

# Lamorinda Community

## Calendar, Notes, News

# Lafayette

Calendar	
City Council	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Monday, January 12	
Planning Comm.	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, December 18	
Design Review	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Tuesday, December 23	
Town of Lafayette: <a href="http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us">http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us</a>	
Chamber of Commerce: <a href="http://www.lafayettechamber.org">http://www.lafayettechamber.org</a>	



**“Pool” at the Roundup**  
11/28/08 – Lafayette Police witnessed a Roundup patron who appeared to be unable to walk. At that point, the patron fell onto one of the establishment’s pool tables. Talk about choking on the eight ball. The patron was arrested for being drunk in public.

**Stolen Truck**  
11/26/08 – A trusting contractor parked his work truck in the Oakwood Athletic Club parking lot and went inside. When he returned, his truck was gone. He had not given anyone permission to borrow his truck and there are no leads at this time.

**Counterfeit Cash**  
11/24/08 – An alert Blockbuster employee realized a patron was attempting to make payment with a counterfeit \$100 bill. When the employee confronted the patron, the patron ran out the door and threw the fake cash in the trash. The suspect was successfully apprehended by Lafayette Police. Who tries to pay for a movie rental with a \$100 bill anyway?

**Stolen Car Equals Bad Karma**  
11/26/08 – America’s #1 stolen vehicle, the Honda Accord, was stolen out of the driveway of a Rosedale Avenue resident. While the car is quite popular, its owner is (to put it mildly) quite an exemplary Lafayette citizen. We’re guessing the car thief is experiencing a bit of a karma slump.

**Download “Your” story from www.lamorindaweekly.com**

## One Building Better Than Two

By Cathy Tyson



Veteran's Memorial Building on Mt. Diablo Boulevard Photo provided

In a coordinated effort, the powers that be traded two crumbling Veterans Memorial Buildings for one state of the art facility. Three years on, users can see that it was a good deal for all involved.

It took a number of entities to make the swap happen: Walnut Creek and Lafayette Redevelopment Agencies, Contra Costa County and Veterans groups from both Walnut Creek and Lafayette.

The original Walnut Creek Veterans Memorial Building (VMB), located on what is now Mt. Diablo Boulevard was dedicated in 1925. After World War II, the existing building was relocated to Locust Street, where a new lower floor was constructed and the original building placed on top. This remodeled facility, completed in 1948, had a

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## Dedicated Parks and Recreation Director Transforms Department

By Cathy Tyson



Jennifer Russell Photo Cathy Tyson

At 29 years of service and counting, Jennifer Russell, Parks and Recreation Director, is arguably one of the city’s longest tenured employees. She must be doing some-

thing right. With the rehabilitated Community Center in good shape, class and meeting rooms busy every day of the week, a new multi-sport RINK, Petanque Park and Buckeye

Fields - things are going swimmingly. She and an able staff of nine people are responsible for recreation programs, special events, parks and city trails.

After graduating from Acalanes and fresh from San Francisco State with a degree in Parks and Recreation, finding gainful employment in a post Proposition 13 world was a little challenging, “people laughed and told me I’d chosen the wrong career,” said Russell.

She’s been asked “how can you possibly stay in a job this long”, “It’s incredibly easy to answer because it’s never boring and never stagnant – continually changing. When we started there was no Community Center and we only had the little tiny Brook Street Park.” What a difference almost three decades make.

Starting out working for Ernie Mariner, Lafayette’s first City Manager, in this “no service” city, the prospects of a long term career did

not look good.

Her very first job with the City was as a temporary, part-time Summer Recreation Leader where she supervised public swimming, basketball, ping-pong and badminton at Acalanes High School. The Recreation Commission saw a lot of potential in her and convinced the City to hire her as a Commission Aid. In addition to her Commission duties, she single-handedly managed a variety of recreation classes wherever she could find a space – church

buildings, school classrooms and even private homes.

The purchase of the Community Center was a big change for Russell. Due to a big decrease in family sizes, school numbers fell dramatically and, the post Proposition 13 budget cuts convinced the school district to close four schools in the late 1970’s.

One of these was the old Burton School which sat vacant for six long years with a leaky roof.

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## Acalanes Valley and Ridge Neighborhood Closes in on Goal

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The Acalanes Valley and Ridge neighborhood is comprised of approximately 300 homes and many of the residents have school-age children. Stanley Boulevard serves as the neighborhood’s main artery into the neighborhood so the resulting traffic can be quite busy, especially at peak times.

The neighborhood wants to make its streets more pedestrian-friendly and “make it safer for children to walk or bike to school, activities and friends’ houses.” While the City of Lafayette has agreed to contribute \$70,000 to the project, Acalanes Valley and Ridge residents are responsible for raising an additional \$30,000. The full \$30,000 needs to be raised by December 31, 2008 or the City will move on to the next neighborhood that needs help. As it stands, the neighborhood is within \$5,000 of its goal.

Funds have been raised in many ways, including neighbor-to-neighbor campaigns, donations from local businesses, a “buy-a-brick” donation program and kid-powered lemonade stands. The

Springhill Student Council has also decided to donate the proceeds from its first Pay it Forward fundraiser to the effort.

The City of Lafayette established its Traffic Calming Program in September, 2002, and has helped other neighborhoods within the community.

The Acalanes Valley effort is a three-pronged approach: Traffic Calming Project, Sidewalk Project and Warner Court Curve Project. The Traffic Calming portion includes obeying the speed limit and stopping for stop signs and pedestrian occupied crosswalks.

The Sidewalk Project seeks to provide a pedestrian-friendly walkway that will eliminate the need for cars, cyclists and pedestrians to share the same path and the Warner Court Curve Project will improve the dangerous portion of Stanley Boulevard near Warner Court. Rotundo hopes the improvements will enable parents to feel like “it’s OK to let kids get outdoors and knock on their neighbors’ door and ask them to play. A lot of people have re-

signed themselves that that was yesteryear.”

If the neighborhood is successful in reaching its goals, construction is slated to begin next summer. For more information or to make a donation, please visit [www.acalanesvalley.com](http://www.acalanesvalley.com).

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