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Volume 02; Issue 10

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Wednesday, July 23, 2008



Cooper Krznicar

Photos Doug Kohen

Meghan Sposato Breast Stroke

More Than Swimming - Lafayette City Meet

By Jean Follmer

By 8:00 am on July 12 and 13, Acalanes High School was a temporary city of tents. Given the wild attire and thunderous roars, teepees may have been more appropriate. The Sun Valley Suns performed a rigorously choreographed dance routine, the mighty Springbrook Hogs deafened the crowd with their vocal presence and the LMYA Dolphins "sacrificed" their junior coaches by throwing them into the pool. It was, after all, the 42nd Annual Lafayette City Meet.

Swimmers from Las Trampas, LMYA, Oakwood Athletic Club, Rancho Colorados, Springbrook and Sun Valley surely represented much of the Lafayette student population. Each day started off with morning heats and ended with afternoon finals. Once again, the Springbrook Hogs dominated the meet and secured an incredible 1st place finish with 1,355.50 points. 2nd place went to the Rancho Colorados Wahoos with 716 points and the Las Trampas Seahorses placed 3rd with 683 points. Sun Valley, LMYA and Oakwood respectively finished 4th, 5th and 6th.

Swimmers from Las Trampas, LMYA, Oakwood Athletic Club,

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this week

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They're on our streets doing a tough job
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A seasonal hazard for your pets
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General Election, Tuesday, November 4, 2008

The filing period is open in our three communities for those interested in running for City/Town Council. Candidates must be a registered voter residing within the city/town they wish to serve. Nomination papers may be obtained from the appropriate City Clerk beginning on July 15. Forms must be submitted by 5:00pm on August 8. If one or more incumbents do not file nomination papers by 5:00 on August 8, the filing period for individuals who are not currently Council Members will be extended to Wednesday, August 13 at 5:00pm.

Lafayette
City Clerk:
Joanne Robbins – please call for an appointment, (925) 284-1968
3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd
http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us/
The three four-year seats currently held by Mike Anderson, Carl Anduri and Carol Federighi will expire this year

Moraga
Town Clerk:
Rhonda Basore
(925) 888-7040
329 Rheem Blvd.
http://moraga.ca.us/
The three four-year seats currently held by Lynda Deschambault, Rochelle Bird and Michael Metcalf will expire this year.

Orinda
City Clerk:
Michele Olsen
(925) 253-4221
22 Orinda Way
http://www.ci.orinda.ca.us
The two four-year seats currently held by Steve Glazer and Victoria Smith will expire this year.



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Lamorinda Community

Calendar, Notes, News

Lafayette

| Calendar | |
|---|--------|
| City Council | 7pm |
| Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road | |
| Monday, July 28 | |
| Planning Comm. | 7pm |
| Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road | |
| Wednesday, August 7 | |
| Design Review | 7pm |
| Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road | |
| Tuesday, August 12 | |
| Park, Trails, Rec. | 7pm |
| Community Center 500 St Mary's Road | |
| Friday, August 13 | |
| Senior Services | 3:30pm |
| Community Center, Alder Room 500 St Mary's Road | |
| Thursday, August 28 | |
| 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 | |



Bank fraud 7/11/08 A young woman who lives on Topper Court called police to report and an unknown suspect took \$9,000 from her checking account. The victim had no idea how this happened. She didn't give anyone permission to take her funds.

Theft from car, 7/08/08 Between Saturday night and Sunday morning a thief took a pair of binoculars and a cell phone charger from an unlocked car parked on El Curtola Boulevard. The items had been in the glove compartment before they disappeared. Estimated value \$40 total for the two items.

Theft from car, 7/07/08 A Marlene Drive resident parked her car in the carport in front of her place, unsure if she locked the doors. The victim went to her vehicle the next morning and noticed that her coin box was missing. Estimated loss, coins in the coin box valued at \$5.

Tools taken, 7/1/08 Tools were taken from a Moraga Road construction site during the night. The same location was burglarized a week before, the unknown thieves used the same point of entry to sneak in.

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Mt. Diablo Paving Project

By Cathy Tyson



Hard-working employees of St. Francis Electric, a subcontractor of Top Grade Construction Photo Cathy Tyson

It's déjà vu all over again. Drivers along Mt. Diablo Boulevard from Dolores Drive to First Street might be flashing back to the Moraga Way or EBMUD paving projects while stuck on Lafayette's main thoroughfare. Because of significant signs of wear and tear and having not been paved in over fifteen years, now is the time to get it done.

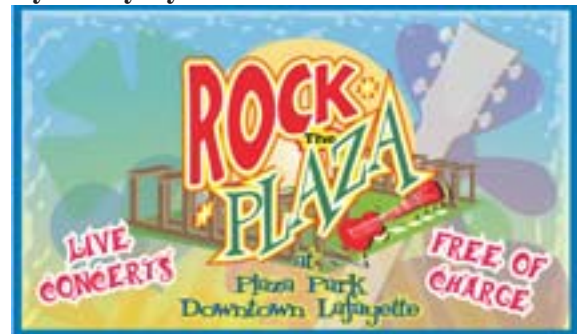
The first layer of pavement was placed last week. The last layer is tentatively scheduled for July 28 and 29; residents are strongly encouraged to avoid the project area on those two days. Remaining miscellaneous work is expected to be completed by the end of August.

Lafayette residents will be pleased to find out that city staff made the deal of the century with regard to funding this project. The three-fifths of a mile long project will cost approximately \$865,000. More than half of the funds, \$540,000, came from a federal grant; \$240,000 came from regional mitigation money, that could only be used on arterial roads, and the balance, a mere \$85,000, was spent from gas tax revenue received from the State and is required as a matching contribution in order to obtain the federal grant.

... continued on page 19

Coming Soon: Rock the Plaza

By Cathy Tyson



Graphic provided by Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

Lafayette's Plaza Park, also known as Elam and Margaret Brown Plaza Park, will once again be the place to enjoy quality music on the first four Friday nights in August with the summer music series, "Rock the Plaza." Sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and Red House Studios, this will be the third summer this popular series will have downtown jammin'.

... continued on page 19

The Lafayette City Council is seeking applicants for the opening on the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA). The Citizens Advisory Committee provides citizen perspective, participation and involvement in the CCTA's \$3 billion voter-approved Transportation Expenditure Plan and Growth Management Program. **Applications available on the city website www.ci.lafayette.ca.us or call 284-1968 and ask for Joanne Robbins, City Clerk.**

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Future of Potential Sales Tax Doubtful

By Cathy Tyson



Jay Lifson, Executive Director Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Photo Wendy Schreck

In the first of two City Council meetings looking for public input regarding a potential additional sales tax for Lafayette, many anti-tax advocates expressed their opinions including the influential Chamber of Commerce. A recent survey of Lafayette residents by the Tramutola/Godbe research firm showed general support for the measure; 59% of polled residents were in favor, even after hearing arguments against it.

At issue was a potential increase of .75% to the current 8.25% tax rate, which if approved would have made Lafayette, at 9.00%, the city with the highest sales tax in the Bay Area. The additional funds would be used to pay for badly needed road repair, pay for downtown twinkle lights, banners, landscaping, parks and preserved open space and police services.

"After a two hour discussion our Board of Directors voted to oppose. This is not the right time; our downtown is made up of small businesses that are already feeling the effects of a poor economy. A sales tax is not the way to solve the revenue problems our city faces," said Jay Lifson, Executive Director of the Chamber of Commerce.

... continued on page 19

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Lamorinda Community Calendar, Notes, News

Moraga

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

Moraga Mayor Will Not Run

By Sophie Braccini



Mayor Lynda Deschambault at the Union Bank of California Ribbon Cutting Photo Sophie Braccini

Lynda Deschambault was elected to the Moraga Town Council four years ago on the slogan, "Preserving our past, planning for our future." As Moraga's current Mayor, she feels that she accomplished her mission and now needs to focus her energy on a broader county-wide effort. Her term in office ends this year and she announced last weekend that she will not seek re-election in the fall.

"When you love everything that you do, it is hard to choose which one to invest in," she said, "And it is harder still to decide which one to let go of." Deschambault struggled with the decision for a while, but feels her legacy will stand.

One of her main objectives was to foster a more open and participating government in town; she

believes that has been achieved, with documents readily accessible to the public and community groups fully engaged in town policy-making. She will continue to advocate to ensure that all meetings are open to the public.

A long-time environmental protection advocate, she is pleased with the progress that was made during her tenure and cites the protection of the Mulholland Ridge Open Space, the energy saving measures taken by the town and the compromise reached on the Palos Colorados Development.

Former Mayor Cherie Grant observed, "Lynda provided an opportunity for elected officials to engage in topics such as the long term sustainability of our community, and what type of legacy we want to leave to our children."



Police Blotter will return August 6.

DISPOSITION OF EVIDENCE
Moraga Police Department no longer needs property related to Case 07-754 for evidentiary purposes. If you are involved in this case and have ownership of items involved and want to claim your property please contact the Moraga Police Department's Property Officer Heather Pomeroy at (925)888-7054. All evidence, phones, radios, and cameras for case 07-754 will be destroyed after August 15, 2008.

Moraga Comments On Specific Plan

By Sophie Braccini



VIEW-09 PROPOSED

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The public comment period on the Moraga Specific Plan is nearing its end. Unless modified, it will close on August 1st at 5 p.m. Since the forty five day comment period began on June 17th, the Moraga Specific Plan has been presented to and reviewed by all of Moraga's official bodies and many interested parties. Lori Salamack, Moraga Planning Director, has been collecting pages of observa-

tions and questions which will be officially responded to once the comment period is closed.

The Town Council had its chance to comment on the plan on July 9th. Some Council Members were very disappointed not to see the 3D animated simulation of the proposed development that had been promised by the Dahlin Group, the consultant in charge of the study. It seems that Town staff

canceled that part of the presentation due to budgetary concerns, without a vote of the Council. "This should have been our decision," commented Council Member Rochelle Bird. Mayor Lynda Deschambault was concerned that this lack of visuals would not permit anyone to assess correctly the esthetic impact of the proposed developments.

... continued on page 18

Moraga Restaurants Caught Selling Alcohol to Minors

By Sophie Braccini



Officer Ron Ward Photo Sophie Braccini

The California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) conducts about two dozen "Minor Decoy" operations every year in the greater Oakland area (which includes Lamorinda). The purpose of the program is to find out if restaurants and bars are serving alcoholic beverages to minors. In June they visited Moraga and found a surprisingly high rate of violations.

The "minor decoy," someone under age twenty one, orders a beer or a glass of wine to see if he (or she) is asked to show proof of legal drinking age. The minor operates in conjunction with a police officer. While the decoy enters the premises, the officer either waits outside or sits in another part of the establishment.

Licenses have been issued to sixteen eating establishments in Moraga; thirteen were visited and six were found in violation. "That's 46% of the places," said ABC's Erik Szakaacs, "a bit more than the average 18%-22% we usually encounter."

"I am very surprised by the high percentage of violations of this nature and am disappointed that with all of our enforcement and effort in the community this occurred," stated Mark Ruppenthal, Moraga's Chief of Police.

... continued on page 18

TOWN OF MORAGA SEEKS APPLICANTS TO SERVE AS TOWN TREASURER

The Town of Moraga is seeking applicants to fill the position of Town Treasurer. The Treasurer serves on the Audit and Finance Committee, which is responsible for providing review and recommendations related to the annual operating budget, investment strategies, and other fiscal issues as they arise.

The Treasurer serves a two-year term, is appointed by and reports to the Town Manager and serves without compensation.

Members of the Moraga community with financial credentials, preferably in public finance and/or governmental fund accounting, are encouraged to apply immediately.



Applicants should send a letter of interest and a resume to:

Joan Streit, Finance Director
Town of Moraga
2100 Donald Dr.
Moraga, CA 94556

For more information contact Joan Streit, Finance Director at (925) 888-7032.

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Lamorinda Community

Calendar, Notes, News

Orinda

| Calendar | |
|---|--------|
| City Council | 7pm |
| Auditorium, Orinda Library 26 Orinda Way | |
| Thursday, August 19 (Meeting August 5 cancelled) | |
| Planning Comm. | 7:00pm |
| Auditorium, Orinda Library 26 Orinda Way | |
| Tuesday, August 12 | |
| Planning Process Review 8:00am | |
| Community Room at City Hall 22 Orinda Way | |
| Friday, July 31 | |
| Public Safety Comm. | 7pm |
| Community Room at City Hall 22 Orinda Way | |
| Thursday, August 14 | |
| Mayor's Com. Liaison | 9am |
| Community Room at City Hall 22 Orinda Way | |
| Monday, September 8 (no Meeting in August) | |
| check online: Town of Orinda: http://www.ci.orinda.ca.us/ | |
| • all meeting notes • calendar updates | |
| Chamber of Commerce: http://www.orindachamber.org/ | |
| • local businesses • upcoming events | |



Drunk in public, 7/16/08 A middle aged woman was seen wandering into traffic at 10:50 one morning along Moraga Way near Orchard. When the officer asked where she was going, she gave her home address, but was walking in the opposite direction. She had a distinct odor of alcohol, red blood-shot eyes and slurred speech, and is known to be a "frequent flyer" to the police. Oddly enough she refused a blood alcohol test, and was arrested for being drunk in public.

Credit Card Fraud, 7/16/08 An elderly Donna Maria Way resident called the police department to report that his credit card was used without his okay. An unauthorized person used his card for unspecified online purchases. The credit card company reimbursed him for all charges.

Trough taken, 7/15/08 A Lost Valley resident called police to report that her horse trough was stolen from her barn, located on Valley View Drive. Her lucky horse(s) drank from a cast iron claw foot bathtub; that had an estimated value of \$700. The equine(s) were unable to provide a description of the thief or thieves.

Sign smashed, 7/11/08 The wooden Miramonte sign at the front of the school fell victim to an unknown object, most likely a car or truck. Sometime between Tuesday 7/08 and Thursday 7/10 the four foot by six foot sign was smashed beyond repair. Estimated cost to replace \$2,000. Sounds like a good project for woodshop class.

Orinda Seeks Ways to Increase Revenues

By Emily Schultheis

Orinda, like its sister cities Lafayette and Moraga, faces the significant challenge of fixing a decaying infrastructure system, i.e. the roads, and finding the resources to make this happen. To that end, the City Council established a Revenue Enhancement Task Force to help identify ways to raise additional funds for infrastructure projects. The Task Force recently sought the advice of Michael Coleman, the principal fiscal policy advisor for the League of California Cities, who knows how to make this process a little less difficult.

Coleman presented his ideas and took questions from community members on revenue enhancement at a special session of the Orinda City Council on July 10 at the Orinda Library.

Coleman stated that due to the current economic climate, revenues from both sales taxes and property taxes—the two top sources of general-purpose revenues—have both declined, a

trend that is affecting cities across the state.

In addition, because there is "not a whole lot of city money in the state general fund," Coleman said cities shoulder much of the costs for services necessary to keep cities running, like police and fire departments, infrastructure and parks, through their own means.



Graphic by Amanda Griggs

"There are no easy answers," stated Coleman. He stressed the complexity of the situation and outlined several steps cities like Orinda can take to increase revenues.

Coleman cited additional

taxes like a transportation sales tax on BART and an add-on sales tax as possible revenue sources for the City of Orinda. He added that while it is important to find new sources of revenue, cities should also work to set priorities and work within their means, whatever those may be.

When asked by a community member if the proposition of an add-on tax would be supported by city residents in a time of economic downturn, Coleman acknowledged the difficulty of the situation, but said that reaching out to people as early on as possible would make the process easier.

In follow up to Coleman's presentation, Mayor Pro Tem Sue Severson, a member of the Revenue Enhancement Task Force, reported to the City Council that the Task Force has reviewed an initial draft of a report regarding ways to increase Orinda's revenues and that the final report will likely be submitted in early October.

Andrea A. Firth contributed to this article

Orinda BART Goes Solar

By Andrea A. Firth



Bart parking lot, view from platform

Photo Andy Scheck

Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) is planning to install solar photovoltaic panels at the Orinda BART Station. "This will be the only BART station in the District with solar panels," a BART representative reported to the members of Orinda's City Council at the last Council meeting held on July 15. "In fact forty lucky BART riders will have the added benefit of the shade of a carport," he added.

The photovoltaic panels will be placed on top of a 40-space carport to be located in the parking lot directly across from the BART station entrance. There will be no loss in the number of parking spaces in

the lot, although there may be a temporary reduction in spaces available during construction of the carport.

The solar panels will generate sufficient energy to meet the daytime electricity needs of the Orinda station. Remarkably, Orinda was chosen as the site for the BART solar panels over BART stations to the east, in part, due to its sun potential. When it gets too hot, the solar panels are less efficient. According to BART's assessment, the Orinda location provides an environment that is not too hot and not too cloudy.

BART will also install rooftop photovoltaic arrays at maintenance facilities in Hayward and Richmond. The Orinda BART car-

port with solar panels will require approximately a month to construct and the project will be completed by the end of the year.



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Orinda Night Out—August 5th

By Andrea A. Firth

Neighbors in Orinda will be gathering for block parties, barbecues, and ice cream socials on Tuesday, August 5th to take part in Orinda Night Out.

Prompted by the City Council, the Safety Commission modeled the upcoming evening event after the National Night Out program which has been ongoing for 25 years. "The goal of the evening is to build a greater sense of community and get to know our neighbors better," states Rebecca Kunzman, a member of the Orinda Public Safety Advisory Commission and the point person for the event.

Kunzman states that over 20 neighborhoods have already let her know about their planned events and that many other neighborhoods are participating that she just doesn't know about yet. "Many of the events are being held between 5:00 and 7:00 pm on that Tuesday," adds Kunzman. "These are multi-generational parties in-

volving everyone in the neighborhood."

Orinda's Public Safety Advisory Commission was established about four ago and has worked with residents through out the community to create neighborhood watch and emergency preparedness groups. However, Kunzman notes that several of these neighborhood groups existed as far back as thirty years ago. "This is not a new concept in Orinda," states Kunzman. "Orinda Night Out has enabled us to re-establish many of the existing groups and create new ones."

Residents are encouraged to join in by contacting their neighbors to arrange for a casual gathering that evening. If you would like the Orinda Police or Fire Representative to stop by your event, call 254-1849. Rumor has it that Mayor Pro Tem Sue Severson and Police Chief Bill French will be cruising the Orinda streets looking for a party to attend.



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Preparation Key to Fire Safety in Lamorinda's Wildland-Urban Interface

By Jennifer Wake



Smoke from recent California wildfires turns the sun pink as air quality decreases Photo Jennifer Wake

Although smoke has dissipated and air quality has returned to a healthy level, wildfires continue to burn throughout California. Recently, several Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) firefighters joined California Department of Forestry (CalFire) and other battalions to battle the Butte Lightning Complex Fire, while the remaining MOFD staff kept a vigilant watch on our own hills.

When a red flag alert was called by the MOFD two weeks ago, CalFire responded saying they would be there if they were needed, but "don't count on it anytime soon."

"They didn't have anyone to send," MOFD Battalion Chief Ed Borden said. In the event of a first alarm situation, in addition to MOFD's own equipment and personnel CalFire supplies six engines, two tanker aircraft, a helicopter, two bulldozers, a hand crew, and an extra CalFire chief.

The recent wildfires, however, put such a strain on CalFire that requests were put in a holding queue until equipment and personnel became available.

Fortunately, even with these challenges, the MOFD has the training and equipment to reach any area covered by the District, says Borden – even those more difficult to access roads and hills in Canyon and Orinda.

Crews are given monthly training classes on overall safety, tactics working with CalFire and air tankers, basic company evolutions, pump and roll, and extended hoselay (a method of deploying hoses along firelines during sup-

pression every 100 feet or so. As the line progresses, more hoses and valves are added).

"Extended hoselay is a staple in this valley," explained Borden. "But it takes a lot of people and a lot of time. During wildland season, we send multiple units to any full alarm. We also have four 'Type Three' engines that are smaller, have 4-wheel drive with high wheel bases and rugged suspension for those more precarious roads. We also have a water tender that carries 1,250 gallons used to supply our engines and shuttle water to the site before returning to fill up again."

Experts watching the recent firestorms believe climate change is playing a part in the increased number of fires, while the trend of building homes in more remote areas that are prone to fire make each year's wildland season all the more dangerous. As more building occurs in outlying areas, more fires will likely threaten homes and lives, and continue to strain CalFire.

Since the Oakland Hills fire of 1991, where 3,200 homes were destroyed and 25 people were killed, districts made changes to how fire companies communicate and how efforts are coordinated among its personnel.

For the past 10 years, firefighters from seven counties have gathered for an annual wildland training drill. Last year's drill in Dublin included more than 500 firefighters who came to practice progressive hoselays, mobile attack where you rapidly drive a fire apparatus while attacking a fire, real time burns and hand tool attacks.

This year, however, due to the extensive number of active wildfires, the training was canceled. "We had to cancel it this year because everybody was out fighting fires," Borden says. "It was the first time in 10 years this was canceled."

With large portions of Lamorinda considered part of a growing wildland-urban interface – areas where structures intermingle with undeveloped wildland vegetation – strategic planning and training are vital.

Part of the MOFD's strategic plan includes working with the City of Orinda to improve the City's water supply infrastructure. Although the number of critical projects in Orinda remains the same as last year (47 listed with inadequate fireflow), MOFD Fire Marshal Mike Mentink says the District is collaborating with the City of Orinda to repair critical water safety systems. In the meantime, fire suppression will be accomplished with the existing hydrants and water supply, augmented with 'water-shuttle' operations.

"The problem has been there for a long time, and it will take a long time to tackle," Mentink says. "These are very expensive projects and that's all part of the collaboration."

In addition, the MOFD and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, which serves Lafayette, have been working closely with Lamorinda homeowners in high fire-risk areas to reduce combustible materials surrounding their homes to expand defensible space, and promote the use of fire-retar-

dant building materials when building new structures or remodeling existing ones.

Through the Firewise program, which began last year, Lamorinda residents have been able to view their properties to get a risk assessment of their fire danger, and make changes to reduce higher risk ratings.

For now, Lamorinda residents should continue to pay attention to potential fire hazards and stay extra vigilant during red flag days. As of Sunday, July 13, there were approximately 450 fires of sizeable interest still burning in California.

For more information about the Firewise program, visit <http://www.mofd.org/FirewiseMain.htm>.

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Life in LAMORINDA

Flagmen Keep Cars Rolling Through Record Heat

By Jennifer Wake



Mountain Cascade flagmen directing traffic in 104 degree heat

Photo Jennifer Wake

When temperatures reach triple digits, most of us run to the sanctity of our air conditioned homes or offices. But when your office is the hard pavement of a busy street and your uniform is heavy boots, a hard hat, reflector vest and a stop sign, there is no escape.

The Mountain Cascade flagmen who have been keeping cars moving on the detour routes along St. Mary's Road and Moraga Road during the Moraga Road Pipeline Construction Project have one of the hardest jobs, says Mountain Cascade project manager Tony Batista. On a typical day, paving materials can reach 150 degrees, according to a report on urban heat islands by the Environmental Protection Agency. The excess heat radiates away from the ground, adding to the stifling heat of the

summer sun. And the recent poor air quality only makes things worse.

"People think that flagging is an easy job," Batista says, "but it's one of the tougher jobs out there."

In addition to braving the elements, flaggers must endure their eight hour shift by themselves, while staying alert to any traffic problems, keeping buses on schedule, and staying courteous to passing motorists. "People flagging get all the grief, obscene gestures and comments," says Mountain Cascade Project Coordinator John Eudy. "If a bus is behind a couple of cars, they flag the cars through to keep the bus on schedule. Everyone is 'flagmen certified' to keep things running smoothly and to avoid accidents."

Fortunately, Batista says

most people (about 98 percent) have been cordial. But a choice few have tried to get past the system, and have even put flagmen in danger.

Some motorists have ignored the road closure signs, continuing along Moraga Road until they are finally re-diverted back to the detour route. One driver reportedly swerved at a flagger a couple of weeks ago. "They're probably teenage kids messing around having fun, but they could accidentally hit the gas or the brake and you have a guy hurt or killed because someone wanted a laugh," Eudy says.

All flagmen have business cards they hand to disgruntled motorists with contact numbers to lodge complaints to EBMUD Community Affairs Representative Nora Harlow. "Nora has received some complaints and

some suggestions, but a lot of phone calls and emails complimenting the flaggers and thanking them for their hard work," Eudy says. "She drives the route regularly to see if there are any problems. There haven't been any accidents, thank God. All the residents and locals are getting used to it. When I was at a recent family function, I was told that it's easier to get down some roads because they're flagging traffic smoothly through without stopping."

Keeping things running smoothly, however, is a lonely job. One Mountain Cascade worker said two friends (one a flagman) were carpooling; because he hadn't talked to anyone all day, the flagman talked non-stop to his friend the entire way home. Although Dave Papst, the Flagger Foreman, rotates the flagmen, makes sure they get the breaks they need and time to sit down, and is taking extended measures to keep his men hydrated, it doesn't make it easy.

There are no iPods, there is no chit-chat by a water cooler. There's just the hum of cars passing by and an occasional wave of a friendly hand – or a less than friendly finger.

"I wouldn't want to be standing on my feet all day in the hot sun," Eudy says. "Slow down, take it slow. The flagmen are working out there to make all the residents' drives smoother. Be courteous. Be patient. You'll get to work on time. One minute longer is not going to hurt you."



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Management Changes Tune for 24-Hour Members

By Cathy Tyson



Members entering the new Moraga 24-Hour Fitness location Photo Cathy Tyson

It was all smiles and shiny new exercise machines at the opening of the new Super Sport 24-Hour Fitness facility in Moraga on Friday. The new club is a huge improvement over the old facility, spacious, airy, with

upscale finishes, a sea of exercise equipment, a dedicated spinning room with 34 bicycles, and an expansive locker room with granite countertops.

The good news inside belies the recent flurry of complaints from angry members who were upset about paying additional fees that they thought were unwarranted. In a June letter, members were informed that everyone who would like to use the new facility would have to pay an additional fee.

Apparently all of the member complaints have had some impact on management. There's been a shift to now honor memberships initiated after August of 2007; they can use the new club without any additional fees. According to a

company spokesperson, "One-Club" members who signed up from August 25, 2007 forward will be transferred as a "One-Club" member to the new Moraga location. A similar arrangement is in place for those that signed an "All-Club Sport" members will be upgraded to "All-Club Super Sport" and will have access to the new club, free of additional fees as well as all Super Sport, Sport and Active 24-Hour locations.

A company spokesperson spelled out the policy change: "24-Hour Fitness values the feedback we have received from our members and we have taken steps to communicate with them about our new club opening in Moraga. We have informed members who joined our club starting in late August 2007 that they will have full access to the new facility without any increase in their monthly dues. Members who signed up prior to this date can enjoy our new facility for either an additional \$9.99 per month or no more than a total of \$39.99 per month, whichever amount is less for their particular membership. The majority of these members will pay much less than \$39.99 per month under this arrangement. These members also will have free access to the new club for 30 days before deciding whether to upgrade their membership."

Perhaps the letter from attorney Victoria Smith, who is also the Mayor of Orinda and a disgruntled 24-Hour Fitness member, had some impact:

... continued on page 17



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Life in LAMORINDA

Saint Mary's Alumni Abound

By Andrea A. Firth



SMC Alumni on campus for the Reunion festivities

Photo Andrea A. Firth

Saint Mary's College (SMC) graduates don't venture too far from their alma mater—about 25% of the College's alumni population can be found within the boundaries of Contra Costa County. While some former students were raised in the area, many alumni from other parts of California and outside the state made a connection with the East Bay while in college and chose to stay put or return soon after graduation.

"The largest concentration of Saint Mary's alumni can be found in Contra Costa County. There are about 10,000," states Chris Carter, Associate Director of Alumni Relations for the College and a graduate of the class of '97, who chose to both work for and live by his old school.

"Because of the nature of SMC, [alumni] feel a real fondness and connection with the College," says Carter. "There is a strong feeling of school pride right now which is probably tied to SMC's recent athletic successes," he adds. "Alumni engagement has increased dramatically over the past few years."

Last weekend, SMC held its annual reunion week-

end hosting approximately 600 former students from the classes of 1958 through 2003. Alumni from near and far are invited back every five years to participate in class-specific events, such as a golf outing or party, and an all-college day of festivities including a family barbecue, mass, and dinner dance. Alumni are invited to stay on campus for a second chance at college dormitory living, and about a third of the attendees opt to sleep and shower in the townhouse residence halls.

Moraga residents Claudia and Tim McCaffrey were among several Lamorinda locals who reconnected with college friends over the reunion weekend. The McCaffreys met while attending Saint Mary's and have lived in Moraga for much of their married lives. Claudia, who grew up in Walnut Creek, admits that she did not pay much attention to life in Moraga outside of the campus while attending SMC. "I didn't think of Moraga as a college town, but I also wasn't thinking about it as a place where I might raise a family. It kind of just happened."

Proximity to campus

and reunion weekends are not the only things that keep the McCaffreys coming back to SMC. Claudia has a nephew and cousin now attending the College, and like many in town, they are season ticket-holders for the men's basketball games.

Brother Raphael Patton, a member of SMC's 100th graduating class (1963) and an SMC faculty member for the past 38 years, reconnected with about twenty of his college friends on the golf course during the reunion weekend.

Patton, who seems content with having spent much of his life and career at Saint Mary's, admits that landing back on the Moraga campus was not necessarily his idea. "You kind of go where you are sent," he confides.

Like many SMC alumni, Patton was raised nearby. "I was born and raised in Concord before anyone or anything was there," he says. As one of forty brothers-in-training while he attended Saint Mary's as an undergraduate, Patton was discouraged from mingling with the rest of the student body. "We weren't supposed to mix too much with the

other students, but we found ways," he hints.

"I never feel quite at home unless I'm here," adds Patton. "I don't know what it is—the fog, the hills, the proximity to the ocean. I don't want to live anywhere else but here."

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The Reality of Moraga's Financial Situation

By Sophie Braccini

Former Town Manager Phil Vince said it in a nutshell: "The Town has to come to grips with what it wants to become. We will have to scale back service levels if we can't increase our revenue." The approved operational budget for 2008/2009 was balanced, but the Town is on a trajectory toward a structural deficit. Staff was directed to propose measures to correct the situation and to find additional resources to hire additional police officers. At this point, potential lay-offs are adding to the stress of a staff that's already overworked.

Moraga's philosophy has always been minimal government. In the average

Contra Costa town, 3.4 employees serve 1000 residents. In Moraga the number is 2.5, resulting in management staff working 55- 60 hour a week. "People are stressed, but show an incredible amount of commitment to the town," says Jay Tashiro, Interim Town Manager.

The number of police officers in town follows the same trend. The average rate of police officers per resident is 1/1000. In Moraga, that would mandate 16 officers. The force has 13 with two officers currently on disability, receiving full pay and benefits, for up to a year. "On average, our Officers have put in eleven extra hours of patrol per week," says Police Chief

Mark Ruppenthal.

"The security of our residents is a priority," Council Member Rochelle Bird said at the June 11th Town Council meeting, "we need to do what it takes to be able to add strength to our police force." Council member Ken Chew commented, "I would like to emphasize that our town's need for adequate and effective public safety must be maintained and enhanced. My hope is that two more police officers be added over and above what we currently have." Finance Director Joan Streit was instructed to find funds in the years to come to cover the deficit and add 1-3 new officers.

... continued on page 17

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Life in LAMORINDA

The Wandering Hues—Lafayette Reservoir's Plein Air Group

By Andrea A. Firth



Marcy Wheeler and Charles White

Photo Tod Fierner

Theater-in-the-round, where the audience surrounds the stage area, provides theater-goers with unique access to viewing the actors and the production. Marcy Wheeler, an artist and Director of the Lafayette Studio, has come up with a similar concept and applied it to the art world. Wheeler's idea for "painting-in-the-round" consists of views from around the Lafayette Reservoir painted by local artists that will provide art patrons with a unique—and more complete—view of this local landmark.

"I have always felt that the Reservoir is one of the best things about Lafayette," states Wheeler who has lived in Lafayette for almost 15 years and who, in addition to teaching art, owns and operates the Toots Sweets bakery

in the Plaza Shopping Center on Mount Diablo Boulevard. "I thought this would be a wonderful community activity that would allow people to get to know the Reservoir as a subject of paintings," adds Wheeler.

To make her idea a reality, Wheeler recruited some of her artist colleagues, including Charles White, Teresa Onada, and Mark Jezierny, to teach a class on plein air painting (painting in the outdoors) that is held at the Lafayette Reservoir each week. Following a brief critique session of works-in-progress at the Lafayette Studio, class members and teacher then carpool to the Reservoir and head out to find a view of their liking.

"Plein air painters are very independent," says Wheeler. "It may take some

an hour or more to find just the right spot with just the right light... And we can't ignore the trail that goes around the Reservoir," adds Wheeler. "It creates wonderful sinuous lines in the landscape."

Wheeler has an enlarged photo of the Reservoir where she keeps track of the locations from which paintings have been created. Through the work of the students and teachers, Wheeler aims to amass a sufficient number of paintings from around the Reservoir to hold a show. By displaying the "art-in-the-round," Wheeler hopes to provide viewers with a complete (and probably never before seen) picture of the Lafayette Reservoir.

All painting skill levels are invited to join the class (although some art experience is advisable), which will



Scene from the Lafayette Reservoir by Marcy Wheeler

be held each Wednesday afternoon until the rain comes. The teachers are versed in oils and acrylics and rotate leading the class each week providing students with a variety of art perspectives. For more information about the class or to become one of Wheeler's wandering hues, contact the Lafayette Studio at 284-5143.



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Letters to the Editor



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email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Dear Editor:

The recently completed repaving of Moraga Way by the City of Orinda is an excellent example of public works done right. All too often public projects—particularly road works—are slap-dash affairs that drag on and on, disrupt the lives of the citizenry, and end with substandard results. But this project was very professionally executed, finished a month ahead of time and with minimal inconvenience to residents. In the 30 years I've lived here, Moraga Way has never looked so good or driven so smoothly.

Bill Brown
Orinda

Dear Editor,

One of my favorite fairy tales as a child was the Emperor's New Clothes, its meaning lost on my youth. Later on, I found the implied lesson more and more pertinent: Just because someone says it is so convincingly, doesn't mean it is. Point in fact, when management of 24 Hour Fitness says that its members are now privy to a Super Club, it ain't necessarily so. In itself, the change in designation to Super Sport is to lead the membership to believe that in fact they are getting something which they are not. Take a look at the descriptions of 24 Hr. Fitness own website for club types. What clearly sets the new Super Sport Club apart from the Current Active rubric—as stated on website—are: Bas-

ketball court, pool, pro shop, spa, tanning, whirlpool, juice bar, lounge, steam room.

The re-designation to Super Sport is a misnomer as it falls short on the following: basketball court, pool, pro shop, spa, tanning, whirlpool, juice bar, lounge, and steam room. The Super Club has no new clothes other than a new, clean and enlarged space. In fact, current membership ought to get kudos simply for putting up with a facility long cramped, poorly ventilated and run by an indifferent staff.

How does 24 Hr Fitness blatantly and imperiously increase monthly costs—particularly without prior notice of any kind and think this will fly?

How does 24 Hr Fitness off-handedly redirect its current clients to Walnut Creek without the clients' involvement in the decision process? No one to my knowledge had been given a heads-up about this change of venue.

I for one, am not inclined to drive the extra miles (or I'd be at Renaissance Clubsport), to spend the extra gas but mostly, I resent being yanked about. Incidentally, checking the reviews online for Walnut Creek 24 Hour Fitness is an additional deterrent for even entertaining the idea of going there.

What we the clients are getting is the "old" stuff in a new setting. There are some unflattering words for this kind of business dealing. The idea that an increase of \$10 (pardon, I meant, \$9.95) per month (or merely \$39.99 per month depending on status) won't be noticed much but be a drop in the bucket for the locals is insulting to be sure.

Shop **locally** whenever you can.
Only your support of our **local** businesses will keep them open!

But, we can all see beyond the words and know what's what when we see it.

L. Foley
Moraga

Dear Editor,

I certainly did not mean to offend anyone in writing the letter of 6/25 regarding American Flags. I have nothing but respect and admiration for people who have fought for our country, and for those still fighting. I was simply trying to get the point across to people who do not love our country and show no love or admiration for it. My feeling is that many people complain about America; therefore, they could care less about holidays, Veterans, etc. These are, also, the people who probably do not vote, yet insist on complaining about how "messed-up" everything is....My point to the public is that if you are going to live in America then act like an American and show that you love "her". I have had several relatives fight in wars. I love this country, I just don't like how she is being treated. If you don't like it here then move. That's my feeling. In my opinion, this is the best country to live in. That is why everyone migrates here. And that is all I was trying to convey in my letter. Thank you; and GOD BLESS AMERICA!!

Sincerely,
Janet C. Bellotti-Kelley
Moraga

Public Forum

JOIN IT

This week's Public Forum letter comes from Mr. Frank Compelli, a resident of Moraga who has been an informed and active citizen-participant in Town affairs.

All opinions expressed in this forum are those of the writer and not of the Lamorinda Weekly. Letters may be edited for legal considerations, but edited letters will be returned to the writer for consent prior to publication. Submissions should be sent to letter@lamorindaweekly.com. Our internal editorial board will review all letters for form and content, and reserves the right to refuse a submission. Writers should have significant knowledge of the area in which they are writing, and letters should be on a subject that we have introduced in our pages. We have not set a maximum word count, but it is unlikely that a 2000-word letter would be printed (for reference, the letter on the right contains 817 words).

A SEA CHANGE FOR MORAGA

With Phil Vince's departure a few weeks ago, the Town Council has rightly initiated the process to find a replacement. Assuming an Executive Search firm will be engaged, it will require a position description and I would like to offer some thoughts on that description.

For the first 26 years of its existence, under the policies set by 13 successive Town Councils and through the management skills of Town Managers Gary Chase and Ross Hubbard, Moraga was a charming small town, renowned for its semi-rural environment, the natural beauty of its surroundings, and effective Town government. It was "boring" for teens, but a desirable place to live for adults and young children.

Only recently have residents begun to fully appreciate what made the Town government exceptional. During that period, the Town was managed as a minimum service community—required services were provided efficiently and cost-effectively within the Town's budget. Fiscal responsibility was first and foremost, not an inconvenience afterthought. Population continued to grow through prudent development projects. Moraga was a successful small town with no aspirations to be something it wasn't or couldn't be, and many current residents moved here for that very reason.

In the year 2000, a sea change began to take place in Moraga. Over the course of the following years, the principal focus of Town government shifted from living within our means to formulating and enacting a

vision for Moraga – a vision that has focused on increasing Town services (and therefore staff) and improving the "quality of life in Moraga" through revitalizing and expanding the Town's commercial sector.

Now there are many and diverse opinions about the current state of the latter aspect of that vision and not enough time and space in this letter to address them. But suffice it to say, that unless the revitalization is an approved Redevelopment Project, the participation of the Town government in that matter should be limited to encouragement and support, in whatever forms may be allowed by the Municipal Code and Town ordinances. The success or failure of the revitalization should fall squarely on the shoulders of the owners of the commercial property.

It is important to recognize that the principal function of the Town Manager is to implement the policies of the Town Council. If everyone is not on the same page, the result is ineffective and wasteful governance. Therefore, before the Town Council completes the Town Manager's position description, the Council should seize the opportunity to make another sea change in the course of Moraga's destiny. The Council should consider establishing a policy or policies that clearly state that Moraga is a small town, enjoys the benefits of a small town, and not only desires to remain a small town, but desires to be the best small town west of the Hudson River.

That doesn't mean the Town can't grow or revitalize; but it does mean running the government within its means and proceeding prudently with further development, consistent with maintaining the small town character of Moraga. It is worth it to gain the tax revenues from an additional 1000 homes (to support a larger Town staff) if, in doing so, we lose

the essence of what makes Moraga so special? What have we gained?

With this Town policy firmly in hand, what should that position description say? The Town Manager's job is to run the Town government efficiently and cost-effectively within the limits of the Town's resources. The Council should look for a manager with the skills and qualifications to run a small town and, just as important, someone who wants to manage a small town and will take pride in doing so. The Town has a strong technical staff, which suggests that the principal talents of the new Town Manager should be in team management, with particular emphasis on setting priorities and budgets and on maintaining the team's focus on them.

It has been said many times that Moraga will be in dire financial straits in a few years because the concept of balancing expenses against revenues seems to have been sacrificed on the altar of vision, and a structural budget deficit now looms in the Town's future. That prediction needn't come true. Now is the time for the sitting Council to affirm who and what we are, and who and what we want to be, now and in the future, for ourselves and for our children. Now is the time to recognize and accept the need to focus on the twin priorities of a small town government – safety and infrastructure – and commit to developing responsible budgets to achieve those priorities within expected revenue.

This Council has the singular opportunity to set a meaningful, fiscally-sound goal for Moraga's future, and then find the appropriate Town Manager to make it happen. The residents of Moraga are depending on the Council's swift and true action.

Frank Compelli

Lamorinda's Religious Services



Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, Orinda, 254-3422

Summer Worship Schedule
 8:15 a.m. Traditions Worship Service
 9:15 a.m. Coffee Fellowship
 9:45 a.m. Celebrations Worship Service
 Childcare available for ages 5 and younger

Our Savior's Lutheran (ELCA)
 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette
 283-3722 www.oslc.net

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 9:30-10:30 am each Sunday

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 2nd and 3rd Friday evening - 8:00 PM
 Saturday mornings at 10:30 AM

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 A one inch listing will cost \$20.

Troop 237 Orinda Eagle Scouts Honored



Clockwise from top left: Kyle Young, Alex Weber, Peter Sciamanna, Jared Hein

Four Miramonte High School students received Eagle Scout honors at a ceremony June 1, and a fifth student on May 19. Both ceremonies were held at Orinda Community Church, sponsor of Troop 237. The ceremonies included Mayor Victoria Smith's proclamation of an Orinda Day for each Eagle: Alex Weber, Jared Hein, Kyle Young, Peter Sciamanna and Stephen Church.

The Eagle honor is the highest in Boy Scouting (earned by 4% of all nationally-registered Scouts) and entails an ambitious community service project capping years of outdoor fun & skills, service and leadership development. The boys thank their fellow Scouts, family & friends, community members, and the dedicated adult volunteers of Troop 237, including the four Scoutmasters they've had: Bill Cooper, Wick Smith, Gabe Esquivel and Eric Jorgensen



Stephen Church Photos provided

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Life in LAMORINDA

Do Re Mi Studio: Fun For Young Pianists

By Sophie Braccini



Nathalie and Benjamin Kao present a duet as their teacher, Gordana Sakic-Petrovic, encourages them. Photo Sophie Braccini

Her country was still called Yugoslavia when Gordana Sakic-Petrovic started her career in Belgrade as a pianist and a teacher. Now settled in the Bay Area, the Serbian woman is developing a music school, Do Re Mi Studio, using a personal method that gives very young children the sound theoretical foundation Europeans deem irreplaceable, while using fun and accessible ways for them to grasp the concepts. The result was loud and clear during the end-of-the-year concert that Sakic-Petrovic's students performed for their families and friends at in the Community room of the Orthodox Church on School Street in Moraga.

She believes that the love of the arts needs to be taught very young, and her youngest students are 4 years old. She insists on the necessity to learn the theory behind the music, even at an early age, "there are ways to teach Solfège concepts (musical theory) in a fun and understandable way to very young musicians," she says.

Do Re Mi Studio classes are taught in a group setting. "My son enjoys meeting with his friends twice a week," says the mother of a five year old pianist, "they have a lot of fun together, they help each other and the group dynamic is excellent." Sakic-Petrovic keeps the groups very small, normally three or four students, and homogeneous. The chil-

dren meet for an hour twice every week, and for years will work with the same friends, those who started at the same time they did.

The results speak for themselves. Four and five year old children learn to play with both hands from the get go in September and by Christmas are able to play their first songs. At the end of the year performance, the audience was treated to pieces from Char-mac to Clementi to Tchaikovsky. The "older" students, ten and eleven year olds, express emotions in the way they play, "my son is quite shy and I had no idea how he was going to play," says the mother of a ten year old, "I am so enthused to hear him expressing emotions with the piano, it is very moving."

Sam has been Sakic-Petrovic's student for five years now, "I love to play songs which get harder and harder, and now I can put more spirit into them, I love to play for my mom and dad," says the entering OIS student.

Even the youngest ones like what they are doing. "Sometimes I don't like to practice every day," says eight year old Will, "but my mother gives me treats and I like to learn new songs."

The parents seem happy with the teaching and the results, "The way Gordana teaches the theory is very visual and easy to grasp," says Jane Kao, the mother of three young musicians, "the melodic way helps them to sing and they pick up the tunes fast."

The music studio is closed during the summer. Sakic-Petrovic spends July and August in her native country where her daughter lives. She will be back for a new season, starting classes the week of the Labor Day weekend. Interested families can reach her at g_doremi@hotmail.com or (510) 886-8449.



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An Evening With the Moraga Movers

By George Fisher, President

On Monday evening, July 14, the Moraga Movers met at Saint Mary's College for their monthly dinner. Over 100 were in attendance and they were treated to an outstanding Power Point presentation narrated by Judy Dinkle, chair of the Hacienda Foundation of Moraga. Exciting future plans for the Hacienda were presented and the audience was given the opportunity to present their ideas on the questionnaires provided. In appreciation of the Foundation's efforts the Moraga Movers presented it with a check for \$1000.

The ongoing raffle produced a big winner on the first drawing; Dorothy Meridith

drew the Ace of Spades and went home with \$617.

The Side by Side singers completed the evening's entertainment and we enjoyed a delightful array of familiar popular songs.

The Moraga Movers is dedicated to providing activities for adults 55+. We now have 350 members and always welcome more. Just call 376-6622 to receive information. Our next dinner meeting will be a traditional barbecue with all the fixings, on Monday, August 11 in the Poplar Grove at Saint Mary's College. Call 376-6622 no later than 5 PM Wednesday, August 6, to make your reservations

Downed by the Drought



The new water feature in the Commons Park Photo Wendy Schreck

Sad but true: Although originally scheduled to open with the Summer Concert season at the Moraga Commons, the shiny new water feature at which we gaze wistfully on those

hot summer afternoons will remain closed until the drought is over. The East Bay Municipal Utility District said "No" to all that water going down the drain.



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Realtor
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East Contra Costa County Foreclosures—Select Cities Only

NOTE: The date is the recorded date of the deed when the lender "took title to" the property (not necessarily possession of), since the former owners may not have moved out yet. The price is what the lender paid for it (usually the mortgage balance plus foreclosure fees). Each property is now owned by the lender. This information was provided by Cal Resource.

There were no foreclosures recorded in Lafayette, Moraga, or Orinda during this time period.

- ANTIOCH**
2819 Almondridge Drive, 94509, CitiMortgage, 06-09-08, \$229,900, 1916 sf, 4 bd
3117 Ash Street, 94509, Structured Assets, 06-26-08, \$156,390, 1058 sf, 3 bd
2409 Asilomar Drive, 94531, Deutsche Bank, 06-09-08, \$360,000, 2240 sf, 5 bd
4516 Buckskin Drive, 94531, Deutsche Bank, 06-12-08, \$259,000, 2800 sf, 5 bd
213 Creed Avenue, 94509, Credit Suisse First, 06-27-08, \$126,750, 1139 sf, 2 bd
2328 Cypress Street, 94509, US Bank, 06-02-08, \$150,875, 1058 sf, 3 bd
1004 East 13th Street, 94509, US Bank, 06-26-08, \$266,500, 1475 sf, 3 bd
4556 Elk Court, 94531, Csfb Trust, 06-10-08, \$258,750, 1615 sf, 3 bd
4628 Ellis Court, 94531, Morgan Stanley, 06-25-08, \$220,350, 2698 sf, 4 bd
2332 Foothill Drive, 94509, Bank of New York, 06-03-08, \$238,000, 1743 sf, 4 bd
2083 Goldpine Way, 94509, Resmae Liquidation Properties, 06-11-08, \$434,793, 2763 sf, 5 bd
2709 Harvest Ln #197, 94531, Washington Mutual Bank, 06-25-08, \$116,000, 871 sf, 2 bd
4316 Hillcrest Avenue, 94531, HSBC Bank, 06-06-08, \$450,000, 2627 sf, 4 bd
1312 Jasmine Court, 94509, US Bank, 06-06-08, \$225,000, 1045 sf, 3 bd
2525 Johns Way, 94531, Downing Savings, 06-23-08, \$195,000, 1925 sf, 3 bd
5655 Leitrim Way, 94531, ING Bank, 06-10-08, \$552,346, 2544 sf, 3 bd
2012 Live Oak Ct, 94509, Greenpoint Mortgage, 06-06-08, \$370,000, 2790 sf, 4 bd
5004 Longhorn Ct, 94531, Liquidation Properties, 06-16-08, \$233,750, 2249 sf, 4 bd
2221 Lopez Drive, 94509, Morgan Stanley, 06-27-08, \$212,500, 1471 sf, 3 bd
4516 Muledeer Ct, 94509, Mortgage Electronic, 06-02-08, \$301,750, 2330 sf, 5 bd
3200 Oso Grande Way, 94531, CWALT Inc., 06-04-08, \$382,500, 2996 sf, 5 bd
5109 Pawnee Dr, 94531, Soundview Home Loan Trust, 06-05-08, \$300,510, 1631 sf, 4 bd
5402 Piute Court, 94531, Indymac Bank, 06-26-08, \$326,008, 2457 sf, 4 bd
80 Russell Drive, 94509, Financial Assets, 06-02-08, \$182,750, 1178 sf, 3 bd
506 Shaddock Drive, 94509, LaSalle Bank, 06-24-08, \$142,350, 1134 sf, 3 bd
4717 Shetland Court, 94531, CWALT Inc., 06-02-08, \$432,979, 3239 sf, 4 bd
5220 South Steven Stroud Dr, 94531, Deutsche Bank, 06-24-08, \$280,500, 2698 sf, 4 bd
5121 Stagecoach Way, 94531, JP Morgan, 06-27-08, \$221,280, 1321 sf, 3 bd
2801 Stamm Dr, 94509, Federal National Mortgage, 06-06-08, \$293,570, 1069 sf, 3 bd
4925 Stonewood Way, 94531, Csfb Home Equity, 06-25-08, \$196,484, 1303 sf, 3 bd
3113 Van Buren Place, 94509, C-BASS Mortgage, 06-26-08, \$177,100, 1388 sf, 3 bd
1600 Viera Avenue, 94509, Mortgage Electronic, 06-25-08, \$107,250, 704 sf, 2 bd
4428 Whitehoof Way, 94531, Wachovia Mortgage, 06-11-08, \$209,100, 1508 sf, 3 bd
2370 Whitetail Drive, 94531, CitiMortgage, 06-11-08, \$371,430, 1664 sf, 3 bd
2758 Winding Lane, 94531, Bank of New York, 06-02-08, \$167,875, 1052 sf, 3 bd
1426 Yellowstone Drive, 94509, US Bank, 06-25-08, \$191,750, 1810 sf, 4 bd
- CONCORD**
3218 Bonifacio St, 94519, JP Morgan Chase Bank, 06-11-08, \$308,870, 1606 sf, 3 bd
4081 Clayton Road #104, 94521, Structured Assets, 06-25-08, \$178,606, 646 sf, 1 bd
1398 Del Rio Circle #C, 94518, Wells Fargo Bank, 06-25-08, \$123,250, 870 sf, 2 bd
2512 East Olivera Road, 94519, US Bank, 06-25-08, \$213,850, 1536 sf, 4 bd
2618 Garden Avenue, 94520, Structured Assets, 06-25-08, \$175,500, 1184 sf, 3 bd
2475 Hemlock Ave, 94520, New Century Home Equity, 06-04-08, \$336,600, 1088 sf, 3 bd
2154 Huron Drive, 94519, Deutsche Bank, 06-25-08, \$356,655, 1276 sf, 4 bd
4109 Kensington Drive, 94521, US Bank, 06-05-08, \$360,000, 1160 sf, 4 bd
2901 Loma Vista Ave, 94520, Liquidation Properties, 06-18-08, \$342,000, 1028 sf, 3 bd
4558 Marsh Meadow Way, 94521, Washington Mutual Bank, 06-11-08, \$558,000, 2537 sf, 4 bd
3361 Moretti Drive, 94519, Indymac Bank, 06-11-08, \$398,174, 1136 sf, 4 bd
1060 Oak Grove Rd #91, 94518, Morgan Stanley, 06-05-08, \$165,750, 910 sf, 2 bd
2097 Olivera Rd #D, 94520, Federal Home Loan Mortgage, 06-11-08, \$125,195, 884 sf, 2 bd
958 Pullman Court, 94518, Aurora Loan Services, 06-05-08, \$376,740, 1548 sf, 4 bd
1184 Tilson Dr, 94520, Washington Mutual Bank, 06-11-08, \$188,000, 1112 sf, 3 bd
4278 Wilson Lane, 94521, GMAC Mortgage, 06-05-08, \$442,550, 1486 sf, 4 bd
- DANVILLE**
648 Hartley Drive, 94526, HSBC Bank, 06-18-08, \$385,000, 1207 sf, 2 bd
- MARTINEZ**
4108 Irene Dr, 94553, Washington Mutual Bank, 06-11-08, \$179,910, 1205 sf, 3 bd
322 Mill Road, 94553, Federal National Mortgage, 06-09-08, \$195,355, 939 sf, 2 bd
120 Muir Road, 94553, US Bank, 06-09-08, \$202,095, 1263 sf, 3 bd
4990 Shadowfalls Drive, 94553, Nomura Assets, 06-27-08, \$444,916, 1490 sf, 3 bd
2404 Willow Tree Lane, 94553, HSBC Mortgage, 06-25-08, \$307,562, 1497 sf, 3 bd
- PLEASANT HILL**
830 Camelback Pl, 94523, Liquidation Properties, 06-16-08, \$212,000, 968 sf, 2 bd
130 Diablo Ct, 94523, Consumer Solutions REO, 06-25-08, \$563,316, 1146 sf, 3 bd
- SAN RAMON**
2556 McLaren Ln, 94582, American Home Mortgage, 06-24-08, \$586,246, 1775 sf, 3 bd
- WALNUT CREEK**
1731 2nd Avenue, 94597, CitiMortgage, 06-11-08, \$566,642, 1434 sf, 3 bd
1656 Parkside Drive #12, 94597, US Bank, 06-25-08, \$447,170, 1510 sf, 2 bd

Real Estate Market Slowdown Offers Good Opportunities to Buy Investment Properties

By Val Cook-Watkins

They say there are two sides to every coin, and that is particularly true in real estate. While the recent slowdown in the housing market has softened prices for home sellers, it also has resulted in an unusually good opportunity to buy rentals and other investment properties at outstanding values. Inventories of homes for sale have climbed steadily over the past couple of years, which has put downward pressure on prices. In particular, the larger number of bank-owned properties, or REOs, in the outlying areas

of Contra Costa County has resulted in a bigger inventory at the lower end of the market. As a result, many rentals are selling at discounted prices. Owning a rental property has always been a wise investment, given the many tax advantages. More tax deductions and are available for this type of property than for just about any other investment. But the dynamics of this market have made owning investment properties an even better value. Adding to the lure of investment real estate right

now is the fact that mortgage rates remain near historic lows and monthly rents throughout Contra Costa County are climbing once again due to an increase in the number of people looking to rent units. It all adds up to a very good investment climate.

There are many advantages of owning a rental, including depreciation and other tax write-offs. But the greatest benefit of all may be long-term appreciation. It is often said that you make your profits in real estate when you buy, not when you sell. So getting into the market at a low price point only increases your returns down the road.

What are some of the other advantages of owning investment property?

- **Deducting your expenses.** You may be able to deduct from your federal taxes many expenses associated with rental properties, including repairs, cleaning and maintenance, taxes, utilities and insurance. Perhaps the best deduction of all is depreciation of the property over 27.5 years.
- **Lower, capital gains tax rates.** When you sell real estate, you currently pay just 15 percent on the capital gains for federal taxes compared to your ordinary income tax rate for other income, such as CDs and bonds.
- **Deferring taxes.** You can

defer capital gains taxes by doing a 1031 exchange, where you replace your property with a like-kind one. The rules are complicated, so be sure to get expert help with this.

• **A Balanced Investment Portfolio** –By buying a rental property, second home or other investment real estate you can diversify your assets beyond stocks, bonds and CDs. In the long run, that means a more stable portfolio and a more secure future retirement.

Investment properties are a very specialized form of real estate. As a result, it's particularly important to work with a professional Realtor® who has expertise in this field to find the right property for you. In addition, tax laws can be complicated, so seek the advice a CPA or other tax professional.

Val Cook-Watkins, Manager of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage's Orinda offices, provides the above tips. A 30-year real estate veteran, Watkins oversees a talented team of 78 real estate professionals in the East Bay. Her offices are located at 5 Moraga Way and 2 Theatre Square, Suite 211, in Orinda. She can be reached at 925-253-4600 or by e-mail at vcocookwatkins@cbtnorcal.com.

Lamorinda Home Sales continued

| | |
|------------------|------------------|
| LAFAYETTE | Last reported: 8 |
| LOWEST AMOUNT: | \$635,000 |
| HIGHEST AMOUNT: | \$1,945,000 |
| MORAGA | Last reported: 9 |
| LOWEST AMOUNT: | \$405,000 |
| HIGHEST AMOUNT: | \$1,825,000 |
| ORINDA | Last reported: 9 |
| LOWEST AMOUNT: | \$203,000 |
| HIGHEST AMOUNT: | \$1,925,000 |

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

- LAFAYETTE**
1028 Carol Lane, \$735,000, 3 Bdrms, 1187 SqFt, 1951 YrBlit, 6-27-08
1185 Glen Road, \$960,000, 3 Bdrms, 1916 SqFt, 1955 YrBlit, 6-27-08
833 Hope Lane, \$1,195,000, 3 Bdrms, 2383 SqFt, 1954 YrBlit, 6-26-08
4150 Los Arabis Drive, \$1,510,000, 3 Bdrms, 2299 SqFt, 1957 YrBlit, 6-20-08
817 Mariposa Road, \$635,000, 1 Bdrms, 1083 SqFt, 1950 YrBlit, 6-27-08
2 Moss Lane, \$660,000, 2 Bdrms, 1559 SqFt, 1987 YrBlit, 6-25-08
627 Murray Lane, \$1,425,000, 4 Bdrms, 3074 SqFt, 1989 YrBlit, 6-26-08
3907 South Peardale Dr., \$1,945,000, 4 Bdrms, 3661 SqFt, 1998 YrBlit, 6-27-08
- MORAGA**
756 Augusta Drive, \$650,000, 2 Bdrms, 2079 SqFt, 1974 YrBlit, 6-25-08
1421 Camino Peral, \$555,000, 3 Bdrms, 1444 SqFt, 1972 YrBlit, 6-27-08
756 Country Club Drive, \$715,000, 2 Bdrms, 1743 SqFt, 1973 YrBlit, 6-27-08
700 Crossbrook Drive, \$1,825,000, 4 Bdrms, 3903 SqFt, 2002 YrBlit, 6-25-08
424 Donald Drive, \$1,092,000, 4 Bdrms, 2150 SqFt, 1968 YrBlit, 6-26-08
114 La Quinta Street, \$840,000, 2 Bdrms, 1720 SqFt, 1982 YrBlit, 6-18-08
30 Miramonte Drive, \$409,000, 2 Bdrms, 1152 SqFt, 1964 YrBlit, 6-25-08
132 Miramonte Drive, \$405,000, 2 Bdrms, 1134 SqFt, 1965 YrBlit, 6-20-08
502 Woodminster Drive, \$587,500, 2 Bdrms, 1474 SqFt, 1974 YrBlit, 6-24-08
- ORINDA**
136 Amber Valley Drive, \$1,850,000, 5 Bdrms, 3889 SqFt, 1970 YrBlit, 6-20-08
39 California Avenue, \$910,000, 4 Bdrms, 1708 SqFt, 1947 YrBlit, 6-26-08
19 Estates Drive, \$1,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 2312 SqFt, 1955 YrBlit, 6-26-08
100 Meadow Lane, \$203,000, 6-23-08
66 Monte Veda Drive, \$750,000, 3 Bdrms, 1884 SqFt, 1941 YrBlit, 6-27-08
101 Monte Vista Road, \$1,135,000, 4 Bdrms, 1723 SqFt, 1945 YrBlit, 6-25-08
4 Patrick Lane, \$1,925,000, 5 Bdrms, 3604 SqFt, 1990 YrBlit, 6-18-08
58 Van Tassel Lane, \$950,000, 4 Bdrms, 2014 SqFt, 1956 YrBlit, 6-18-08
33 Whitehall Drive, \$793,000, 3 Bdrms, 1579 SqFt, 1961 YrBlit, 6-27-08

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business briefs

Mechanics Bank Opens in Lafayette 3640 Mt. Diablo Boulevard



It may have looked like "old home week" to some Lafayette businesses and residents when Mechanics Bank opened its new Lafayette Office on Monday, July 21. The 103-year old bank's newest office across from Trader Joe's features plenty of familiar faces. The office will be managed by vice president Debbie Cooper, who formerly worked as the service manager at Mt. Diablo Bank. Before that, Cooper managed the Lafayette office of Bank of America. At Mechanics Bank, she will be joined by Magda Pieracki, another veteran of Mt. Diablo Bank who first worked with Cooper at Bank of America. Both are happy to be back in their element as community bankers. In addition to individual and small business banking products, Mechanics Bank has a full range of corporate banking products—including treasury management, commercial lending, commercial real estate lending and equipment leasing—and also a full range of wealth management, investment and trust services.

Correction to Business Briefs, July 9: Kiko Caicedo says: "Our company Bunu, LLC is a licensee of the Ironman name which along with the "Mdot" logo (the red letter M with the dot over it) is owned by the World Triathlon Corporation not Bunu, LLC."

Orinda Physical Therapy Center is on the Move 1 Bates Blvd. #100, Orinda, 254-8755

The Center has been in business for 50 yrs in Orinda. After 35 yrs. at 12 Camino Encinas, they are relocating to 1 Bates Blvd. #100, still in Orinda. For more information please contact orindaPT@yahoo.com

Tim Floyd Moves to Wells Fargo

Home Mortgage Consultant -Wells Fargo Home Mortgage
1277 Treat Blvd #150, Walnut Creek, 287.6926 - www.wfhm.com/wfhm/timothy-floyd
A Top Performer at Washington Mutual, Floyd was informed of his company closing its Wholesale and Retail Home Mortgage offices throughout the United States after returning from a Top Performer trip in the Bahamas that they were sponsoring. Floyd decided to go to work for Wells Fargo instead, because of its stability and stellar reputation. "My personal opinion is that we are currently in the eye of the storm with this financial crisis," says Floyd. The lack of available funds and restricted rules can make it difficult for potential borrowers who want to invest in real estate. "My team is uniquely positioned to provide solutions for most borrowers today," says Floyd. "We are a direct lender to VA, FHA, CALPERS, CALHFA and have access to down payment assistant programs for 1st time homebuyers that qualify. Those borrowers with substantial down payments and sufficient income will find a variety of premium loan programs to choose from."

Chambers of Commerce:

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

- Monday, July 28 - 2nd Public Hearing to discuss Sales Tax - Community Center
- Thursday, July 31 - Business Issues Committee - 8:00am - Chamber Office
- Lafayette Art & Wine Festival September 20th & 21st. The festival has become a major attraction for residents from Central Contra Costa County and the Bay Area.



Lafayette Art & Wine Festival 2007

Moraga Chamber of Commerce, www.moragachamber.org:

- The August Chamber meeting day and time has changed. Chamber members and their families are invited to participate to a Barbeque on Tuesday August 26th at the Moraga Commons Park, 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce, www.orindachamber.org

- Chamber Breakfast Meeting 8:00 a.m. - August 28th at Shelby's Restaurant -Theater Square. Cost \$10.00 at the door. The guest speaker will be Tom Chen of the Subcommittee for Emergency Preparedness. He will address the topic: "Is Orinda Ready?"

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

or call our office at 925-377-0977.

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Reflexology Sets Foot in Moraga.

By Sophie Braccini



Foot massage by Mr. Dang (Jim)

What could inspire the mother of a two year old child to open a Reflexology Studio in Moraga? If you ask that question to Tiana Hou, a young immigrant from Northern China, she will tell you that it was advice from her family and personal experience that led her to her first business venture.

A recent business graduate from Cal State, Hou had taken a leave of absence from her former employer, Bank of America, to spend more time with daughter. When it was time to go back to work, the bank had no opportunities available near her Lafayette home. With a new baby Hou didn't want a long commute. She consulted her family and brain-stormed about what kind of business she wanted to get involved in.

"The sense of well-

being is evolving in our community," says Alex, Hou's husband. "People are looking for complementary medicine and natural preventive and healing care." Hou had researched that field herself and had been very interested in Inga Dougans' book, "The Art of Reflexology." She experienced Reflexology first hand herself when long periods of standing had caused her severe pain. "Reflexology can release serious conditions," she believes, "it helped me with my pain. I use it routinely also to release stress, enhance blood circulation, promote detoxification and balance my body energy flow." Hou believes that Reflexology is very beneficial to relationships, since most conflicts are rooted in unreleased tensions.

The Moraga Reflexol-

ogy Studio officially opened on July 1st. It is located at 361 Rheem Blvd., between the new 24H Fitness and Round Table Pizza. The cozy studio features lounging armchairs in which clients recline while a masseuse takes care of their feet. The treatment is usually an hour long and starts with an herbal foot bath. While the feet soak, a head, neck and shoulder massage is performed before the foot treatment itself. Hou works with three licensed and experienced reflexologists: Mr. Li, Mr. Dang and Ms. Yang. Full body massages are offered as well. For an appointment, call 377-0685. Other reference books include: "The Complete Guide to Foot Reflexology," by Kevin and Barbara Kunz and "Feet First," by Laura Norman.

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SCHOOL CALENDAR

School Governing Board Meetings

Acalanes Union

High School District
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
Wednesday, Aug. 20 at 7:30 pm

Lafayette School District

LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
Monday, July 28 at 7:00 pm
Monday, Aug. 25 at 7:00 pm

Moraga School District

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
Tuesday, Aug. 19 at 7:30 pm

Orinda Union School District

OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
Monday, Aug. 25 at 4:00 pm

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Lamorinda Schools

Lamorinda Families Host Spanish Exchange Students

By Jean Follmer



Spanish exchange students and Lamorinda hosts enjoying a Giants game

Photo provided

Changing Times in College Admission

By Elizabeth La Scala, Ph.D.

As a college advisor, I am often asked the question "Why has getting into college become so stressful?" What was once simple and straight-forward is now more complex. What has changed? First, thanks to the Baby Boomer generation, there are greater numbers of high school graduates and more of them want to go to college. For many, a college degree has replaced the high school diploma as the minimum standard of educational achievement. In response to the greater demand for an undergraduate degree, colleges have escalated marketing efforts to attract qualified applicants. And, of course, technology makes it easier than ever to access college websites, take virtual tours and prepare college applications.

But this is only part of the answer. Digging a bit deeper, we see that more students are applying to the 100 most prestigious colleges and universities in the country. Simply put, more students are competing for the same number of spots at the most highly selective institutions. Heightened by media attention, it appears more difficult to gain college admission. The overall impact on students and parents is

stressful. The pressure mounts to take more challenging coursework, register for increasingly earlier test prep, and hire expensive consultants to help students "get into" the right college. With all the hype, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that it is the student who should be highly selective in the college he chooses.

My goal as a professional college advisor is to offer a few simple guidelines to help students and their families streamline the college admission process. First, control what you can control. This involves figuring out what's important to the student, her needs, interests, and academic aspirations. It also means taking an honest look at areas for improvement and focusing on these during the academic year. Next, plan ahead and start early. The senior year is far more fun and rewarding if you prepare the groundwork by doing what needs to be done in the sophomore and junior years. It is important to do a thorough college search, take the necessary tests, adhere to deadlines and prepare strong applications. No matter when you get started, the secret is good organization and planning, and applying to colleges that are a good match. It is

helpful to remember that a good, even a great education can be had at more than 2500 colleges nationwide, and most of these institutions accept 50% to 80% of their applicants.

My column will appear regularly through the college cycle from application to acceptance. Parents and students can look forward to a timeline of what needs to get done and when. The topics will include admission requirements, options for standardized testing and how to prepare, the college search, college applications, essays and personal statements, how and when to ask for teacher recommendations, college visits and financial aid. I will provide some practical guidance and suggest websites and other resources for more information. For now, enjoy the last few weeks of summer. In August we will get to work



Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. works as an independent college advisor in Lafayette. Dr. LaScala draws on 20 years of experience in higher education and research to customize the college search and admission process for students and their families. She has 3 daughters—one a graduate of Cal Poly (San Luis Obispo), one a sophomore at MIT and the youngest, a junior in high school.

Dr. LaScala can be contacted at elizabeth@doingcollege.com or (925) 891-4491.

Several Lamorinda families are hosting students from the Basque region of Spain this summer. The exchange program is managed by Edu-Culture International (ECI), a non-profit organization based in Berkeley.

Local ECI Leader Ken Beatus said the students are engaged in Bay Area activities during the day. Outings have included visits to the Golden Gate Bridge, UC Berkeley, Golden Gate Park, Union Square and the fortune cookie factory. The students also partook in a scavenger hunt in downtown Lafayette. During the hunt, they visited the Soccer Post and Take One Video before heading to Trader Joe's to find a product made in Spain. Beatus said they also "went to the beautiful Lafayette Reservoir and played soccer there." When Ken spoke to the Lamorinda Weekly, the students were busy learning about Thanksgiving at the Orinda Community Church; in addition to learning about Plymouth Rock and the pilgrims, they made and enjoyed an entire Thanksgiving Feast.

Teacher Aitzier Goicuria traveled to the United States with the students. She said her students are benefiting greatly from the experience: "The relationship between the students and the (host) families has been great. We really appreciate the generosity of the American people. This is a way to grow in our mind and think...to take time to know other people and their cultures." Beatus agreed saying "I'm really impressed by the generosity of the Lamorinda families."

Moraga resident Bonnie MacNab and husband Steve Hanna have been thrilled with their experience as host parents. MacNab said "We had not done it (hosted) before, but would do it again in a heartbeat. Our Jon is absolutely delightful...he's a wonderful guy." MacNab said her son, Ryan Hanna, and Jon have developed a great friendship this summer. She said "Ryan went to Spain this summer with ECI. He loved it. He'll be a junior next year and he'll absolutely go again next year." MacNab's experience with ECI "has been top notch. It's a first class operation."

The Caronna family of Orinda is hosting Aitor this summer. As the parents of two daughters, John Caronna said they thought it would be fun to host a boy. Caronna said "It's been a good experience for my girls, my wife, for Aitor and for me. He's so welcome to come back." The Caronnas have also enjoyed getting to know other families that are participating in the exchange program. They went to a 4th of July party at Bonnie MacNab's house and Caronna said "Bonnie's attitude was great. She ended up having 7-9 families there. It was a blast. That warmth was really nice."

The Peacock family of Lafayette is hosting Leire. Janice Peacock said her daughter, Kiera, and Leire "are both single children. This has been a nice experience for both of them." Peacock said "I think one of the things that helped was Phyllis from ECI said to try and treat the exchange student as a visiting niece or nephew as opposed to an

honored guest." Peacock said this helped Leire settle in and feel comfortable helping herself in the house. Peacock also said "The time has gone by very quickly. Already we're in a panic about things we haven't done." Peacock suggested that future host families "try to plan some things out because the time will go by incredibly quickly." She also said it's important to show the students about American life at home: "They get a lot of touristy outings in San Francisco during the day." It's important to teach them about American foods, even some American television instead of just focusing on "we're going to the movies today and tomorrow we're going to the zoo."

ECI Director Phyllis O'Neill said ECI has worked with lots of Lamorinda families in both hosting and traveling capacities. O'Neill said they helped Campolindo High School host a group of students from Austria last February. She also mentioned a group of Campolindo students is spending the summer in Germany as part of an ECI trip. O'Neill said the foreign exchange experience "really changes lives dramatically." On a personal note, she said "I've hosted over 20 students myself and my kids have friends all over the world." As a former educator, O'Neill understands the amazing experience a new culture brings to the educational environment. For more information on ECI programs, contact Phyllis at Phyllis@educulture.org or 510-845-3925.

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The Bay Area Writing Project's Young Writers' Camp (<http://www.bayareawritingproject.org/>), for students entering grades 4-8, came to Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School for three weeks this summer. The hours of writing culminated in a public reading by the youthful authors of their own work at the Storyteller in Lafayette. We invited the writers to send us some of their creations—we hope you enjoy these two poems by elementary school students:

I Am
By Addison Naton
(The first two words of each line were provided to the writer)

I am cool
I wonder what would happened if I was a squirrel
I see my friends around me
I hear my family telling me I'm special
I want my family to love me
I am myself

I pretend I am a warrior
I feel that I must right the wrong
I enjoy to play with my family
I like to see who I love happy
I respect all people
I am myself

I understand war is evil
I say we should stop war
I dream that I can make a difference
I try to make people respect Earth
I hope war stops and Earth gets cleaned up
I am myself

Beach
By Ava Tajbakhsh
My special place is the beach
The sun in my hair, the sand on my feet
I lay on a towel, getting a tan
I run in the water again and again
I swim with the dolphins
(yeah, I wish...)
I'm lucky if I see a fish!

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Lamorinda Schools

Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Academy Orinda Intermediate • Saklan Valley School • Sleepy Hollow Springhill • Stanley Middle • St. Perpetua School • Wagner Ranch

A Meal for Every Mile

By Jean Follmer, with Angela LaScala-Gruenewald



From right to left: Diana LaScala-Gruenewald, Daniel Mather and Angela LaScala Gruenewald at the end of trail in Tahoe City

A 2007 visit to Lake Tahoe prompted Lafayette sisters Angela and Diana LaScala-Gruenewald to consider the Tahoe Rim Trail (TRT). As avid backpackers, they decided to take it on during the summer of 2008. With Diana at MIT and Angela at Acalanes, they would be able to really catch up. They had volunteered extensively through Contra Costa's Youth Action Council, so it felt natural to build public service into

their hike. After considering many options, "Backpacking for Food" was born.

The goal was to raise funds for The Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. The idea was simple: Backpack around the TRT, ask for pledges for miles and donate proceeds to The Food Bank. One dollar can purchase three cans of food, so they set their fundraising goal at \$3000 for 10,000 cans of food.

Angela said "During the summer, the generous spirit of the holidays fades away and the organization struggles. That's one of the primary reasons this project will really help." Diana said her community service passion was initially inspired by Joan Tomasini of the Food Bank during her freshman year at Acalanes. The sisters have worked with Joan ever since.

They were thrilled to discover incredible support through

out the community. Diablo Foods generously offered their store front for fundraising and REI in Berkeley also opened their doors to them. The sisters found a fellow devoted backpacker who wanted to pitch in and help. They worked together with Daniel Mather throughout the month of June fundraising and planning. Although they fell short of their goal, they raised over \$2,200 in pledges.

On June 28th, they set off for the TRT. In total, they hiked 169 miles averaging 12 miles a day for 15 days. They carried 3-4 days of food at a time, picking it up at three planned drop-off points. Angela said the hike had a tremendous impact on her: "The experience was amazing. The backpacking was incredible and I learned a lot about the struggle (in fundraising) for non-profits. We thought of every mile as a meal and went for it." Diana said the bonus was "We got to do something we really love."

The Lafayette sisters will complete "Backpacking for Food" on August 1st when they turn in the donations to the Food Bank. They hope to reach their \$3,000 goal and are still accepting donations. To help them reach their goal, contact them at backpacking4food@gmail.com.

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Getting ready to go back to school! photo Jean Follmer
Springhill Elementary moms put together packets for August 25 Scorpion Day at Springbrook pool

Young Performers Present "Alice in Wonderland, Jr."

Submitted by Rachel Pergamit



Grace Roberts (White Rabbit), Marissa Monopoli (Alice) Photo provided

The zany world of Lewis Carroll will march into Moraga

when young performers take the outdoor stage in the all-time fa-

vorite Disney musical "Alice in Wonderland, Jr." The After School Drama Club has filled the hot summer afternoons with music and dance for local children, which will culminate in an evening performance under the stars. Audience members are encouraged to bring picnic dinners and blankets to the evening performance at the beautiful Hacienda de las Flores in Moraga on July 25, 2008 at 7 PM.

Cast members include Katie Coates as the madcap Mad Hatter and Marissa Monopoli in the title role of Alice. Performing as the ever-late White Rabbit is Grace Roberts with Catrina Kolm as the laid-back, cool Caterpillar. Margaret Hunger will be cutting off

everyone's head as the Queen of Hearts. Ashlee Lyall, Amanda Giles and Julie Meng will share the role of the pesky Cheshire Cat. The troublesome twins, Tweedle Dum and Tweedle Dee, will be portrayed by real-life best friends, Katherine Christensen and Samantha Myatt. Anya Petrovich, Jessica Nelson, Isabella Jacobi, Rachel Jackson and Natalie Kolm are the nasty flowers. Rounding out the cast is Cameron Cort (Doorknob), Sara Lee (Dodo Bird), Kellen Kvech (King of Hearts), Cameron Kvech (Mathilda), Claire Nelson (Small Alice), Tara Gottfried (Tall Alice) and Haley Seyranian as the March Hare.

Alice in Wonderland, Jr.

July 25, 2007 @ 7 PM
Hacienda de las Flores
2100 Donald Dr., Moraga
Tickets are \$7 in advance, \$9 at the gate
Contact (925) 300-8337 or
www.AfterSchoolDramaClub.com

Correction:

In our July 9 story Student Organizes Fundraiser for 5 Year Old, we indicated that the Lettko's would be holding an event in their Lafayette home on July 25. The Lettko residence is actually in Orinda, 19 Fallen Leaf Terrace.

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The Eagle Who Built the Bridge

By Jean Follmer



3rd from right John Wilcox

Photo provided

During his sophomore year at Acalanes High School, Life Scout John Wilcox became ready to fly with the Eagles. Although he was ready to join the elite rank, he had a big decision to make. John had to decide what he wanted to do for his Eagle Project; the act that would enable him to finally become an Eagle Scout.

After being a Boy Scout for over 10 years, John wanted to do something big. He said, "I joined Cub Scouts in the 1st grade at Springhill. I stayed in (Boy Scouts) because of the public service, hiking and camping." It was during an act of public service that John discovered the path to his Eagle Project. John said that he and some fellow Boy Scouts "were rebuilding a trail in Briones when I learned of several opportunities." It turned out that several Bay Area sites were in need of pedestrian bridges and the prospect of building one appealed to John. He chose to build a 25 foot pedestrian bridge near a picnic site on the old Mangini Ranch property near Mt. Diablo. The land is currently owned by Save Mt. Di-

ablo and it is scheduled to be given to the California State Park system.

Building a bridge isn't your typical Eagle Project. In fact, the magnitude of the project raised some initial questions. John said "You have to get approval from your Troop Leader and an Eagle Advisor." He said both men wanted to make sure he was going to be able to complete the project before they approved it. He assured them he would finish and they granted their approval. John moved on to securing all of the funding, materials and labor. He was lucky enough to have the structural engineering donated by his parents, Craig and Karen Wilcox, both engineers. John said, "I sent out donation packets to local construction (and related) companies." He had a great response from local companies such as Hardy Investments, MWH Engineers, Overaa Construction, Peacock Construction and Piedmont Lumber.

John was joined at the site by eight friends and fellow Boy Scouts. Although John had done a lot of the prep-work with two

friends (which included cutting, drilling and pouring the foundation), the bridge still needed to be completely constructed. Getting started was a challenge since they had to slide the beams down the steep embankment which leads to Galindo Creek. John said his Eagle Project enabled most of the boys to earn some of their community service hours required by both Boy Scouts and Acalanes High School. Approximately 240 hours of work went into the bridge project.

Although the Mangini Ranch property is not yet open to the public, you will have an opportunity to cross John's bridge on August 10 from 9am-12pm, when Save Mt. Diablo volunteer David Ogden will lead a 2-3 mile hike on Save Mt. Diablo's Mangini Ranch property. In addition to crossing John's bridge, organizers say the hike will include newly constructed trails through some of the property's most beautiful areas. Great views and rare plants are emphasized. For more information, contact David Ogden at davidogden@sbcglobal.net.

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Dining Dining Dining Dining Dining

The Rising Loafer Has More Than Great Bread!

By Susie Iventosch



Rising Loafer Ahmed Shibli and Maria Gastelumendi Photo Susie Iventosch

When I think of a chopped salad, I envision all sorts of delicious, calorie-laden goodies like garbanzo beans, salami, marinated artichoke hearts and cheese in addition to lettuce and all the veggies.

Curiosity got the better of me and gladly, too. He was so right! This salad is delicious, healthy and visually very pretty with a variety of different colored vegetables and walnuts, all covered with 'real' raspberry dressing.

Maria Gastelumendi and Ahmed Shibli have owned and operated the Rising Loafer in Lafayette for five years. Three

years ago they opened a second location in the Frank H. Ogawa Plaza in downtown Oakland.

"We bake all our own breads," Ahmed said. "We offer nine-grain wheat, country oat, garden herb, garlic basil, sour dough, New York rye and cinnamon raisin breads."

Ahmed and Maria also worked with a local health club owner to create a 'living lean' high fiber bread, made with quinoa, wheat, white and rye flour, nine grain cereal, oat bran and flax seed.

I purchased a loaf of the 'living lean' bread, and my family loved it. It's wonderful for breakfast, sandwiches, or snitching on the way home in the car.

"We make most everything here and we try to be as 'green' as possible," Ahmed pointed out. "We recycle to reduce refuse, practice water conservation, use biodegradable cleaning products, and pesticide and hormone-free foods, whenever possible. And, when available we buy local.

Maria noted, "Our Oakland restaurant recently earned the Alameda County 'Green Restaurant' certification."

This particular certification requires restaurants to commit to

"earth-friendly" environmental and conservation measures by bringing their operations into compliance with all environmental regulations in their city location. Each establishment undergoes a series of inspections to ensure they've met those requirements prior to earning the "green" designation.

Robin Bedell-Waite, coordinator of the Contra Costa Green Business Program, said they are continually adding restaurants and other businesses to the list of certified Green Businesses. "Anyone interested in the Green Business certification program, may contact our office at (925) 646-2286."

Ahmed indicated the Lafayette restaurant is in the process of the 'Green Biz' certification for Contra Costa County.

"We already abide by the same environmental and conservation standards," he said.

For more information on Green Restaurant or Business Program, please visit the following Web site:

- http://www.greenmycuisine.com/about.php
http://www.greenbiz.ca.gov/Abo utUsCCC.html
http://www.greenbiz.ca.gov/Shop GreenAC.html#restaurants

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Lafayette, CA. 94549
(925) 284-8816
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The Rising Loafer - Oakland
130 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, CA. 94612
(510) 836-8712
Hours: Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Fresh chopped veggie salad with walnuts and real raspberry vinaigrette

- 1 head leaf lettuce, chopped
1 cup carrots, julienne-cut
1/2 cup red cabbage, finely sliced
1/2 cucumber, cut into thin slices and quartered
1/3 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced thin and halved
2 medium tomatoes, cut into bite-sized pieces, or 3/4 cup cherry tomatoes, halved
1/2 cup dried cranberries
1/2 cup walnuts, broken into pieces
Mix all ingredients in large salad bowl and toss with fresh raspberry vinaigrette.



Fresh raspberry vinaigrette

- 1 teaspoon red onion, finely diced
1 1/2 cups soybean or canola oil
1/4 cup fresh or frozen raspberries (can freeze now for use during the winter months)
3/4 cup red wine vinegar
1/4 cup honey
1/2 to 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 1/2 teaspoons dried tarragon
1/2 teaspoon granulated garlic, or one small clove garlic, crushed
1/2 teaspoon sea salt
1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
Place all ingredients in a blender and puree until thick and smooth. Refrigerate until ready to use.

This recipe is available on our web site. Go to: http://www.lamorindaweekly.com

Susie can be reached at suziven@hughes.net

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LAMORINDA's Restaurants
--- updated July 23, 2008 ---
Table listing various restaurants, their addresses, and phone numbers. Includes categories like American, French, Italian, Japanese, Mexican, etc.

The Lamorinda Weekly (LW) Restaurant Guide is not paid advertising; our intent is to provide a useful reference guide. We hope that we have included all Lamorinda restaurants on this page, except those that told us they did not wish to be listed. LW is not liable for errors or omissions. In the event that we have inadvertently printed misinformation or excluded a restaurant please let us know (info@lamorindaweekly.com) so that we may correct our list for the next issue.

Life in LAMORINDA

FOXTAILS

By Mona Miller, DVM



Foxtails can be found throughout Lamorinda Photo Andy Schreck

Foxtails present a significant health hazard to animals throughout California, from late spring through fall. It is impossible to miss this wild annual grass if one goes out into any un-landscaped area. The name refers to the bushy spike arrangement at the top of the grass that resembles the tail of a fox – it is a cluster of spikelets attached to a main stem. Each cluster comes off the plant easily, and tiny barbs clasp onto material (socks, fur, etc). Then, the sharp point at the base of the cluster allows it to move forward into the material. This is the plant's adaptation for dispersing its seeds throughout an area. For most wild animals that live in the same native environments that foxtails are found, their fur is short enough that the foxtail does not migrate into the skin, but is transported and dropped off, allowing for successful seed dispersal. However, for our domestic pets we often find that the foxtail point will migrate into tissue and thereby cause problems.

I have seen foxtails in every part of an animal's body. Symptoms are related to the body part affected. Some areas are easier than others to find and remove the foxtails – such as in-between toes, the undersides of paws, ear canals and conjunctival lining of the eyes. Even in these areas, though, there may be significant pain associated with the foxtail (and its resultant inflammation and infection) that the dog may need sedation or

sil area.

Foxtails in cats are much less common, possibly because cats are meticulous cleaners, but I have seen foxtails in cats' eyes and ear canals.

When a foxtail gets embedded into tissue, it is only a matter of time before it will start to penetrate inside. Foxtails can form abscesses in the fat tissue under the skin, and also inside the lungs and abdomen. Obviously, it is best to address a foxtail problem before it has advanced inside the body and requires subsequent surgical diagnosis and removal.

Additional information can be found at www.veterinarypartner.com and www.cvma.net.

Dr. Mona S. Miller lives in Lafayette with her 3 year old son and her yellow Labrador Retriever. She has worked at Four Seasons Animal Hospital in Lafayette since moving here in 2001. She attended Cal as an undergrad, and received her DVM from U.C. Davis. She can be reached at Four Seasons, 938-7700, or by email to MonaSDVM@aol.com.



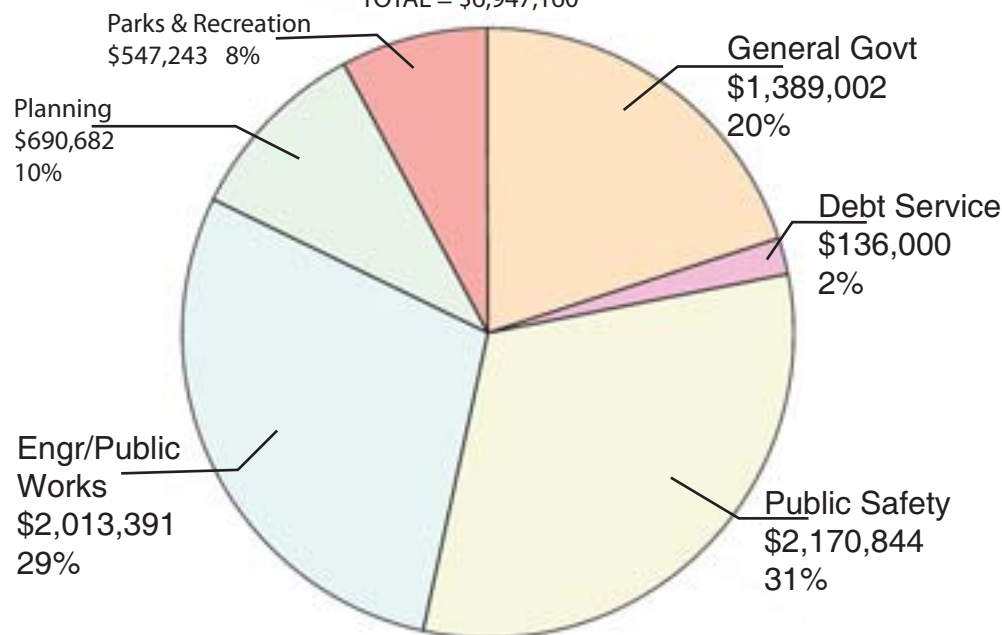
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The Reality of Moraga's Financial Situation

... continued from page 7

FY2008-09 PROPOSED EXPENDITURES BY GOVERNMENT FUNCTION

TOTAL = \$6,947,160



Streit believes that Moraga's financial state is not catastrophic. She explained that many towns in the Bay Area are suffering far greater circumstances than Moraga; the Town has little debt, its bond rating is essentially AAA and all bargaining units are covered in the budget.

The worrisome part of the equation is the growth of expenses while resources languish. "The cost of labor, supplies and materials keeps growing," states Streit, "while our revenue stream is more or less stagnant." The projected deficit for 2009/2010 is about \$130,000; it jumps to \$210,000 in 2010/2011, \$460,000 in 2011/2012 and \$550,000 in 2012/2013. That is, before Streit makes her recommendations and before hiring additional police officers.

"One of the problems of our revenue stream is that we do not have a diversified revenue base and are very vulnerable to State take-away." Streit

goes on to explain that 40% of the Town's revenue comes from property taxes. The Town gets 5 cents from every dollar paid in property tax, but the tax is unpredictable and fluctuates beyond Moraga's control. The problem is the same with Moraga's second most important revenue stream, sales tax, where only one penny on the dollar stays local. "We need to look at sources of revenue that will allow us to control our income stream," believes Streit.

At this time, working on savings and trying to find money for additional police officers, Streit is pessimistic: "If no other income sources are found in the short term, the reality is that we will have to do lay-offs." This would necessarily mean a lower level of service for residents, such as longer periods of wait time for permits, less maintenance of public grounds and fewer recreation options.

The Council favors a dy-

namic approach. A Council Member Ken Chew put it, "I support looking at ways to cut expenses and the possibility of a 'Revenue Enhancement Task Force' to explore ways to increase revenue."

The City of Orinda recently launched such a task force. Mayor Lynda Deschambault proposed that a similar body be formed in Moraga. "Rather than focusing on cutting programs and opportunities, it makes more sense to focus our energy on identifying ways to increase our revenue generation." She would like to see a brainstorming process where different options would be studied, including returning permitting and processing to the Town, adding a business license fee, additional revenue from events and recreation, grants or selling of property. Tashiro recently met with Orinda to discuss the project, which can only happen if the Town Council makes it so.

Management Changes Tune for 24-Hour Members

... continued from page 6

"I have previously expressed my frustration with the conditions to the staff who are working there, and have been assured by them that the problems would be remedied by the opening of the new facility, and that all current 24-Hour Fitness members would be able to use the new facility under their existing memberships. ...nowhere in any materials provided by the Club, or in any discussion with any employee of the Moraga Club, has it ever been stated that there would be an additional charge to existing members to use the new facility; in fact, quite the opposite has been represented."

She continued, "I am very upset that you have decided that existing 24-Hour Fitness members will have to pay an additional monthly charge to use the new Moraga facility, notwithstanding the fact that it does not have a pool or any additional sports courts. The new facility, while I certainly hope that it will have decent air conditioning, better equipment, and more space than the current standard Moraga facility, should not be designated as a 'super sport' club, nor do I believe that any existing 24-Hour Fitness member should be required to pay more to use that facility."

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LAMORINDA Community • Wilder Project Jumps Next Hurdle

By Andrea A. Firth

Orinda & Moraga

Photos Andy Scheck



Wilder Project Site July 19th, 2008

Orinda's City Council recently approved the final map for the first phase of the Wilder subdivision project. The Phase I map, the first of four anticipated final maps, will create 72 single family residential lots, the lots for a swim center,

community art and garden center and some of the planned playing fields, along with the open space and trails surrounding the lots. According to Mike Olsen, the representative for the Wilder project, the first homes built will be part of this

Phase I map, and maps for the subsequent phases of the project will be presented to the City Council in the next three to four months.

Moraga Restaurants Caught Selling Alcohol to Minors

... continued from page 3

Ruppenthal believes this highlights an area that needs to be addressed.

Officer Ron Ward agrees: "I was very surprised, too," said Ward, "we have a no tolerance policy in this town that's supported by the hierarchy and the Council."

Ward speaks from experience; he has been the top enforcer of Driving Under the Influence (DUI) laws in Contra Costa five years in a row and received a national award in 2007. He believes that the situation resulted from insufficient training and communication. "This may be a lack of communication between restaurant owners and employees," he said, "people can feel awkward asking, but there is training available to help identify and react to underage and over-drinking."

Ward does not believe that Moraga has a specific problem with alcohol, even though he recently arrested a 16 year old who was driving after 11:30 p.m. and was 'Under the Influence.' There were 107 recorded DUIs in Moraga in 2007.

The restaurants involved say that training programs are already in place. According to the General Manager of one establishment the incident was an unfortunate and isolated slip-up. "A human error was made," he acknowledged, continuing, "We took this event very seriously and immediately

took steps to further staff training and are working with ABC and their online program." He is confident that this will not happen again at his restaurant.

Another restaurateur reacted quickly as well and posted prompts in his restaurant both for customers and staff. All are reminded of the rules and responsibilities of the license requirements and that even on busy nights one has to make sure that all customers are the age they appear to be. "We had to let go the waitress who made the error," he said, adding that the incident was not her only mistake.

The penalty for non-compliance is a suspension of the license or a fine. A similar operation in Lafayette last December netted three violators.

First time violators in a three year period of time face a fifteen day suspension of their ABC license or may choose to pay a fine in lieu of the suspension, in the range of \$750 to \$3000, depending on the average amount of alcohol they sell. According to Jennifer Deuel from ABC, all the Moraga restaurants were first time contraveners. A second violation in 3 years would be subjected to a twenty five day suspension and a third time could mean the final suspension of the license.

For more information go to <http://www.abc.ca.gov/>.

Moraga Comments On Specific Plan

... continued from page 3



Moraga Center Specific Plan Page 7 View Locator

The plan includes a significant addition of multi-unit housing, either senior housing, students or multi-families, which triggered many reactions from the public. In an email to Salamack, Ferenc Kovac, a 20 year resident of Moraga, summarizes the concern: "Bringing

more homes, especially high density housing, will average the home price down, bring crime up, and have a huge negative impact on the quality of life in Moraga."

The Bruzzone family, which owns 90% of the land targeted by the Specific Plan, expressed concern through their urban planner, Richard Loewke. During a Parks and Recreation meeting he explained that one of the locations proposed for the gymnasium would be very detrimental to retail success and on a larger scale he expressed the opinion that "the Bruzzone family... were disappointed not to have been able to help shape the project description" and they are concerned that "the limitations contained in this version of the specific plan would block the production of both needed housing and retail development." The consultant proposed a very long list of elements to allow a successful development of the area. Among them, incentives to encourage the expansion of retail,

the constitution of the right mix of housing according to market conditions, streamlining of the approval process, and consideration of the use of future revenue to underwrite the cost of a public shuttle service connecting Saint Mary's College, the downtown and BART stations, delivering traffic mitigation and additional retail traffic.

Traffic mitigation was one of Deschambault's concern as well since the new California Environmental Quality Act procedure requires developments to mitigate their CO2 impact.

The traffic issue was echoed by some residents; one wrote: "Traffic is the main concern, specifically Moraga Road which is the main artery out of Moraga. This road is at full capacity now... How could it handle 2,000 or 3,000 additional car trips a day?"

Moragan James Johnson proposed a public referendum since he believes that the Specific Plan does not comply with the spirit of Moraga General Plan.

The Cities of Lafayette and Orinda both sent a letter requesting an extension of the public comment period, stating that 45 days is not enough time to review the voluminous and complex plan, particularly its impact on the roads and intersections. Both highlighted the timing, during summer vacation, that's not conducive to large public involvement.

At press time the Council hadn't made a decision on extending the comment period, however the staff's recommendation was not to extend to period because of the housing element contained in the plan that needs to be approved by the Town before a certain date. Whatever the vote of the Council, there is still time for residents to get informed and participate in the debate. The plan is available at the Moraga Library and online on the Town's web site (ci.moraga.ca.us); Salamack awaits your contributions. Public comments are also posted on the website.

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LAMORINDA Community •

Lafayette

Coming Soon: Rock the Plaza

... continued from page 2



Rock the Plaza 2007

Photo Andy Scheck

"Lafayette has countless numbers of musicians, both aspiring and accomplished, as well as music fans," said Raja Singh, owner of Red House and a Lafayette resident. "The 'Rock the Plaza' series is another great way for these musicians to share their music with the local community."

Get your groove on free of charge starting at 6:00 p.m. August 1 with the Red House All-Stars. On stage August 8 will be Stagefrite, August 15 The Ramblers and fi-

nally closing night August 22 will feature The Spazmatics, a personal favorite, their catch phrase is "nerds that rock."

Pack your own picnic or just pick up some delicious food and drink at the park, on the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road. Come as you are, dancing shoes optional. What could more fun than savoring an adult beverage with pals, your toes in the grass on a warm summer night? Carpe the Friday.

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August 15
The Ramblers

August 22
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Mt. Diablo Paving Project

... continued from page 2

Associate Engineer Matt Luttrupp noted that many people ask why the paving wasn't done at night, similar to Orinda's recent paving project. "There are quite a few large apartment buildings and many residential homes within 100 yards of Mount Diablo Boulevard and if the work was performed at night these individuals would not have been able to sleep for the last week and half and this was deemed an unreasonable burden."

Updates are posted on the city of Lafayette's website, www.love-lafayette.org every Friday, under the Quick Links section, subhead Cap-

ital Improvements.

One lane will be open in each direction at all times during work hours of 8:30 to 4:30, but there will be delays. Detours will be well marked. Contractor Top Grade Construction and city staff asks drivers for cooperation and extra patience during the project, which they are hoping to complete while minimizing delays and inconvenience. Surely this won't be a problem for normally courteous Lamorinda motorists, who are quite familiar with the joys of road construction.

Future of Potential Sales Tax Doubtful

... continued from page 2

"It was an agonizing, painful decision, because we want the city to succeed, we want our streets paved, we want police services increased," said fellow Chamber member and long time business owner Larry Blodgett. Referring to the difficult business climate for his store lately he continued, "Our story is one of many up and down the boulevard; I don't think now is the time for a sales tax."

The majority of public input was definitely not in favor of a potential tax increase. Marianne Adams of the Yarn Boutique said, "I can't tell you how much I oppose this measure."

"I'm disgusted that you would do something to harm business - it's just as close to go

to Walnut Creek or Moraga and way less hassle," said Gloria Lenhardt.

One of only a few residents that didn't oppose the measure was Geoff Bellenger who said, "I think it's very appropriate that citizens have the opportunity to vote on the tax. I believe we are short on services."

Public comment is encouraged at the second meeting addressing this issue on July 28 at the Lafayette Community Center, 7:00 p.m., a final decision as to whether or not to put it on the November ballot will be made at that time. If the mood of this meeting was any indication, the future of a potential additional sales tax does not look good.

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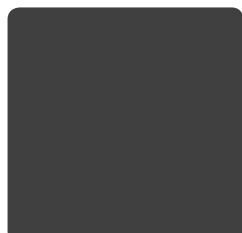
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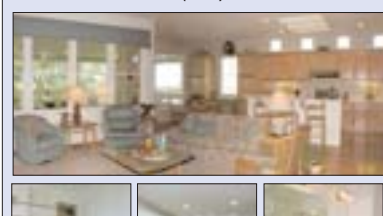
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SPORTS

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Stanford Routs Santa Barbara for U-20 National Title

By Alex Crook



Photo Robert Johnson

The USA Water Polo Mens 20 and Under National Championship was held at The Soda Aquatic Center at Campolindo High School the weekend of July 11. There were 11 teams going into the completion: The 680 Drivers, Diablo Water Polo Club, the CBU Lancers, Lamorinda Water Polo, San Diego Shores, SET and Shore Aquatics. The tournament also featured four college teams: Princeton, UC Davis, UC Santa Barbara and Stanford.

After two long days of action, it came down to the semi-finals, the consolation games and the championship on Sunday the 13th. Following six straight games of water polo, there remained only two teams and one final game: The Stanford Cardinal

vs the UC Santa Barbara Gauchos.

In the final collegiate rankings both teams had been highly ranked, with the Cardinal at #4 and the Gauchos #6.

The game was a rematch of a regular season game between these two teams on October 27 of last year. That time, visiting Santa Barbara, then #9, upset the 4th ranked Cardinal by a score of 9-7.

Early in the first quarter of this championship game, there was no action until Alexander Pulido scored with 1:36 remaining on the clock to give Stanford the 1-0 lead. Pulido turned out to be a key factor, scoring three times in the game for the Cardinal.

28 seconds later, the Gauchos responded with a goal from Sean Castillo to tie

it up at 1.

With just under a minute to go in the 1st, Santa Barbara failed to convert on a play that should have resulted in a goal. The shot deflected off of Cardinal keeper Brian Pingree and the quarter ended with both teams knotted at one.

The second quarter lacked scoring, except for another Stanford goal, this time from Sage Wright, and the Cardinal went into the half up by one, 2-1.

Coming out of the break, Stanford exploded and completely broke the game open by outscoring the Gauchos 4-1, including two back-to-back goals from Pulido.

Following Pulidos two goals, Sage Wright put himself in the spotlight once more by scoring his second goal of the day on a beautiful spin move to put the ball past Santa Barbara goalkeeper Travis Johnson, giving the Cardinal the commanding 5-2 lead.

With 3:31 left in the quarter, Santa Barbara got back on the board with an easy lob over the head of Brian Pingree, courtesy of Sam Evans.

31 seconds later, Stanford missed a chance after Kevin Mays shot deflected off the bar right into Travis Johnson's hands.

Near the end of the third, Johnson made a critical mistake, leaving the net wide open for Ryan Brown who lobbed it easily over the Gauch keeper's head for a 6-2 Stanford lead going into the 4th quarter.

1:15 into the 4th, Wright recorded his third goal of the day off a breakaway pass from keeper Brian Pingree.

With two minutes left to play and Stanford in control of a comfortable 7-2 lead, Santa Barbara started to wear down. Sam Evans' shot over the crossbar appeared to be the last sign of life for the Gauchos. It was now only a matter of staying in the game and not letting Stanford pour it on in the final minutes.

Santa Barbara did hold up, and Stanford didn't score any more, but the Cardinal were crowned champions in the 7-2 win over the Gauchos.

OCC Tops Competition at Bottoms Up

By Tim Fong



Mixed 11 Year Olds 200 Yard Freestyle Relay

Photo Andy Scheck

Nearly 700 swimmers flocked to the swimming pool at Miramonte High School to take part in the annual Bottoms Up swim meet. Competition was fierce in the meet and everyone wanted to win for their team. However, all swimmers displayed great sportsmanship and it ended up being a fun day for everyone.

"The meet is a great way for kids of all ages to get a chance to compete" said Orinda Country Club (OCC) coach Kelley Fernbacher. "Everyone really has a great time at Bottoms Up."

OCC came in first place at the meet, beating second place Sleepy Hollow by nearly 100 points. Garrett Dunn (7), Stephen Schmidt (9), and Charlie Wiser (13) all won the coveted high point trophy. This highly prestigious and sought after trophy is given to the swimmer in each age group who wins the most points for their team.

Nine year old Stephen Schmidt broke two records, eclipsing the previous records in the 100 yard IM and the 50 yard freestyle. Charlie Wiser broke two records as well, shattering the previous marks held in the 100 yard IM and 50 yard

breaststroke.

The second place Sleepy Hollow Legends boasted high point winners Natalie Redig and Sean Berry; Redig was the winner in the 13 and under age group and Berry in the 5 and under boys.

Another key point scorer for the Legends was 15 year old Meredith White. White swam in the 100 yard IM, 50 yard freestyle, and 50 yard fly earning silvers in the IM and freestyle and a gold in the fly.

"I am very proud of Natalie and Sean really representing Sleepy Hollow and doing so well in the meet. Winning the high point is an amazing accomplishment, and they both deserve that trophy for their hard work," said Legend coach Lincoln Haley.

Moraga Country Club also had a strong showing, finishing in third place. First place finishes by Erica Muller, Mary Allison Ashby, Sophie Smith, and Dana Holt helped key the success of the waves.

Muller, a 13 year old, earned the gold in 100 yard IM, 50 yard freestyle, and 50 yard backstroke. She also earned silver in the mixed 200 medley relay.

Eleven year old Mary Allison Ashby earned gold in the 50 yard freestyle and the 50 yard backstroke, as well as grabbing the silver in the girls 100 yard IM. Ashby was also a high point winner for the waves.

Fifteen year old Sophie Smith nabbed three medals, gold in the 50 yard breaststroke and silvers in 50 yard fly and 50 yard freestyle.

Dana Holt, also 15, brought home the gold in the 50 yard backstroke and 50 yard fly, as well as the silver in 50 yard free.

Five year old Arielle Allen also won a high point for the waves, after winning silver in the 25 yard freestyle and 25 yard backstroke. She also earned the bronze in 25 yard fly to earn a total of 26 points.

Other notable swimmers included fifteen year olds Sierra Robbins and Nicholas Deaver of Meadow and eleven year old Tyler Bartis of Campolindo Cabana Club. All three set records; Deaver broke records in the 100 yard IM, 50 yard backstroke, and 50 yard fly, Robbins in the 50 yard freestyle and 50 yard backstroke, and Bartis in the 50 yard backstroke



Mixed 13 Year Olds 200 Yard Freestyle Relay

Photo Andy Scheck

Karate Tournament in Reno

Submitted by Colleen Monasevitch



The weekend of July 18-19, 2008, six athletes from The Karate & Fitness Place USA in Moraga, competed in the 2008 West Coast AAU Junior Olympic Games Karate tournament in Reno, Nevada. The six returned home

with 14 medals: ten Gold, two Silver and two Bronze. L to R, Chris Wellbrook, Nick Luckenbach, Edward Chen, John Monasevitch, Brandon Tokuyama and Haze Mach.

38th Annual Meadow Mini Meet

(Information submitted by Elizabeth Lewis)

An estimated 1500 people descended upon the Meadow Swim and Tennis Club for the 38th Annual Meadow Mini Meet last Sunday, July 20. More than 600 swimmers from 10 teams competed in this daylong event.

The meet is unique in that participation is limited to swimmers aged eight and younger. Swimmers compete based on their actual age on the day of the meet, giving them opportunities for healthy competition not often available to younger swimmers. For many of the children, this was the first time ever competing

at a swim meet.

Gold medals went to Chloe Morrison, Mark McCurdy, Grayson Meckfessel, Tom McGuire, Channing Hanley, Lauren McAninch, Sara McCandless, Nina Munson, Eloise Engs, Ryan Lenahan, Mark McCurdy, Margat McDonald, Katherine Cane, Clair Steele, Hana Neugebauer, Carson Broad, Kate Minden, Chris Meckfessel, Marcus Ferreira, Casey Estes, Aidan Crouch, Garrett Dunn, Katrina Nugent, Samantha DeVecchi, Derrick Garcia, Ashleen O'Brien, Megan Colpo, Charlotte Wu, Kelly Mur-

phy, Zoe Zabatian, Bennett Winther, Robby Rowell, T.J. Collins, and William Faoro (results from Hy-Tek Meet Manager).

Many proud young swimmers went home with Silver and Bronze medals as well.

Among those who began their careers at the Meadow Mini Meet were Olympic swimmers Matt Biondi, Peter Rocca and three members of the U.S. National Water Polo team, Kirk Everest, Colin Keely, and Rick McNair.

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Girls 7 Year Olds 100 Yard Medley Relay

Photo Andy Scheck



SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

42nd Annual Lafayette City Swim Meet

... continued from page 1



Zach Dashner Free Style

Photo Doug Kohen



Rancho Coaches L-R = Ben Lucchese (head coach), Sarah Davidson, Tommy Dowley, Brian O'Hara

Photo Doug Kohen

The competition was fierce among all age groups. Rancho Colorados (Boys 6 & under) swimmer Ben Woodworth edged out teammate Nick Kresnak for 1st place in the 25-yard breaststroke with a final time of 29.41. Both Woodworth and Kresnak won the Medley and Free Relays with teammates Cooper Krznaric and Tommy Thrasher in the Medley and Thrasher and Lucas Eppinger in the Free. Also in breaststroke (50-yard), LMYA (Girls 13-14) swimmer Katie Records leaped from 3rd place in the preliminaries to beat Bryce Tanner and Brooke Aiello of Springbrook in the finals with a time of 33.34. Rancho Colorados swimmer Matthew Ladrech (Boys 11-12) edged out Grant

Sivesind of Las Trampas for a 1st place finish with a time of 28.66 in the 50-yard butterfly. Jack Larsen (Boys 6 & under) of Oakwood was untouchable in the 25-yard backstroke and tied Springbrook's Luke Miles for 1st place in the 25-yard freestyle. Sean McKenna (Boys 9-10) of Sun Valley pulled ahead of Springbrook's Nathan Brickman to win the 100-yard IM with a time of 1:21.46. Grant Sivesind (Boys 11-12) of Las Trampas won his events in freestyle and the IM while Ellyn Stewart (Girls 11-12) of Springbrook rocked her way to 1st place in all of her events (freestyle, backstroke and the IM). Stewart also won the 200-yard Medley Relay with teammates Megan Dietrich, Chase Lanier and

Katherine Torchio as well as the 200-yard Freestyle Relay with teammates Megan Dietrich, Sydney Dunne and Madeline Myall.

Springbrook dominated in the Boys 13-14 50-yard backstroke with 6 of the 10 final placements. 1st place went to Joseph Dietrich (28.07), 2nd to Ryan Connoly (29.19) and 3rd to Brendan Foster (30.09). Other Springbrook backstroke finalists were Luke Inserra (4th), Brennan Quinn (6th) and Justice Fleischmann (10th). Springbrook also set a meet record in the Girls 13-14 200-yard Medley Relay. Teammates Nora Vance, Barbara Lanier, Brooke Aiello and Natalie Chan broke the 1995 LMYA record with a time of 1:58.35.

Becca Buck Does it Again

By Jean Follmer

LMYA Girls 7-8 swimmer Becca Buck took home one of the high point trophies from the 42nd Annual Lafayette City Swim Meet. In a 5-way tie at 33 points with Joseph Dietrich (Springbrook Boys 13-14), Shannon Pegnim (Springbrook Girls 15-18), Ellyn Stewart (Springbrook Girls 11-12) and Sam Stromberg (Sun Valley Boys 15-18), Becca was by far the youngest overall winner of the meet.

After cruising to first place finishes in breast stroke, freestyle and the IM, Becca shyly said "I feel pretty good about it." She also won the Medley Relay (with teammates Zoe Del Rosario, Melissa Elliott and Morgan Rogers) and the Freestyle Relay (with teammates Audrey Chang, Melissa Elliott and Morgan Rogers). Not new to winning, Becca recently took home the

high point trophy in her age group at the Battle of the Ages for the second year in a row.

Becca started swimming with the LMYA Dolphins at age 4. With her older sister, Hannah Buck, already swimming for the Dolphins, Becca skipped Gutter Guppies and "went straight onto the swim team." When asked what she likes about swimming, Becca said "I like that when you get a time you can always get a faster one. I like it when you pop your time you get a dolphin stamp on your t-shirt." Becca also appreciates the fact "that teammates root each other on" no matter how well they are swimming. Becca's mom, Kristi Buck said "We try to keep it low key at our house so that she knows it's important to focus on her own goals and make sure that her teammates feel good about their successes as well."



Becca Buck

Photo Doug Kohen

Springbrook Coach Marc Cavallero was thrilled with the win saying "It was our 8th year in a row winning the City Meet. Our hard work is paying off. In swimming, you work hard and you get to see the direct benefits of your work. I tell my swimmers it's (the City Meet) a mid-season progress report to see where we're at. Now we get back to work."

Individual winners by age group:

| Name | Team | Age | Total Points |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| Megan McKenna | Sun Valley | Girls 6&under | 31 |
| Jack Larsen | Oakwood | Boys 6&under | 30 |
| Becca Buck | LMYA | Girls 7-8 | 33 |
| Seppi Ortman | Las Trampas | Boys 7-8 | 31 |
| Alyssa Mueller | Sun Valley | Girls 9-10 | 31 |
| Brady Aiello | Springbrook | Boys 9-10 | 31 |
| Ellyn Stewart | Springbrook | Girls 11-12 | 33 |
| Grant Sivesind | Las Trampas | Boys 11-12 | 31 |
| Natalie Chan | Springbrook | Girls 13-14 | 31 |
| Joseph Dietrich | Springbrook | Boys 13-14 | 33 |
| Shannon Pegnim | Springbrook | Girls 15-18 | 33 |
| Sam Stromberg | Sun Valley | Boys 15-18 | 33 |



Winning Boys L-R = Devin Regan, Brad Robison, Joey Hewitt, Wyatt Wilson

Photo Doug Kohen

Patricia Battersby, Ashley Battersby, Joan Cleveland, Joan Eggers, Joan Evans, Linda Friedman, Marianne Greene, Pamela Halloran, Dexter Honens II, Debbie Johnston, Hal Kaufman

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SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Lafayette Criterium A Crowd Pleaser

By Linda U. Foley



The Race

Photo Doug Kohen

Criteriums come in different shapes and forms, some are done by time others by laps, some have hairpin turns and some have climbs. . . but whatever the configuration, they are always great fun and exciting, especially for the spectators. All they are required to do is shout out their opinions and hang out in a shady spot with a cup of joe or a smoothie.

The established one-kilometer loop was to be circled and circled again for a solid, unrelenting 75 minutes for the Pro 1/2 event. At upwards of 30 miles an hour, even just watching from the sidelines in the shade, one can imagine the screaming quads and the sweat burning your eyes, exacerbated by the heat. But, that's the nature of the game, the adrenalin rush,

and the riders wouldn't have it any other way.

To me, one of the great organic aspects about this sport is the silence. The silence of the wheels, the absence of motors and exhaust. Instead, the excitement of personal strength, stamina, strategy and vigor ride on the air. All manner of lightweight Titanium steeds humming under spandex clad bodies.

Teams work together, they have strategies, they protect and support each other. It never ceases to amaze me how much unending information there is about riding, bikes, strategies, and training especially when I listen to Bob Rolle covering the Tour de France. And I used to think you just get in the melee, maintain some elbow room to

keep from entangling with other riders, keep the rubber side down and peddle like the Dickens.

As the "gun" went off at 12:05, a tarantella of collective cleats clicking lifted the group off the asphalt for a micro second, into the air and then forward, projectile-ing toward the first hay-baled corner of the loop.

"Wow! 75 minutes is a long time to spectate, much less go in circles," said my mother in German, or a facsimile thereof, as she sat perched in a beach chair. Some minutes later, she'd vacated her position to hang on the ropes yelling at her grandson whenever he whooshed by. Or at least we thought it was him, they all look alike especially in team uniforms. In addition, they

share same body builds—lean; same outfits—spandex; and same determination.

About twenty-five minutes into the constantly changing configuration of circling riders, seven riders pulled away. They swooped the corners in a fluid teardrop and the gap between the two factions lengthened. With plenty of time to go, plenty of time for another breakaway to close the gap—or not.

Following an unexpected interruption to neutralize the race, the event concluded not unlike it started—lots of camaraderie, back slapping, wide grins—and lots of sweat.

Linda U. Foley is a contributing writer – her son Michael Foley is an author and cyclist who rides for the Wells Fargo Racing Team.

4th Annual Lafayette Criterium Results

(Complete results are available at <http://www.c4racing.org/www/events.htm>)

| Place | Name | Team, if applicable |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Elite 5 Male | | |
| 1 | Dereck Dixon | |
| 2 | Peter Armstrong | Synergy-Taleo |
| 3 | Benjamin Joplin | Bikes 4 Life |
| Elite 3 Female | | |
| 1 | Beverly Chaney | Roaring Mouse |
| 2 | Andrea Monroe | Velo Bello |
| 3 | Janette Kellman | Dolce Vita |
| Elite 4 Female | | |
| 1 | Melissa Schultz | Cycle Sports/Trumer Pils |
| 2 | Morgan Bonar | Chico Corsa Cycle |
| 3 | Ann Stuart | Sac Golden Wheel |
| Master 45+ Male | | |
| 1 | Kevin Metcalfe | Specialized |
| 2 | Rich Juarez | VOS |
| 3 | Lawrence Nolan | Specialized |
| Master 55+ Male | | |
| 1 | Richard Shields | Hammer Nutrition |
| 2 | Morgan Caldwell | |
| 3 | David Stockwell | SJBC/SugarCRM |
| Elite 4 Male | | |
| 1 | Joakim Vinberg | Kovarus/ABTA |
| 2 | Scott Penzarella | Bike-Rx |
| 3 | Sam Parker | Roaring Mouse |
| Elite 3 Male | | |
| 1 | Brandon Correia | Gospeed Courier |
| 2 | Patrick McLaughlin | Wells Fargo |
| 3 | Angelo DiGiovine | Active Athlete/Squadra Ovest |
| Pro Elite 1-2 Male | | |
| 1 | Patrick Briggs | Cal Giant Berry/Specialized |
| 2 | Rand Miller | Webcor/Alto Velo |
| 3 | Bob Newman | Pacific State Bank |
| Pro Elite 1-2-3 Female | | |
| 1 | Mary-Ellen Ash | Easton/SugarCRM/Specialized |
| 2 | Hanan Alves/Hyde | Proman |
| 3 | Amanda Eaken | Metromint |
| Master 1-2-3 35+ Male | | |
| 1 | Davis McCook | Proman |
| 2 | Chris Wire | SJBC/Sugar/CRM |
| 3 | Keith Defiebre | Scott/Ritchey/Oakley |
| Master 4-5 35+ Male | | |
| 1 | John Hansen | Wells Fargo |
| 2 | Matthew Smith | East Bay Velo Club |
| 3 | Mac Heebner | Dolce Vita |

Send sports stories and ideas to:
sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com
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 call 925-377-0977



Photo Doug Kohen

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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 The Lamorinda Weekly is looking for a reporter to cover events and meetings in Orinda. Reporter should be community-minded and objective. Must be able to attend and report on 1 - 3 evening meetings per month. Call Wendy Scheck: 925-377-0977 or email wendy@lamorindaweekly.com

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 The Lamorinda Weekly is looking for a Contributing Editor to coordinate sports coverage, write and edit stories. We are also looking for versatile sports reporters to cover Lamorinda sporting events. Hours are flexible but most events are in the afternoon/evening and weekends. Some experience is required of the editor and preferred for reporters, although we will consider all qualified entry-level candidates. Wendy@lamorindaweekly.com

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SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Lacrosse Star Doesn't Stop For Summer

By Tim Fong



Alex Seclow

Photo Tim Shearer

At age eight, Alex Seclow started playing lacrosse. Although there were no girls' teams for her age group, she still played and dominated the boys she competed against. Now, at age 15, Seclow is still dominating.

Seclow will be a sophomore at Miramonte High School in the fall, and made the varsity lacrosse team as a freshman. During her freshman season, she helped the Lady Matadors advance to the North Coast Section Semifinals where Miramonte was ousted by Monte Vista.

During the summer Seclow plays for Triple Threat Varsity, a prominent club team that has traveled to national tournaments in Colorado, Pennsylvania, New

Jersey, and Maryland. These tournaments allow players to gain experience, be seen by college recruiters, and improve their game.

"The tournaments are a great chance to play higher level lacrosse and be seen by college recruiters," explains Seclow, who hopes to play college lacrosse; these tournaments can help make this dream a reality by providing the needed exposure to recruiters.

The national tournaments are important to recruiters because of the reputation of the West coast as being weak at lacrosse. The East coast usually boasts the strongest players and teams; however this does not dis-

courage Seclow and her teammates from continually competing in tournaments with predominantly East coast teams.

"East Coast teams have a reputation for being better than the West coast teams, so it's always fun to show them we can play too. They start playing younger on the East coast and many more girls play. Some people think that East coast teams pass quicker and are more aggressive, but we have been able to hold our own against many of the teams," Seclow stated.

Traveling with the team allows Seclow and other teammates to spend time together and become close friends.

"I have had such great experiences with Triple Threat - not only do I become really close with my own team mates, but its fun getting to meet girls from all over the country like Vail, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Boston and New Jersey," said Seclow.

However, Seclow never forgets the real reason for competing in such intense tournaments, concluding, "The best part of traveling to tournaments and playing in games is getting the chance to improve my lacrosse game."

All this hard work may pay off and allow Seclow to fulfill her dream of playing college lacrosse.

Moraga Country Club

Treats the Community to Great Tournament

By Sophie Braccini

Some Lamorindans plan their vacations around it: Moraga Country Club's (MCC) Stead Open, the tennis tournament they do not want to miss. "This will be our 22nd year," says MCC Tennis Director Mark Orwig, "every second week in August, we have between 220 and 280 participants registering to compete in men's and women's singles, doubles and mixed doubles." The free event attracts thousands of visitors every year from all of our neighboring cities; they come to see great tennis and unusual games.

"What is specific about the Stead Open is that it is not a professional event," explains Orwig, "still, there is \$25,000 in prize money to be won, so we attract some very good players." You may not see Federer, Nadal or Sharapova on the Moraga courts, but definitely some great players; some on the Tour at this time, some ex-professionals and some nationally ranked juniors. The eclectic group makes for unusual encounters and very interesting games, a delight for spectators.

When the event was first envisioned, Orwig began working with Michael Stead, the owner of many auto dealerships in the East Bay. Since then, the Stead family has been a great sponsor and supporter of the event. This year



Darrin Cohen of Lafayette in last year's Mens' Doubles Final Photo Tod Fierner

the Club secured the support of an additional generous sponsor, Barons Jewelers. It is thanks to the sponsors that the event is free for the public. "We do this for the community," says an enthusiastic Orwig, who spends many hours on this event every year, "the Club is completely accessible during the tournament, the parking is plentiful, food is available and the restaurant is open to all during the week." As a special treat for people who work

during the week, Orwig announces that featured matches will be presented in the evening, starting at 5:30 p.m.

This year's tournament runs from August 5th-10th. The public can check the results and announcements on bulletin boards at the Club or by calling 376-1314. USTA players can register until July 26th by sending an email to Orwig at Mark@moragacc.com.

Correction: In our July 9 story, Little League All-Stars Start Sizzling Summer, we incorrectly named one of the players for the 10-year-old All-Stars. Our apologies to pitcher Jake Berry; there is no Jake Rowley on the team.

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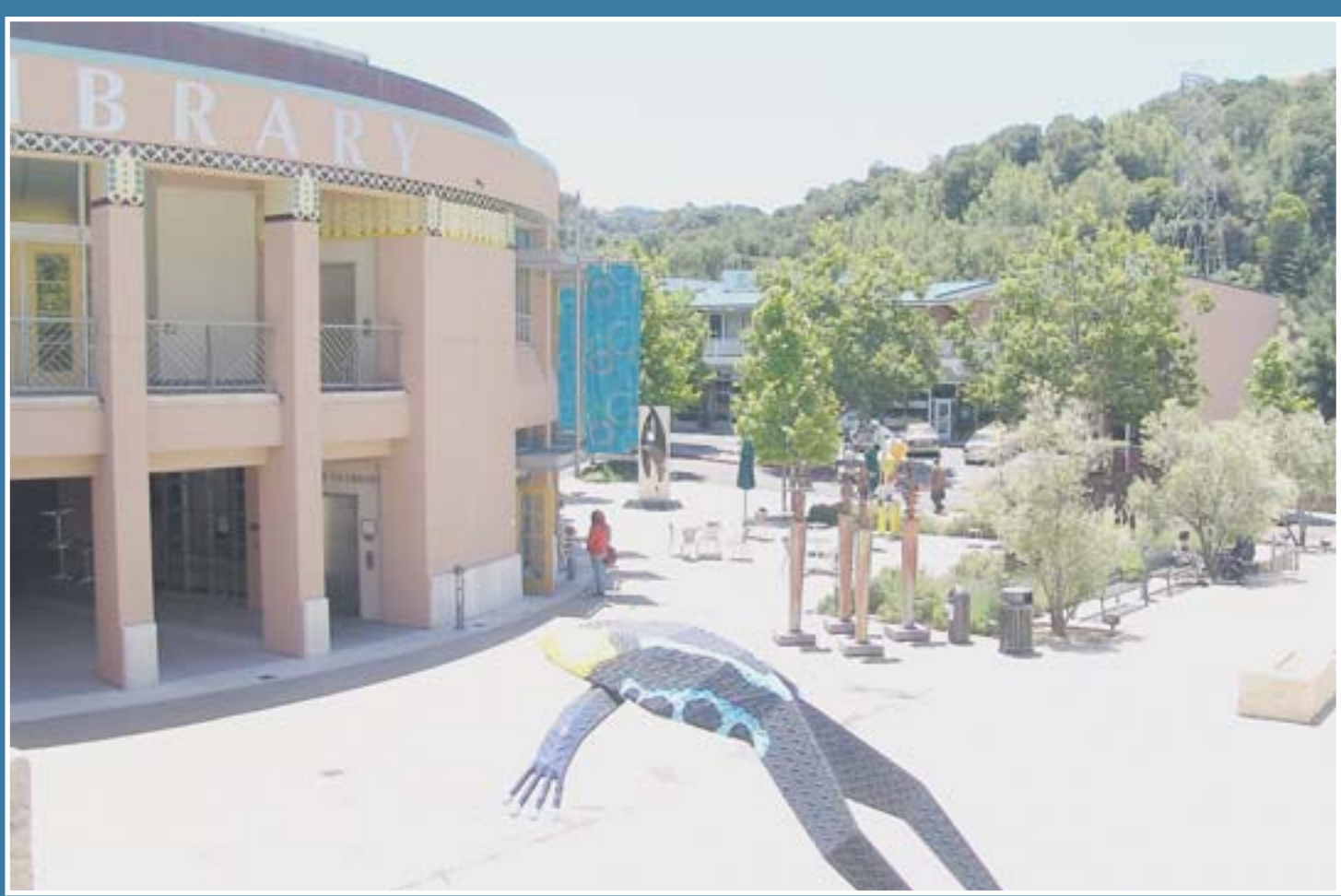
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