Continued Investment in the Vitality of the Downtown Core."

Jay Lifson, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce saved the day once again, suggesting the Chamber can work with the City Council toward a mutually beneficial solution, "I would like the Council to consider Option E because it's the right and fair thing to do." Larry Blodgett continued the theme, stating, "let us be a part of the so-

lution."

Other possible options to increase revenue included, "Adopt-a-Median," to a city sales tax increase of 1/10th of a cent, to a business license tax.

City Manager Steve Falk suggested the City should look to find a comprehensive solution incorporating roads, police and the downtown budget.

On the bright side, since City Staff estimated conservatively, it's projected that Lafayette will have revenue of \$1,000,000 over their targeted amount of \$590,000 this fiscal year. According to the Staff Report, submitted by Tracy Robinson, Administrative Services Director, if Option E is selected, "the issue of funding the Core Area can be reviewed in the context of the whole budget either at the December 2007 meeting or in the spring, when the FY 2008-09 budget will be proposed."

In the end, the City Council selected Option E. Lafayette residents can sleep soundly tonight knowing banners, street lights, sidewalk repair and tree trimming will continue as usual. Hopefully they'll be so well rested, and enchanted by the twinkle lights and banners, that they'll spend a small fortune on Christmas gifts downtown.

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Lafayette Party Shack Smashed

By Cathy Tyson

Due to the quick actions of Lafayette Youth Services Officer Mark Greenwood, a keg party at "The Shack" was stopped. He found a flyer advertising the event circulated at Acalanes the day of the party, Friday November 9th, advertising \$2.00 beers and \$1.00 refills.

With some detective work, Greenwood found the party venue off of Franklin Lane and Happy Valley, tucked way back in a little ravine, off of a private road.

Because it was located on East Bay Regional Park land, Park police came with a large 4 x 4 truck equipped with winches to help Lafayette officers destroy

the shack prior to party time. Leveling the 600 square foot structure was not easy. "It was amazing the amount of planning,



time and effort that obviously went into this thing. It's not just a tree house," notes Greenwood.

... continued on page 10

Senior Housing Likely in Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson



Former site of Butler-Conti Dodge on Mt. Diablo Blvd. Photo Cathy Tyson

Finding housing in Lafayette is difficult enough, but finding affordable senior housing is nearly impossible. Help is on the way, though it may take a while. The Senior Housing Task Force (SHTF) has been hard at work since early 2005 to remedy the situation. With a total of seven representatives, two City Council Members, two Planning Commissioners, three Senior Services Commissioners, a housing consultant to provide technical assistance and City Planning staff Niroop Srivatsa and Glenda Warmoth, the SHTF was on a mission.

Following discussions with a number of developers, the non-profit Eden Housing, Inc. was se-

lected. In business for 39 years, Eden Housing has partnered with the cities of Clayton, Martinez, Concord, Richmond and Hercules to "create a variety of high-quality affordable housing opportunities for lower income families, seniors, and people with disabilities," according to their website.

It's been difficult to find a site with the necessary zoning that is relatively close to downtown. After speaking with a number of possible landowners, a 1.35-acre parcel at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Blackwood Lane was chosen, the former site of Butler-Conti Dodge.

"Eden Housing is still working to secure the property, but right now it looks promising,"

said Glenda Warmoth, Assistant Planner.

Although the project is in the planning stages, tentatively approximately 50 independent living units, with parking in the rear, is on the table. Once the property has been purchased, plans will be formalized. Eden Housing's architect, Rick Williams, of Van Meter Williams, Pollack is currently working on conceptual plans.

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Car Theft, 11/12/07 A Reliez Valley Road resident had his 1996 2-door Nissan XE black truck stolen from an address on Windsor Drive. The car was locked and parked in the driveway. A key was left inside the center console. The registered owner was home but didn't see or hear anything. Two Mono Lake stickers are on the camper shell.

Stolen Vehicle Found, 11/12/07 A white, 4-door Nissan Altima was found parked at La Fiesta Square by the owner, a Wildwood Lane Resident. The car had been there for the last four days, according to the parking lot attendant. Car and driver are happily reunited.

Car Trouble, 10/14/07 Two vehicles were parked in a Kingsley Place driveway, a gray 2003 GMC Yukon XL and an unlocked 2007 Chevy. Sometime between 11/10 and 11/11 an unknown person or persons ransacked the unlocked '07 Chevy and drove the '03 truck away with the key left in the console. To make matters worse, the thief hit the resident's mailbox pillar while departing.

Probation Violation, 11/12/07 A 59-year old white male was walking in and out of traffic in front of Diablo Foods at night. He was disoriented, belligerent, having some difficulty walking, and appeared drunk. Officers found the gentleman to be on probation. Unfortunately, the terms of his probation expressly forbid drinking alcohol. He was arrested for being drunk in public.



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Lamorinda Community, Calendar, Agendas, Notes, News

Moraga

Calendar

City Council 7:30pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School
1010 Camino Pablo
Wednesday, Nov 28
Wednesday, Dec 12

Planning Comm. 7:30pm
Hacienda, La Sala Room
2100 Donald Drive
Monday, Dec 3

Design Review 7:30pm
Hacienda, La Sala Room
2100 Donald Drive
Monday, Dec 10

Park & Rec 7:30pm
Hacienda, Mosaic Room
2100 Donald Drive
Tuesday, Dec 18

Liaison 8:00am
Fire Station
1280 Moraga Way
Friday, Dec 14

Chamber of Commerce 8am
Terzetto's Cuisine
Moraga Shopping Center
Friday, Nov 30

check online:
Town of Moraga:
<http://www.ci.moraga.ca.us>
for:
• all meeting notes
• calendar updates

Council Faces \$38 Million Wish List for \$17 Million Palos Money

By Steve Angelides

The Moraga Town Council has begun to grapple with a \$38 million wish list for \$17 million of anticipated fees from the Palos Colorados development. The Council will take another crack at the problem at its meeting on January 9, and will hold a large meeting to get more public input on the topic sometime next February.

Town Manager Phil Vince presented the wish list developed by the Town staff to the Council. It includes \$7.3 million for roads, \$7.3 million for storm drains, \$6.7 million for a gym, a \$5 million reserve, \$3.8 million for building renovations, \$2 million for open space maintenance and acquisition, \$1.5 million to pay off a pension loan, a \$1.5 million legal fund, \$1.4 million to help close a "structural budget deficit", \$9 million for a sports field at Rancho Laguna park, and \$5 million for the Town's estimated share of the regional emergency radio system.

After Vince's lengthy presentation and comments from several of the 30 residents present, the Council struggled for an hour and a half before agreeing that it will attempt to reach tentative agreement on some of the items at its meeting on January 9, to help frame the public input at the large meeting in February.

The council members seemed to agree on at least two items. A majority of them spoke in favor of paying off the \$1.5 million pension loan, because the Town pays 7.75% interest on the loan but can only earn about 5% on money it invests. A majority also spoke in favor of setting aside a reserve fund, but they did not agree on the amount of the reserve fund. Vince has recommended a \$5 million reserve fund. Vince and some of the council members also spoke in favor of setting aside \$7.3 million for roads.

If the council were to agree on January 9 to pay off the \$1.5

million pension loan, set aside a \$5 million reserve, and set aside \$7.3 million for roads, that would amount to \$13.8 million, leaving only about \$4 million of the anticipated Palos money up for grabs at the public meeting in February. Councilmember Dave Trotter was unwilling to agree with that approach because he favors a gym which it is estimated will cost \$6.7 million.

However, Councilmember Rochelle Bird said that by using "smart debt" it might be possible to invest some of the money and use the income to pay off debt for capital projects, such as the gym, over the long term. Vince said he had prepared a spreadsheet which illustrates some of those concepts and would make it available to council members to study.

Some of the residents who attended spoke in favor of investing the entire \$17 million of anticipated Palos money.

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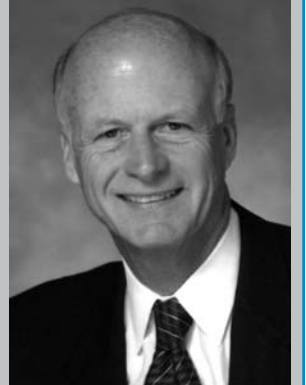
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Wallet Theft, 11/20/07 A shopper had her wallet stolen at T.J.Maxx in Moraga. The victim had her wallet in her coat pocket, prior to its removal. She took off her coat and left it unattended while she continued shopping. The now missing wallet contained her driver's license and three credit cards.

Convenience Brawl, 11/16/07 At 2:30 in the morning a taxi driver who had given a lift to three St. Mary's students ended up using mace on them. The driver drove the students from a bar in Lafayette and stopped at the Moraga 7 – 11 to get cash to presumably pay for the ride. Unfortunately, the insolvent student was unable to obtain funds from the ATM. The taxi driver took one of his passengers' cell phones to call police. A fight ensued, at which point the driver maced the kids. The three students admitted to drinking before the incident. No arrests were made.

Five Finger Discount, 11/16/07 A 19-year old shoplifter was detained at Safeway for attempting to abscond with a bottle of alcohol. The suspect was placed under citizen's arrest and was transported to the Moraga Police Department where he signed a promise to appear.

Ten Finger Discount, 11/10/07 Sometime in the last two weeks, someone stole a safe from one of the residents of Aegis Assisted Living. The safe contained approximately \$300 in cash and some jewelry. There were no signs of forced entry and nothing else was taken.

Safeway Responds to Concerns

By Sophie Braccini



Deborah Potter loves the new smaller carts at Safeway

Photo Sophie Braccini

New small shopping carts, cleaner bathrooms and products on request are some of the innovations you might notice while shopping at Moraga Safeway. These improvements are the result of a meeting held a few weeks ago between David Volo, the new manager of the Moraga Safeway, his district manager, Helen Carver, Fiona Artiaga, Moraga Juniors Women's Club President and Edy Schwartz from the Shop Moraga First Committee.

It all started when Schwartz was invited to a Moraga Juniors' meeting to present the "Shop Moraga First" campaign. There, the young women expressed their frustration with the supermarket, which is the only grocery store in town. Schwartz asked them to put their concerns in writing and went on a quest to find a sympathetic ear at Safeway.

Schwartz contacted the local Human Resources manager, and a meeting was organized in Moraga.

During the discussion, the women handed out their list. It was comprised of four different categories in which Safeway could improve: Customer service, out of stock items, cleanliness, and navigability of the store. In all these areas, the management decided to take rapid corrective action.

"We wanted to respond quickly to the customers' most urgent requests," said Esperanza Greenwood, Public Affairs manager for Safeway. "One of the first things we implemented is the suggestion box in the customer service section of the store where customers can provide feedback to the new store manager about their specific concerns." The previous procedure involved sending the suggestions to the corporate office where they were sorted and dispatched.

Safeway has also made other changes to the store. The wire baskets and aisle stacks have for the most part been removed

from the aisles. Management has also ordered 60 new shopping carts. "These are the smaller shopping carts that are easier to maneuver and were specifically requested by the residents," comments Esperanza. The store is also addressing the issue of cleanliness and has implemented a new schedule for cleaning the bathrooms every hour and conducting a deep clean every day at 3:00 p.m.

Another key request from Moraga customers had to do with the choice of products in the store. "If a customer requests an item that is sold anywhere at another Safeway, I guarantee that we will get it as soon as the request is formulated," assured Volo during a Moraga Chamber of Commerce meeting.

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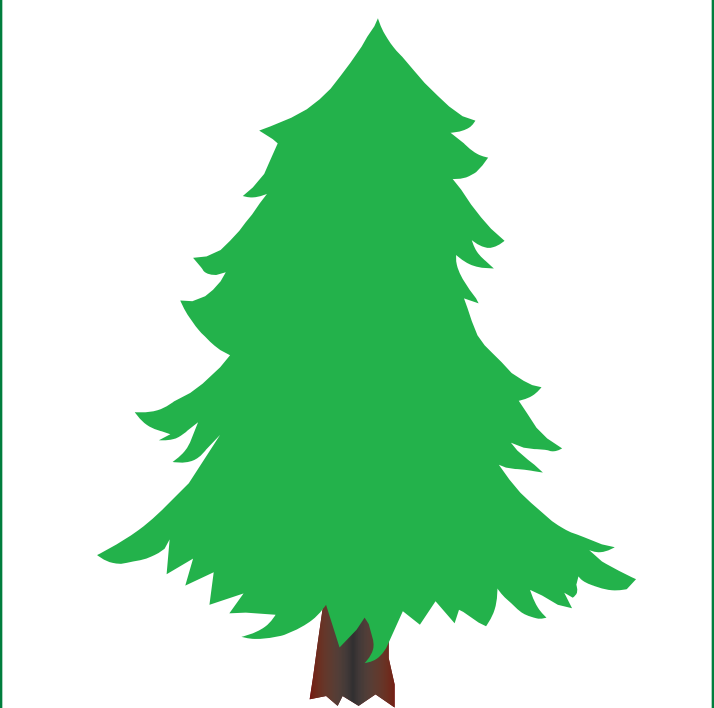


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City Council member Sue Severson and Mayor Pro Tem Victoria Smith received their Shop Orinda bags at the Chamber Breakfast on Nov. 15

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Lamorinda Community, Calendar, Agendas, Notes, News

Orinda

| Calendar | |
|--|--------|
| City Council | 7pm |
| Auditorium, Orinda Library 26 Orinda Way Tuesday, Dec 4 (Tuesday, Nov 20 canceled) | |
| Planning Comm. | 7pm |
| Auditorium, Orinda Library 26 Orinda Way Tuesday, Dec 11 | |
| Hist. Landmark Comm. | 3pm |
| Gallery Room, Upper Level 26 Orinda Way Tuesday, Jan 22 | |
| Liaison | 8:30am |
| Community Room at City Hall 22 Orinda Way Monday, Dec 3 | |
| check online: Town of Orinda: http://www.ci.orinda.ca.us/ • all meeting notes • calendar updates | |
| Chamber of Commerce: http://www.orinda-chamber.org/ • local businesses • upcoming events | |



Loaded Lacrosse Player, 11/17/07 An unknown St. Mary's student was banging on the door of a Lost Valley resident at 4:30 in the morning. Suspect was yelling, waving his arms, staggering and slurring his words. He was covered in leaves and had appeared to have urinated on himself. There was a Lacrosse party just down the street from the stunned resident that evening. Apparently Leaf-boy had been left behind. Clearly not able to care for himself, with a blood alcohol level of .24, three times the legal limit, police arrested him for public drunkenness.

D.U.I., 11/16/07 Officers pulled over a vehicle going 50 m.p.h. in a 35 m.p.h. zone. The 34-year-old male driver had a strong odor of alcohol, showed signs of intoxication, and preformed poorly on field sobriety tests, a blotto trifecta. His blood alcohol level of .08 sealed the deal.

Mail Thieves Busted, 11/09/07 Occupants of a suspicious vehicle were looking through mailboxes on El Toyonal. A records check showed the driver was on probation in Alameda County. The two male suspects, 25 and 26-years old respectively, were in possession of stolen property.

Tampon Break In, 11/07/07 A 25-year old male had forced open a tampon machine at 4 Orinda Way. The suspect had been chased after being seen breaking into a car at the Orinda BART parking lot.

Couturier Knock-off and Old World Values In Tact in Orinda

By Linda U. Foley



Johanna Behrsing

Photo Linda U. Foley

Any woman who's done any 'serious' shopping or "Vogue" reading and knows her Givenchy from Dior, also knows that glamour and timelessness hinge not merely on gorgeous quality fabrics but on the details. No one lays better claim to this than the French.

A mutual friend had arranged a coffee klatsch recently with Johanna Behrsing in Orinda. We are all native Germans—from Schleswig Holstein to Bavaria—and appreciated the opportunity to share homemade poppy seed cake, whipped cream, fragrant coffee and learning about Johanna's voyage to becoming a master seamstress, a profession lost to mass production today and the dictates of the current fads.

Johanna lovingly unfolds her French 'knock-off,' which she created—more than 45 years ago—copying the dress from a Vogue magazine as a seamstress apprentice.

Each of us has memories of the value of handmade clothing; the seamstress coming to the house, an elder's heavy coat or silk dress retailored for oneself and drew comparisons to what is available in stores today. We also recalled how handmade things endured forever. And—being raised not to discard anything that was perfectly good—that durability and timelessness were not always appreciated by the younger generation.

Surrounded by many artifacts from her girlhood in the Black Forest, Johanna wove her personal history.

In post war Germany, families in her rural area sent their daughters to the county seat to learn sewing in order to enable them to make their own clothing and earn their livelihood. After mastering the basics, several of the best students were selected to stay on as apprentices. At the conclusion of her apprenticeship, Johanna had to pass an arduous

test, which included a Gesellenrock or apprentice skirt.

The grey wool fabric was spread before us on the table purveying in exacting detail every intricacy of skilled sewing: hidden seams, reversible pockets and lapels, handmade buttonholes, kick pleats, cording, concealed zippers, embroidery and not a pucker, pull or bulge in sight. Not even hinting on its reversibility, the same perfection was seen as she flipped the piece over.

Johanna said, "I was so fearful of my instructor. She would just tear the seams open if they looked even slightly bumpy, and we had to redo it all painstakingly."

Sandwiched between three years of apprenticeship and six months of Meisterschule in Stuttgart—which would include designing ensembles and rudiments of business management—Johanna was required to work five years in various salons. "Once a client brought in for alteration a beautiful skirt she'd bought in Paris. The owner of the salon was so fascinated with the skirt—as no one knows sewing and style as well as the French—that she had us take it completely apart to copy the pattern."

To finally earn her master's seamstress diploma, eight years of fine honing culminated in a one-week 'sewing marathon' under the watchful eyes of the judges situated on the periphery of the room. "The finale was a Modenschau or fashion show and we had to model our work ourselves. It was nerve wrack-

ing." The mere memory colored her cheeks pink.

Johanna worked in her profession until she got married and moved to California in the mid 60's.

Infused by the romp through memories and our interest, Johanna brought out her great-great-grandfather's linen shirt reminiscent of a cossack's. It is in perfect condition and white as a commercial. Johanna's hands caressed the lace neckband, which is handmade as is all the fabric. "For the cost of her meals, a woman would spend the winters at my great-grandparents home, spinning," added Johanna. In the corner of the room, next to her grandmother's wardrobe, sat the silent historian—the spinning wheel.

Johanna brought out her grandfather's sheep fur-lined hat, her mother's going-to-church black silk apron—now a hand-

some pillow—black crocheted scarves, the water kettle that used to hang inside the wood stove.

The enlarged photos on the walls enhanced Johanna's recollections of another time. Solemn black and white relatives sitting in front of sepia doors, on benches next to thick wood piles, chickens pecking. A hint of forest in the distance.

As she held up her Goldenrod colored "knock-off," the timelessness of Audrey Hepburn came to mind in Breakfast at Tiffany's. Simple lines, pleats, styling achieved with great knowledge and care.

We all reached for our personal historical details and understood. The afternoon nodded toward the end. We said our goodbyes, happy to know that the past, the skills and history are tangible parts of the present—it's all in the details.

'zAthlete' Gaining Popularity Among Lamorinda Youth

By David Anderson

The recent popularity of online networking websites has yielded a new creation targeting athletes and fans. According to a recent press release, 'zAthlete' (a product of Orinda-based In-traware) aims to provide exposure for athletes by enabling users to share video, pictures, statistics and more.

The website provides a 21st century approach to recruiting athletes across the nation featuring a familiar user setup reminiscent of other online networking websites such as Facebook and MySpace. Members utilize a profile page in which they can post their statistics and upload pictures and video highlights. Coaches, fans and athletes are able to browse through picture and video albums, send messages and compare stats.

Launched in October, the potential for 'zAthlete' to succeed in providing exposure for athletes is high. The success of social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace lies in their ability to connect people all over the world. There is room for this site to succeed as well if 'zAthlete' can successfully connect athletes with coaches and recruiters at the college and professional level.

"I think it'll help a lot (with

recruiting)," says Kimberly Sanguinetti, a senior member of the DFAL Champion Miramonte Women's Water Polo team. "There are a lot of schools that aren't as well known as (Miramonte) so I think that a lot of athletes in the Bay Area and all over the United States can get recognized pretty easily. The website is growing a lot. More and more people are getting 'z pages'."

Athletes throughout Lamorinda seem to be on the same page about the potential benefits of 'zAthlete.' Andrew Wood, a freshman Rugby player at St. Mary's College adds, "There's no way to really get noticed unless your coach gets you noticed or someone comes to your game and sees you. So having something like (zAthlete) would be really helpful."

Due to the website's status as a "beta version" (meaning the current website is not the final version) it is still somewhat rough. The overall aesthetics of the site, for example, are simplistic and the section designated for members to post blogs is still under construction.

Although finishing touches are still being made, 'zAthlete' is serving its purpose quite well. The site provides a space for members to post athletic achievements and does so while accepting high quality pictures and videos of any size. To view the website, go to www.zathlete.com. Members must have a valid email address and be at least thirteen years old to sign up.



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Shigeko Ide, Japanese Heritage in Lamorinda

By Sophie Braccini



Shigeko Ide, Ikebana teacher by one of her creations

Photo Sophie Braccini

In her Lafayette home, Shigeko Ide teaches an Ikebana class in the purest Japanese style (Ikenobo style). The ancient art of flower arranging keeps her going in spite of the difficult times life has sent her

way. On December 7th, many American families will remember a sad anniversary: The 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Imperial Japanese Navy. The attack was a shock to the nation and America formally declared

war against Japan the next day. But for Ide, whose family is of Japanese decent, this anniversary has quite a different meaning.

Two months after Pearl Harbor, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 that marked the beginning of the banishment of all Japanese-Americans living on the West coast of the United States. Some 120,000 ethnic Japanese were held in internment camps for the duration of the war, 2/3 of them were Americans born of Japanese ancestry. At the time, 1/16 of Japanese blood was enough to send anyone living on the West Coast to a detention camp. The exiled included orphans as young as 3 months, the elderly, the sick, and the blind. There, in one of the nine camps that were hastily built in deserts or swamps, they fought to rebuild a community.

Among them was Shigeko Ide. The soft-spoken 86 year old, wife of the late Harry Ide of Harry's nursery (now Mt. Diablo Nursery and Garden), was sent to Rohwer internment camp in southeastern Arkansas with her new husband in 1942. Ide says she has vivid memories of this experience, but no bitterness.

Ide was born in Stockton in 1921 of Japanese parents who came to the USA in 1916 thinking "the streets of America are paved in gold." Her parents ran a Japanese grocery store. After she finished high school, she went to work for the DMV in Sacramento; her school counselor had warned her that because of racism, finding a job in the private sector was difficult for Asian-looking Americans.

Around that time, her parents introduced her to Harry Ide, another young American of Japanese decent. Shigeko remembers that for Harry, it was love at first sight; as for her, she would have liked to pursue her career a bit longer. Three months after their marriage, Pearl Harbor happened and they had a few days to sell all their belongings before being shipped away. Shigeko's parents were lucky enough to be able to store some of their belongings in a neighbor's basement. At the time of deportation, with not much time to sell all their life's possessions, many Japanese were easy pray to unscrupulous Americans.

... continued on page 8

So You Want to Buy a Bike?

By Christopher Kolm

This time of year, many parents and kids have thoughts of what they will give and get this holiday season. Visions of a gleaming new bike under the tree dance in the imagination of kids and adults alike. Receiving a bike meets all sorts of criteria for holiday gift giving; it's big, shiny, it represents freedom for an eight year old and for those with a technical bent, it has gears and mechanisms and some even come with a bell. It also is good for your health and gets you out of the house and onto trails and roads for some adventure. Experiences that are muted in a car like the changes in season, the differences in temperature between Moraga Road and Pinehurst, and of course the speed of the flats, the struggle up hills and the thrill of downhill, are very real and immediate on a bicycle. To get an experience of a "journey" in a car, you have to travel for a day, on a bike it takes an hour.

Walking into a local bike shop and choosing from the hundreds of models, shapes and sizes

can be daunting. It used to be easier. There were two or three kinds of bikes with simple to understand sizes and a choice between three or ten speeds. Some of the new bikes have very creative frame geometry, full suspensions and you have to choose between carbon, titanium, aluminum, steel and hybrid frames. And there's center vs. side pull brakes; full, front and no suspension, comfort fit vs. racing fit; special clip-on shoes with cleats; and ten different kinds of seats. WAIT - I just wanted to buy a bike and have some fun on the trails around Lamorinda.

First question to ask yourself before buying a bike is, "what kind of riding will be done and where?" When you've figured this out, go to a local bike shop and describe what you want to do on the bike. Sales folks at the shop should be able to turn your idea into a couple of choices and price ranges. If you're riding with kids younger than eight, you are probably going to be riding on the Lafayette-Moraga Trail on the weekends and so for yourself,

you might want to hold off on that high-end Trek Madone. Get something that is immediately comfortable to sit on and has tires wider than a half inch. Similar rules for buying bikes for kids. Younger riders won't ride bikes where they have to rock back and forth to touch their toes. If you're buying a bike as a gift, according to Matt Sharp of Sharp Bicycles in Lafayette, the most important piece of information to bring into the store with you is the height of the person who will be riding it.

If you are interested in riding in a group that meets on the weekends and rides 40 or more miles, you might want to get a lighter bike with 20-30 gears where the shifters are integrated with the brake levers on the handlebars. The reason the handlebars are curved down is to keep the rider out of the wind. This position takes some getting used to and a "bike fit" is necessary. The longer you plan to ride in a leaning forward position on a bike, the more important it is to have someone who knows what

Christopher Kolm rides with Lamorinda Cycling Club/Synergy-Taleo Racing Team

they are doing fit you to your bike. Bike fit includes position of the feet on the pedals, angle of the knees during pedaling motion, angle of your hips, shoulders and elbows in the three normal positions on the handlebars among other measurements. Don't be concerned when the technician pulls out a plumb bob and a goniometer, they are tools of the trade that will ensure many happy hours on the bike.

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Ed-shaped Cookies and a Surprise Party for Diablo Foods Patriarch
By Lee Borrowman



Ed Stokes at his Rotary Birthday Party Photo John Sherry

If you happened to be shopping at Diablo Foods a couple of weeks ago, you may have enjoyed nibbling a cookie baked in the shape of a smiling Ed Stokes with your cup of coffee as you perused the new self-serve deli and fresh sushi-to-go. Stokes, the owner of Diablo Foods and Honorary Mayor of Lafayette, turned eighty-five years old this month and the community did not let the milestone go by unnoticed or uncelebrated.

The Lafayette Rotary Club honored Stokes, a long-time Rotarian, at their weekly luncheon meeting on November 15 at the Oakwood Athletic

Club. Speakers included Sheriff Warren Rupf, former Mayors Jay Strauss and Erling Horn, Rotary President Larry Duson, Oakwood's Dennis Garrison and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson, who led the room in a sing-along of the "Mr. Ed" theme song. Lifson said, "Ed, you have been our example of 'lead by example.' We learn from your warmth and generosity and your devotion and love to your family, your employees and your community."

The perennially busy Stokes can still frequently be found at Diablo Foods, or perhaps occasionally chatting with friends on the new bench that Lafayette Rotary installed in his honor last March, just outside the doors to the store, under the tree.

Happy Birthday, Ed Stokes!

Speaking at the Rotary event celebrating the 85th birthday of Ed Stokes, Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk, after opening with an anecdote about Stokes' legendary generosity, said:

"What would happen if you never said no to people who asked you for something?

What would happen if you always had a good thing to say about somebody else?

What would happen if you saw the sun every day, even when it was raining?

What would happen if you were unfailingly generous with your time and resources?

What would happen if you had a smile on your face for everyone you saw?

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Finally, you would, through your love and generosity, establish a tone for one community – **this** community, **our** community – that would ultimately transform it. Transform it into one of the finest, most livable, lovable, and generous places imaginable.

That's the power of one person. That's the power of Ed Stokes."

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One Woman's Home...
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By Wendy Scheck



Jim and Lynne Collins' home near Rancho Laguna Park Photo Andy Scheck

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Or perhaps you have more modest aspirations of remodeling your typical Moraga rancher into a unique "statement" home. Be inspired by the Irving's remodeled classic Campolindo area home which now features elegant crown molding, bay windows, raised ceilings and marble features to add drama and style throughout the home, or the Chamberlain's Corliss Drive home that demonstrates the open space

that can be created when you remodel, add 1200 square feet and turn the former dining room, family room, kitchen and dinette into a Great Room.

For innovative decorating ideas, look no further than Sue Olsen's Country Club Craftsman style home that features natural light and a color theme of green, black, ochre and red color after her own travels to Asia inspired a complete transformation.

All together, you will have the opportunity to tour four unique homes as well as the newly remodeled Moraga Barn which features sustainable technologies.

The Moraga Women's Society is an organization founded 40 years ago to provide community service and funding for the betterment of the community

Proceeds from the tour will be donated to various community organizations, including schools, Parks and Recreation, the library and other local foundations.

The Holiday Homes Tour will take place on Friday, December 7th from 10:00-4:00. Tickets are available for purchase at King Florist in the Rheem Shopping Center, St. Mary's Florist in the Moraga Center, or by calling Nancy at 376-3187.

Lunch will be available for \$10.00 at the Holy Trinity Cultural Center at 1700 School Street from 11:30 am to 3:00pm. The gourmet box lunch must be pre-ordered.

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Losing the Last Leaf While Swimming Laps
By Dorothy Bowen, guest writer

We live in Orinda's Left Bank: The El Toyonal quadrant of old summer cabins and their eccentric inhabitants. All the streets have Spanish names, bestowed by the developer, E. I. deLaveaga, but only a few have his signature Spanish haciendas, alas.

The best place to swim, in fact, the only place, is the equally historic Park Pool. But, alas, again, even it's new incarnation, it is only open during the summer months. During the fall, winter and early spring, refugees from OPP must seek other venues. One of the best is the Olympic size pool at Soda Center at Campolindo High School.

While it doesn't have the lake like shape of OPP, preserved in its reconstruction at great effort and expense, it does have friendly lifeguards and is surrounded by redwoods and sycamores. It is the site of the Spanish land

grant, Rancho Laguna de los Palos Colorados

I return to Soda Center in the fall, just as the sycamores are losing their leaves. Day by day, they are almost gone until only one remains, clinging to the topmost branch.

When I return from my swim, I tell my grandchildren O. Henry's story, The Last Leaf. You remember: Two young starving artists are living in Greenwich Village. One is very ill with pneumonia. She looks at the tree outside her window and says, "When the last leaf falls, I must go, too." An old man, a failed artist, hears of her despair and braves the storm to paint a leaf on the wall behind the tree.

Then....But you don't want me to tell you more. O. Henry's stories are all about endings.

Imagine my dismay when I returned this fall to find that not only the last leaf

was gone, but the entire line of sycamores had disappeared and a rank of bleachers rose in their place.

Oh, they had the usual excuses: The leaves were clogging the pool filters. The roots were undermining the cement walkways.

It reminds me of swimming at Strawberry Canyon in the '60s. Women had to wear bathing caps because long hair clogged the filters. Then men began wearing long hair and beards and suddenly long hair was no longer a menace. No one would dream of asking a man to do anything as effeminate as wearing a bathing cap.

But, I wonder, is there a more symbolic issue here? I've done laps holding on to the last leaf for many years now. Is the total disappearance of the trees a fatal omen? Who will paint the last leaf on the gymnasium wall for me to make it through the winter?

Life in LAMORINDA

How to Beat the Holiday Blues

By Jennifer Wake

You can see it all around us: holiday decorations adorn light poles, festive knickknacks line store shelves. The holidays are upon us. The season brings families together, traditional foods to our tables, and – of course – gifts. But for many in the Lamorinda area, the season simply brings a sense of foreboding.

“If people are already tense or depressed, the holidays (with all expectations to perform, either by buying, wrapping and delivering gifts, cooking for a zillion others, or planning a visit that seems like an incredible hassle) make everything worse,” said Orinda resident

and psychiatrist Dr. Harvey Widroe.

Lafayette psychologist Ellen Lev, Ph.D., explains that since the holidays are times of gatherings, rituals, and relationships, if an individual is alone, or lacks a sufficient support system, the approaching holiday triggers heightened sadness, and emptiness.

Unlike clinical depression, which the National Institute of Mental Health says affects more than 19 million people each year, depression during the holidays is usually temporary, often lifting a few days or weeks after the end of



Shoppers experience one of the many holiday stresses: waiting Photo Jennifer Wake

the season. But that does not mean the feelings are not real.

For Lafayette resident Marilyn Finn, the sparkle of the holiday season left after her divorce and her journey into single parenting. During that time, she and two other single friends chose to combat the blues by setting off on a week-long trip to Puerto Vallarta right after Christmas. “That got us through it that year,” she said.

The tricky part now for Finn is surviving the holidays on her limited income. “The stress of trying to find thoughtful creative gifts is depressing,” she said. “I know that if I make my family something they can use, they’ll appreciate that I did something, instead of what I do now, which is freeze.”

Dr. Lev suggests we be realistic about the holidays. “Holiday times fuel our childhood fantasies of perfection and idealism,” she

said. “Even if we didn’t live it, we see it plastered all over the advertising world. If we measure our current experience against that, we often come up short and disappointed.”

What else can we do? The University of Maryland Medical Center suggests we create new or different ways to celebrate, enjoy activities that are free, contact someone with whom we have lost touch, treat ourselves as a special holiday guest, and find a way to do

something for someone else.

Finn agrees. For several years, she and another single friend whose family lives on the East coast have delivered holiday dinners for the Salvation Army to people in San Francisco who were homebound. Each year after the deliveries, she said she would come home feeling blessed with everything she had.

The grass is not always greener on the other side, says Lev. “Practice gratitude and acceptance for what you do have,” she said. “Create a ritual for yourself that you can do by yourself that you can enjoy. Invite someone to join you. If a loved one is absent, use visualization to imagine

their presence with you. Allow yourself to have your feelings! They are normal. They illuminate what is important to you. And feelings pass.”

Widroe says to remember that the holidays are a time-limited stress.

“Scaling back on what you think is expected of you isn’t the end of the world (it is usually only a passing ripple),” he said. “If you spot someone who seems down, talk to them, even those not close to you. More often than not, they will benefit from it. Did you ever say to your grocery clerk, ‘You seem down today; are you okay?’ You will be surprised at the positive response you are likely to get.”



One dad points out decorations at Sun Valley Mall as his sons wait for Santa to return Photo Jennifer Wake

Lamorinda Helps Feed the Hungry through Loaves and Fishes

By Jean Follmer



Maureen and Tim McClintick Photo Jean Follmer

Loaves and Fishes of Contra Costa County began feeding the hungry in 1983. It was founded by Pittsburg residents who sought to feed people that were digging through dumpsters in search of food. Loaves and Fishes has since grown to include six serving sites and a catering kitchen. Two of the sites have a certified kitchen. To date, Loaves and Fishes has served over 3,000,000 meals to the hungry. A mid-day meal is served at each of the locations 5 days a week, 52 weeks a year and is available to

anyone in need, no questions asked.

Prior to his retirement, Lafayette resident Tim McClintick began volunteering at Loaves and Fishes five years ago. After retiring, he accepted the role of Loaves and Fishes Board Chair and volunteers every third Thursday at St. Michaels and All Angels Church in Concord. A visit to the Concord facility found Mr. McClintick and his fellow volunteers in action. There were seven volunteers, including McClintick’s wife, Maureen and three employees working

at the facility.

As the largest facility, approximately 250 meals are served there each day. Once everything was ready, there was a “calm before the storm.” The patrons were lined up and waiting. Some had arrived by car, others by foot and some with dogs that they tied to trees outside.

At 11:00, the doors opened and in they came. There were men and women of all ages, races and walks of life.

... continued on page 16

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Big Sisters Training to Lead at the Summit for Girls Submitted by Tricia Vaughan and Ksenija Soster Olmer

Ask any young adult today if they would like to go back to their middle school years and you would most likely get a resounding "No!" The junior high years as they were known in the past can be years of adjustment to new academic and social pressures, but they can also be years of new growth, new friendships and new self-awareness.

The local branch of the American Association of University Women is doing their best to help girls in our community celebrate the latter and deal effectively with the first. Once again the adult committee and nearly fifty high school facilitators are hard at work organizing the 2008 Sister-to-Sister Summit. It will be held March 15th at Acalanes High School in Lafayette. The summit, now in its ninth year, is a day-long event for Lamorinda and Walnut Creek middle school girls to come together and discuss the things that are crucial to their lives right now. These topics are varied and range from body image and peer pressure to harassment and "mean girls." They learn to talk about the ins and outs of relationships, trust and the surprising difficulties that can come with an ever-widening circle of friends, something that seems to really take off in middle school.

The beauty of this day for the middle school girls is that it is



L to R, Sylvia Marton & Keely Kuhn, seniors at Las Lomas, Amber Kanwer and Helen Wang, both juniors at Acalanes

Photo Sharon Metcalf

led by a dynamic group of local high school girls, specifically chosen and trained by parent educators and psychologists specializing in adolescence, just for this type of event. Small discussion groups and activities led by girls who just recently went through – and survived – the angst and confusion of their middle school years are inspiring and at the same time comforting to younger girls who are experiencing the first pangs of uncertainty that come with entering the teenage years. The positive attitude, the sense of acceptance among girls and the fun, creative and inspiring activities and presenters make this day special.

The high school facilitators representing all four high schools in our district have been meeting regularly for leadership and com-

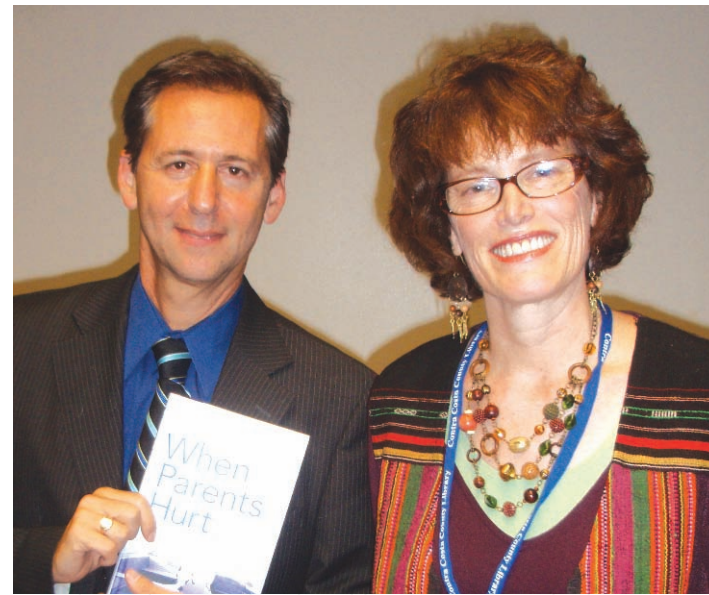
munication skill training sessions as well as for work in different committees that decide every detail from what will be the main theme of the summit, to what will be the topics of discussion groups, down to which kind of pizza would their Little Sisters enjoy most.

If you have a girl attending middle school save the date, Saturday, March 15, 2008, for an unforgettable day. The first hour of the summit a parenting workshop on raising daughters will be run concurrently. If you would like to hear from local parenting and counseling experts and their take on issues they are working with and connect to other parents of girls in the community plan to save some time after dropping your daughter off.

For more information visit: www.aauwoml.org

Coping with Intergenerational Hurtful Relationships

By Linda U. Foley



Dr. Joshua Coleman and Linda Waldroup, Senior Branch Librarian, Moraga Library

Photo Linda Foley

Dr. Joshua Coleman addressed the issue of hurtful relationships between parents and their adolescent or adult children on November 1 at the Moraga Library. The Orinda resident is an internationally renowned relationship expert who has guested on 20/20, Today Show, Good Morning America, the BBC and numerous news programs.

His latest book *When Parents Hurt: Compassionate Strategies: When You and Your Grown Child Don't Get Along*, examines how the cumulative effects of divorce, personality mismatches within the family struc-

ture, and demands of a competitive society can create distancing and chasms between parent and child.

This topic, Dr. Coleman explained, is "underground" because this subject is not readily identified or openly discussed leaving parents with a lingering and festering heartache. Whereas thirty years ago, Dr. Coleman explains, parents believed that children were strong and resilient, today's omnipotent parents "over protect" the child from every possible danger. The child who once was ready to take flight in his early 20s, today tends to linger in the "nest" until his late

20s. This creates democratization within the family or a blurring of boundaries setting the stage for resistance and resentment, providing the child with the position of rejecting the parent.

Dr. Coleman spoke eloquently from his personal hurtful experience with his own daughter – after his divorce – now in a mending stage. He also presented viable excerpts from his case studies from his book. Dr. Coleman provided strategies for managing the guilt and regret that often plague parents resulting from their own parenting mistakes, mistreatment of their children or feeling responsible for their child's inability to launch a happy or successful life.

His suggestions for coping include: forgiving yourself for mistakes you made as well as forgiving your child for being disappointed by them or whatever he/she may have done to hurt you and, not using guilt in order to keep him/her closer to you.

The book is an excellent resource for stressed intergenerational relationships to begin rebuilding and healing, and how to start the dialogue.

Dr. Coleman's other books include *The Marriage Makeover*, *Imperfect Harmony*, *The Lazy Husband*, *Married with Twins*.

Lafayette Party Shack Smashed

Officers were stunned by the use of brand new lumber for the floors, the tar paper covered roof, outdoor fire pit, couches, comfortable chairs, bar and electric lamp, suggesting a generator was there at one point. What was not a surprise was the amount of contraband found, namely used condoms and empty alcohol bottles. The outdoor fire pit was troubling as well; drunk teens, an open fire

and tall dry grass are not a great combination. Speculation remains that the construction and parties started in the summertime, when fire danger was extremely high.

"Our main concern was stopping the party that night," Greenwood explained. To that end, after demolishing "The Shack," an officer was posted at the entrance to turn teens away.

Word on the street is "The

... continued from page 2

Shack" is known as an Acalanes senior hangout. It's clear that more than a couple of people over a period of time worked on the structure. Lafayette parents of teens, who happen to be missing some lumber and building supplies, take note.

Prosecution will be up to East Bay Regional Park Police, as "The Shack" is in their jurisdiction.

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What Do You Know About "The Luck of the Draw?"

By Jean Follmer



Luck of the Draw artwork on display at Fastframe

It all started five years ago when LASF was approached by Fastframe of Lafayette owner, Anthony Ruiz. Mr. Ruiz wanted to partner with LASF to display the artwork of elementary students throughout the Lafayette community. LASF agreed and "The Luck of the Draw" was born. Ruiz' distaste for judging artwork led to the random drawing of student names from each of the elementary schools. He believes that "all art is valid," including the art of children. He furthers this thought by saying "much of (the students') artwork is really pretty good. It's certainly better than Blue Canvas at MOMA."

Throughout the school year, LASF teachers work with



Emma Workman, 1st grade, Springhill Elementary Photo J. Follmer

students in each of the Lafayette schools. Gigi Voris, an LASF teacher at Happy Valley Elementary and owner of The Art Room in Lafayette, says the LASF teachers "try to schedule projects to coincide with what the students are studying in class." Toward the end of the academic year, each of the schools holds its annual art show. After the art show, student names are drawn for next year's Luck of the Draw and the winning artists are notified. At that point, the winning artwork is sent to Fastframe of Lafayette for framing. Ruiz donates his time, talent and materials to mat and frame each of the pieces. LASF Art Chair Sandra Pazos said, "Anthony should get a lot of credit for this. It takes a lot of his time." Ruiz loves his work and says, "You need to find something you really enjoy and that pleases you. If you're doing what you love to do, it's not always about the money." Ruiz also donates his leftover scraps and supplies to the LASF art teachers throughout the year.

Each fall, The Luck of Draw holds an opening night at the gallery in Fastframe of Lafayette. The artists, their families and members of the community are all invited to attend. This year was the biggest

turnout so far. Ruiz said the event has become so popular, "it's reached the point where kids and families are looking for it." After opening night, the artwork is displayed at Fastframe of Lafayette before rotating to the Town Hall Theatre, Chow, Papillion and then back to the schools. The framed artwork is ultimately returned to each artist.

One of the lucky artists this year is Springhill Elementary first grader, Emma Workman. Emma created her piece last year in her kindergarten LASF art class. Emma wants to be an artist or a rock star when she grows up. Emma brought her whole family to the Luck of the Draw opening night and really enjoyed it. Emma said, "Art is so fun and when you do it lots of times you'll be better and you can write a book with it." One of Emma's favorite books is "The Lion and the Little Red Bird" by Elisa Klevin because she loves the artwork in it. She had the chance to meet Elisa Klevin at the Lafayette Library. When asked what her favorite LASF project this year is, she said it's the desert one "where you tear the paper." In the spring, Emma's framed piece will be returned to her and she'll be able to enjoy the LASF

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Since Luck of the Draw has been so warmly received in Lafayette, Ruiz thinks it would be great to get something similar going in Moraga and Orinda too. The fact that each student has a chance of winning is the essential element of the program to Ruiz. It encourages them to find their inner artist and be confident about it. Ruiz strongly believes that anyone can be an artist and "children shouldn't be told not to draw". He says The Luck of the Draw "encourages personal well being. It's about kids feeling good."

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Holiday Cheer for the Family

By Margie Ryerson

There's a reason that we watch the same videos year after year during the holiday season. "It's a Wonderful Life," "A Christmas Story," and "Miracle on 34th Street" are some of the most popular holiday films. They portray a simpler time when life was slower-paced, less consumer-oriented, and "stress" wasn't a well-known word.

These days, families often try to pack in lots of activities in an attempt to create holiday cheer and memories. We want to live life to the fullest, and sometimes this means living life to the most frenetic. If your calendar becomes too crowded and you are rushing from one activity to another, it is hard to savor the experiences you are having. Limiting your holiday socializing can prevent your schedule from becoming too hectic and can allow time for meaningful family activities.

Children usually long for traditions, and many can be quite simple. Asking your children what their favorite family activities are, before the holidays are upon us, allows you to

pick some that are easy to implement. One friend of Italian heritage has prepared homemade raviolis with her children each Christmas. This tradition was always her children's favorite, and still is, even though they are now in their 20's.

Gift-giving has changed radically from simpler times. Where each child may have received six or seven gifts for Christmas or one gift for each night of Chanukah, nowadays it can take hours to open all of the gifts. Children may not appreciate what they receive if they are inundated with presents.

As parents, you can agree upon how many gifts each child will receive, how expensive the total will be for each child, and what you will do together to create a memorable holiday season. You can decide to produce simple gifts for friends and relatives as a family, volunteer together for some of the many worthwhile charities in the Bay area, or even create a "do-it-yourself" volunteer project.

One family took the initiative and asked their local



Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a marriage and family therapist with offices in Orinda and Walnut Creek. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or margierye@yahoo.com.

Safeway store if it would donate some of its unsold Christmas trees and decorations the day before Christmas. When they got the okay, they contacted a shelter in Oakland and arranged to deliver trees, ornaments, and gifts they purchased and wrapped. The parents said they enjoyed showing their children how even a simple volunteer effort could effectively bring joy to others.

Here's to a happy, healthy, and simple holiday season for all!



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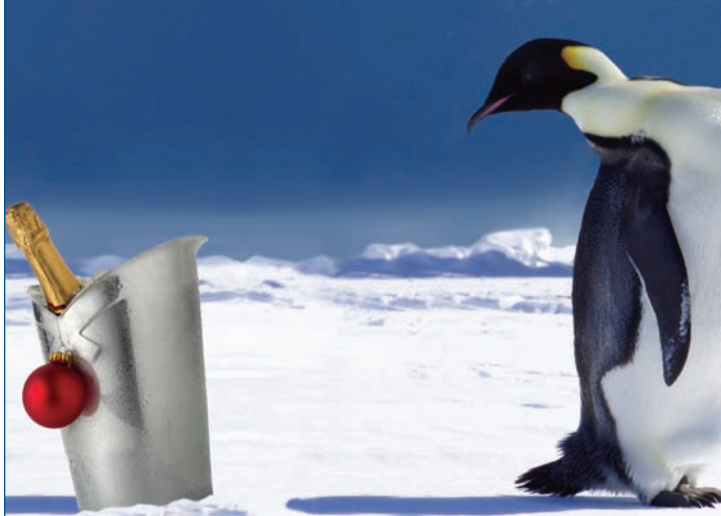
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Tuesday, Dec 11 at 7:30 the Miramonte Winter Ensemble/Chamber Music Concert will take place in the Miramonte Theater. This is a special Benefit Concert for Victims of the Southern California Wildfires: 75% of the proceeds from this concert will be donated to the fire victims' fund. There is a suggested ticket price of \$5 for adults, \$2 for students. All ticket holders will be eligible for a raffle held during the performance breaks, and all are invited to a Dessert Reception in the Art Studio after the performance.

The Miramonte Jazz Band's Annual Winter Wonderland Tour is set for Friday, Dec., 21 from 8 am until noon. The Band will perform holiday favorites at the AUHSD offices at about 9 am and then at Orinda Theater Square around

10:30 am Don't miss this exciting community event.

Lafayette Town Hall Theatre Company Presents Miracle on 34th Street Through Dec. 29th Contact the Town Hall Theatre Company Box Office for exact dates and times Rating - Appropriate for all Ages. Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street at Moraga Road, Lafayette 925-283-1557 or www.thtcc.org

CAPA performs The Nutcracker Dec 14th, 15th and 16th. The snow falls onstage and the Christmas tree magically grows in the California Academy of Performing Arts presentation of a full-length Nutcracker in Moraga. This is an energy-filled spectacle with a certain joy that reflects the studio's dedication to young dancers with more than 100 performers and extra characters & surprises. For specific show times and tickets, please contact www.capadance.net or call 925-376-2454. Student Matinees: If your child's school class would like to come to a Student Nutcracker performance, please contact Nancy Falk at

Not to be missed

nancy.falk@gmail.com, Student Performances are 9:30am and 12pm on Wed Dec 12 and 13th at the Rheem Theater in Moraga.

"Christmas at the Biltmore", an original play by Brentwood local Steve Kinsella, is a heartwarming and touching story of individuals all coming to spend their Christmas vacation at the New England bed and breakfast, Biltmore Hotel. As each hotel guest arrives, they carry a burden with them, an invisible weight that is exposed during the course of the show. Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, 1801 Lacassie Ave, Walnut Creek. Dec. 7-15. Tickets \$20. Discounts for groups, youth and seniors. Order at www.cchristiantheatre.org.

HOLIDAY CONCERTS

Women Sing, an auditioned Bay Area chorus of over 50 women, will perform a holiday concert. Artistic Director is Martin Benvenuto, accompanist is Paul Caccamo, Dancer's Circle. Wednesday, Nov. 28, 8 p.m., Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church, 10 Moraga Valley Lane, Moraga and Sunday, Dec. 2, 4 p.m. Ticket are \$25 premium seating, \$20 general, \$18 senior, \$10 student/youth 18 and under. Tickets can be charged on the website at www.womensing.org, by phone at (925) 974-9169, or at the door.

Moraga Community Chorus to Perform locally:

Dec. 2, 1:30pm Ægis, Moraga - Christmas Program for the Residents

Dec. 2, 5:30pm Moraga Commons - Lighting for Hospice

Dec. 8, 7:30pm Miramonte Gardens Club House - Formal Concert

Voices of Musica Sacra, John Kendall Bailey, music director, presents "Caroling, Caroling" a holiday concert featuring the complete carols of Alfred Burt and works by others. Dec. 8, 8PM, Santa Maria Catholic Church Orinda. Dec. 9, 3PM, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Walnut Creek. Tickets, information call (925) 944-5239 or www.vmschorus.org

Special holiday treat - "Playhouse West: Our Musical Legacy." This fun musical revue performs Nov. 30 - Dec. 8 only at the company's Locust Street theater. Ten musicals will be featured in both scenes and songs creatively stitched together by artistic director Lois Grandi, who directed and choreographed the show. Performers will bring to life characters from such shows as "Baby," "Starting Here, Starting Now," "The Boyfriend," "The World Goes Round," Rodgers and Hammerstein's "A Grand Night for Singing," and much more. Tickets are \$30. Call 925-942-0300 or www.playhousewest.org.

ART

Orinda artists Peggy Moulton and Liz Piatt will be showing their art in the Orinda Library Art

Gallery through Dec 15. The large case will feature Peggy's fiber art with emphasis on her whimsical cats-all embroidered and stitched by hand. The smaller case will be filled with Liz's handmade 3-D Christmas scenes-everything from Seven Maids a-milking to The Old Woman in the Shoe. Bring your kids. Orinda Library Gallery 24 Orinda Way, (925) 254-2184

Moraga Art Gallery "Texture and Light" through Jan. 6th.

Featuring the work of Pat Smith, who likes to experiment with different art forms: watercolor, acrylic painting, printmaking, photography and fiber arts. Moraga Art Gallery, 570 Center St, Rheem Valley Shopping Center/next to Longs Drugs Open Tuesday through Sunday, 12-5 pm. 925.376.5407

Lafayette Gallery "Envisioning the Season" through Dec 23rd A special show that captures the spirit and the glow of the holiday season. A holiday reception will be held at the Gallery (50 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette) on Nov. 30 from 7 - 9 pm.

"Capturing the Light: a Retrospective" solo exhibit by Bay Area photographer Wenda Pyman. Her body of work shown here are Landscapes, Scenics and Nature, mostly concentrating on the local Diablo area and beyond. Moraga Public Library, 1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga, 925.376.8294 Open Tuesday through Sunday, hours vary.

"Mt. Diablo A Personal View" - The Photography of Sue Reynolds Through February 28. Lindsay Wildlife Museum, 1931 First Ave, Walnut Creek

Gerry Wallace, Orinda's favorite ceramic artist, will have a holiday exhibition and sale of her work. Paul Kratter, whose plein air paintings are a continuing feature at Orinda Books, will have a special exhibition and sale on that day also. Friday, Dec. 7, 10am, 276 Village Square, Orinda

LITERATURE

Moraga Library "Overstock Book Sale" on Saturday, Dec. 1st from 9 am to 12 noon. Children's books and cook books will be featured along with unsorted fiction and non-fiction. The sale will be held on the Moraga Library porch at 1500 St. Mary's Road. All funds raised are used to benefit the library programs and its patrons. Recently these funds paid for new tables, more books and programs for children and adults. Bring your friends and take advantage of greatly reduced prices. For further information call 376-6259

Orinda Library Holiday Book Sale Thu., Dec. 6, 10 am - 1 pm. Friends of the Orinda Library holiday book sale includes just-like-new books and collector's books ideal for holiday gifts. The Sorting Room and Bookshop will both be open during the sale; the Bookshop will remain open until 6 pm Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda. Thursday, Dec. 6, 4 PM-Orinda Books Penny Warner will discuss and sign copies of The Official Nancy Drew Handbook. A special added attraction at this event will be Hannah Gruen's Lemon Bars. 276 Village Square, Orinda, orindabooks@thegrid.net

Activities at the Moraga Library Winter Holiday Crafts—Tuesday, Dec. 4, 4 pm. The Elves and the Shoemaker—Thursday, Dec. 6, 4 p.m. A puppet show presenting a comical adaptation of the classic tale. Joy of Movement-Sat., Dec. 8, 11 am An interactive musical experience for ages 3-7 with Nia instructor Liz Mac. SAT & ACT Essay workshop—Thursday, Dec. 6, 7 p.m. Workshop designed to give students experience of writing a 25

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

min essay under timed conditions. Saint Mary's Road, Moraga, 925-376-6852 www.cclib.org

An Evening with Khaled Housseini will be held Jan. 18, 2008 at the Leshar Theater in Walnut Creek, between 7:30 and 9 pm. This is a benefit for Trust In Education. Khaled, author of "The Kite Runner" and "A Thousand Splendid Suns", will be interviewed by Lynn Carey of the Contra Costa Times and Budd MacKenzie, in what the theater describes as "an Oprah setting." Tickets will go on sale the first week of Dec. Call for information 925-283-8057

OTHER EVENTS

6th Annual Overhill Road Holiday Boutique Dec 1 & 2, 10 am - 5 pm 214 Overhill Road, Orinda. Percentage of proceeds to benefit the American Red Cross. Hand-crafted gifts and foods by local crafters. Includes items from the Miramonte Marketplace. Free admission. 925-253-9065 or 925-254-3944

PALESTINIAN CRAFT FAIR - Orinda Community Church Fireside Room. Saturday, Dec. 1 and Sunday, Dec. 2, from 1 to 4pm each day

Wednesday, Dec. 5, the Orinda Historical Society will hold its annual Holiday Dinner. Joe Cleary, Orinda artist and sculptor, will be the guest speaker. We will gather at 6:30pm, and the dinner and program will begin at 7pm. All are welcome. The dinner and program is \$35, with a choice of beef, chicken, or vegetarian lasagna. Please call the Historical Society at 254-1353 for more information, or you can reserve your seat by sending a check with your meal choice to: P.O. Box 82, Orinda, CA 94563.

Holiday Homes Tour- Moraga Women's Society's 22 biennial Holiday Homes Tour Fri, Dec 7, 10am-4pm. See article on page 8.

Photo with Santa at Rheem Valley Shopping Center in Moraga Sat, Dec 8th 11am-2pm

Campus Happenings

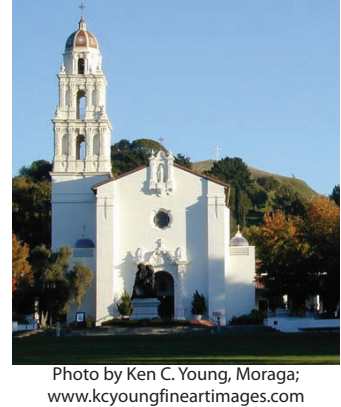


Photo by Ken C. Young, Moraga; www.kcyoungfineartimages.com

Performances/Lectures:

Author C.S. Giscombe C. S. Giscombe is the author of the collections of poetry Postcards, Giscombe Road and Here, as well as the collection of essays Into and Out of Dislocation. His work has also been published in New American Writing, Callaloo, O-Blek, Iowa Review and Hudson Review. A graduate of SUNY Albany and Cornell, he has taught at Syracuse University, Illinois State University, Penn State, the New York State Poets-in-the-Schools program, and currently UC Berkeley. He has been editor of Epoch magazine and worked for the Housing Service for the Aging in Syracuse, New York. He is the winner of the Carl Sandburg Award for Poetry. Wednesday, Nov. 28 at 7:30 p.m. Soda Center, Free

A Musical Celebration for Christmas featuring the Pacific Mozart Ensemble Performing works from Mozart to Stravinsky to Dave Brubeck, this stunning vocal ensemble has captured the hearts of music lovers around the world. Directed by Lynne Morrow, Pacific Mozart Ensemble's holiday concert features a stirring rendition of Cary Boyce's Ave Maria, Poulenc's Christmas Motets, and a selection of elegant holiday songs sung in small ensemble groupings. Sponsored by the Committee for Lectures, Art and Music at Saint Mary's Col-

Teddy Bear Tea

Bring your child and favorite Teddy Bear to a holiday Teddy Bear Tea. Enjoy delicious tea sandwiches, hot chocolate, Tom Thumb milkshakes and lots of yummy treats made to delight every child. Entertainment includes captivating storytelling and a special magic show! Saturday, Dec. 8 from 1-3pm at the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Lafayette. Reservations required. Please phone 925-283-7108.

Christmas Creche Around the World Lafayette United Methodist Church at 955 Moraga Road, Lafayette, will host a display of nativity scenes from around the world on Saturday afternoon Dec. 8 from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. and Sunday Dec. 9 from Noon - 2 p.m. The public is invited. Refreshments will be served and a free will offering taken. Supervised children are welcome.

Moraga Garden Club Holiday Luncheon - Tuesday, Dec. 11, 2007, 9:30 am, Diablo Country Club, 1700 Clubhouse Rd., Diablo. Thierry Chantrel of La Follia Floral Design will demonstrate his "Les Belle Fleur" design during this program. For membership information contact Mardi Potts (925) 376-2004.

Lafayette Parks and Recreation winter session registration begins Dec. 10th. Go online to www.LafayetteRec.org or call us at 925-284-2232.

8th Annual New Year's Eve Balloon Drop - Monday, Dec. 31 (12:45pm & 3:45pm): Reservations for the Annual New Year's Eve Balloon Drop at Chabot are now being taken for members and guests. At the strike of 1pm PDT and 4pm on Dec. 31, we celebrate the start of the real New Year with music and balloons dropping from our ceiling, many filled with prizes. Children ages 5 and under are invited to their own balloon drops in the Discovery Lab at 1pm and 4pm. The event is FREE with general admission but space is limited and advance reservations are REQUIRED. Call the Chabot Box Office at (510) 336-7373.

lege. Saturday, Dec. 8 at 8 p.m. Saint Mary's College Chapel Suggested Donation: \$30 general; \$25 seniors; \$15 for SMC faculty/staff and non-SMC students; \$2 for SMC students. For information, call (925) 631-4381 or go online to www.stmarys-ca.edu and click on "The Arts."

Art Exhibitions:

"Footloose in Arcadia: Artists and Authors of Piedmont from 1890 to 1930" Nov. 3 to Dec. 16 In celebration of the centennial of the City of Piedmont, the Hearst Art Gallery has organized this exhibition of the region's early artists and writers. Turn of the century Piedmont was home to Jack London, who wrote the Sea Wolf and Call of the Wild while living in Piedmont. He was part of the local artistic and literary bohemia that included George Sterling, Herman Whitaker, and Xavier Timateo Martinez. The Reverend Joseph Worcester, the first Swedenborgian minister in San Francisco, designed and built his own home and was one of the first to design a structure that was harmonious with nature - he influenced architects Bernard Maybeck and Willis Polk. In 1901 Jack London moved into Worcester's cottage. William Keith painted several versions of the Worcester cottage; three are included in the exhibition. Hearst Art Gallery **"William Keith: The 1880s Paintings"** Works from the 1880s, which marked a decade of great changes in William Keith's life. On view in the William Keith Room Hearst Art Gallery

Exhibition hours: Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Admission: \$3 adult; children 12 and under free; free parking Web site: http://gallery.stmarys-ca.edu. Telephone: 925-631-4379

For more information about upcoming events at Saint Mary's College, visit the college website at http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/news-and-events/events.html.

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Business news or business press releases - business@lamorindaweekly.com

School stories/events - schooldesk@lamorindaweekly.com

General interest stories - storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

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Local Soldier Works to Restore Scouting in Iraq

By Jennifer Wake



Lt. Michael Gerson is part of the Green Zone Boy Scout Council in Iraq. Photo provided

For many in Lamorinda, Scouting is a part of growing up, teaching values that last a lifetime. When Michael Gerson (known to childhood friends as Andrew) was part of Boy Scout Troop 212 in Moraga, he learned courage, respect and responsibility. Those values have served him well as he headed from Campolindo High School to Jacksonville University in Florida on a naval ROTC scholarship, and then to Okinawa, Japan.

But five months ago these values came to the forefront when, after seeing friends returning to Iraq for second tours of duty, Gerson, age 24, volunteered to go to Bagdad. "I'm single, have no dependents, and haven't been - it's my turn," he told his mother, Jamie. He now serves as a Ma-

rine Corps lieutenant in Iraq's Green Zone.

Upon his arrival in Iraq, Gerson learned that scouting is not just an American concept.

"Scouting has always been a part of Iraqi culture," explained Gerson on the phone from Iraq. "When Saddam was in power, he turned scouting into a military source and changed a lot of the fundamental views of scouting, but scouting for Iraqis is not a new concept. There are about six scouting leaders involved inside the Green Zone, but 150,000 kids are involved throughout Iraq's 18 provinces."

In fact, the long tradition of scouting in Iraq dates back to the 1920s, but was briefly halted during World War II and then later, when Saddam Hus-

sein turned scouting into a paramilitary training course, Iraq was kicked out of the international scouting organization.

As part of the Green Zone Boy Scout Council, which has nearly 100 members, Gerson and 10 other council members volunteer their time to meet weekly with local Iraqi Boy Scout leaders to retrain them on the skills and concepts of scouting. The Council is also working with the president of the Iraqi scouting movement, Abdul Salaam, who works with the minister of education, to help re-induct the Iraqi scouts into the World Scouting Organization.

"The way scouting works here is that it's tied in with the school program. Teachers are scout masters," Gerson said. The Council meetings focus on training these teacher-leaders on how to run a soccer camp, a campout, or conduct merit badge training.

"We teach the leaders how to tie knots and other basics, and the Iraqi leaders teach the kids. We're in the shadows," he said. "The Iraqis really want to get this started. The hardest thing is getting support. They just don't know what to do next."

After getting involved in the Council, Gerson enlisted

the help of his former Scout leader Tom (Mac) Macintosh and another parent he knew from Troop 212, Ken Towers, to get copies of Boy Scout handbooks and merit badge books to the Green Zone.

"The books can be used for those who speak English and they can translate them into Arabic," said Gerson. Macintosh and Towers sent a shipment of books last week. The Iraqis also need camping supplies, utensils, and tents for campouts, but more importantly there needs to be a shift in thinking.

"We need to create new leaders who think about the country first. Scouting creates pride in your nation and promotes town citizenship," Gerson said. "You can think of yourself as an Iraqi who is ALSO from this town or that religious sect. The future of Iraq will be governed by the skills we are teaching the kids today."

Moraga Mayor Michael Metcalf has known the Gersons for 20 years (his son was a scout mate of Gerson's in Troop 212). He is extremely proud of Gerson's efforts. "Here is a terrific example of a young Moraga lad doing something for Iraqi youth that potentially is more enduring than anything else our country could do," he said. "If what he is doing actually takes hold, it will go to further America's good reasons for being there."

You can mail camping supplies directly to Gerson at: Lt. Michael Gerson, MNF-I CSO, APOAE 09316.

Read online at: <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com> (a pdf reader is required to view the pages.)

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Lt. Michael Gerson stands with his former Scout master Tom "Mac" Macintosh at a Moraga event in 2005 to honor local men serving in the military. Photo provided

Shigeko Ide, Japanese Heritage in Lamorinda

... continued from page 7

The Ides ended up in Arkansas. Before the camp was built, they were first herded for months in horse stalls at the Tanforan Center in San Bruno. They stayed three years in the wood barracks, in small rooms separated with paper walls, and no running water. Shigeko remembers the small garden they grew to try and get fresh vegetables, the constant walks to common bathrooms and cafeteria, the monotonous diet of beets and mutton stew, the cold winters and the hot summers.

In camp, Shigeko and Harry lived with their family and were blessed with the birth of two daughters. Japanese doctors delivered the babies in the

camp. Harry, who had previously wanted to give up his Japanese citizenship and keep only his American one in order to assimilate, refused to confirm that choice when presented with a questionnaire in camp. As a result of not wanting to give up his Japanese citizenship, he was considered disloyal and sent to Tule Lake camp. There, his mail was stamped "enemy mail." In 1946, Shigeko was sent back by bus to Stockton, she was re-united with her husband a year later.

When asked about her feelings at the time of the deportation, Ide says she remembers not being surprised to be sent

away: "We were used to being discriminated against, we were different, we had darker skin, it was normal." The chilling statement may partly explain why her generation was called "the quiet generation." They wanted to forget about that period of their lives, and it took the fighting spirit of the new generation to finally get Ronald Reagan to apologize for the US Government in 1988. But maybe as a result of this early experience the grandmother of eight young Americans and honored "Sensei" who lives peacefully in Lafayette, confides that she never wanted to give up her Japanese first name and never felt totally assimilated.

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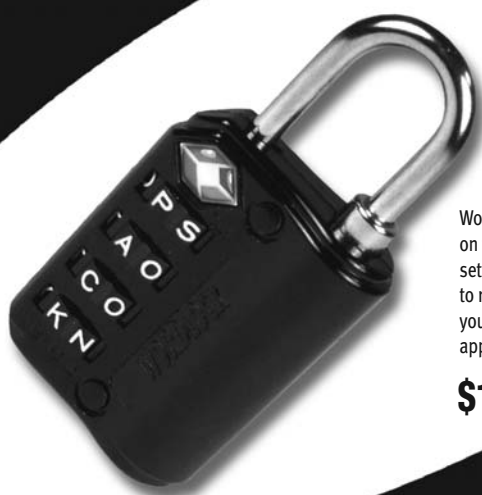
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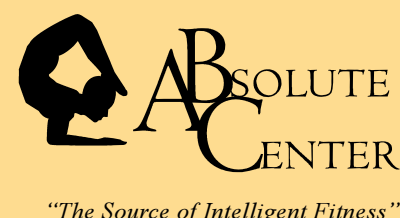


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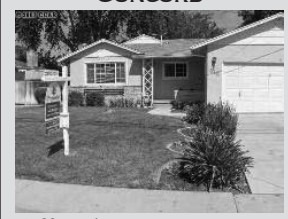



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Remodeling that Pays: How Far to Upgrade a Lamorinda Home

By Ken Ryerson, Sales Associate Pacific Union Orinda

For homeowners contemplating a remodel project, an important consideration is how much to do; that is, how much work is appropriate for a kitchen makeover or landscaping upgrade? The cardinal rule of real estate applies here: It's "Location, location, location" that determines how much effort pays off and how much is too much.

In general, the best remodeling returns are realized by projects that bring a substandard house up to the standard of its surroundings. Lamorinda is predominantly a bedroom community of families here for the quality schools. The standard for a house as a whole is a stylish master suite plus two or three smaller bedrooms, good landscaping, living room, and connected kitchen-informal dining-family room space. In our community, projects that address these spaces realize the largest returns on remodeling, to 125% of costs or better.

But for an individual

project, how much is enough?

As is the case for a house as a whole, an individual project shows the best payback when it suits the community. In our area, this means family-friendly remodeling that takes into account our beautiful setting and gentle climate. For example, one of the most cost-effective projects nationally provides relatively poor returns in Lamorinda: refacing a home with vinyl siding. In most parts of the country homeowners appreciate the tough, easy-care qualities of vinyl, but here in our mild area, natural siding is preferred.

Landscape work here offers the best returns when it enhances the natural setting of a house, while at the same time offering space for children to play safely outdoors. Landscaping that fills a yard with ornamental plants or rockeries is less attractive to family buyers and thus returns less value.

Adding an outdoor pool

generally provides a very low remodeling return, in Lamorinda as elsewhere. A pool dominates the outdoor space of a typical lot, and it may be considered an unwanted hazard by families with small children. Of course for large properties or dedicated swimmers, a pool may be a very desirable addition, but for our community in general, pools offer the least remodel value of any project. Indeed, some homeowners with older pools prefer to fill them in rather than upgrade them.

Family factors likewise dominate inside a Lamorinda home. For remodel projects this consideration commonly means choosing sturdy, reliable finishes and fixtures over the latest fashions. And flow is important, to channel the activities of energetic children.

"To get a good return or payback on a kitchen remodel, for example, a good design is more important than overspending on the highest end appliances and finishes," says

Orinda's Rick Kattenburg of Kattenburg Architects. "We see many projects where people pay quadruple what's necessary, either because they are status-driven or just unaware they are paying too much."

Kattenburg continues, "Stainless steel finishes on residential appliances cost more but are popular because they offer the 'commercial look' promoted in home magazines. Stainless, I believe, is generally a bad idea in a home with children. Smudges made by sticky fingers on a stainless steel refrigerator door are less than attractive and tough to clean."

Accordingly, very high-end luxury upgrades return less value in Lamorinda than do mid-range makeovers. But homeowners needn't scrimp on budget materials.

"Cabinets, granite, tile, and plumbing fixtures have a wide range of costs," says Kattenburg. "You don't have to save as much as the typical tract developer does with their finish selections, but if you're going for payback



Ken Ryerson

on a remodel, take a lesson from their approach to finish selection. Select products with inherent value. Not having an overrated brand name won't be a critical factor when you sell. Good flow and general appearance will."

Of course each remodeling project differs as much as people do, and the final value of any project depends on the situation. The concepts presented here provide general guidelines for approaching a remodel in a typ-

ical Lamorinda family home and won't apply for all. In the end, the real worth of a remodeling job is judged by the homeowner alone, and almost any work can return real value if properly considered.

Ken can be reached at 925-253-6279 or by email ken@ryersonrealty.com



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Council Faces \$38 Million Wish List for \$17 Million Palos Money

However, Town Treasurer Robert Kennedy stated that the Town is projecting an annual "structural budget deficit" averaging around \$200,000 beginning in 2013 and continuing thereafter. Kennedy explained that projected deficit is because property tax revenues are expected to increase only 2% per year under Proposition 13, while personnel-related expenditures are expected to increase 5% per year.

Vince told the Council that "beginning in 2013 or 2014 we will face dramatic reductions in services and personnel if we don't find a way to reduce the deficit." Since everyone at the meeting agreed that this Council cannot bind future Councils, that projection may make the option of spending none of the Palos money or interest until 2017 unlikely.

Regarding the \$1.5 million legal fund he is recommending, Vince explained that the Town "has made land use decisions", that "there are initiatives coming down the pike—MOSO 2008" (the Moraga Open Space Ordinance), "which will be on the ballot in June or November", and


... continued from page 3

that "an applicant (the Bruzzone family) has sued the Town over its design guidelines." Regarding the prospect of the Town spending legal fees to defend MOSO, Bird commented that "these initiatives get passed and then it's on the company dime of the city to get it all sorted out."

Toward the end of the meeting Police Chief Mark Ruppenthal made a second pitch for \$500,000 for the Town's estimated share of the regional emergency radio system. He also asked the Council to consider spending Palos money for "one or two more police officers," which went beyond the \$38 million wish list presented by Vince. Ruppenthal's comments illustrate the dilemma the Council faces in selecting from a growing wish list the items on which the Town will spend the one-time Palos Colorados development fees.

In his presentation Vince included an illustration which showed that if the Town did that and spent none of the Palos money or the interest it would have over \$25 million by 2017.

Lamorinda Home Sales continued



LAFAYETTE Last reported: 7
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$665,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,350,000

MORAGA Last reported: 10
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$405,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$2,900,000

ORINDA Last reported: 5
LOWEST AMOUNT: \$1,085,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$2,300,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal Resource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California Resource. Neither Cal Resource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

- LAFAYETTE**
- 1661 Foothill Park Circle, \$1,135,000, 4 Bdrms, 2102 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 11-9-07
 - 1154 Glen Road, \$1,315,000, 7 Bdrms, 3427 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 11-1-07
 - 124 Haslemere Court, \$680,000, 3 Bdrms, 1638 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 11-9-07
 - 3239 Judy Lane, \$1,350,000, 3 Bdrms, 2329 SqFt, 1890 YrBlt, 11-1-07
 - 866 Mariposa Road, \$1,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 1545 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 11-6-07
 - 1042 Sunnybrook Drive, \$665,000, 3 Bdrms, 1305 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 10-31-07
 - 3108 Teigland Road, \$1,100,000, 3 Bdrms, 3130 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 10-31-07
- MORAGA**
- 1997 Ascot Drive #C, \$405,000, 2 Bdrms, 1124 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 10-31-07
 - 819 Augusta Drive, \$870,000, 2 Bdrms, 2488 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 11-6-07
 - 1434 Camino Peral, \$555,000, 3 Bdrms, 1348 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 10-31-07
 - 694 Carroll Drive, \$906,000, 4 Bdrms, 1548 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 11-7-07
 - 4 Donald Place, \$1,549,500, 4 Bdrms, 2269 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 10-30-07
 - 23 Greenfield Drive, \$990,000, 4 Bdrms, 2270 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 10-30-07
 - 3 Julianna Court, \$2,900,000, 4 Bdrms, 3983 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 10-30-07
 - 10 Kimberly Drive, \$719,000, 11-5-07
 - 161 Miramonte Drive, \$555,000, 2 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 11-6-07
 - 425 Woodminster Drive, \$570,000, 3 Bdrms, 1800 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 10-30-07
- ORINDA**
- 10 El Sueno, \$2,300,000, 3 Bdrms, 3669 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 11-9-07
 - 225 El Toyonal Road, \$1,110,000, 4 Bdrms, 1958 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 11-1-07
 - 4 Santa Lucia Road, \$1,900,000, 3 Bdrms, 3040 SqFt, 1937 YrBlt, 11-1-07
 - 81 Tarry Lane, \$1,085,000, 2 Bdrms, 1692 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 11-6-07
 - 28 Vallecito Lane, \$1,143,000, 3 Bdrms, 3275 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 11-6-07



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business briefs

High-End Cosmetic Dentistry in Orinda

La Beauté, 3 Altarinda Rd., Orinda - 254-0084

Dr. Angela Bayat opened a new Cosmetic Dentistry office in Orinda last month. She has a very successful practice in Berkeley where she specializes in full service cosmetic dentistry. Patients who appreciate privacy get complete service the minute they set foot in her office or arrive at the airport (some of her clients fly in specially to get her service, she says). She offers a stress free approach, including other professionals as needed: practitioners such as plastic surgeons for a complete new look, concierge services, food, medications and even sleeping accommodations. Most of her clients are business leaders looking to get the smile of success.

New Treatment for a Slimmer You in Lafayette

Jeffrey Friedman MD; 911 Moraga Rd Ste 205, Lafayette - 283-4012

Dr. Friedman is the first cosmetic surgeon in Contra Costa to offer treatment with the new generation of VelaShape machines. The technology is FDA approved for circumferential reduction and cellulite reduction. It combines heat, deep massage and bi-polar radio-frequency for optimal fat reduction and smoother texture. Friedman's first patient testifies: "Since I've had my first child a year and a half ago I've been unable to lose those extra inches around my waist. After four VelaShape sessions we measured a two inches loss around my waist and a half inch loss around each of my legs." Dr. Friedman believes there is no better non-surgical, non-invasive treatment today for cellulite.



Magazine Fusing Bay Area Fashion

FUSE 3249 Mt. Diablo Court, Lafayette

Penelope Lippincott, a former Mt Diablo Blvd boutique owner is launching a new Fashion magazine on December 1st. "We're focusing on the many talented designers and fashion and beauty industry specialists in the Bay area," said editor Lippincott. The publication's targets are fashion savvy mature women with a passion for fashion. Lippincott's objective is to fuse local designers with outlets and consumers. The magazine will feature mature women as models, side by side with their younger counterparts.

Aegis Celebrates its 8th Anniversary

Aegis, 950 Country Club Drive, Moraga - 377-7900

In order to celebrate its 8th Anniversary, Aegis, the Moraga retirement community, invites the community to come celebrate on Thursday December 13th from 5:30p.m. to 7:30p.m.. Champagne and holiday refreshments will be served while seasonal music performances take place. Reservations by phone at 377-7900.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce:

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, 100 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette; www.lafayettechamber.org - 284-7404

- Holiday Mixer, Wednesday December 12th at 5:30 p.m. Location: Bank of the West, 3583 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
- Entrepreneur's Club, Thursday December 20th at 8:30 a.m. Location: Lafayette Chamber Conference Room.

Chamber of Commerce of Moraga;

www.moragachamber.org

- Season of Light, a winter celebration at the Rheem shopping center, Saturday December 8th from 11a.m. to 7p.m.
- Monthly meeting and Year-end celebration at Aegis, 950 Country Club drive, Tuesday December 11th at 7pm. All are welcomed but please confirm with Aegis at 377-7900.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce, 24 Orinda Way, Orinda www.orindachamber.org:

- Breakfast Meeting, Friday, December 7, 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. Location: Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, Orinda, CA 94563
Bill Lindsey will introduce Rev. Shumake of the Richmond Improvement Association
- Christmas Mixer, Thursday, December 13, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Location: First Republic Bank, 224 Brookwood Road
- Hospice Tree Lighting, Saturday, December 8th, 4:00 p.m. Location: Bank of America parking lot, 31 Orinda Way

Pixel Outpost, Making It Big in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



Steve Kozel president of Pixel Outpost in front of one of his prints Photo Sophie Braccini

When Steve and Suzanne Kozel took a trip to Italy in 2004, they took pictures they wanted to enlarge and display. They looked online and couldn't find an affordable way to get large prints of their memories. That's how Kozel, who was part of a visual art family business, decided to start a new venture; Pixel Outpost, an internet service that takes those beautiful Taj Mahal or Grand Canyon pictures and turns them into works of art that will gracefully adorn living rooms and entryways. Last June, the Lafayette resident moved his Walnut Creek business to Moraga, purchasing the old firehouse at 331 Rheem Boulevard.

For the end-user, the process is quite simple: go to www.pixeloutpost.com, upload your electronic file (you can upload directly up to 100MB files, otherwise, there are other ways to transfer your pixels) and then the creative part begins. After deciding on an optional border, you'll get to choose the kind of material you want your rendition on and how you want it mounted. The software will offer you different sizes appropriate for the definition of your picture. For example, a canvas made out of a picture would look great blown to a 32" by 24", but look too "pixelated" at 48" by 36". Pixel Outpost offers free help via email to optimize your results.

According to Kozel, "less than 5% of the projects get finalized without interaction with the customers. 70% of the discussions happen via email, the rest by phone. We do not charge for any of this and what sets us apart is that we are available almost 24/7."

Denise Davidson from

Oakwood Athletic Club works with Pixel Outpost: "They print posters for us and their response time is amazing; they will deliver the finished product the same day or within 24 hours. They are very helpful if we have a problem with a picture and will always offer suggestions. They are easy to work with and very reasonably priced." The price range varies depending on size and material and goes from \$37 for a paper print 16"X20" to \$315 for a canvas 60"X72".

Oakwood is one local customer of the Outpost, but that's only a fraction of the business. Since it is web-based, orders come from all over the United States. Of the 16,000 images printed since the beginning in May of 2005, 80% came from outside of California and in California, only 20% originate in the Bay Area. The three largest markets are New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. The majority of the images are landscapes from individual trips, but the Outpost gets orders from Historical Societies and Museums wanting to preserve and display older material. The company can work from already-printed material like ancient pictures.

All the orders received are printed on the premises. The office harbors HP and Epson printers stocked with water based ink, rolls of paper and canvas, frames, fixtures, as well as tubes and boxes for shipping. Five employees work in the building, including wife Suzanne who helps with marketing and Kozel's sister Kim Fogarty who handles the book-keeping and part of the production.

The end results can be quite stunning. Beautiful family pictures on canvas with a paint-

like finish, long panoramic views of the Bay, Machu Pichu in the clouds, flowers, pets.... The range of images is endless. You can count on Kozel's mastery of Photoshop to improve your images: When a picture is blown up, what appeared to be a pure blue sky can show "digital noise," or markings can be revealed on portraits; Kozel takes care of these without being asked. For special projects Kozel is happy to get involved and make suggestions, like the composition based on a dog's picture with four different backgrounds or a beautiful panoramic view of Yosemite presented in the form of a triptych. Your imagination and creativity is the limit.

Safeway Responds to Concerns

... continued from page 3

Schwartz was happy with the outcome of the meeting. "Carver is committed to responding to any customer demand and has given her email, Helen.Carver@safeway.com, so people can use it. It is possible to improve the shopping experience at Safeway in many ways. The management is listening, so let's give them a chance." She wants to remind Moraga shoppers that even though food is not taxable, there are many items at Safeway such as paper towels, tooth paste and cleaning products that should be bought locally to maximize the town's tax revenue. "As other issues come up we will do our best to address them and work with the residents to provide them with the outstanding customer service and superior quality items," concludes Greenwood.

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If you have a business brief to share, please contact Sophie Braccini at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com or contact Lamorinda Weekly at 925-377-0977.



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Gigi's, The Spirit of Sophisticated Lafayette on Your Plate

By Sophie Braccini

Getting a table at Gigi's for dinner, even just for two, requires some planning ahead. When I called on a Friday afternoon for a table that same evening, nothing was available until 9:00 pm. But my date and I were hungry and decided to head over at 8:15, just in case.

I used to know the small cottage on Brown in Lafayette as the home of a quaint European place. That rainy evening, the atmosphere was quite different. Owner Jeff Amber remodeled it in a simple, modern and elegant way. The young chef moved to Lafayette from San Francisco four years ago, looking for a great place to raise his family. He had run Moose's and XYZ in San Francisco as well as the three Chow's. He started working in restaurants at age fourteen, working his way up the ladder.

When we arrived, the main rooms and small covered terrace were full with a baby boomer crowd. We sat at the bar, a bit crunched in the hallway, waiting for a table to open. We were offered a very interesting choice of drinks. I had a glass of Macon Village and my companion a Californian beer. The wine and beer list is extensive and diverse. As Jeff Amber explained later "for

beer, we look for local small breweries, the wines are more international and the French and Italian we have are lighter, affordable and go well with our food." As we waited for a table, we could observe part of the kitchen where Amber works side by side with



chef Sebastian Miller.

A table first became available for us on the covered terrace, but the atmosphere there was a bit cold and isolated. We moved to one of the main rooms for a warmer feel. The servers were quite busy, but very amicable and took our every request with the best disposition. The menu is seasonal and claims use of local ingredients. I started with figs stuffed with goat cheese on a baby arugula salad with fennel. The taste of the salad was much milder and more subtle than the usual arugula. I later learned that it was harvested very young and mixed

with watercress. Amber buys it from Sausalito Springs, a local Bay Area organic farmer. My companion had roasted chicken liver with green apple and arugula. The livers had a pleasant distinctive scent that came from a mix of herbs and spices including dried celery seeds and a "secret ingredient" from the south called old bay; the greens were extremely tender and tasty.

My main dish was cod with butter-nut squash. The fish was perfectly cooked and the vegetables were just the right combination. My companion chose pork tenderloin that was served with small vegetables and faro. The taste of the sauce was refined and savory; we asked the composition and were answered that it was a beef and red wine reduction that incorporated some 20 other ingredients, including apple cider and maple syrup.

The restaurant places an emphasis on treating seasonal vegetables as an important focus of the dishes. Amber confirms, "I get my inspiration from seasonal local ingredients. For example we are now serving a roasted coings salad with honey vinaigrette. This is a fruit that is often overlooked but gives great results." Another key element is the research of interesting flavors without the need for overstatement. "Yes," says Amber, "we make everything but the bread and we try to keep our cooking elegant and simple."

We were quite satiated after the entrees, but couldn't ignore the dessert menu. We gave in to poached pears with vanilla mascarpone and a perfect butterscotch crème brulee with shortbread cookies. The total price, with gratuities, drinks and dessert came to \$100 for two. As the evening came to a close, Amber worked the room and greeted all of the diners to make sure everyone had enjoyed their visit to Gigi's, one of the most interesting dinner experiences in Lamorinda.

Gigi's, 1005 Brown Ave., Lafayette 962-0882

Lamorinda Helps Feed the Hungry through Loaves and Fishes

There were even two young children with their grandparents. Many folks walked right past the food line and went straight to the back of the lunchroom to pick out much needed new clothes and bread that had been donated. With their choices in hand, they returned to the food line and joined the others for lunch.

One fellow has eaten at Loaves and Fishes for 25 years and lives in a local park. The night before, he was stabbed in the thigh and his jacket and shoes were stolen. He had 30-40 staples in his leg and was walking with a limp. When asked how he was feeling, he replied "Yeah, it hurts. I guess I'll get the staples out in a couple weeks." He then walked to the back to pick out a new jacket before returning for his meal. He was well known by the staff, workers and many of the patrons. There was a lot of camaraderie, laughter and hugs of recognition among the patrons and staff. The employees also function as "quasi social workers" according to McClintick, checking in with the folks from day to day to see how they are doing and making program recommendations that could help them out.

McClintick said about 50% of the patrons are the working poor, 25% are homeless and 25% are seniors. In the summer,

... continued from page 9 there are also a lot of children since they're not in school. The policy of Loaves and Fishes is to serve whoever walks through the door, regardless of their relative need. McClintick said "One of the premises of Loaves and Fishes is to be a non-threatening, low-key place to eat." For some folks, this is their only meal of the day and they are welcome to have as many servings as they want. The facilities tend to get busier toward the end of the month when money starts to run low at home.

Loaves and Fishes has an annual budget of roughly \$1,000,000. \$500,000 of that comes from food donations from grocery stores such as Diablo Foods in Lafayette. The other \$500,000 comes from various donors. Volunteers are also vital to the operations. Currently, there are about 1,200 regular volunteers that serve each month and a number of them are from Lamorinda. Some of the Lamorinda organizations with regular volunteer groups are the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, Temple Isaiah and the Rossmoor Community. There is plenty of room for more volunteers and donations. Further information on becoming a volunteer or making a donation can be obtained at www.loavesandfishesofcontracosta.org.

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| LAMORINDA's Restaurants | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|--|
| •• updated November 28, 2007 •• | | | |
| American | | | |
| Bistro | 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-7108 | |
| Chow Restaurant | 53 Lafayette Cir, Laf | 962-2469 | |
| Hungry Hunter | 3201 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 938-3938 | |
| Quiznos | 3651 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 962-0200 | |
| Ranch House | 1012 School St, Mor | 376-5127 | |
| Terzetto Cuisine | 1419 Moraga Way, Mor | 376-3832 | |
| The Cheese Steak Shop | 3455 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-1234 | |
| BBQ | | | |
| Bo's Barbecue | 3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-7133 | |
| Burger Joint | | | |
| Flippers | 960 Moraga Rd, Laf | 284-1567 | |
| Nation's Giant Hamburgers | 400 Park, Mor | 376-8888 | |
| Nation's Giant Hamburgers | 76 Moraga Way, Ori | 254-8888 | |
| Café | | | |
| Express Cafe | 3732 Mt. Diablo Blvd #170, Laf | 283-7170 | |
| Ferrari-Lucca Delicatessens | 23 Lafayette Cir, Laf | 299-8040 | |
| Geppetto's cafe | 87 Orinda Way, Ori | 253-9894 | |
| California Cuisine | | | |
| Gigi's | 1005 Brown St., Laf | 962-0882 | |
| Metro Lafayette | 3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-4422 | |
| Shelby's | 2 Theatre Sq, Ori | 254-9687 | |
| Chinese | | | |
| Asia Palace Restaurant | 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor | 376-0809 | |
| Chef Chao Restaurant | 343 Rheim Blvd, Mor | 376-1740 | |
| China Moon Restaurant | 380 Park St, Mor | 376-1828 | |
| The Great Wall Restaurant | 3500 Golden Gate Way, Laf | 284-3500 | |
| Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine | 1 Orinda Way # 1, Ori | 253-9852 | |
| Lily's House | 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #A, Laf | 284-7569 | |
| Mandarin Flower | 581 Moraga Rd, Mor | 376-7839 | |
| Panda Express | 3608 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 962-0288 | |
| Szechwan Chinese Restaurant | 79 Orinda Way, Ori | 254-2020 | |
| Uncle Yu's Szechuan | 999 Oak Hill Rd, Laf | 283-1688 | |
| Yan's Restaurant | 3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-2228 | |
| Coffee Shop | | | |
| Millie's Kitchen | 1018 Oak Hill Rd #A, Laf | 283-2397 | |
| Squirrel's Coffee Shop | 998 Moraga Rd, Laf | 284-7830 | |
| Village Inn Cafe | 290 Village Square, Ori | 254-6080 | |
| Continental | | | |
| Petar's Restaurant | 32 Lafayette Cir, Laf | 284-7117 | |
| Vino Restaurant | 3531 Plaza Way, Laf | 284-1330 | |
| Duck Club Restaurant | 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-7108 | |
| Hawaiian Grill | | | |
| Lava Pit | 2 Theatre Square, St. 142, Ori | 253-1338 | |
| Indian | | | |
| India Palace | 3740 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-5700 | |
| Swad Indian Cuisine | 3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 962-9575 | |
| Italian | | | |
| Giardino | 3406 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-3869 | |
| La Finestra Ristorante | 100 Lafayette Cir, St. 101, Laf | 284-5282 | |
| La Piazza | 15 Moraga Way, Ori | 253-9191 | |
| Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria | 975 Moraga Rd, Laf | 284-3081 | |
| Michael's | 1375 Moraga Way, Mor | 376-4300 | |
| Mondello's | 337 Rheim Blvd, Mor | 376-2533 | |
| Pizza Antica | 3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-0500 | |
| Postino | 3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-8700 | |
| Ristorante Amoroma | 360 Park St, Mor | 377-7662 | |
| Japanese | | | |
| Asia Palace Sushi Bar | 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor | 376-0809 | |
| Blue Ginko | 3518-A Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 962-9020 | |
| Kane Sushi | 3474 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-9709 | |
| Niwa Restaurant | 1 Camino Sobrante # 6, Ori | 254-1606 | |
| Serika Restaurant | 2 Theatre Sq # 118, Ori | 254-7088 | |
| Tamami's Japanese Restaurant | 356 Park St, Mor | 376-2872 | |
| Yu Sushi | 19 Moraga Way, Ori | 253-8399 | |
| Jazz Dinner Club | | | |
| Joe's of Lafayette | 3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Laf | 299-8807 | |
| The Orinda House | 65 Moraga Way, Ori | 258-4445 | |
| Mediterranean | | | |
| Alex's | 2 Theatre Sq # 105, Ori | 254-5290 | |
| Nino's Bay | #2 Theater Square, Ste. 153, Ori | 253-1327 | |
| Oasis Cafe | 3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-8822 | |
| Per Tutti Ristorante | 3576 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-5225 | |
| Mexican | | | |
| 360 Gourmet Burrito | 3655 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-1270 | |
| El Charro Mexican Dining | 3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-2345 | |
| El Jaro Mexican Cafe | 3563 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-6639 | |
| La Cocina Mexicana | 23 Orinda Way, Ori | 258-9987 | |
| Mucho wraps | 1375-B Moraga Way, Mor | 377-1203 | |
| Baja Fresh Mexican Grill | 3596 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-8740 | |
| Celia's Restaurant | 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-8288 | |
| El Balazo | 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-8700 | |
| Maya Mexican Grill | 74 Moraga Way, Ori | 258-9049 | |
| Numero Uno Taqueria | 3616 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-1333 | |
| Pizza | | | |
| Aladino's Pizza | 3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-6363 | |
| Mountain Mike's Pizza | 504 Center St, Mor | 377-6453 | |
| Pennini's | 1375 Moraga Rd, Mor | 376-1515 | |
| Round Table Pizza | 361 Rheim Blvd, Mor | 376-1411 | |
| Round Table Pizza | 3637 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 283-8404 | |
| Village Pizza | 19 Orinda Way # Ab, Ori | 254-1200 | |
| Zamboni's Pizza | 1 Camino Sobrante # 4, Ori | 254-2800 | |
| Sandwiches/Deli | | | |
| Bianca's Deli | 1480 Moraga Rd # A, Mor | 376-4400 | |
| Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub | 64 Moraga Way, Ori | 254-7202 | |
| Gourmet Bistro Cafe | 484 Center St, Mor | 376-1551 | |
| Kasper's Hot Dogs | 103 Moraga Way, Ori | 253-0766 | |
| Noah's Bagels | 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-0716 | |
| Orinda Deli | 19 F Orinda Way, Ori | 254-1990 | |
| Subway | 396 Park St., Mor | 376-2959 | |
| Subway | 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf | 284-2627 | |
| Subway | Theatre Square, Ori | 258-0470 | |
| Singaporean/Malaysian | | | |
| Kopitiam | 3647 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 299-1653 | |
| South American | | | |
| The Patio Tapas and Restaurant | 960 Moraga Road, Laf | 299-6885 | |
| Steak | | | |
| Casa Orinda | 20 Bryant Way, Ori | 254-2981 | |
| Tea | | | |
| Patisserie Lafayette | 71 Lafayette Cir, Laf | 283-2226 | |
| Tea Party by Appointment | 107 Orinda Way, Ori | 254-2206 | |
| Thai | | | |
| Amarin Thai Cuisine | 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd # B, Laf | 283-8883 | |
| Baan Thai | 99 Orinda Way, Ori | 253-0989 | |
| Royal Siam | 512 Center St, Mor | 377-0420 | |
| Siam Orchid | 23 Orinda Way # F, Ori | 253-1975 | |

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Lynn's Top Five

FIVE YEAR-END TAX PLANNING TIPS FOR YOU

By--- Lynn Ballou, CFP, EA

Normally this time of year, we are getting ready for the fun annual round of parties, family get-togethers and shopping! But lurking just underneath the surface of all that frivolity is that nagging question: isn't there something I should be doing for my taxes before the end of the year?

Much press and air time is given to this topic by many famous (and not so famous!) pundits. In this column, we'll explore some of the less obvious year-end tax savings ideas for you to consider.

1) ACCELERATE DEDUCTIONS INTO 2007 - OR NOT? Almost every advisor out there will tell you that a tried and true method of saving money on your income taxes this year is to accelerate as many deductions into this year as possible. But what if you subject to that nasty Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT)? Originally designed to keep extremely wealthy individuals from taking too much advantage of tax breaks, this "stealth tax" now affects an alarming and increasing percentage of taxpayers who would hardly consider themselves part of the wealthy elite! If you are already fairly deeply into the AMT, accelerating any more itemized deductions might be useless. One of our clients was contemplating prepaying her January state income tax estimated payment into December. After having her tax advisor run the numbers, she learned that doing so would not lower her taxes at all! Instead, her tax advisor recommended that she accelerate some of her self employment income into 2007. Now that's a switch!

2) CHARITABLE GIFTING: THINK APPRECIATED ASSETS! Lamorinda is generally a charitable community. For those of you who are contemplating making year-end donations, you should really take a close look at donating highly appreciated assets from your investment portfolio rather than writing a check. A client recently mentioned to us that she wanted to give her favorite charity a check for \$1000. She had the available cash, but she also had some very low basis stock. After checking in with her CPA to verify the numbers, we recommended she gift the stock instead of the cash. The organization was thrilled to have the gift and she was thrilled to make a difference with a tax smart strategy.

3) COLLEGE FUNDING - A MOVE YOU CAN DO BEFORE YEAR END - LAST CALL! Recently Congress effectively undid one of the most popular forms of college funding: gifting appreciated securities to your students and having them sell these securities in their own, hopefully much lower, tax bracket. Sadly, starting next year, dependent children under age 19, as well as dependent children who are age 19 through age 23 and full-time students, will be taxed at their parent's highest marginal bracket for investment income in excess of \$1700 --- ugh. So, for taxpayers whose dependent kids are age 18 - 23 by the end of this year, you have until the end of this year to use this technique before it disappears for good (or until Congress changes their minds again!). One interesting note: if a

college student is providing over half their own support and are therefore not a dependent, they will not be taxed at their parents' highest marginal rate on investment income... hmmm... maybe time to set some of these kids free!

4) RMD: THIS YEAR OR TWO NEXT YEAR? You probably are aware that (in most cases) you must start withdrawing money from your retirement accounts when you turn 70-1/2 under the Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) rules. However, in that first year, you can wait until April 1st of the year after you turn 70-1/2 to take that first distribution, but then you must, in that same year, take your next distribution by year end. Good idea to double up in one year? Maybe, and maybe not: it depends on how that extra income --- i.e. two RMD payouts --- in the second year affects your tax bracket and how well your money is growing in the meantime. Best idea: run the numbers before you decide. Also, when you do take an RMD, don't forget that you can choose to take the assets out in kind rather than in cash. It may make sense to take that highly appreciated, publically traded stock out in cash and repurchase it in your after tax account with a higher basis, while a well performing investment that's closed to new purchase may be a very good in-kind distribution choice since you can't buy it anymore.

5) CARS: MAYBE STILL A GOOD CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION! There sure was a lot of press recently about the loss of the car as a charitable deduction. However, as we learned from CPA Linda LaHonta of Moore and Baker in Walnut Creek, "the amount of the charitable deduction for a donated vehicle has been greatly reduced UNLESS the charity plans to use the vehicle for their charitable activities. If you are thinking of donating a vehicle to charity inquire whether the charity plans to sell the car or use it themselves and if you find a charity that plans to actually use the car, this may yield a bigger tax deduction for you."

So, as a final comment I'd like to suggest that while you keep reading all those great year-end tax tip columns (including mine!), be sure to pick and choose what you do carefully. This is the time of year when your trusted tax advisor and team is invaluable. They can help you sift through all the free advice floating around out there and help you concentrate on those ideas that will really help YOU personally so you can have a very Happy Holiday Season! Enjoy!

Lynn Ballou is a Certified Financial Planner™ (CFP®) and co-owner of Ballou Plum Financial Advisors, LLC, a Registered Investment Advisory (RIA) firm in Lafayette.

Lynn is also a Registered Principal and Branch Manager with Linsco/Private Ledger (LPL). As such, she is required by securities regulations to add the following information to this column: The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and not intended to provide specific advice or recommendation for any individual. Securities offered through Linsco/Private Ledger, member NASD/SIPC.

Tree of Lights Ceremonies Help Those Who've Lost Remember

... continued from page 1

Because Hospice of the East Bay is independently operated, and not part of a large for-profit corporate or a government entity, Jones said the organization can establish policies locally to meet the needs of the communities it serves.

"We determined that specialized programs were needed in the East Bay for in-home pediatric hospice care (Comfort for Kids program), for women with recurrent breast cancer (Anna's Program), and for perinatal hospice care (Skye's Angels)," she said.

Each of these programs is unique to Northern California, and approximately 10 percent of those helped by Hospice of the East Bay are Lamorinda residents.

Two more events are scheduled in Lamorinda. The Moraga Community Chorus is scheduled to sing at upcoming Tree of Lights Ceremony on Dec. 2 at the Moraga Commons. The Orinda ceremony on Dec. 8 (at Orinda Village by Bank of America) will feature the Children's Chorus from Del Rey, Glorietta, Sleepy Hollow, Wagner

Ranch, and Orinda Intermediate schools, directed by Harmony Murphy, Colleen Sipich and Ron Pickett.

At each of the Tree of Lights Ceremonies, individuals, merchants and community groups have shown their support by donating goods and services. Starbucks in Lafayette donated hot chocolate and coffee at the Nov. 11 event; Safeway in Orinda plans to donate cookies and drinks and the Orinda Fire Department plans to bring Santa to the festivity on their fire truck; and Moraga's Troop 212 will build a bonfire to warm all attendees while girl scout troops hand out cookies.

"The tree lightings are a tradition for family and friends to gather together to honor and remember their



friends and family members," Jones said. "People look forward to their community's tree lighting and return year after year."

For more information about upcoming ceremonies or to make a donation, contact Hospice of the East Bay at 925-887-5678.

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SPORTS

LAMORINDAS LOCAL SPORTS NEWS



Running Game Powers Cougars to Another Win

By Alex Crook

“You guys love playing on the road.” Those were the words of 12th year Campolindo coach Kevin Macy before his Cougars cruised to an easy 28-8 win over the Encinal Jets in Alameda on Friday night. The air was cold at Willie Stargell Field, which looked like it could have been a 1970’s Pop Warner field. It had natural grass, no hash marks, and yard lines every five yards across the entire length of the field.

The spotlight was on senior running back Bo Richter that night when he ran in all four Campolindo touchdowns. The first quarter ended 14-0 Campo. The Cougars allowed the Jets only one offensive play in the first 12 minutes. That’s because Campo’s Tyler Rittenhour successfully recovered an onside kick from Giorgio Tavecchio following a 1-yard score from Bo Richter to open the game.

Encinal got on the scoreboard in the second quarter when Luke Crossley received a bad snap from John Petrovich. The ball sailed over the punter’s

head and into the end zone where a blue jersey pounced on it to put the Jets on the board with a safety. The half then ended 21-2 Cougars with the help of a 7-yard touchdown run from Richter to extend Campolindo’s lead.

In the third quarter, the Jets exploded with a 57-yard touchdown pass from Jonathan Brown to Dominique Sashington for the last Encinal highlight of the night. After the missed extra point, the score stood 21-8 Cougars. To finish off the Jets in the fourth quarter, Bo Richter converted on yet another 1-yard score to put Campolindo up by 20.

Late in the 4th a Campo fumble was picked up by Tyrone Duckett and ran back for the Encinal score. But two flags against the Jets crushed their hope of stopping the red-hot Cougars, and the touchdown was denied. Encinal then got a little ticked off with Campo and landed a personal foul, driving the Jets back 15 yards. With 44 seconds remaining, Tyler Ritten-

hour sealed it by picking off Brown’s pass. The Cougars finally ran down the clock to eliminate Encinal from the NCS Playoffs.

Campolindo has only lost once on the road all year, that being Week 4 against the College Park Falcons. The Cougars ended up on the short side of a 34-32 heartbreaker in Pleasant Hill back on Sept. 28. Campo is 6-1 away from Cougar Stadium.

This week’s game will be a rematch with the Las Lomas Knights in Walnut Creek. On Saturday afternoon, Las Lomas took down the visiting Ygnacio Valley Warriors. Campo will be thinking payback after what happened with the blown call in Moraga a couple weeks ago. In fact, the Cougars haven’t trailed a game since they hosted Las Lomas on senior night. The Knights held on to a late 20-13 lead to take the win.

The winner of Friday night’s game will play for the NCS title. Campo has never been to the final.

Saint Mary’s Men Win In Final Five Seconds

By Kevin D. Shallat



L to R: Coley Heldreth (2), Kurt Thompson (26), David Blanchard (7)

Photo Tod Fierner

The Saint Mary’s men’s soccer team finished up their season Sunday, Nov. 18 on a high note against the Loyola Marymount Lions. The Gaels came from behind to score a goal in the last five seconds of regulation to break up the tie and win this game, 2-1.

The Gaels beat the Lions in Los Angeles in October, but found themselves down 1-0 in this game mid-way through the first half. Loyola Marymount’s Rafael Baca took a shot that caromed off the cross bar, but leaked back into the field of play where Steffen Canty was there to kick the ball into the upper right corner of the goal for the Lion’s lone score of the game.

The Gaels nearly tied the score in the first half after a wild succession of headers. Corey Heldreth was able to head the ball to teammate Justin Kim who headed the ball on a line toward the goal, but the Lion’s Alex Proano was standing inside the goal line where he took one step out and headed the ball away in what would have been a sure goal for Saint Mary’s. Despite a seemingly equal time of possession, the Lions would keep the lead and head into the half with 1-0 advantage.

It was senior day for the Gaels, and the last game of the season for both squads, so the game was very physical, and the referees called the game accordingly. There were a total of 32 fouls in the game, including two red cards. The Gaels actually had two more fouls in this game than

the Lions, but the Gaels were able to capitalize on the penalties. The Lions may have been frustrated by their tough season, as two of their players received red cards, and were ejected from the game.

Some of Loyola Marymount’s frustration may have come after the Gaels tied the score. Nick Cashmere took a shot that was deflected, and Mark Araujo hit a header that bounced off the cross bar and towards the goal line. The Saint Mary’s fans thought that the Gaels were robbed, but rejoiced after a controversial call from the referee, who motioned that the ball dropped inside the goal line for a game tying score.

The Gaels got another

penalty call in their favor with five seconds to go in regulation, with the game tied at 1-1. Justin Kim looked like he was going to be the one to kick the penalty shot, but at the last second Eric Robert kicked a screaming shot that tailed back into the goal and into the upper middle portion of the net for an untouched game winning goal. “We put our best left footer on it, one of our most confident strikers. He saw the upper corner and put it home for us,” said goalkeeper Brian Mason.

Mason also wanted to thank his teammates, as this was his last game as a Gael. “Thank you for a wonderful, wonderful, amazing experience,” said Mason.



Dylan Leslie (4)

Photo Tod Fierner

Saint Mary’s Upends 12th Ranked Oregon Ducks

... continued from page 1

The game went back and forth in the first half, as neither team was able to break away. The Gaels headed into the locker room at halftime with a 38-35 advantage over the Ducks.

The high flying and energetic duo of Samhan and forward Diamon Simpson would come up big in the second half. Simpson would finish with 18 points, 12 rebounds, two blocks, and two steals. Samhan would finish with 16 points and five rebounds. When the score reached 68-56 in favor of the Gaels, the gym took on a frenzied atmosphere, with one half of the gym yelling “go,”



Patrick Mills (13)

Photo Tod Fierner

and the other half yelling “Gaels.” However, the fans would soon become quiet as Leunen was able to make a lay-up for Oregon to cut the lead to 72-64.

Saint Mary’s received a quick boost from forward Lucas Walker, who came off the bench and scored back to back lay-ups. With the help of Mills’ record breaking performance, and Todd Golden’s rock

steady defense and heads up play, the Gaels took this game in convincing fashion, 99-87.



Go Gaels!

Upcoming Sports Events at Saint Mary’s College

Men’s Basketball vs. Seton Hall Saturday, Dec. 1 at 4:05 p.m. McKeon Pavilion

Men’s Basketball vs. Furman vs. CS Fullerton Friday, Dec. 28 at 5 p.m. McKeon Pavilion

For information about upcoming season schedules, visit the official Saint Mary’s athletics website at www.SMCGaels.com.

Cougars Pass First Test to Stay Alive

By Alex Crook

Apparently, a season-ending visit to Concord wasn’t the end of the line for Campolindo varsity football.

It started a couple weeks ago, when Campo took their turn in the opening round of the 2007 NCS 2A Championships. They were scheduled to face heavily favored Heritage High School on their home turf in Brentwood at Patriot Stadium. Before the game in the locker room, Cougar coach Kevin Macy told his guys that not them, but Heritage should be under pressure that night. It was their home turf, and they were expected to win. And Heritage did everything-except win.

On the opening kickoff, Campo’s Michael Hoffman, one of several junior varsity players to move up to varsity next year, returned the kick all the way to the Heritage 17. About 4 minutes later, senior wide receiver Nick Mascheroni caught a 6-yard touchdown pass from future varsity quarterback Tommy Stephens, one of 4 of the wide receiver’s touchdown catches in Campo’s 42-14 rout of the “host” Patriots. Mascheroni’s longest touchdown reception that night was a 30-yard bomb from Stephens. Nick later took a break from the spotlight to let lightning fast fullback Andreas Antono pound his way 15 yards into the end zone for yet another Cougar score.

The half ended 28-7 in favor of Campolindo but for Coach Macy, that wasn’t good enough. At the break, Macy told his team a

story of how in one game, Campo led 35-21 at halftime. The final score was 38-35. Campo lost. Even on this night against the Pats, the coaches were all in the players’ face about how not to give up a comeback and not letting the first drive of the second half slip away from the defense. And coming out of the locker room, Heritage was hungry.

With 10:13 left in the 3rd quarter, the Patriots marched all the way to the Cougars’ 1. On 4th and goal, quarterback Kyle Golinveaux capped the drive with a QB sneak into the end zone, cutting the lead to 28-14 Cougars. After an incomplete pass to Luke Crossley on 4th down, the Patriots drove the ball all the back way down deep into Cougar territory, this time to the 5 before Anthony Fadelli intercepted Golinveaux’s throw in the end zone and took it back 100 yards down the sideline for the touchdown to make it 35-14 Campo. That was the turning point of the game, and Heritage never looked up again.

Nick Mascheroni ended the scoring in the 4th quarter with a beautifully lobbed 10-yard touchdown reception from Andrew Ertola.

Last week, Campolindo went on to defeat Encinal High 28-8 (see story above) after the Jets ended Acalan’s season with a 46-7 win over the Dons in Lafayette. The No. 7 Cougars will face No. 1 Las Lomas on the Knights’ home turf at 7 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 30.

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SPORTS

LAMORINDAS LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

State Champs Defend Title, Advance in NCS Playoffs

By Kevin D. Shallat



Photo Gavin Schlissel

The defending women's state volleyball champion Campolindo Cougars hosted the Miramonte Matadors for the second time in less than a week. The two teams would match up again on Wednesday, Nov. 13, for the third time this year in an early North Coast Section matchup. Campolindo mounted an incredible comeback after being down two games to one, to win this match 3-2.

The first game went back and forth, with no team leaping too far ahead. The Cougars kept a three point cushion for most of the game. Campolindo outside hitter and middle blocker Alex Shurtz had a huge block around the net to take make it 18-15, causing Miramonte to call a timeout. Outside hitter Kate Canty served well for the Cougars – a big reason they won the first game 25-17.

With the home crowd at a deafening roar, and Campolindo winning the battle by the net, it was apparent that Miramonte would have to get aggressive in a hurry. The Matadors came out in the second game swinging, and jumped out to a 10-3 lead. With the help of a few Kari Johnson

spikes, the Matadors were right back in the match.

Miramonte star outside hitter Juliana Stivanicevic came alive with a statement spike to take the score to 11-3. However the Cougars would not go down without a fight. Great players don't panic, and when challenged, they often answer right back. After Stivanicevic's spike, freshman setter Mary Vaccaro would set up Canty for a thunder-

ous statement spike of her own that left the gym buzzing, taking the score to 11-4, and beginning one of the best comebacks of the season, as Vaccaro and her teammates would tie the score at 20-20.

The Mats earned the win in this game, beating the Cougars 27-25, but the comeback was a statement by the Cougars that did not go unheard. Campolindo head coach Scott Bishop mentioned how his assistant was kidding him that they should have gotten blown out in this game to save energy. Bishop said, "It was actually worth it not to do that, because we got a lot of momentum and we got our focus back a little bit, and got a little more confident."

Miramonte rode the high of winning the second game into the third game, playing with a determined mindset. Matador setter Mary Diamantidis once again got her teammates involved to scrap out a close win, beating the Cougars 25-23. However, Vaccaro and the rest of her teammates did not panic.

Campolindo outside hitter and middle blocker Chandler Moore played with a passion and inspired her team to a 25-23 win over Miramonte in the fourth game. In the short fifth and final game, the Cougars got out to a quick lead thanks to outside hitter and middle blocker Rachel Eberhard, as she came up with big plays around the net to win this game 15-5, and take this NCS match 3-2.



Campolindos Alessandra Neason (12) and Kim Condie (15) Photo Gavin Schlissel

Orinda Teen Seeks Second World Title

Submitted by Jeanette Kermaninejad



Miramonte senior Naveed Kermaninejad Photo provided

Most Orinda teenagers spent Thanksgiving vacation with friends and family, enjoying a turkey dinner on Thanksgiving Day. But one 17-year-old Orinda youth was eating turkey from a buffet line in a South Carolina hotel.

During Thanksgiving break, Miramonte senior Naveed Kermaninejad endeavored to win his second title at the Karate Super Grands World Games. This competition was hosted by the NBL (National Blackbelt League), which is the only international sport karate league that is based upon a series of open tournaments which rate and qualify blackbelt level players to become official sport karate world champions at the "Super Grands World Games."

Inspired at first by the Ninja Turtles of the 1990's, Naveed has been training in the martial arts for 12 years, discovering the commitment needed to train daily and the discipline required to learn the philosophy of the martial arts. He has won several local titles, a Sport Karate International amateur title, and an NBL "world title."

While most parents are kept busy shuttling their children between football, soccer and basketball games, there are a growing number of parents who take a more costly route and travel statewide and even nationwide to participate in the elite NBL sport karate circuit in a points race for the highest ranking possible by year end. Through a series of regional and national events competitors gain points depending on

the place taken at these tournaments.

During the 2007 season from March to September Naveed (who has chosen sparring as his specialty) attended tournaments in California, Oregon, Texas and Nevada. His goal was to repeat last year's title win in continuous sparring, but his real challenge was in point sparring. Junior continuous sparring divisions group competitors according to weight unlike point sparring which groups competitors according to age, 15 to 17 in his case.

The size and weight disparity is greater here and, as Kermaninejad has experienced, there are some very large 17 year olds in the division. Competitors come from around the globe, but mostly from the U.S., Canada, Central America and Europe and most are seeded.

Ranked in the top in continuous sparring, a series of bad luck has kept Naveed from a high seed in point sparring so he had to use all his skills and training to keep ahead of the top fighters. He took second in continuous sparring against a Guatemalan fighter named Juan Pablo Santiago. Many participants also competed in forms and weapons in dazzling displays of choreography and gymnastics during the week long tournament in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Every evening, spectators enjoyed a show with the top two divisional performers of the daytime eliminations vying for first place and the coveted gold ring and embroidered black belt. More important than the prize is the prestige and bragging rights that are bestowed upon the winner.

Cyclocross: Good Fun for Everyone

By Mike F. Foley



Cyclocross racers hurdle obstacles during Bay Area Super Prestige Series Photo Melissa Aycock

I've been a cyclist and competitive bicycle racer for close to twenty years, with the last two years including cyclocross. It's some of the most fun I've ever had on a bicycle while gasping, sweating profusely and (at times) bleeding.

What is cyclocross?

Considered 'the rugby of cycling,' cyclocross is a short-circuit (2-4k in length), multiple lap, bicycle race that becomes a one hour sprint over twisty and extremely varied terrain including grass, dirt, single-track and pavement.

Courses are designed for riders to dismount and run over obstacles at least twice per lap. There are different categories, A, B and C as well as Master's, juniors and single-speed divisions. While you can use a mountain bike to race, a cross bike is recommended. If you're just starting out you'll want to enter the Men's or Women's C category - 30 minute races - and go from there. In a pinch, a cross bike could be used for other types of road riding and they can also make good touring bikes.

This fall and winter sport has a great deal of history and fits nicely into an active Bay Area lifestyle. Cross emerged out of Europe in the early 1900s as a good off-season training regimen for 'roadies.' Many of the great Tour champions have used cyclocross for cross training in the winter. Since races never exceed one hour, riders can squeeze in enough training miles during a busy work week.

Cyclocross racing reminds me of what mountain bike racing used to be in the late '80s and early '90s: It's a great sport full of the right energy and grit. But while cyclocross can be really fun, it can also be rough on the body and the equipment.

At the second race of the Bay Area Super Prestige Series this year, I not only broke my chain, but I blew a tire, cut my leg and threw up breakfast in the parking lot behind my car - lovely. Overall, it was some of the most fun I've had all season. After finally being lapped by the leaders and passing my car for the fifth time, I decided it was time to pull out of the race - but in the end, I had a smile on my face for the effort. It made me want to race that much harder the following Sunday.

To give you some idea of the competition, last year I finished twelfth overall in the Men's 'A' 35-plus division. With two races left in the 2007 season I still have a shot at the top ten. The riders in the top ten are very tough to beat. They don't make many mistakes, show up on a regular basis and truly earn their places on the start line each week.

So you want to check it out? Maybe enter an event?

Don't be discouraged, everyone looks fast in all of their

'race' gear. The nervous anticipation before the race can get to you, if you let it.

All races start the same way. A field of 35-55 riders line up and start to push forward. The top ten riders (in the series/overall) from that category are called to the front line - added incentive to do well each week. Good positioning is paramount for the riders jockeying for the front. Every rider on the front row wants to be the first one into the first corner. Unfortunately, there's only enough room for one and this causes pile ups and good spectating.

The start of a cross race can be like a smash-up derby - riders get tangled up, bodies and bars collide, clicking cleats and dust, some shouting and elbows. Somehow the usual suspects emerge at

the front.

For the most part, everyone is here for the same reason; to compete and to cheer on their friends and loved ones. And afterwards nobody is afraid to open a cold beer for the effort. I've found it's the best place to spend a few hours on a Sunday blowing off some steam. It's the most fun you'll have at a bicycle race - I guarantee it.

You can find some of the best cyclocross racing right here in the Bay Area: <http://www.ncna.org/>.

Mike Foley is the author of 'Bicycling Beyond City Limits.' The Story of a 55-day, unsupported bicycle trip across the United States. For more information go to - <http://www.bicycling-beyondcitylimits.com>.

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Correction: NCS Boys Water Polo Championship

The Nov. 14 NCS Boys Water Polo Championship game between Miramonte and Campolindo story included an error. The fourth Campolindo goal at the NCS Water Polo Championship was actually scored by Stephen Loomis.



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