

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Wednesday, January 23, 2008

State Budget Cuts to Education



What's at Stake for Lamorinda's Schools?

By Andrea A. Firth

(Contributing: Lee Borrowman)

Members of the Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) Governing Board were not celebrating a "happy" new year as they convened last Wednesday for the first time in 2008 and listened to a sobering budget presentation by Chris Learned, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services. Learned reviewed Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed budget cuts to education and outlined preliminary estimates of the decrease in state funding that the District could expect. "The proposed budget is the most devastating budget proposal that I have seen since Proposition 13," reported Jim Negri, Superintendent of AUHSD, in his newsletter to the community. "Draconian," "Bleak," "Bad, really bad," were all words used by school administrators across Lamorinda over the past week to describe the state's proposed budget as they worked ardently to determine the repercussions

of the cuts on their budgets and to their stakeholders.

The Governor's budget proposes to eliminate over \$4 billion in funding to schools in the next year, which translates to a loss of over \$2.7 million in revenue for the Acalanes Union High School District in 2008-2009 according to Learned. This projected budget reduction equates to a loss of \$489 per student in AUHSD. In addition, AUHSD projects categorical programs such as class size reduction, counseling, and special education will be reduced by another \$60 per student.

The situation in the Moraga School District looks no better. Preliminary estimates reveal that the district faces a funding reduction of \$582,000 less than what was projected for 2008-2009—a loss of \$342 per student below projected revenue and \$162 per student below the current year's funding level. These amounts do

not yet reflect the impact of the anticipated federal funding reduction to categorical programs and special education.

In Orinda, Superintendent Joe Jaconette says, "Our preliminary review of the Governor's budget cuts would leave the District short around one million dollars next year."

Lafayette Superintendent Frank Tom has preliminary estimates as well, but says the Governor's budget proposal has "a lot of different pieces," so it's hard to confirm at this point what the actual numbers will look like. He meets with his Budget Director and Cabinet this week to further assess the situation, and stated unequivocally, "It's definitely going to impact all school district programs."

"This is not business as usual this year," said Superintendent Negri at the recent AUHSD Governing Board meeting.

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY this week

Chaney Field



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Moraga Revisits Bumps



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Miramonte Women Defeat Acalanes



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The Treacherous Information Highway

By Jennifer Wake

Recent advances in software and technology have enabled users to browse the Internet from remote locations (including their cell phones) and meet new friends via the Web on social networking sites. At the same time, more doors have opened for the cyber criminal.

In the past few years, Orinda Police Detective Nate McCormack has seen a large increase in local identity thefts. "Some are through the mail, but more are through the Internet," he said.

According to a report by the National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA), more than 70 million people use social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook, and the numbers are increasing daily. Of those adults who "social network," 83 percent expose themselves to hackers and thieves by downloading unknown files potentially opening up their PCs to attacks, and 74 percent have given out some sort of personal information such as their e-mail address, name, and birthday — even social security numbers.

"Providing this type of information can provide enough ammunition for criminals to hack into financial records and compromise users' personal

information," the report noted.

Although not a "social networker," Lafayette resident Ginna Bowles says she gets about two dozen spam e-mails a day on her home computer. "Some e-mails say, 'You only need to click here to get \$2,400.' I just delete them," she said.

Many of these e-mails can include links that send victims to bogus Web sites that look legitimate. Requests for users to reenter passwords or provide personal information can look safe, but often the information is either sold to scammers or used by identity theft criminals.

Unfortunately, the number of identity thefts

in this area is difficult to nail down because they are often classified in different categories, such as petty theft or grand theft, McCormack explained. "It's hard to get exact numbers," he said. "It's even harder to catch the online perpetrators because they're often operating out of state or out of the country."

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) states that only 39 percent of identity theft victims notify a police department after being scammed, so the actual numbers are likely much higher than reported.

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Lamorinda Community

Calendar, Notes, News

Lafayette

Calendar	
City Council	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Monday, Jan 28	
Planning Comm.	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, Feb 7	
Design Review	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Tuesday, Feb 12	
Park, Trails, Rec.	7pm
Community Center 500 St Mary's Road Wednesday, Feb 13	
Circulation	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Monday, Feb 4	
Emergency Prep.	9:15am
City Offices 3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite 265 Wednesday, Feb 13	
Senior Services	3:30pm
Community Center, Alder Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, Jan 24	

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



Car Burglary, 1/11/08 Police were dispatched to Carol Lane, Building D to check on a car burglary. The victim parked his vehicle at approximately 9:00 p.m. in his assigned spot. He returned to the car, to find his left front window was smashed. A GPS navigation system valued at \$250 was the only thing missing. Estimated cost to repair the window, \$350.

Recoil pad removed, 1/11/08 Victim called police department to report an item missing from a UPS package left on his front porch on School Street. UPS said the package had not been opened when it was delivered. Estimated value of the shotgun recoil pad, \$30.



Letters missing, 1/7/08 - 1/8/08 The Lafayette School District called to report the theft of several brass letters from the M. H. Stanley Middle School sign. Unknown suspect(s) pried the letter from the concrete base. See photo above.

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Buckeye South Field to Become Chaney Field



Matt Chaney Photo Cathy Tyson

Both the Parks, Trails and Recreation Commission and the Lafayette City Council unanimously approved naming the South Field at Buckeye Fields, "Chaney Field" for dedicated volunteer, Matt Chaney.

More than thirty glowing letters of support were submitted suggesting the name change, which was proposed by Lafayette Little League President Jon Ewing.

Chaney has volunteered for the Lafayette Moraga Youth Association Board and the Lafayette Little League Board. He also served as the Safety and Fields Manager and Groundskeeper for the Lafayette Little League and has volunteered at Burton Valley Elementary and at Stanley Middle School and put in a significant amount of time for soccer and rugby teams as well. Finally he has led weekly sing-alongs for Mulberry Tree preschoolers and is a leading fundraiser for ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis).

"I moved to Lafayette in 1998, and by the start of the 1999 season, I was shanghaied/coerced to participate as a Little League Board Member. At the time they were looking for a Safety Officer, dealing with ice packs and first aid, but it turned out to be a lot more. It kind of snowballed from there. I was on the Board from 1999 to 2004," reflects Chaney on his service.

He continued, "I was diagnosed with ALS - Lou Gehrig's disease -- at the end of 2000. It's a neurodegenerative disease, now I have impairment in my upper extremities: my arms, shoulders, head and facial muscles. By 2004 it got to the point where I had done my time on the Boards and should

allow some other lucky parent to have all the fun I was having."

"It became more and more difficult to drive the tractor and keep up with e-mail. I just decided to move on. I had to give up coaching as well. I was unable to do the demonstrating," he said referring to hand and arm movements necessary for the game.

He was genuinely surprised at the honor and said as much while he was being photographed.

As noted above, there were many letters of support, here is just a small sampling:

"His sound commitment to this community, his family, children and friends is inspirational to us all," noted Jon Ewing, President of the Lafayette Little League.

Jan Askin, Principal of Burton Valley Elementary, in her support letter said, "He promoted sportsmanship and fair play. His value as a role model is inestimable."

Brian Griggs, Chairman of the ALS Association, Greater Bay Area Chapter, noted that he and Chaney served together as coaches, managers and Board Members of Lafayette Little League. "I shared the conviction that the league should be for children of all ages and abilities and through Matt's involvement and leadership, the program's success has continued to escalate."

"I grew up in Lafayette, and though I know there have been hundreds of wonderful volunteers in this City, I know of no one who has affected the lives of so many people, adults and children alike as Matt," said long-time friend and fraternity brother at Cal, Robert Gonsler.

Wanna Work Someplace Sweet? This Candy Store Will Blow Your Mind!

Interview will be held at the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce 100 Lafayette Circle, #103 on Saturday January 26 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. For more information call (925) 299-YUMM

ABAG Allocation Revisited

By Cathy Tyson

Back in December, this newspaper reported on the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) of very low, low, moderate and above moderate income housing units for 2007 - 2014.

At the January 14th City Council Meeting, there was significant concern among Council Members about the methodology used by ABAG to determine Lafayette's allocation, a total of 361 units.

"The goal is to show that there is sufficient land in place to accommodate these numbers and that Lafayette's own rules and regulations don't provide any hurdles for developers to make these types of units available," stated Niroop Srivatsa, Planning and Building Manager. The downside of not having a state certified housing element is that Lafayette may be further down the list for consideration

when making grant applications, but the City isn't penalized.

ABAG Senior Planner Christy Riviere said, "Allocations are based on projections done every two years." A wide assortment of cities participate as part of the allocation committee, trying to find a balance considering economics, demographic trends, and transit.

Lafayette is not the only city that is unhappy with its allocation. Palo Alto, Emeryville, Mt. View and Berkeley are all officially appealing the ABAG numbers. Vice Mayor Don Tatzin commented, "They (ABAG) have been very tone deaf on this issue. The numbers they use are predicated on the housing market, which is changing rapidly. They need to be updated to reflect reality."

Lynn Hiden of the Lafayette Homeowners Council stated, "We need...to see that the disastrous and clumsy methodology passed by ABAG that resulted in so many un-

realistic allocations to so many cities gets changed." She continued, "We believe that the ABAG Board in no way comprehends what it has created and its resulting impacts. Like Palo Alto, we believe that if ABAG adopts more realistic and achievable RNHA goals, cities will be able to focus on actually providing adequate housing for a diverse population, a truly laudable goal."

If Lafayette officially appeals the allocation, the City would preserve its ability to litigate. However, as Planning and Building Services Manager, Niroop Srivatsa noted in an earlier article, there needs to be a technical reason to appeal, and staff doesn't believe there is a technical reason.

In the end, Council Members agreed to send a letter noting the non-response of prior letters, and asked for ABAG to review their methodology and subsequent allocation.

Beautiful Bentley Building

By Cathy Tyson

At a recent Design Review meeting in Lafayette, Commission members were quite impressed with the proposed Bentley School Classroom building for the Lafayette campus of this two-campus school. Also on the drawing board is a 77-space landscaped parking lot. "The architecture is just stunning," said Commission Member Bob Cleaver. Commission Member Bill Marquand added, "We're very fond of the building and all of its thoughtfulness and style."

Kava Massih of Kava Massih Architects gave a presentation on the 22,187 square foot, three story, boomerang shaped structure. Fitting snugly in a corner of the site, the building will house a number of classrooms, a library/media center, administrative offices, and an auditorium, as well as art and music classrooms on the ground floor. Because of the slope of the site, only the top story will be visible from nearby Highway 24. The Kava Massih firm also designed the gymnasium, student center and a classroom building on campus. The new proposed building will have design elements similar to the existing campus buildings: clean lines, exterior walkways open to the plaza below and a sweeping roof.

According to Mark Schlientz, an Associate at Kava Massih, ori-

enting the building with its back toward the freeway serves two purposes, blocking out freeway noise

and opening up a plaza area for students to enjoy.

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Joining the Living Lean program is one of the best things I've done for myself in a long time. My husband got the program for me for my 41st birthday in May of this year. At first I was very skeptical and didn't think that I would want to devote so much time to exercise. I haven't worked out for over 6 years and didn't think it was likely that I would be disciplined enough to maintain the exercise routine or the nutritional plan. However, I gave it a shot and was really surprised to see results in less than two weeks after I joined the program. Now, after being on Living Lean for over 15 weeks, I have lost over 20 pounds of fat. I feel much better in general and have a lot more energy to do all the things that I enjoy doing outdoors. Most of all, it feels great to know that I can accomplish something that I thought was next to impossible just a few months ago. Thanks Sheena for being such a great trainer and thank you Michael for such a wonderful birthday present! - Amy Chen

After being on Living Lean for 15 weeks, Amy lost over 20 pounds of fat.

Living Lean Team

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Lamorinda Community

Calendar, Notes, News

Moraga

Calendar	
City Council	7:30pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School 1010 Camino Pablo	
Wednesday, Jan 30	(special Meeting)
Wednesday, Feb 13	
Planning Comm.	7:30pm
Hacienda, La Sala Room 2100 Donald Drive	
Monday, Feb 4	
Design Review	7:30pm
Hacienda, La Sala Room 2100 Donald Drive	
Monday, Jan 28	
Park & Rec	7:30pm
Hacienda, Mosaic Room 2100 Donald Drive	
Tuesday, Feb 19	
Liaison	8:00am
Fire Station 1280 Moraga Way	
Friday, Feb 8	
Town of Moraga online: http://www.ci.moraga.ca.us	
for: • all meeting notes • calendar updates	



Red Bull party busted, 1/12/08 A Thune Avenue resident had a large party with approximately 250 guests with two strippers and a DJ sponsored by Red Bull. Officers cited the resident for violating the Town of Moraga Noise Ordinance. When officers returned later in the evening, the host wisely decided to ask her guests to leave.

Drunk college student, 1/12/08 Moraga police officers responded to St. Mary's College for an intoxicated student. There had been a dance at the Soda Center, when it ended campus Public Safety Officers located a 20-year-old male who was unable to care for himself. Moraga-Orinda Fire Department transported him to Kaiser Walnut Creek.

Disposition of Evidence
Moraga Police Dept. no longer needs property related to case 07-578 for evidentiary purposes. All evidence is going to be disposed of. If you are involved in the case and have ownership of items involved please contact the Moraga Police Dept. Property Officer Heather Pomeroy at 925-376-2515. All Evidence will be destroyed after Feb. 28, 2008.

Found Property
Moraga Police Dept. has 4 bicycles, 1 gym bag, 1 inflatable bedroll and a bike helmet that was turned into found property. If any of these items belong to you please call Heather Pomeroy at the Moraga Police Dept. at 925-376-2515. If items are not claimed on or before Feb. 28, 2008 the items will be sent to auction or be destroyed.

Moraga Center Specific Plan: Will The Dream Ever Come True? By Sophie Braccini

A beautiful winter morning can bring high hopes especially when town officials, property owners, architects and members of the community come together to create a vision for downtown Moraga. Saturday, January 12, was just such a morning at the Hacienda de Las Flores. The sweet scent of humus and eucalyptus perfumed the air, while in La Salla, two design firms worked to get a better understanding of what the community wants to see happen in downtown Moraga.

Joining the Town Council, Town Manager and environmental consultant were a handful of Moraga residents, including two members of the Bruzzone family which owns the property addressed by the Specific Plan. SZFM and the

Dahlin Group, the Bay Area firms competing to be the Town's urban design consultant, each led discussion groups.

In the first group led by Dahlin, participants explained what they were seeing today and what they would like improved. The intersection of Moraga Road and Moraga Way is generally considered to be the center of Moraga. Yet, as most of the participants sadly noted, when one reaches this junction, nothing is reminiscent of an attractive and vibrant village center. As Vice-Mayor Dave Totter noted, "Moraga lacks a focal point of interaction."

The Dahlin Group brought pictures of different centers to get a feel for the styles people might favor.

Their approach inspired visions of what the village could become. Ideas included extending St Mary's Road on the other side of Moraga Way to reach the Ranch area, rehabilitation of the creek that runs behind that section, mixed housing where the outflow parking lot is and multi-family homes in the pear orchard that lies between the creek and Camino Ricardo. After the first session, groups switched places and a similar interaction happened with the other firm.

SZFM moved its workshop along a bit differently, explaining how they had turned other helpless commercial places into vibrant spots. Their vision would create a gradual approach to the village center, starting by re-populating both sides of Moraga Way, re-framing the existing center into a more quaint space and organizing a gathering center closer to the creek.

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Palos Colorados Fees to be "Banked"

By Sophie Braccini

On January 9th Moraga Finance Director Emily Boyd presented a Staff report to the Town Council recommending the creation of a "Town Bank" with the \$17 million in one-time fees that Moraga will be receiving from the Palo Colorado developers over a period of six years. Town Manager Philip Vince explained, "Moraga is facing a structural deficit. Projections show that we will be in the red within ten to fifteen years. So, we do not want to spend this money, we want to keep it and use it as a bank for ourselves."

The Council voted unanimously to use a portion of the development fees to pay off an outstanding CalPERS unfunded pension liability - a debt of about \$1.5 million that carries a high interest rate.

The Council then considered a management strategy so the remaining money would not evaporate.

Boyd presented two plans to the Council for the "bank," each having a different emphasis on suggested use of the funds and with somewhat different financial controls. Under both plans the "bank" would finance approved town projects

along with a reimbursement structure. The Town has elected to use PFM (Public Financial Management) who manages a JPA (Joint Powers Agreement) called CAMP (California Asset Management Program) to manage the funds. The expected return rate is 5%. 3% will be saved to compensate for inflation, while the remaining 2% would be used as grant money for Council-approved projects.

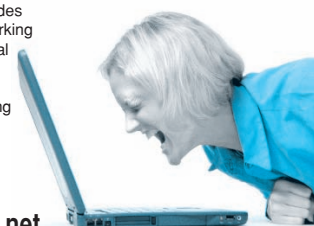
Council Member Mike Metcalf declared, "I'm very favorable to this proposition, the conservative approach is the only way to go." Council Member Rochelle Bird firmly stated her support for the proposal, saying that even if there will be a public meeting in mid March to get public input on the use of the money, "We need to adopt a policy and frame the discussion so proposals do not get out of hand." Council Member Ken Chew favored the project as well, preferring the plan that is a bit more conservative. Vice-Mayor Trotter, who firmly believes that a multi-generational recreation facility is important for the Town (part of the settlement with Palos Colorados was to offset "lost recreation ameni-

ties), first declared he would rather not make any recommendation to staff on how the money should be used until after the public meeting was held, but then joined Mayor Deschambault's proposal to recommend a version that will include analysis of how the funds may be used to finance a recreation facility.

Correction,
"Council in Transition,"
December 26:
Dave Trotter was elected Vice-Mayor with four votes; Rochelle Bird abstained.

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Lamorinda Community

Calendar, Notes, News

Orinda

Calendar	
City Council	7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library 26 Orinda Way Tuesday, Jan 29	
Planning Comm.	7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library 26 Orinda Way Tuesday, Feb 12	
Hist. Landmark Comm.	3pm
Gallery Room, Upper Level 26 Orinda Way Tuesday, Feb 26	
Planning Process Review 8:30am	
Community Room at City Hall 22 Orinda Way Friday, Feb 1	
Mayor's Com. Liaison	9am
Community Room at City Hall 22 Orinda Way Monday, Feb 4	

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Town of Orinda:
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• all meeting notes
• calendar updates

Chamber of Commerce:
<http://www.orindachamber.org/>
• local businesses
• upcoming events



Bev Mo Burglary, 1/16/08
Two women came into the store with a large black bag and took some liquor without paying for it. They left in a Nissan Stanza. Police stopped the vehicle and found three large bottles of tequila along with the black bag.

Attempted scam, 1/14/08 A 56 year old Orinda resident had received e-mails from A & E Textile Company offering part time employment. All the potential victim had to do was receive profits from products purchased in the U.S. and deposit the money in a bank account, then forward the profits less 10% to A & E in the U.K. The non-victim received several money orders for \$820. payable to her, which turned out to be fraudulent.

Parking while drunk, 1/11/08 A Van Ripper Lane resident was suspected to be driving drunk in the Happy Valley area. Officers contacted him at his home, where he preformed poorly on field sobriety tests and showed a .25 blood alcohol level, more than three times the legal limit. Despite the fact that his car was in the garage, he was arrested for driving under the influence.

Theft, 1/11/08 An unknown person removed a DMV disabled placard from the front seat of an unlocked vehicle that was parked at the Village Pizza parking lot.

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

A Blinding Flash Can't Clear Away Clutter

By Dorothy Bowen
By now, most New Year's resolutions have passed their sell-by dates. I have, however, made a small step forward in my annual get-organized-and-eliminate-clutter-resolve.
The stores have been full of plastic bins and wicker baskets for containing things which can be contained. Helpful articles abound about how to sort through and organize clutter, giving the illusion that it is indeed possible. If only it were that easy.
I should be farther along, I realize, since I experienced an epiphany of sorts some

years ago. It happened this way:
I had tracked down the whereabouts of a Lamorinda pioneer, Gertrude Malette, the owner of the Moraga ranch house, since 1916, that became the estate of developer Donald Rheen, since 1934, then the abode of the Christian Brothers, 1961, and then the Moraga Hacienda de las Flores in 1973.
When I say tracked down, implying relentless research into the past, it was more like falling into a gold mine by accident.
Members of local historical societies heard of Malette



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nurse. Local ranchers said the two women could take a tractor apart and put it back together in no time flat.
On Christmas Eve, 1935, they left the property purchased by Donald Rheen. He added a second story, a swimming pool complete with columns and a film screening room a la Hearst Castle.
"One wonders what he needed all those bedrooms for," sniffed Malette, in a later interview.
Years went by. A neighbor on South Trail, in Orinda, told me about another neighbor, a woman in her 80s, who split logs for her wood-burning stove in the summer cottage where she lived. Her name rang a bell: Gertrude Malette. Unfortunately, she had

been felled by a stroke and hospitalized, but she was anxious to move back into her cottage.
At the same time, Vietnamese refugees were coming here, sponsored by Saint Mary's College. They spoke French. She spoke French. They needed a home. She needed help. A perfect fit, I thought. We arranged a meeting for the families at Malette's cottage on La Madronal, on the side of a canyon surrounded by oak trees.
When we opened the front door, I began to suspect that what seemed like a perfect solution might not be. She had kept an extended family of cats, and though they were gone, their aroma remained.
continued on page 7

Caution: Crooked Tree Trimmers at Work



By Cathy Tyson
Orinda residents beware; an unscrupulous tree trimming service has been active in and around Orinda. Especially after the recent storms, many residents have trees large and small strewn or dangling around their property.
Although seeming legitimate, many locals have fallen for their solicitations and their rock bottom prices. Brian Gates, Owner of Expert Tree Service, who has been in business for 30 years and is a member of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce said, "It's impossible to run a legitimate tree service for less than \$50 per man/hour. There is just no way to pay for the insurance, trucks, certification and equipment for less than that."
An illegitimate tree service might come in at \$15 to \$20 dollars per hour, but they probably don't have any workers compensation insurance or the required Line Clearance Certificate, not to mention experi-

ence. A Line Clearance Certificate is required when working within 10 feet of any kind of power line. "The two leading causes of death among tree trimmers were electrocutions and falls," according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. In the unfortunate event of an accident the homeowner is completely liable for injury that occurs to a worker and for all the damage caused.
"Local consumers can have such a laissez-faire attitude, knowing that they have benefits and insurance from their jobs, but when they get a substantially lower bid, it's so easy to look the other way, and forget about the huge exposure they open themselves to and lack of insurance," opined Gates.
One particular company that has five salesmen working the area, claims zero employees on their Contractor's License, which is easily

accessible from the Contractors State License Board website (see sidebar) and pays no workers compensation. It is unknown whether they are following all of the OSHA regulations relevant to tree trimming.
Caveat emptor.

- What to look for when hiring a tree service:
1. Check the Contractors State License Board at www.cslb.ca.gov to get status of contractor's license, by clicking on "check a license." Towards the bottom of the Contract' License Detail page, workers compensation status is listed along with required contractor's bond.
 2. Demand and save an insurance certificate from the carrier, not the service provider.
 3. Make sure they have property liability insurance to protect you and workers compensation insurance for all employees to protect you and the worker.
 4. Make sure they have the required Line Clearance Certificate to work around electrical conductors, power lines, guy wires and telephone poles.
 5. Make sure they have a Certified Arborist on staff so they know when and how to trim your trees. For example, Monterey Pines trimmed in the summer months will die.
 6. Make sure they wear the required safety equipment, hard hat and safety glasses.

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Life in LAMORINDA

Quest for Answers Leads to Awareness of Deadly Gas

By Jennifer Wake



Simi-Wilson with her daughter, Gabby, and cat, Roxy, sit outside their home in Lafayette Photo Jennifer Wake

This past summer, after learning of her aunt's cancer diagnosis, 7-year-old Gabby Wilson set up a lemonade stand near her home in Lafayette to raise money for research. Two weeks later, events took a terrible turn. Gabby was diagnosed with a rare form of lung cancer.

"It was so eerie," said Dana Simi-Wilson, Gabby's mother. "In August she had her picture in the paper because of the lemonade sale for her aunt, then two weeks later she was diagnosed."

After Gabby's diagnosis (which is so rare that only about 10 cases are reported worldwide each year) she had one lung removed and started her recovery. Dana began searching for answers.

"Since her diagnosis I have been looking into the causes of lung cancer," she said. "It is pretty scary what I found: Radon -- a gas produced in the earth that seeps into homes -- is the second leading cause of lung cancer behind cigarette smoking."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) states that exposure to radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers, and estimates that radon causes more than 20,000 lung cancer deaths in the country each year.

The EPA describes radon as "a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil, and water from the natural decay of uranium." While levels in outdoor air pose a relatively low threat to human health, radon can accumulate to dangerous levels inside buildings. "You can't see, smell, or taste it, but an elevated radon level in

your home may be affecting the health of your family," the agency noted.

The California Department of Health Services estimates the number of California homes exceeding the EPA's recommended radiation threshold of 4 picocuries (pCi/L) is roughly one percent, or approximately 100,000 homes.

Although Gabby's doctors could not pinpoint the exact cause of the cancer, Dana has taken steps to ensure that radon will not be a future risk factor. After learning that the U.S. Surgeon General recommends all homes in the United States be tested for radon, Dana tested her home for the gas, asked friends and family to test their homes, and teamed up with California's Radon action office to give away free test kits from her office at Freskos Realty in Lafayette.

"I am just a local mom trying to save someone else the horror we have been through," Dana said. "I did not find high levels of radon in my house but will test again in the spring. Everyone I am close to has tested their homes and are waiting for the results. They listened because they had never heard about it before, and because it is so easy to test."

According to the EPA,

testing your house for radon is as easy as "opening a package, placing a radon detector in a designated area, and, after a set number of days, sending the detector back to a lab for analysis." The lab will then inform you of your radon test results. If your house has a radon problem, there are technicians trained to fix the problem, which usually involves patching cracks or openings where the radon gas can enter the home.

Testing should be done in every household since two homes right next to each other can have vastly different radon levels.

Dana is also concerned about schools. "That will be my next target."

As for Gabby, she now tells everyone about radon. "She said she wants to tell everyone so they don't have hurt lungs like she does," Dana said. "It's amazing what a 7-year-old can do."

Free radon testing kits are available at Freskos Realty (3451 Plaza Way in Lafayette) while supplies last. Radon test kits are also available at many home improvement or hardware stores, or can be ordered from the National Safety Council (NSC) Web site at www.nsc.org/issues/radon or radon testing companies.

Are You Ready for the Treeline Triathlon?

By Lee Borrowman

Did your New Year's resolution include getting into shape? Or perhaps your Bucket List reads, "Compete in a triathlon!" The 2nd annual Moraga Treeline Triathlon will be held on April 26, 2008, and this year Moraga Parks and Recreation and Race Director Carl Martin are offering a Triathlon Training Program.

The six-week course is for beginners and pros alike, and gets you started on a thirteen-week training program. Topics will include endurance training, interval training, swim form, bike training, running regimens and nutrition. Martin, a veteran triathlete, explains his training philosophy: "I call it my 4D philosophy. The 4 D's are dedication, discipline, determination and desire. I triangulate the first three (correlating it to the "tri" pyramid of swim, bike and run) with the desire component in the middle. My goal in the training class is to re-program the mind (the computer) that runs the machine (the body). The electricity that runs the whole thing is the desire, so we will spend time talking about motivation and inspiration."

According to Martin, the first two days of the course will be focused on swimming; one day on form and efficiency, the other on cardio conditioning and building endurance. The third and fourth classes will focus on cycling, with a discussion of bike fit and riding form. Martin will bring in two experts for a demonstration and fitting, and the following week participants will work on building miles and take a long ride together. The final two days will be about running, endurance and will tie the whole package together.



"Interspersed throughout the six classes, we'll talk about stretching, breathing, rest, avoiding injury and a host of other topics," says Martin. "I've put together a lot of content that expands far beyond just triathlon training. It's more like six personal training sessions that have a triathlon focus. Participants must come prepared to learn and sweat because it's a very hands' on program that includes a minimum of 45 minutes cardio each of the six classes."

Class meets at the Soda Center utilizing the pool, Campo track and outlying areas for training and conditioning; six Saturdays starting this week (1/26-3/1), 8:00am-9:30am. The cost of the course is \$82. For more information or to register on-line go to: http://moraga.ca.us/production/moraga_recreation_programs.php

Friends and neighbors, Treeline Triathlon Race Director Carl Martin claims, "I can turn anyone into a triathlete in thirteen weeks." Big words, says yours truly! Not one to back away from a challenge, Martin has accepted the most daunting assignment of his athletic career -- turning this out-of-shape, over-forty mom, with a dubious lack of athletic prowess, into a triathlete (okay, maybe not a competitive triathlete -- just crossing the finish line will be good enough for me). We'll see you in training, and out there at the Treeline Triathlon on April 26!

For more information on the Moraga Treeline Triathlon, go to <http://www.moragatri.com>

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County Retirement Budget Woes

By Cathy Tyson



From left, Mike Metcalf, County Supervisor Gayle Uilkema, Howard Harpham and Chuck Treat at Moraga Kiwanis meeting

Photo Cathy Tyson

“OPEB is a four letter word,” according to Supervisor Gayle Uilkema, Contra Costa Board of Supervisors, District 2. “There’s no question that it’s a huge gorilla in the closet.” Despite the early hour, 7:30 a.m., the members of the Moraga Kiwanis Club gathered for breakfast at Saint Mary’s College, were intrigued. So what is OPEB and why is it important?

OPEB is an acronym for Other Post Employment Benefits. For County employees these benefits include retiree health care, dental care, life insurance, prescriptions, vision, hearing and long-term disability. Retiree pension and deferred compensation plans are not included. It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to grasp the incredible cost increases for these benefits over the years.

The Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) has new rules starting this year that will affect OPEB.

The new state law requires both public and private businesses to record unfunded liabilities as an accounting liability every year. GASB obligates the public sector to account for total OPEB costs for

30 long years. The intent of GASB was for the public sector to avoid the collapse of benefit plans that have occurred in the private sector.

For Contra Costa County, there are 8,438 active employees, 4,856 retirees and 360 surviving spouses as of January of 2006. The cost for all of the existing employees and retirees over the course of their lifetimes is approximately \$2.3 billion, according to the Supervisor.

The problem is the County does not have an extra \$2.3 billion dollars. At the moment, the County only budgets and pays for the annual health care premium for current retirees, \$36 million dollars, on the Paygo (pay as you go) system, putting nothing aside for current employee’s retirement needs down the road.

So what is the Supervisor going to do about it? She got quite a laugh from the audience when she recounted the following anecdote. “Some people feel the answer is simple, the County has a \$2.3 billion total budget, and to fund OPEB fully we need \$2.3 billion. All we have to do is close down the County entirely for one

year and we’re done. No police, fire department, jails or hospitals for a year.”

She added, “Other’s say, ‘this is not a problem, we continue offering benefits and the state or the federal government will take care of it with National Health Insurance.’”

Uilkema got another chuckle from the crowd when she said, “The Board of Supervisors agreed on a radical solution, spend no more that we receive.”

Looking for answers, the County Supervisors have hired actuaries to come up with a magic number to determine how much to save now. In addition, they have done research on what other counties are doing. Orange County made the drastic change of cutting all retirement benefits. Understandably outraged retirees promptly sued. The County is also looking at entitlements and vesting, examining what exactly retirees are entitled to, and what, if anything, might be optional.

Resolving this issue is still up in the air. “I want to be reasonable and fair. I know how many people need these benefits,” said Uilkema.

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Lawsuit Settled in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council formally adopted revisions to its Design Guidelines on January 9. The revisions are the result of a negotiated settlement with the Bruzzone family that was approved by the Council behind closed doors in December. Town Manager Philip Vince said, “Settling the lawsuit saved the Town thousands of dollars in legal fees.”

The Bruzzone’s lawsuit had challenged the way the “Build-It-Green” guidelines were adopted by the Council, claiming they might eliminate all possibility of development, and was inconsistent with the Moraga 2002 General Plan. Among other elements, the new guidelines required development to incorporate elements of energy savings and sustainability.

The Council unanimously approved minor revisions to the Design Guidelines to confirm that the definitions in the

General Plan pertain to the Guidelines and adding an Appendix to include the “Build-It-Green,” Green Point Rated Program matrix that is referenced in the Guidelines. The approved minor revisions clarify the adopted Guidelines:

- 1.) A sentence has been added to the end of the first full paragraph on page 7 which reads, “The definitions in Appendix D to the Town of Moraga’s General Plan are expressly incorporated herein and shall be used to interpret and implement these Design Guidelines.”
- 2.) A sentence has been added to the end of ID13.13 on page 22 which reads, “The Build It Green requirements are attached herein as Appendix A.”
- 3.) The Build It Green, Single-Family Green Point Rated Checklist has been added to the Design Guidelines as Appendix A on page 33.

Traffic Light Coming to Ascot

By Sophie Braccini

A few years ago the subject of an additional traffic light in Moraga was taboo; there was no funding available and people didn’t want to be stopped on their way across town. But times change and a traffic light at the intersection of Moraga Rd. and Ascot Dr. (across from 7 Eleven) is pointing its flashing nose on the Moraga horizon.

The Town Council voted unanimously on January 9th to authorize traffic consultants Fehr and Peers to create a design for the installation of a traffic signal at the busy intersection, without changes to the current layout of the streets.

A Highway Safety Improvement Grant will fund up to 90% of the cost of the project with a cap of \$601,425. The Town will provide the required 10% match.

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Life in LAMORINDA

Filippi Academic Hall Opens at SMC New Home to the Kalmanovitz School of Education

By Andrea A. Firth



Courtyard view of Filippi Academic Hall the new home of the Kalmanovitz School of Education at Saint Mary's College in Moraga.

Photo by Gary Ng, SMC Department of Architecture

"This building has been a long time coming," notes Nancy Sorenson, now in her eighth year as Dean of the School of Education at Saint Mary's College. "The planning started with the former Dean." Filippi Academic Hall—the new home of the Kalmanovitz School of Education at Saint Mary's—will celebrate its official opening later this month, but staff and faculty are already making themselves at home and at work on the second floor as the final touches to the interior and landscaping are completed. Several years and over \$23 million later, Saint Mary's students, faculty, and staff will continue to learn about learning in a building that is three times larger than the previous facility with ample centralized office space and technology-equipped classrooms.

The 600 to 650 students enrolled in graduate level course work at Saint Mary's helps to meet the continued demand for well-qualified teachers in the East Bay. "Many of

our graduates have taken positions or hold positions in schools in the nearby area, certainly in Contra Costa County—our big draw area," explains Sorenson. In the prior few years, the Education Department at Saint Mary's saw substantial growth in enrollment. "We have actually surpassed the projections that were made when they first started planning the building," notes Sorenson. "The building is quite a bit larger than the original plans that I first looked at. We certainly have room for expansion, and we have several programs that we want to target to expand."

The 37,000 square-foot building is located in the southwest corner of the campus adjacent to Augustine Hall and across the street from the baseball field. A central courtyard featuring a large Valley Oak complements the classic architecture of Filippi Hall, which is named after longtime college supporters Frank and Olivia Filippi. The mature Oak tree was

moved from the opposite side of campus near the sports pavilion. "(Preparing the tree to be moved) was actually under way for quite some time and we weren't paying much attention," notes Sorenson. "Then someone pointed out that this was the tree that they were moving, and we were quite amazed."

The opening of the Kalmanovitz School of Education in Filippi Academic Hall will be celebrated with an expert panel discussion entitled The Future of Education in California: Closing the Achievement Gap followed by an open house reception. Current students, alumni, and members of the communities and school districts with whom Saint Mary's partners have been invited to inaugurate the Education School's new home. According to Dean Sorenson they are expecting a good crowd and an interesting day. "In the final analysis people who have spent any time in the building are pretty pleased with what has been produced."

The Treacherous Information Highway continued from page 1



Shirley Krohn, senior assembly member for Contra Costa County and elder abuse prevention advocate, addresses a group of seniors about financial abuse at the Lafayette Community Center. Photo Jennifer Wake

Although Bowles is very careful about not opening any e-mails from anyone she does not know, she still fell victim to a scam.

Last month, while reviewing her bank statement, Bowles came across a strange copy of a check for \$29.99. The writing on the check was nearly impossible to read and the check's date was Nov. 27, the same day she and her husband had taken a long flight and were not writing any checks.

"I went to the bank and told them I didn't know what this was," she said. "They made an enlarged copy and with a magnifying glass we could make out 'Market Billing' on the check. The person at the bank googled the name and found six pages of people caught in this national scam. They had an electronic signature of mine on file and had all my bank information." Although Bowles never places outgoing mail in her mail box, somehow a criminal got one of her checks.

In addition to changing her bank account, Bowles had to change a number of documents and financial accounts linked to the checking account. "It was a nightmare," she said. "We now don't pay by check and pay by

computer, but that opens another can of worms."

According to the FTC, in 2005 Consumer Sentinel – the complaint database developed and maintained by the FTC – received over 685,000 consumer fraud and identity theft complaints: 63 percent were fraud, 37 percent were identity theft.

Last week at a seminar on how to avoid financial exploitation hosted by Lafayette Senior Services, Shirley Krohn, senior assembly member for Contra Costa County and elder abuse prevention advocate, passed around copies of dozens of e-mails she had received in just one day – all of which were potential scams. One e-mail even stated it was from the Internal Revenue Service, asking to click on a link regarding a \$240.34 refund.

"It's doubtful the IRS would be sending e-mails to people so they could get their refund," she said. "It's hard enough to get money out of the IRS. Never click on a link inside an e-mail or give out personal information."

"Many elders are too trusting and are easily duped by official looking (or sounding) communications such as e-mails," said Jenefer Duane, CEO

and executive director of Elder Financial Protection Network. "Also, elders who are more isolated may respond to an e-mail without asking around or checking out a bogus request for account (or other) personal financial information."

The best defense is awareness and education.

"I generally tell people to always be sure you know who you're talking to," Detective McCormack said. "You should have the most updated software, have firewalls, spam filters, all the latest features."

For information on how to protect yourself from cyber criminals, visit On Guard Online, hosted by the FTC, at <http://onguardonline.gov>.

If you think that your personal information has been stolen, visit the Federal Trade Commission's Identity Theft Resource Center at

www.consumer.gov/idtheft/index.html for information on how to file a complaint and control the damage.

A Blinding Flash Can't Clear Away Clutter continued from page 4

In addition, she kept, apparently, every scrap of newspaper and magazine she had ever received. She was a writer, after all; they were grist for her mill. They might be useful someday. I understood perfectly.

Paths between stacks of paper led to the corner fireplace and to the kitchen where she cooked on a wood stove. Another path led to her bedroom.

The bewildered Vietnamese and the elderly settler exchanged a few polite phrases in French. But further symbiosis was not to be. They were city people. She was not.

In a blinding flash, I saw the future, my future, and resolved to reform.

But in spite of my good intentions, reformation is slow work. For the most part, my books and papers are still confined to the bookcases. The papers do not, in general, interfere with foot traffic, or if they do, only for a finite space of time.

But I have taken a small step ahead. I firmly dropped the list of New Year's resolu-

tions in the recycling bin instead of tucking it away for future reference. It might have come in handy sometime.

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Notre Dame." Free admission;
freewill offering collected.

**LUNAR NEW YEAR FAMILY
CELEBRATION**
Sun., Feb. 10 at 3 p.m., the Eng Fam-
ily and the Orinda Library present a
special event to celebrate the Lunar
New Year. The Murasaki Ensemble, a
Bay Area group that provides a mus-
ical experience of sounds unlike any
other with elements of traditional Far
Eastern music, Latin American
rhythms and improvisational jazz will
perform at the Orinda Library Audi-
torium. Free. It is appropriate for
families, although children under six
might find it long.

A Big Band Dance in Lafayette on
Friday, Feb 15th, New Veterans Me-
morial Building in Lafayette. Brush
up on or learn Ball Room Dancing
from 7- 8pm, then dance from 8-
10pm with the Rossmoor Big Band.
Students from Acalanes High and

Stanley will also be featured and stu-
dents from both schools are invited to
attend the dance. Tickets are \$10.00,
sold at the Lafayette Chamber of
Commerce office, located at 100
Lafayette Circle #103, Lafayette. Pur-
chase your tickets in advance, as this
event has sold out in the past. Space
is limited.

Lafayette Town Hall Theatre pre-
sents "Moonlight and Magnolias" Feb.
9 – March 15, 2008 This story brings
audiences into the inside of the office
of legendary producer David O.
Selznick during the final moments
when he is transforming the best sell-
ing book, "Gone with the Wind", into
one of the most beloved movies of all
time. Contact the Town Hall Theatre
Company Box Office for exact dates
and times. Town Hall Theatre Com-
pany, 3535 School Street at Moraga
Road, Lafayette
925-283-1557 or www.thtc.org

ART

**Yea We Said It, And No We're Not
Sorry!"** Art Exhibition featuring
Artist Malik Senferu. Feb 1- Feb 29.
Opening Reception Friday Feb 1
5:30pm to 8:30 pm Free Refresh-
ments. Artist Malik Senferu says the
theme of this exhibit is a "calling of the
ages". Seneferu takes a "no holds
barred" approach to his art and a pow-
erful message during Black History
Month.

Joyce Gordon Gallery
406 14th Street, Oakland,
510-465-8928
jvbgg@sbcglobal.net
www.joycegordongallery.com

**New Moraga Art Gallery Show to run
through March 16**
The Moraga Art Gallery featuring the
work of jewelry designer Karen
Blum-Boateng, John Diestler, digital
photographer. Karen's funky elegant
designs combine the hippest jewelry
fashions with sophisticated style.

John teaches digital photography, dig-
ital art, multimedia and graphic de-
sign at Contra Costa College in San
Pablo. 570 Center St, Rheem Valley
Shopping Center/next to Longs Drugs
in Moraga. The Gallery is open Tues-
day through Sunday, 12-5 pm.

Lafayette Gallery's new show, Ob-
jects of Affection is open through
March 1st and will be featuring works
from 22 artists. Join us for a festive
champagne reception on Fri, Feb 8
from 6:30- 8:30pm. Lafayette
Gallery, 50 Lafayette Circle, is open
Tuesday to Saturday from 11am to
5pm. 925-284-2788, www.lafayette-
gallery.net

Artists/Teachers ART EXHIBIT -
Jan. 13th to Feb. 21st. 11 artists: Mar-
ianne Brown, Dorothy Cutright
Davis, Andrew Denman, Bonnie
Fitch, Marilyn Hajjar, Anne Marie
Glover, Pam Glover, Terry McBriarty,
Shirley Rencher Miller, Norm Nichol-
son and Catherine Watters. Mon
through Sat. 8 am to 7 pm - Sun. 12
noon to 5 pm. Orinda Library Gallery
24 Orinda Way Orinda

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

LITERATURE

Richard Schwartz, historian, story-
teller and author, will be the speaker
at the Jan. 31st meeting of the Moraga
Historical Society at 7:30 p.m. at the
Moraga Library. He will be speaking
on his latest book, "Eccentrics, He-
roes, and Cutthroats of Old Berkeley"
"Combining the research skills of a
careful historian with the flair of a
yarn-spinner, Richard Schwartz
brings early Berkeley alive..." Open
to the public. Free. Cookies and cof-
fee will be served. Call Nilda Rego at
925 377 8702

**Book Signing- Tuesday, Feb. 5, 4
PM. Vikram Chandra** will discuss
and sign copies of Sacred Games, just
out in paperback. Orinda Books, 276
Village Square, Orinda.
orindabooks@thegrid.net

Orinda Library Booksale will be
Thursday, Feb. 7 from 10 a.m. to 1
p.m. It will include shelves of fine fic-
tion and nonfiction for adults, good
books for children from toddlers to
teen-agers, just-like-new books and
books for collectors. Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way, Orinda.

**Sandi Cummings, Contemporary
Fiber Artist,** "Thinking Outside the
Block"—Wednesday, Jan. 30—2:00
p.m. Sandi Cummings, quilt artist, au-
thor, and teacher will speak on
"Thinking Outside the Block", the
title of her newest book. This talk fea-
tures a look at the work of her con-
temporary quilt group, and also
includes slides and commentary on
her own work as a quilt artist. She will
include some of her reflections on
working in a series, sources of inspi-
ration, and the courage to experiment.

POLITICAL

The Lamorinda Democratic Club
presidential primary candidates' night.
Representatives from each of the eight
Democratic presidential campaigns
will present their candidates' posi-
tions. All in attendance will have the
opportunity to participate in a straw
poll at the end of the evening, as club
membership is not a requirement for
voting. Merchandise and/or literature
will be available from each candi-
date's representative, and attendees
can learn how to get involved in the
campaign of their choice.
Fri. Jan 25, 7:30pm general club
meeting, 8:00 PM Presidential cam-
paign representatives present their
candidates. Orinda Community
Church, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda, \$5 for
admission.. Students free.
Call 925-210-7337 or go to www.lam-
orindademoclub.com for more infor-
mation.

OTHER EVENTS

**"Spirit of the Marathon" Viewing
and Premovie Run.** Join us for an
evening run and then a special view-
ing of the movie "Spirit of the
Marathon" Jan. 24th at 7:30 PM Cen-
tury Theatre 1201 Locust Street Wal-
nut Creek 6:15pm run 7:30pm
viewing. \$10

**Free workshop on advanced direc-
tives and estate planning.** Sunday,
Jan. 27th, Lafayette Christian
Church, 584 Glenside Dr., Lafayette.
The session will be preceded by a
lunch at 12:30. To make a reserva-

tion, call (925) 283-8304. Participants
may make a donation for the lunch.

**Spring Modern Bridal Faire,
Claremont Resort** Sunday Jan. 27th,
2008. Doors are open from 11:00am -
4:00pm. Fashion shows at 12:30pm
and 2:30pm

**Registration for the Feb. 7 CERT
training is open!**
The class will be held at Saint Mary's
College. To enroll, register online at
www.lamorindaCERT.org or call Ken
Tom at 925-376-0533.

**Comedy, Juggling, Magic and
More!** On Wednesday, Jan. 30th,
come see one of San Francisco's
finest entertainers. 1:30-2:15pm at
the Lafayette Community Center in
the Live Oak Room. Tickets are \$5
per person (under 1yr free) and will
be available at the door.

**Annual Crab Feed & Dance – Satur-
day, Feb. 2, 6 - 11 p.m.** Holy Trinity
Cultural Center, 1700 School St.,
Moraga. Great food and dancing,
with music provided by popular DJ.
Dinner & dance \$35 --
Dance only \$10.
For information / reservations, please
call 925-672-6799.

**Free Seminar on "Stress and your
Teenager"**. Mon, Feb. 4th, starting at
7pm, in the Campolindo library, 300
Moraga Rd., Moraga. Psychologist
Lisa Lewis will be addressing the
issue of stress and our teenagers both
from the psychological point of view
as well as the relational point of view.
Parents will take away what stress
looks like in teenagers and how it is
different from other behaviors/issues
that they might be demonstrating, as
well as how to best parent through the
stressful times.

**Sustainable Moraga General meet-
ing, Feb. 5, 7pm.**
Moraga Barn at the corner of Country
Club Drive and Viader. Speaker: "Bill
Roth, local author of "Crossing the
Energy Chasm" will talk on the eco-
nomics of implementing a sustainable
energy technology revolution that
will deliver lower pump prices,
achieve energy independence and
solve global warming, NOW!"

The Kiwanis of Moraga Valley will
hold their 8th Annual Crab Feed Feb
9. Featuring Silent Auction, Dinner &
Dancing. Price: \$45. Call Paul Ratto
for tickets at 925-899-9536. Pro-
ceeds go to local charities with em-
phasis on youth programs and
services.

**Moraga Movers Monthly Lunch-
eon,** Monday, Feb. 11 at noon, St.
Mary's College. Judge John Minney
will be the featured speaker. Visitors
are most welcome! Reservations are
necessary and can be made by call-
ing the office at 376-6622 by 5 PM
Wednesday, Feb. 6.

Men's Basketball Open Gym 7-
9pm at Joaquin Moraga School in
Moraga. \$5 per player/night. For
more information contact Gerald De
Venuta at 817-8429 or the Moraga
Parks and Recreation Dept at 925-
888-7045.

**"Peace through Art and Writing
Challenge."** The contest is open to
Contra Costa County high and middle
school students. The students are in-
vited to enter any of three categories:
Essay, Creative Writing, or Art. All
entries are evaluated by independent
judges. In keeping with the awarding
of the Nobel Peace Prize to an envi-
ronmentalism, former Vice President
Al Gore in 2007, the contest theme
this year is "How are environmental
issues related to peace?" Deadline
for submitting entries is Friday,

March 7, 2008. Mail of drop off to
the Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Cen-
ter, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek,
CA 94596. Cash prizes, ranging from
\$50 to \$500 depending on grade level
and achievement, will be awarded to
winners. The awards will be pre-
sented at a dinner on Saturday May
17th at 6:00 PM at the Walnut Creek
Unitarian Universalist Church, 55
Eckley Lan

Lapsit /Toddler Time Wed., Jan. 30
and Feb 6th. 10:30am Stories, songs
& action rhymes for young children
and their caregivers. For ages 6
months to 3 years with adult partici-
pation. Moraga Library

Quilting Fun for Kids—Thu., Jan. 3
1-4pm. Sandi Cummings, well
known Moraga fiber artist to work
with kids 4 and older to make a li-
brary quilt for the library and a quilt
square to take home using paper and
fabrics. Moraga Library Friends of
Brighter Beginnings Lunch & Lec-
ture – 11:30 a.m. Jan. 31. Speaker –
Anita Siegel, MPH, Deputy Director
Alameda County Health Department.
Resiliency Factors in Early Child-
hood - When the focus is on support-
ing families and children with a
strength-based model at the earliest
stages of life, then children even in
the most challenging of life's condi-

tions not only survive - but truly
thrive. Postino Restaurant, 3565 Mt.
Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. \$45. Mari-
ani Salmon, 925-299-1405 or
friends@brighter-beginnings.org.

**"Family and Friends" CPR, Tues-
day 1/29 ,10:00 AM – 1 PM** American
Medical Response instructors will
teach you and your loved ones the life-
saving skills of cardio-pulmonary re-
suscitation (CPR) and relief of chok-
ing, in accordance with the American
Heart Association Guidelines. You
should wear loose, comfortable cloth-
ing as you practice skills that require
sitting, bending and lifting. Once you
have completed the AHA course, you
will receive an AMR certificate and
completion card. Reserve your spot in
the course by calling 284-5546.
Lafayette Community Center

**Let's Face It – Women Explore
Aging Using "Let's Face It,"** a
video documentary produced by a
group of mature Berkeley women, as
the stepping stone of our workshop,
we will explore our feelings about
changes as we age and how we came
to these feelings? We welcome both
men and women to our event which
promises to have a profound impact
on all. Thurs. 2/7, 10:30 – Noon,
Lafayette Community Center

Saint Mary's College

Campus Happenings



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

World: 101 Alternatives to Sui-
cide for Teens, Freaks and Other
Outlaws," was published in 2006.
Her other published works in-
clude, "Gender Outlaw: On Men,
Women and the Rest of Us," "My
Gender Workbook," and the
cyber-romance/action novel,
"Nearly Roadkill," with co-author
Caitlin Sullivan. Wed., Jan. 30
from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Soda Center
Contact: Jan. Term (925)631-
4771

Art Exhibitions:
**"Pinturas de Fe: The Retablo
Tradition in Mexico and New
Mexico"** Pilgrimage, procession,
and the creation of home altars
and shrines are ancient religious
practices that endure today in
many cultures around the world.
This exhibition tells the story of
one such tradition as it evolved in
the Americas from the time of the
Spanish Conquest to the present
day. Today, individual artists
faithfully carry on the tradition of
hand painted retablos, and con-
temporary artists from diverse
cultural backgrounds draw cre-
ative inspiration from this popular
art form. Exhibition runs through
April 6. 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

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 web-
site at http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/news-and-
events/events.html.

THE HEARST ART GALLERY of Saint Mary's College presents Exhibits & Events through April 6

Pinturas de Fe: The Retablo Tradition in Mexico and New Mexico



Images from the late 18th
century to the present,
on loan from museum
and private collections
including the Museum
of Spanish Colonial Art
and the Museum of
International Folk Art
in Santa Fe.

**LECTURE, RECEPTION,
QUILT SHOW:**

Fri, Feb. 29, 3 - 7 pm

Quilt Show & Sale:
Los Hilos de la Vida
Latina quilts 3 - 5 pm.
Art Room 105

Lecture: 5 - 6 p.m.
Soda Activity Center, Saint Mary's College
Images of Mary – Sacred, Secular and Stylized
by Pamela Gasparovich Thomas, M.A.

Reception following 6 - 7 p.m.
Members & children under 12 free, \$5 general admission

New in the Keith Room: William Keith: the 1890s Paintings



Gallery Admission: \$3 adult; children 12 & under free; free parking
Exhibition Hours: Wednesdays - Sundays, 11 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

<http://gallery.stmarys-ca.edu>
925.631.4379

The Hearst Art Gallery, celebrating its 30th anniversary in
2007, is accredited by the American Association of Museums.

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

Lamorinda Weekly is an independent publication,
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Sport events/stories/pictures: sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com
Art, theater, community events: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com
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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Life in LAMORINDA

SMC's Children's Theater Production—Whose Porridge is too Hot?

By Andrea A. Firth



Michael Cook (left) works with sophmores Michael Matar (center) and Blaine Badasci as they build the set for SMC's stage adaptation of Goldilocks and the Three Bears Photo Andrea A. Firth

Each January, Saint Mary's College faculty member Michael Cook puts himself and a handful of students on a "theater production treadmill" as they race to build sets and learn lines, songs and choreography for the annual performance of a classic children's fairytale. Part of Saint Mary's January term course offerings—Creating Theater for Young Adults—presents a musical adaptation seen by over 2,700 area children. "It's more like Summer Stock. It's down and dirty," explains Cook. "The students re-

turn from their holiday break and hit the boards running."

Over the past several years, the productions have featured well-read children's fairy tales such as The Princess and the Pea, Cinderella, and Hansel and Gretel. Cook starts the process by taking the two-page fairytale and crafting a 45-minute stage adaptation. His wife, Jeffra, a musician and composer, creates original music for the play that is written for the individual actors. The course is open to any undergraduate student and usually

draws a handful of theater majors along with several students who little or no theater experience.

Cook, who is also the Technical Director of LeFevre Theater, spends half of each school day during the course working with the group of students responsible for building the set and props. Prior to taking the class, many students have no experience using power tools, so Cook makes safety as a priority and leads his crew to the completion of a professional-looking set that he has

designed. The remainder of each day is spent in rehearsals. Rehearsal time is condensed to two weeks versus the eight weeks of practice that theater students are accustomed to for productions done during the regular school year.

Saint Mary's has established a strong relationship with schools in Lamorinda and throughout the East Bay with their Children's Theater performances, and local school groups return year after year for these charming productions. In addition, Theater Coordinator Sharon Cahill works with teachers whose students will attend the shows to extend the learning experience. "We provide the teachers with a list of vocabulary words that the students will hear in the play that may be new to them. Examples might include words such as metaphorically, landlord, or tenants. Teachers can then review the meaning of these words with their students prior to the show."

Almost all of the 10 performances for this year's production—Goldilocks and the Three Bears are sold out. However, you can still catch the show on Thursday, January 31st at 4 pm. Tickets are \$8 per person. Reservations and advance purchase are requested; call 925-631-4670.

Moraga Center Specific Plan: Will The Dream Ever Come True?

continued from page 3

When her turn came to express her thoughts, Joan Bruzzone talked about the history of Moraga and the vision that her husband, the late Russell Bruzzone, had for the town. "Since the original concept was for Moraga to accommodate 60,000 people, my husband planned the shopping

center to handle that anticipated population. At that same time, the original plan was to have access to two freeways going through Moraga, which would account for that scope of thought."

She later reflected on the process itself. "The idea of soliciting architectural designs was

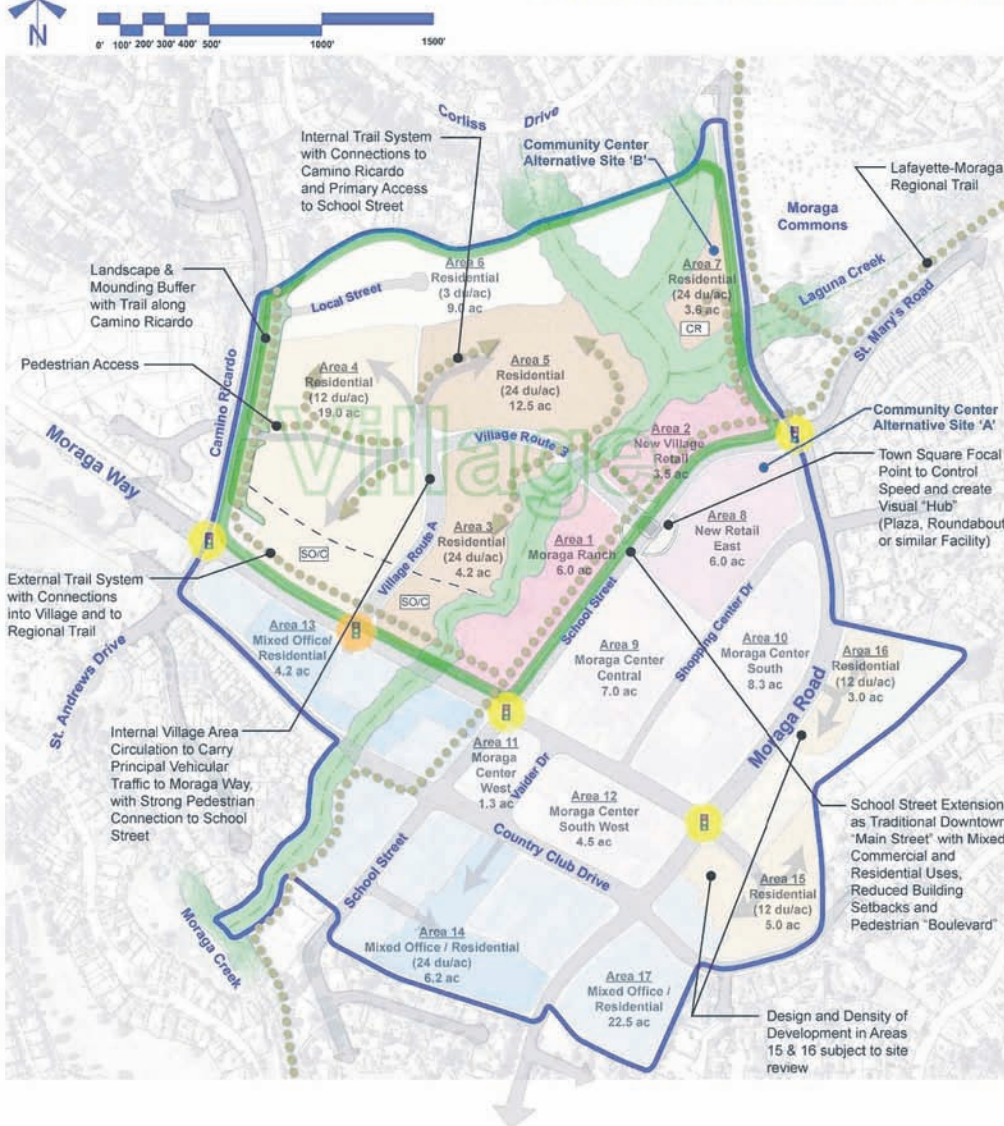
not approved by us, only by the Town," she said, "which I consider a very unique situation. I find it most unusual for the Town to preempt the prerogative of the property owner to make the initial architectural presentation and to solicit the town's participation before that of the property owner. It has always

been my naivete that the property owner still maintained at least a modicum of legal as well as private property privileges, other than to pay real estate and parcel taxes. I would certainly hate to have been mistaken all these years."

On January 23rd, the Council will hear public comments and decide which firm should be awarded a contract to create a visual of what the downtown area could become. Mayor Deschambault has been advocating this approach for months: "In all things, there is a need to move forward and at the same time seek compromise and buy-in from all the stakeholders involved," she says, "if we do not do them all simultaneously than that is when nothing happens. This charette was a new approach and I am optimistic about continuing the discussions. I am excited that we can begin to see visual presentations of what this might look like. I hope the landowners will continue to express their interests, their concerns, and their dreams."

MORAGA CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN

Illustrative Land Use and Circulation Plan (05.30.07)



LEGEND
Community Commercial
Mixed Commercial / Residential (12-24 du/ac)
Residential (12-24 du/ac)
Residential (6-12 du/ac)
Residential (3-6 du/ac)
Public Facilities
Open Space
Suburban Office / Residential
Trail System
Village Policy Area
Modified Signal
Approximate Signal & Intersection Location
Creek & Setback
Residential Base Density with Suburban Office/Commercial Overlay
Residential Base Density with Commercial Recreation Overlay

This map is part of the Draft-EIR and can be found online at The Town of Moraga's web site: http://www.moraga.ca.us/moraga_planning_department.php



Open House, Sunday Jan. 27th 1-4pm
3320 Woodview Court, Lafayette
\$431 per sq ft. and Lafayette schools. Must see beautiful home on large wooded lot. Remodeled kitchen with granite, stainless steel appliances & cherry cabinets. 4 large bedrooms & 3 1/2 baths including Master Suite and Au Pair suite with separate entrance. Very quiet area.
Offered at \$1,199,000



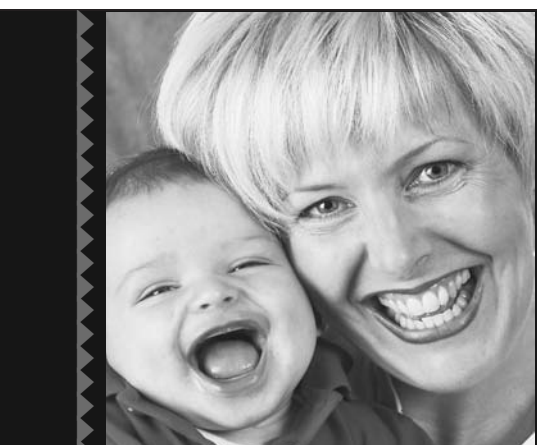
Price reduced by \$50,000!
1221 El Curtola Blvd, Lafayette
Beautifully updated 4 bedroom, 2 bath home with great back yard potential. Large decks surrounds the kitchen and the entire back of the home. Updates include kitchen, main floor windows, front landscaping, new roof and outside paint. 1646 square feet; .23 acre lot
www.1221ElCurtolaBlvd.com
Offered at \$799,000

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925-283-7000

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SUPER SHARP UNIT - 3 bedrooms and 2.5 baths! Over 1,400sf (300sf larger than other units in complex currently listed). Fresh paint, updates in kitchen and baths, Located at the top of street with views plus Top Rated Lafayette schools.
Call: (925) 283-7000

948 NOTRE DAME CONCORD



Offered at \$439,000
GREAT HOME IN CONCORD/WALNUT CREEK Border. This 3 bd 2 ba, 1247sf home is close to PH BART and freeway access. Interior painted 1 year ago, hardwood floors, dual pane windows and RV Parking.
Call Cary at 925-818-0880 or Call: (925) 283-7000

712 IRONBARK CT. ORINDA



Offered at \$1,389,000
Orinda Woods; experience amazing views from the front porch. The home features 3+ bedrooms, 2.5 baths, 2,350sf on a 1/3 acre lot, new hardwood floors, windows and built-ins. Great Interior Colors. Call Deb at 925-381-0325 or Call: (925) 283-7000

711 BUCKINGHAM COURT WALNUT CREEK



Offered at \$1,049,000
Well-priced Northgate home with desirable cul-de-sac location plus 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths and over 2,600sf on a single level. Beautiful backyard with pool, patio and large lawn. Fabulous Granite kitchen.
Call Jim at 925-962-6101 or Call: (925) 283-7000

163 HOOKSTON ROAD PLEASANT HILL



Offered at \$389,900
Bank Owned. Excellent price for a 3 bedroom with large yard! Updated kitchen, some dual pane windows, 2 car garage. \$2,500 credit to buyer for closing costs! Call Jennifer at 925-382-7484 or Call: (925) 283-7000

20 MUTH DRIVE ORINDA



Offered at \$1,150,000
Spacious, upgraded 4 bd, 2.5 ba, 2,200sf home on a 3/4 acre lot. Close to downtown & BART. RV parking, low maint. grounds, granite counters & gas cook-top. Call Jennifer at 925-382-7484 or Call: (925) 283-7000

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Tried and True Tips and Vendors

By Dana Green, Realtor, J. Rockcliff Realtors, Inc.
Home and Termite Inspections

Inspecting your property frequently will allow you to head off problems before they become a real burden and expensive nuisance. This is something you should do annually whether or not you plan to sell your home. Walk the perimeter carefully checking the general condition of the siding, trim, and eaves, particularly behind bushes that may obstruct easy viewing. What do you see? Along the way, make a list of items of concern, and record your observations. If you see anything out of the ordinary, (large gaps, cracks, sagging or sloping of floors, etc.), make note and consider calling an accredited property inspector. Aside from a qualified evaluation of the conditions that you recorded, a professional

home inspector can often discover other important issues that have gone unnoticed. A typical inspection will cost \$350 to \$500. This will pay for itself quickly if a problem is caught early!

The over-all safety of a building is only one of the main concerns of a trained inspector. They are also evaluating performance of key components (roof, foundation, heating systems, etc.) and electrical issues. Adverse conditions inside an electrical panel such as improper wiring and faulty connections can result in an electrical fire. Poor roof conditions, improper functioning of the heating system and leaks in the plumbing are just a few examples of other issues that can be discovered by a home inspector.

As it is not a particularly glamorous job, don't forget to crawl under the home or visually inspect the attic space. Both areas have structural significance and should be professionally evaluated to maintain their condition. Excessive settlement can be caused if the grading around the outside of the home is found to have too much moisture.

Lastly, it is also important to check your house for dry-rot and/or termite activity. It pays to recognize the signs

of infestation and carry out a termite inspection every 1-2 years. An average termite inspection runs between \$185-\$250. Some of the signs to look for are termite swarms coming out of hidden spots. Or, if you have just finished a remodeling project, make sure the contractor did not leave abandoned wood scraps or material, commonly called cellulose debris, in the crawl space. These materials create the perfect environment for termites. Again, if you think you have a problem, call in

the professionals.

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Dana Green, a Lafayette native, is a Lamorinda Real Estate Specialist. Dana can be reached at (925) 339-1918 or danagreen@rockcliff.com

Beautiful Bentley Building

continued from page 2



Design by Kava Massih Architects, watercolor rendering by Robert Becker

He also commented that there have been some changes along the way. The massive three-story stairway was adjusted to include student-friendly spaces with lots of planters and seating areas. Some sections of the roof will be changed to be more green, and help the project with its LEED

(Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification. The interior walls facing the plaza will be all glass, letting in a significant amount of natural light, while giving teachers three other classroom walls for whiteboards, maps, and student projects.

The proposed building is

for students in grades six through eight, who are currently at the Hiller Campus in Oakland.

"At this point we're in the middle of a capital campaign which is going very well," said Melissa Rosengard, who is President of the Bentley School Board of Trustees. "We've had

lots of support from the community," she added. If fundraising falls short, the school can borrow money, "that continues to be an option."

If all goes well, Rosengard anticipates construction starting in 2009, with completion approximately a year later in 2010.

Lamorinda Home Sales continued

SOLD	LAFAYETTE Last reported: 4
HOME SALES presented by	LOWEST AMOUNT: \$1,000,000
LAMORINDA	HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,925,000
LAMORINDA	MORAGA Last reported: 8
	LOWEST AMOUNT: \$260,000
	HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$1,059,000
	ORINDA Last reported: 0
	LOWEST AMOUNT: \$0
	HIGHEST AMOUNT: \$0

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**
- 1408 Meadowlark Ct., \$1,925,000, 3 Bdrms, 1909 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 12-27-07
 - 218 Ruth Court, \$1,230,000, 3 Bdrms, 1380 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-28-07
 - 1218 Sunrise Ridge Dr., \$1,115,000, 5 Bdrms, 2972 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 12-28-07
 - 3293 Sweet Drive, \$1,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 1658 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-28-07
- MORAGA**
- 117 Ascot Court #A, \$419,000, 2 Bdrms, 1191 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 12-11-07
 - 119 Ascot Court #7, \$548,000, 3 Bdrms, 1320 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-28-07
 - 1997 Ascot Drive #C, \$405,000, 2 Bdrms, 1124 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 12-31-07
 - 2079 Ascot Drive #138, \$260,000, 1 Bdrms, 713 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-28-07
 - 2121 Donald Drive #9, \$270,000, 2 Bdrms, 756 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 1-2-08
 - 651 Moraga Road #14, \$480,000, 3 Bdrms, 1394 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-16-07
 - 1913 St. Andrews Dr., \$1,059,000, 3 Bdrms, 1880 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 12-28-07
 - 132 Whitethorne Dr., \$1,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 1909 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 12-28-07

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LAMORINDA Business

business briefs

BrightStar Franchise Comes to Lafayette
BrightStar Healthcare, 3746 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Suite 204, Lafayette, 284-8888
 Matt and Marilyn Shriner opened a new independently owned franchise of BrightStar Healthcare, a full-service healthcare staffing agency, "Families expect support from someone who can not only provide a higher and more knowledgeable level of care, but also answer questions and help lower anxiety," Marilyn Shriner said. "Our services allow clients to remain in the comfort of their own homes and offer peace of mind to family members who can be confident that their loved ones are receiving the care, attention, and most importantly the companionship they need and deserve."

Living Lean – Sheena Lakhota moves and enriches her services to the community
15 Altarinda Rd – Orinda, 360-7051
 Lakhota is the owner of Leaving Lean, a weight management philosophy that integrates exercise and nutrition. She is developing a new nourishment offering in conjunction with local merchants, so grabbing a sandwich or a drink on the go can be part of your new healthy lifestyle. Lakhota is presently working with Gepetto, Rising Loafer, Diablo Foods, Café Theatro and Quencher. Soon you'll find "Living Lean" sandwiches, breads and/or drinks. Her new studio offers in addition to personalized training, semi-private dance, weight, spin or cardio classes.



left to right: Peter Eigenheer, Francoise Cervantes and Katharine Livingston having a spin in Lakhota's new studio
 Photo Elizabeth Wolfe, Living Lean Client

East Bay Coldwell Banker offices collected more than 1,000 toys:
The Bay Area chapter collected nearly 5,000 toys for needy children in the Bay Area.
 This marked the 20th consecutive year that Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage served as an official corporate partner for the United States Marine Corps Reserve's "Toys for Tots" campaign. Larry Klapow, president of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in the San Francisco Bay region, said, "If it weren't for our wonderful customers and fellow residents, none of this would be possible."

East Bay Mortgage Planner Earns Exclusive CMC Designation
Fountainhead Mortgage, Orinda, 925-317-7601
 Mortgage Planner Ryan Lauper has earned the exclusive Certified Mortgage Consultant (CMC) designation, the highest level of certification available from the National Association of Mortgage Brokers. Fewer than 40 California mortgage planners have earned the title and less than 1 percent of all mortgage originators nationwide have attained the distinction.

New Workshop:
Women's Business Connection of Lamorinda wants you to "Search Engine Optimize"
 The Lamorinda group invites all business owners to a workshop on how to make your website work for you: search optimization, transforming visitors into clients, paid search realities, etc. At the Orinda Library on Wednesday Feb 13th from 5:30 to 7:30pm, Cost is \$10 including food. More info 283-7546 or www.wbclamorinda.com

"We've Lived Though It Before – But Will we be Ready To Do It Again?"
 In the event of a major emergency, more than 40% of businesses close and never re-open. The Chambers of Commerce of Moraga, Lafayette and the Town of Moraga are hosting an Emergency Preparedness Seminar, Wednesday, March 26th at the Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street in Moraga. Two sessions are offered to accommodate different business schedules: 7:30 to 10 am (Cost \$5 with breakfast) and 6:30 to 9pm (Cost \$10 with dinner). Deadline to register is March 20th, contact Ken Tom at 376-0533.

Lafayette Green Awards.
 The city of Lafayette is currently collection nominations for the new Lafayette Green Awards, which will recognize outstanding efforts during 2007 that contributed to a more sustainable community. To learn more go to www.sustainablelafayette.net/greenawards/

News from the Three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, 100 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette, www.lafayettechamber.org

- Green Committee second meeting, Wednesday January 30th at noon at the Chamber office. Identify easy steps to take to be more sustainable. The committee was created in partnership with Sustainable Lafayette. Review success stories at www.sustainablelafayette.net/businesses/
- Chamber Mixer, Wednesday February the 13th, starting at 5:30 pm, Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School Street.
- The Chamber of Commerce organized volunteers on the 18th of December to distribute to the business community a "commuter guide" in form of a map indication long term parking in town. The guide can be found at the Chamber's office.
- Annual Business Person of the Year Dinner on Friday January 25th, 6:00pm at the Lafayette Park Hotel and Spa. The Chamber is honoring Larry Blodgett as our 2008 Business Person of the Year. This dinner is the annual membership meeting. Included are the Mayor's "State of the City" address and the introduction of the Chamber's 2008 Board of Directors. Go to www.lafayettechamber.org and download a registration form.



L-R: Chamber President Larry Duson (Bank of The West), Membership Services Director Barbara Gilmore, Steve Palsa (Minuteman Press)
 Photo Wendy Schek

Chamber of Commerce of Moraga, www.moragachamber.org

- Chamber General Meeting. On Friday Jan 25th from 8 AM to 9:30 AM Terezetto's restaurant in the Moraga Shopping Center. This is a time to connect as a business community, have a business or two showcased so we all know what businesses, small and large, are part of our Chamber, and have speakers speak on topics that will enhance our businesses as a whole and our business community in general.
- Shop Moraga First committee. The Shop Moraga First committee continues to encourage businesses to display the Shop Moraga First posters and have their staffs wear Shop Moraga First pins. The committee is also making a concerted effort to reach out to Saint Mary's College to bridge the gap between Moraga businesses and the Saint Mary's College community.
- Chamber Website: We are in the process of updating our Chamber website. <http://www.moragachamber.org/>. If you have suggestion about the website, please email edy321@comcast.net.
- Survey: The Chamber board is going to send our a survey to get its members input on 1) alternative days and times to meet 2) topics that would enhance your business and 3) activities that you feel would develop connections in our business community.

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

- February After Hours Mixer February 28th: 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. Jamie Westdal Photography 2 Theater Square, Suite 112, Orinda, CA
- The "Shop Orinda" campaign, launched in November 2007 has been a great hit, with the smart canvas shopping bags and tent cards appearing all through the city. So far, more than 600 bags have been distributed and 500 tent cards are in place among Orinda businesses.
- The Chamber needs your enthusiasm and expertise. Volunteer for an upcoming event or to participate on one of our committees by calling the Chamber office at 925-254-3909 or by email to our address at info@orindachamber.org.
- New Chamber members:
 - S. Justin Kim, C.P.A. www.justinkimcpa.com/
 - Private Associates Betsy Maness www.privateassociates.com
 - Orinda Pet Shop www.OrindaPetShop.com

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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What's Going On At The Rheem Center? Fudge Alley, a Moraga Business Icon, at a Turning Point

By Sophie Braccini



Inside Fudge Alley, home-made fudge, candy and ice cream in an old fashion decor
 Photo Sophie Braccini

Frank Chao will be turning eighty this year. One could never tell, watching the Taiwanese shopkeeper interact joyfully with young dancers from the nearby California Academy of Performing Arts (CAPA), who come to satisfy their craving for sweets between two entrechats. Fudge Alley, Chao's candy and ice cream parlor, has been in operation for more than thirty years but the future is uncertain for the smooth old gentleman, who doesn't look much older than sixty, since he didn't renew his five-year lease with the Rheem Center's owner, Kimco Realty Corporation.

Chao considered this his American dream, a great place for retirement. But eating habits change and the business has been declining over the years. Still, Frank is a favorite. George Quintero, owner of the Moraga and Lafayette Pet Shoppes, says, "If somebody should get an award in Moraga, it's Frank. He's been a great presence in the Center for many, many years, taking care of everybody's kids." Another Moraga resident, now in his early thirties adds: "We used to go to Fudge Alley all the time with my parents when I was a kid. We had hotdogs, fudge, cookies and ice cream. Frank is definitely a Moraga icon."

For many teens, Fudge Alley has been a favorite "hang out," although this has not been without some controversy. Rumors link the shop to teenage delinquency, vandalism and other illegal activities that have occurred in the vicinity, but Moraga Police Chief Mark Ruppenthal believes that Frank Chao is an honest man. Quintero identifies another reason why business owners at Rheem are having a hard time. "(The Rheem Center) has changed owners four times in the

last five years," he says, "and every time, the business property tax goes up and we, the tenants, are the ones paying for it." The same thing happened to Beauty Source a few months ago; a proposed 25% increase in rent drove the store out of the Rheem Center. Both Beauty Source and the Karate and Fitness Place, another former Rheem business, have relocated to the Moraga Center.

At Rheem in the meantime, stores remain empty. Spaces once occupied by such businesses as Mia and Friends, Box Guy, Star Shoes, Beauty Source, 2nd Generation Consignment and Specialtees Outlet have been vacant for months. That may be the reason that Kimco is letting Chao stay in his store, with a month-to-month contract, until they have found a new tenant.

Edy Schwartz, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Moraga, comments, "The business community is concerned about what is going on at this shopping center. Shop keepers

are having a hard time reaching and communicating with the owner and have been unable to negotiate the significant rent increase that's been asked of them."

Grant Stubblefield of Lori's Perfect Tan, which is also located in the Rheem Center, says, "Our contract is up in less than a month and, in spite of repeated attempts, we have been unable to reach the responsible party at Kimco and still do not have a new contract proposal." The storeowner may consider not staying in Rheem if the increase is commensurate with what has been seen recently. "They are asking for Walnut Creek rent levels," says Stubblefield, "in a shopping center that has not been improved in years and where doing business is challenging." Kimco could not be reached for comment on this issue.

Meanwhile, Chao is contemplating a return to his homeland of Taiwan. "That's where I want my bones to be buried," says the smiling gentleman.

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Bentley Drama Presents 10 Plays to Honor 10th Anniversary Next Up: Sherman's Lagoon The Musical

By Andrea A. Firth



Members of the Bentley singing ensemble the *Shallow Soles* rehearse for the upcoming production of *Sherman's Lagoon The Musical* Photo Andrea A. Firth

To celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Bentley Upper School, drama teacher Winter Mead set the ambitious goal to produce ten plays in a single school year. With the help and support of Ahmed El-Gasseir, Chairman of the Performing Arts Department, and other members of the Drama and Music Departments, Bentley has a theater performance schedule packed with literary classics. Mead and El-Gasseir kicked off the season and treated the students to a faculty performance of Edward Albee's one-act play *The Zoo Story*. The Fall performance also included Tennessee Williams' highly charged *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, another Edward Albee play, *Three Tall Women*, and Stephen Sondheim's Broadway musical sensation (and Johnny Depp's latest movie success) *Sweeney Todd*.

For their next act, in early February, Bentley Drama will present the world premiere of *Sherman's Lagoon The Musical*. Based on the popular comic strip

by Jim Toomey, this dual-campus production will include a cast of over 30 students in 6th through 12th grades from the Oakland and Lafayette school sites. According to director and screenwriter Winter Mead, this 90-minute family-friendly show will be as entertaining to adults as it is to children.

The musical version of *Sherman's Lagoon* is populated with the familiar comic strip characters including the sharks Sherman and Megan, Fillmore the sea turtle, and Hawthorne the hermit crab. They are faced with saving their habitat from an environmental catastrophe set in motion by bad-guy Captain Quigley. The original music and lyrics written by El-Gasseir and Mead have an Afro-Caribbean feel reminiscent of the South Seas with a hint of Latin Jazz. The professionally-designed set features vibrant blues and greens and even bubbles to give the audience the sensation of being "under the sea". And, Toomey will be on hand to add his artistic touch to the sets as his comic strip is brought to life.

Mead came to collaborate on the development of the musical adaptation of *Sherman's Lagoon* after teaching an adult education course in screenwriting in which the comic-strip creator was a student. The two became friends and when the idea to do a musical surfaced, Toomey was on board. Inspired in equal parts by *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown* and *Doonesbury The Musical*, Mead worked with Toomey and, in just two months this past summer, developed a story that addressed modern-day concerns regarding global warming and eco-consciousness and everyday themes of human nature as Sherman and Megan meet and fall in love.

Now halfway through this prolific theater season, Mead, his colleagues, and his students have little time to pause and catch their creative breath. The second half of the school year will feature student-directed productions of *Copenhagen* by Michael Frayn and August Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, French playwright Pierre Marivaux's *The Dispute* with guest direction by Ali El-Gasseir (Ahmed's brother), and Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear* directed by Mead.

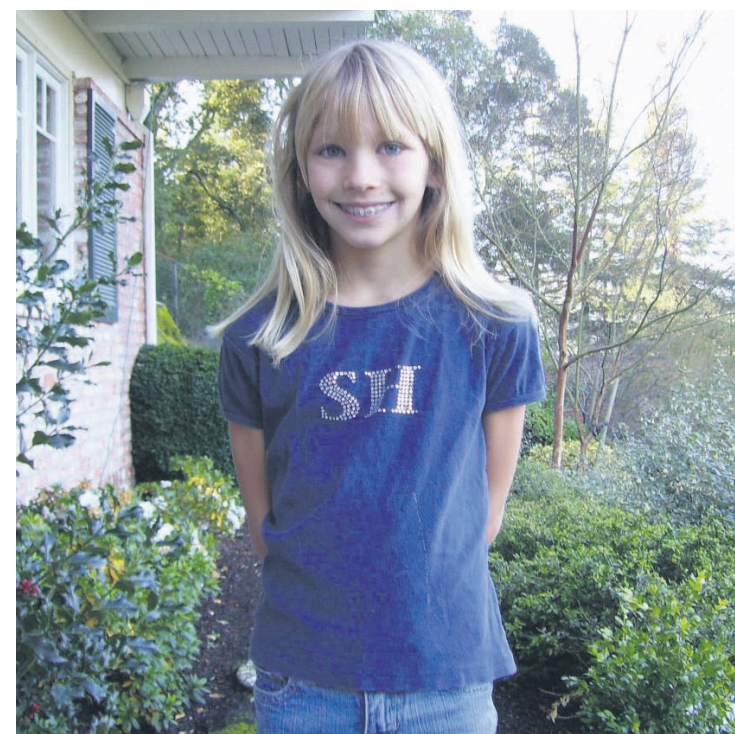
Sherman's Lagoon The Musical will be performed at the Bentley School Lafayette Campus in the Student Performing Art Center on February 1-3 and 8-10. Evening performances will be held at 7 pm on Fridays and Saturdays, and daytime shows will start at 2 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. For tickets go to tickets@bentleystudent.net.

The Poet of Sleepy Hollow

By Jean Follmer

Let it be known to all that Sleepy Hollow Elementary has a published poet in its midst! Third grader Vivian McGowan's poem "I Can Fly" can be found in the January, 2008 issue of *Highlights for Children*. Vivian penned her poem at age six in Mrs. Hilty's first grade class. Mrs. Hilty instructed her students to write a story called "I Can Fly" and Vivian's story came to life as a free verse poem:

Vivian submitted her poem to *Highlights for Children* in 2006 and waited nearly two years for it to be published. Upon learning she was a published author, she



Author Vivian McGowan, Sleepy Hollow Elementary 3rd grader

Photo Jean Follmer

I Can Fly

*Swish, flap,
I soar through the sky
like a hawk drifting along.
A soft breeze
goes through the air.
The sun is setting
in a soft pink and orange.
I can see the ocean.
Beyond that I see
a green forest and meadows.
The stars start to shine.
It is night.
The owl begins to hoot.
The bats begin to squeal.
Suddenly I swish around.
I fly home.
It's been a good flight.*

(Reprinted with permission from *Highlights for Children*)

says "I was proud when I found out." When asked what inspired her to write a poem instead of a story, Vivian said, "I intended for it to be a story and mine turned out to be a poem." Vivian says she likes to write poetry, particularly free verse. Sleepy Hollow Elementary has a strong focus on their writing program, so Vivian has frequent opportunities to work on her poetry in school. Vivian also enjoys sketching and reading. Reading is her favorite subject in school. "I like reading *Goosebumps* and *Nancy Drew*" says Vivian. She wants to be a teacher or a photographer when she grows up.

Sleepy Hollow principal Diane Kanegae says "Vivian has been a lovely addition to our school and has excelled every year.

She's rather remarkable in all areas, she is...unusually articulate for her age. I'm actually thrilled for her." Vivian's parents, Susan Wheatley and Michael McGowan are incredibly proud of their daughter. Ms. Wheatley said "Mrs. Hilty was very enthusiastic about the writing program." She appreciates that Sleepy Hollow is "teaching kids at an early age that they can really be creative and be authors." Mr. McGowan proudly carries a copy of Vivian's poem with him every day in his briefcase.

Correction "Gold Star Award Winners", Jan 9 issue:

Rachel Shapiro, Kimberly Scherr and Caitlin Haley, all Campolindo seniors, are currently working on their Girl Scout Gold Award. When they accumulate the necessary 65 hours of leadership service each, they will receive the award.

They are hard at work helping a new family, a single mom and her 13-year old daughter get settled at the Elizabeth House in Oakland. Shapiro, Scherr and Haley are looking for a number of donated items for the kitchen along with small appliances and bedding to help this family in need. For more information call, (925) 324-2893.

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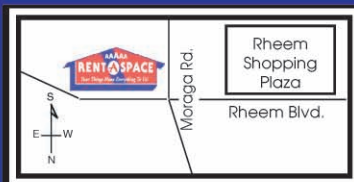
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High School Calendar Debate Open to the Public! Provide Your Input on the Academic Calendar

Do you have an opinion on the future high school calendar? The Acalanes Union High School District is holding five Public Forums to take public input on the academic calendar for 2009-2010 and beyond.

The forums are scheduled for 7:00 to 9:00 pm on the following dates and locations:

- February 5 - Miramonte Theatre
- February 7 - Campolindo, Room A9
- February 12 - Las Lomas Theatre
- February 19 - Del Valle Educational Center, Library

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Tree Lot Brings Big Gifts to Orinda Students

Submitted by Jane Wisler, Educational Foundation of Orinda

Orinda students found the gift of education under their trees this holiday, thanks to the many Orinda residents who purchased trees at the Orinda Christmas Tree Lot on Altarinda Road. Mike Kang and his wife Barbara Cabellon, presented Education Foundation of Orinda (EFO) President, Janet Riley, with a check for \$3,600 that will go directly to the school programs and instruction sponsored by EFO. The tree lot enjoyed a 20% sales increase over last year which is reflected in this generous donation to EFO. Thank you Mike, Barbara and Orinda residents!



Barbara Cabellon, Mike Kang and Janet Riley Photo provided

Kindergarten Registration Starts Soon!

If, years from now, you will remember 2008 as the year your child entered kindergarten, start gathering your paperwork and prepare to attend Kindergarten Registration Day. If you're child was born on or before Dec. 2, 2003, your time has come!

Kindergarten registration will take place at your neighborhood school on the dates and times listed below. You will need to bring several documents with you, including your child's birth certificate or passport, proof of residence, emergency contact information (your child's doctor and dentist) and a complete immunization record. Your district may also require your child's Social Security Number and a Report of Health Examination for School Entry Form. Please check the school district websites for details on specific requirements. If you are not sure at which school you should register your child, call the district office for more information.

Lafayette School District

Registration dates are Tuesday, January 29th and Wednesday, January 30th:

Lafayette Elementary, 950 Moraga Rd, 9:00am-12:00pm and 1:00pm-2:30pm (School office: 283-6231)

Burton Valley, 561 Merriewood Dr, 9:00am-11:00am and 1:00pm-2:30pm (School office: 284-7046)

Happy Valley, 3855 Happy Valley Rd, 9:00am-11:00am and 1:00pm-2:30pm (School office: 284-7049)

Springhill, 3301 Springhill Rd, 9:00am-11:30am (School office: 283-8281)

District Website: <http://www.lafsd.k12.ca.us/>

District Phone: 284-7011

Moraga School District

Registration dates are Thursday, March 6th and Friday, March 7th:

Camino Pablo, 1111 Camino Pablo, 9:00am-11:45am and 1:15pm-3:00pm (School office: 376-4435)

Los Perales, 22 Wakefield Dr, 9:00am-2:00pm (School office: 631-0105)

Donald Rheem, 90 Laird Dr,

9:00am-2:00pm (School office: 376-4441)

District Website:

<http://www.moraga.k12.ca.us/>

District Phone: 376-5943

Orinda Union School District

Registration dates are Monday, February 4th thru Thursday, February 7th:

Del Rey, 25 El Camino Moraga, 9:00am-1:00pm (School office: 258-3099)

Sleepy Hollow, 20 Washington Ln, 9:00am-1:00pm (School office: 254-8711)

Glorietta, 15 Martha Rd, 9:00am-1:00pm (School office: 254-8770)

Wagner Ranch, 350 Camino Pablo, 9:00am-1:00pm (School office: 258-0016)

District Website: <http://orindaschools.org/ousd/site/default.asp>

District Phone: 258-6214

Vandals Hit Moraga Elementary Schools

By Lee Borrowman

A broken skylight at Rheem; a field at Camino Pablo with extensive damage caused by someone(s) driving onto the field and spinning "doughnuts;" the Los Perales Auction Committee's ten foot tall replica of the Empire State Building, destroyed not by the plush King Kong who was seen climbing the "building" before winter break to the delight of all, but by vandals who struck over the holidays.

All three of Moraga's elementary schools suffered property damage that was discovered on January 2 by Superintendent Richard Schafer as he drove from school to school to make sure all was well while students and staff were away. "My first reaction (upon arriving at LP) was disappointment," said Schafer. "I have tremendous trouble understanding the pleasure people get from destroying things."

As district employees busied themselves repairing the skylight and nursing the scarred field, Schafer noted, "Vandalism takes resources away from instruction and hurts students and the community."

As of this writing no arrests have been made, but some parents and staff believe the recent vandalism was probably the work of teenagers. Los Perales parent Sandy Preto Flett said she hopes parents will "please consider talking, again, with their children about using common sense and being a respectful member of our community."

Schafer is supportive of juvenile diversion programs for teenage vandals. "I have had experience with juvenile diversion programs in my former district. When young people committed



The Empire State Building before...

Photos Lee Borrowman

a first offense, they had to meet with the owner who then explained the costs and problems associated with the repair. The goal was to make impersonal crimes personal," Schafer explained. "(Moraga Police Chief Mark Ruppenthal) has an officer working in this area when the opportunity/availability occurs," he continued.

Flett's 77-year-old father constructed the somewhat smaller-than-life replica of the Empire State Building for the Los Perales Auction Committee, whose theme this year is "A Night in the Big Apple." She is saddened by the loss, adding, "It



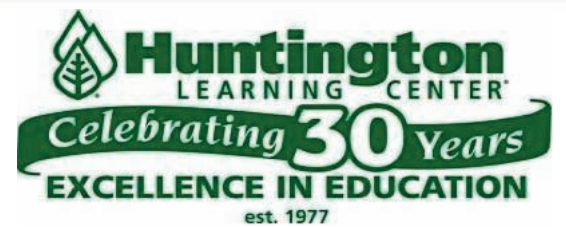
...and after

took him three full days to build it; it was for the kids...it was a labor of love."

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A Wake-Up Call at Joaquin Moraga

By Lee Borrowman

The lessons of a post-Columbine world hit unfortunately close to home in Moraga last week. Joaquin Moraga Middle School Principal Bruce Burns contacted the Moraga Police Department on Friday after confiscating a "hit list" reportedly written by a student that included the names of students and staff members.

In an email to parents, Burns wrote: "I received a telephone call from a concerned parent who told me that his child had heard (about the list) from others. The student gave me the list and told me that he had no intention of harming anyone." Police officers escorted the student home, and he has been suspended.

Burns continued, "At JM safety is a daily priority. When matters of concern come to our attention we take it very seriously and investigate thoroughly." Burns conducted a search of the boy's backpack and school lockers, and the police searched his home. "I want to emphasize that nothing

harmful was discovered in all of these searches," Burns said.

The Moraga Police subsequently issued a statement confirming that the searches found nothing, and that there is no reason to believe the student presented a risk to either himself or others.

The parents of students whose names were on the list were contacted by the school. We do not have the list, but word of mouth led us to one of these parents, a mother who said, "I respect and appreciate the job that school officials did, on the minute chance that this was indeed something serious. My own child never felt threatened. We, as a family, are holding (the boy's) family in our good thoughts and hope that everything works out well for everyone. I'm so glad that we live in a community in which people and schools care."

The mother of another JM student said, "My daughter feels that this list was created out of sadness, and that (the boy) would never cause

harm to anyone. My son, a sophomore in high school, says many boys keep similar lists of people they feel have wronged them; it's not uncommon at all."

Not all of the facts have come to light, particularly around the boy's motivation for making the ill-advised list, but although he clearly condemns the boy's behavior, Burns' email concluded with a hint that this child may himself have had trouble with bullies:

"It is important that we learn from this experience. Threats will be investigated and will not be tolerated. We also need to reflect on what each of us can do to make JM a positive environment that is free from intimidation and bullying, indifference and isolation, and intolerance. Every student and parent has the right to expect that students will learn in a safe and non-violent school environment."

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Life in LAMORINDA

State Budget Cuts to Education What's at Stake for Lamorinda's Schools?

continued from page 1

Even the current school year budgets may be jeopardized by the proposed cuts. Although the Governor's budget proposal indicated that a \$360 million reduction in current school year funding was expected to come from a redirection of savings from categorical programs, this may not be the case.

"School Services of California [an organization that advises schools districts on fiscal issues] has suggested that the state may not be able to recapture the full amount that they need," explained Moraga School District Superintendent Rick Schafer. "...there may be a .5% midyear cut to our revenue limit funds. Again, we do not know if this will happen. We guesstimate this amount to be in the neighborhood of \$50,000 if it was to occur," he added.

Learned of AUHSD was working on similar assump-

tions for the current school year budget, "Not good news there. That's about a \$190,000 this year to this District's revenue limit."

Orinda would be short this year in the range of \$60K - \$95, according to Jaconette. The district held a special board study session last week to discuss the budget and the financial options. "We will be planning for the worst case that we know at this time," Jaconette confirmed.

At this point in the school budgeting process the final fiscal picture remains hazy. "There are still a lot of things to play out," noted Superintendent Negri in discussions with the Governing Board. "We are working off the Governor's proposed budget," he added. "We have to. Whether it comes out that way, we won't see for a while." Although some things may change or be clarified with respect to the budget

and education funding as the state legislature begins to tackle the issue over the next few months, the Governor's May Revision will provide the next major budget update, according to Negri.

Despite the murky picture, school administrators throughout the area moved quickly to begin to identify areas to be reduced and ways revenues could be increased to offset the expected funding shortfall.

Assistant Superintendent Learned has already met with the AUHSD Budget Advisory Committee, which is comprised of parents, students, teachers, and staff, to brainstorm ways to reduce. "One of the things that keeps coming up is our energy costs. What can we do to be more energy efficient in this District? But that's hard to measure," explained Learned. "And 86% or maybe a little less of our budget is salaries and benefits. So it's unavoidable for the District to not affect people of this District," he added.

Superintendent Schafer is



Acalanes High School in Lafayette

also planning to meet with members of his District to get input prior to the development of final budget recommendations. "We need to plan now, but no decisions can or should be made until the budget really begins to take shape in May," added Schafer.

Enrollment is another factor affecting Lamorinda schools budgets. According to Learned, enrollment has been in decline in the Kindergarten thru 8th grade schools districts for the past few years and that decline is now affecting AUHSD. He is projecting enrollment of 150 fewer students

across the District next year. "We would have been compressing our budget anyway. Some of our lost revenue is due to enrollment decline," Learned noted.

Moraga School District also faces a declining enrollment trend and the related decreased revenues but Superintendent Schafer cautioned, "As we look forward, we must balance spending reductions with our mission of educating all students. However, the cuts away from the classroom must be carefully analyzed and thoroughly explained before we take action."

When asked what the school community can expect over the next school year Superintendent Schafer responded, "Any and all reductions will have an impact. Prioritizing where and what to reduce can become contentious and leave stakeholders uncomfortable at best and angry at worst. For the next six to eight months our entire educational community will need to practice the Lifeskills of cooperation, flexibility, patience, and problem solving at levels never before imagined."

Bumps Revisited: Moraga Town Council Strikes a Balance

By Sophie Braccini

It was a long and emotional Moraga Town Council meeting on January 16th. Two groups of Moraga citizens argued over the issue of traffic calming devices on Camino Pablo, a major collector street bordered by two schools and leading to a populated area of the town. In its decision, the Council took a first step toward a resolution that strives to satisfy the majority of the concerns, but did not completely satisfy either side.

Council Member Chew supported leaving the raised crosswalks as is, while Mike Metcalf supported their removal and replacement with stop signs or other device that would maintain the present gains in safety for the children. Vice-Mayor Dave Trotter proposed the compromise that won the day: Maintain the

raised crosswalk at Oxford so "little people" be better seen by cars, remove the one at Hodges and have a traffic engineer study the possibility of a stop sign there, and set staff to studying alternatives for the raised crosswalk in front of Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. Mayor Linda Deschambault commented, "This decision provides a good balance between the two needs of our community: protection of the children and response times for emergency vehicles."

"The raised crosswalks are serving their purpose," stated Jill Mercurio, the town Director of Public Works and Engineer. "Smoothing the raised crosswalk improved the response time tested by the Moraga Orinda Fire Department (MOFD) over the previous configuration of the

tables," said Mercurio, as she presented the data given by MOFD. The report shows that it takes now the biggest fire truck an additional 35 seconds to travel Camino Pablo and an ambulance an additional 20 seconds. These improved results didn't impress MOFD Chief Pete Nowicki who persisted in his opposition to the impediment.

Response time is MOFD's main concern and so is the focus of MoragaSafety.org, a group founded by Jack Balousek and Stan Roth. On the opposing side, parents of Camino Pablo Elementary students are concerned with excessive speeding in Moraga and consider the raised crosswalks a real improvement.

The public comments part of the meeting started with

Moraga Safety. Their long PowerPoint presentation was informative, with presentation of maps showing how an added 30 seconds in the response time puts more residents outside of the 6-minute response time zone.

Christina DaRodda, President of the Camino Pablo PTA, presented the results of a CP parent poll. 250 parents signed a petition in favor of the raised crosswalks and in a survey a majority declared they could support stop signs instead. DaRodda later commented that she was glad the raised crosswalk at Oxford was maintained but added, "Removing the raised crosswalk (at Hodges) without providing an alternative traffic calming device puts us in a situation that is worse than what we have now."

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"Ensuring the safety of your most precious cargo should be your top priority before you get behind the wheel of a car," says Captain Jim Cahoon of the California Highway Patrol (CHP). In cooperation with the Bay Area Rapid Transit District and the Lafayette Police Department, certified car seat technicians from the CHP will be at the Lafayette BART Station (3601 Deerhill Rd), in the east parking lot, on Saturday, Feb. 9, from 9:00am-1:00pm to provide

assistance with installations.

According to CHP Officer Scott Yox, in California during 2005, 62% of children under the age of six that were killed in car accidents were not using a child safety seat. Another 568 children were injured. "Most of these injuries could have been prevented," says Cahoon, adding, "Anytime you have children in your car, I urge you to take a few extra moments to ensure they are restrained properly. And if anyone has any doubts about whether they are using a child

safety seat properly, now is the time to seek out a certified child safety seat technician."

California law says children must be secured in an appropriate child passenger restraint (safety seat or booster seat) in the back seat of a vehicle until they're at least six years old or weigh at least 60 pounds. If you miss this event but would like help with your child's car seat, you can also make an appointment with the Contra Costa Area

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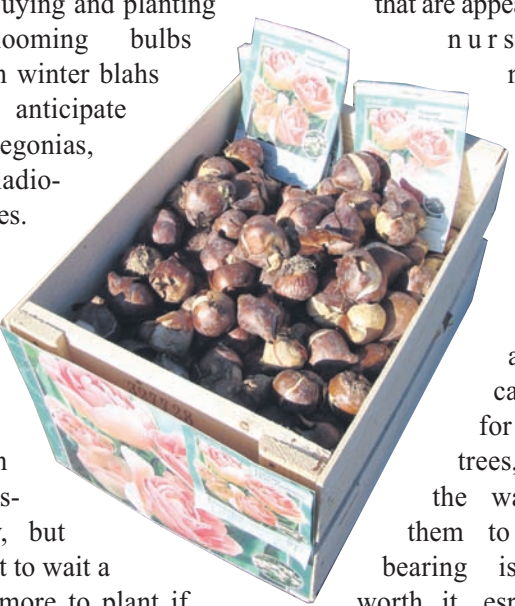
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In the Backyard

Winter Gardening: Not an Oxymoron

By Suzan Ormandy, McDonnell Nursery

Just because your garden is dormant doesn't mean you have to be. To start with, bulbs and bare-root offer two great ways to keep your spirits up and your hands dirty in late winter. Buying and planting summer-blooming bulbs will banish winter blahs as we anticipate showy begonias, dahlias, gladiolus and lilies. These and other bulbs, corms and tubers are available in local nurseries now, but you'll want to wait a month or more to plant if it's a frosty winter. Don't forget bulb food or bone meal to insure bigger blossoms.



Good nutrition and taste can begin in bare-root form with blackberries, raspberries, strawberries and grapes as well as an array of apples, pears, persimmons and stone fruits that are appearing in nurseries now. The large lots in our Lamorinda area call out for fruit trees, and the wait for them to begin bearing is well worth it, especially with the spring-flower bonus.

passed. Veggie and other flower seeds can be started inside soon too, with handy heat/moisture containing kits available to facilitate seed germination.

Winter workshops and shows also keep frustrated gardeners in the groove. McDonnell Nursery is again offering a free workshop on rose care conducted by the East Bay Rose Society on Saturday, January 26 – not coincidentally at the ideal time for pruning your roses. Call 254-3713 to reserve for this very popular event. Heather Farms also holds hands-on rose pruning demos through March 1. And it's not too early to buy tickets for the March 12-16 S.F. Flower and Garden Show, with tickets available at some nurseries for a reduced early-bird rate. While the exquisite Bouquets to Art show at the de Young in late March isn't technically a gardening event, it does inspire the floral artist in all of us. (Tickets are already for sale, call 415 - 750-3504.)

Seeds also provide a late-winter gardening opportunity. Cast wildflower seeds on that problem hillside just before rain and start precious sweet peas inside so you can get them in the ground as soon as frost danger has

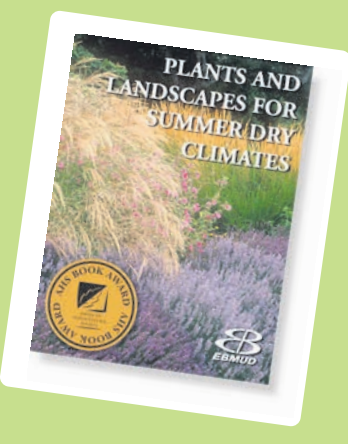
January and February mark the beginning of the rose-selling season (bare-root and potted). Jackson and Perkins' Rose of the Year, April in Paris, is a strongly-scented but delicately-hued pink hybrid tea that should live up to its name. David Austin introduces a new English rose: compact and creamy, Windermere promises to be a fragrant, full-petaled beauty, too. Don't overlook recent and old favorites, especially roses well suited to N. California like About Face, Cherry Parfait and Honey Perfume. In addition to roses, you'll want to check out bare-root peonies and clematis – all sure to please if it's a big summer show to which you're looking forward.



Now that the fun stuff has been covered, let's review some more mundane but important winter tasks:

- Spray your roses and fruit trees – trunk, branches and twigs – with a dormant oil and sulfur or copper to control over-wintering insects like aphids, mites and scale as well as diseases.
- Prune roses by Presidents' Day.
- Prune most deciduous fruit and shade trees and vines, and cut back woody shrubs like artemesia, butterfly bush and Mexican sage to encourage dense new growth next summer.
- Feed your citrus trees; at the same time, don't neglect to protect them with permeable blankets and/or sprays when frost is predicted.
- Continue to apply 0-10-10 fertilizer to your azaleas, rhododendrons and camellias for lush blooms in the near future.
- Re-pot those rambunctious cymbidium orchids after blooming. (If you don't feel up to it, nurseries will do the job for you.)
- Tune up your pruners and loppers, another do-it-yourself task, or ask the nursery.

As a reward for your efforts, you can now curl up in front of your fireplace with a copy of EBMUD's outstanding *Plants and Landscapes for Summer-Dry Climates*. You'll not only be transported by the lush photography but also inspired to plan a more water-wise garden this spring.



According to EBMUD's web site the book is available at the following Lamorinda stores:

- McDonnell Nursery, Orinda
- Orchard Nursery, Lafayette
- Orinda Books, Orinda

You may also look up a book overview at: http://www.ebmud.com/conserving_&_recycling/plant_book/plant-book_overview_12web.pdf

Montelindo Garden Club is hosting a special winter speaker series:

Friday, February 15th - Naturalist and Educator Jack Laws.
Friday, March 21st - Author Rose Marie Nichols McGee on container gardening.
 The events will be held at the Orinda Community Church, #10 Irwin Way, Orinda at 10:00AM. They are free to the public. Refreshments will be served, followed by the speaker.
 The Moraga Garden Club meets 9:30 a.m. third Thursdays monthly September - May in Moraga.
February 23, 2008- Ali Harivandi of the Contra Costa Cooperative Extension presents "Happy Lawns Belong to Happy Families."
 Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. Membership Mardi Potts, (925) 376-2004.

Lamorinda Schools

Where in the World? JM and Rheem Host Geo Bees



Social Studies teacher Paul Schindler quizzes students on their knowledge of world geography in the 14th Annual National Geographic Bee held at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School two week. Eighth grader Colton Jang was crowned the winner



Steven Wescott (pictured right), a fifth grader, was the winner of the first annual National Geographic Bee held at Rheem School in Moraga

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Beer as an Educational Tool?

By Chef Dan Leff
I recently taught a class on cooking with beer. A dozen students, all men, comprised the class. They walked in with the expectation of getting a little learning, a fair amount of good eats, and a lot of beer. They left with much more than that. Here's how things shaped up....

Appetizers –

Spicy Shrimp, Teriyaki Chicken Wings

These appetizers were quick and easy to make. The guys were pleasantly surprised that they weren't just handed a jug of teriyaki glaze to season the wings – I had them prepare the glaze using soy sauce, sugar, and some lager beer. We used Michelob for the glaze – we saved the fine micro-brewed bock beer for drinking purposes. These dishes paired well with ice-cold Anchor Steam. Anchor Steam is the only beer of its kind – it's made using lager yeast, but is fermented at higher temperatures than a lager.

Main Course -

Jambalaya with Wild Rice

There was no way of avoiding the usual arguments over “how much garlic, how much cayenne,” etc., but the boys settled their culinary differences in a quick and good-natured manner. Some Bass Pale Ale added complexity to this dish. The Bass mellowed out some of the spices, while adding a hint of bitterness that kept the dish from being too heavy. Not surprisingly, Bass accompanied this dish nicely.

Side Dish –

Broccoli Rabe with Garlic

Not too many of the men had seen broccoli rabe (also called rapini) before. With an appearance that lies somewhere in between American broccoli and Chinese broccoli (Gai Lan), it's a misunderstood vegetable. It's quite bitter, as well – I had to explain that even though we lost some nutrients by poaching it as long as we did, we also lost most of the rapini's harshness. I originally planned to match this with a malty hefeweissen, but the end product was mellow enough to go with any of the lagers or pale ales served that night.

Dessert –

Fallen Chocolate Cake

Not “fallen” in the Biblical sense, but actually a cake with a fair amount of meringue in it that settles down when it cools. I was never as proud as when I heard these rowdy guys painstakingly evaluating the peaks of the meringue, gently mixing the batter, and punctually reminding one another to “Check the cake, dude; make sure it's baking okay.” I originally planned on serving the dessert with Guinness Stout, but one guy surprised me – he brought some Kriek Lambic (a Belgian cherry-flavored beer) and served it to everyone at the end, in little aperitif glasses. Lambic is a style specific to Belgium – wild yeast alone is used to ferment the beer. It's similar in concept to our own San Francisco Sourdough bread.



About

Chef Dan Leff...

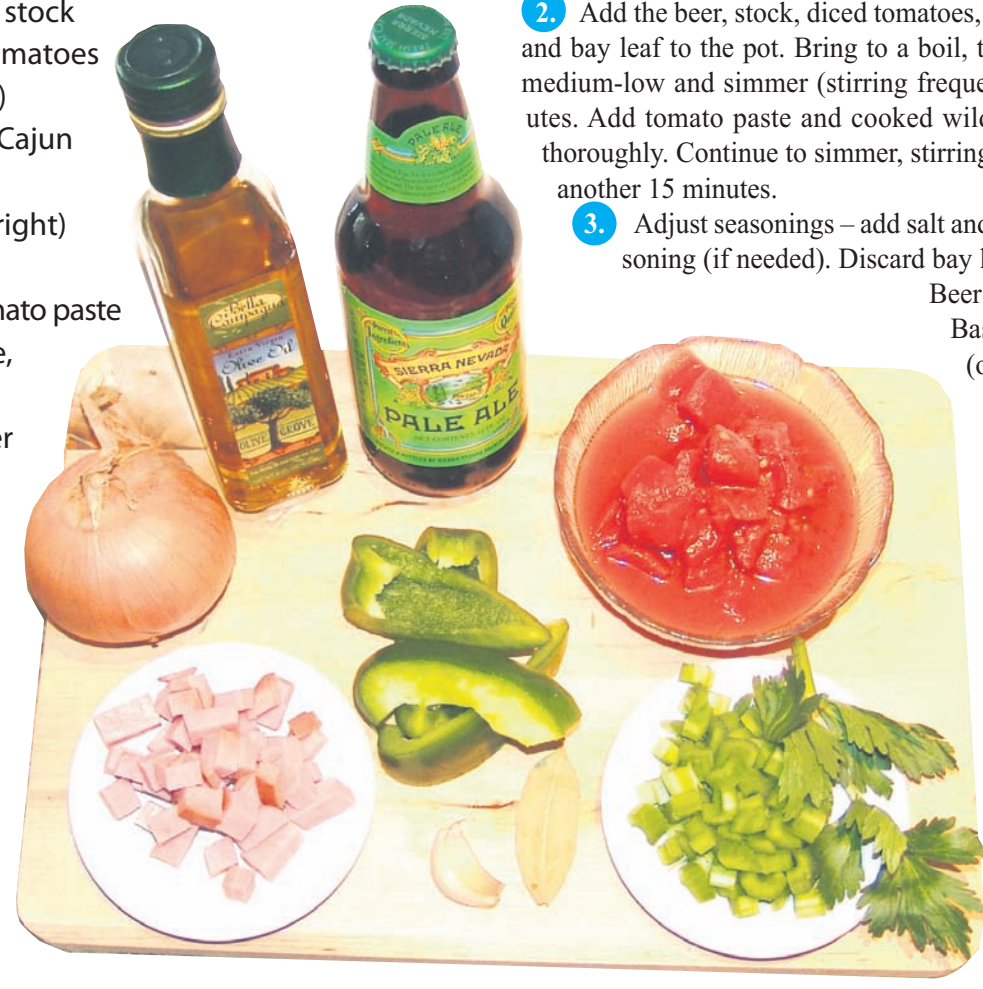
After graduating from the CA Culinary Academy in 1995, I've worked in venues around the Bay Area. Having worked with Bradley Ogden at the Lark Creek Inn, I specialize in Classic American cuisine, using seasonal ingredients, with a fine dining emphasis. Chef Dan Leff Catering focuses on intimate, elegant sit-down dinners and small corporate events. <http://www.chefdanleff.com>, email: ChefDanLeff@aol.com, phone: 510-530-1243

At the end of class, the guys all tucked into a hearty, hand-crafted meal. The sound of forks clinking against plates served as a backdrop to intense table-side discussions of all they'd learned during the evening.

Cajun Jambalaya with Wild Rice

Makes 10 servings

- 4 tablespoons olive oil or rice bran oil
- 3 lbs smoked ham, cut into ½” dice
- 3 lbs andouille sausage, cut into ¼” thick slices
- 2 green bell peppers, stemmed, seeded, and cut into ½” dice
- 1 large onion, small diced
- 5 stalks celery, small diced
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 6 cups light beer (preferably pale ale)
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 4 cans diced tomatoes (28-oz. per can)
- 3 tablespoons Cajun Seasoning (see note on right)
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 6-oz. cans tomato paste
- 6 cups wild rice, pre-cooked in pressure cooker
- Salt, to taste



Note: Cajun Seasoning can be purchased, but it's more satisfying to make one's own blend at home. This seasoning consists of dried oregano, dried thyme, garlic powder, onion powder, ground black pepper, ground white pepper, cayenne pepper, and mustard powder.

1. In a large soup pot, heat the olive or rice bran oil over medium high heat. Add the ham and sausage – cook, stirring frequently, until the meat just starts to stick to the bottom of the pot. Add the garlic, bell peppers, onion and celery, and cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables are softened (about 10 minutes – the onion and celery will be opaque).
2. Add the beer, stock, diced tomatoes, Cajun Seasoning, and bay leaf to the pot. Bring to a boil, then lower heat to medium-low and simmer (stirring frequently) for 15 minutes. Add tomato paste and cooked wild rice, stir to mix thoroughly. Continue to simmer, stirring all the while, for another 15 minutes.
3. Adjust seasonings – add salt and more Cajun Seasoning (if needed). Discard bay leaf and serve.

Beer Pairing –
Bass Ale
(or other pale ale)

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Quiznos	3651 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	962-0200
Ranch House	1012 School St, Mor	376-5127
Terzetto Cuisine	1419 Moraga Way, Mor	376-3832
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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
Cafe		
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
Rising Loafer	3643 Mt. Diablo Blvd Ste B, Laf	284-8816
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 Rheem 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 Rheem 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		
Mountain Mike's Pizza	3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-6363
Mountain Mike's Pizza	504 Center St, Mor	377-6453
Penini's	1375 Moraga Rd, Mor	376-1515
Round Table Pizza	361 Rheem Blvd, Mor	376-1411
Round Table Pizza	3637 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-0404
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
Seafood		
Yankee Pier	3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-4100
Singaporean/Malaysian		
Kapitiam	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



SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Miramonte Women Defeat Acalanes

By David Anderson



Photo Gavin Schlissel

It was a tale of two halves Wednesday night as the Miramonte women's basketball team outplayed the Acalanes Dons, 61-38, in Lafayette. The first half encompassed hard fought play from both sides but the Matadors proved to be too much for the Dons and took control of the game early in the second half.

The first half was highlighted by the dominant play of junior guard Katie Bruzzone for the Dons and sophomore

center Stephanie Golden for the Matadors.

Bruzzone finished the first half with 16 points including four 3-pointers in the first quarter alone (she would go on to finish with 20 points). Shannon German followed Bruzzone with 6 points in the second quarter and 9 points overall. Golden, on the other hand, seemed to dominate the inside of the key during the first half and most of the game. She scored 11 points in the first

half leading the Matadors to a two point 27-25 lead at half-time.

The beginning of the second half proved to be the turning point of the game as Bruzzone's shots refused to fall and the Dons could not keep up with the Matadors, who added a few more scorers to the mix in the third and fourth quarters. Senior guard Katie Batlin added 13 points for the Mats while Golden added another 13 points to the mix in the second half. She would finish with 24 points for the night.

The Dons fell to 7-8 (1-3 DFAL) on the season while the Matadors improved their mark to 12-2 (4-0 DFAL) and hold onto an undefeated league record. The Matadors have a big test Jan. 18 as they take on Dublin, which is also undefeated in DFAL and 13-2 overall. Acalanes plays next at Las Lomas Jan. 18.



Photo Gavin Schlissel

Matadors Continue to Impress, Beat Acalanes

By David Anderson



Mats Eric Obeysekere (35)

Photo Gavin Schlissel

The Miramonte Matadors improved their record to 14-2 and tied for first place in the DFAL standings as they commanded their way to a 67-49 victory over the Acalanes Dons on Wednesday, Jan. 16 in Lafayette.

Nothing could go wrong for the Matadors in the first quarter of play as they erupted to an early 23-12 lead. Led by Senior Zac Akin, shooting was the theme in the first quarter with four Matadors contributing three point field goals. Elliot Shoebart continued the trend on defense taking an impressive charge in the first quarter that kept the momentum with the Mats.

The Dons mounted a comeback in the second quarter with aggressive play and good shooting from sophomore guard Donovan Christensen. All of Christensen's 11 points came in the second quarter including three 3-pointers that brought the Dons within five points at the half. Acalanes outscored the Mats 19-13 in the second quarter.

Led by Joey Anderson, who scored 11 of the Don's 18 second half points (includ-

Miramonte Draws Alhambra to a 1-1 Tie

By Kevin D. Shallat



Photo Jordan Fong

The Matadors let a good opportunity slip away Wednesday, Jan. 16, as they had a chance to record a season sweep against the Bulldogs of Alhambra.

The women's Matador soccer team beat the Bulldogs 2-0 in Martinez a few weeks ago, and looked to continue their domination at home over one of their inter-league rivals. Miramonte was one half away from the victory, as they led 1-0 at the break. The Bulldogs spoiled the Matadors hopes of sweeping by tying the game with just under 33 minutes remaining. The match ended in a 1-1 tie.

Miramonte came into this game with an 11-1-1 overall record, and an 8-1 league record. Their only loss of the season came against Northgate on Jan. 11. The game was primed for the Matadors to make their mark in league play, as the game featured a Wednesday night game under the lights.

From the opening whistle the Mats were in control of the game.

The Bulldogs seemed content to make sure Miramonte was not able to score, as Alhambra was unable to gain possession of the ball for any significant stretch of time.

Despite the fact that the Matadors dominated the time of possession in this game, they dodged a few bullets on a few miscues by the Alhambra offense. With only a few minutes into the game, an Alhambra player had a wide-open shot on goal. Luckily, the Bulldog player miss-hit the ball, and the shot leaked right of the Miramonte goal. Soon after the Bulldog miscue, the Matadors kicked it into gear and converted on their only goal of the game. Miramonte midfielder Bonnie Zieger set up a beautiful centering pass to junior Elaine Tanski who was waiting about 12 yards outside of the goal box, and quickly hammered the ball in for a Matador goal. Midfielder Katherine Sander did her best to get Tanski her second goal of the night, as she set up her teammate with a nice pass. Tanski put a good shot on

goal that took a horizontal dive by the Alhambra goalkeeper to prevent another Miramonte score.

Miramonte was able to ratchet up their defense and prevent Alhambra from scoring in the first half of play. Matador defender Marissa Crosetti helped out her team by playing strong, physical defense against the Bulldogs. Miramonte goalkeeper Shelby Church was another reason the Matadors were able to shut down the Bulldogs in the first half. Church seems to have an excellent sense of where to position herself in defense of the goal.

In the second half the Matadors looked a little tired, and the Bulldogs took advantage. With 32:50 left in the game, Alhambra's No. 22 was able to break free of the Miramonte defense, as she scored the game-tying goal for the Bulldogs. Tanski and forward Marissa Rowland took their shots, but the game ended in a 1-1 tie. "We just weren't connecting well tonight, but we still have a goal of winning league," Tanski said.

ing a team high 17 points), the Dons continued their aggressive play into the second half but could only manage nine points in each of the final two quarters.

In the end, the Matadors proved to be too much for the Dons as Miramonte rolled through the fourth quarter to their largest leads of the night. The Matadors held a comfortable lead for much of the game resulting from hard fought defensive play and excellent shooting. Chris Hatfield led the scoring for the Mats with 15 points. Peter Briskey followed with 13 points while Zac Akin had 12 on the night. The Matadors improved to 4-0 while the Dons fell to 1-3 in DFAL play (10-6 overall).

The Matadors are currently ranked 16th in the North Coast Section and continue to improve upon their impressive and unexpected start this season. They are currently on a five game winning streak, undefeated in the Diablo Foothill Athletic League and have only lost one of their previous 15 games. The Mats next game is Jan. 18 at Dublin when they play for sole possession of first place in DFAL league play.



Photo Gavin Schlissel

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SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Packed House Greet Dons, Cougars

By Conrad Bassett



Photo Gavin Schlissel



Photo Gavin Schlissel

When two of the DFAL's perennial contenders in men's basketball get together for a game you can expect a packed house as well as an exciting game. The Jan. 11 visit by Acalanes to Campolindo was no exception as the Cougars held off the defending NCS Champions 45-38.

The visiting Dons (10-4, 1-1 DFAL) scored the first five points of the game before Jack Trotter scored for Campo (8-5, 2-0 DFAL) at the 4:02 mark. The defense was tight as Acalanes led after one period 7-6. In the second period Campo took the lead when Chris Dyer hit Trotter who dropped in a three pointer and were never headed again. The score stayed close until the end of the period when Tom Wraith hit two running layups, the last just before the buzzer to send the teams to the locker room at 21-17 Campo.

In the third period, Wraith opened the period with a trey on another nifty Dyer pass and after Acalanes countered with a Hunter Hewitt field goal, Campo went

on a 10-2 run that included scores by Trotter, Dyer, and free throws from Adam Mancebo and Miles Macy who had replaced Wraith who left the game with an injured knee.

By midway through the fourth period, Campo had opened up a 13 point lead at 41-28 after Macy hit a three from the corner but Acalanes began chipping away. Hewitt and Donovan Christensen nailed back to back threes and Joey Anderson hit a layup and with less than two minutes to go the Cougar lead was down to five. The Dons were forced to foul with time running down and Campo hit four of six free throws including three by Will Shields with less than 14 seconds to play and Campo had hung on for their first win over Acalanes since 2006.

Trotter finished with 13 points and 10 rebounds for Campo while Hewitt led all scorers with 14 points. Anderson was held to eight points but also had 10 rebounds and three blocks.

The teams will meet again in Lafayette on Feb. 6.



Photo Gavin Schlissel

An Exciting Start to the New Year for Campo

By Conrad Bassett

The Campolindo High School boy's varsity team opened up the 2008 DFAL season with a resounding 56-34 road win at College Park. Will Shields led all scorers with 17 and Chris Dyer added 10 with Reinke chipping in 8.

After a disappointing double overtime loss to Las Lomas on Jan. 14, the Cougars returned to the hardwoods Jan. 16, hosting the Mt. Diablo Red Devils. Playing without Tom Wraith, Graham Smith and Bryan Reinke, who were nursing injuries, Campo (9-6, 3-1 DFAL) scored first on a Jack Trotter rebound and dunk and Mt. Diablo (6-8, 0-4 DFAL) played a close first period behind Damahn Miller's five points as the teams traded baskets . . . one a Patrick Wirth 3-point shot that was launched from somewhere near Castro Valley.

Following an exchange of early scores in the second, Campo expanded a 27-24 lead by going on a 17-5 run to end the period. Trotter had 17 of his game high 32 points in the first half and Will Shields added nine.

The second half started as the first ended. Shields hit a three with Miller answering with a two and then Campo exploded scoring 19 unanswered points. Shields hit back-to-back threes and Trotter scored the next eight in a row before Ryan Fruin added the first of his three 3 pt. shots. Campo led 70-39 heading to the final period.

In the fourth period the onslaught continued with the last five minutes being played with a "running clock." Nearly everyone got into the act with Chris Bassett-Bouchard getting a three and Jamie Fox adding two baskets. By the time it was over, Campo had a 90-44 victory. Trotter had 16 rebounds and the team scored 48 of their points from outside the arc. Shields finished with 22 points - all 3-point goals and one free throw and Fruin with a career high 9 points.

Following a three game homestand, Campo traveled to Northgate to take on the Broncos Jan. 18. For three periods, the Broncos (7-10, 2-3 DFAL) stayed with the Cougars until the fourth period when Campo (10-6, 4-1 DFAL) outscored them 21-6 to complete the 77-59 win.

It was all Cougs in the fourth as Chris Dyer assisted the first three scores then followed with his own three and it was 66-53. Trotter finished with 3 and Shields and Dyer scored 14 and 11 respectively. Trotter with 16 and Dyer with 12 led the rebounding effort.

The Cougars continued to roll earning their third decisive win in a row by smashing Terra Linda 90 to 57 at the MLK Jamboree Jan. 19 at Piedmont High. Campo (11-6, 4-1 DFAL) again scored early and often behind Jack Trotter's 15 point first period effort. By halftime, Campo had a commanding 48-26 lead and coasted from there.

Will Shields continued to force the scoreboard operator to hit the number three button as he had four during the game on his way to 13 points. Trotter tied his season high of 39 points and added 11 rebounds. Chris Dyer scored 12 and had numerous assists and steals that led to quick Campo points. The Cougars scored more than 20 points in each period with Pat Wirth nailing two from beyond the arc and Chris Bassett-Bouchard finishing off the game by scoring the last five points.

Bentley School Soccer Coach Receives National Award

Submitted by Emily Haas

Bentley Upper School's Athletic Director and Soccer Coach Rusty Taylor was notified Jan. 18 by the National Soccer Coaches Association of American that he is the recipient of the 2007 Robert W. Robinson Award. The Award is named in honor of Robert W. "Robby" Robinson, a Philadelphia area high school coach who has touched virtually every aspect of the NSCAA.

Each year, the NSCAA presents this award to a person who has raised interscholastic soccer to new heights through his or her long-term dedication to the game. Taylor has notched an impressive 1,139 wins over the past 36 years at four different schools in the Bay Area.

According to the NSCAA, Taylor has been a fixture in West Coast high school soccer since 1972. "He has surpassed the 500-win plateau as a boys coach and the 600-win mark coaching girls, and may be best known for his stint as the boys and girls coach at San

Francisco University High School, where he won 766 games and won four national coach of the year awards," the NSCAA Web site states. "He has helped grow the NSCAA presence on the West Coast by serving at times on both its Coach of the Year and All-America committees."

Taylor was also the recipient of the Girls Large School Coach of the Year award in 1982, the Boys Private/Parochial Award in 1992 and the Girls Small School Award in 1999. He will travel to Baltimore, Md., to accept the award in person at the NSCAA Awards Ceremony on Friday, Feb. 13.



Men's Tennis vs. UC Davis
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SMC

Men's Basketball vs. Portland
Saturday, Feb. 2 at 7:05 p.m.
McKeon Pavilion

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

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SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Saint Mary's Rugby Ranks Third in the Nation: Beats Chico State

By Kevin D. Shallat



Photo Tod Fierner

The Saint Mary's rugby squad was back in action this week, as they took on the Chico State Wildcats at home Saturday, Jan. 19. It wasn't the team's prettiest win of the season, as the Gaels got off to a slow start, but their balanced offensive attack was more than enough to take care of the Wildcats. Chico State was able to record the first points of the game. However, after they went up 3-0, the Gaels were able to kick it in

gear and win the match by a score of 46-11.

Chico State was able to get on the scoreboard first by a penalty against the Gaels. Saint Mary's scored three tries in the first half, but missed all three of their kicks. The Gaels held a slim 15-6 lead at halftime, but were lucky to be up by as much as they were after a quick turn of events in the first half. Saint Mary's threw an errant pass that was intercepted by a

Chico State player who took the ball back approximately 40 yards before Gaels team captain Kevin Swiryn caught up to him and saved what would have been a crucial try for the Wildcats.

The definition of a scrum half position is typically a player who is smaller than the other players, but possesses a high degree of vision. This definition fits Saint Mary's scrum half Chad Clark perfectly. He is not the biggest

player around, but he sees the whole field, and knows where every player is at all times. Clark was everywhere Saturday afternoon. He was able to help eight players score tries in one way or another. One assist came in the first half where Clark dished the ball unselfishly to lock Kyle Mickiewicz for the Gaels first try of the day. "That's the scrum half position I guess, you need to set up your teammates when you can," Clark said.

Saint Mary's had a strong second half offensively, thanks largely in part to fullback Matt Leatherby. The Gaels were able to get their points, but the Wildcats did their best to disrupt Saint Mary's with their physical style of play.

Swiryn had a terrific day for the Gaels, as he ran all over the Wildcats defense, but even Swiryn wasn't immune to the Wildcats rough and tumble style of play. Swiryn was roughed up on one play, and as the trainer began to run out on the field to the check on him, was waved away by the Saint Mary's captain. When asked whether he would be all right to play in two weeks (when the Gaels play next) his response was typical of a rugby player. "Tomorrow, if wake up and I can walk around, then yeah, I'm good to go," he said.

The Gaels went on to win this match 46-11, and remain unbeaten at 9-0.



Photo Tod Fierner

Saint Mary's Survives Against Team in Turmoil

By Kevin D. Shallat

Just three days before the Pepperdine Waves basketball team was scheduled to play the Gaels in Moraga, the head coach of Pepperdine, Vance Walberg, stepped down. Walberg resigned his position as the men's basketball coach for what was deemed as personal reasons. Despite the disarray of their program, this Pepperdine team came into town Saturday, Jan. 19, and put forth a spirited effort that gave the Gaels a scare of their own. The Waves were down by only four points with 15 seconds to play, before Saint Mary's put the game away and won by a score of 79-74.

Last week the Gaels played against their arch rival, Santa Clara, which is always counted on for being a tight game. Saint Mary's won that game by 31 points. This week they played a team in turmoil, and were 20 point favorites, but wound up winning by the skin of their teeth.

The score was tied seven times in the first half, and the lead changed three times as well. This was a clear indication that the team was not functioning at it's best. Head coach Randy Bennett turned to his bench early, and that decision paid off. The Gaels bench scored 29 points in 66 minutes of

action. No bench player was more productive offensively than Tron Smith. Smith continues to take the ball hard and safely to the rim, which is something he says he has been working on.

"When I come in, I just want to create...I just have to step up as a senior leader, and take care of the ball, and do whatever I have to do to help us win," Smith said. Smith was 5-8 from the field, and scored 15 points in 26 minutes. Saint Mary's took a precarious 38-30 lead at halftime, as many of their shots in the first half rimmed out of the bucket.

The halftime didn't seem to change anything for Saint Mary's, as they picked up where they left off in the second half. The very first possession was a steal by Damon Simpson, but he was unable to finish the fast break, and turned the ball over. This play typified the Gael's night. Still, Simpson finished with near triple-double figures. He recorded 17 points, 14 rebounds, and five steals, while hitting 7-8 free throw attempts.

Carlin Hughes was uncharacteristically 0-4 from 3-point range, but had astoundingly efficient numbers for the game. Hughes finished with eight points, three rebounds, three assists, and

three steals in 23 minutes. Hughes also had the play of the year, which left the crowd rocking. He dribbled down the floor on a fast break, and put the ball around his back and in for a Globetrotter-like

layup. The Waves made things interesting, as they cut the lead to one with 14:54 remaining, but that would be as close as they got, as the Gaels were able to hang on and defeat the Waves 79-74.



Diamon Simpson (20)

Photo Tod Fierner

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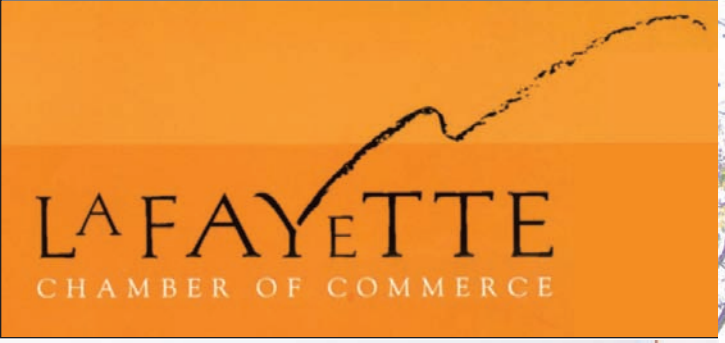
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