

CONCORD - 4700 CLAYTON RD. (925) 827-9588
OAKLAND - 2523 BROADWAY (510) 451-7373
ROSEWOODHOUSE.COM
 SOLID HANDCRAFTED FURNITURE • BEDROOM, DINING, OFFICE & ENTERTAINMENT • LARGE IN-STOCK INVENTORY
 CUSTOM DESIGN SERVICES • PREMIUM QUALITY SINCE 1969



Rosewood House
FINE ORIENTAL FURNITURE

Judy's Nail Salon
 Thank you Lamorinda for your Business!
6th Year Anniversary Special

Manicure \$8 Pedicure \$20
 Manicure & Pedicure \$25
 Full Set (acrylic) \$20 Fill in \$15
 Waxing 10% off

Nails by Danny
 625 Moraga Rd, Moraga • (925) 377-0990 or 0991
 Tues - Sat: 10am - 7pm • Sun: 10am - 6pm

BUSHVELD CONSTRUCTION
 CA License #762192 - Insured - Local Referrals Available
 Serving the area for 16 years! We are creative in saving costs!

Specializing in all types of outdoor projects & living spaces (decks, retaining walls, drainage, fireplaces, kitchens, etc). Proficient in solving structural problems.

Ofc/Fax: 925.465.4398 Cell: 925.989.9308
 cmkudrnac@astound.net

Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writers and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and town (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only), and should be 350 words or less. Letters may be edited for length or legal considerations. email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: **Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570**

Dear Editor:

Using poor judgment, the Board of Trustees of the Orinda Union School District is asking Orinda's voters to approve an astounding 32 percent increase in property (parcel) taxes. In a March 2009 election, Orinda voters will be asked to raise the current \$385 annual school tax to \$509. To pass, the tax will need a two-thirds majority vote. The proposed tax would be more palatable if the Orinda school district had asked for -- and received -- some concessions from the powerful teachers' union. The union has traditionally opposed paying teachers according to the rules of supply and demand. Instead, the union supports an egalitarian pay system, in which all teachers are paid the same. (Teacher pay can be adjusted according to a formula based on a teacher's amount of college credits and length of service. However, pay is not based on market conditions.) Under this egalitarian system, a history teacher is paid the same amount of money as a mathematics teacher. Thus, there is a chronic shortage of excellent mathematics teachers because mathematics teachers can obtain better pay in such places as Silicon Valley. The proposed tax might be worth considering if teacher pay could be determined by free-market economics. Any business does this. For example, companies like Intel and Google pay a senior computer programmer more than they pay a janitor. The tax does not offer a blanket exemption to Orinda' senior citizens. Sen-

iors, most of whom live on fixed incomes, have seen their stock portfolios decimated in recent months. Moreover, seniors have to face sharply rising costs for food and medical care. It's time for the trustees of the Orinda school district to stop asking voters for more money unless voters get something in return. Orinda's voters should soundly reject this proposed tax.

Richard S. Colman
Orinda

Dear Editor,

I am saddened to see Mr. Richard Colman's letter to the editor (that appeared in a different publication) regarding the Orinda Union School District's decision to place a parcel tax on the ballot. So often, these days, political opposition comes in the form of deceit and exaggeration rather than honest discourse.

On November 18th, Mr. Colman called me, as president of the Board of Trustees, and we shared a lengthy conversation about the unprecedented fiscal crisis facing our schools. I was very detailed in elaborating how both the current and the proposed parcel tax DO include senior exemptions for low-income seniors.

For Mr. Colman to write that "The Orinda school district could have -- but did not -- offer a tax exemption to senior citizens" is a deliberate falsehood, and he knows it.

In a time of enormous uncertainty, Orinda schools are facing huge budget cuts this year, with even more crippling cuts proposed for next year. We must take action to preserve our quality educational programs. Though nobody likes to raise taxes, we can maintain local control over these funds to ensure they go directly toward essential academic programs. Mr. Colman does a disservice to voters by ignoring the fact that this important measure offers protections for low-income seniors.

Riki Sorenson
President, Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees
Orinda

Dear Editor,

My family and I are quite disappointed with the way Ms. Baker (Letters to the Editor, Nov. 26) mocked the children who were out in Lafayette expressing their support with 'no on 8' signs. These children you spoke of just so happen to be the sons and daughters of gay or lesbian parents! And would you believe they are very, very well aware what 'no on 8' would mean to their families. My female partner and I have been together 17 years with 2 boys, 14 + 10 years and yes, we even reside in Lamorinda along with many other gay and lesbian families. Our boys are brought up to show tolerance to others regardless of race, gender, economic status, sexual orientation and above all - Equality for all. Perhaps you should meet our sons and let them explain to you why they were out in Lafayette shouting their little hearts out 'NO ON 8!' Oh, did you happen to notice all the children above highway 24 yelling 'yes on 8' - probably not.

Diane Druss
Lafayette

Coach Ken Nelson Remembered and Honored

... continued from page 7



Hung at St. Perpetua's meeting hall during Coach Nelson's memorial service reception, this banner was up the weekend prior at Tice Valley's basketball court during the Thanksgiving youth basketball tournament. The St. Perpetua CYO picture on the left is actually a combined picture -- two 1993 6th grade teams, both coached that year by Ken Nelson and Phil Doherty. Both teams won their respective Diocese championships. Photo Robin Schoettler Fox

At the time of his death, his offer to help one CYO team had blossomed into Coach Nelson's 12-months-a-year youth basketball coaching vocation. To say he spent weekends in gyms is no lie. Some say Coach Nelson was a second father figure for players, maybe even like a grandfather.

Kisner explains: "He just treats every player like he's known them for a really long time, even if it's like the first time he ever coached them. It makes you feel like you're home almost."

For coaches, Nelson was the go-to guy, St. P's long time Athletic Director, the keeper of the gym keys. One call to Nelson and he'd be there to open the gym, substitute coach or find the missing score-table clock. At one time or another, Coach Nelson carried keys that opened every Lafayette public school gym. More recently, he'd added a Campo set. Even when he passed A.D. reigns to Dan Baker, he kept keys and his seat on the CYO board.

"The beauty of a guy like Ken is that he always wanted to make sure we did things that made sense for the program and for the kids," says Baker. "He had no agenda."

Except maybe to improve as a coach.

"He was famous for re-hashing games over a cold beer," says Doherty. "Mostly, he just wanted to be comfortable that he was reaching the kids and getting the most

from them." Coach Nelson's memorial service at St. P's was a capacity crowd of familiar gym faces, including all three Campo boys' basketball squads sitting together in their team travel clothes, and the pew of 7th grade St. P players in Sunday best topped with basketball jerseys. Other former players, some currently on Acalanes Varsity, as well as area coaches dotted the crowd.

Coach Nelson had recently received hundreds of letters and emails, expressing not just concern but also gratitude. But it was a thank you letter sent last summer, former player to coach mentor, penned by former Acalanes varsity guard Robert O'Keefe as he prepared to go to San Diego State, that hit home when read at the ceremony:

"Ken, you not only taught us the game of basketball but instilled in us the qualities of passion, perseverance, and eagerness to take on a challenge. Sure, our family and friends had an influence on our well beings, but without our youth basketball, I very much doubt we would be the individuals we are today."

A coach's reach, it can extend beyond the court. And when it does, that's worth putting a name on a tournament. So Campolindo did. The Ken Nelson Invitational Tournament is scheduled for December 10-13. Campolindo and Acalanes will both be playing.


"Holiday Special"
 Lamorinda Only
 Buy (1) 1hr Massage &...
 *Your Friends 1hr Massage is Free
 *Massages Given Back to Back
 (1hr massage Regular price = \$90)

The Back-Man
 "Mobile Massage"

James Kizzie
 (925) 798-8898

Lessons - Couples Packages - Gift Certificates

Lamorinda's Religious Services



Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, Orinda, 254-3422

8:15 a.m. Traditions Worship Service
 9:15 a.m. Coffee Fellowship
 9:40 a.m. Education for all ages
 10:45 a.m. Celebrations Worship Service
 Childcare available for ages 5 and younger

Christmas Eve Services

4:00 p.m. Joy to the World (Children's Christmas Pageant)
 6:00 p.m. The First Noel (Candlelight Communion Service)
 10:00 p.m. Silent Night (Candlelight Communion Service)
 Childcare at the 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. Services

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

Sunday mornings at OSLC:
 Classic Worship, 8:15 am
 Education Hour, 9:30-10:20 am
 Contemporary Worship, 10:30 am

Christmas Eve Services
 5:00 Family
 7:00 & 9:00 Traditional

St. Anselm's Episcopal Church

- December 24th, Christmas Pageant at 5:00 PM. A children's service with children enacting the nativity experience
- Christmas Eve Service: - Carol singing at 10:30 PM - Church service at 11:00 PM

682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, 284-7420, www.stanselms.ws

St. Giles Episcopal Church of Moraga

Worshipping at St. Mary's College Chapel. All are welcome at our services.
9 a.m. Sunday Service: Holy Communion - with St. Giles' Choir.
 Child care is available all year.
 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. 925-376-5770

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE
 Church Services and Sunday School (up to age 20); 10 - 11 AM
 Informal Testimony Meeting, Wed 7:30 - 8:30 PM
 24 Orinda Way www.christianscienceorinda.org
 Carol sing and refreshments December 21 after church service.

\$10 OFF w/coupon*

Wonderful Spa Center

Full Body Massage • Foot Reflexology
925-258-1888
 Hours: 10 am to 9:30 pm
23 Orinda Way, Ste N • Orinda

*exp. 10-30

Public Forum JOIN IT

Transportation Options for Lafayette Seniors

Turning 70 was not something I was especially looking forward to in my life, but when it happened it was not an unpleasant event...that is, until I was notified by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) that I could no longer renew my driver's license by mail. I had to make a personal visit to their office and take a written driver's test, and a vision test. It was then that I realized the possibilities of "what if I don't pass the test? If I lose my license I won't be able to drive anymore!"

Someday that could happen. The timing of this awareness coincidentally came just as I was about to attend on November 9 a round table discussion on transportation options for Senior's who can no longer drive. It was facilitated by the Lafayette Senior Liaison Committee and included members of the Lafayette Senior Service's Commission, caretakers of seniors, transportation experts, and representatives from some of Lafayette's churches.

This discussion came as a result of the Lafayette Senior Liaison Committee Symposium of April 22, 2008 which focused on the most important issues facing our senior population. By far the most pressing need was for transportation options. Paul Branson, Chairperson of the County's Aging and Adult Services, and an experienced enthusiast for senior transportation, was the keynote speaker. He addressed the dilemma: we want our seniors to "age in place," but do not want them to drive when they can no longer drive safely. Giving up the car keys is often a traumatic situation, but

Mr. Branson pointed out that although it does mean a "change in life, it is not the end of life!" Since "mobility = independence," alternative transportation is essential.

Fortunately, there are options. For those that qualify under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) there is the Link Paratransit provided by the County Connection Transit system. For those who are not

ADA eligible there is the Lamorinda Spirit Van which takes people to lunch, shopping, and medical appointments. Senior Helpline Services also provides transportation for the basic needs of shopping and medical appointments with volunteer drivers using their own cars. The Yellow Cab and DeSoto Company provide a 20% discount for Lamorinda seniors. Often friendly neighbors help out. The idea of forming a coalition of all these resources was discussed. It would help in recruiting more volunteer drivers and perhaps allow the Spirit Van to be used by other organizations when it isn't making its usual rounds.

The DMV is very interested in keeping seniors driving for as long as possible if they can do so safely. In this effort they have created a Senior Ombudsman Program, which could serve as an older driver network for mobility management. A big obstacle is that when seniors give up driving many are not comfortable making the transition to other options such as using the Spirit Van. Taking a taxi seems so expensive even though it costs much less than owning a car. They also fear losing their flexibility -being able to go anywhere at any time without making appointments for rides.

Also discussed was the idea of having a "buddy program" in which a friendly person familiar with using the options could accompany first time users and alleviate their anxiety.

It is so important that all of us understand there are many options to driving one's own car. As Mary Bruns, Coordinator of the Lamorinda Spirit Van Program said, "People age when they stop doing things. When they take the van, they stay engaged in life."

Sandra A Smith
Lafayette Senior Liaison Committee and Lafayette Senior Services Commission

THERE'S A NEW NEIGHBOR
 in your neighborhood.
 Call or visit me today.

Mike Rosa State Farm Agent,
 1042 Country Club Dr Suite 2D • Moraga
 license # 0F45583 • 925-376-2244 • Mike@MikeRosa.org

LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR STATE FARM IS THERE.®

Providing Insurance and Financial Services

812206 11/04 State Farm Insurance Companies • Home Offices: Bloomington, IL • statefarm.com

The Berkeley Faculty Club

Elegant Weddings • Banquets • Special Events

For Special Events call Kenna Richards

510-643-0834 • info@berkeleyfacultyclub.com
 UC Berkeley Campus • www.berkeleyfacultyclub.com