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Volume 02; Issue 11

www.lamorindaweekly.com 925-377-0977

Wednesday, August 6, 2008



# Lafayette Downtown Strategy

By Cathy Tyson

... update

Developing a vision and strategy for the long-term future growth of Lafayette is the objective of Lafayette's ambitious Downtown Strategy that was initiated in May of 2007. Although limits on development are spelled out in the city's General Plan, the purpose of the Strategy is to guide development that will likely unfold over the next 20 years to enhance Lafayette's functionality and prioritize improvements like parks, circulation and parking – making the downtown area more inviting and livable.

So far Wallace, Roberts & Todd, (WRT), a city and regional planning firm, with a substantial amount of community input, has defined the issues and vision - while noting opportunities and constraints, explored alternatives, and outlined a preferred concept

of development, but stopped short of preparing the strategy and specific plan while the Advisory Committee clarifies draft goals.

Kicking off the Strategy process was a city-wide mailing explaining the process, next came a survey sent to 11,000 homes and businesses. Representatives from WRT walked and mapped the downtown, examined parcel sizes, density and traffic. Three community workshops, scores of interviews with key stakeholders and public meetings followed.

Experts from WRT analyzed all of the data gleaned from their research and surveys and came up with a Preferred Plan in April of this year. The revised draft goals established at that time are now being revisited by the Advisory Committee.

All of this is easier said than done, when you have to take into account BART, higher density housing, walkability, parking, open spaces, height limits, mixed use projects, creek protection and more.

Having a substantial amount of money available from the Redevelopment Agency to invest in the city that can only be used toward public projects and toward stimulating affordable housing is what makes this strategy and its future execution possible.

A plan is critical to allocate funds of up to \$20 million over the next 20 years, with an additional \$30 million earmarked to stimulate affordable housing projects. Spending \$50 million in Lafayette over a number of years will certainly have an impact on the city. ... continued on page 10

## LAMORINDA WEEKLY this week

### Profiles: Pages 2, 3, 4 Lamorinda's Finance Directors -



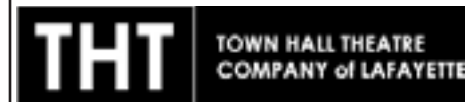
These three women know what they're doing.

### Town Hall Theater



Names Its Artistic Director - A new job for a familiar face.

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### Art and Wine Winner

By Cathy Tyson



Devin Abbott, a 17-year old entering senior at Acalanes High School, is the winner of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce's poster art contest for the Art and Wine Festival. Promotional materials for this September's Festival will bear Abbott's eye-catching design.

Abbott's inspiration was capturing the surrounding hills while featuring the focus of the festival - art and wine. His poster will be plastered all over town as the event draws near.

Abbott has taken art classes for two years at Acalanes, and enjoys drawing by hand and via the computer. Although he's currently attending summer camp at Stanford, taking a creative writing course, he wants to start a graphic arts club when school starts in the fall.

### Making a Splash in Beijing

By Emily Schultheis

Kim Vandenberg and Peter Varellas were teammates on the swim team at Moraga Tennis and Swim Club when they were in elementary school. Now, years later, they're teammates again--on the United States Olympic team.

Representing their country in the Olympics is the dream of many young athletes. For Vandenberg and Varellas, both 2002 Campolindo grads, it will soon be a reality.

Both will be part of the United States Olympic team – Vandenberg for swimming, and Varellas for water polo – in Beijing this month.

Vandenberg started swimming at MTSC when she was eight years old. She swam recreationally for four years, and according to her dad, Rick Vandenberg, won trophies both through the Orinda-Moraga Pool Association and the county swim meet.

At age twelve, Vandenberg began swimming year-round with Orinda Aquatics, and continued to swim – and win awards – throughout her time at Campolindo. She graduated in 2002, and went on to swim at UCLA. ... continued on page 17



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# Lamorinda Community

## Calendar, Notes, News

# Lafayette

**Calendar**

**City Council** 7pm  
Community Center, Manzanita Room  
500 St Mary's Road  
Monday, August 11

**Planning Comm.** 7pm  
Community Center, Manzanita Room  
500 St Mary's Road  
Thursday, August 21

**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  
Wednesday, 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



**Open container 7/26/08** At just before 2:00 a.m. on El Curtola at Green Place a driver was pulled over for having a tail light out. The operator of the vehicle happened to be driving on a suspended license and there was a half-full, ever the optimist, bottle of Jack Daniels under the seat of her pal riding shotgun. The 20-year-old white male passenger admitted the bottle was his. At least he was honest.

**Car burglary, 7/22/08** A Ruth Court resident woke up and found someone had broken into her locked car during the night. An iPod and a camera that were left on the seat were taken. No suspects or leads.

**Home burglary, 7/18/08** An unknown suspect entered a Sibert Court home through an unlocked front door and stole electronic items, jewelry and prescription during the day.

**Garage burglary, 7/16/08** A dirt bike, tools, and miscellaneous equipment were taken from a Windsor Drive garage. A pair of bolt cutters and cable cutters were left behind. Does bad news come in threes? If so, perhaps this reporter can take the next edition off.

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### Tracy Robinson – Using Your Tax Dollars Wisely

By Cathy Tyson



Tracy Robinson

Photo provided

It all started with a resume, then came a series of questions via e-mail, an interview in front of five department heads and a meeting with the City Manager. Then some testing, a detailed financial analysis of a theoretical scenario and presentation of her work to a panel of City Managers from Lafayette, Orinda and Danville, then another meeting with future boss, Lafayette City Manager Steven Falk. Who knew Tracy Robinson, Molecular Biology graduate of UC Berkeley would use that as a springboard to municipal finance. Perhaps it was her MBA from UC Davis with an emphasis in finance and accounting that sealed the deal on being hired as Lafayette's Administrative Services Director.

Working as a Budget Analyst for World Savings, now Wachovia, for a dozen years in their Oakland headquarters might have helped too. Robinson rose to Assistant Vice President and joined the Information Technology Department. With the City of

Lafayette since May of 2000, she thought the requirements of management and budget experience coupled with technology expertise would be a good match for her skill set. "I am a nerd who loves spreadsheets, what can I say?"

Managing a \$50 million budget is no easy task. "Personally, I think that the budget is the most important document the City has. The budget is a tool that allows the City Council to function effectively and to set priorities. When I got this job, Steven told me that it was expected that I would 'strap on a keyboard' and input the budget myself. And I was thrilled. It's really the favorite part of my job. Stretching the dollars is always a challenge. I'm staffing the Lafayette Finance Review Committee whose mission is to independently review the City's finances to see if there are efficiencies we can take advantage of to squeeze every last drop out of the precious revenue we do get."

Like many positions within

city government, she wears many hats during her work day. "My job duties include Human Resources, Finance & Budgeting, Risk Management and Information Technology. In addition, I edit the city's quarterly newsletter, Vistas. So basically, I view my job as making sure that there are sufficient resources to implement the City Council's policies. That means that I ensure we hire and train the right people and give the staff the tools and resources they need to do their jobs efficiently. That can include everything from designing and maintaining the City's website, making sure the phone and computer systems function properly, analyzing budget proposals, issuing bonds for capital projects, conducting salary and benefit surveys, tracking expenses and revenues, recruiting for open positions, even making sure that we get all our office supplies at the best possible prices." In addition, when Falk is out of the office, Robinson fills in as Acting City Manager.

What's the one thing you want the public to grasp about city finances? "They are a lot more complex than people think," said Robinson. "We have regulations, mandates and statutory limitations on how we can spend the money we get. Probably the biggest thing that people don't realize is that out of every \$1,000 they pay in property tax, the City gets only \$65. That surprises most people."

Robinson lives in the Oakland hills with her husband, two daughters and cat. During her lunch break you might find her at Oakwood on a treadmill watching the Food Network or reading a trashy novel. At home Robinson manages the family budget. She confides that her talented, creative husband, who has an honors degree in Economics, still comes from the, "if we still have checks, we must have money" school of thought.

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### No Increase in Sales Tax

By Cathy Tyson

The final decision to not place an additional sales tax measure on the November ballot was made at last week's City Council meeting. After cake, complimentary t-shirts, bumper stickers and the "happy birthday" song to celebrate Lafayette's fortieth year since incorporation, a substantial amount of public comment was heard.

Not surprisingly much of the comment was negative. Council members wondered aloud how a sales tax would pass without community support. Council Member Carol Federighi was concerned that yet another tax measure loss would leave the city in a bad position for future measures.

City Manager Steven Falk said, "59% of those polled said they want to tax themselves to pay for better roads, extra police patrols, and more open space in Lafayette, and so it's disappointing that the community couldn't find a way to come together and support this idea. However, with nobody stepping forth to run the campaign and with the

Chamber of Commerce opposed to the proposal, I completely understand and defend the City Council's action."

Voytek Konopk, owner of Novina Fine Jewelry said, "Why should merchants be punished to pay for the tax?" He feels an additional sales tax would encourage potential customers to buy over the internet, thus robbing the city of any sales tax at all.

Also mentioned at the meeting was unhappiness over the paving of a section of Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Residents didn't understand that the city leveraged a small investment, \$85,000., from gas tax revenue received from the State, and paid only a fraction of the total price tag, wisely garnering federal and regional grants for the balance. Although the street had gotten a slurry seal some years back, it hadn't been paved in fifteen years. Considering the project cost \$865,000, the City paid less than 10% of the total amount; that's a bargain any way you slice it.

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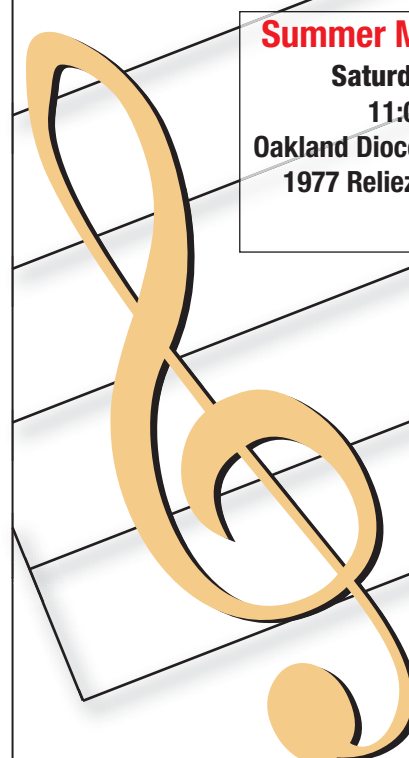
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\*50minute massage. Nail service discount applies only to signature manicure and pedicure. Offer ends 9/21/08.

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# Lamorinda Community Calendar, Notes, News

# Moraga

**Calendar**

**City Council 7:30pm**  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School  
1010 Camino Pablo  
Wednesday, August 27

**Planning Comm. 7:30pm**  
Hacienda, La Sala Room  
2100 Donald Drive  
Monday, August 18

**Design Review 7:30pm**  
Hacienda, La Sala Room  
2100 Donald Drive  
Monday, August 11

**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



**Kids playing, 7/30/08** At 7:45 p.m. a Moraga resident who lives across the street from the Campolindo sports field heard subjects being loud while they played soccer, or in his view "illegally used the field." The reporting person said he would be willing to place the subjects under arrest for trespassing if they didn't have permission from school staff. Officers spoke to the eleven soccer players who admitted they didn't have permission to use the field. Everybody agreed to leave. No arrests were made.

**Skatepark contraband 7/29/08** While on patrol an officer noticed a group of young people at the Skatepark, even though it was officially closed at the time. As he exited his patrol car, the juveniles scattered, leaving behind cans of beer, a small amount of marijuana and Aderall pills. Two female juveniles were contacted in the park, but possession of the contraband was unable to be determined. Officer had a serious chat with the kids and released them to their respective parents.

**D.U.I. 7/27/08** A 19-year-old male driver of a Subaru was stopped at a green light for an extended period of time on Rheem Boulevard near the Theater. Objective signs of alcohol intoxication were noted. The drunk driver had a fake I.D. on him that indicated he was 21, wonder why?

**Party and alleged drug sales, 7/17/08** At 10:45 p.m. Moraga police responded to a complaint of loud noise, not unusual for this Thune Avenue address, as well as possible drug sales. Officer arrived, contacted the reporting person and noticed what appeared to him to be a drug transaction occurring in the driveway. Numerous vehicles were observed coming and going during the day along with underage drinking. The owner was contacted but no evidence of illegal activity was found.

## Joan Streit – Taking a Firm Grip on Moraga Finance

By Sophie Braccini



Joan Streit at the Hacienda de las Flores Photo Sophie Braccini

Moraga's Finance Director was raised in a rural area of Maine, a small town with farms, where the family's peaceful house overlooked a lake. "This was a very serene place," remembers Streit, "and it's nice to visit, but there isn't much that goes on there because it is a small town with less than 2000 people." Her family later moved to Los Angeles. Streit completed her undergraduate work at the University of California at Davis, earned a Master's at San Francisco State and a PhD at U.C. Berkeley.

After graduation Streit secured a position with U.C. Berkeley where she was the Budget Director for the Housing and Dining Department for many years before moving to U.C. Davis, where she was hired as the First Assistant Dean in the School of Education. But she wanted a faster paced environment and more self-determination. So

she applied for a position as a Director of Finance and Information Technology with the city of Albany.

"City government gives me more latitude to implement my own policies and procedures," says Streit, "the scope of operations is smaller than a large campus, but it requires a higher technical mastery; you do not have a whole range of experts at your fingertips." The position in Moraga represented what she was looking for, a place to make an impact and to wear many hats.

"Joan is a Finance Director who has a broad experience in finance and is very definitive in her actions and recommendations," says Jay Tashiro, Interim Town Manager, "I truly like working with her due to her dependability, professionalism and wealth of knowledge and experience in the area of finance."

... continued on page 6

## Moraga Discusses MOSO 2008 Impact Report

By Sophie Braccini

On July 23 the Moraga Town Council received the 9212 impact report (under California Election Code Section 9212) on the MOSO 2008 open space initiative and ordered the initiative to the November ballot. Moraga voters will have a choice between two very different initiatives addressing land use.

The reports produced by staff assessing the potential impacts of the MOSO 2008 and MOSPRO initiatives on the town are important pieces of information for Moraga voters. The complete texts of the initiatives and the corresponding 9212 reports are available on the town's web site at [http://moraga.ca.us/production/moraga\\_ballot\\_initiatives.php](http://moraga.ca.us/production/moraga_ballot_initiatives.php).

The accuracy of the 9212 re-

ports has been fiercely debated by proponents and opponents of each initiative. During the Council meeting, speakers raised important issues including, but not limited to, the risk of litigation for the Town. Some members of the public, sensing too many uncertainties, called for both initiatives to be voted down.

MOSO 2008, the initiative proposed by the Friends of Moraga Open Space, aims at restricting development in the remaining undeveloped space in Moraga. The targeted areas are Bollinger Canyon, Indian Valley and Rheem Valley.

The first disagreement about the impact of the initiative was its potential to include more than the three designated areas specified in the text.

... continued on page 6

## Moraga Specific Plan Continues To Raise Questions

By Sophie Braccini

The comment period on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Moraga Specific Plan will not be extended. Despite requests from the cities of Lafayette and Orinda, and David Loeke, urban planner for the Bruzzone family, the Moraga Town Council decided not to change the August 1st deadline.

A major factor in the decision was the realization that comments can be sent after the deadline, and that letters from the neighboring cities and the responses could be included in the EIR even if they are received late.

If the deadline had been moved to a later date, the final vote could not have taken place until after the November election. None of the Council members expressed a desire to adhere to the deadline just to make sure they could participate in the final vote, but as Planning Director Lori Salamack explained, if the plan is not approved before the end of the year, months could be

added to the process in order to bring possible new Council members up to speed.

Salamack keeps in mind the deadline of June 30, 2009, to present the Town's housing element to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). She was supported by Interim Town Manager Jay Tashiro, who has experienced firsthand the penalties a local government can face when defaulting on its housing obligation to the State.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is a state mandated process for determining how many housing units, including affordable units, each community must plan. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) determines the total housing need for a region, and it is the ABAG's responsibility to distribute this need to local governments. In Moraga, the number of required housing units is:

Very Low –	73
Low –	47
Moderate –	52
Above Moderate –	62
<b>Total -</b>	<b>234</b>

Because Moraga did not have a state certified housing element during the previous cycle the Town also needs to plan for those required units, bringing the total number of needed units to 307.

At the public hearing on July 22, many residents voiced concern that affordable housing would bring crime to town and change the nature of the place in which they have chosen to live. According to Salamack, however, the Town may opt to use the State's default density of 20 units/acre for a suburban location. By using the default standard, the Town is not required to prove affordability for low-income households. The Town's obligation then is to define areas that have appropriate zoning to accommodate affordable housing. ... continued on page 6

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Lamorinda Community Calendar, Notes, News

Orinda

Calendar table with events: City Council 7pm, Planning Comm. 7:00pm, Traffic Safty Advisory Committee, Mayor's Com. Liaison, etc.

Beverli Marshall—Keeping Track of Orinda's Money and Much More

By Andrea A. Firth



Beverli Marshall, Administrative/Financial Services Director for the City of Orinda

As the Administrative/Financial Services Director in Orinda, Beverli Marshall has a long title and a long list of responsibilities to go with it.

also held other positions in Berkeley's city government. Having come from Berkeley, she is accustomed to "being under the microscope."

Although Marshall feels Orindans have high expectations for the level of city services, she finds their approach to city government refreshing.

With the move from a larger, urban setting such as Berkeley to a smaller, semi-rural city like Orinda, Marshall has found that she prefers being a bigger fish in a smaller pond.

"Orinda is a new kid. It's really just reaching teenager status as far as cities go," explains Marshall. "It hasn't grown in size, but it's starting to formalize things."

Marshall would like to see Orinda's designation as the city with the best schools and worst roads change. "Fixing the roads is Orinda's biggest challenge," states Marshall.

City of Orinda Launches New Website—www.cityoforinda.org

By Andrea A. Firth



The city of Orinda's website has a new name and a new look. Go to www.cityoforinda.org and you will find a user-friendly website with a sophisticated design reflective of the community it supports.

and how they go about looking for it. "We tried to put ourselves in the user's position in planning every aspect of the website," states Pacheco.

multiple links on the website. So you can get to the same place in several different ways," she explains.

... continued on page 12



Drunk driving, 8/01/08 A twenty-something white female was stopped for going 60 m.p.h in a 35 m.p.h. zone, at just after midnight.

Fake moneygram, 7/31/08 An unknown black male passed a fraudulent moneygram for \$500 at Hediye gift boutique at Theatre Square.

Spouse smackdown, 7/28/08 The wife of an Orinda Way restaurant employee became angry after hearing a rumor that her husband had been unfaithful.

Vandalism at Wagner Ranch, sometime between 7/25/08 and 7/28/08 An unknown suspect damaged the roof of Wagner Ranch Elementary School, damaging a number of composite roof shingles.

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# Life in LAMORINDA

## Town Hall Theater Names New Artistic Director—Clive Worsley

### Season Kicks Off with *The Graduate*

By Andrea A. Firth



Emily Garcia, Clive Worsley (in back), and Joel Roster at Town Hall Theater  
Photo Andrea A. Firth

Town Hall Theater (THT) will launch its 2008-2009 season with a new Artistic Director at the helm—Clive Worsley, an award-winning Bay Area actor, director, and theater educator, will be steering the THT cast and crew. Worsley is a familiar face at Town Hall where he has acted and directed in the past. “This a good move for me,” states Worsley. “I am a firm believer that theater enhances education and builds community. And, I am really impressed by the com-

mitment to community that is exemplified by Town Hall Theater.”

Born in Glasgow, Scotland and raised in British Columbia, Worsley has spent the last thirty plus years in the Bay Area. Following stints with Armitage Shanks Theater and San Francisco’s Viaduct Theater, Worsley became a core company member of Berkeley’s acclaimed Shotgun Players. For the last six years he has turned much of his attention to theater education working as a Teaching

Artist in classrooms throughout Contra Costa County and as an Associate Artist with California Shakespeare Theater’s educational and outreach programs.

One of the things that Worsley has learned from his teaching experience is that he likes it on this side of the tunnel. “I give credit to the parents and theater professionals in Contra Costa County. They embrace their community, and they commit to strengthening it—all while making some really good art,” he states.

Worsley is already intimately familiar with the great main stage productions produced by Town Hall Theater, and he describes the educational program as the best in the East Bay. So what’s left for him to do? “I want to reach our farther,” sates Worsley. “I would like Town Hall Theater to be a household name in Lamorinda and beyond.” To achieve that goal, he plans to keep the selection of plays fresh and varied while still accessible to the average theater-goer.

“I’m looking forward to my first season with Town Hall Theater and getting to know the patrons,” states Worsley. “Town Hall is an ac-

tive member of the community, and I want to increase the dialogue.”

**THT Season Kicks off with *The Graduate*.**

Town Hall Theater’s 2008-2009 season will kick off with *The Graduate* on September 11th. Based on the novel by Charles Webb, this new adaptation for the stage stays pretty true to the movie version from the sixties that many baby boomers will remember.

“While the show is set in the 1960’s, it is no way limited to that time,” states Joel Roster who will direct the Town Hall Theater (THT) play—an East Bay premier. “The themes of alcoholism, infidelity, and dysfunctional families persist and may be even more relevant today. It makes the comedic moments even funnier and the poignant moments hit harder,” he adds. Roster says play-goers should be prepared for an evening of laughter and tears. “It’s a startling moving show. It’s brilliant.”

*The Graduate* will play at Town Hall Theater from September 11th through October 11th. For tickets contact the box office at 925.283.1557.

## Paws to Read in Lamorinda

By Sophie Braccini

As she comes in to the special library room, Melyssa, a 3rd grader, is told that today she will read to Trevin. The dog is waiting for her with his handler/owner, Carol. He is one of the three canines present that day at the Orinda Library to participate in “Paws to Read,” a program where elementary school children come to read to dogs.

The program has been running in Orinda for three years. “It was started in Salt Lake City many years ago,” says Lin Look, the librarian in charge of children’s activities, “I heard about it at a conference and was immediately convinced of its value.” Research shows that kids who are learning to read can become nervous about looking dumb around their friends. But with a dog, they start to relax and reading becomes easier.

The program will start in Moraga this August. Moraga librarian Linda Waldroup summarizes, “Children enjoy reading to non-judgmental canines.”

“Dogs are not critical,” says

Melyssa’s mother, “they take the children for who they are.” Paws to Read attracts children from the entire spectrum of reading levels. Martha, a 4th grader who was there that morning in Orinda, is a very avid reader, having completed the library summer program for her age

in triplicate. During the session she read three books to her dog. “She takes any opportunity to read,” says her mother. The little girl commented, “I love to read to dogs, you can see they really understand what you read.”

The dogs involved in the pro-

gram are family pets of many different breeds and their owners, who volunteer their time, have been certified in pet therapy. In addition to reading improvement, “Paws” shows kids how to relate to dogs as pets.

... continued on page 6

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## Joan Streit – Taking a Firm Grip on Moraga Finance

... continued from page 3

Moraga is certainly a place where financial savvy is needed. When she arrived, Streit realized that the Town was lacking guidelines. "A city should have strong internal policies and procedures to control its operations," believes

Streit. For example, she discovered that no written policies are in place to determine who should have a Town credit card nor are there any written policies on accepted use of the card. Although there have not been any problems or misuse of

the credit cards, and those who have them have been very responsible, a written policy helps to guard against misuse. So part of Streit's responsibility consists of protecting the Town's assets, defining standard procedures and

establishing policies.

As far as the future is concerned, Streit believes that Moraga's sources of income are not controlled enough by the town. The sales tax fluctuates depending on the economy and most of it goes to the State; the property tax is fairly stable but the Town has no control on how much it can raise. A good example of the Town's dependency on State decisions is the gas tax money that municipalities should be receiving. The State has withheld allocations since March.

The Town should be getting its share in September but the State could decide to hold it for a longer period of time.

A solution could be for Moraga to raise some local taxes, such as a business license tax, or process building permits "in house" rather than at the County as it is currently done. "The Town Council has a good understanding of the situation," says Streit, "but in an election year, no one wants to be the one who raises taxes." The Director does not see any of the rev-

enue enhancement proposals being implemented earlier than the 2009-10 budget year.

Amidst all the challenges, Streit still has time for a rich cultural life. "We are blessed in the Bay Area with a wide variety of cultural offerings," she acknowledges. The mother of two grown children enjoys going to the symphony and repertory theater with her husband, and to fulfill her passion for others she has a membership at the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

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## Moraga Specific Plan Continues To Raise Questions

... continued from page 3

In Moraga, a suburban area, the density is 20 units per acre. Council Member Rochelle Bird reminded the audience that the number of houses included in the Specific Plan has not been determined yet.

In October Salamack will present the responses to the comments that have been received. After this presentation the Council will discuss, amend and vote on a final version of the Specific Plan. Differences of opinion have already

emerged on the Council.

Council Member Ken Chew believes that this plan would so change the character of the town that a referendum would be needed. Council Member Mike Metcalf would like to better understand the risk associated with not having a housing plan. Bird believes that the town shouldn't be dictating what the developer must do with the property. Vice-Mayor Dave Trotter asks which vision is the right one for the community, stressing the

need to revitalize the existing center and is concerned that the plan presented does not include a financial feasibility analysis. Mayor Deschambault is concerned by the absence of an evacuation plan, the viability of retail, the mitigation of the CO2 impact of the plan and the preservation of the riparian corridor by the creek.

Residents may still appear before the Council and voice their comments and recommendations until the final vote.

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## Moraga Discusses MOSO 2008 Impact Report

... continued from page 3

Renata Sos, a Moraga resident who supports the initiative, asked that the 9212 report clarify the issue by indicating that MOSO 2008 would apply only to the areas designated in the text of the initiative.

That position was challenged by David Bruzzone, a member of the family which owns much of the land in question, whose interpretation is that, "All the slopes of more than 20% and all the ridge lines above 800 feet would be submitted to the development restrictions, and that would include parts of Ascot Dr. and Birchwood among other areas."

Council Member Mike Metcalf asked the Town's attorney, Michelle Kenyon, for her opinion on the matter. She replied that she would interpret the initiative as only applying to the areas defined in the text.

A major concern raised during the meeting was the possibility of litigation and the extra costs that would result for the Town. Moraga

resident Bob Reynolds asked, "What would happen if both initiatives pass?" Kenyon responded that if both initiatives have a majority of votes, and if they do not conflict, they would both stand.

The determination of whether or not the initiatives conflict would be made by the Town Council, based on legal advice. In that case, Kenyon would not exclude the possibility of a legal challenge.

Residents voiced their concern that the cost of litigation was not budgeted. "Vote both initiatives down," said Moraga resident Barbara Simpson, "we should know ahead of time if the initiatives conflict."

A larger element of discussion involved the financial impact of the initiative for the town. The fiscal analysis that was conducted by staff estimates that the town will undergo a reduction of net revenues in the range of \$410,700 a year due to the limitation of the number of houses that could be built. It concludes that the initiative would still

have a positive impact on the town, smaller than in a no initiative scenario, and would amount to a net municipal revenue of \$60,200.

Dick Loeke, urban planner for the Bruzzone family, said, "What's missing (in the 9212 report) is the long term effect on budget and housing." Loeke believes that the restriction on housing will generate a loss in sales tax revenue and will jeopardize the viability of the retailers in town.

In response to a question from Loeke on the impact of the initiative on Moraga schools and the Fire District, Moraga Planning Director Lori Salamack responded that both entities had declined to assess the financial impact of the initiative.

Salamack indicated that Town staff is preparing a comparison of the two initiatives. This report could be presented to the Council at its next meeting on August 27, and would be available online with the meeting agenda.

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## Paws to Read in Lamorinda

...continued from page 5



Melyssa reads to Trevin under the supervision of Carol, the dog's handler  
Photo Sophie Braccini

"Children are sometimes unsure," says handler Ginger Wadsworth, "and within a few minutes of petting the dog they come closer and start reading." This is why Look removed some of the restrictions other libraries have put on

the program, she will allow kids with minor allergies to come to the program, as well as kids who are not used to interacting with pets and might be a bit nervous at first.

Wadsworth is on the Friends Orinda Library board, and has two

trained therapy dogs. She comes to "Paws" with her golden retriever – Willa – who is so excited about going to see kids. She's a big supporter of the program, and the Friends of the library have donated books, pillows, doggy treats, water for the handler and little certificates. "It is still a lot of work for the librarian," recognizes Wadsworth, "and Lin has done a fantastic job."


Waldroup confirmed that all the dogs in her program are certified therapy dogs as well. Most of the people who bring their dogs do other things with them, like going to hospitals and convalescent homes. There are therapy cats, too, and both Look and Waldroup would like to find some of these for their programs. They both want to connect with the local schools and reading specialists. The program is over for the summer in Orinda and will start again in the fall. After the August trial in Moraga, the program will be evaluated and is also expected to return in the fall.

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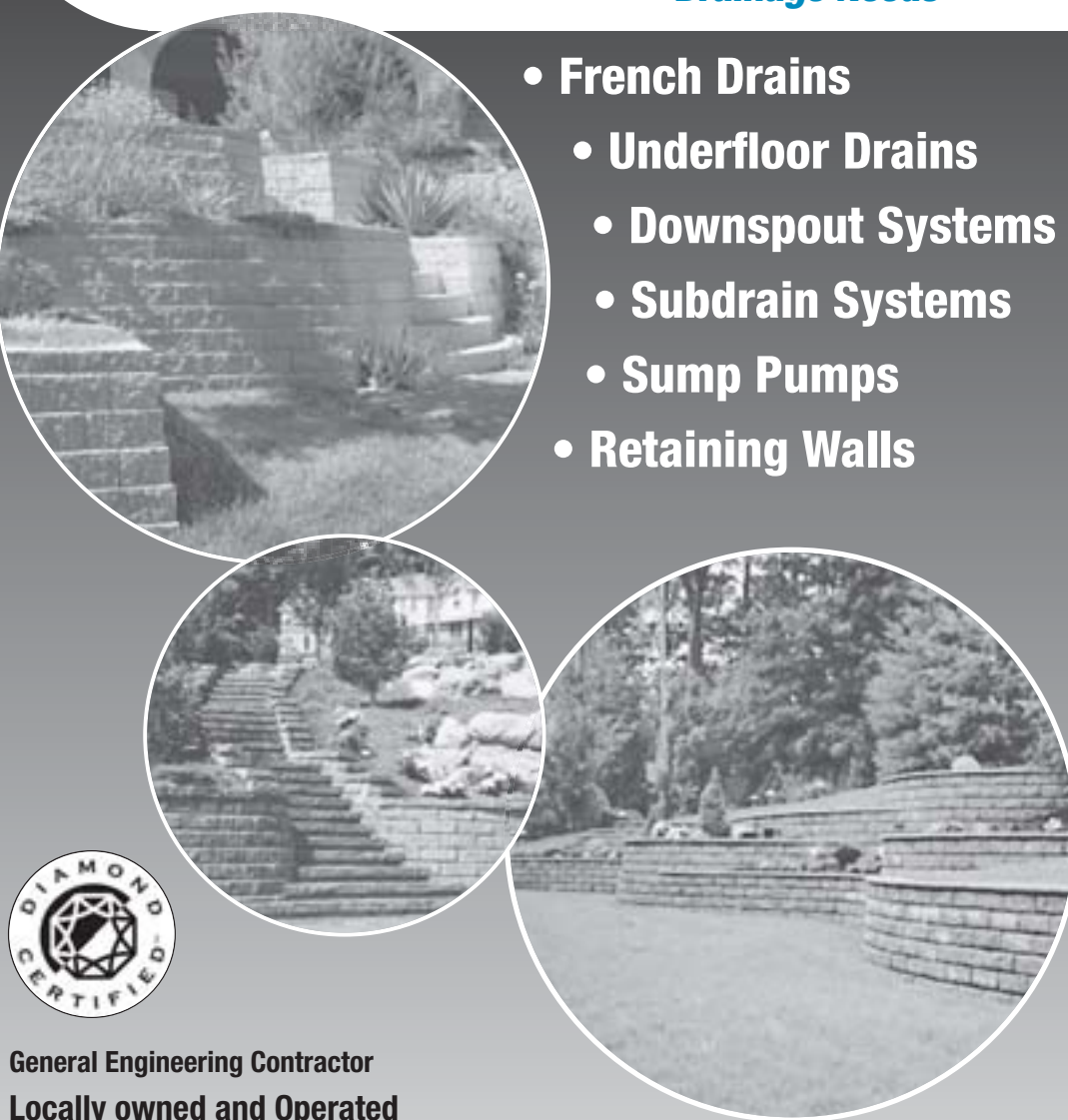
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# Life in LAMORINDA

## Dochterman Receives "Service Above Self" Award Moraga Rotary Named "Club of the Year"

By Sophie Braccini



Mary Elena Dochterman and Colin Barnard Photo courtesy of Moraga Rotary

Mary Elena Dochterman, past President of the Rotary Club of Moraga, was given the prestigious "Service Above Self" award from Rotary International, and the Club was awarded as the "Medium-Sized Club of the Year" in Rotary District 5160 at the District Conference in Sacramento recently.

The Rotary International "Service Above Self" Award is given to individual Rotarians who have rendered exemplary humanitarian Rotary service that embodies Rotary's motto Service Above Self. The award recognizes outstanding efforts in the promotion of Rotary's objectives of serving youth, international humanitarian causes, and meeting community needs. The Award is considered Rotary's highest honor. Recipients are selected from among the 1.2 million members of Rotary International in 180 nations of the world. Only 135 awards were given throughout the world this year.

Ms. Dochterman just completed serving as Assistant District

Governor, responsible for eight clubs out of 67 in the District, which includes Rotary Clubs from San Ramon northward to the Oregon border.

"I have participated in volunteer activities since I was in high school in San Francisco over 50 years ago," says Dochterman, "all of the years I was working as a teacher, school administrator and in later years as a Benefits Analyst for Wells Fargo Bank, I always hoped that some day I would be retired and able to focus on volunteer activities."

Dochterman's worldwide humanitarian activities have included polio immunization in India, Ethiopia, Turkey and Philippines; assistance to AIDS orphans in South Africa; delivery of wheelchairs in China and Mexico; educational scholarships to orphaned Russian children; and securing playgrounds and educational supplies for Mexican children. She has also led the Moraga Rotary Club in a variety of educational activities for local children.

During the same ceremony, Moraga was recognized as the "Medium-Sized Club of the Year" for its District. Past Club President Colin Barnard said, "The Rotary Club of Moraga was chartered about 41 years ago, and has provided Moraga many capital improvement projects as well as service projects that benefit the community. We have worked hard for the community, and are pleased to be recognized as the outstanding medium-sized club in the District. The new District Governor, Jim Campbell, is a member of Moraga Rotary and we look forward to supporting his projects this year".

Moraga Rotary donates time and money to many service projects in Moraga and the county, including giving a dictionary to every third grader in Moraga, buying and installing playground equipment, giving scholarships to St. Mary's College and Campolindo High School, sponsoring Interact Clubs at Miramonte and Campolindo High Schools, conducting a Field Day track meet for third, fourth, and fifth graders in Moraga schools and sending high school students to leadership and entrepreneurial camps. Moraga Rotary also donates to national and international project such as disaster relief, providing LN-4 prosthetic hands, providing wheelchairs and working towards eradication of polio in the world.

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## Way Side Inn Thrift Shop Celebrates 30 Years with Pearls

By Sophie Braccini

The building now called the Way Side Inn Thrift Shop was a hotel and a tavern at the turn of the century, in a time where Mt Diablo Blvd was a stagecoach road between Oakland and Walnut Creek. For the last 30 years it has been the home of the Assistance League of Diablo Valley thrift shop, a non profit group serving those in need in Contra Costa. The Lafayette store celebrates its 30th anniversary on Monday, August 11, with a "Pearl Extravaganza" from 3

to 7 p.m. at 3521 Golden Gate Way. The event will include refreshments, door prizes, information about the chapter's programs and merchandise for sale featuring pearl jewelry and accessories.

The store is stocked with high quality clothing and accessories that have been given to the League after being gently used. All personnel working there are volunteers and they strive to keep the place attractive to shoppers.

... continued on page 13



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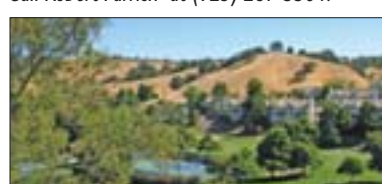
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# Life in LAMORINDA

## Elderly Need to be Cautious When Seeking In-Home Care

By Jennifer Wake

When a person's health deteriorates, the need for extra care can be immediate.

Lafayette resident Doris Johnson was faced with this decision two years ago, after her sister Rita suffered a second stroke, leaving her blind and needing 24-hour care.

"It all happened very fast," Johnson says. "She was getting ready to be released [from the hospital] and I needed to sign something before they would release her, showing the care she would receive."

Johnson was handed three pages listing nursing homes and full-service in-home care agencies to choose from. "I was shocked when I found out the cost," says Johnson, who owns her house together with her sister. "I never considered long-term care insurance. I worry about the cost, but as long as we can manage, I want her here. We've lived together most of our lives."

Johnson chose Companion Care in Lafayette mainly because it was close to their home. Caregivers – who are each supervised by professional geriatric care managers who all have master's degrees – come into the sisters' home six days a week from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. to do light housekeeping, laundry, cook meals and even do some ironing. Johnson is "on duty" during the nights and on Sundays. "That's our time to be alone," she says.

Typical cost for this type of care ranges from \$24 to \$30 per hour and \$250 to \$350 per shift rate – an out-of-pocket expense for Johnson, since this type of home care is not covered by Medicare insurance. (The cost of 24-hour care could reach \$9,000 per month.)

Johnson was lucky, however, since Companion Care does background checks and TB tests on all of its caregivers, and pays the workers compensation and liability insurance. But it adds to the overall cost of care.

In the past five years, Barbara Schuh, a geriatric care manager who founded Companion Care 11 years ago, has seen in-home care agencies grow from five in the area, to nearly 50 agencies today.

"Chateau in Lafayette now offers home care, and Marriott is even offering the service. People choosing home care need to be really cautious," she warns. "People open these companies with good hearts, but they don't always know what they're doing."

Because of the growing number of organizations offering home care, the National Private Duty Association says consumers are turning to companies that offer the cheapest price for care without understanding the implications of using a referral agency versus a full-service agency. "Many consumers are hiring from registries that do not 'employ or supervise' their workers, but merely 'place' them in

home care settings."

This gives the consumer and caregiver an "employee-employer" relationship in the home, making consumers responsible for payroll taxes (and interest and penalties from an estate, if taxes were never paid), and worker's compensation coverage for any medical costs and lost wages for "employees" who are injured in their home (many homeowners policies exclude "employees"). Also, many of these types of organizations are not required by the state to run background checks or administer TB tests on caregivers, and they may not follow minimum standards of care.

When researching in-home care, Schuh suggests people ask tough questions.

"Ask if they do background checks, ask to see a copy of their liability insurance, and ask if they pour medication," she says. "The last is a trick question. If they say 'yes', run. They obviously don't know what they're supposed to do."

Unlike home health care, which is covered by Medicare and MediCal, home care aide organizations are not licensed to administer medications or provide any health-related services. Schuh recommends starting by bringing in a geriatric care manager (found through the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers) for an assessment.

"Individuals will come out to the home to do an assessment of

needs," Schuh says. "You may not need care right away, and could get by with Meals on Wheels or Caring Hands (a program run through John Muir Medical Center)."

Schuh sits on the board of the California Association for Health Services at Home (CAHSAH), a leading statewide home care association in the nation and the voice of home care for the Western United States. The organization is determined to provide standards of care for all home care aide organizations and is seeking legislation requiring state licensing in California.

Two years ago, CAHSAH put a bill before legislators at the Capital. "Senators had no clue there was no licensing for home

care. Unfortunately, no one wanted to take it on," Schuh says. "It jumped from the Labor Commission to Health Services."

In the end, the licensing fee they recommended for the bill to pass was too much to ask these companies to pay.

CAHSAH decided to start self-policing agencies as part of its Home Care Aide Organization Certification Program. Member organizations submit proof of liability and workers compensation insurance as well as their standards of practice to CAHSAH. "At least people will know if they are associated with CAHSAH, they have been screened," Schuh says.

For Johnson, although it's

been a big adjustment to have someone move into her house, she has a feeling of security knowing the caregivers are there. But the cost of care weighs heavy on her mind. She advises any young person to look into long-term care insurance.

"The routine in your life changes," Johnson says. "I don't think about the future. I probably should, but we just take it day-to-day, month-to-month. It's scary, it's really scary."

For more information about home care agencies and current legislation, visit CAHSAH's Web site (www.cahsah.org) or the National Private Duty Association (www.npda.org).

### LYNN'S TOP FIVE

By Lynn Ballou, CFP, EA

#### Long - Term Care Insurance:

#### A complex policy, a complex decision

Somehow nothing in the financial planning field seems to be straight forward these days! And probably, nothing ever was, but it's nice to pretend that it was all simpler in the past, isn't it? The longevity of the baby boomers and their parents is creating a whole new type of chats at cocktail parties, around the pool, and hopefully in offices with our respective financial advisors. It seems that even at the line in the grocery store I'm over-hearing more and more conversations about how to help aging relatives, and worries about how

our kids will be there to help us – hah! So we are increasingly looking to handle the situation on our own terms. One important tool for us to use in that quest is long-term care insurance.

What is it, do you need it, can you afford it, and can you even qualify for it? Since there is a lot of information about these questions already out there for you to digest, I'm going to take a different tact, for a variety of reasons (not the least of which is space!), and say that these questions are ones you should carefully and personally explore with

your advisors and qualified long-term care insurance agent specialist (in California insurance agents who provide this coverage for clients have special continuing education requirements and designations and must be certified to sell long-term care insurance).

Instead, I'd like to focus in this article on some less popular conversation points that I hope will help you in conversations you might have with your own team of advisors when you or someone you love has decided to seek a good long-term care policy.

#### 1) Will you cancel? Will you keep?

Aside from the safety of the insurance company, perhaps the most important consideration in purchasing a long-term care (LTC) policy is affordability. You can design and purchase the most wonderful plan available today, but if you will cancel it before you ever collect benefits because it has become too expensive, then this policy will basically be a waste of your money and a false sense of security. Not often enough is it explained to us that premiums for long-term care insurance are not locked-in, not guaranteed, and will (in all likelihood) go up as we age! Premiums will rise with the insurance company's costs experienced by claims and inflation just like auto, homeowners, medical and other insurance plans. Be sure you design a plan that you can afford to keep! It would be a great tragedy for you to pay for your LTC insurance for many, many years, only to cancel the coverage in your later retirement years because it has become unaffordable – never having received a benefit (if needed).

#### 2) Length of benefits:

One way to handle the affordability issue may be to buy fewer years of coverage by shortening up the length of time benefits will be paid out if a claim arises (or create a smaller pool of funds). Let's say that the life-time option would be your preference, but is too costly, whereas 5 years of coverage is affordable for you. Similarly, you can lengthen the up-front elimination period and self insure, for example, for a year with your own assets before having your policy become available to you. Most agents quote the classic 90 day elimination period, but that is not necessarily your best personal choice. Quotes offered by qualified agents will also include these other options and different viewpoints on coverage and affordability. Be sure to have your agent review them with you in detail.

... continued on page 13

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# business briefs

## Decadent Ribbon Cutting, Anyone?

### The French Bakery, 71 Lafayette Circle, 283-0224

The French Bakery will hold a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on August 28th at 4:40 p.m. A place for afternoon tea, lunch and deserts, located in the charming white bungalow on Lafayette circle. Business hours are Tuesday to Friday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

## Cell Phones for Soldiers

### Prudential California Realty, 999 Oak Hill Road, Lafayette, Contact: M'lissa Cassidy, 283-7000

The Lafayette office is proud to announce that they are an official drop-off location for the Cell Phones for Soldiers Program. With the combined efforts of the Bergquists, and ReCellular, every used cell phone donated will provide one hour of free talk time to soldiers serving abroad. Every 16 months, U.S. consumers retire an estimated 150 million cell phones and less than 10 percent of those phones are recycled. ReCellular pays Cell Phones for Soldiers enough to provide an hour of talk time per phone for soldiers abroad. Cell Phone for Soldiers was founded by teenagers Robbie and Brittany Bergquist from Norwell, Mass. Since the beginning, they have raised enough money to send 500,000 prepaid calling cards to soldiers serving overseas. ReCellular works with a recycling partner to reclaim materials from every component that is donated.

In Lafayette, agent Barbara Harkins brought the flyer into the office and the group decided to collect phones at work. To participate, simply drop off your used phone to the Prudential Office any weekday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. or call M'lissa Cassidy to arrange for a pick up. "We just want to help our troops and their family," says Cassidy, "it's an easy thing to do, and we want to keep it going as long as possible."



Barbara Harkins (left) and M'lissa Cassidy get ready to send a phone Courtesy of Prudential Realty

## SZFM Design Studio Wins Awards

Sudhish Mohindroo and Eric Maltman are proud to announce that SZFM has received three awards from the Pacific Coast Builders Conference 2008 Gold Nugget Awards Program: Grand Award for Shuey Podva Building in Danville; Award of Merit for Lafayette Mercantile; Award of Merit for Salvio Pacheco Square in Concord.

SZFM was the architect partnering with developer Steve Cortese to design the Lafayette Mercantile located on Mt. Diablo Blvd between Lafayette Circle and Dewing Ave. "Our primary focus was how the building would integrate within the framework of the public space," said Mohindroo, who has a wealth of experience in urban planning and esthetics. He believes that a timeless and elegant design is the key for a development to be successful and last. "The upper floors where the offices are provide the classical frame that supports the creativity and life brought by the retailers at the street level," adds the architect. The star theme that runs all over the buildings adds to its appeal and cohesion.

## Garden Lights Landscape & Pool Development (254-4797) Wins 8 Awards at Annual CLCA Chapter Banquet

Orinda business owner Steve Lambert of Garden Lights Landscape Development received eight top honors at this year's "Beautification Awards" presented June 7th at the Pleasanton Hotel by the CLCA's (California Landscape Contractors Association) East Bay Chapter President. The awards include: Judges Award "Best of the Best" - Large Design/Build, Bluford Residence, Orinda; First Place - Medium Residential Installation, Shellenbeck Residence, Moraga; First Place - Small Design/Build Installation, Vega Residence, Moraga, First Place - Special Effects Lighting, Dunne Residence, Orinda. "It's really rewarding to have your work recognized by your peers in the industry," said Lambert.



"Best of the Best" - Large Design/Build, Bluford Residence, Orinda

## Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

- No mixer in August
- Wednesday August 21st, Entrepreneur Club meeting, starting at 8:30 a.m. in the Chamber's office
- Rock the Plaza continues at the corner of Mt Diablo Blvd and Moraga Rd. On August 8th come and hear Stagefrite, on the 15th the Ramblers and on the 22nd the Spazmatic. Concerts are free of charge, food sold by Lafayette Rotary Club.

## Moraga Chamber of Commerce

- The August Chamber meeting day and time was changed. Chamber members and their spouses are invited to participate in a Barbeque on Tuesday, August 26th at the Moraga Commons Park from 6 to 7:30 p.m.
- Aug 28th the Chamber will be present at the St Mary's fair for new students from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. 600 to 800 new students will be present on campus with their parents. Anybody interested in participating needs to contact Edy Schwartz at Edy321@comcast.net before August 10th.

## Orinda Chamber of Commerce

- Chamber Breakfast Meeting 8:00 a.m. - August 28th at Shelby's Restaurant -Theater Square. Cost \$10.00 (paid at door). The guest Speaker will be Tom Chen of the Subcommittee for Emergency Preparedness. He will address the following topic: "Is Orinda Ready?"
  - Major natural hazard impacting Orinda businesses
  - Local and regional response capabilities and resources
  - Structural and infrastructure vulnerabilities affecting Orinda business
  - Mitigation alternatives and recommendations
  - Getting Orinda businesses prepared

## Lafayette Entrepreneurs Club Returns To Its Roots

### By Sophie Braccini

The July 17th session was as packed as usual. Thirty to forty local business owners filled up the meeting room of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce for the monthly meeting of the Entrepreneurs Club. The group, which is sponsored by the Chamber, has recently adopted a mission statement and decided to re-center on what members feel is the core mission: providing practical business advice to members. The networking part of the group is still present, in the same friendly and informal manner that's one of the attractive features

of the group.

The new mission statement is: "A Chamber sponsored program where small business owners and managers can share ideas and solve problems that are specific to their business. Practical lessons and information are presented for personal development. Connections and alliances are made creating an ongoing learning community."

"We wanted to make sure that the members understood that this was not a networking group," says Jay Lifson, Lafayette Chamber Executive Director. "There were

some people showing up with the mission of trying to sell their service or product to the others in attendance. We needed to make clear that is not the purpose of the meetings."

The room was filled that day with experienced professionals who were ready to help each other. Many business cards were exchanged as people thought of possible synergies. The next meeting will be on Thursday August 21st at 8:30 a.m. at the Lafayette Chamber offices, 100 Lafayette Circle.

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## Handlebar Toys Has New Owners

### By Andrea A. Firth



Lance Ghulam and Sara Casey at work and at play at Handlebar Toys in Lafayette Photo Andrea A. Firth

Lance Ghulam and Sara Casey are continuing to mind the shop, the shop being Handlebar Toys in Lafayette, which is something that they have been doing together for many years. The difference now is that Ghulam and Casey recently became the new owners of Handlebar Toys having purchased the store from the family of longtime proprietor Freda Challis who passed away in the spring.

"It was really like a passing of the baton," explains Ghulam who started working at the toy store ten years ago as a temporary stint but

then never left. "We had talked about taking over the store for a while. It's really how it was meant to be," adds Casey, who started working at Handlebar 15 years ago while she was still in high school.

Lafayette natives and self-described best friends, Ghulam and Casey each bring a unique experience and perspective to their business venture. Ghulam's many years of retail experience with the Disney Store has proven invaluable as he has worked to update the look of Handlebar Toys. And, Casey, who has a family of four children between 6

months and ten years of age, provides a real-world testing ground for new toys. "If it doesn't work in Sara's family, it won't be in the store," states Ghulam.

This toy store duo has no plans to tinker with the successful formula that Handlebar Toys has followed for the past four decades. "One thing will always stay the same," states Ghulam, "We will always carry quality, hard-to-find toys. We will carry action figures and Barbie's, but the bulk of our inventory will be toys that you won't find at the [local discount retailer]."

However, Ghulam and Casey do plan to do more. They want to have special purchase days (where a percentage of sales receipts will be donated to local schools) and birthday clubs (that will help parents to buy the right gifts for the right kids). And, they continue to work on the store design and displays to create a more inviting shopping experience.

"We want to be more than just a toy store," states Casey. "We want the store to be a destination—a place where both a child and a grown up can have a good time," adds Ghulam finishing Casey's thought as these best friends often do.

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# In the Back Yard

## Digging Deep—Cynthia's Garden Vacation

By Cynthia Brian



"The main purpose of a garden is to give its owner the best and highest kind of earthly pleasure." Gertrude Jekyll

"Come on down for a glass of champagne to help us christen our new outdoor kitchen," my neighbor emailed me this past weekend. What a beautiful addition to their already gorgeous garden! We sipped

the bubbly and nibbled on appetizers while enjoying the sun setting over their luscious landscape, "I feel like I'm on holiday in your backyard!" I cheerfully exclaimed.

Today homeowners are realizing the value of creating inviting outdoor places. Living space is increased through the creation of outdoor rooms, especially with the beautiful weather we experience here in California. Changes in taste and technology have extended style and luxury to our outdoor furnishings. It's a way to bring our interiors outside while designing a leisurely sanctuary in the midst of a hectic life.

The building blocks for outdoor furnishings include woods, metals, rattan, wicker, stone, and fabric. The key is to utilize materials that are weather resistant, durable, and attractive. As with all design, you want your outdoor rooms to be functional, balanced, and easy to clean.

Over the years I've designed many outdoor spaces where I could have easily spent a vacation. Making sure that the fabrics, textures, and designs mimic and compliment the home and garden is essential for

the area to flow comfortably. In my own backyard, I've incorporated patios, terraces, paths, water features, bird baths, feeders, picnic areas, hammocks, and fanciful art into my garden schemes. Although I travel extensively lecturing around the world, my garden is always my very favorite vacation locale. Where else can I watch wildlife, swim, nap, barbecue, spa, read, write, play, weed, gather fresh vegetables, fruits, and flowers yet still dream from the comfort of my own bed?

This August as the world travels to a distant environment to get away from it all, I'm gong on vacation at home in my backyard where we have it all. The champagne is on ice. Salute!

Happy Gardening to you from the Ultimate Mom Gardener, Cynthia Brian. [cynthia@starstyle.com](mailto:cynthia@starstyle.com), [www.GardeningwithCynthia.com](http://www.GardeningwithCynthia.com)



### Cynthia's Digging Deep Garden Guide for August

"Gardeners, I think, dream bigger dreams than emperors." Mary Cantwell

Our warmest summer month and the time to enjoy the fruits of our labors. The vegetables are abundant. Plants are in their glory. Nothing tastes sweeter than home-grown tomatoes, corn, nectarines, peaches, and pears. Keep everything thoroughly watered so that vegetables and fruit mature properly, lawns are kept green and flowering plants bloom profusely. Lots of outdoor entertaining and lounging around the yard and pool are in order. The birds, bees, butterflies are in profusion if you have been maintaining a healthy garden! All of nature seems to be singing the praises of high summer.

- LAWN mower blades need to be set to the highest position so than grass roots are shaded from the hot August sunshine.
- WATER deeply, especially lawns. Short, frequent watering cycles are not useful.
- PRUNE suckers that grow from trunks of trees and roses. They zap the strength of the mother plant and if not pruned will kill the rootstock.
- DEADHEAD summer annuals and perennials for a burst of fall color. Be careful to leave some foliage as photosynthesis is still in process to nourish the plant for the upcoming winter.
- CLIP roses for sprays of beauty and fragrance for both indoor and outdoor entertainment.
- HARVEST fruits and vegetables, especially beets, potatoes, strawberries, corn, tomatoes and zucchini.
- PICK herbs in the morning, use fresh or dry upside down in a cool dark room for later culinary needs.
- HUNT for snails and slugs by flashlight at night or drown them in left-over beer from your barbeque!
- RAKE any fallen leaves, remove diseased stems and leaves from plants.
- BUY a golden finch sock, fill with thistle seed and enjoy the show!
- FIRE up your barbecue, invite your friends and neighbors, and grill some of your homegrown or farmer's market produce. Besides vegetables, peaches, pears, nectarines and plums are delicious hot from the coals drizzled with honey.
- SWING in your hammock, dream the dreams of kings and queens.

May the sun shine in your garden and the stars in your heart.



### City of Orinda Launches New Website— [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org)

... continued from page 4

A photo banner of city landmarks—including the library, the theater, City Hall, a hillside view,

and a school walkway—traverses the homepage reflecting Orinda's beauty and character. "We wanted the website to show what it is like to live in Orinda and how people feel when they come here," says Pacheco. The website's color scheme mirrors the look of Orinda's landscape employing the same earth tones; such as green, terra cotta, and brown, that are evident in the hills surrounding and buildings throughout the city.

Providing meeting information is one of the key functions of the website notes Pacheco. The new website has a calendar of meeting events on the homepage and provides easier access to agendas and minutes," she adds. "We broke the government section into a few parts to separate the Council activities from the various committees and commissions that have grown in number and activity," she adds. And, to communicate (via email) with a Council member or city employee is as easy as point and click.

"The City Council and our numerous citizen commissions need residents' participation to be a truly representative government," notes Glazer. "With only a few clicks on your computer you can read the who, what, where and why on almost any matter coming to the

City Council."

Although the new website has been updated, launched and is running smoothly, Pacheco believes that it will continue to evolve and grow. "It is my hope that the City's website can continue to be improved so that it can be the source of all things Orinda," adds Glazer. "I hope we can find ways to provide expanded links to civic organizations and businesses."

Pacheco explains that the website will be an important source of information during emergencies. "Phone lines get flooded quickly," she states. "The News and Updates section on the homepage will be on of the first places where information is posted during an emergency."

However, in this age of e-news, email, and e-everything, Glazer points out, "The City Council and City Staff continue to provide written information to residents who don't have access to a computer. No one should be left out of the information loop if they don't have access to our website. Committee agendas, minutes, and city policies can still be requested by calling the City at 253-4200."

To check out the City of Orinda's website go to [www.cityoforinda.org](http://www.cityoforinda.org).

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# Life in LAMORINDA

## Way Side Inn Thrift Shop Celebrates 30 Years with Pearls

... continued from page 7



Louise Ferdun at the Way Side Inn

Photo Sophie Braccini

"This is one of my secret places," says a shopper who didn't care to be identified, "It's like going to a candy store, the prices

are so low, the clothes are so diverse, I can try on 20 items I wouldn't have thought of for myself and come out with three or

four great looking pieces of clothing for about \$20."

"The Way Side Inn Thrift Shop provides most of our funding," explains Louise Ferdun, the Diablo Valley League's President and an Orinda resident, "Corporate and individual sponsors have sent financial contributions to our programs... As a team, we distributed \$500,000 through our philanthropic programs this year and have touched the lives of more than 13,000 local people." Ferdun is particularly proud to report that the Chapter was able to supply new clothes for 3000 children in central Contra Costa County through "Operation School Bell," a national program that provides clothing, shoes, backpacks, literacy programs, as

well as health and hygiene kits to disadvantaged school children.

Merchandise is donated by many residents of the Lamorinda area, as well Walnut Creek, Alamo, and Danville. Donations are welcomed at the Way Side Inn Thrift Shop which is open from 10:00 to 4:00 Tuesday through Saturday. They accept gently used clothing (men's, women's children's), décor items, house wares, small furniture, books, toys, collectables and art.

The League always needs new members. Leadership is encouraged and service to the community is the focus. To find out more about the programs, come to the August 11th party or go to the League's web site: diablovalley.assistanceleague.org.

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### LYNN'S TOP FIVE

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## Long - Term Care Insurance: A complex policy, a complex decision

**3) 10 year pay option:** Another way to confront affordability is to buy your insurance coverage while you are working, and then pay it up in full before you retire, or in your early retirement years. The most popular way is by purchasing a 10-pay rider on your plan. This is VERY costly: usually the annual premiums are 2.5 - 3 times higher than a more conventional life-time pay policy. However, if you budget this into your highest, peak earning years, you are paid up before you retire, and you are done! Using the highest quality insurance company for this type of product is key, however. Not a time to cut corners here!

**4) Inflation protection — don't scrimp!** A lot of riders and add-on features are available to you when designing your LTC policy. There are costs to these, so some are worth it, others not so much. Here's one to embrace: INFLATION PROTECTION! Consider buying at least 5%, buy it as a compounding benefit, be happy you have it!

**5) Daily benefit:** It is very scary to think that if I were to need full-time care, my assets would need to produce let's say \$8000/month. But that doesn't mean I need to buy \$8000/month of coverage. If my assets were already projected to provide, let's say, \$5000/month of retirement income for me, maybe I only need to buy \$3000/month of coverage? You and your planning team can go through your own projected budget during your retirement years and figure out what you won't be doing if you were to be receiving long-term care (traveling and car payments, for example, might be substantially reduced if not just eliminated). You then can calculate how much your projected income shortfall will actually be, and just cover that. Again, this is a way to keep it real and keep it affordable. Don't forget the equity in your home in this calculation. How you will or will not use that as a potential long-term care funding source is a very personal question, but one that should not be ignored in your quest for affordable solutions.

On your journey you will find that even extremely knowledgeable agents find it tough to compare policies and insurers. Take care,

take time, ask questions. The policy you buy is most likely the policy you will be keeping. As you age and your medical situation changes,

you may not be able to switch policies. So be sure you do your homework up-front! It's an investment of time that you won't regret!

*Lynn Ballou is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP) and co-owner of Ballou Plum Financial Advisors, LLC, a Registered Investment Advisory (RIA) firm in Lafayette. Lynn is also a Registered Principal and Branch Manager with LPL Financial (LPL). As such, she is required by securities regulations to add the following information to this column: The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and not intended to provide specific advice or recommendation for any individual. Securities offered through LPL Financial, member FINRA/SIPC.*

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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

## Moraga Education Foundation Surpasses Fundraising Goal

By Andrea A. Firth



Photo Andrea A. Firth

Following a year marked by significant cuts to the State funding of public schools, parents of students who attend Moraga public schools have a little something to smile about, albeit if only briefly. The Moraga Education Foundation (MEF)—a non-profit, volunteer-run organization that raises funds to fill State-created budget gaps—surpassed its 2007-2008 goal to raise a total of \$1,245,000. MEF's fundraising success was in part due to a May letter campaign that raised \$119,000 in just 31 days.

"The Moraga parent community has consistently stepped up to the plate to support their children's education," stated Moraga School District Superintendent Rick Schafer, however even he was surprised by the magnitude of the support garnered so quickly through the May campaign.

More than 14% of contributors to the May campaign were giving for the second time and 18% of contributors were first time MEF donors. "We have had an unprecedented year," stated MEF President Shari Simon. "To preserve the type

and range of programs that we have had in our schools, we had to raise more. The number of new donors was very exciting," she added.

According to Schafer, MEF's contributions will enable Moraga School District to reinstate programs that were to be eliminated due to the State funding cuts. Libraries across the District will be restored to full-time function, added classes at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School will keep the average class size from encroaching on 30 students per class, and popular grade-level enrichment programs will not be forgone. In addition, MEF will give a total of \$420,000 to Campolindo High School, which will help fund counseling programs, class size reduction, library services, and classroom technology—programs that would have been cut secondary to the State budget crunch.

"Unfortunately we are going into a bleak period and State funding may get even worse over the next three years," noted Simon. Superintendent Schafer concurred. "We are very concerned about the next three budget years... The State has shifted providing adequate school funding to the individual communities. Our community has been able to meet the challenge, but I question how long they will be able to continue," stated Schafer.

Although the money raised by MEF does not begin to approximate the State funding shortfall for the District, Simon remained hopeful. "I'm very optimistic about the commitment of our parents and the greater community. Education is valued and a priority here. I believe that the community will rise to the challenge."

## What's For Dinner?

By Jill McTaggart

Since the 1970's when women joined the workforce in droves the "What's for dinner?" question has confounded them. The conundrum is in part logistical – finding the time and energy to plan, shop, and cook meals. But, for me, as a parent I knew deep down, emotionally, there were some other more intuitive reasons why I wanted a shared family meal (and not because my own amazingly efficient working mother always managed it).

Through research, what I found was that many recent studies have quantified my gut feeling about the importance of dinnertime. Here are my top 5 reasons to eat meals together at home as a family culled from recent academic studies.

1. Health. The Archive of Family Medicine study in 2000 showed that eating family dinner was associated with healthful dietary intake, including more fruits and vegetables and less fried food and soda.
2. Children will be better spoken and better read. A Harvard study found that complex and rich dinner conversations were more important than play, story time and other family events in the development of language and reading skills.
3. Averts risky teen behavior. A Columbia University study cites that teens are 42% less likely to drink, 59% less likely to smoke

tobacco and 66% less likely to try marijuana.

4. Adolescent girls will have less eating disorders according to a 2004 University of Minnesota study.

5. Working parents are happier. Published in July 2008, Brigham Young University found that among both mothers and fathers who made it home regularly for dinner, they felt more personal success and felt "more kindly" about their workplace.

While researching this article I stumbled upon a link for a website called bringbackdinner.com. Cool, I thought, a motivated mom is providing information that will help. As I opened the link it was immediately apparent that this was not a mom's site, it is sponsored by the KFC Corporation, yes Colonel Sanders et al. This internet misfire was serendipitous in that it brought me to a study proclaiming that family dinners will cause adults to be less obese. This 2007 study in Public Health Nutrition found that families who ate fast food for dinner more than three times a week ate more junk food, less fruits and vegetables than families who ate fast food less than three times a week. Adults tended to be more obese and have a higher BMI than non fast food eating adults. "Fast food can be a convenient alternative to cooking for busy families," said Kerri Boutelle, Ph.D., lead author and as-

sistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Minnesota Medical School. "But, frequently making fast food a family meal can negatively affect food choices in the house and the overall health of the family."

It is important to note that shared meals are not only about the food, but about the few moments that families take to sit face to face away from media, cell phones and other modern distraction. In a recent NPR segment on the family dinner, a noted researcher wondered aloud if the social and emotional benefits of dinner were a result of the actual meal or if they were caused by the functionality of a family who can coordinate and provide frequently shared meals. This notion coincides with my intuition that it is not only the healthful food but a time to build relationships and show one another that you truly care about them and what happened in the course of the day.

If this interaction is new to you and even a little awkward, an ice breaker that I like to use with my kids is the question: What was the best thing and what was the worst thing that happened today? This is a way to explore all the good that happens as well as the not so good that happens throughout the day. Hey, at this point any question is better than "What's for dinner?"—right?

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## AUHSD to Place Bond on Next Ballot

By Andrea A. Firth

The Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) Board unanimously passed a resolution to place a bond measure on the November ballot asking voters to fund improvements to aging and obsolete facilities throughout the District along with establishing a ten-year technology fund.

"All of our facilities are aging and we need to plan for the next 20 years. The bond will provide the funding to do so," notes AUHSD Superintendent Jim Negri. "Additionally, the Classroom Technology Fund will allow the district to provide classroom technology and life cycle replacement to

provide students and staff with up-to-date technology to support learning and teaching," he adds.

The measure, if passed, will issue \$93 million in bonds without increasing current residential tax rates but extending

the current tax rate for several years. Other projects to be funded by the bond measure include the replacement of aging roofs, conversion of older facilities into classroom space, and upgrading energy management systems.

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Dining Dining Dining Dining Dining

Gigi Settles In as a Local Favorite

By Susie Iventosch

One step inside the front door of Gigi Restaurant in Lafayette had me dreaming of herb-roasted chicken and caramelized vegetables.

braised Sonoma lamb shanks with roasted corn, arugula and black olive vinaigrette.

Need I say more? Actually, yes, because the side dishes are also unusual and include warm olives, a bowl of local Brentwood cherries, baked organic broccoli and fries with whole-grain mustard aioli.

Prior to opening Gigi, Amber worked in the restaurant business for 15 years in San Francisco and says he learned his craft on the job.

"We'd like to thank the city of Lafayette for supporting us," he said. "We're off the beaten path, so we really appreciate our devout local following and are looking forward to our second year of business in this community."

When I asked Chef Amber if he'd be willing to share one of his recipes, he sent me a spinach-peach salad with champagne vinaigrette. Because we're right in the middle of the peach harvest, you'll have no trouble at all finding excellent ripe, but firm peaches for this dish.

Amber opened Gigi, a sophisticated neighborhood restaurant, just about a year ago. He says they seem to be well-known for seasonally-driven dinners and very popular brunch items such as eggs Benedict and seasonal veggie and steak scramble.

"We select really fresh, locally-grown produce for our salads and our menu features handmade pastas, local fish and even great hamburgers," Amber said.

Many of the salads are made with seasonal fruit and greens, and the day I was there, the dinner menu included northwestern trout with Dungeness crabmeat; seared Tombo tuna with shitake mushrooms, bok choy and pea shoot salad; organic Cornish game hens - buttermilk fried; sautéed flank steak with summer squash, artichoke hearts, bacon and blue cheese; and



Roxanne Logan and Jeff Amber in the lobby of Gigi Restaurant in Lafayette

This recipe is available on our web site. Go to: http://www.lamorindaweekly.com Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com



Gigi's Peach Salad (Yields about 4 dinner salads)

- Ingredients: 8 cups baby spinach, 3 ripe yellow peaches, 12 tablespoons toasted almonds, 2 ounces shaved ricotta salata, 5 1/2 ounces champagne vinaigrette.

Directions: Place spinach and peaches in a large mixing bowl and gently toss with vinaigrette. Add salt and pepper to taste.

- Champagne vinaigrette ingredients: 1/2 cup Champagne vinegar, 1 shallot, juice of one-half lemon, 4 tablespoons Dijon mustard, 2 cups canola oil, salt and pepper.

Combine all dressing ingredients in a blender. Blend until thoroughly combined.

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Table listing various restaurants in the Lamorinda area, including their names, addresses, and phone numbers. Categories include American, BBQ, Burger Joint, Cafe, Chinese, 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.



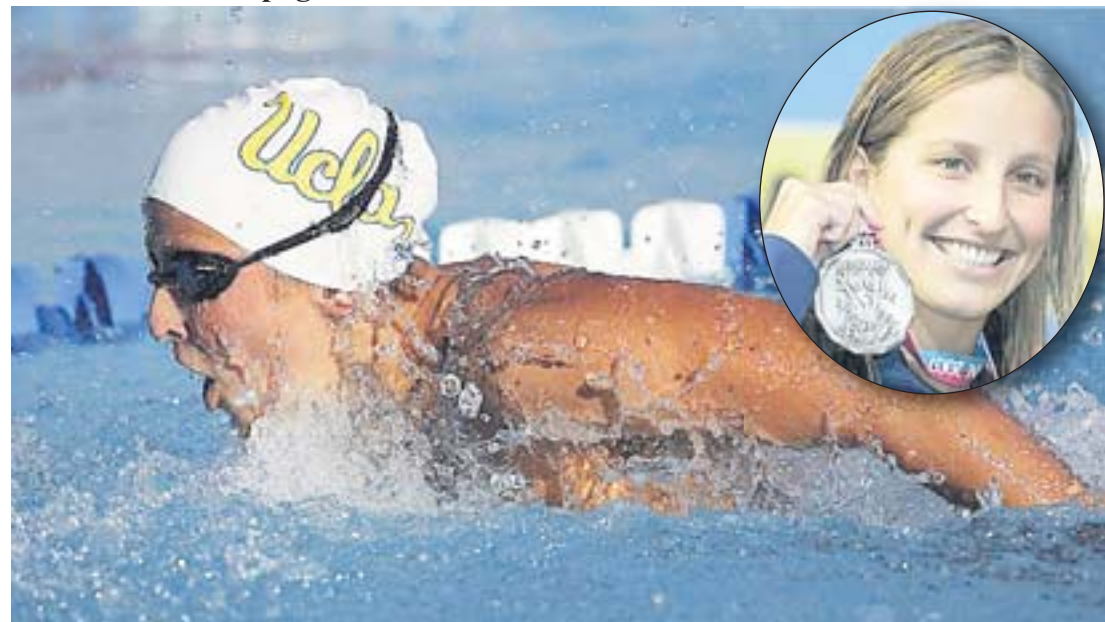


# SPORTS

## LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

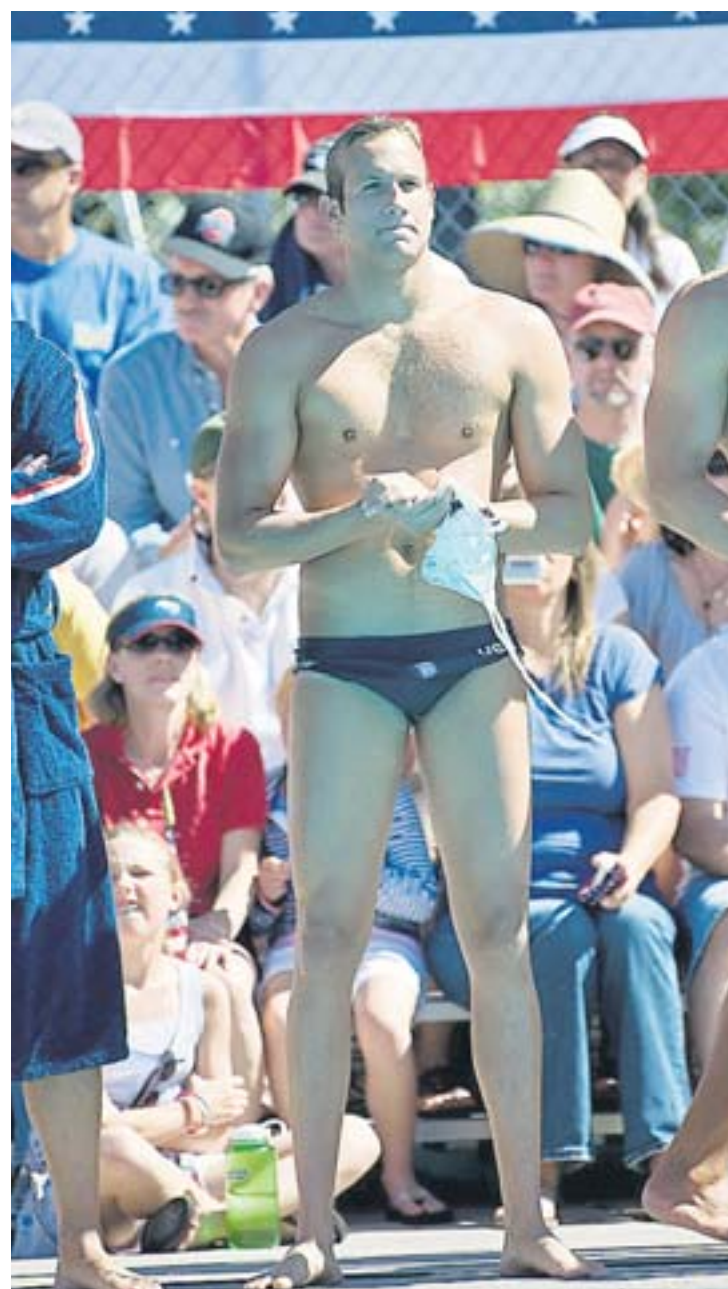
### Making a Splash in Beijing

... continued from page 1



Kim Vandenberg

Photo provided



Peter Varellas

Photo Robert Johnson

And after an impressive career both at Campolindo and UCLA, Vandenberg placed fifth in the 200-meter freestyle event at the Olympic Trials. She didn't make the team in her first event, butterfly, but made it as a member of the

women's 4x200 meter freestyle relay team.

Her dad said he's excited to see her swim as a part of the US Olympic team. "It's encouraging as a parent to see your child achieve his or her goals," he said.

For Varellas, swimming at MTSC was just a warm-up for his real passion – water polo. He began playing when he started high school at Campolindo, and by the end of his sophomore year, he "kind of knew that's what I wanted to do," he said.

After graduating from Campolindo in 2002, he went on to play water polo at Stanford for four years. During his senior year at Stanford, he started playing for the U.S. National team, and has been a part of the team since.

When he graduated from Stanford, he traveled to Europe to play for a professional team in Italy during his months off from the U.S. national team. He just finished his second year with that team.

Varellas' mom, Robyn, said it's still a bit unreal to know that her son is going to the Olympics. "I think it will really hit us when we stand there and see him march out at the first game with the team," she said. "We are so proud and so appreciative of all the support our friends, family, his coaches, and the community have given him."

Varellas is excited to represent the United States in the Olympics, but said making it is only the first step – now, he and his team have to prove themselves in Beijing.

"Making it was a goal of mine, but the true goal for the team has yet to be accomplished," he said.

### LMYA 5TH-6TH Grade Boys

### Summer Basketball League Champions

Submitted Colleen Monasevitch



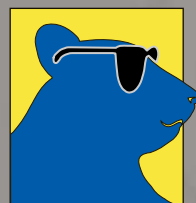
Bottom row : Nathan Edwards, Nathaniel Sauerberg, Jack Brahney, Eric Monasevitch  
Back row: Grant Smith, Coach Edwards, Sterling Strothers

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### Local Beijing Bound Athletes Prepare for Olympics

By Jack Fernbacher  
Jeff Stevens

#### Nicole Branagh

Joining Varellas and Vandenberg, Stevens is one of three graduates of Campolindo from the class of 2002. Stevens, a right handed pitcher from Berkeley, is a part of the historic USA baseball team. Currently, baseball is not scheduled for the 2012 Olympics so Stevens could be a part of the last Olympic USA baseball team. Stevens has been playing Triple-A ball in Buffalo for the Cleveland Indians this season.

Branagh, a Miramonte graduate from the class of 1997, finished strong at the end of the Beach Volleyball qualifying to capture her first Olympic bid. Joined by her partner Youngs, the number-five ranked duo in the World are aiming for a medal.

#### Heather Petri

Petri is competing in her third Olympics with the Women's Water Polo team. Graduating from the class of 1996 from Miramonte, she has helped the US receive the World's number one ranking. She is aiming for her first gold medal in Olympic competition.

#### Grace Upshaw

Upshaw is the lone Acalanes graduate competing in Beijing. She qualified for the long jump competition at the Olympic trials in Oregon. Jumping 6.88 m, Upshaw placed second in the trials to make it to her second Olympics. Upshaw went to the 2004 Olympic Games where she placed 10th. Upshaw graduated from Acalanes in 1993 and Cal-Berkeley in 1979.

#### Natalie Coughlin

World record holder (100 yard backstroke) Natalie Coughlin grew up in Lafayette and graduated from Carondelet High in Concord in 2000. This will be the Cal grad's second Olympic appearance. Coughlin came home from Athens in 2004 with two Gold medals, two Silver and one Bronze.

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# SPORTS

## LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS



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### OCC Swim-a-thon Benefits Nicholas Colby Fund

By Jill Tarkoff, OCC



Nicholas Colby Fund volunteers Sarah Atkinson, Becky Edwards, Steve Haufler, OCC Head Swim Coach with swimmers Photo Allie Edwards



Steve Haufler, OCC Head Swim Coach with swimmers Photo Allie Edwards

### Sleepy Hollow Hosts "B" Invitational Swim Meet

Submitted by Ali Minden



Morning winners Photo provided



Afternoon winners Photo provided

On Sunday July 27, Sleepy Hollow Swim and Tennis Club held its 22nd Annual "B" Invitational swim meet. There were approximately 750 swimmers from 9 swim clubs from the Orinda-Moraga Pool Association competing in this fun meet. Here are the results of the meet:

- High Point Winners:**
- 6 and under women - Ella Drury - Sleepy Hollow
  - 6 and under men - Matt Lyons - Sleepy Hollow
  - 7-8 women - Avery Hansen - Sleepy Hollow
  - 7-8 men - Jack Lewis - Sleepy Hollow
  - 9-10 women - Kristine Stanners - OCC and Mary Noal - Meadow (Tie)
  - 9-10 men - Taariq Saffouri - Campo Cabana Club
  - 11-12 women - Claire Marvin - OCC
  - 11-12 men - Grayson Judge - OCC
  - 13-14 women - Cynthia Brzezinski - Sleepy Hollow
  - 13-14 men - Michael Hori - Miramonte
  - 15-18 women - Kelly Katsura - Sleepy Hollow
  - 15-18 men - Pierce Haley - Sleepy Hollow

### More on the Lafayette City Meet



Sean McKenna and Brady Aiello with 9-10 High Point Trophies at Lafayette City Swim Meet 2008 Photo submitted by Colin McKenna

In our last issue, you read some of the highlights of the Lafayette City Swim Meet. When we listed the high point winners, we failed to note that 9 year old Sean McKenna, swimming for Sun Valley, tied with Brady Aiello (31 points each) in the Boys 9-10 category. Coming off last season's victories as high point winner in the 7-8 group at the both the City and Conference meets, McKenna dropped several seconds off his previous best time to win the 50 yard backstroke and also took the high point award for his age group at this year's Battle of the Ages.

I love swimming as a sport, but it makes me even happier to swim for children who are less fortunate. I feel special that I was part of this," said Kyle, an Orinda Country Club swimmer. On July 21st the Orinda Country Club Sharks swimming team, coached by Steve Haufler, held their annual Swim-a-thon. This year the team swam laps to raise money for The Nicholas Colby Fund in Walnut Creek. Swimmers age four to eighteen donated \$5,000 to help children with cancer, degenerative conditions or other life threatening illnesses and their families.

The Nicholas Colby Fund

reaches out to children through collaborative relationships set up with Children's Hospital Oakland, Stanford-Lucile Packard Children's Hospital, The University of California San Francisco Children's Hospital and the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Their motto is "Helping Children Be Children." They accomplish this goal through partnerships with area businesses to provide breaks from treatment through ticket donations to Warriors basketball games, Oakland A's baseball games, Oakland Ice Arena events, Harlem Globetrotters basketball games and the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus.

Holidays are another time that the Nicholas Colby Fund reaches out. At Thanksgiving the fund also provides thanksgiving dinners for parents and their children in the hospital. At Christmas they collected donated toys for patients to give to their siblings. At New Year's, baskets are delivered to patients, parents and medical staff to help ring in the new year of possibilities and hope.

When a child is diagnosed with a life threatening illness, a family may struggle for moments to smile. The Nicholas Colby Fund tries to provide not only nutritional treat packs to parents of children in Pediatric Intensive

Care Units and backpacks filled with fun things to do for newly diagnosed children, but also a moment to treasure. A night away from treatment, seeing the sparkle in your child's eyes and laughing together can make all the difference and a lifetime of memories.

OCC is proud to help the Nicholas Colby Fund in their pursuit of helping children be children. Just as we clap and cheer for our swimmers as they reach their individual goals we know that our small contribution will help other families and children in the Bay Area reach theirs.

### Doing the Dive!

Information submitted by Steve Sherman

On Saturday, August 2, young divers from Lamorinda and beyond gathered at the Sherman Swim Club in Lafayette to compete in the 2008 Sherman Invitational Diving Meet.

"This meet caters to novice divers, but it has become a springboard for a lot of great divers starting their careers," said coach Steve Sherman. "We had national level divers competing this year as well."

Carley Roberts of Orinda was the winner of the Novice Girls High Point Dive Award, earning the single highest score among all the novice girls.

Meet Results for Lamorinda Participants:

- 11 & Under Boys (Novice)**  
1st place: Sunil Aneja, Lafayette
- 13 & Under Girls (Novice)**  
1st place: Alyssa Parsons, Moraga  
2nd place: Claire Svedberg, Lafayette  
3rd place: Carley Roberts, Orinda
- 13 & Under Girls (JC)**  
3rd place: Mikaela Moore, Moraga
- 16-18 Girls (JO)**  
9th place: Eliza Galligian, Moraga  
11th place: Heather Finerte, Moraga
- 19 & Over Women**  
1st place: Katie Copenhagen, Orinda



Sunil Aneja Photo Robert Johnson



Claire Svedberg Photo Robert Johnson

**Lamorinda Weekly** is an independent publication, produced by and for the residents of Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda, CA

**Lamorinda Weekly, P.O. Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570-6133**  
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Publisher: Andy Scheck; andy@lamorindaweekly.com, phone 925-330-7916  
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Advertising: Wendy Wuerth-Scheck; 925-377-0977, wendy@lamorindaweekly.com

26,200 printed copies; 24,600 mailed to homes and businesses in Lamorinda. 1,500 delivered to pick up locations.  
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# SPORTS

## LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

### Moraga's Basketball Superheroes—Katie Batlin and Jack Trotter

By Andrea A. Firth

It seems quite remarkable that Katie Batlin and Jack Trotter—two of the best basketball players graduating from Lamorinda high schools this past year—grew up less than a block apart, in the same neighborhood, on a bedrock bluff in Moraga. One might speculate that there was something strange in the water that fed the bluff about 18 1/2 years ago to yield two basketball prodigies in such close proximity. But the Batlin family did not arrive in Moraga until Katie was three years old, so that theory is dashed.

Yet similarities between Batlin and Trotter exist and can not be discounted. First the obvious—they are tall. Batlin stands 5'11" and Trotter towers at 6'9". Second, they have good genes. Batlin's uncle was an all-American basketball player, and Trotter's father played college ball.

But what they share that is most important to their athletic success is the quiet confidence, fierce competitive nature, and passion for the game that is evident when both of these young talents take to the court. These traits, coupled with the limitless family support they each receive, helped Batlin and Trotter to lead their high school teams to North Coast Section Championship wins and to position themselves for careers in Division I College Basketball.

#### Katie Batlin

As a youngster, Batlin and her father would slip in the side door of the McKeon Pavilion at Saint Mary's College (SMC) and shoot around on the stadium-style court when the gymnasium was empty. "Back then I would tell my dad how great it would be to get to play for a college team on a court like that," says Batlin with a smile. And that is exactly what Batlin will be doing in a few weeks having accepted a full-ride scholarship to play basketball at Saint Mary's.

Batlin played on the Varsity Girls Basketball Team at Miramonte High School for the past four years under Coach Darrell Hirashima, and her accomplishments at Miramonte are endless. She was named Rookie of the Year as a freshman, Most Valuable Player in her sophomore and junior years, and selected to the Hall of Fame in her senior year. "She is one of the strongest players to have ever played for Miramonte High School," states Hirashima without hesitation. "She was the fiercest competitor that I have ever coached. For girls playing against her, it was nearly impossible to beat her," he adds.

Bolstered by parents who have attended every school and

club basketball game that she has played in since ninth grade (which numbered roughly in the thousands according to mom Judy), Batlin is looking forward to having her family close by when she heads off to college. "My friends tease me about the fact that I can walk to the College from my house," says Batlin who plans to live on the SMC campus. "I think it will be great to stop back at home to do laundry or have a home-cooked meal. Plus, I don't think I'll have any problem with getting homesick," she adds. Batlin's mom describes her daughter's choice to attend Saint Mary's as a dream come true. "Katie felt connected to the coaching staff and her teammates from day one, and she is ecstatic to continue being a part of the local community," says Judy Batlin.

It will also be helpful for Batlin to have mom and dad nearby so that she can continue her pregame ritual. "Our whole family is superstitious," explains Batlin who before each and every game gets a piece of gum from mom, a kiss and words of encouragement from mom and dad, and their final bit of advice—to have fun. "My goal each game is to have fun. I like to have a good time, and that is what I want for everyone else."

"It's going to be a challenge to balance school, basketball, and a social life," states Batlin who plans to study elementary education and hopes to eventually work with special needs students. But with her easy-going, mature, and responsible nature, Batlin seems more than ready for this new experience and the next level of competition.

"I think the last chapter of Katie Batlin's basketball career has yet to be written," says her former coach Hirashima. "The best may be yet to come, and we will have the advantage to be able to watch her do it."

#### Jack Trotter

If you google Jack Trotter, you will find his ESPN high school boys basketball ranking and a flattering description of the power forward which includes phrases such as 'smooth shooting touch,' 'solid pivot work' and 'excellent hands.' This is quite impressive for a lefty from Moraga who never made the All-CYO team while in middle school.

As the center of Campolindo's championship-winning Boys Varsity Basketball Team, Trotter was the go-to guy. "He was a leader," states Chris Whirlow who coached Trotter for the past two years at Campolindo. "Other teams game-planned against him.

Our players looked to him for leadership. He led the way to the title."

Averaging 24 points and 14 rebounds per game, Trotter was named co-MVP of the DFAL League and Campolindo's team last season. The only thing that seems to have paralleled Trotter's success on the court has been his exponential growth off the court. Trotter started freshman year standing six feet short and grew in annual increments of three inches to reach his current height of 6'9", and he may not be done yet.

Trotter, who carried a heavy schedule of AP classes and maintained a 4.2 GPA while at Campolindo, will be attending Stanford University in September where he is a preferred walk-on for the Men's Basketball Team. "I wanted to go to Stanford before I knew basketball could open doors for me," states Trotter. Although he received offers to play basketball elsewhere, Trotter is confident with his choice to join a three-generation family tradition, following mom, dad, and siblings Andy, and Emma, to the hallowed halls of Stanford U.

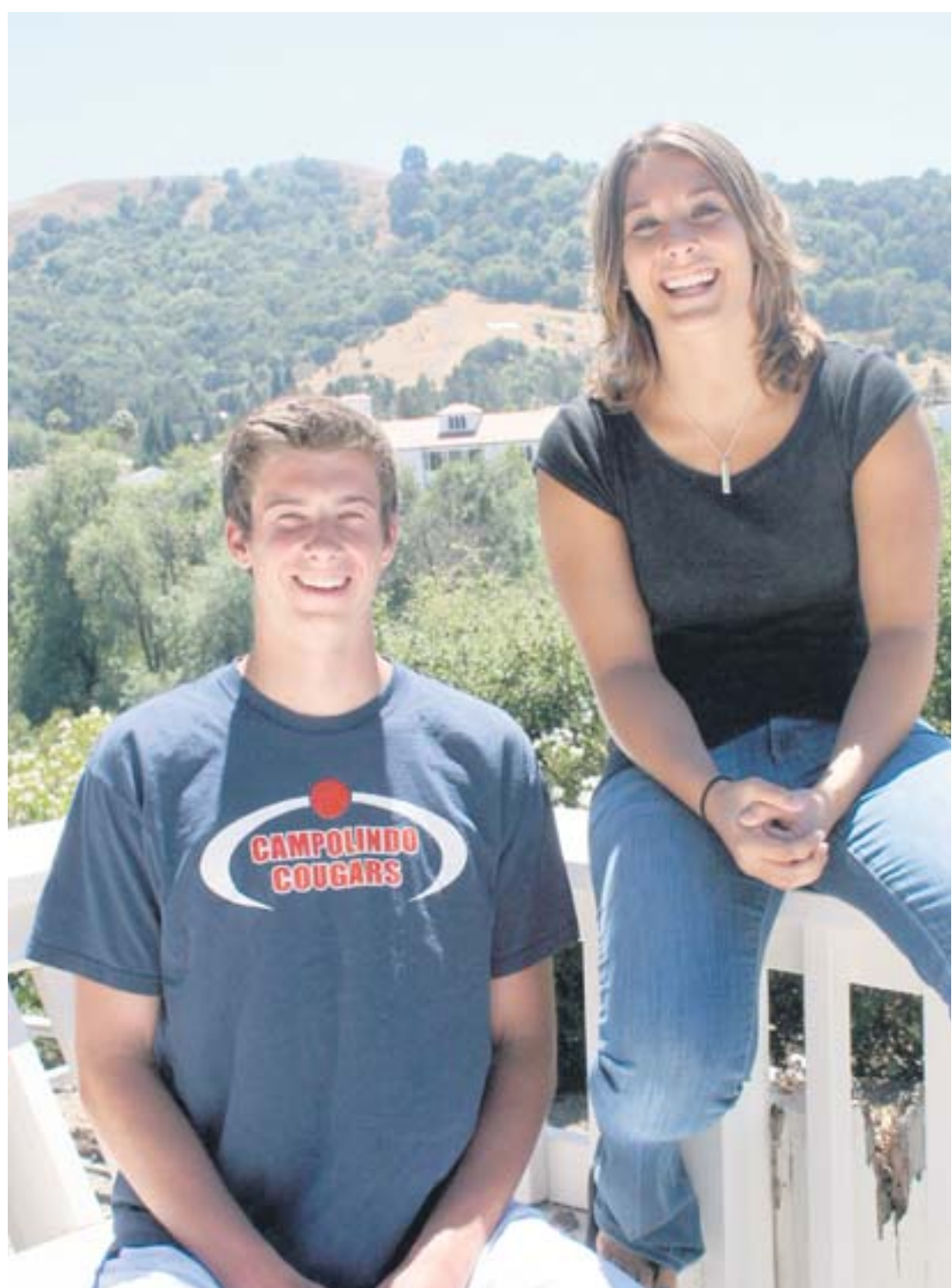
Modest in nature, Trotter credits Coach Whirlow with his success last season. "He re-engineered the offense and defense which opened the way for me to score," states Trotter "It's really thanks to him that I'm going anywhere."

"Over the past few years Jack has shown a knack for working hard to take advantage of opportunities on the basketball court. Those opportunities have included really superb coaching Jack has received at Campolindo," adds Trotter's father Dave.

Trotter's dad, who coached him in the early days, has missed only a handful of his son's games over the past four years. "I really enjoyed coaching Jack and his LMYA and CYO teammates. From the start, I found Jack to be extremely coachable. He absorbs constructive criticism and has continued to work hard, both during and out of season, on improving his physical strength and basketball skills."

Trotter's passion for the game is clear. "Basketball made high school better. It was almost essential," he states in his characteristically judicious style.

"I think Stanford is a great choice for Jack," says Coach Whirlow. "Given some recent changes in their line up, I think he'll have the opportunity to play," he adds. "Jack hasn't come close to realizing his full potential on the basketball court. Stanford got a sleeper, and they will benefit from Jack being a part of the team."



Jack Trotter and Katie Batlin at home in the Bluffs in Moraga Photo Andrea A. Firth

### Lafayette Little League All-Stars Take First

Submitted by Fran Miller



Pictured from left to right, front row: Casey Harrington, Matthew Stanners, Matthew Jorgensen, Charlie Ziolkowski. Middle row: Jesse Longchamps, Will Brueckner, John O'Malley, Ryan Donat, Alexie Shurtz, Andrew Schatz, Ben Miller. Back row: Assistant Coach Joe Ziolkowski, Head Coach Bob Brueckner, Assistant Coach Dan Harrington. (not pictured: Trevor Martinho)

The Lafayette Little League 11 year-old All Stars recently took first place in the 22nd Annual Granada Invitational in Livermore, in which 17 East Bay teams participated.

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