

# LAMORINDA Community

Advertising

## Motorists Duped into Dumping Dough at Dealerships

Federal Law states a manufacturer cannot deny any warranty claim due to maintenance being performed by an independant repair shop. Many consumers have been led to believe that they are required to return to the dealership for maintenance of their vehicle. This is not true according to the law. In fact it is illegal for any dealership to state or imply that your vehicle must be serviced by them to keep the warranty valid.



### Recent repair shop comparison has been performed:

	Orinda Motors	Dealership
Service Keeps Your Warranty Valid	Yes ✓	Yes ✓
Factory Trained Technicians	Yes ✓	Yes ✓
State of the Art Diagnostic Equipment	Yes ✓	Yes ✓
Access to Factory Repair and Service Info	Yes ✓	Yes ✓
Tires and Alignment	Yes ✓	Some
Emissions Testing	Yes ✓	Some
On-Site Rental Service	Yes ✓	Some
Complimentary Vehicle Pickup & Delivery	Yes ✓	Some
Trust- Always Get What You Pay For	Yes ✓	Some
Excellent Customer Service	Yes ✓	Some
Green Business	Yes ✓	1 (inCCC)
Open Door Shop Policy	Yes ✓	No
Locally Owned / Family Business	Yes ✓	No
While You Wait! Drive Through Service	Yes ✓	No
Access to Your Vehicles Technician	Yes ✓	No
Conveniently Located In Your Home Town	Yes ✓	No
Local Community Support and Involvement	Yes ✓	No

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## Dedicated Parks and Recreation Director Transforms Department

"It was amazing when the city bought this building along with the park property across the creek - that was a big leap - I had to become a building manager which meant learning quickly about boilers and roofs and so much more." She continued, "When we came out here - I thought you've got to be kidding me - there's mold growing up the walls, water sogged ceiling tiles piled up on the floors and broken glass behind the boarded up windows."

"My mantra was one room at a time - just focus on one room at a time." One of the first projects she

tackled was to knock out the walls of four classrooms to create a multipurpose room with the intention of hosting lots of classes to help offset the remodeling costs.

Currently there's been serious discussion of a new playground, dog park, Calaveras Ridge Trail connection and bike/BMX park. These coupled with existing facilities like the 68-acre Community Park, Buckeye Field, Brook Street Park, Leigh Creekside Park, and the new multi-sport RINK keep Russell plenty busy. Every day the Community Center hosts a wide range of classes from Kinderym to

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Dog Obedience to Vietnamese Cooking. There's also the soon-to-be completed Master Parks Plan and maintaining the self-sufficiency of the recreation fee classes and implementing the Trails Master Plan. It's no wonder she never gets bored. Russell pays high tribute to the PTR Commissioners who work in partnership with her. "It's like having this amazing talent pool that works for free."

In fact, because she's such a dedicated city employee, this year will be the first time since 1984 she'll be able to take a two week vacation. She deserves one.

## On the Razor's Edge: Moraga's 2008-2009 budget

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Council member Rochelle Bird, who did not run for re-election, asked that the Council lead by example and freeze all of their travel expenses.

Mayor Linda Deschambault, whose term is also ending, argued that the expense was inconsequential (less than 0.2% of the budget) while the learning experience that Council Members get can benefit the town. A majority of the Council agreed of the importance of a symbolic gesture and manufactured a

lengthy amendment authorizing only local conferences and some training for the two new Council Members, Karen Mendonca and Howard Harpham.

Members of the public questioned the viability of this iteration of the budget, arguing that cuts by the State were very likely and that the budgetary health of Moraga was compromised in the long term, with a deficit projected as early as 2010. Streit emphasized once more

the need for the Town to diversify its revenue sources and not be so dependent on outside income streams.

Edy Schwartz, President of the Chamber of Commerce, took the opportunity to plea for greater support by the Town of its business community, including the use of the Town marquee for publicizing events, participation of elected officials in Chamber actions and streamlining of the permit process for new businesses.

## Hetfield Project: Moraga Residents Organize to Appeal Planning Commission Approval

By Sophie Braccini



The hillside site of the proposed project

Photo Sophie Braccini

The Planning Commission approved on November 17th a Mitigated Negative Declaration, a Conceptual Development Plan and a Conditional Use Permit for the construction of six new homes on the "Hetfield Estate." Immediately following this action, a number of Moraga residents living in the area organized to appeal these approvals. The Town Council will hear their request on January 14th 2009.

Located on MOSO land, the Hetfield property is across from Larch Creek, parallel to Sanders Drive; it is a woodsy hill that was used for cattle grazing. The owners of the land in question, Robert Lipson and Sandy Cage, have author-

ized John Wyro to submit an application to develop 6 homes on their 51.45 acres.

If built, the new residences would be accessed via a bridge at the end of Hetfield Place between 1120 and 1124 Sanders Drive. The new residential development, as currently proposed, will be located directly behind eighteen existing residences on Sanders Drive.

During the October 6th Planning Commission meeting, Planning Director Lori Salamack explained that the project, as redesigned, "would be the proper way to implement the MOSO guidelines on the site." She explained that the proposed area for development was outside the envi-

ronmentally sensitive area, and the density of 1 dwelling per 9.7 acres was consistent with past practice in the Town for open space development.

On December 1st, a group of residents calling themselves the Sanders Drive-Hetfield Place Homeowners' Group filed an appeal with the Town of Moraga to reverse the decision. Their arguments entail a number of issues including environmental, visual, economic, and noise impacts they believe have not been properly addressed and/or mitigated.

For example, they argue that the proposed massive grading of the hill will affect the area's wild life, creek water quality, and will permanently and adversely impact the wetlands.

The group also claims that the project fails to comply with key elements of Design Guidelines. That document states that new residential development should reflect the size, scale, height, setback and character of existing development. The 6 "Estate Houses" proposed in the project would "dwarf" the existing homes they would face along Larch Creek and will negatively affect the property values, according to the group.

## Council Grants Mayor's Award in Excellence in Architecture

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Holly Lane Winner in the Major Project category

Photo provided

Architect Jeff Supran designed the new home on Holly Lane, which was the winner in the Major Project category. Set in a wooded canyon with a creek running through, the property's beautiful surroundings presented topographical challenges. The contemporary styled home employs clean lines and building materials to reinforce the sites natural elements drawing the outdoors in and the indoors out. The owners kept it green by using recycled materials in every room, low VOC paint, and solar-ready technology.

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## Todd Skinner, Orinda Parks and Recreation Director—A Mainstay

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Skinner later went on to obtain a Masters in Recreation Administration from San Jose State University.

When asked what's new at Parks and Rec, Skinner proudly produces scaled drawings of the five sports fields, art and garden center, series of lakes, walking paths, and trails planned for the Wilder development. "This is out future," states Skinner, who in his role as Director has been part of the many iterations of the development of this land. "From Highway 24, you will be able to hike all the way to San Leandro," states Skinner adding that the development will add 200 acres of open space—doubling the City's current

acreage of open space.

While the Wilder project leaves Skinner with much to plan for and look forward to, he is also busy working to complete the Bike, Trails, and Walkway Master Plan. "Trails are important to people and Orinda," says Skinner; he anticipates that the Plan will be presented to the City Council in late Spring. From there, Skinner plans to get permission to develop a Parks Master Plan to identify the last pockets of open space and potential areas of new park land available to the City. The recent passage of Measure WW may provide funds for Orinda to secure what limited space remains.