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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?

What would happen if you weren't afraid to tell people that you loved them?

Here's what would happen.

You'd live to be 85 years old.

People would throw surprise parties for you.

Everyone would smile back at you.

Your business would flourish for decades even though you continued to give and give and give with no expectation of return.

You would set an example that other merchants would step up to meet.

You'd be named the Businessperson of the Year and the Citizen of the Year, and you'd win every conceivable award possible from local groups and service clubs.

You'd be coronated as the Honorary Mayor – the only person in the history of the City to have that honor.

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...

### Is another's castle!

By Wendy Scheck



Jim and Lynne Collins' home near Rancho Laguna Park

Photo Andy Scheck

Did you ever dream of living in a castle? The Moraga Women's Society Holiday Homes Tour will walk you through your fantasy with a tour of the Collin's 7800 square foot hillside home complete with stables and five bedrooms, each with its own bath and exquisite French Doors.

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 Moraga 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.

## 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?

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