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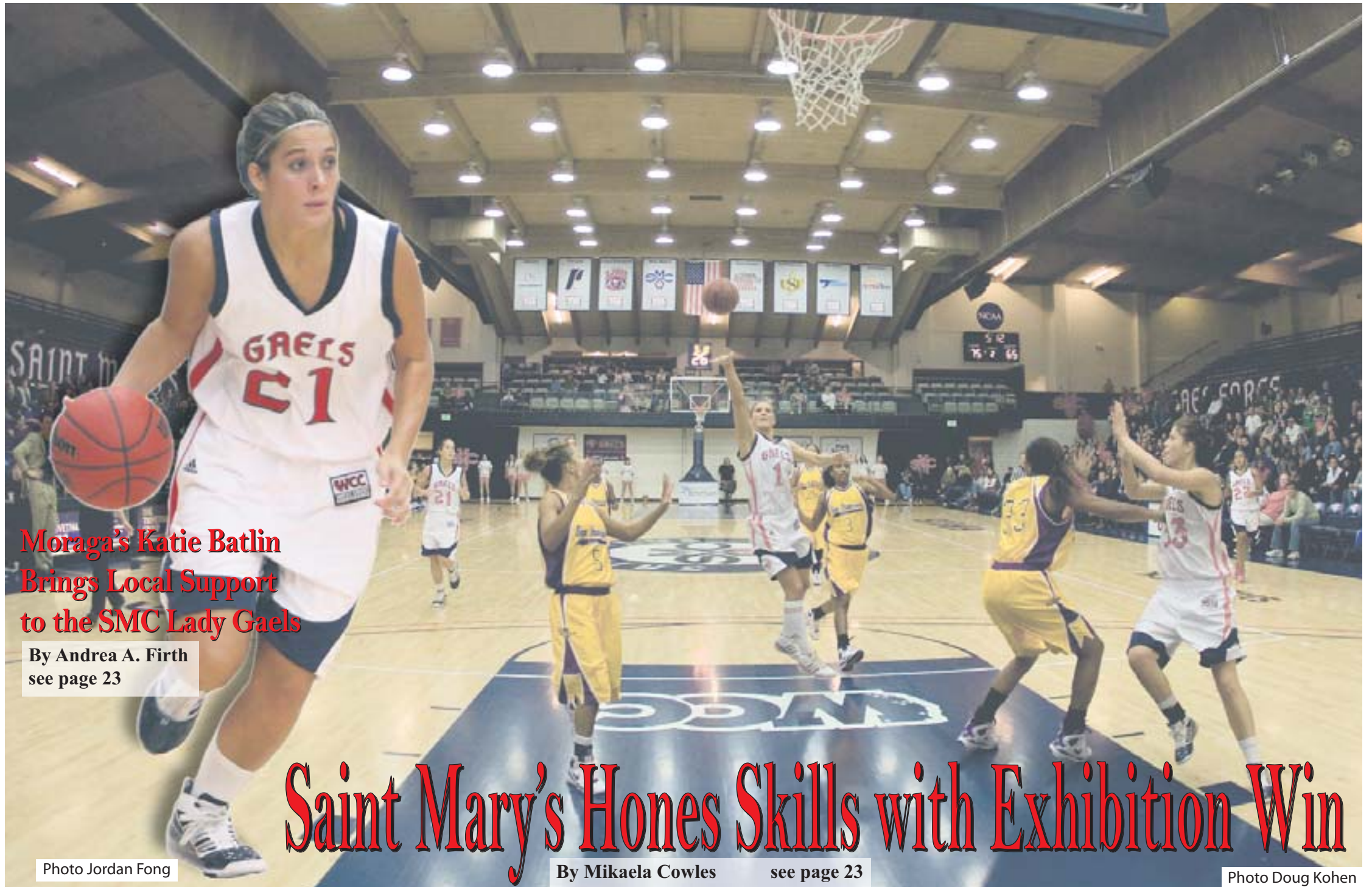
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Volume 02; Issue 18

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Wednesday, November 12, 2008



Moraga's Katie Batlin Brings Local Support to the SMC Lady Gaels

By Andrea A. Firth see page 23

Saint Mary's Hones Skills with Exhibition Win

Photo Jordan Fong

By Mikaela Cowles see page 23

Photo Doug Kohen

LAMORINDA WEEKLY
this week
Page 3

Moragans 'Just Say No' to initiatives

Pages 5 and 9

Don't miss a pair of stories in honor of our veterans

Mancinelli to Join the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board

By Andrea A. Firth

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board will have a new member seated at the table at their meeting in December—one that brings active fire fighting experience to the position. Brook Mancinelli, who works as a fire fighter in San Francisco, will join the Board having defeated incumbent Gene Gottfried in race for the seat representing Division 5. “I am pleased to have won. I’m glad

to have the opportunity to give something back to the community that I live in,” states Mancinelli. After growing up in the Sleepy Hollow neighborhood, Mancinelli returned to Orinda to raise his own family and lives just 50 yards from his childhood home.

“One of the big reasons that I ran for the Board is that I don’t want our Fire District to face the financial problems that they are hav-

ing elsewhere.” Mancinelli wants to focus on bringing the long-term pension and health-care costs of the District under control. “The District needs to be responsible for what they can maintain,” he adds.

In the race for the Fire District Board representative for Division 2, incumbent Fred Weil defeated Bob Nelson to retain his seat.

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County Connection to Cut Service Routes and Raise Fares

By Jean Follmer

As a result of severe budget shortfalls, the Contra Costa County Transit Authority (CCCTA) needs to cut 74,600 service hours (23%). CCCTA plans to make the cuts by reducing its routes, eliminating mid-day free rides, closing its transit center and increasing its fares earlier than expected. The approved fare increases that were expected to take place on July 1, 2009, may take hold as early as April 1, 2009. Fare changes follow:

CCCTA has scheduled six public workshops “to discuss cost saving measures which include service reductions and fare increases equivalent to 74,600 hours of service.” As of this publication date, November 12, there are two meetings left:

November 12, 2008 from 4:00-7:00 pm at the Orinda Community Center and November 13, 2008 from 4:00-7:00 pm at the Pleasant Hill City Office

“We really are looking for community input. People can drop in and we’ll be there throughout the evening to answer questions,” said County Connection Administrator Mary Burdick. Burdick said they want the public to tell them which routes they use most frequently so CCCTA can determine where it can most effectively cut services. CCCTA has two route reductions options: either discontinue weekend service and shorten the weekday

	Current	Effective April, 09
Adult 10th Cash	1.50	2.00
Adult 10th Monthly Pass	53.00	60.00
Adult 10th 1 Ride	1.00	1.50
Senior 10th Cash	.85	1.00
Senior 10th 10AM PM with R/C Card	free	1.00
BAR transfer Senior 10th	.50	.50
Senior 10th 0 Ride	13.00	15.00
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transfers BAR	.85	1.00
press B s Cash	.00	.50
B s to B s transfers	free	free
in Paratransit	3.00	3.00

service from 6am-6pm or implement “selective service reductions requiring system analysis.” If you’re unable to attend one of the meetings, CCCTA has established a dedicated e-mail link at www.cccta.org. “We have already received a few e-mails from people

asking us to keep their route,” said Burdick. For more information including detailed maps of proposed route reductions in Lamorinda and throughout Contra Costa County, visit www.cccta.org and click on “Spring 2009 Systemwide Service and Fare Changes.”

Measure E passes as budget forecast gets stormier

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Lamorinda Community

Calendar, Notes, News

Lafayette

Calendar	
City Council	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road	
Monday, November 24	
Planning Comm.	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road	
Thursday, November 20	
Design Review	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road	
Tuesday, November 25	
Town of Lafayette:	
http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us	
Chamber of Commerce:	
http://www.lafayettechamber.org	



Take Your Tools and Leave
11/2/08 – Lafayette Police were summoned to a Los Arabis Drive home to calm a dispute between the homeowner and a contractor over work being done at the home. The dispute arose after the homeowner told the contractor he planned to rescind the contract and ordered the contractor to gather his materials and leave the property. The contractor became rather upset and began cursing at the homeowner and demanding payment. The homeowner told the contractor to take him to court and the contractor left with his equipment.

Minor, Marijuana and Music
10/29/08 – An Acalanes student was arrested on campus for possession of less than 1 ounce of marijuana on school grounds. The minor also happened to be in possession of a stolen iPod. It is unknown if the minor was listening to Pink Floyd's "Wish You Were Here" just prior to the arrest.

Broken Passenger Windows at Oakwood
10/29/08 – An unknown suspect broke the passenger windows of two vehicles parked at Oakwood Athletic Club. One owner was missing a nylon briefcase containing his Dell laptop. The other owner is missing a gym bag containing clothes and an iPod. The computer was later recovered after being sold on the street in Montclair. The location of the gym bag and its contents is unknown. A small, dark and mysterious vehicle was seen circling the lot just prior to the break-ins.

Speed Racer Found
10/31/08 – A minor was pulled over by Lafayette Police on Happy Valley Road near Sundown Terrace. The minor was charged with "reckless driving" for driving in excess of 70 mph in a 25 mph zone. The minor will appear in court on November 25.



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Historic Election Party Rocks the Plaza

By Cathy Tyson



The Lamorinda Democratic Club's Craig Cheslog addresses the crowd

Photo Andy Scheck

With a nod to the throngs of people gathered in Chicago and Washington D.C., Lafayette's Plaza Park was the place to go to celebrate a new day for our country, last Wednesday evening. Cars drove by and honked their horns, young children danced on the grass, and flags hanging from the trellises provided a backdrop for this historic celebration.

Mike Anderson spoke passionately about what a momentous, life changing event this is – electing

the first African American president. Lynda Deschambault, Moraga's Mayor, recalled that "we've gone through the good, the bad and the ugly," in this election and introduced the top vote-getter (by ten votes at press time) in the Moraga Town Council race, Karen Mendonca. Host Craig Cheslog of the Lamorinda Democratic Club (LDC) noted that Barack Obama is only the third democrat in the last century to win the majority of the popular vote. He also commented

that Obama has 2.5 million fans on Facebook – a sign of what a campaign can do by reaching out to young people.

Despite having their hands full trying to get local democratic candidates elected, the LDC rallied, pulling together this election party together on short notice. Live music, balloons, campaign buttons and Obama cookies helped set the celebratory tone of the night.

... continued on page 6

Eden Comes to Lafayette

Long awaited senior housing nears fruition

By Cathy Tyson

It took five years to get to this point, but additional senior housing is finally coming to Lafayette. Eden Housing, Inc. is well on its way to having its land use permit request granted. Both the Planning Commission and the Senior Housing Task Force expressed their enthusiastic support of the project. Some paperwork on

Conditions and Findings needs to be completed before the final okay, which should be granted at the Planning Commission's next meeting.

The proposed 52,000 square foot structure on .8 acre, will contain 46 senior apartments. The central location between Brown Avenue and Blackwood Lane, next

to the Forge at 3426 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, is ideal. Architect Van Meter Williams Pollack designed the three story building to be set back from the street, and it features two interior courtyards for the residents to enjoy. Almost all of the units, 97%, will be deemed "affordable."

... continued on page 10

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Submitted by Barry Hunau, Lafayette, cartoonsbybarry.com

New Library Nearing Completion

By Cathy Tyson

Everything is basically on schedule for the Lafayette Library and Learning Center (LLLC) to open its doors in approximately a year, in late fall of 2009. The project is the first of its kind to include a unique collaboration of a dozen arts, education and cultural organizations – The Glenn Seaborg Consortium. The over 30,000 square feet structure is more than four times larger than the current library, giving the collection of 110,000 books and audiovisual materials, 42 computers,

186 reader seats, homework center and more - room to breathe.

There was just one interesting delay, having to do with the granite. The master plan of finishes, paint colors and landscaping goes through the design review process just like every other project in Lafayette. However, it took about a year from the time the granite - 80,000 square feet, the equivalent of two acres - was identified until the recent delivery of a current sample.

... continued on page 6

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Lamorinda Community

Calendar, Notes, News

Moraga

Calendar	
City Council	7:30pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School 1010 Camino Pablo	
Monday, December 10	
November 26 canceled	
Planning Comm.	7:30pm
Hacienda, La Sala Room 2100 Donald Drive	
Monday, November 17	
Design Review	7:30pm
Hacienda, La Sala Room 2100 Donald Drive	
Tuesday, November 24	
Park & Rec	7:30pm
Hacienda, Mosaic Room 2100 Donald Drive	
Tuesday, November 18	
Liaison	8:00am
Fire Station 1280 Moraga Way	
Friday, November 14	
Town of Moraga online: http://www.ci.moraga.ca.us	



Taco Bell sign toast, 11/06/08 A white female, approximately 18-years-old, drove her Honda Passport through the drive-through and hit the electronic sign as she pulled away from the drive up window, and did not stop. Because a vigilant employee noted her license plate number, the young woman was contacted at St. Mary's College in her dorm room. Must've been anxious to enjoy her burrito.

Car vs. child, 11/02/08 At just after 3:00 p.m. the police department responded to a bicycle collision. Upon arrival, officers found a young boy and a small green bike under the rear tire of an SUV stopped in the roadway. The 8-year-old boy was treated for a broken leg and was transported to Children's Hospital for further medical attention.

Smashing pumpkins, 11/01/08 Real ones, not the band. Around 10:30 p.m., a Del Monte Way resident contacted police that someone smashed approximately 20 pumpkins in the roadway in front of her home. The reporting person had no idea who would do this. Public Works to the rescue – they came the next day to clean up.

Loud party, 11/01/08 Minutes after midnight, police responded to a Halloween party on Ascot Drive. The residents were cooperative, but cops stuck around to see that the approximately 15 party goers dispersed. A warning notice was issued and the hosts were warned of the repercussions should this happen again.

Moraga's New Council

By Sophie Braccini

As we go to press, the results of the elections have not yet been certified by the Contra Costa Elections Division. Provisional ballots still have to be verified and the county has until December 2nd to certify the outcome. Moraga had three Council seats to fill; Karen Mendonca and incumbent Mike Metcalf have won two of those seats. Candidates Howard Harpham and Janice Kolbe have only a seven vote difference between them. They are in 3rd and 4th place respectively and that margin was not enough for Harpham to feel comfortable claiming victory.

"Janice and I agree on probably 90% of the issues," said Harpham, "I'll be happy for her if she ends up winning and of course will be looking forward to sitting on the Council if my 3rd place is confirmed." Janice Kolbe added, "At

this point I would like to thank those who voted for me and continue to offer their support while we wait for the final results."

Karen Mendonca appears to have squeezed out a very narrow first place with an unofficial number of 4,012 votes compared to incumbent Mike Metcalf's 4002 votes, and she feels ready to sit with the four other Council Members. "I know all of them," says Mendonca, "I've talked with each of them, to Howard and Janice during the campaign, and I know Dave Trotter, Ken Chew, and Mike Metcalf from their work on the Council." Mendonca is looking forward to a Council committed to working together, treating each other with respect, and prioritizing in the best interests of Moraga.

Mendonca sees her election as a sign that people chose ethics and professionalism over other issues. ... continued on page 10

Land Use Initiatives: "No on Both" Triumphs

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga's heated debate over land use and open space came to a conclusion on election day, as Moraga voters voiced a clear preference for the status quo. Measure K, also known as MOSO 2008, which would have severely restricted open space development, was defeated with 56% of voters opposed to the initiative. The initiative that favored more development, Measure J, was soundly defeated as 86.5% of voters said "No."

"We obviously are disappointed in the election result, but feel very good about what we tried to do," said Renata Sos, who worked tirelessly over the past months in favor of Measure K, "We worked very hard to give the voters of Moraga the opportunity to protect our beautiful open space and preserve our quality of life."

Newly elected Council Member Karen Mendonca supported the measure as well: "I supported Measure K because I believe that our General Plan does not give enough teeth to city leaders to protect our ridgelines and sensitive lands. If citizens want to amend the General Plan we can review the guidelines

and make sure they are strong enough."

Howard Harpham was in the "No on Both" camp: "I'm glad they both failed," he said, adding that he believed that Measure K was particularly dangerous for the development of Moraga. "Now if people want to amend the General Plan we will have a discussion," he adds.

Mike Metcalf shares this point of view, noting, "This vote is a testament to the sagacity of Moraga people and we need to have gratitude to the 'No-No' people. I'm very happy about the result," he said. Metcalf is not opposed to a discussion about the General Plan but he believes that the General Plan's goals, policies and implementation programs are pretty effective, provided they are applied carefully and consistently. "It was good to learn that, during a recent Planning Commission discussion regarding the Rancho Laguna development, Planning Commissioners were testing the project against the General Plan — which is what they should be doing — and asking that inconsistencies be resolved," added Metcalf. ... continued on page 10

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Lamorinda Community Calendar, Notes, News

Orinda

Calendar	
City Council	7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library 26 Orinda Way Tuesday, November 18	
Planning Comm.	7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library 26 Orinda Way Tuesday, November 25	
Public Safety Comm.	7pm
Community Room at City Hall 22 Orinda Way Wednesday, November 13	
Mayor's Com. Liaison	9am
Community Room at City Hall 22 Orinda Way Monday, December 1	
Revenue Enhancement Task Force Community Workshop	7pm
De Rey School Auditorium Wednesday, November 12	

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



Auto burglary, 11/05/08 An unknown suspect forced entry into a locked Honda CRV on Avenida de Orinda and removed an undisclosed amount of property valued at \$350.

Identity theft, 11/04/08 A Meadowview Road resident went to Citibank to open an account. At the bank, he was told that his social security number was flagged by his other bank, Washington Mutual, as fraudulent. The victim has no idea how his social security number was compromised.

Auto burglary, 10/31/08 A 2002 Lexus SUV was parked at Wagner Ranch Elementary School in, where else, the parking lot. An unknown suspect forced entry into the car by smashing the front window. The owner's Nordstrom briefcase was missing along with an upscale pen containing gold flakes. Unfortunately the owner's financial information was inside the briefcase. Estimated total loss \$800.

Speed racer, 10/31/08 A 22-year-old white male led police on a high speed car chase reaching speeds of up to 100 m.p.h. It started at Camino Pablo and Brockwood, and ended at the intersection of Highway 24 and Highway 13. Police noted the license plate number and will follow up with the registered owner who lives in Moraga. If that's his "trick" for Halloween, I'm sure he'll love the "treat" the cops will have for him.

Ivy Drive Gets A Speed Cushion

By Andrea A. Firth

Following more than two hours of presentation, public comment, and discussion, the Orinda City Council approved the installation of a single speed cushion on Ivy Drive abutting the properties at 46 Ivy and 2 Crown Court. Council Members Amy Worth and Sue Severson and Mayor Victoria Smith voted in favor of the speed cushion, while Council members Steve Glazer and Tom McCormick both abstained from the vote.

Finding a solution to the traffic problems on Ivy Drive—a thoroughfare that stretches from Del Rey Elementary School at the north end to Miramonte High School at the south end with Orinda Intermediate School in the middle—has been the focus of a neighborhood action group and Orinda's Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) for over two years. Based on the input from multiple neighborhood and committee meetings, circulated petitions, and finally polls of the Ivy Drive residents on the proposed traffic calming options, TSAC presented the Council with a three-part recommendation including a stop sign, additional speed limits signs, and the single speed cushion.

Questions were raised during the public comment portion of the

discussion regarding how the polls were conducted and who was able to vote. "I believe the process was manipulated," stated Tim Millette, a TSAC member. Millette told the Council that he felt it was inappropriate that an email had circulated indicating how residents had voted in the poll and that the polling response deadline had been extended after the voted had failed the first time.

The process of identifying a solution to the Ivy Drive traffic woes has been confounded by the fact that separate and slightly different guidelines exist for TSAC to follow for implementing traffic calming measures and installing speed cushions. Despite the challenges presented by the lack of alignment between the two sets of guidelines, Vice Mayor Severson, who has worked closely with TSAC, felt the spirit and intent of the guidelines had been adhered to and she encouraged her fellow Council Members to move forward with the speed cushion. "The [Ivy Drive] neighbors have been requesting relief for a long time," stated Severson.

Council Member McCormick, while supportive of speed cushions as an effective traffic calming measure, was bothered by the

lack of confidentiality of the neighborhood poll and how the poll was conducted. "Every property that touches Ivy Drive should be noticed and have the opportunity to vote," stated McCormick. Councilman Glazer, who stated that he also supports the concept of speed cushions and worked to have them installed in his own neighborhood, acknowledged the difficulty in obtaining a super majority of neighbors in agreement with the speed cushion. Glazer expressed concern over the Council's ability to consistently interpret and apply the traffic calming measure guidelines to other situations in the future due to the lack of alignment in the current process.

TSAC's recommendation to install additional speed limit signs along Ivy Drive was passed unanimously by the Council. However, the Council did not support the installation of a one-way stop sign on Arroyo Drive at Ivy Drive. Two other speed cushions that TSAC has considered as further traffic calming measures for the street did not meet either the super majority required through polling of the neighborhood or were refused by the property owners who directly about the proposed cushion placement.



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Incumbents Win in Orinda

By Andrea A. Firth and Lee Borrowman



Steve Glazer at Tuesday night's Europa Restaurant election party Photo Andy Scheck

In contrast to the sweeping changes in Congress and state governments across the nation last week, the face of Orinda's City Council will remain unchanged. Incumbents Victoria Smith and Steven Glazer won their bids to return to the Council for another four years. Mayor Smith placed first in the race with 38.8% of the vote, Councilman Glazer took a close second with 36.9%, and the challenger Robert Larsen trailed the incumbents with 23.7%.

On election night, Glazer gathered with about fifty of his supporters and a few colleagues in front of the large screen televisions at Europa. In the crowd were fellow

Council Members Sue Severson and Tom McCormick and Orinda City Manager Janet Keeter. The atmosphere was festive and hopeful as kids played and adults mingled.

Shortly after 8:30, preliminary local election results came in, and the group erupted in a chant of "Four More Years!" Glazer thanked his supporters, but his victory speech was interrupted by another winner of the evening as Barack Obama appeared on the large screen ready to speak to the throngs of well wishers in Grant Park and the nation watching. Glazer quickly wrapped up as all turned their attention to the President-elect.

... continued on page 10

The Future of Orinda's Commercial Downtown Looks Bright

By Sophie Braccini

"We all want more restaurants, shops and services in the downtown," says Orinda Mayor Victoria Smith, "as a small city with limited funds we can best encourage revitalization by providing zoning and planning requirements that incentivize property owners to redevelop their older buildings in order to attract more tenants." Working on that plan was the mission imparted to a Task Force that was formed fourteen months ago, bringing together residents and experts.

On October 28th the Orinda Chamber of Commerce hosted the first public presentation of the plan. "This demonstrates the close relationship between the Chamber and the town," said Chamber President Keith Miller, before adding that this process was vital to the local economy which has been stagnant for too long. Presenters were Bruce Burrows, Amy Worth and Thomas McCormick, each representing a subcommittee: commercial, process and residential.

The Commercial subcommittee worked on options to revitalize the downtown into a vibrant village with a mix of retail, residential and office uses. "We really need the de-

velopment," said Richard Westin, a Planning Commissioner who participated on the task force, "fiscally we always need more money, our roads are a disaster."

"Revitalization has been on the table for fifteen years," added Orinda Council Member Tom McCormick, "besides the increase of property taxes and sales taxes that the project will generate, one of the reasons to make the downtown more of a village is the needs expressed by our population that's

reaching retirement age." In Orinda, 50% of the residents are in that category; most of them want to stay in Orinda, but may be in their large homes. The consensus on the task force was that increasing the number of residential units downtown would both provide a solution for the aging population while increasing shopping.

Bruce Burrows presented pictures and simulations of what the new city center could look like.

... continued on page 7

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Life in LAMORINDA

A Civilian POW in the Turmoil of WWII

By Sophie Braccini



Herb Brown in his apartment at Aegis

Photo Sophie Braccini

"You have no idea what it's like to wake up every morning to the sight of a gun and bayonet, to be constantly threatened and beaten, to see your companions being executed, to be constantly starving." Brown believes he owes his life to his "nasty disposition"; otherwise he thinks it would have been easier to just give up and die. "I was a trouble maker, I would have done anything to survive; cheat, steal. The sadism you are exposed to brings out the worst in human beings."

When he came back in 1945, weighing 89 pounds, no military service was there for him. No financial help, no doctors, nothing. His mother took care of him. He learned to eat normally again and started to fight the diseases he had contracted in the camps: malaria, dysentery, and beriberi, a nervous system ailment caused by vitamin B1 deficiency. If he is today in a wheel chair, Brown owes it to that condition.

In 1985, one year after his retirement, he finally got an honorable discharge from the US Navy and received veteran status. His standing remains confused since he was never a registered combatant. Interestingly enough, Brown spent most of his professional life in the Orient in international trades. His apartment at Aegis contains some of the art pieces he gathered. Brown lived in Rossmoor until 8 years ago when he lost his wife of 63 years. His best friend, who lives in Moraga, enticed him to move to Aegis.

Candice Moses, the marketing director at Aegis, has heard Herb tell his stories many times and was touched by it. She is looking for ways for the old POW to connect with local veterans with whom to share his story. To contact Herb Brown, call Aegis at 925 377-7900.

reinforced enemy troops and the atoll fell on December 23rd, twelve days after the first attack.

"I was petrified when it started," remembers Brown. The Marines gave him a gun and he defended the atoll ace with the rest of them. "We were outnumbered ten to one, they had fifty three ships, two aircraft carriers and planes. They had blown up seven out of our 10 planes on the first day." The US relief party that had been assembled was ordered to turn around and never reached Wake, leaving it easy prey.

"I was prisoner on the island for a few days and then sent to the Chinese camp of Woosung on a Japanese boat named the Nitta Maru," recalls Brown, "the place had been deserted and was dilapidated. There started 44 months of captivity that took me to 4 different camps in China and Japan, each time getting to a worse place."

The former prisoner of war does not like to relive this painful past. Ann Randolph, a therapist at Aegis, helps him with remembering and putting things in writing.

Who remembers Wake Island? For most of us, the war in the Pacific started with the bombing of Pearl Harbor and moved to the Philippines before encompassing the whole Orient. But four hours after attacking Pearl Harbor, the Japanese Army swarmed Wake Island, an atoll 2000 miles south west of Honolulu where the U.S. Navy was building a base. Young Herb Brown, a twenty two year old civilian, was taken by surprise along with 450 marines and some 1200 civilians. The young man endured forty four months of the harshest captivity, which reduced his body to eighty nine pounds and stripped him of his humanity.

Now an 89 year old resident at Aegis in Moraga, Brown wants to testify about his piece of history. "We were attacked four hours after Pearl Harbor," he remembers, "we had received a telegraphic communication about the attack but were completely unprepared."

After repulsing a first attempted Japanese landing, the Americans were outnumbered by

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Historic Election Party Rocks the Plaza

... continued from page 2

Nancy Skinner, who won for Assembly District 14, along with Mark DeSaulnier, winner of the Senate District 7 contest, had inspiring remarks. Unfortunately Orinda City Council Members were unable to attend due to a city meeting conflict. Both incumbents, Steve Glazer and Victoria Smith, won their races.

It was an incumbent sweep in Lafayette. Although he's concerned about the state budget, Mayor Mike Anderson was happy to be re-elected, "We've got the team back together, thanks to the voters." Carl Anduri said he's, "excited for another four years." Carol Federighi was unable to attend.

In Moraga, Mike Metcalf and Karen Mendonca clearly won two of the three Town Council seats. At press time it was too close to call - Howard Harpham and Janice Kolbe are in a dead heat for the third seat, with only a seven vote difference between them.

ally cheering. "Yes, we can" young and old came together to celebrate on this clear cool evening what this election means to our country. Anderson summed it up, "Feels like a new day - with change echoing through neighborhoods all across the country."

With the audience occasion-

Delivering Mail and a Helping Hand

By Cathy Tyson



Good Samaritan Jeovani Abenoja, and Chuck Jenkins on the Jenkins' back deck Photo Cathy Tyson

It was Betty and Chuck Jenkins' lucky day. Turns out their regular carrier technician, Jeovani Abenoja is the Safety Captain of the Lafayette Post Office and is First Aid certified through the American Red Cross. Who knew those skills would come in handy on a recent Thursday afternoon?

Abenoja, 23, who has been working for the Postal Service since he was 19, was making the usual delivery rounds in a relatively remote area on the city limits. Chuck Jenkins, 85, a retired Captain of the SS Jeremiah O'Brien during World War II, had just suffered a fall in the backyard, cutting his leg, breaking two fingers and dislocating his thumb. Abenoja offered his assistance; Betty Jenkins gratefully

accepted. "He's a fine young man, and was a great help," she said.

"The Jenkins and I have been good friends for over two years, and I'm glad I was able to do something nice for them, and show them how much I care. I would do it again in a heartbeat!" said Abenoja.

Jenkins was seen later that day by his regular physician, who put a cast on his right arm, but has now made a complete recovery. He is happy to demonstrate that he's regained his strong handshake, despite his injuries.

Not one to blow his own horn, Abenoja is mandated to report assistance, if given. There really are Good Samaritans out there, sometimes they're just undercover.

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New Library Nearing Completion

... continued from page 2



Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk leading a hard hat tour of the new library Photo provided

Unfortunately, during that time, the quarry had dug progressively further into the mountain and the delivered product had large pink blotches throughout the stone. According to Ann Merideth, Community Development Director, "a new granite has been selected, and it is on order."

Kathy Merchant, President of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation, says the Board of Trustees and dozens of volunteers have been hard at work on the \$4 million Open Doors, Open Minds initiative with the goal of raising money to increase open hours, expand programming, and enrich the collection. They are working hard to reach the half-way milestone by the end of this year. Picking just a few words to describe the new library, Merchant said, "innovation, community building, and transparency." She reflects on these trying economic times, "now more than ever, it's im-

portant to have a free resource for the whole community to use."

Although quite a bit has been accomplished, obviously there is more construction work to be completed. According to Merideth, the two buildings - the Library and Community Hall - are framed and the roof structures and utilities are in place. Also the interior walls creating the different rooms are framed and the structure for the solar panels is in place. The windows and metal roof panels come next. With the recent rain, crews have been working hard to water proof the structure.

Public art has been approved by the Redevelopment agency. Brian Goggin and Kana Tanaka are the lucky winners for the Outdoor Plaza Corridor and the Children's Activity Deck.

On the financial front, the Lafayette Community Foundation has raised and donated a staggering \$12.5 million towards construction

of the project. Back in November of 2004, an \$11.9 million grant was awarded to LLLC by the California Public Library Construction and Renovation Bond Board. Finally, the Lafayette Redevelopment Agency just issued "A" rated, double tax free bonds on October 29, 2008. They are available in \$5,000 increments through Piper Jaffray.

Killefer Flammang Architects of Santa Monica worked diligently incorporating new and old into the cutting edge structure. The building features: recycled teak, low-e windows, a separate teen area, three group study rooms, a community meeting room, large adult area with quiet zone, storytelling and class visit space for thirty children, an Art and Science Discovery Center, a space for "Old Betsy," and a used book store. Other highlights include windows in the shape of the big dipper, a very unique artistic solar fireplace with prisms, and what will surely be the best looking public restrooms in town.

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Life in LAMORINDA

Moraga as a College Town?

By Sophie Braccini



SMC's Neal McSherry with the Terzetto's banner by the gym on game day
Photo Edy Schwartz

When she attended the last Moraga Chamber of Commerce meeting Roos Pal, owner of Terzetto Cuisine, heard music to her ears -- a way for her business to reach and attract the students that live on the nearby St Mary's College (SMC) campus. As Neal McSherry, SMC's Director of Ticket Sales, unfolded his plan to encourage student attendance at athletic games, the business community saw an opportunity to provide incentives alongside the campus for students to come and shop in town.

"We have set up a system of points that the students will earn as they come and cheer," explained McSherry. "The college has set in place a tracking system that allows us to automatically update the students' points. The points earn them prizes and benefits." McSherry thinks that the business community could be involved at two different levels: first by giving out coupons or merchandise to students who go and support campus sports and second, the businesses themselves could be part of the reward system. The St Mary's group has identified

twenty one local businesses that could interest students.

"I think this is great," says Pal. "I had been looking at ways to reach the students and had tried to talk to different people but had not been very successful. The opportunity presented at the Chamber was exactly what I was looking for." Wasting no time, McSherry and Pal launched the first operation on Sunday November 9th. Terzetto offered 200 "2 for 1" lunch coupons to the first students to come to the women's basketball home game. Additionally, she gave out four \$25 gift cards for students reaching a certain level of points. Pal is planning to continue working with the campus to provide them with new and interesting things on an ongoing basis.

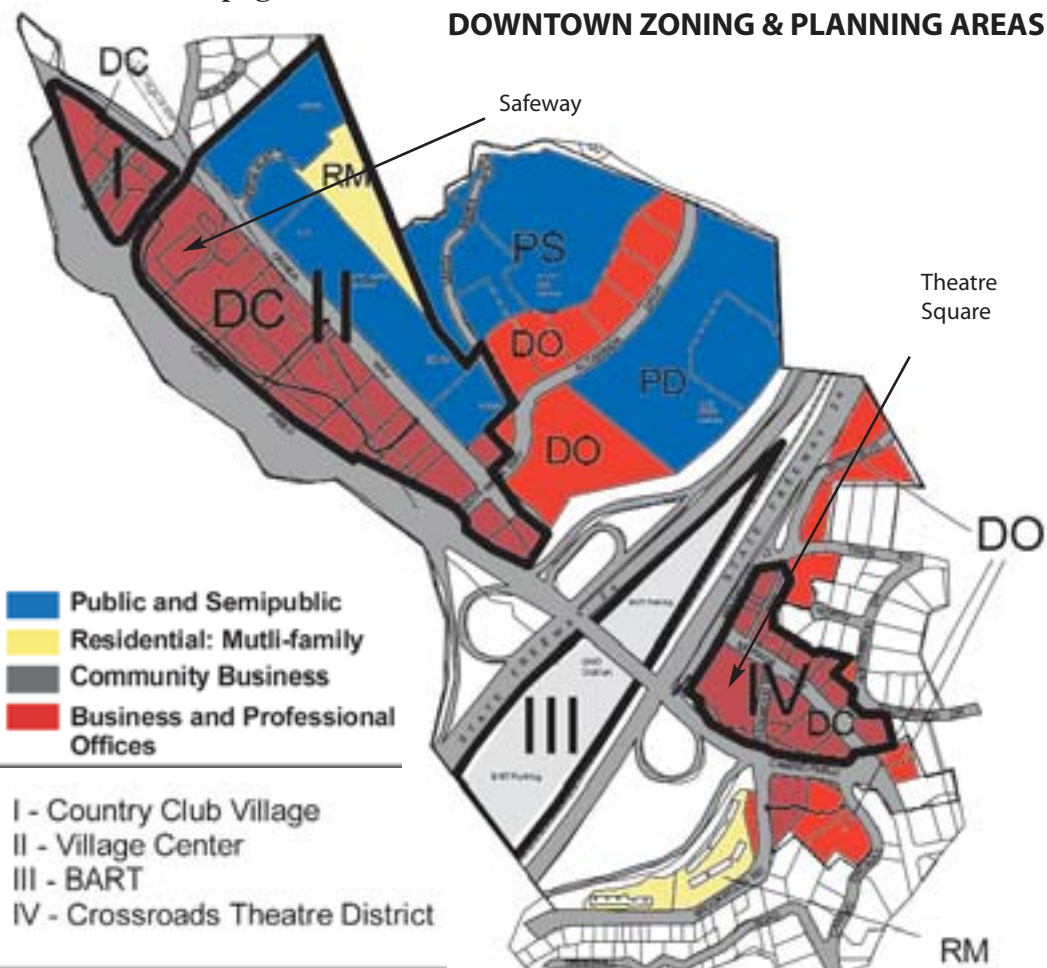
"The college expects about 1200 visitors for each basketball game this season," says Moraga Chamber President Edy Schwartz, "we can find opportunities for our Moraga businesses to provide services or package discount plans for those games."

Schwartz would like to see folks come for an early dinner at one of Moraga's local establishments, or stop by afterwards for a drink or dessert to top off the evening. To entice SMC students to Shop Moraga First and work toward the integration of the college and the Town of Moraga has always been a key element in her platform.

... continued on page 11

The Future of Orinda's Commercial Downtown Looks Bright

... continued from page 4



"We are thinking of three to four story buildings with retail at the street level and offices or living units upstairs." The group studied examples like the vibrant University Avenue in Palo Alto and the 55' high Mercantile building in Lafayette. "We want to leave open doors to trigger the creativity of designers and architects," says McCormick, "there are ways to build such units in a very attractive way with larger and smaller units, including some affordable ones." The group does not want to change the character of the town: "There are two types of areas in Orinda," adds McCormick, "the hills are semi-rural and the downtown can become a village with interesting stores and street side cafés."

In order to achieve "green" development in the downtown the choice of the task force is to provide incentive rather than setting rules. "Through history we've seen that restrictive rules have produced a dead downtown," says McCormick, "because that doesn't work, we want to provide incentives." A very enthusiastic promoter of sustainable construction practices himself, McCormick sees flex cars and shuttles, bi-and-tricycles and solar energy, all provided by developers who will receive a benefit in return.

To start convincing the many property owners in the center of Orinda, the members of the task force are meeting with all of them and advocating some type of coop-

eration. "Their first response is that they don't want to make changes because the town makes it difficult and the rents are low," recognizes McCormick. "One of my ideas to streamline the process is to replace the long public hearings by a document presenting the project that property owners could get their neighbors to sign. One of our big ideas in Orinda is to have neighbors come together and plan together."

But on its road to revitalization Orinda needs to meet some more challenges. Highway 24 and BART cut the city center in half. "It is dysfunctional," acknowledges Westin, "we have to live with it, possibly create some walkways with more interesting beautification." McCormick agrees that solving this problem would be very expensive "ideally we would build a pedestrian walkway from the theater to the village, with stores on both sides like the Ponte Vecchio."

Directly linked to this aspect of the topography is the difficult economic situation of Theater Square. "We had it working in 2000 when Intraware had a derogation to have its offices on the ground floor of the Square," recalls McCormick, "the foot traffic generated by the business helped all the retail around it." As part of the new plan, the rezoning of Theater Square would allow non-retail options on the ground floor in the back of the professional building.

Ultimately, it's the residents

who will make the decision. Starting as early as next month, a series of workshops will be conducted to get resident's ideas and comments. "I want to encourage all residents to attend the upcoming public workshops and provide input about how our downtown will look, feel and operate in the years to come," urges Smith. "I hope the public will participate," adds McCormick, "one problem in Orinda is that people who live here work very hard; it's often the same vocal minority that shows up. We really need to get people from all walks of life."

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Life in LAMORINDA

Military Service Helps Forge Long-time Friendships, Support System

By Jennifer Wake



Long-time friends (left to right) Peggy and Robert Houlahan, Donna and Thomas Pearson, and Edwin and Rae Humann have been meeting regularly for more than 65 years, after the couples' husbands met during World War II flight training
Photo Jennifer Wake

In 1943, at age 18, Moraga resident Edwin Humann was sent to Thunderbird Field outside of Phoenix, Ariz., for flight training. He found himself away from anything familiar, but he soon met fellow flight cadets Thomas Pearson and Robert Houlahan. Their friendship – along with that of their three wives (Rae, Donna, and Peggy) – has lasted more than 65 years.

"Our personalities brought us together," Pearson says. "We got along and had an immediate bond because of the trials and tribulations of going through the program as cadets."

But that didn't make military life easy.

When Peggy married Robert Houlahan, she says she knew nothing about military families, but with each transfer to a new town (or country), she says they were always warmly welcomed.

"I practically raised our kids alone," she says. "We got along just fine because we helped each other out. They had a structure in place. I can't tell you how many times I took pregnant gals to the

hospital to have babies because their husbands were deployed."

Pearson's wife, Donna, agrees. "Anytime we were transferred, which was roughly every three years, we were part of that family."

But times have changed since World War II, when Americans pulled together when loved ones were drafted in mass.

"There was a big difference between World War II and Vietnam or Iraq," Houlahan says. "People were behind it."

Although troops involved in wars like Vietnam, Korea, Iraq and Afghanistan, have not had the same type of support from fellow Americans as was seen in World War I and II, several things have remained constant: An immediate bond is created among these service men and women and their families, and long-time military families continue to give back to this extended family through outreach and volunteer efforts.

The Pearsons live at Air Force Village in Riverside, Calif., from which many in the military are de-

ployed to Iraq. "We send them off and we're there to cheer when they return – even if it's at two in the morning. There is definite support – a bond in the military," Pearson says.

Houlahan's wife, Peggy, volunteers in the Listener's Program at the Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. For three hours each week, she offers support for patients whose families live far away.

"We are all Depression Babies and understand sacrifice," Rae Humann says. "My mom would put cardboard in our shoes and paint them black."

The couples all agree that military life is different today. "Reservists are called in, and the family stays in the general community," Donna says. "Back then, it was expected for wives to participate in base activities, but very few wives worked back then; it was a different atmosphere. My daughter is part of a wives' club and has a hard time getting women to help."

"All of my daughters work and have careers," Rae says.

That is where volunteer programs and outreach from non-profit

organizations can help. Over the past several years, hundreds of organizations have been established that offer financial and emotional support to service personnel and their families, either directly, or through care packages and letter writing campaigns.

Lafayette resident Jon B. Rogers, who served as an officer in the U.S. Army from 1954 to 1957, is president of The Rogers Family Company – one the nation's leading importers and roasters of branded gourmet coffee and tea. Over the past four years his company has sent 500,000 bags of coffee to overseas troops, including those deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Rogers is a longtime supporter of Operation Gratitude – a non-profit organization that sends care packages and personal letters of appreciation addressed to U.S. Service Members deployed in hostile regions such as Iraq and Afghanistan, and on military ships at sea. This month, Rogers' company is partnering with Operation Gratitude in a "Letters to Our Troops Contest." Letters received from the contest will be included in more than 70,000 Operation Gratitude holiday care packages.

"Sometimes, the gesture that touches a Soldier, Marine, Airman or Sailor the most is a simple, heartfelt thank-you," says Rogers. "It's impossible to underestimate the pride a member of our military feels when they receive a letter or an e-mail addressed 'Dear Hero.'"

For Pearson, it's important to remember that the military is an all-volunteer force. "They are asking for second tours of duty because they see the good they are doing, the schools they are opening up."

"There is no longer a mass entry," adds Houlahan. "These men and women have said 'I'll put my life on the line for my country.'"

For more information about Operation Gratitude's "Letters to Our Troops Contest," go to <http://dearhero.opgratitude.com> and click on the "Write a Letter" button.

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Moraga resident Rae Humann points to a picture of her husband, Edwin, taken with his World War II flight squadron in 1944 Photo Jennifer Wake

Theatre Event Abundance at Saint Mary's College



Photo provided

Pictured are members of the Saint Mary's Performing Arts Department as they rehearse Beth Henley's play Abundance, quirky comedy about mail-order brides on the untamed Wyoming frontier. Performances are November 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, and 22 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, November 16 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for general admission and \$10 for students. To purchase call (925) 631-4670.

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Letters to the Editor

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Dear Editor:

I would like to thank the voters of Orinda for their support of my re-election to the Orinda City Council. There are many residents who worked on my behalf and I am grateful to them as well for their confidence in me. The election results are a strong affirmation of the path that the City Council is now on to promote open and inclusive city government, prioritizing infrastructure improvements and public safety while keeping a tight stewardship over our city budget. It is humbling to serve in this capacity. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to serve our wonderful Orinda community.

Steve Glazer
Orinda

Dear Editor,

I want to thank everyone who helped re-elect me to the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board. In particular, I thank those who hosted my signs, who made calls or sent emails of support to their friends and neighbors, and who voted for me. I appreciate your support and confidence, and pledge to continue to give my best efforts on behalf of all of the residents of the District. I give special thanks to Stan Holcenberg, Dick Olsen, Sam Sperry, Larry Hood, my son-in-law, David Brown, and, of course, my wife, Joan, for her ideas, hard work and patience.

Fred Weil

Editor:

On Moraga Land Development, Everyone Wins. Thanks to all who endorsed continuing Moraga's open and fair planning processes by voting no on J and K. Common sense prevailed. For those unhappy with the results, win by participating in the planning processes. For example, Rancho Laguna still needs town approval, significant issues remain, and public hearings will continue. There's absolutely no development approved for the Bollinger Canyon Study Area. The only activity underway is focused on setting potential maximum housing densities for inclusion in the Moraga General Plan (like all undeveloped land). Ultimately the Moraga Town Council will set the potential maximum densities, and there will be public hearings. Moraga's planning processes are open and fair. Win by participating. Yes, compromise will be necessary, but that's a fact of life for everyone.

Bob Reynolds
Steve Woehleke

Dear Editor,

The United States has made great strides in disaster preparedness since Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Happily, pets and service animals are being included in the planning process at both state and local levels. Unfortunately, as Hurricane Ike illustrated, not all pet owners are as prepared as they should. In

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Texas, about half of the pet owners left their pets behind. In many cases there was no happy reunion waiting for them when they returned, sometimes weeks later. Pet owners must take their pets with them when they evacuate. If they don't, the animal may not survive. There are more than 30,000 pets in Lamorinda. Because many pet owners work outside our area there is no telling how many pets and other animals will involuntarily be left behind when a disaster strikes. Who will rescue your pet when you are not around? Who will help you evacuate with your pet? Lamorinda is blessed with having a very active Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). The (free) CERT program has trained more than 400 of our residents to survive disasters and to help their neighbors do the same. Pet owners in Lamorinda are doubly blessed now that Lamorinda CERT has started an animal rescue and sheltering group that can assist pet owners. I hope that pet owners in Lamorinda will support the Lamorinda DART (Disaster Animal Response Team) and join us. Please visit our web site at <http://LamorindaDART.org> or contact me at DART@LamorindaCERT.org.

Frans Hoffman,
Instructor, Lamorinda CERT, Moraga

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Incumbents Win in Orinda

... continued from page 4

When asked how he felt about the election results, Glazer stated, "The results are a strong confirmation for the path that we are now on to maintain open and inclusive city government, clear focus on infrastructure improvements and public safety and tight stewardship of our budget." When asked about the campaign specifically, Glazer commented, "I was sorry to see the false statements made. I could only hope the voters would get the facts and make their best judgment. I want to focus on the positives from the election." Smith kept her victory celebration low key and watched the results with a few close friends. "I am very pleased that the voters

have shown confidence in me by re-electing me to the Council," said Smith. "I think that the election results show that voters feel that the city is headed in the right direction, and are more interested in positive results than in negative distractions," she added. Both of the newly re-elected incumbents moved quickly to the tasks at hand for Orinda. "I think it will be very important to spend the time to thoroughly look again at the City's budget, which we will do next in the mid-year budget review, and at additional funding sources," stated Smith. She noted that the Revenue Enhancement Task Force will soon be holding a public workshop (11/12/08 7 pm.

in the Del Rey Gym) and will then bring ideas to the Council on how to generate extra revenue. Glazer also focused on the need to examine new revenue and budget options that are being explored by a number of the Orinda citizen commissions. "Their findings will be presented at various public hearings in the next few months. I hope the community will stay informed and actively participate in finding a consensus solution to this important problem." And with their brief celebrations over, the Council Members were back to work as usual at the City Council meeting the next evening.

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"No on Both" Triumphs

... continued from page 3

"We are very pleased for Moraga that J and K both failed," said Bob Reynolds, one of the initiators of the 'No on Both' movement. "However, in retrospect, we are distressed at the enormous amount of money and valuable time that was spent by the initiative proponents, the Town, and by our effort to get us back to where we were before this divisive episode started," adds a saddened Reynolds, "I blanch when I think about all of the constructive ways we could have expended these funds and incredible energies for the betterment of Moraga." "We are thankful to the dozens of volunteers who worked tirelessly for over a year, first to get

Measure K on the ballot and then to campaign for it over the past several months," said Sos, "in the end, we just couldn't offset the huge spending by the opposition: when the final campaign finance reports are in, we fully expect to find out that we were outspent by over 10 to 1." "Moraga's election results reinforce two important points," commented Mary Jo Rossi, spokesperson for the "Yes on J" campaign, "Moraga residents are moderate and mainstream - not extreme in their viewpoints; and that Moraga citizens expect their town leaders to put aside polarizing agendas to work toward a balance between open space and future growth."

Eden Comes to Lafayette



"City staff is very supportive of the changes made," said Glenda Warmoth, Assistant Planner of the richer, darker color scheme, the two variations of the front facade, widening the sidewalk, and moving the driveway slightly to align with the easement to the Post Office Annex.

"The Task Force has been looking for a site for at least two years, looking at over twenty sites and examining proximity to amenities. This met our basic criteria," said Council Member Carol Federighi of the Senior Housing Task Force. They recently voted unanimously to rec-

ommend the sloped roof versus the flat roof option for the front elevation, noting that it made the building seem more residential than urban. "Eden has done a marvelous job on something that's badly needed in Lafayette, said Ruth McCahan of the Senior Services Commission. "I encourage you to approve this plan." Mary Miller, also of the Senior Housing Task Force commented that the architects, "did a fine job of turning a sow's ear into a silk purse," referring to the design and very constrained lot.

Send Letters and Opinions to letters@lamorindaweekly.com

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St Mary's Garden, Where Spirituality Grows

By Sophie Braccini



The community at work in St Mary's Garden (L to R): Cherie Grant, Lynda Deschambault, Rob Lucacher, Julie Welch Photo Sophie Braccini

According to Julie Welch, the Garden Steward at St Mary's College, working in the garden is not just a part time job, it is living some of the Lasallian principles that inspire the school: social justice, quality education, inclusive community, and of course, says Welch, where better than in a garden can you feel the presence of God.

The almost mystical quality of this endeavor may explain part of the success that the garden has been meeting with faculty and students alike. Steve Woolpert, Dean of Liberal Arts, was at the root of the project. "Many people wanted a garden," says Woolpert, "and I invited them to share their ideas for a sustainable campus." Some wanted a botanical garden, others a food garden; then key individuals came into play: Sharon Jones, parent of a student and avid permaculturist*, and Julie Welch, who had experience in managing a large vegetable garden. "The catalyst for the College was a theme chosen for this year for the freshmen: 'Feast or Famine,'" adds Woolpert, "a garden was a perfect way to bring the idea down to earth."

The garden had to be ready for the beginning of the school year. The first site that had been chosen

by the College, along St Mary's road, was rejected by the Moraga Planning Department. "When the verdict reached us in August, we had to react quickly," remembers Woolpert, "but the new site we chose, in the back of the campus, is in fact more conveniently located for the students, there is water, but it was not flat."

Shawny Anderson, Associate Dean of Liberal Arts, organized all of the logistics: grading, planning the gardening beds, getting the supplies and setting the work shifts. Most of the work was and is still done by students and faculty, who have given a total of 850 hours of volunteer work.

As the freshmen came in and took ownership of the project, it became apparent that a permanent position had to be created to insure continuity. "We worked a great partnership with Sodexo," explains Woolpert, "they get all the food produced by the garden for free and in exchange they pay (Welch's) salary."

"Our company has a huge sustainability drive," confirms Mat Carroll, the full time Sodexo manager who works at St Mary's with his team. He is responsible for serving 4000 meals per day, plus re-

tail sales and events. Carroll directs six full-time managers on campus, and 100 employees. "Schools, hospitals, and corporations are asking that we use locally grown and possibly organic produce in the kitchens; that is why the partnership with the College's garden is very good for us." It is unlikely that the garden will ever be Sodexo's sole source of produce, but Welch believes it can cover a significant portion of the salad bar. Right now the garden has about 500 sqf of beds already planted with greens, lettuces and radishes, and a very large section of the plot will be developed directly on the ground according to permaculture principles.

Supplying the salad bar is not the garden's only mission. "We want to be a sustainable garden that goes full circle and closes the loop with the kitchen," says Welch, "we want to reduce food waste on campus and will compost some of it on site, and use it as fertilizer." She points out that the beds were built with recycled wood benches, the compost bins from re-used crates.

The garden will be a resource for teaching as well. A green house will be added, an outside teaching structure, and a space to come relax and meditate. The links between

the garden and the curriculum will happen over time, believes Woolpert. "Food activism and social justice are linked and that is why the freshmen have decided that the garden will be their legacy project," he explains. The students are also exploring the use of gray water or runoff to water the garden.

The garden is a great example of community inclusiveness as well. Moraga Garden Center gave seedlings to the garden, Mc Donnell Nursery gave fertilizer, Fadelli Farm gave horse manure, and the faculty of the Schools of Economics and Business can be found on weekends working alongside community members and students. "We want to have a pesticide and herbicide free garden," says Welch, "this is very labor intensive and we want to thank all the clubs and organization who continue to help us make it happen."

*Permaculture: the term coined by Australians Bill Mollison and David Holmgren during the 1970s, is an acronym for "permanent agriculture" that aims at developing perennial agricultural systems that mimic the structure and interrelationship found in natural ecologies. The ultimate purpose is the constitution of self-sufficient human settlements.



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Moraga as a College Town?

... continued from page 7

"I am very excited that the business community is getting involved," says McSherry, "we are looking forward to a great partnership." The idea for the program was born in the SMC Marketing department between McSherry, Mike Samuels and Stacy Ham-

aguchi. An alumni himself, McSherry knows that Moraga may not always be a prime destination for students. The group would like to see more support from the community for their games as well. "We are starting a grass root campaign," says the young Direc-

tor, "when students see that businesses support them, they will come to town more. When residents get more information and are aware of the returns for their town, they will come more often to the campus and get that spirit going, it's truly a win-win dynamic."

National Charity League at Moraga Royale



Photo provided

The Class of 2011 from the Lamorinda Chapter of National Charity League, Inc. The 10th grade Ticktockers recently hosted their annual "Fall Tea" for the clients of Moraga Royale. The afternoon entertainment in-

cluded sing-a-long activities, socializing, and centerpiece raffle. NCL is a mother daughter volunteer organization that serves local communities through philanthropic service, leadership opportunities, and cultural experiences.

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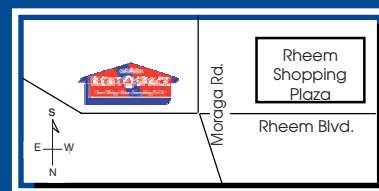
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- LAFAYETTE**
- 1210 Bacon Way, \$650,000, 3 Bdrms, 1903 SqFt, 1955 YrBl, 10-9-08
 - 36 Knox Drive, \$1,238,000, 4 Bdrms, 2596 SqFt, 1979 YrBl, 10-8-08
 - 3190 Lucas Circle, \$1,065,000, 4 Bdrms, 1926 SqFt, 1959 YrBl, 10-10-08
 - 3169 Lucas Drive, \$800,000, 4 Bdrms, 2145 SqFt, 1963 YrBl, 10-13-08
 - 3280 Sweet Drive, \$807,000, 3 Bdrms, 1525 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 10-16-08
 - 1755 Toyon Road, \$2,500,000, 5 Bdrms, 2843 SqFt, 2005 YrBl, 10-3-08
- MORAGA**
- 80 Courter Lane, \$1,440,000, 4 Bdrms, 3149 SqFt, 2000 YrBl, 10-15-08
 - 1326 Larch Avenue, \$900,000, 3 Bdrms, 1910 SqFt, 1968 YrBl, 10-10-08
 - 140 Via Joaquin, \$680,000, 3 Bdrms, 2117 SqFt, 1980 YrBl, 10-15-08
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- 183 Ardith Court, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2575 SqFt, 1958 YrBl, 10-3-08
 - 137 Ardith Drive, \$960,000, 4 Bdrms, 1769 SqFt, 1959 YrBl, 10-7-08
 - 4 Edgewood Court, \$1,082,000, 4 Bdrms, 2280 SqFt, 1957 YrBl, 10-15-08
 - 258 Glorietta Boulevard, \$930,000, 3 Bdrms, 1846 SqFt, 1948 YrBl, 10-9-08
 - 48 Muth Drive, \$1,087,500, 3 Bdrms, 2519 SqFt, 1961 YrBl, 10-10-08
 - 21 Owl Hill Road, \$3,250,000, 5 Bdrms, 4835 SqFt, 2000 YrBl, 10-9-08
 - 411 Wovenwood, \$939,000, 3 Bdrms, 1436 SqFt, 1981 YrBl, 10-10-08

Home Improvements to Help You Sell—the Dos and Don'ts

By Val Cook-Watkins

As a homeowner, the day will come that you will want or need to make improvements, updates or renovations. The beauty of owning your own home is that you can make changes specific to your tastes. You can turn your suburban tract home into a Mediterranean villa or an English cottage if you'd like. You can model your kitchen after the Jetsons' or turn your master bedroom into Graceland's Jungle Room. But what happens when it comes time to sell? Will all of your renovations be considered improvements or will they hurt you in the end?

Like any expensive and timely project, you want to

make sure you are getting the most for your money when you remodel. You also want to make sure the changes you like now, you won't regret later. So, before you start remodeling, here are a few things to keep in mind that could help get you top dollar when it's time to sell.

- Kitchens – According to the Remodeling Cost vs. Value Report conducted by Remodeling Online and distributed by the National Association of Realtors®, minor kitchen remodeling provided the largest return on investment, at 103.5%, for Bay Area homeowners in 2007. That included replacing and updating cabinet doors and drawers, adding new

hardware, installing mid-priced sinks and faucets, replacing appliances with energy-efficient models and replacing laminate countertops and resilient flooring. Kitchens tend to be the nerve-center of a home, so expect this to be one of the first rooms at which buyers look.

- Bathrooms – If there is one room that dates a house more than any other, this is it. Buyers always take a close look at bathrooms because, even though they aren't the most visible rooms in the house, they are one of the most used. The good thing about remodeling bathrooms is that some projects can be do-it-yourselfers. Create a budget and pick and choose what to replace first. Toilets should be at the top of the list because buyers will appreciate them being brand new.

neighbor's shoes and look at your home from across the street. Can you see your walk way and front door? If not, grab a lawn mower. Just by mowing your lawn, raking leaves, trimming trees and planting a few flowers, you can be well on your way to making your home look sharp.

- Sweat the small stuff – Just because it's cheap, doesn't mean it can't help get you the most for your home. Don't underestimate the little improvements that can make a big impression. Consider adding a fresh coat of a neutral colored paint on the interior walls, trim and ceiling of your home. Invest in some good elbow grease for a thorough cleaning of every room. Buyers will notice dirt, grim, dust, soap scum and bad odors, and they will leave less than impressed. Take the time to clean out or organize closets, cabinets and storage spaces to highlight the extra space buyers are looking for.

only have a small budget allotted for improvements, talk to your real estate agent about what features are in the most need of replacing or updating. In the end, not investing anything into your home may lose you the most money.

- Don't do it yourself if it should be done by a professional – Keep in mind that buyers will be going over your home with a fine-toothed comb and they will easily be able to spot poor craftsmanship. The money you save by installing appliances, painting, laying tile or hanging cabinetry, could cost you in aesthetics if you don't do it correctly.
- Don't decorate – There's no need to spend additional money to decorate or redesign your home before listing it. The trick is for buyers to be able to walk in and picture themselves living there. To do that, the house needs to be removed of personal collections and photographs. Artwork should not be distracting and wallpaper should be taken down and replaced with neutral-painted walls. Remember too that furniture and artwork should add to the beautiful features of your home, not distract from them.

will fit into each room. That will be difficult if you've left your second bedroom as a billiards hall.

Purchasing your home was one of the best investments you've ever made and you should enjoy it, feel comfortable and be surrounded by the features and amenities that you love. But once it comes time to sell, your house becomes a product and should be as attractive to potential buyers as possible. The best possible scenario when creating the home of your dreams is that it turns out to be the dream home for future owners. If can do that, you should have no trouble getting the most out of your investment.

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

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SCHOOL CALENDAR

School Governing Board Meetings

Acalanes Union
High School District
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
Wednesday, Oct. 29 at 7:30 pm
- Special Session
Wednesday, Nov. 19

Lafayette School District
LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
Monday, Nov. 17 at 7:00 pm

Moraga School District
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
Monday, Nov. 18 at 7:30pm

Orinda Union School District
OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
Monday, Nov. 17 at 1:00 pm

Not to be missed - Teens & Parents

SILENT AUCTION FUNDRAISER FOR SCOTT TURNER'S FAMILY: Scott Turner is a teacher at Burton Valley Elementary. His father has been diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease). He is hoping to raise money to cover costs for his dad's care which are not covered by insurance. Please join friends and family on Saturday, Nov 15th from 6- 10pm at the Walnut Creek Elk's Lodge, Creekside Drive in Walnut Creek. Cost is \$35.00. For more information on how to obtain your ticket contact Alicia Turner at 980-4678 or Marsha King at 283-7180 or mchking@comcast.net. If you would like to donate an item for the Silent Auction or help in other areas, please call Alicia or Marsha.

A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children (James T. Webb, Ph.D. and others) Join other parents for a discussion of this book and share your own parenting experiences and tips. Monday, Nov 17th, 7:00-8:30pm, library, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, 1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga. No fee, register at event or on-line (course #056102) at <http://adulted.acalanes.k12.ca.us/onlinereg/>.

Smart Money: Using the Bank Instead of Mom and Dad Thursday, Nov. 20th, 7-9pm, in the Las Lomas Theater. Learn how to make smart credit choices, apply for auto loans including the hidden expenses involved,

and keeping your identity safe. Parents are welcome to attend. This series is brought to you by the Las Lomas PTSA's Parent Ed and Healthy Choices Committees and is free of charge. Handouts will be available at all sessions. Register on line: (course #056216) <http://adulted.acalanes.k12.ca.us/onlinereg/>.

Staying Connected to Your Teenager (Dr. Michael Riera, Ph.D.) Tuesday, Dec 2nd, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School library, 1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga. Our discussion facilitator will be JM school counselor, Ms. Heidi Felt.

Lamorinda Schools

AUHSD Facilities Bond Passes Convincingly

By Andrea A. Firth

With 63.9% of voters in support, Measure E—the \$93 million Acalanes Union High School District (ACUHSD) Facilities Bond—convincingly surpassed the 55% threshold for approval. “I was extremely pleased with the results,” reports Cheryl Knoll, a Campolindo parent who helped to spearhead the Measure E campaign. “The people in this community value what I consider is our most important asset—quality schools. I was happy to see that people wanted to continue to invest in our schools for this generation and those to come.”

Although bonds were sold within four months of approving the previous bond measure in 2002, Chris Learned, Assistant Superintendent of Business Services for AUHSD, is not sure that things will move as quickly this time around. “Because of what is going on in the bond market right now, timing will be important,” states Learned.

The District has planned to issue three series of bonds over a six to eight year period. The first series, originally estimated at

\$50 million, may be smaller according to Learned. “If we sell bonds by March of next year, some of the work may start in the summer,” he explains. These would be smaller projects that do not require architectural approval by the State, which can take up to eight months.

“We are going to be very prudent and careful on how we proceed,” says AUHSD Governing Board member Tom Mulvaney. “We are starting the planning process, and a preliminary project schedule will be presented at the next meeting of the Governing Board on November 19th.”

The District will start recruiting for a citizen’s oversight committee in December and appointments will be made by January. The committee will include a broad range of citizens representative of the community. “The oversight committee is key to the efficient administration of the program,” states Mulvaney. “We are looking for people who can provide a common sense approach to how to administer the funds for these projects.”

Budget Update

On Thursday, November 6, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger proposed \$4.5 billion in spending reductions across state government and \$4.7 billion in revenue increases to help close the state’s budget shortfall; this would include \$2.5 billion in cuts to K-12 education.

Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) Superintendent Jim Negri stated, “Under the Governor’s proposed budget, the AUHSD would lose approximately \$300 per student on the revenue limit plus it would lose the minimal .68% increase cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in the current budget. These cuts translate into a \$2,100,000 loss of revenue this year. In order to adopt a balanced 2008-2009 budget last June, the district had to cut \$1,000,000 and ask the parent clubs and foundations for \$1,000,000. The proposed mid-year cuts are greater than what the district had to cut last June.

The Governing Board and district staff will be carefully reviewing the Governor’s proposal and working to ensure that our students continue to receive the high quality education that they deserve.”

Disaster Drill at Local Schools



OIS students go under cover during a disaster drill conducted throughout the Orinda Union School District and Miramonte High School on October 23rd. Photo Andy Schreck

Economic Impact on Kids

By Jean Follmer

Santa Claus may be broke this year. He may not be able to bring that \$700 game system. A Lafayette mom said the annual Tahoe family ski trip may be off this winter. The economic downturn is impacting more than our job security, our portfolios, our home values and our personal stress levels: it is impacting our families and our children.

A survey of some local child-driven businesses supports this. “Kids ‘N Dance is down from about 350 to 190 students. It’s devastating,” said Kris Mueller, owner of Kids ‘N Dance in Lafayette. “In summer, it (registration) was low. In fall is when I started counting. It’s down to almost as low as when I started 15 years ago,” said Mueller.

High-end children’s clothing boutiques have also noticed a change. “I do think October was a tough month for most businesses. You have to be very creative and work hard to do well,” said Laurie Ivry of Red Wagon in Lafayette.

Toys are not quite as evident. Handlebar Toys owner Lance Ghulam said it’s hard to tell how the holiday season will be because there is always a natural drop in the 4th quarter leading up to the holidays.

Ghulam believes that holiday gifts for children will be one of the last areas that parents will cut. “Buying a toy is cheaper than taking them on vacation,” said Ghulam. He has, however, noticed a possible impact of the economic downturn. “There has been a pretty drastic cut in kids coming in and buying toys themselves,” said Ghulam. Ghulam said it was not uncommon for local children to enter the store with \$20-\$30 in hand to buy a Lego set. “I think parents are watching that more closely,” said Ghulam.

The economic downturn has impacted some children in ways beyond the acquisition of material goods and luxury of enrichment activities: it has changed family life. One Lamorinda mother told the Lamorinda Weekly how her family has been impacted by the economic downturn; her husband is an independent contractor and has experienced difficulty securing enough work in the area. The situation has forced him to regularly commute out of state for work. While the family would consider relocating to be together, they don’t want to put their house on the market at this time. Although the children are currently enrolled in a private school, the family

will be moving to the public school system next year.

Other Lamorinda families have suffered job losses. One family could no longer afford their mortgage payments after the father lost his job. They immediately put their house on the market and are uncertain about their future. Marriage and Family Therapist Margie Ryerson said the impact of job loss on children can be extensive. “Personally, I’ve seen many kids’ parents lose their jobs over the years and it ultimately makes the kids more resilient and compassionate. But in the meantime it’s embarrassing and even shameful for them. Of course, the fallout is a lot of anger directed at the parents who were supposed to protect them and some act out—misbehaving in school, slacking off academically and testing limits,” said Ryerson.

These are tough times for many families and economists are not predicting a quick fix to the downturn. We need to be realistic with our expectations and more cautious in our spending. “It helps that many families are cutting back this year, even the ones with steady employment, but it’s still a tough situation,” said Ryerson.

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“Boogie for Baha” Dance-a-thon at Seedlings Preschool

Submitted by Jenny Shepherd (edited by Jean Follmer)



Developmental Kindergarten class: Back Row / Left to Right: Brady Brinkman, Tyler Singh, Hayden Abolins, Joseph O’Dea, Madeline Seburn, Benji Braunstein, Melissa Morris. Front Row / Left to Right: Francesca Vasconi, Alexia Dunlavey, Allie Wayland, Anna Watson, Logan Ketcham, and Niels Ekstrand

Seedlings Preschool of Lafayette recently held the “Boogie for Baha” Dance-a-thon to raise tuition funds for the Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children in Gaza City, Palestine. The Atfaluna Society is a school specifically designed to educate poverty-stricken deaf children within Gaza City. Seedlings “adopted” an 8-year old Palestinian boy named Baha’ Hammo. The proceeds from the dance-a-thon will go toward Baha’s annual tuition. Baha’ is one of six children and the only deaf child in his family. He is known as a funny student who loves to play with his classmates and siblings.

As the preschool of Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, Seedlings has held similar fundraisers to promote world peace (without borders) over the past 5 years. The experiences have been very fulfilling for the families LOPC and Seedlings and have enabled the Seedlings children to learn compassion for other children throughout the world. In preparation for the dance-a-thon, the children were shown photos of Baha’. They looked at a globe to determine how far away he lives and learned a few simple things in sign language. The dance-a-thon was held on October 29 and

involved all of the Seedlings students. Children aged from babies to 5 years old danced for 15 minutes on each day and had a great time with freeze dances, running around, and being silly. Their fun paid off.

It takes only \$600 to sponsor one deaf child’s schooling for an entire year at Atfaluna. As of the date of this article, Seedlings is well on its way to surpassing the more than \$1,000 raised in 2007’s fundraiser. For more information or to contribute to Seedlings’ effort on behalf of the Atfaluna Society for Deaf Children, please contact Jenny Shepherd at (925) 360-7003.

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Orinda School District Proposes Parcel Tax for March Ballot

By Jean Follmer

Due to an immediate funding need in the Orinda Union School District, the School Board has proposed a parcel tax measure for a March, 2009 ballot. The proposed tax would be an increase to the current parcel tax which was passed in March, 2003 – nearly 6 years ago. California state budget cuts had a \$700,000 impact on Orinda's budget last year and the number is projected to be much worse for next year.

In August the district canvassed the Orinda community to determine the level of support for a new parcel tax measure. They determined an amount somewhere in the vicinity of \$100 would pass. Since Proposition 13 requires that parcel taxes pass with a 2/3 majority vote, the Board has to be sure to ask for an amount it can actually get.

The Orinda School Board held a special session on October 27 to review the proposed parcel tax. "The parcel tax pays for the teachers' salaries. We want to pay to keep these great teachers. We're not talking about something special and nice for enrichment. We're talking about operating our schools," said Board Member Glenn Alper. Orinda hopes to keep its teachers' salaries competitive. "If we cannot supplement salaries with parcel tax

revenue we lose competitiveness with surrounding districts. We are now slipping behind the regional average," said Board President Riki Sorenson. "We've lost programs in the past 1 1/2 years and getting them back is even harder," said Board Member Pat Rudebusch. After some discussion about exactly when the measure should appear on the ballot, the Board agreed to move forward with March. The Board met again on November 3.

Preliminary indications are that the measure will seek to raise the current parcel tax of \$385 by \$120 to \$505. "When we met (on November 3) we were able to agree that we would continue on our course to get a new parcel tax on the ballot for March. The tax would resemble the current tax in being a flat tax (no escalator), with a low-income senior exemption. The current parcel tax amount would be bumped up by \$120 (from \$385 to \$505), but the \$120 figure may change after further discussion (at the upcoming November 17 board meeting)," said Sorenson.

Although many Bay Area communities (including Lafayette) have passed parcel taxes that include inflationary factors, the Orinda School Board believes an escalator could reduce the chances of passing the vital measure. In

March, 2002, the Orinda schools suffered a parcel tax defeat when an inflation adjustment was included in the measure. Orinda passed the current parcel tax of \$385 passed a year later as a flat tax.

If the Orinda School Board is not successful in passing the parcel tax measure, they expect a significant impact in the classroom next year. "A parcel tax would help us get through this crisis without a severe impact on core classroom programs. There is nothing left to trim from our budget except in the core classrooms. There is nothing left to trim because EFO (Education Foundation of Orinda) and Parents Club have assumed responsibility for paying for programs that we have already cut including art, music, P.E., library and classroom assistants – none of those programs are part of the OUSD budget anymore," said Sorenson.

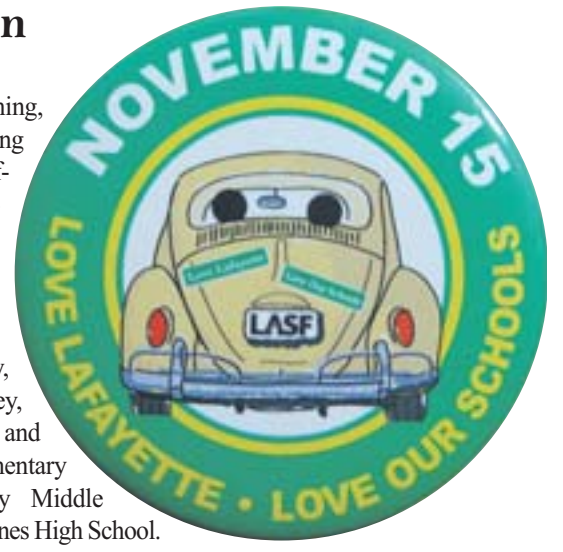
The School Board was waiting to see how other Bay Area parcel tax measures did in the November 4 election given the current economy. "I'm told that eleven out of fourteen in the greater Bay Area passed," said Sorenson. The Board is currently working to establish the leadership team for the parcel tax campaign and will reconvene on November 17 at 1:00 pm.

LASF Party on the Horizon

By Cathy Tyson

Academic supporters will flock for the first time to the Orinda Country Club for the Lafayette Art and Science Foundation's "Love Lafayette, Love Education" party on November 15, 2008. This year it's a group effort with parent clubs and PTA's working together to reach the community's fundraising goals. "This is an especially important year for our event with the massive state budget problems," said Darci Chan, president of LASF. A big turnout is expected for

appetizers, gaming, live music, dancing and numerous raffles. All the proceeds, less expenses, fund LASF arts and science programs at Burton Valley, Happy Valley, Lafayette, and Springhill Elementary Schools, Stanley Middle School and Acalanes High School.



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Town Hall Theatre

Teams with OIS and Stanley in Fall Productions

By Jean Follmer



Clive Worsley working with actors at OIS

Photo submitted

It's time to put down the Lamorinda Weekly and head to Orinda Intermediate School (OIS) or Stanley Middle School for a spectacular fall production. Town Hall Theatre of Lafayette has teamed with OIS and Stanley for the first time.

OIS Production

The Bulldog Theatre Company is presenting "Sherlock Holmes and the Hound of the Clackervilles" beginning today, November 12 and running through November 15. The production is based on the book by Craig Sodaro. Clive Worsley of Town Hall Theatre directs sixty OIS students in this comedic spoof. Clive said he and his producer, Kathy Simon, chose a comedy as a result of feedback from both the community and the actors. They all expressed an interest in something beyond the recent productions of "Peter Pan", "Snow White" and "Beauty and the Beast." Having comic scenes throughout the play has been a change for many of the actors. "It's been great to see the kids grow. There is usually comic relief (in a fairy tale) that is driving

toward more of a moral of a story," said Worsley, who has worked at OIS for about seven years through his affiliation with the California Shakespeare Theatre. The benefits of participation extend well beyond gaining experience in a new acting genre. "The elements of self-control, fairness, teamwork and the benefits of passive learning are all evident," said OIS parent DD Felton. Felton's daughter, Kela, is participating in the production. "Acting is a way for you to branch out from the crowd. Clive is a great role model and person to look up to," said Kela Felton. Show times are: November 12 at 5:00, November 13 at 5:00, November 14 at 5:00 and 8:00, November 15 at 3:00 and 7:00 at the Orinda Intermediate School Theatre.

Stanley Production

Stanley Middle School is presenting a musical titled "A Magical Journey." The musical is directed by Emily Garcia of Town Hall Theatre. "A Magical Journey is a series of musical numbers that takes us on a trip through the ups and downs of

pursuing our dreams. It begins with the inspiration to take that first step, moves on to the journey, then finding love, loss and ultimately coming back to what's important – friendship," said Garcia. The production includes many popular Broadway songs like "Magic to Do" from Pippin, "Can't Stop the Beat" from Hairspray and "All That Jazz" from Chicago. "I put together the musical review myself. I took a high level journey to relate to the middle school experience," said Garcia. At the beginning of the production, Garcia asked all of the students to share their middle school experiences and feelings in writing. Many of them will be shared during narrations throughout the production. Garcia said the narration will range from one student's love of nachos to another's love of family. "It makes it more personal that they're reading their own words. This is a great opportunity for all performers to have their moment to shine," said Garcia. Showtimes are: November 13 at 6:00 and 8:00 and November 14 at 6:00 and 8:00.



Stanley Wildcats on Stage presents: A Magical Journey, Back Row Left to Right: Georgia Jansky, Brendan O'Donnell, Scott McCormick, Front Row: Blair Howard, Daphne Ford, Angela Falk Photo submitted

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Lamorinda Schools

Applying to College

By Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D.

As the Class of 2009 works its way toward graduation, and transforms itself into next year's fall freshmen at institutions around the country, these seniors are tackling their college applications. This effort adds an additional layer of stress to an already jammed senior calendar. I want to offer some tips and strategies I give my own clients for preparing their applications. By now I assume that the college list is virtually complete. It is important to keep in mind that preparing a college application is a lot of work; there is no getting around that. Follow these guidelines and your task will be easier.

Do not procrastinate! First, figure out exactly what each college's application process is (deadlines, number of letters of recommendation, essay requirements). Next, make a time line for precisely what needs to be done and by when. Plan to meet all deadlines well ahead of time. Procrastination can result in missed opportunities, such as when a favorite teacher turns down your request to write your letter of recommendation because you asked too late.

File electronically. The actual process of filing an application is quite simple now that most colleges accept electronic submissions. Word processing has made revising essays and applications far easier than in your parents' day; you can update and edit your application right up until the time of submission.

Be neat and complete! It is difficult to condense yourself into the small boxes on an application, and it is easy to make errors. Before you hit the "submit" key, be sure to double check everything for completeness and accuracy. Careless errors tarnish an otherwise strong application, and can reflect poorly on the applicant. Remember, the electronic world can make things less complex, but cut and paste features also make it easier to make mistakes. It is not a good idea for an admissions officer at Carleton College to read that you are excited about attending Reed!

Write an effective essay. This topic was covered in October (to read, visit the Lamorinda archives at www.lamorindaweekly.com); here I will add just a few guidelines. Never let anyone, however well-intentioned, write any part of your essay. First, it is unethical and, second, those who read applications are skilled at distinguishing a student's voice. Some colleges, if they are in doubt, will request a writing sample that has been graded at high school. Remember the SAT and ACT essays you wrote are also available to admissions officers. Finally, and most importantly, you deserve to know you are accepted at a college on your own merits.

Take advantage of appropriate help to support your essay writing. You can brainstorm ideas with others and get comments about rough drafts. It is best to ask someone who can be objective, like your

English teacher or school counselor. Help with final editing and proofreading is also fine, and I strongly recommend it. Admissions officers know you have time to polish your essays and expect you will do so; it is a sign that you are taking your application to the school seriously.

Consider the Common Application. First, check to see if the schools you are applying to accept the common application. Hundreds of colleges now do. It was designed to simplify the admissions process. Go to www.commonapp.org for the latest information. Students sometimes ask me whether a college that maintains its own application, but gives students a choice about which to use, might prefer its own forms. Colleges pledge to treat all applications equally, and they keep that pledge. So the choice is entirely up to you.

Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. works as an independent college advisor in Lafayette. Dr. LaScala draws on 20 years of experience in higher education and research to customize the college search and admission process for students and their families. She has 3 daughters—one a graduate of Cal Poly (San Luis Obispo), one a sophomore at MIT and the youngest, a junior in high school. Dr. LaScala can be contacted at elizabeth@doingcollege.com or (925) 891-4491.

Family Focus

Increase in Anxiety Among Children and Teens

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

Teachers and health professionals have reported increased anxiety among children and teens in recent years, and I'm seeing it too. In many instances, there is a genetic predisposition for a child to develop anxiety. If you or anyone in your family suffers from anxiety-related conditions, your child may also be affected.

If your child exhibits any of the following behaviors for a lengthy period of time, it is important to seek help from your physician and then possibly a mental health professional: frequent nightmares and fear of being alone in her room at night; inability to fall asleep or go back to sleep if awakening in the middle of the night; sudden lack of concentration in school; compulsive thoughts or behavior (hair-pulling, body image and eating issues, cutting, etc.); or excessive worrying about safety for herself and her family.

Some cases of anxiety are less biologically-based and more situational, however. In our current national and world environment, even the calmest among us can be susceptible to bouts of anxiety. One seventeen year-old told me recently that he worries constantly about his future—getting into a good college, finding a satisfying job, being in an enduring relationship, and now more than ever, having the financial means to live a good life. He worries, too, about the environment and unsafe conditions in the world.

That's certainly a lot for a young person to carry around!

A twelve year-old girl confides about her worries for her parents' safety because they both travel a lot for work. She is an only child and is frequently left in the care of college-age babysitters during the week. Her family doesn't eat dinner together even when everyone is home. Her parents treat her more like a friend than a child. "Emily" likes to be treated like an equal, but in reality she suffers from not having enough emotional support and time with her parents. Because she was trying hard to suppress her worries, fears, and loneliness, Emily developed an anxiety disorder. Her anxiety attacks became more frequent and alarming, and struck without warning or explanation. Eventually, Emily asked her parents to obtain help for her.

If you see your child struggling with anxiety and feeling less in control, encourage her to share her thoughts and feelings with you. Your child may need more time to be with you and to have opportunities to talk. Find time to relax alone together in interactive ways, not just watching television or videos.

It can help your child to hear that a certain amount of worry and anxiety is perfectly natural and normal, and that she is not alone in feeling this way. And it is comforting for her to know that if she can't handle her feelings on her own, you will help in any way you can.

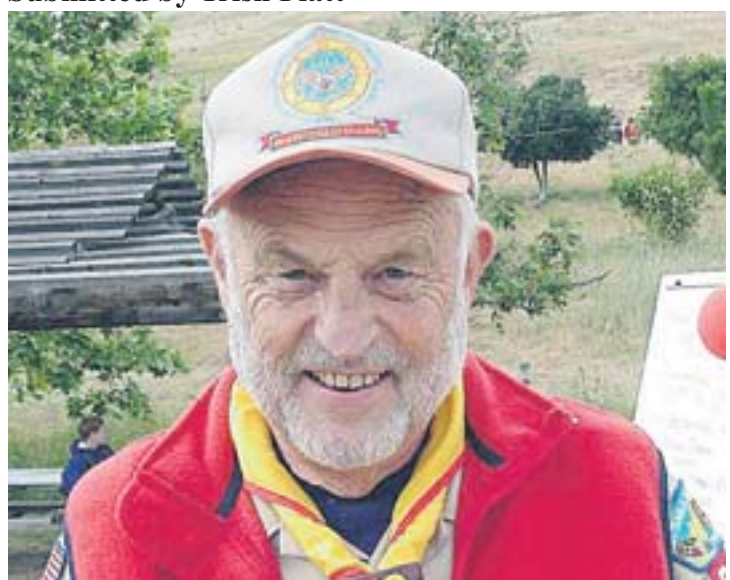
Try adding additional routines to family life. Children crave routine and certainty. It helps them feel safe. Even though they may complain about "Borinda" and "Boraga," a certain amount of predictability is reassuring. Continue to provide structure and limits for your child. Help her learn and practice relaxation techniques. Bring up changes or future events ahead of time to try to avoid upsetting surprises. And, as always, try to set a good example. If you have your own anxieties, manage them as best you can through increased exercise, meditation or yoga, healthy eating, finding support among friends and family, or possible therapy and/or medication.

When we travel on an airplane and experience unexpected turbulence, it is natural to watch the flight attendants to see how they are responding to the situation. We want to see them looking calm and relaxed so we can feel reassured. (We just hope they aren't being good actors!) Similarly, children look to us for cues on how to respond to certain situations. Like a virus, anxiety can be transmitted back and forth among family members. By being observant and responsive, you can help your child learn to manage her anxiety.

Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a marriage and family therapist in Orinda and Walnut Creek. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or www.margieryserson.com

Troop 212 to Honor Tom "Mac" McIntosh – "A Man Among Boys"

Submitted by Trish Piatt



Tom Macintosh Photo provided

Tom "Mac" McIntosh, assumed leadership of Troop 212 in Moraga for what he thought would be a four-year commitment. Thirty-seven years later, Mac is

stepping down as scoutmaster and leaving a lasting impression on the lives of hundreds of young men, sons and grandsons included. Mac dedicated his adult

life to mentoring young boys while honing their transformation into confident, self-assured leaders. More than 250 of these young men attained Eagle Scout, the highest award scouting has to offer, and many have gone on to leadership roles of their own.

With the scouts, Mac has accrued a travelogue that would make many seasoned travelers green with envy: backpacking in the high Sierras, the Grand Canyon, British Columbia, New Mexico, and the Yukon Territory of Canada; biking in Oregon, Canada, and Bavaria; canoeing on the Yukon River in Alaska, the Green River in Utah, and the Bowron Lakes of Northern British Columbia.

For his scouting services, Mac has received many distinguished awards including the Silver Beaver Award and the BSA Distinguished Citizen Award, both from the Mt. Diablo Silverado Council. He was the recipient of Moraga's Citizen of the Year Award in 1995 and The National Presbyterian God and Service Award.

Mac has a favorite proverb that he feels sums up what he and the troop are all about: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it." Mac says, "For over thirty-seven years I have had the pleasure and honor of working with some fine men and enjoying the company of some outstanding boys, men and women – a marvelous blessing."

Fortunately for the boys in Troop 212, the energetic 78 year old Mac plans to stay active in troop activities. He is determined not to retire, but only to pass the reigns to the next leader, Rainer "Rhino" Del Valle, who was himself a Troop 212 Eagle.

Those associated with Troop 212, past and present, feel the pleasure and honor have been theirs. A Tribute Reception to honor Mac for his dedication and service to the troop will be held on Saturday, November 29, from 2:30-5:00pm at the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church.

Taylor Boulevard Clean Up



Photo provided

Michael Insera says that when the City of Lafayette didn't respond to his request to clean up Taylor Boulevard, he took the matter into his own hands. Insera approached the Peter Pan Foundation (a local non-profit) and local kids to volunteer their time to help clean up the street. Springbrook Pool (at which Mr. Insera is President) donated its dumpster to dispose of the refuse. Thanks to their efforts, Taylor is looking clean and green

Michael Insera says that when the City of Lafayette didn't respond to his request to clean up Taylor Boulevard, he took the matter into his own hands. Insera approached the Peter Pan Foundation (a local non-profit) and local kids to volunteer their time to help clean up the street. Springbrook Pool (at which Mr. Insera is President) donated its dumpster to dispose of the refuse. Thanks to their efforts, Taylor is looking clean and green

Meet the Author at Sleepy Hollow

By Jean Follmer



Elizabeth Ellison reading to students Photo provided

Sleepy Hollow Elementary School will host author and former Orinda resident Elizabeth Stow Ellison on November 19 at 6:30 pm. Ellison will be on hand to present and discuss her new book, Flight.

Flight is about a family struggling with the hidden illiteracy of their son, Evan, who is a freshman in high school. The story is nar-

rated from the point-of-view of Evan's twelve year-old sister and is set in Orinda. "I want Flight to be a message to all readers that they too can take flight from whatever it is that's holding them back in their lives," said Ellison.

Ellison attended school in Orinda until she moved to Southern California at age nine. "It was in Miss Hanson's third grade class at

Glorietta Elementary School where I began my writing career, though I didn't know it at the time. We just wrote a lot and I loved it."

In addition to being an author, Ellison is a 5th grade teacher. Ellison looks forward to returning home to Orinda. "I have lived in many areas, but Orinda had a significant impact on me. I attended Glorietta and even as a young child I knew that I was getting the best education. The teachers and the community as a whole are so invested in their children. Orinda made such an impression on me as a child that I had no doubts about setting my novel in that town. I am so pleased to have this opportunity to share my novel with Orinda," said Ellison.

The Sleepy Hollow event is free and is open to the public. Ellison will also be at Orinda Books for a book signing on November 22 at 3:00 pm. For more information about Elizabeth Stow Ellison, visit her website at www.elizabethstow-ellison.com.

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Burton Valley Elementary School's Walk a Thon



Red Ribbon Week Walk-a-thon at Burton Valley Elementary School. Pictured from left to right are Walk-a-thon co-chair Alyse Pellegrini, Katja Brewer, Sarah Shipway and co-chair Tracy Brewer

business briefs

Zeta Gallery

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Evelyn Fulgado-Taylor invites the Lamorinda community to her gallery opening on Saturday, November 15, to discover the opening exhibition during the reception from 3 to 7 p.m. The opening exhibition will showcase sculpture by Robert Cantor, ceramics by Margo Scarpulla, paintings from Kevan Bean, fine photography by Allan Mendez as well as singular fine jewelry by Leila Fulgado and Evelyn Fulgado-Taylor. In addition the gallery will feature a unique collection devoted to the art of Africa. "It has been my lifelong dream to open an art gallery," says Fulgado-Taylor, an artist herself, "I'm looking forward to being part of the art community of Lamorinda."



Mbuya Mask Pende Tribe D.R. Congo Photo courtesy Zeta web site

New Restaurants in Lamorinda:

In Orinda:

Turquoise Mediterranean Grill, 70 Moraga Way, Orinda, 253-2004

The family-owned and operated restaurant across from Pete's Coffee offers steaks, kebabs, falafel, hummus, dolma, tabouleh, in plates or wraps and sandwiches. Great food for the meat-eating and vegetarians alike.

Village Pizza, 19 Orinda Way, Orinda, 254-1200

Village Pizza is now under new ownership.

In Lafayette:

Knox will replace Per Tutti at 3576 Mt Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette.

New management promises friendly family dining in a fun atmosphere. More information soon.

Keenan Heinz Co. is Moving to Concord

Still in Lafayette until the end of November, 3454 Mt. Diablo Bld.

"The whole corner is going to be torn down," says Joe Heinz, who has been running the store for ten years, "This is a heartache, we've made a lot of friends in Lafayette, it was a funky place, that worked well for us." The property was sold to Merrill Garden, a development corporation based in Seattle, which plans to re-develop the whole corner.

Ten years ago Heinz and his wife started a frame shop with a bit of retail. It evolved to become retail-only after four years and prospered. More than a year ago the couple looked for a place to open a second store and found the Concord location at 1700 East Street. It took months of renovation but they are now ready to occupy the new space. "We are looking for a new place in Lafayette as well," says Heinz, who doesn't want to give up on the city he loves.

"Green" Business Events Becoming a Tradition

Sustainable Lafayette and Sustainable Moraga have been sponsoring regular networking and entertaining events in the community, supported by the three Lamorinda Chambers of Commerce. The last event was on November 11th, the fourth Lamorinda "Green Drinks", at Pizza Antica. Lamorinda Green Drinks is an informal opportunity for local businesses and residents that are interested in green practices and sustainability to socialize, network and learn from one another. Location and town changes every month.

VoiceMedia/Susan & Friends Casting Gets Fun International Activities Going

283-6446, susansvoicemedia.com

Susan McCollom has a full service recording studio and voice-over training company in downtown Lafayette, where she's lived for 20 years. The studio audio engineer, Michael Bruce, is also a Lafayette resident. Recently one of Susan's students, Josh Snyder, booked a job for AXE Body Spray. The client was in a recording studio in Argentina and directed Josh over Skype phone lines while Michael recorded Josh in the Lafayette studio. Since the client was Spanish speaking and VoiceMedia is not, they had another studio in Miami online acting as interpreters. Who knew such international excitement could take place in Little Ol' Lafayette?

Small Business Administration Seminars

The Chambers of Commerce recommend taking advantage of the free seminars offered by the Small Business Administration in the East Bay. Of particular interest in these times of difficult financing is "Accessing Capital for Small Businesses and Start-Up Companies in Hayward on Tuesday November 18th from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. For more information and to register go to www.eastbaysbdc.org

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

100 Lafayette Circle, Suite 103, www.lafayettechamber.org, 925-284-7404

- Congratulations to new Board Members: Dave Simpson, Lafayette Book Store; Debbie Cooper, Mechanics Bank; David Watson, Professional Automotive. Elected to a new term: Larry Blodgett, Blodgett's Abbey Carpet & Flooring; Caesar Perales, Caesar Perales, CPA; Steve Cortese, Cortese Investments; Tony Eichers, Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa; Polly Bernson, Diablo Rapid Print; Steve Palsa, Minuteman Press of Lafayette; AJ Nisen, Bank of America Mortgage. Returning to the Board: Dennis Garrison, Oakwood Athletic Club; Barbara Townsend, Future's Explored; Sandi Mitchell, Empire Realty; Budd MacKenzie, Budd Mackenzie, Attorney; Larry Duson, Bank of the West; Edward Zeidan, Nerd4Rent.
- The GREEN Committee Wed., Nov. 19 12 noon, Chamber office.
- Community Thanksgiving Breakfast Fri Nov 21 at 7:30 a.m. at Temple Isaiah 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Join city leaders, residents, and the business community for breakfast that is a 28 year tradition. The 29th Annual Community Thanksgiving Breakfast will be held on Friday, November 21, from 7:30am - 9:00am at Temple Isaiah, 3458 Mt. Diablo Blvd. (just off Risa Rd.). Breakfast will be graciously prepared by Susan Foord Catering. Reservations can be made by calling the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce at 284-7404 or download a registration form at www.lafayettechamber.org. Cost is \$15 per person.

Moraga Chamber of Commerce

- Congratulations to the elected Board Members: Ellen Beans, Friend of the Chamber; Dimitry Brokman, Manager Union Bank of California; Tim Farley, Director Community & Government Relations Saint Mary's College; Mike Lawrence, Manager, Longs at the Rheem and Moraga Shopping Centers; Walter Nelson, Realtor Caldwell Banker; Yelena Mucovich, Global Security Systems; Ravi Singh, Owner Rheem Automotive; Edy Schwartz, Friend of the Chamber; Wendy Scheck, Associate Publisher, Advertising, Lamorinda Weekly; Larry Tessler, Score.
- State of the Town Address, Wednesday, November 19th starting at 7:00 p.m. in the Rheem Theatre. Come and hear the address by Mayor Lynda Deschambault, a wrap-up of town events for this past year. The Business Person of the Year, chosen by the Chamber, will be announced. The Chamber co-sponsors this event with the Town.
- The next Chamber meeting is Friday, November 21st, 7:30 a.m. coffee and muffins, meeting from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. at the Hacienda. David Gill, Saint Mary's professor, will speak on business ethics.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce

- The first Orinda restaurant tour at the end of September was a success beyond expectation, generating \$2,230 for the Educational Foundation of Orinda (EFO), 1/3 of the total tickets proceed. EFO and the Chamber celebrated their collaboration on October 14th.
- Next Chamber General meeting will be the annual Christmas Mixer, Thursday, December 11, 2008 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at Mechanics Bank, 77 Moraga Way, Orinda.

• LAMORINDA Business •

Is it a Good Time to Buy or Sell a Business?

By Sophie Braccini



Ken Tom

Photo Wendy Scheck

Ken Tom wants to sell his business because he wants to retire. "I have a customer base and a viable business, but not the energy to go after new contracts," says the Moraga entrepreneur, who provides satellite communication systems primarily to Federal Government Agencies and emergency services. Tom's situation is not uncommon and many Baby Boomers, reaching retirement age, are looking for a way out of the business they developed. If the supply of businesses for sale is steady, it should be a good time to buy, but the credit restriction our economy faces is the biggest challenge that potential buyers have to overcome.

"We still have a lot of potential buyers and sellers," says Jim Rusconi, a local business broker with Bluekey Business Brokerage, "the entrepreneurial spirit is high and people want to control their own destiny." Rusconi identifies financing as the biggest challenge: "The Small Business Administration (SBA) has tightened its rules to approve loans," says the broker. Like any

other institution, SBA is looking to minimize its risk and is requiring potential business owners to prove their professional expertise in the same field as the business they want to buy.

Is a closely related business experience a necessity for success in buying a business? "We believe that a key to the success of any transaction is how the deal is structured and how long the previous owner is ready to be available to train the new owner," says Julie White, another Bluekey broker who has been in the business for many years.

"A business owner can help with the financing," says Didi Cooklev, who is also a local business broker, "that way they show confidence in their own business and they help in this difficult economy." Cooklev has seen owners financing 33 to 50% of the price of their company, "everything is negotiable," she says, "the price is important but equally important is how you are structuring the deal."

Potential owners have to be creative as far as pulling re-

sources together. "One solution, once you have asked all your family members and friends, is to tap into your 401K," says Rusconi, "using that money is possible without penalty and we see more and more people using that resource."

Using retirement money requires a high degree of confidence in the endeavor buyers are ready to commit to. "When you buy a business you need to check its margins and the quality of its cash flow," says Rusconi, "your best bet is to assemble a team to help you with your due diligence." Besides an experienced business broker, Rusconi recommends working with a Certified Public Accountant and a business lawyer.

In this time of slow economic growth, the sector of investment will be crucial too. Both Rusconi and Cooklev recommend the health care industry, senior related businesses, professional services, and manufacturing.

Finally, locating a business that is for sale is not as easy as finding a home. There is no Multiple Listing Service for businesses as there are for homes. The names of the business for sale most of the time stay confidential since owners do not want to scare employees and clients. "There are sites on line that can be good resources," suggests Cooklev, "the listings are blind and will not even provide a precise location, but it can help to narrow down a search." Among others she cites bizben.com and Bizbuysell.com.

Jim Rusconi can be reached at 631 0132 and Didi Cooklev at 377-6700.

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Lynn's Top Five
Extraordinary Times Call for Extraordinary Care
 By Lynn Ballou, EA, CFP



Lessons Learned from the Past: that could also be the title for this column. We are living in extraordinary times. Times we probably would have preferred to miss! However, we also have the opportunity and in fact the NEED to put our choices under a magnifying glass and use this as a chance to make some key changes in the financial decisions we make --- choices that will not just benefit us today, but could set a good tone for us in better times as well.

Those of us from my generation have frequently made a bit of fun of our parents and grandparents regarding their very cautious ways --- driving cars for 10+ years, recycling rubber bands from the newspaper, rinsing aluminum foil and reusing it again --- I'm sure you have your own family favorites! But what we forget when we tease them about these habits, is that they lived, or their parents lived through an extraordinary event: The Great Depression. In the news, everyday, pundits are comparing these times we are in to that moment in history. Only time will tell if they are right --- we certainly hope that this experience falls well short of that --- but there are lessons to be learned about thrift, recycling, not being such a disposable society, and just common good sense.

1) Find ways to spend less. In our hurried, harried life we often do what is expedient, and not thrifty. If you invest time in spending less, it's the same as earning more --- except tax free! Don't buy things you

don't really need. Shop around on-line or via newspaper ads for bargains on what's essential. Defer big ticket items until truly needed, instead of wanted. If you have children, make it a game and get them involved, too! This will have the added benefit of giving them a lifetime of good money management skills and intuition.

2) Find free or inexpensive ways to play. This is a great time of year to visit the beach, go for a bike ride, make a picnic and walk the dog in a new park you've not explored yet. Do it! Get out all the toys you've accumulated over the years and use them. Note to myself: Lynn, clean off the 20 year old canoe and take it to the reservoir --- see you there!

3) Don't stop investing. If you are enrolled in your 401(k) or other plan at work, or if you simply have your own savings plan, don't stop adding while the markets are down unless you must to make ends meet. The dollar cost averaging you are doing now during these down markets is like walking into Nordstrom and finding all your favorite stuff on sale at a HUGE discount! What you should do is carefully review your current holdings and where your new money is investing to be sure it's the makings of a sensible long-term, high quality, portfolio. Quality is the key - high quality never goes out of style for long!

4) Don't panic! It's tempting to pull everything out and put it in cash. Unless you have very short-term need of the funds, you could be hurting yourself more than helping.

This is especially true in your retirement accounts.

5) Be charitable, but maybe give time instead of cash or assets. Not everyone can afford to give money, stock and other assets to charity, though most of us can certainly find a way to help out the local food bank, for example, or pitch in for Toys for Tots. This is a good year to volunteer your time if you can't help with your checkbook. And this provides a super opportunity to give your children a chance to participate and see what a difference they can make. You can call a family meeting and have your kids, grandkids, friends and even colleagues help with ideas and organize participation --- and carpool to save gas!

Just remember, these extraordinary times will be looked back on someday and provide lessons to future generations. You'll have a lot to share with future generations -- if they listen any better than we did! And yes, someday we might just remember these as "the good old days!"

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.

CHOCOLATE – TASTES SO GOOD, BUT BAD FOR DOGS!

By Mona Miller, DVM



Labrador Kenna on a "stay" demonstrating how dogs might love chocolate! Photo Mona Miller

Chocolate is good for humans, with anti-oxidant and feel-good effects and a great taste! But as beneficial as might be for us, it is bad news for our animal friends. Cats are often not affected by chocolate toxicity, because they tend to be fairly discriminating eaters. Dogs, however, can get very sick and even die from chocolate ingestion. Chocolate contains an active ingredient called theobromine, which is a methylxanthine stimulant similar to caffeine. It affects the heart and nervous systems, causing hyperactivity, a rise in blood pressure, increase in heart rate and possible disturbances in the heart rhythm, muscle tremors, wobbliness and even seizures. Signs of toxicity can be seen within the first 4-12 hours after ingestion. It can take 4 days for theobromine to leave a dog's system. During this time, veterinary care would include causing vomiting, giving activated charcoal to bind remaining active ingredient, intravenous fluids and symptomatic treatment for the symptoms (i.e., anti-con-

vulsant medication, cardiac drugs, gastrointestinal support). The level of toxicity depends on the size of the dog, the amount of chocolate eaten and the type/darkness of the chocolate. In general, the small Maltese who eats a large amount of dark chocolate is a problem waiting to happen. Conversely, the large Rottweiler who grabs a couple of M&M candies from the floor will most likely experience no adverse effects at all. More specifically, for a 60lb Labrador to experience signs of toxicity, he would have to eat 25 oz of milk chocolate, or 8 oz of dark chocolate, or 2 3/4 oz of baking chocolate.

Another factor of chocolate toxicity concerns the amount of fat ingested suddenly. A large amount of sweetened milk chocolate candies contain a large amount of fat as well. Sudden fat ingestion stimulates the pancreas to produce digestive enzymes and can result in inflammation of the pancreas (pancreatitis). Common symptoms are not eating, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, belly pain and

lying around. This can occur 1-3 days after the chocolate candies are eaten. In this case, it is the fat causing the problem, not the theobromine toxicity.

An interesting side note in California regards the increased use of cocoa bean hulls in mulch and fertilizer, and toxicity resulting in dogs with access to these garden areas. The dogs are attracted by the aroma of the chocolate. According to the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center, 67% of reported cases of cocoa bean hull toxicity were from California dogs. Cocoa bean hulls contain 250mg per ounce of theobromine, putting it at about half the amount of Baker's chocolate.

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

Moraga Rotary Hosts East African Visitors to the United States

By Sophie Braccini



Rotarians from District 5160 welcome the Group Study Exchange team members from East Africa to the USA. In photo, (L to R): Rotarian Amelia Ward (Redding Rotary), Luladay Aragaw (Ethiopia), Sylvia Nakajjugo (Uganda), Sarah Kasule (Uganda), Rotarian Muchau Githiaka (Kenya, Team Leader), and Rotarian Gary Irwin (Moraga Rotary) Picture courtesy of Moraga Rotary

Four young business professionals from Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia were hosted in the Lamorinda area by the Rotary Club of Moraga. They presented their ini-

tial program to that Club on a recent Tuesday. They are members of a Group Study Exchange team that will tour northern California in Rotary District 5160, and will be

hosted by various Rotary clubs elsewhere in the District. They will present their program to the Rossmore, Lafayette, San Ramon Valley and Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary clubs.

The team is led by Kenyan Rotarian Muchau Githiaka, a past president of the Nairobi-Langata Rotary club. Other team members are Luladay Aragaw of Ethiopia, and Sylvia Nakajjugo and Sarah Kasule of Uganda. They will attend and present their program to the District Conference held at the Concord Hilton.

Group Study Exchange is a program of Rotary International to foster peace and international understanding, and in the spring 2009, a team of Americans will tour these East African countries to complete the exchange.

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LAMORINDA Seniors

Outward Bound: Music and Motoring with the Lamorinda Spirit Van

By Mei Sun Li, Lafayette Senior Services



Rosalee Biasatti Photo provided

One afternoon about twenty five years ago, Orinda's Rosalee Biasatti was told she had MS, Multiple Sclerosis. Rosalee was stunned but adhered to her plans that night for a fun evening with a friend. Soon thereafter, and pre-internet, she found herself immersed

in the local library, discovering everything one could learn about this debilitating and difficult disease.

Today, Rosalee Biasatti is one of the Lamorinda Spirit Van's most ardent supporters. The paratransit service, which has a wheelchair lift,

takes passengers to the local Walnut Creek Senior Center lunch program, gets them to medical appointments, and to shopping and banking centers. She says, "The Spirit Van is wonderful especially because of the people I've met who come from so many different backgrounds and careers. Also I get out of the house and this is particularly important for me since I am so confined in my wheelchair. I know that the social interaction is good for my brain."

Rosalee is used to using her brain. Rosalee today, a retired teacher into her seventies, still conveys a radiance and assurance that her teenage students must have found comforting. She taught just about everything in the Hayward school system - geography, civics, phys ed, dance - and loved it.

Rosalee lives next door to one of her three grown sons in Orinda

and enjoys all of her five grandchildren. She says that this is the time in her life for "soul growth" and routinely allocates periods of the day for prayers, meditation, and reading some of the important metaphysical writers such as Deepak Chopra.

Help Lafayette Senior Services (LSS) to help folks like Rosalee Biasatti stay outward bound. The Lamorinda Spirit Van program will be the recipient of all funds raised at the Lafayette Senior Services annual holiday concert event on Friday December 12th 1:30 - 3:00 PM at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 Saint Mary's Road in Lafayette. Violist Jennifer Carne along with Mark Shaw, fiddler extraordinaire, will present a musical concert program of holiday, bluegrass, and folk tunes. Light refreshments will be served. Tickets are only \$5 and discounts available

for senior resident groups. Call Lafayette Senior Services at 284-5050 to let them know you will attend this festive and important holiday event.

Raffle prizes have been donated by the following groups for which LSS is most grateful:

- Town Hall Theater Company
- Gold Coast Chamber Players
- Stratford at Countrywood
- Eldercare Services

- Amarin Thai Cuisine Restaurant
- Mt. Diablo Nursery and Garden
- Powell's Sweet Shoppe
- Howard and Mary Fuchs
- Ruth and David McCahan
- Lafayette Recreation Center

LSS would also like to extend its thanks to the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and Companion Care of Lafayette for their enduring support.

Volunteering—An Exchange of Goodness

Submitted by Kay Schroeder



Volunteer Eileen Kempfer helps with a fundraising mailing Photo provided

be enriched.

Volunteering allows you to step up and help out your "neighborhood." And, surprisingly, volunteers benefit as much as those they help. There's an exchange of goodness that benefits all parties. There is exciting research from more than 30 studies that show individuals who volunteer just two hours a week enjoy significant health benefits. Volunteerism is an important tool in our strategy to promote health and prevent disease," says Josefine G. Carbonell, Assistant Secretary for Aging at the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. Volunteering leads to improved mental and physical health.

Volunteering is a great way to build new friendships. Senior men and women begin to experience losses as they age. Losing close family members and friends is distressing, and a bit frightening. Volunteering is an easy and fun approach to senior life. Consider bringing a friend with you to enjoy the experience. The buddy system adds to the fun, sharing the gas and doubles the positive impact you can make on your community.

Eileen Kempfer has been volunteering for several non profit or-

ganizations for the last three years. She says, "For me, activity keeps my lifestyle functioning. I have made new friends in all my volunteer activities. I started volunteering when my husband died. The reward for volunteering far exceeds my own effort and the variety of opportunities is endless."

For those recently retired, volunteering is a great way to keep your spirits and stay current. Jim Larkin, a volunteer at the American Cancer Society, used his corporate background and skills to develop and implement a new educational program for them.

He says, "My thought is that working with people of different ages is a critical piece of well being in our world. I recently worked with a 27 year old and it was such an interesting experience to be working along with a younger person. By experiencing people of all generations, an older person can increase social skills. They don't have to feel left out of multi-generational conversations."

The word is out—it's good to be good. Good for those you help. Good for your own health and happiness. Whatever your reasons for volunteering, there are hundreds of

different ways to help. The Volunteer Center for the East Bay sponsors a program, RSVP, specifically designed to help retired and senior volunteers find the right match given their passions, skills, and schedule. If you are 55 or older and want to volunteer, contact RSVP at 925-472-5769.

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Not to be missed - Senior Events

Lafayette Senior's Recreation Center Fund Raiser will be held Nov. 13th from 10am-2pm at the Methodist Church 955 Moraga Rd, Lafayette. The Center has served seniors since 1950 and is run entirely by volunteers. Items for sale include: homemade cookies, breads, jams, handmade gifts for the holidays, hand knitted items and

much more. Drop by and support your senior community!

Widowed Person Support offers social events and a workshop for all widows and widowers: Call 925-932-3448. Saturday, Nov. 15, a luncheon at Terzetto Cuisine Café in Moraga. Saturday, Nov. 22, a free workshop to help widowed

people handle the holidays, at St. Stephens Church, Orinda.

Classic Movies at the Hacienda, Thursday, Dec 4th 2 pm, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga. Join us on the first Thursday of the month for a Classic Movie and light refreshments in the Mosaic Room. The movie will begin at 2 pm and last approximately 2 hours. We will choose from an assortment of classic films including Casablanca, Sunset Blvd., Cat on Hot Tin Roof and To Kill a Mockingbird. We will take suggestions from viewers as well. A \$2 donation is requested. 925-888-7045.

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Community Champions: Sports as a Metaphor for Life

By Rob Lucacher



Coaches Dean Myatt (L) and Steve Christensen (R) with the proud players of Team Barcelona Photo Rob Lucacher

On a recent Saturday morning, Team Barcelona, with coaches Dean and Steve at the helm, made it happen, by winning their LMYA soccer game and securing first place in their 5th and 6th grade girls division.

What is their secret? What does it take to prepare young boys and girls to more effectively compete by mastering the technical, emotional and procedural fundamentals of a competitive sport? If we use sports as a universal metaphor for life, how do we establish the essentials of teamwork, purpose and passion as the foundations for building success in everything we do?

Team building and individual achievement are the goals of Steve Christensen and Dean Myatt, two of our local LMYA coaches. Steve and Dean inspire their players through selfless giving and a passion for teaching while actively mentoring each player. This results in a purpose-driven commitment that we all seek to impart to our children so that they can effectively tackle the rigors and challenges of life.

These two men possess

complementary skill sets that, when combined, build a tradition of winning teams and proud team members. It's the unique chemistry that Coach Steve and Coach Dean bring to the games of soccer and softball that makes for a winning formula.

Coach Dean's essential strength and focus is on the technical elements of the game. He identifies the fundamental skills that need to be mastered, sets up a regimen for imparting these skills to his players, evaluates how the clash of wills will play out on the field and what techniques and discipline will be needed to overcome the barriers to success. On the other hand, Coach Steve understands and focuses on the human side of the equation, instilling confidence, joy, spirit and a sense of common purpose so individual players form a more perfect union we call a team. Drawing upon these collective strengths, some of the strategies they use to nurture the heart and skills of their young team members are pre-game discussions, post-game review and weekly recognition for exceptional individual performance.

Yet what makes their teams truly exceptional is how the coaches' good chemistry is translated into effective and purposeful leadership. The emphasis is not on winning but the quality of the competitive spirit as it unfolds on the playing field. After years of coaching together, Coach Steve and Coach Dean have come to know each other so well that each can anticipate the other's response to a specific challenge or opportunity. Building on the core philosophy that "success breeds confidence and confidence breeds greater success," they work together to instill this credo in the minds and hearts of all their players.

Despite having logged 17 seasons of LMYA coaching between them, they never tire of the challenge and opportunity that each new season brings: to educate, unify and inspire a new group of eager young charges. And as the final whistle sounds on yet another season, they file away another batch of great memories and hope to receive the ultimate gratification and measure of success – players who can't wait to sign up to play again next year.

Oakland Strokes Medal in 2008 Head of the American

Submitted by Irene Gessling



WV Lightweight 8, L to R: S. Goldman, A. Hofinga, R. D'Orazio, E. Lenczowski, J. Buffington, S. Coppock-Pector, A. Koenig, E. Sharf; not pictured, coxswain Mia Hamano Photo provided

The Oakland Strokes Women's Varsity 8 had a fantastic start to the season, winning the gold medal at the Head of the American Regatta Oct. 25 at Lake Natoma, Sacramento. Their time of 16:41 is the fastest time posted by a junior women's crew at Head of the American since 2001, and is a minute faster than the Strokes' own winning fastest time of 17:42 in 2005.

The rowers in the winning eight were Katie McKeen (Piedmont High School, grade 10), Nicole Sung-Jereczek (Piedmont, grade 11), Nikki Dahlberg-Seeth (Miramonte High School, grade 11), Camilla Polakoff (Bentley School, grade 11), Ali Mittelberger (Head Royce School, grade 12), Dana Walsh (Miramonte High School, grade 11),

Barbara Barnes (College Preparatory School, grade 12), Kelly Bauer (Miramonte High School, grade 11) and Molly Fehr – cox (Miramonte High School, grade 11).

The WV Lightweight 8 (pictured) became the first Oakland Strokes women's lightweight boat ever to win first place at the Head of the American. The crew finished with a posted time of 17:56, taking the gold.

The rowers were Eva Sharf (Head Royce, grade 12), Ayla Koenig (Berkeley High, grade 12), Sarah Goldman (Piedmont High, grade 11), Jessica Buffington (Berkeley High, grade 11), Sarah Coppock-Pector (Bishop O'Dowd, grade 12), Anne Hofinga (Miramonte, grade 11), Rosie D'Orazio (Bishop O'Dowd,

grade 12), Elizabeth Lenczowski (Miramonte, grade 11), Mia Hamano – cox (Piedmont, grade 12).

Oakland Strokes Men's Varsity 8 finished with a time of 15:27. The crew consists of coxswain Daniel Migdale (Miramonte), stroke Garrett Bell (Las Lomas, grade 12), Andre Ramos (Alameda, grade 11) Coleman Williams Campolindo, grade 12), Billy Deskin (Campolindo, grade 12), Stephen Gessling (Campolindo, grade 12) Alex Sheridan (Campolindo, grade 11), James Kwan (Piedmont, grade 11) and Matt Lenhart (Campolindo, grade 12).

The Oakland Strokes went on to take gold in the Head of the Estuary competition and Newport Autumn Rowing Festival.

SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

MOL Football Champions



Photo submitted by Joanne Layschok

The MOL Football season came to a close over the weekend of Nov 8-9 with exciting play-offs and bowl match-ups. In the end, the Vikings (7-0 for the season) defeated the Cardi-

nals 13-7 in the NFC Division Superbowl (pictured), the AFC Division Bengals took the Bills 21-20 and in the Pac 10 it was the undefeated Irish over the Cardinals 14-8

Sherman Divers Make it Look Easy

(Based on information submitted by Steve Sherman)



Steve Sherman (5th from left first row) with his Diving Team Photo provided

A little water never hurt anyone! On a rainy Saturday, November 1, Lafayette's Sherman Swim School hosted the Sherman Fall Fun Meet. Sixty divers representing six diving clubs from around the Bay Area met to compete in the warm waters of the School's pools.

Divers from the Sherman Diving Team had a successful meet, including a 1st place spot for Moraga's Maren Kjell. Partial results (for Lamorinda divers):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 9 & Under Girls (Novice) | 6th place, Caroline King, Moraga |
| 11 & Under Girls (Novice) | 2nd place, Morgan Matrang, Moraga |
| 13 & Under Girls (Novice) | 2nd place, Rachael Purcell, Orinda; |
| | 3rd place, Carley Roberts, Orinda; |
| | 7th place, Lizzy Atkinson, Orinda |
| 13 & Under Girls (Junior Olympics) | 3rd place, Alyssa Parsons, Moraga |
| 14-18 Girls (Novice) | 6th place, Donna Brackett, Moraga |
| 14 & 15 Under Girls (Junior Olympics) | 1st place, Maren Kjell, Moraga |
| 16-18 Girls (Junior Olympics) | 2nd place, Heather Finertie, Moraga |
| 21-29 Women | 2nd place, Katie Copenhagen, Orinda |

Home Run Barrage

Lifts LBC to Desert Classic Championship

Submitted by Anne McNally



The LBC 12U Fall Ball Team Photo provided

Northern California's Lamorinda Baseball Club (LBC) 12U Fall Ball Team won the Las Vegas Desert Classic by defeating the South Bay Diamondbacks, also from Northern California, 11-3 in the championship game.

The LBC Fall Ball Team was made up of eight players from the 2008 11U TBS National Champion Lamorinda Cougars. In addition, the team was joined by two other 2008 Elite World Series participants: Michael Palos who traveled to Orlando with the Simi Predators and Noah Burnham of the 2008 10U Quarterfinalists Lamorinda Monarchs. Longtime Cougar Willie MacIver rounded out the squad as the team's shortstop.

In the championship game, starting pitcher Johnny

Breidenthal allowed 2 runs in 5 innings for the win. Tournament MVP Drew Downing came on to close out the game as he had successfully done throughout the tournament.

The tournament's most highly anticipated matchup occurred in the semifinals when LBC was pitted against the San Diego Stars. LBC's starting pitcher Daniel Slominski went the distance in the 3-1 victory.

The scoring for LBC began in the bottom of the first inning with a solo homerun by Palos. An inning later, D.B. Vidal drove in MacIver with a two-out single. In the bottom of the fifth, Breidenthal led off with a double off the wall. After MacIver's sacrifice bunt, Breidenthal scored on a wild pitch to provide the 2-run cushion.

The hard-hitting Stars didn't go away quietly in the top of the sixth inning. With the top of the order up, the Stars' lead-off hitter smashed a liner up the middle that was snagged by Slominski. The next hitter drove a ball to deep right centerfield that was tracked down by Walter Tucker. Then, with All-American Brady Aiken in the on-deck circle, third baseman Vidal made a play on a hard-hit grounder to end the game.

Earlier in the day, Joe Demers pitched a complete game 1-hitter in LBC's 9-1 win over the Las Vegas Warriors in the quarterfinals. The game was broken open by a grand slam by Slominski.

The story of the tournament was the power displayed by the LBC team. Even with a stiff desert wind blowing in from centerfield throughout the event, LBC pounded out 13 home runs in seven games. The attack was led by Palos and Demers, who each hit 5 homers. Slominski, who only played in three games, added two home runs and Breidenthal another.

Leadoff hitter Conner McNally and two-hitter Tucker consistently got on-base to set the table for the homerun hitters. Clutch line drives were also provided by Jake Rider, Downing, and Burnham to contribute to LBC's 73 runs in the event.

SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Saint Mary's Men's Basketball Season Preview

By Mikaela Cowles



Ian O'Leary (4) screams in excitement to teammate Diamon Simpson Photo Tod Fierner

At 7 am on Monday morning, the Saint Mary's men's basketball team is not tucked in their beds. Rather, they are in the gym getting ready for the upcoming season.

"There are higher expectations (this season) from the media and polls that might be a little unrealistic," head coach Randy Bennett says.

Realistic or not, the Gaels graduated only two seniors and return with their top three scorers, including 2008 Olympian Patrick Mills.

figures they posted last season. However, Bennett says that the team has "a lot of guys who are capable of scoring as well. They have to take on other roles, though, because not everyone can be a scorer."

With players such as Ian O'Leary, who averaged 7.6 points per game and shot 43 percent from the field, and Wayne Hunter, who averaged 8.8 points per game, the Gaels can certainly keep their options open. With the addition to the roster of transfer Ben Allen from Indiana, who is now eligible, the Gaels gain a 6'11" force in the center.

Coach Bennett's defensive strategy will remain the same, but his offense will make small, yet decisive changes. He plans to keep the free flow offense for which he is so well-known. In addition, he says there will be more half court sets now that he has a better grasp on how his players like to score. In tight games, such as their 88-76 loss at Gonzaga last year, quick hits will make a huge difference, giving the Gaels a better opportunity to get the bucket they want when they want it.

Catch the men at their season opener on November 14th at 7 PM in McKeon Pavilion when play Seattle Pacific, to see if they live up to the hype.

"The talent this year is as high as it's ever been. We have huge strengths in our depth and our experience," Bennett says.

Mills returns leading the team with an average of 14.8 points, 3.4 assists and 1.7 steals per game during the 2007-2008 SMC season. Leading the scoring charge beside him are Diamon Simpson and Omar Samhan, who both averaged double digits in points per game last year and together brought down an average of 16.9 rebounds per game.

Mills, Simpson and Samhan draw a lot of attention due to the

SMC Men Drop Double Overtime Soccer Match

By Kevin D. Shallat



Bryan VanDoorninck (10) Photo Tod Fierner

Sunday, Nov. 9 marked the beginning of a final three game home stand for the Saint Mary's men's soccer team as they played host to the University of San Francisco. Despite the Gaels 3-3-3 WCC record going into this match, they have showed that they can compete with the best teams in the league. The Gaels were able to split wins against a league leading San Diego team this year.

Sunday they looked to establish themselves as a real threat in the conference with a chance to knock off the second place San Francisco Dons. The Gaels came close, as they were able to keep the Dons scoreless in regulation and overtime. However, they were unable to stop the Dons from knocking in a goal in double-overtime to lose the match 1-0.

On a brisk day game at Saint Mary's Stadium that saw more of the moon than the sun, neither team could muster enough offensive power to generate any goals in regulation.

Saint Mary's goalkeeper Jason Badger established his dominance both with his play and with his voice. The talented keeper was as vocal as possible, acting as another coach on the field for the Gaels. Several times his instructions saved his team from touching the ball before it went out of bounds and

mid-field, but were unable to pass the ball effectively near the San Francisco goal.

Despite San Francisco's 13-3 advantage in shots on goal, the Gaels did a good job in keeping the Dons scoreless for roughly 99 minutes. Both Corey Heldreth and Scott Eberhardt played a solid defensive game for Saint Mary's. For most of the game, the Gaels were able to shut down Conor Chinn, San Francisco's star player.

With 17 minutes remaining in the second half, the Gaels had their best opportunity to score in the game. After Dominic Smith met the San Francisco goalkeeper head on, his shot was deflected to a wide-open Yousef Samy. With San Francisco's goalkeeper out of position, Samy had an opportunity to take a long distance shot for the Gaels. As the crowd stood on its feet in anticipation of a goal, the shot sailed wide right for the mid-fielder. Samy led the Gaels with two shots on the day.

In double overtime, Chinn finally struck for a goal in the 100th minute of play for his eighth goal in nine games. Chinn took a one-timer from the cross from teammate Justin Kendro. Chinn's shot hit the far right upper corner of the goal to end the game. With the loss, the Gaels move to 4-9-4 (3-4-3WCC), and the Dons improve to 8-8-2 (6-3-1WCC).

Mills Impresses at Olympics

By Mikaela Cowles



Patrick Mills this October Photo Tod Fierner

Patrick Mills turned heads with his 2008 Olympic performance, averaging a team best of 14.2 points per game while coming off the bench for each competition. He also posted 2.1 rebounds, 2 assists, 1.7 steals and 23 minutes on average to help the Australian Olympic team achieve a 3-3 record.

As the only collegiate basketball player competing in the Olympics, Mills scored an individual tournament high of 22 points against Argentina. Most memorable for Mills, however, was not his outstanding performance but fulfilling what he describes as his "ultimate dream goal, to wear my country's colors and represent

what he calls his "taking it one day at a time" outlook on his basketball career, his success should have come as little surprise.

Mills is not only Australia's youngest basketball player ever to compete in the Olympics, but also the country's most successful one with an indigenous background. Mills said his background heightened his experience because he is able to provide an important role model for the indigenous community.

He hopes that "being seen in the community and schools, where I can meet kids and they can meet me, will help them believe in the success they can have on the basketball court. If I can give them tips and let them see that they can make it, then hopefully they will try."

The upcoming season for the Saint Mary's Gaels brings much promise for the success of the team, and Mills as well. He believes the lessons he learned at the Olympics will help him immensely in his upcoming season.

"Our captain (Matt Nielson) was an amazing leader. I learned so much from him about how to lead the team," Mills says.

Catch this phenomenal young man as he once again dons Saint Mary's red and blue and looks to lead the Gaels in another successful season.

them." Mills says he was completely surprised to be chosen for the team. "I never thought I would be. It wasn't until I was back there, went through camp and sat down with the coach, and he told me I had a good chance, that I really thought it could happen."

A surprise for Mills was a logical conclusion for Saint Mary's head coach Randy Bennett. "After the season he gave us, I couldn't see it not happening. There just aren't two point guards in Australia who are better," he says.

What was a shock, said Bennett, was just how successful Mills was. However, with Mills' humble attitude and



SMC Gaels Home Games

Fri, Nov 14 Men's Soccer Portland Saint Mary's Stadium	2:00 PM	Fri, Nov 28 Women's Basketball La Salle Moraga, CA	7:00 PM
Fri, Nov 14 Men's Basketball Seattle Pacific Moraga (McKeon Pavilion)	7:05 PM	Sat, Nov 29 Women's Basketball Indiana or Radford Moraga, CA	7:00 PM
Sun, Nov 16 Men's Soccer Gonzaga Saint Mary's Stadium	1:00 PM	Sat, Dec 6 Women's Basketball UC Davis Moraga, CA	2:00 PM
Mon, Nov 17 Men's Basketball Fresno State Moraga (McKeon Pavilion)	11:00 PM		
Sun, Nov 23 Men's Basketball Vanguard Moraga (McKeon Pavilion)	4:05 PM		

For complete schedule go to: <http://www.smcgaels.com>

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SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Saint Mary's Honors Skills with Exhibition Win

By Mikaela Cowles



Maija Lahda (1)

Photo Doug Kohen

The Saint Mary's women's basketball team finished their second exhibition game with an 86-75 win over San Francisco State on Sunday, November 9. The Gaels gave the Gaels a better game than last Friday's victory over Showtime, 100-74.

The Gaels broke the game open with a lead they never lost

when Louella Tomlinson won the tip off, sending the ball straight to Jontelle Smith, who passed it to Katie Batlin for two points. Local favorite Batlin made her college debut this weekend, starting both games at point guard, averaging 7.5 points and 3 assists.

Saint Mary's started the game up-tempo with their well-known

Freak defense, sending them on a 13-2 run. In an attempt to slow the game down, the Gaels went to a zone early in the first half. The zone had little effect in the first as the Gaels out-shot their opponents 61.5 percent to 36.4 percent.

Hitting shots meant Saint Mary's could get into their full court press early. In the first half they forced 17 turnovers, converting them successfully into 20 of their first half points as San Francisco struggled against the pressure.

The Gaels went to the locker room at halftime with a 46-33 lead; however, they came out in the second half a little sluggish. Three minutes into the half, the Gaels cut Saint Mary's lead to six, as the Gaels struggled against the zone. It didn't take long for Saint Mary's to get back on track. Despite having a staggering 35 turnovers for the game, they posted an impressive 25 assists as a team.

Tomlinson, Smith and Maija Lahde totaled over half of the Gaels points. Tomlinson lead the team with a notable 23 points, seven rebounds and four blocks. Smith, known for her three-point shot earned nine of her points from behind the arc, giving Saint Mary's 15 points and four assists. Lahde, with a diverse array of contributions, added 11 points to the threesomes mix along with a game high of eight rebounds, four assists and one block.

Saint Mary's will once again start the regular season out of town as they compete in the 2008 World Classic tournament in Austin Texas, opening against Old Dominion on Saturday, November 15th at 2:00 PM PT.

Miramonte Edges Out Las Lomas



Conor Lowery (2)

Photo Doug Kohen

The Miramonte Matadors continued their three game winning streak by squeaking past the Las Lomas Knights last Friday, Nov. 7, in a close 33-31 game.

The Mats are currently in 2nd place in the DFAL with a 3-1 league record, while Las Lomas drops to 3rd at 2-2. Campolindo continues to hold the top spot at 4-0.

This Friday's final regular season match-ups are Miramonte (home) v Alhambra and Campolindo (home) v Acalanes. Alhambra was trounced by Campolindo 35-6 last Friday, and Acalanes has yet to win a league game. Both Campolindo and Miramonte look to be NCS play-off bound. The play-offs begin on Nov. 21.

Diablo Foothill Athletic League (DFAL)
Football Standings as of 11/8/08
(Compiled by Alex Crook)

	League	Overall
Campolindo	4-0	8-1
Miramonte	3-1	7-2
Las Lomas	2-2	6-3
Alhambra	2-2	2-7
Dublin	1-3	2-7
Acalanes	0-4	2-7

Young Cheerleaders Steal the Show



Young cheerleaders pose at last Friday's game

Photo Doug Kohen

If you couldn't make it to the Miramonte High School varsity football game last Friday, you missed what may have been the cutest show on earth. No, not the players, good-looking guys though they may be; the cuteness was on the sidelines Friday evening.

About forty young cheerleaders, drawn largely from the Orinda elementary schools, had the opportunity to join the Miramonte Cheerleaders during the game and to perform a dance at half-time. The girls were participants in last week's Cheer Camp run by the cheerleaders.

The cheerleaders have offered camps in prior years, usually as fundraisers, but this year turned out to be more of a challenge than they anticipated. Varsity head cheerleaders Brenna Casey and Claire Rottici found

themselves without the benefit of their coach, who fell very ill in September. "The cheerleaders had to organize and teach the younger girls all by themselves," said Brenna's mother, Susan Casey.

Brenna said there were forty one little girls in the camp, taught by twenty Miramonte Varsity and JV cheerleaders. "Claire and I met many times to make a 'schedule' of how everything was going to work," Brenna explained. "It has been really hard without (our coach)...but there was no doubt that we were going to follow through with our Kids Camp. Because both Claire and I are Associated Student Body officers for Miramonte as well, it made it a lot easier to talk to the administration in order to work out the logistics. All of the parents of the cheerleaders on our

squad have been really helpful as well."

How much more exciting does it get than to be on the field, pom-poms in hand, cheering with the "pros?" It's the best, according to seven year old Sally: "Do you know what I'm going to be when I grow up? I'm going to be Miramonte Cheerleader!" she announced.

"This experience is a great thing for our squad," says Brenna, "it really makes us realize another aspect of what cheerleading is all about: increasing spirit for our school, but also serving as role models for young girls. It is such a wonderful community bonding event and the little girls look up to us so much. Unlike prior years, our goal for the week was not to fundraise, but to create a cute, community event for the younger population of our city."

Moraga's Katie Batlin

Brings Local Support to the SMC Lady Gaels

By Andrea A. Firth



Katie's family watching the Showtime Basketball game last Friday

Photo Jordan Fong

The family and friends of Moraga's Katie Batlin, including proud parents Judy and Michael Batlin (front row, left and center) and sister Mindi McGrath (2nd row, center), sat courtside this weekend as they cheered for Katie and the rest of the SMC Women's Basketball team in a pair of exhibition games before the start of the regular season. "This is so perfect for Katie, and for us, to be so close to home," stated Judy.

With Saint Mary's McKeon Pavilion less than a half a mile away from their home in the Bluffs

of Moraga, the Batlins will be able to continue their uninterrupted attendance streak at Katie's games--at least the home games. In addition to the large crowd of family and friends who regularly come to see Katie play, Judy spotted many other familiar faces from Lamorinda in the stands. Several Bluffs' neighbors, including Vice Mayor Dave Trotter, were also in attendance to witness Moraga's hometown girl and former Miramonte Matador as she launched her college basketball career at SMC.

"Katie loves being part of this

team. They have built a strong relationship and established a strong bond very quickly," added Judy. This close bond is exemplified by the frenetic pace at which the Lady Gaels execute their game requiring them to know several steps in advance where each player will be.

With two wins over the past weekend, SMC's Women's Basketball looks to be off to the start of a great season. The next home game for the Lady Gaels will be held on Friday, November 28th at 7:00 p.m., for a complete schedule got to www.smcgaels.com.

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