

# LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Volume 02; Issue 20

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Photo Andy Scheck

Lafayette experienced a small town moment for a big town cause on Monday, December 1st. Lafayette business owners, all wearing matching "Try Lafayette First" tee-shirts and carrying signs bearing the names of their businesses, rallied to demonstrate their solidarity and desire to convince Lafayette residents of the importance of supporting local business.

From the Lafayette Park Hotel, to Smith's Shoe Repair, from Valhalla Automotive to Bank of the West, from Mt. Diablo Nursery to Toots Sweets, from Diablo Foods to Curves and from Oakwood Athletic Club to Gigi, more than 100 businesses have signed up to be part of the "Try Lafayette First" campaign and a large percentage of them came to the Lafayette Plaza on December 1st to join in the excitement about the coming holiday business season.

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 See page 15 for a "Try Lafayette First" shopping map.

## "Try Lafayette First!" Kicks Off in Unity and Uniform

By Sophie Braccini

### Severson and McCormick Next to Lead in Orinda

By Andrea A. Firth

Orindans came out en masse and packed the Library Auditorium for the City Council meeting last Tuesday. Good news and celebration were the order of business as the Council recognized and thanked several worthy citizens for their services, awarded grants to seven valuable community groups, and selected the next Mayor and Vice Mayor to lead Orinda through 2009 and 2010.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce President Keith Miller kicked off the evening with a brief Chamber update followed by the introduction of the new and improved Shop Orinda bag, the "gold version", which is deeper and has

a hard bottom. The message was clear—spend more and spend it in Orinda.

The City Council then moved on to recognize some of the City's finest volunteer worker bees and fundraisers. The Council thanked Chip Herman, the founder of the Orinda Classic Car Show, for the fun community event that he coordinates each year and the money that he raises in support of the Seniors Around Town volunteer transportation program. Council Member Amy Worth noted the growth and success of the Car Show, which raised \$16,000 for the cause this year.

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Sue Severson, Orinda's new Mayor for 2009



Tom McCormick, Orinda's new Vice Mayor for 2009

Photos Andy Scheck

### LAMORINDA WEEKLY this week

Meet Lamorinda's Parks and Recreation Directors

# P&R

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### Acalanes Valley and Ridge Neighborhood Closes in on Goal

By Jean Follmer



Oliver Rotundo completes the walk-a-thon. Photo provided by Lynda Rotundo

In 1969, 87% of all children who lived within one mile of their school either walked or biked to school. "Today, 60% of children that live within a mile are driven and 20% take the bus," said Acalanes Valley resident Lynda Rotundo. "An impacting factor (in the change) is the concern for safety," she added. Championed by Rotundo, the Acalanes Valley and Ridge Neighborhood Association has taken safety into its own hands.

The neighborhood, located behind Acalanes High School, boasts beautiful views and a resulting steep terrain. Rotundo realized the need for more safety within the neighborhood about five years ago. She said it was an incident that involved a new driver and the death of a dog that caught her attention.

The young driver saw some girls playing basketball in the


street and was able to avoid them. However, some other kids were walking their dog off leash in the street, the dog ran in front of the car and the driver was unable to stop in time.

Rotundo said it's not uncommon for people to walk in the street in the neighborhood because there aren't adequate sidewalks or pedestrian lanes. "I realized something had to be done to keep these kids safe. I realized we needed to get this going so I started a petition to get folks to slow down," said Rotundo. There is repeated speeding and reckless driving within the neighborhood. In response to a fatal car accident last winter, "residents of Acalanes Valley and Ridge approved a ballot measure to make neighborhood streets safer for our children and all pedestrians."

... continued on page 2

Mailed to 24,600 homes and businesses in Lamorinda.

return to: Lamorinda Weekly • P.O. Box 6133 • Moraga, CA 94570



Acalanes Valley and Ridge  
[www.acalanesvalley.com](http://www.acalanesvalley.com)

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# 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](http://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.

... continued on page 6

## Acalanes Valley and Ridge Neighborhood Closes in on Goal

... continued from page 1

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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# Lamorinda Community

# Moraga

Calendar	
City Council	7:30pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School 1010 Camino Pablo <i>December 24 canceled</i>	
Planning Comm.	7:30pm
Hacienda, La Sala Room 2100 Donald Drive Monday, December 15	
Design Review	7:30pm
Hacienda, La Sala Room 2100 Donald Drive Monday, December 22	
Park & Rec	7:30pm
Hacienda, Mosaic Room 2100 Donald Drive Tuesday, December 16	
Liaison	8:00am
Fire Station 1280 Moraga Way Friday, December 12	
Town of Moraga online: <a href="http://www.ci.moraga.ca.us">http://www.ci.moraga.ca.us</a>	



**House Rocking, 12/02/08** A Francisca Drive resident called police to report at about 7:00 p.m. a group of male juveniles, approximately 17 to 19-years-old threw a rock at his house. The rock allegedly shattered a window; it's estimated the repair will cost is \$500.

**Pot on campus, 12/01/08** A janitor found a plastic baggie with green plant material, suspected to be marijuana, at around 1:00 in the afternoon on the school grounds. So far no one has stepped forward to claim the 1.21 grams of evidence. Imagine that.

**Not taking the hint, 11/30/08** An 18-year-old Moraga man was knocking on the doors and windows of a Cortes Court home at 3:00 in the morning. Police found the young man in the area, and oddly enough, he appeared to be intoxicated. He explained that the house belonged to his ex-girlfriend who wouldn't return his phone calls or text messages.

**Loud party, 11/28/08** Officers came to a Hodges Drive home on a report of a loud party. The 18-year-old host cooperated with police and assisted in disbursing the 25 underage guests. The party featured large amounts of alcohol. Even the distinct smell of pot was detected. The nose knows. Presumably the parents were out of town.

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

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga's Town Council praised staff on December 3rd for great work in balancing the Town's budget under difficult circumstances, while still finding funding for an additional police officer. However, everyone was aware that the fragile equilibrium could be compromised when and if the State of California acts to compensate for its \$20 billion deficit. "We are amongst the smallest fishes in the pond," said Finance Director Joan Streit, commenting on Moraga's position in the hierarchy of public agencies, "when the State declares a 'state of emergency' it can 'borrow' from us sums that we may never see again."

Interim Town Manager Jay Tashiro and Streit had to find financial solutions for a decreased income, while the Council requested funding for an additional police officer. Moraga Police counts 12 officers + 1 whose salary is paid by

COPS (Citizens Options for Public Safety), a State fund that could be on the chopping block. At the same time, Moraga's net income decreased by more than \$200,000, due to lost sales tax among other issues.

During the past few months, Town staff has suffered serious attrition. The solution for additional money was found there: by not replacing and/or downgrading the vacant positions. For example, the Human Resources manager will not be replaced and neither will the Town Clerk. Instead a position will be created for a Clerk/Assistant to the Town Manager. The Assistant to the Planning Director will be replaced by an administrative clerk. Additional cuts have been made in projects to make ends meet.

"If we lose more funding from the State, we will have to re-evaluate the level of service the residents are getting from staff," warned Streit.

... continued on page 6

## A Young Parks and Recreation Director Reaches Out To The Community

By Sophie Braccini



Jay Ingram, Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Photo Sophie Braccini

Jay Ingram joined Moraga Parks and Recreation Department (Parks and Rec) a little over a year ago. He arrived from Marin County, full of energy and with high hopes for the Moraga community: the town had just gotten back its own recreation department and was going to be able to offer new classes. "I do believe in the motto 'creating community through people, parks and programs,'" says Ingram, "Moraga has yet to recognize the positive impact a Parks and Rec can have on a community." He is working hard at improving their experience.

After a year in office, Ingram has a lot to show for it: the department is managing a full offering of classes for all ages (go to //moraga.ca.us/production/moraga\_recreation\_programs.php), in 2008 the Hacienda de las Flores hosted 49 paying events from retreats to music recitals, and from theater performances to weddings; Ingram organized the first community garage sale, summer movies at the Pavilion, the 2nd Annual Treeline Triathlon and many other events. Monthly trips were organized to take seniors to fun and exciting places in the Bay Area. The department worked with other groups and individuals for the success of Moraga Beautiful Week, 4th of July, the Summer Concert series, Pear Festival and the Hacienda Open House. Coming up are "Breakfast with Santa" and 15-minute private visits with the bearded man in red who comes bearing gifts. ... continued on page 7

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# Lamorinda Community Calendar, Notes, News Orinda

Calendar	
City Council	7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library 26 Orinda Way Tuesday, December 16	
Public Safety Comm.	7pm
Community Room at City Hall 22 Orinda Way Thursday, December 11	

**Planning Porcess Review Task Force Commercial Subcommittee Meetings**  
 Thursday, December 11, 2008  
 7:00pm to 9:00pm  
 Del Rey Elementary School  
 Multi-Purpose Room, 25 El Camino Moraga Orinda, CA

Saturday, December 13, 2008  
 9:00am to 11:00am  
 Founders Auditorium, Orinda  
 Community Center, 28 Orinda Way Orinda, CA

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



**Thief of hearts, 12/02/08** The ex-boyfriend of an Orinda resident took his ex-girlfriend's car while she slept. The 17-year-old white male proceeded to crash the car a short distance from the house and fled the scene, hiding out from the cops. A witness happened to see the crash and asked the driver if he needed help, he declined and seemed in a hurry to get out of there. The ex-girlfriend goes to identify the car, and happens to see the ex-boyfriend drive by. The ex-boyfriend was caught by police and 'fessed up that he was talking on his ex-gal pal's stolen cell phone when he crashed. He then called a friend to come pick him up. They got lost and drove by accident.

**Theft, 12/01/08** An 18-year-old white male called police to report two skateboards were stolen from the front porch of his Meadow View Road home. The 42" bamboo boards are estimated to cost \$600.

**D.U.I. 11/29/08** A Lombardy Lane resident was stopped at 1:30 in the morning near the corner of Moraga Road and Ivy Drive. Officers noticed that he failed to dim his high beams, and the strong smell of alcohol in the vehicle. His blood alcohol level was above the legal limit. Perhaps a taxi would have been the better option.

**Appliance Burglary, 11/29/08** An unknown suspect entered the kitchen side door of a Tahos Road home by disabling the deadbolt lock. The refrigerator, six-burner stove and dishwasher were taken - estimated value \$4,400. Miscellaneous items valued at \$2500 were also taken from the garage.

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

By Andrea A. Firth



Todd Skinner, Director of Orinda Parks & Recreation Department Photo A. Firth

Seated in front of the Community Center alongside several red-leaved liquidambar trees, Todd Skinner, Director of Orinda's Parks and Recreation Department, recalls having organized the planting of these trees over twenty years ago. "The journey is getting to meet and work with all the great volunteers and people of

Orinda," states Skinner when asked about his tenure with the City. And his journey as part of Orinda's City Staff has been a long one.

However, Skinner's connection with Orinda started long before receiving his first paycheck. He was raised in Orinda and attended both Sleepy Hollow Ele-

mentary and Miramonte High School. "I love the community that I grew up in," he says.

Skinner became the head of Orinda's Parks and Recreation Department in 1985 when the City incorporated. Prior to that, the County had employed him in a similar capacity. Skinner took over one year after Proposition 13 was enacted when 60% of the County's revenue to the Department was cut and classes jumped from a cost of \$7-\$10 to \$20. Skinner now oversees a budget of about \$1 million, and the Department's programs are essentially self-supporting bringing in 15,000 registrants a year.

From a young age, Skinner knew what he liked and wanted and was comfortable to forge his own path. He sites summers spent working at Echo Lake as the foundation for his love of the outdoors and recreation. He graduated from the University of California at Davis where he pursued an independent degree tied to these interests. While at Davis, he also applied his 6'5" frame to the track team where he qualified for the NCAA trials in the 400-meter hurdles.

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## Severson and McCormick

... continued from page 1

Amy Worth noted the growth and success of the Car Show, which raised \$16,000 for the cause this year. The Council also recognized and thanked the ladies of the Orinda Community Center Auxiliary, which fundraises for the Center and runs several programs throughout the year. Founded over 25 years ago by longtime Orinda activist Bobbie Landers, the Auxiliary coordinated the Easter Fair, the Concerts in the Park, the Halloween Parade, and the recent Holiday Bazaar, which raised \$11,000 for the Community Center.

Although typically tight with the purse strings and focused on diverting what ever funding possible to the City's infrastructure needs, the Council unanimously approved to provide just over \$14,100 in community grants to seven local organizations including the Orinda's Art's Council, Historical Society, Junior Women's Club, and Starlight Village Players, the California Shakespeare

Theater, the Lamorinda Senior Transportation Program, and Haley's 4th of July Run.

Next on the agenda was the certification of the election results, which confirmed the reappointment of Council Members Victoria Smith (6,355 votes) and Steve Glazer (6,102 votes) to four more years of volunteer service to the City. (Both accepted their oath of office willing and with a smile.) Council member Smith was then subjected to a "soft roast" by her colleagues in thanks for her year leading as Mayor. Smith was ribbed for her passion for venti-sized coffees and Cal Bears football, and complimented for her efficient leadership, sharp legal analysis, and support for all things Orinda.

The final two Council votes of the evening were unanimous. Council member Tom McCormick was selected as Orinda's Vice Mayor. And, Sue Severson was selected to serve as Orinda's new Mayor for 2009.

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

By Andrea A. Firth

Two homes in Orinda were recently honored with the Mayor's Award for Excellence in Architecture. For the second year, the City Council has recognized the design efforts of residents whose new or renovated homes exemplify the semi-rural quality and neighborhood sensibility characteristic of Orinda. A committee, which included Council Members and citizens of Orinda, evaluated eight entries in two categories: Minor Projects which represent renovations of 1,500 square feet or less and Major Projects which are over 1,500 square feet.

The winner in the Minor Project category is located on Park Lane Drive in the Glorietta neighborhood. The 1,300 square foot renovation, which was de-

signed by the homeowner Lara Dutto, doubled the size of the family home but had neighbors saying, "the house looks beautiful...did you really add on?" Creating usable space in every square inch of the home, the design made

a strong connection between the indoors and outdoors with carefully placed windows and doors and floor materials that moved from the outside in.

... continued on page 6

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# Life in LAMORINDA

## No Dumping in Creeks: Towns Try to Clean Up Their Act

By Sophie Braccini



Debris on the side of Moraga Road close to the church Photo Sophie Braccini

As the rainy season starts it's the responsibility of property owners to make sure that pollutants do not enter the creeks and rivers that flow through, or are immediately adjacent to, their properties. Lamorinda's cities have a reputation for tough enforcement of the rules and regulations that work to prevent surface water contamination. Yet local governments and their contractors have not always focused intently on holding themselves to the same strict requirements to which the rest of the community is obligated. All too often, it takes a reminder from the community to get cities to walk their talk.

At 155 Moraga Road in Moraga, debris from the East Bay Municipal Utility District's (EBMUD) pipeline project was still lingering by the parking lot of the Christian Community Church. A large pile of debris had been left in proximity to a creek with no protection and another stack of asphalt debris was left adjacent to a storm drainage system. When we mentioned that fact to Town staff, they immediately went to inspect the site and that same afternoon had Mountain Cascade (EBMUD's contractor) start removing piles and mitigating impacts.

In Orinda, we went to 433 Moraga Way, by the parking lot of

the Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, just before the Thanksgiving weekend. There we found large heaps of dirt and asphalt piled by the creek with absolutely no protection from runoff. Corrective action was implemented by contractor KJ Woods after we contacted the city.

In Orinda, the city ordinance code states that, "The permittee shall effect and maintain precautionary measures necessary to protect adjacent watercourses and public or private property from damage or erosion, flooding and deposit of mud or debris originating from the site.... Minimizing increases in no point source pollution caused by storm water runoff from development that would otherwise degrade local water qual-



Kevin Fitzpatrick explains how the protective fence works

Photo Sophie Braccini

ity.... Require developers and owners' builders to control storm water quality impact of their projects during construction required developers of projects with significant storm water pollution potential to mitigate impacts through site planning and design practices and/or installing storm water treatment controls."

The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) confirmed that cities are subject to the same regulations as individual homeowners.

"We have to be exemplary in protecting our creeks," said Moraga Inspector Dana Blatner. "We've monitored the pipeline project during the whole time and I called EBMUD and Mountain Cascade as soon as I became aware of the problem."

At 433 Moraga Way, the erection of a protective fence began the day after we talked to Cathleen Terentieff, Orinda Storm Water Program Manager, and we were invited to come and see the site by Kevin Fitzpatrick of KJ Woods.

On site, Central Contra Costa Sanitary District (Central San) Community Affairs Representative Chris Carpenter explained that it is part of Central San's job to protect the creeks.

"We install protective barriers before the beginning of the

rainy season," explained Fitzpatrick. When it rained during the Thanksgiving week, KJ Woods said they protected the debris with plastic covers held down by sand bags. On site, we saw workers completing the setting of the protective fence. "We are serving the community," added Carpenter, "Central San is engaged in a renovation project of the sewage systems of both Orinda and Lafayette and we have 35 sites open at this time. If the public has questions they can call me at (925) 229-7316."

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A Lamorinda Based Business

## Orinda Rotary Club Endowment Grants Awarded

By Andrea A. Firth

The Orinda Rotary Club awarded \$6,700 in grants to organizations in Orinda through their Endowment. Although unable to fulfill all the requests that they received, Rotarian and Endowment Director Gene Got-

fried was pleased to announce the recipients for 2008. The Orinda Community Church received support for their Winter Nights Homeless Shelter Program; the Orinda Rotary Club got a grant to install an assistive

listening system; the Xenophon Riding Center received sponsorship for a rider; Orinda Intermediate School got a grant for six stereomicroscopes; and Del Rey Elementary School will be able to purchase a document camera.

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## Dedicated Parks and Recreation Director

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"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

... continued from page 2  
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

### ... continued from page 3

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

### ... continued from page 4



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**

... contined from page 4

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

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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.

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## Life in LAMORINDA

### A "Miracle" for Lamorindans

By Cathy Tyson



Tom Flynn as Kris Kringle and Catherine Hayes as Susan in Town Hall Theatre Company's Miracle On 34th Street Photo by Stu Stelland

It's been over sixty years since the film version of "Miracle on 34th Street" came out. Clearly the world is a different place. But themes of suspending disbelief and kindness still resonate in this classic holiday production. The adaptation by Patricia Di Benedetto Snyder, Will Severin and John Vreeke parallels the original novel by Valentine Davis. There is def-

initely a feeling of stepping back in time, from the hair styles to the music.

Single mom and Macy's employee Doris Walker, played seamlessly by Beth Deitchman, is required to find a new Santa at the last minute for the Thanksgiving Day Parade. Newly hired Santa, Tom Flynn, a dead ringer for the man in red, is a huge hit, but all business Doris has reservations

that Mr. Kringle has reindeer on the brain upon his insistence that he really is Santa Claus. Who couldn't fall in love with Fred Galley, played by Timothy Redmond as nice-guy lawyer and Doris' neighbor/love interest?

Although some of the dialog feels circa 1947, there are some wonderful lines. With a hearty chuckle Santa answers the question of how old he is with, "as old as my tongue and little bit older than my teeth."

In supporting roles, hilarious Lauren Rosi is a scene stealer as Miss Adams, Barbara Cecchetti takes on four roles, and does a convincing job with her primary part as a neurotic psychologist.

In her directorial debut at Town Hall Theatre, Jessica Richards manages to keep the ambitious assortment of actors together. In this adaptation, the play is similar to the film, so the real challenge is the distracting set switches that squeeze a total of thirty-three scenes into the two-hour production with the help of semi-stealthy elves.

"Miracle on 34th Street is a compelling story about Christmas

spirit in the real world," says Jessica Richard, director. "What I love about Kris Kringle, Doris & Susan Walker, Fred Gailey, and all the characters in this play is that they are regular people wrestling with the questions of belief and compassion the same way we might be today. The discovery of Christmas spirit in themselves and others is timeless enough that it still inspires people year after year."

"When I first took over as Artistic Director of Town Hall Theatre I wanted to bring fresh directorial visions to our audience and the first person I thought of was Jessica Richards," says Clive Worsley, Artistic Director. "The spirit of humanity and compassion that is embodied in the character of Kris Kringle is something we can all aspire to, not just during the holidays."

Show runs through December 24, Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings at 8:00, Sunday matinees at 2:00. Additional shows Saturday and Sunday the 20th and 21st and Tuesday and Wednesday the 23rd and 24th. For tickets call (925) 283-1557 or go to www.townhalltheatre.com.

### A Young Parks and Recreation Director Reaches Out To The Community

... continued from page 3

Ingram's vision of his department is a group that works in synergy with stakeholders: the K-12 schools, Saint Mary's College, the Moraga Movers (age 55+), the Park and Recreation Foundation and others. "I have met people and groups in town, and this has been very productive," says Ingram. "For example, as a result of a renewed relationship with Saint Mary's College, the two institutions will offer sports camps for the winter and spring breaks. The Town Crier, that includes the Activities Guide, will

also present all of the campus games and a Saint Mary's student is starting an internship to work on the Triathlon marketing plan and volunteer recruitment."

The Moraga School District is an important partner for Ingram as well. Joint meetings have been taking place to start talking about a multi-generational community center. At study as well is a synthetic turf field. Ingram has met with Rheem Elementary and is looking into enrichment classes such as karate, hip-hop, dancing and yoga.

"I have been included in C.O.R.E. meeting with all the PTAs, MEF and the District staff," adds Ingram.

Big on the future agenda of the Director is the Hacienda de las Flores. At this time, the rental rates are appropriate for large functions such as weddings, but are out of reach for family events or Girl Scout troops. Ingram wants to have a different rental format for family events so residents can use the beautiful historic building to celebrate birthdays or host a family type function. "The Council will make the decision,"

says Ingram, "but that's what I will recommend so the Hacienda serves our community better."

Ingram's enthusiasm and optimism stays high, he want the residents to consider the Parks and Rec when making their leisure choices. "The relationships we are creating are starting to flourish; it is to the benefit of all the Moraga residents," he concludes.

### Coach Ken Nelson Remembered and Honored

By Robin Schoettler Fox

It almost doesn't matter who you ask - player, coach, or parent -- the answers sound the same: Ken Nelson was a mellow coach, not a typical sideline yeller, the kind of coach who encouraged team play, who was in it for the kids and had no personal agenda.

That alone is cause to applaud in today's competitive youth basketball world. But it doesn't put a moniker on a tournament as well respected as the long standing Campolindo Freshman Tournament, renamed the Ken Nelson Invitational after Coach Nelson succumbed to cancer in late November.

Coach Nelson's story is about reach, a coach's long-term influence on the local youth basketball landscape.

"The umbrella is huge," says Matt Watson, Campolindo's Varsity Coach, adding that the age range of those who've played for Nelson spans from current 3rd graders to men approaching 30.

"(Coach Nelson) was a per-

son who put a lot of his time and life in support of basketball," says Zach Kisner, one of St. Perpetua's (St. P's) 7th grade Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) players Coach Nelson planned to coach this season, having taken them to the Diocese Championships last year.

In box-scores of youth basketball, Coach Nelson's numbers are impressive, just looking at years with different basketball programs: St. P's CYO, 21 years; Flight Elite, 8 years; Diablo Warriors, 7 years; Acalanes, 1 year; Campolindo, 3 years - this was to be his 4th.

"You would be hard pressed to find many kids playing (local) high school basketball who weren't either coached by Ken or played in one of his programs," says Phil Doherty, who first met Nelson in 1987 at their sons' 3rd grade CYO tryout. Initially, Doherty coached alone. Within a month Nelson joined him, becoming "Coach" for the first time, a

name he proudly owned until the day he died, having coached his final game just a month earlier.

The days of winter-only basketball are over. Club teams play year round. So do high schools. Serious CYO teams join off-season leagues. Yet Coach Nelson rarely took a team off his clipboard, continuing to coach CYO even after he and Doherty started the year round Diablo Warriors program.

... continued on page 14

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### "Try Lafayette First!" Kicks Off in Unity and Uniform

... continued from page 1

"Before you go anywhere else, try Lafayette first," urged Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Chief Executive Officer Jay Lifson. He invited all business owners to recommend another local business to their neighbors. "It is vital," he added, "in a small community like ours we need to know and support one another."

"I am here even if we do not have a store front," said Tamara Selvig of David Selvig Construc-

tion, "(because) in tough times we need to support each other and recommend our fellow businesses to our constituencies."

"For the people in town there is value added to shopping locally; our town depends on sales tax revenue, we all want a lively and vibrant downtown, everybody is in this together," said Chamber Board President Larry Duson, "we are a family and all participate."

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**Capa Holiday Nutcracker-** Friday, Dec 12th - 7pm, Saturday, Dec 13th - 2pm & 7pm and Sunday Dec. 14th - 2pm. Tickets: www.capadance.net or 925-376-2454.

**Back Home Again, by Dan Wheetman and Randal Myler,** the creators of Fire on the Mountain and Ain't Nothin' But the Blues, plays at the Lesher Center for the Arts through December 14. It features modern and traditional holiday songs. Tickets: Available online at www.LesherARTScenter.org, by phone at 925.943.SHOW or in-person at the LCA ticket office.

**"It's a Wonderful Life"** adapted from the inspiring classic by Al Anderson. The show is a heartwarming production perfect for family audiences. It's the story of George Bailey, a man who thinks he's worth more dead than alive until his guardian angel shows him that no one is a failure who has friends. Shows run from December 12th through December 21st at Del Valle Theatre at 1963 Tice Valley Blvd Walnut Creek. Discounts for groups of 8 or more, youth, and seniors. Tickets: 925-943-7469. For more information, go to www.ccchristiantheatre.org

**Lafayette's Town Hall Theater's** presents Miracle on 34th Street through Dec. 28th. Contact the Town Hall Theatre Company Box Office for exact dates and times. 925-283-1557

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www.thct.org. See story on page 7

**Erika Henningsen as the Velveteen Rabbit** and Kathryn G. McCarty as the Skin Horse in the Galatean Players Ensemble Theatre 14th Year Anniversary production of the popular children's musical Whiskers! (an adaptation of Margery Williams' classic "The Velveteen Rabbit") by Caroline Altman playing at the Lesher Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek, Dec. 13-20. For tickets, call (925) 943-SHOW(7469)

**North Pole Review - Fratello Puppets** -Wednesday, December 17th, 4 p.m. Looking for a unique way to celebrate the holiday season? Join the fun with our puppet extravaganza, the North Pole Review, showcasing our frosty juggling penguin and Brazilian ice skating snowman. Featuring the Hawaiian singing sensation, the Hi-Fi Sisters. Moraga Library. Free.

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**Christmas Carol singing on Christmas Eve,** Wednesday, December 24, St. Anselm's Church, 682 Michael Lane, Lafayette. Free.

**Art**

**Last weekend to see "The Second Golden Age of Dutch Art"** at the Hearst Gallery at Saint Mary's College. View 19th Century Dutch Paintings from the Beekhuis Collection through Dec. 14th. Paintings by more than sixty artists represent a broad range of styles and subject matter, including cityscapes, landscapes, seascapes, still lifes, portraits, and interiors. The exhibition is comprised of three main groupings: Dutch Romanticism, The Hague School and Dutch Impressionism. Exhibition Admission: \$3; Gallery Hours: Wed -Sun, 11 am - 4:30 pm, 925.631.4379, www.hearstart-gallery.org.

**The Lafayette Gallery is celebrating the holidays** with "Lightly Seasoned: Fine Art with a Dash of Holiday Spirit." Through Dec 24th. The gallery member artists are displaying original fine art, paintings, prints, watercolors, photography, jewelry and ceramics. Art is a perfect gift for the holiday season that can be cherished for many a season to come. Gallery Hours: 11 - 5 pm Tuesday

- Saturday, 50 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. 925-284-2788.

**The Moraga Art Gallery presents "Celebrate"** - through January 4th. The Gallery is doubly featuring the work of 2 artists: Terri Durkovic, a jewelry designer following a life-long passion for creating wearable art. She is constantly collecting semi precious stones, pearls, shells, wood beads and precious metals to include in her designs. Natalia Udaltsova is a painter and artist who loves life and people, and this is reflected in her paintings. Moraga Art Gallery, 570 Center St., Rheem Valley Shopping Center/ next to Longs Drugs Moraga. Open Tuesday through Sunday, 12-5 pm, 925.376.5407.

**Lectures & Literature**

**Dr. Jay Sordean will talk about Natural Solutions** to Depression at Orinda Library Fireside Chat on Tuesday, Dec. 16 at 7 pm. This time of year often brings up feelings of sadness and depression. If you are unhappily familiar with this problem and you don't want to resort to prescription drugs, Dr. Sordean will discuss natural solutions. He has thirty years of clinical experience in the field of natural medicine, including acupuncture, oriental medicine, homeopathy and the use of herbs. Free. Orinda Library is at 26 Orinda Way in Orinda. For more information, please call (925) 254-2184 or visit http://ccclib.org.

**Orinda's own Wayne Miller** will discuss and sign copies of the new collection of his work, Wayne F. Miller Photographs: 1942-1958. Saturday, December 13 at 3pm. Orinda Books. 276 Village Square, Orinda, 925-254-7606. www.orindabooks.com.

**Holiday Events**

**Live Nativity Scene** - See the Christmas story come to life! The



MVPC courtyard will be transformed into a Bethlehem manger. December 12 & 13 6-8:30pm on the Courtyard - Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church, 10 Moraga Valley Lane in Moraga.

**The Lafayette United Methodist Church** presents The Bethlehem Experience - December 12, 13, & 14, 5:30pm to 8:00pm. Tour Guides lead groups of about ten people through the marketplace of Bethlehem on the night of the Messiah's birth, ending at the manger scene complete with live animals. The Bethlehem Experience is a feast for the senses: the

smell of exotic spices, the festive sound of Jewish music, the sight of robed and sandaled merchants in their stalls, the taste of freshly baked unleavened bread, and the soft feel of flaxen "swaddling clothes". The Bethlehem Experience is a gift to the community from the Lafayette United Methodist Church, 955 Moraga Boulevard, Lafayette. Tours begin every ten minutes and are approximately one-hour long. For questions call 925/284-4765, or go to www.thelumc.org.

**Breakfast with Santa** - Saturday, Dec 13th: Pre-registration required: 2 seatings: 8:30 am (Doors open at 8:15 am) and 10:00 am (Doors open at 10:00am) Please specify when registering. Hacienda de las Flores- 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga \$7 adult / \$5 children (12 & under) (925) 888-7045 www.moraga.ca.us.

**Other**

**Downtown Walnut Creek on Ice** welcomes skaters from the Dublin Dazzlers and Dublin Dolls Synchronized Ice Skating Teams every Wednesday night! These skaters will perform solo, duet, and team routines throughout the season at 7pm. The performances will take place on December 17, & January 7, 14, & 21. The open air ice rink is open on November 13 through January 25, 2009. For additional details, visit www.IceSkateWalnutCreek.com or call 925.935.SNOW (7669).

**Winter Solstice Hike** Sunday, December 21, 2008 2pm- 5pm Discover the reason for the seasons, beginning with a lively indoor activity led by a Chabot astronomer, which includes a solstice craft to take home with you. Then step outside and stroll among the salamanders, slugs, and dewy redwoods with a naturalist-led walk to observe the solstice and its effects on native life. After the hike, explore the interactive, hands-on exhibits at Chabot Space & Science Center. To register, contact East Bay Regional Parks District at 1-888-EB-PARKS (1-888-327-2757) Cost \$5-\$7, depending on residency.

**FREE Electronic Waste (E-Waste) Recycling Events** in Contra Costa County (866) 335-3373 http://www.NoEwaste.com/ Saturday, January 3rd from 9:00am - 1:00pm Diablo Valley College, Overflow Parking Lot 7. 321 Golf Club Road, Pleasant Hill.

**Please submit events to:**

calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

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# LAMORINDA Seniors

## Seniors Reap Health Benefits from Animal Interaction

By Jennifer Wake



Lafayette resident Ruth Barcelon, 80, stays active looking after her one-year-old puppy, LuLu, as well as caring for her chickens, doves and pheasants in her backyard aviaries. Photo Jennifer Wake

Lamorinda resident and photographer Albert Glocker, 89, always loved his pets, and has even won awards for photography of his animals. Now a patient at Manor Care near Rossmoor, he rarely speaks – that is, until his daughter, Lynn, comes to visit with Cody and Copper. A 10-year-old Australian Shepherd and an 8-year-old Australian Shepherd/Border Collie mix.

“With my father, it is the highlight of his day to see the dogs,” Glocker says. “When I arrive with Copper and Cody, he smiles and loves to watch them. He will pet them and be more alert when they are around him. I feel fortunate that Manor Care has allowed me to bring Copper and Cody with me on my visits. He loves them, and they respond in kind.”

Manor Care is one of several facilities which caters to Lamorinda residents and understands the importance of pets in the well-being of their patients’ lives, allowing visits from family pets or through therapy pet programs. Tony LaRussa’s Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF) has recently seen an increase in demand for pet therapy offered through their Pet Hug Pack program, which brings both dogs and cats to facilities including Las Trampas in Lafayette, Aegis of Moraga, Woodland Nursing Inn in Lafayette, and Lamorinda Adult Respite Center in Orinda.

“The increase in demand seems to be due to an increased awareness of the benefits animals bring to seniors,” says ARF People Connect Manager Erika Hart.

easily jump four feet. “When I first got LuLu, I went right down and bought a baby gate. She looked right at it and jumped right over it. I think it’s her Tibetan heritage.”

When considering a type of breed, DogTime.com senior editor Leslie Smith suggests thinking about the personality of the dog, rather than basing the decision solely on looks. “Ask yourself: Am I looking for an easy-going type who will walk to the coffee shop with me every day? Or is a homebody, lapdog ideal?”

Many shelters and rescue centers (including ARF) have “seniors for seniors” programs in which older dogs are placed with senior citizens, sometimes for a lower adoption fee, says Smith. “It’s an absolutely great way to ensure companionship for people and dogs who are slowing down, or who just aren’t as mobile as they used to be.”

DogTime.com also has information on its Web site where people can research dog breeds, and take a quiz to see if they are ready for a dog.

“Bringing a dog into your home shouldn’t be a snap decision,” Smith adds. “It’s an adjustment for both species, and humans have a responsibility to ask themselves how they plan to incorporate a pet into their life.”

Although many nursing and independent living facilities are seeing the benefits of allowing pets on site, the majority still don’t allow pet ownership. The American Animal Hospital Association suggests that before adopting a pet, consider who will care for the animal if you are no longer able.

“My mother and father worried who would take care of their dogs when they could no longer,” Glocker says. “My promise to both my mother and father over the years put their minds at ease: I promised to take care of them and their dogs.”

For information about ARF’s senior adoption program, “Pets for Seniors,” or its seniors’ Guardian program, you can visit <http://www.arf.net/animal-programs/adoption/pets-for-seniors/index.php> or <http://www.arf.net/animal-programs/guardian-program/>.



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## Upcoming Holiday Concert

By Cathy Tyson



Lamorinda seniors enjoying last year’s Holiday Concert

Photo provided

Lafayette Senior Services is putting on its annual Holiday Music Concert and Fundraiser on Friday December 12th from 1:30 until 3:00 at the Community Center. Last year’s event was quite popular, see photo above. Violinist Jennifer

Carne with fiddler Mark Shaw and their musical friends will be performing joyful seasonal music from Bach to Blue Grass and beyond. Light refreshments, caroling, and the opportunity to win some fabulous raffle prizes will also be fea-

tured. A \$5.00 donation is appreciated. Proceeds will support the Lamorinda Spirit Van Program, which serves older residents who no longer drive. To sign up call, (925) 284-5050. The Community Center is located at 500 St. Mary’s Road.

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## Residents Not So Happy About Happy Valley Pathway

By Cathy Tyson



Earlier this year the City of Lafayette followed their normal protocol and posted notices of an upcoming meeting about sidewalk improvements in the Happy Valley area. Very few residents attended the meeting to review the intended design and construction of Happy Valley pathway modifications from Franklin Lane to Valory Lane. When the pathway was complete, residents weren't happy and asked that the new pathway be reconfigured.

Given the current budget crunch, the city is reluctant to rebuild the new pathway, especially when the neighbors had a chance to comment early on.

"Staff indicated to the City Council that (the pathway) was designed after consultation with the neighbors at a publicly noticed meeting, is fully compliant with current standards and practices and is consistent with similar facilities city-wide that have operated without any known history of safety issues," said Associate Engineer John M Luttrupp.

Parents expressed their displeasure at a late October City Council meeting. Because of speeding cars and the edge of the walkway abutting the road, residents feel that it's dangerous and would like the pathway modified.

Quite a few children use the pathway on their way to Happy Valley Elementary school. Since the area immediately around the school can be congested at pick-up and drop-off times, many students walk from Franklin Lane.

In order to solve the sidewalk dilemma a meeting was held in November with concerned residents, city staff, Council Member Brandt Anderson and Bill Bucher, President of the Happy Valley Improvement Association. Residents came to an agreement on a number of issues; first, to paint the existing asphalt berm white. Second, as a temporary solution, the neighbors have volunteered to construct a temporary base rock pathway on private property away from the road and existing pathway, but will need to get the approval of property owners.

What residents really want is to have a permanent pathway away from the edge of the road that would require easements beyond the City's right of way. This option is estimated to cost \$56,000 - although there is \$16,000 in grant money remaining from the Happy Valley Pathway project.

Rumor has it a compromise may be reached at the December 8th City Council meeting.

## How Long Will The Turmoil Last? This is a Great Time to Buy a Home?

By Steve Snyder

**H**ow long will the turmoil in the housing markets last? This is the first time in our country's history in which home values have declined nationally without a corresponding large rise in unemployment. During the Great Depression, the unemployment rate was around 25% compared to approximately 6.7% today. Therefore, the challenges being faced today are different than the challenges that were faced in the 1930s.

Today, states like Michigan and Ohio have high rates of unemployment and this is causing many people in those markets to default on their loans and go into foreclosure. Those markets will not likely rebound until the employment situation improves. On the other hand, states like Florida, Arizona and California have stronger employment. Home prices in those states have declined largely due to unsustainable speculation on the part of investors who over-extended themselves by betting that housing prices would always rise. Those markets have a large glut of investor-owned properties that are going through foreclosure. The downward pressure on housing values due to foreclosures will likely last in most markets across the country throughout 2009, and in some markets, perhaps even through 2010. This does not necessarily mean that home prices will decline for another 12-24 months. This simply means that home values are not likely to recover very quickly due to the downward pressure on home prices.

**How long will the turmoil in the mortgage markets last?**

The sub-prime market has virtually evaporated and lending guidelines have tightened significantly. Interest rates on jumbo mortgages and loans for borrowers with unique situations are considerably higher than loans for borrowers who have smaller mortgage balances, high credit scores, large down payments, and long, steady job histories. There are two factors necessary for lending guidelines to loosen back up: Housing market recovery - lending guidelines are likely to remain very tight until housing prices at least find a bottom. This is because lenders, mortgage insurance companies and Wall Street investors don't want to assume the risk that homeowners will walk away from their mortgage if the home declines in value.

Clear rules and regulations - lenders and Wall Street investors today are very hesitant to be flexible in their guidelines as long as the rules of the game are still undefined. There is a very large fear in the marketplace among lenders that they will be faced with large legal liability if they extend loans to people who may not be able to afford the payments at some point in the future. On July 14, 2008, the Federal Reserve issued new guidelines that clarify the rules that lenders must follow when evaluating a borrower's ability to repay. This was the first time since the credit crisis began in July 2007 that lenders have clear guidance on the rules of the game. This should give lenders a larger comfort level in creating new loan programs and becoming more flexible in their guidelines. Obviously, "flexible" guidelines in the coming months will be defined differently than the reckless "flexible" of the past. Regulators are also considering new rules for Wall Street financial institutions and investors, and these rules should also help in jumpstarting the mortgage lending industry once again. Therefore, lending guidelines will likely become more flexible sometime in 2009.

This is definitely a buyer's market! Negotiating power in this market is greater than at any point in the last several years. If you are interested in buying a home for the long-term, this is a great time to do so. However, if you are a novice looking to speculate in the real estate markets, now is the worst time to do so because this market is more dangerous than ever. Only the truly savvy investors will be able to navigate the market today, but they need to act quickly. There is so much panic selling in the marketplace right now that the deals that are available today will not likely be around in the future. Of course, there will always be deals available, but the types of deals available today are not going to last forever. Everyone talks about buying low and selling high, but hardly anyone actually does it! Once the market stabilizes, everyone will want to jump in again and the best deals will have disappeared.

As long as your time frame is greater than two years, now is probably the best real estate buying opportunity in over two decades.

The best thing for you to do is work with a team of professionals to help you structure your home purchase transaction in ways where you could save the most money. Strategies for you to consider include seller-paid closing costs, maximizing acquisition indebtedness to create tax benefits, structuring the down payment in the proper way and other useful strategies. Make sure you have a knowledgeable Real Estate professional and their team on your side!

**Steve Snyder is a Mortgage Consultant with RPM Mortgage in Walnut Creek. He can be reached at 925-295-9322 or ssnyder@rpm-mtg.com.**

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**Steve Snyder is a Mortgage Consultant with RPM Mortgage in Walnut Creek. He can be reached at 925-295-9322 or ssnyder@rpm-mtg.com.**

## Lamorinda Home Sales continued

<b>SOLD</b>	<b>HOME SALES presented by LAMORINDA</b>	<b>LAFAYETTE</b> Last reported: 4
		<b>LOWEST AMOUNT:</b> \$485,000 <b>HIGHEST AMOUNT:</b> \$1,372,500
<b>SOLD</b>	<b>HOME SALES presented by LAMORINDA</b>	<b>MORAGA</b> Last reported: 0
		<b>LOWEST AMOUNT:</b> \$0 <b>HIGHEST AMOUNT:</b> \$0
<b>SOLD</b>	<b>HOME SALES presented by LAMORINDA</b>	<b>ORINDA</b> Last reported: 4
		<b>LOWEST AMOUNT:</b> \$738,000 <b>HIGHEST AMOUNT:</b> \$1,900,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California REsource. Neither Cal REsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

**LAFAYETTE**  
3215 Andraesen Drive, \$1,695,000, 4 Bdrms, 3062 SqFt, 1952 YrBl, 10-31-08  
3442 Black Hawk Road, \$1,425,000, 4 Bdrms, 2910 SqFt, 1958 YrBl, 10-31-08  
3173 Diablo View Road, \$1,450,000, 3 Bdrms, 2367 SqFt, 1964 YrBl, 11-5-08  
917 Hough Avenue #8, \$485,000, 2 Bdrms, 1038 SqFt, 1969 YrBl, 11-13-08  
3307 Sweet Drive, \$685,000, 5 Bdrms, 1811 SqFt, 1953 YrBl, 11-10-08  
21 Topper Court, \$1,372,500, 4 Bdrms, 1806 SqFt, 1945 YrBl, 11-13-08  
1163 Upper Happy Valley Rd., \$700,000, 2 Bdrms, 970 SqFt, 1945 YrBl, 11-7-08

**ORINDA**  
200 Longview Terrace, \$840,000, 4 Bdrms, 1442 SqFt, 1962 YrBl, 11-13-08  
26 Muth Drive, \$738,000, 3 Bdrms, 1804 SqFt, 1959 YrBl, 11-13-08  
108 Oak Road, \$1,725,000, 3 Bdrms, 3377 SqFt, 2000 YrBl, 11-7-08  
570 Orinda Woods Drive, \$1,900,000, 4 Bdrms, 2980 SqFt, 2005 YrBl, 11-7-08

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# business briefs

## New in Lafayette: Your Dailey Workout

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## Mt Diablo Business Women Networking Dinner

On January 8, 2009 the organization invites its members and interested individuals from 5:45 – 8:30 PM on January 8, 2009, to a conference-dinner held at the Lafayette Park Hotel, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. Marilyn Ellis, CTACC Life Coach, Professional Organizer and Motivational Speaker will present "What Do You Want Your Business and Your Life to Look Like In 2009." \$37 member, \$44 guest, register early, no walk-ins. For info and registration please contact: www.mtidiablobusinesswomen.org.

## Parkmon Vineyard Releases Ten New Wines

The only licensed winery in Lamorinda, Parkmon Vineyard, is starting the distribution of ten new wines of which three are 'estate-grown' from their vineyard, 3 others are 'Lamorinda - grown', and another two are mostly estate-grown (though labeled Contra Costa County because they're <95% from Parkmon vineyard). www.parkmon.com

## Teacake Teaches How to Bake... Teacakes! 35 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette

Teacake has started "Bake with Teacake" baking classes with hopes of inspiring newcomers and veteran bakers alike to delight in the fun and joy of baking from scratch at home. Teacake is offering special holiday-themed classes for the month of December. All baking classes are three-hour, hands-on sessions, and are held on Wednesday evenings from 5-8 p.m.. Each session is \$75 for adults 18 and over, and \$45 for children 6 and over. For more information call 510-655-0865 or email to bake@teacakebakeshop.com.

## News from the Three Chambers of Commerce

### Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

#### Business Person of the Year:

Tom Courtwright. The owner and operator of Orchard Nursery was picked by his fellow Chamber members from this year's nominees. Tom has been recognized by many organizations throughout the world for the work he does as a nurseryman. Tom grew up in the business, beginning his career at his father's nursery in Berkeley. Tom bought Orchard Nursery in 1971. He has been honored as Lafayette's Citizen of the Year in 1989, and has been a local Rotarian since 1972. He served as President of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. Tom has not only managed a very successful business in Lafayette, he has given his, time, money and energy to help make Lafayette a place where people want to live, work and shop. The Business Person of the Year Annual Dinner will be held on Friday, January 30, 2009, beginning at 6:00pm at the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa. Reservations can be made by calling the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce at 925-284-7404. Registration forms will be available on the chamber website soon.



The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Committee surprised Courtwright with the news early Friday at Jonny's Donuts. Standing left to right: Jay Lifson, Mike Heller, Dennis Garrison, Larry Blodgett, sitting: Larry Duson, Tom Courtwright, front Bill Eames

#### Try Lafayette First:

Dave Simpson, chair of the Shop Lafayette Committee, and all the volunteers made it possible for the Chamber to launch an ongoing program to remind residents to support the businesses and services in Lafayette. On Monday, about 100 merchants and locals marched down Mt. Diablo Blvd. to kick the campaign off. About 80 local businesses have signed up to participate. It's not too late for your business to get involved as well. Contact the Lafayette Chamber to find out how to get started. Participating businesses are identified by the Try Lafayette First posters in their windows. Those businesses are asking our residents to sign the "pledge" that asks "When you do your holiday shopping this year, you pledge to try Lafayette first." Everyone who signs a pledge is eligible for the grand prize of \$1,000 in local gift certificates. The winner will be announced on Tuesday, January 6th.

Wednesday, December 17, Green Committee at 12 Noon in the Chamber Conference room.

Thursday, December 18, Entrepreneur's Club at 8:30 a.m. in the Chamber Conference room.

### Moraga Chamber of Commerce

The new and old board met for an energizing session. They brainstormed on better integration of the St Mary's campus and the town.

Next Chamber Meeting Friday January 30th starting with coffee at 7:30 a.m. at the Hacienda de las Flores.

### Orinda Chamber of Commerce

Chamber Christmas Mixer Thursday, December 11, 2008 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. Mechanics Bank, 77 Moraga Way, Orinda. Join us to share holiday greetings and fun times together.

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If you have a business brief to share, please contact

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sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

or call our office at  
925-377-0977.

## Lower Stress Through the Holidays and Beyond

By Dr. Theresa Tsingis, D.C., M.S.

The holiday season is fast approaching and if you're like a lot of people that means more stress, and less time to prepare and eat the right foods. Since food can affect mood and stress levels, let's explore how nutrition can help to cope with the challenges of the season and beyond.

First, some nutritional triage – avoid high sugar foods whenever possible. They are craved because the initial effects are to raise blood sugar levels, (causing an initial sense of energy and improvement in mood). Cravings can occur because the maintenance of brain blood sugar is a strong survival mecha-

nism, and sugar is an immediate source for that. But before you unwrap your favorite candy bar, look out. The negative effects of high sugar consumption kick in shortly afterwards that can result in imbalanced metabolism, fat deposition (especially around the waist), and low blood sugar (hypoglycemia). So, to combat both cravings and stress, find a way to plan ahead for healthy eating every 4 hours, a small snack composed of protein, fat and unrefined carbohydrates.

Dopamine and serotonin are some of the "pleasure" neurotransmitters, giving the body a sense of

wellbeing. Certain nutrients are required for their production, and when abundant, may encourage more production of these "feel good" brain chemicals. Research also suggests that a cell's environment (which is greatly influenced by nutritional intake) influences DNA unwinding. So, the quality of nutrition can affect the balance of brain chemicals. Said simply "You are what you eat". Said another way, "You feel what you eat".

Let's review 10 nutrients involved with neurotransmitter balance, and possible food sources of these nutrients:

<b>DHA</b>	Cold water fish, arugula & other greens, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, canola oil, supplements
<b>Folic acid</b>	Dark leafy greens (beets, spinach, chard, kale, beans, citrus fruits, mushrooms, supplements)
<b>Vitamin B6</b>	Bananas, raw sunflower seeds, raisins, grapes, nuts, whole grains
<b>Vitamin B12</b>	Low fat meats, eggs, legumes, cruciferous vegetables
<b>Vitamin D</b>	Salmon, sardines, shrimp, cod, milk, (Supplements often necessary; lab test needed)
<b>Magnesium</b>	Artichokes, barley, buckwheat, oat bran, halibut
<b>Taurine</b>	Protein-rich foods, energy beverages
<b>Licorice root</b>	Licorice root tea; Note - Use deglycyrrhized licorice only, or may cause high blood pressure
<b>Green tea</b>	Tea, supplements
<b>Thiamine (Vitamin B1)</b>	Raw sunflower seeds, beans, peas, tuna, corn

At our clinic, a 44 year old woman with a history of depression and anxiety came in for a consultation. We worked closely with her M.D. and within 2 months, by making a few changes and taking a couple of supplements, she reported a better night's sleep and significant improvement in anxiety levels. Note: one of the changes was regular exercise, because of its docu-

mented positive effects on mood (via serotonin levels). We also recommend you always check with your doctor before adding supplements to your daily regimen, especially if you are on medication.

There's so much more to nutrition than eating from basic food groups; at the same time, eating simply rather than simply eating can turn someone from stressed-out to in

control. We at Lamorinda Nutrition can help you find ways to keep yourself healthy throughout the holidays and beyond. Happy Holidays!

Dr. Theresa Tsingis, D.C., M.S., maintains a private practice at 89 Davis Rd., #180, Orinda, CA. Telephone (925) 254-1080. Email: drtsingis@comcast.net

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## SCHOOL CALENDAR


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Board Room AUHSD Office  
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette  
Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 6pm –  
Special Board Annual Reorganization Meeting  
Wednesday, Dec. 10 at 7:30pm –  
Regular Board Meeting

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**Orinda Union School District**  
**Moraga School District**  
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# Lamorinda Schools

## Character Counts! – Character Education in our Schools

By Jean Follmer

*“We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.” –Martin Luther King, Jr.*  
*“To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.” –Theodore Roosevelt*

The idea of Character Education in schools is hardly a novel concept. It's actually required in the California Education Code. Section 233.5 (a) reads: “Each teacher shall endeavor to impress upon the minds of the pupils the principles of morality, truth, justice, patriotism, and a true comprehension of the rights, duties, and dignity of American citizenship, and the meaning of equality and human dignity, including the promotion of harmonious relations, kindness toward domestic pets and the humane treatment of living creatures, to teach them to avoid idleness, profanity, and falsehood, and to instruct them in manners and morals and the principles of a free government. (b) Each teacher is also encouraged to create and foster an environment that encourages pupils to realize their full potential and that is free from discriminatory attitudes, practices, events, or activities, in order to prevent acts of hate violence, as defined in subdivision (e) of Section 233.”

“Character is ethics in action,” says John Forenti of the Center for Youth Ethics at the Josephson Institute in Los Angeles. Essentially,

it's distinguishing right from wrong and acting accordingly – a seemingly simple concept. However, it seems many kids are choosing to ignore some of these “givens”.

Let's take cheating for example. The Josephson Institute recently released the results of a survey conducted with high school students. The self-reporting survey found that 64% of high school students had cheated on a test within the past year. This is up from 60% in the 2004 survey. Of those who admitted to cheating, 38% had cheated more than once on a test within the past year.

It's important to remember it was a self-reporting survey so the results only reflect the kids that actually admitted to cheating. We don't know how high the number really is. We've all heard the saying “You're only cheating yourselves.” Forenti says that's not the case. “You're not only cheating yourself. You're cheating everyone who took the test fairly,” said Forenti. Forenti said kids cheat because they don't think they'll be caught and they're likely to benefit from it.

By comparison, 30% of the teens responded they have stolen

from a store within the past year, 42% admitted that they sometimes lie to save money and 83% admitted they'd lied to a parent about something significant. Forenti said it's not a case of bad kids so much as the result of kids receiving inconsistent messages. He offered the example of using a radar detector and showing your kids to only follow the rules when you think you may get caught. Forenti noted that Ken Lay of Enron was a bright person who got caught in the “legal versus ethical” debate in the board room.

The Josephson Institute has aided many school districts and communities in their quests for character development through its program Character Counts. The Lafayette School District is piloting the program this year at Springhill Elementary. The program is based on six pillars: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.

Last summer, 4 parents and 4 staff members (including the principal) attended an intensive 4-day Character Counts session in San Francisco. The school is implementing the program in a multi-faceted way. The idea is TEAM:

Teach children that their character counts, Enforce the six pillars of character, Advocate character and Model good behavior. The language of Character Counts is moving through the school and the children are experiencing behavior reinforcement based on the six pillars. All staff members have been educated on the pillars and a parent education night was recently offered.

The plan is for the Character Counts program to expand to Burton Valley Elementary, Happy Valley Elementary, Lafayette Elementary, Stanley Middle School and the greater community, but the process needs to progress naturally so it takes root. Principals from all Lafayette schools have been introduced to the program. “It's a gradual process. The kids are embracing it. They're using the terminology. We want to make it natural; whether we're teaching math or physical education. It takes many, many years for it to take hold in the community,” said Springhill Principal Bruce Wodhams.

For more information about the program, visit [www.josephsoninstitute.org](http://www.josephsoninstitute.org) or [www.charactercounts.org](http://www.charactercounts.org).

## Why Our College?

By Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D.

Private colleges often ask the question, “Why do you want to attend our school?” The way you respond lets the college know if you have done some research and understand what the college offers, and how the school can meet your needs. The student who has struggled to understand what she wants and needs, and who thinks seriously about how she learns best, is in a far better position to write an authentic and thoughtful response. My goal in this article is to encourage students to get clear about the reasons they are applying to particular schools so that they can address this important essay question.

Virtually every college has a mission and associated values. The student's job is to learn what that mission is and what values it reflects. Then compare your needs with the college's mission. The more information students acquires, the

greater the likelihood of a making a good match.

Here is what you should learn about each college before you apply:

- Understand the educational program and the substance and thinking behind it.
- Know the core curriculum and what classes satisfy these requirements. Some colleges offer a structured core, reflecting the belief that liberal arts education should focus on root intellectual skills in a wide range of subjects; other schools are more flexible and allow the student to define the course of study.
- Acquire an understanding about how the core curriculum classes, or absence of these requirements, relate to the mission of the school. Put simply, understand the school's educational philosophy.
- Get acquainted with the social climate of the campus—does it lean more toward competition or collaboration?
- Get a handle on how faculty teaching and research obligations fall relative to each other; in particular learn the degree to which faculty teach and advise first year students.
- High standards often equate to higher levels of learning. What are the expectations and standards set by the college?
- Frequent assessment and prompt feedback still rank among the best strategies for helping students learn. Find out how the college measures up.
- Find out what the teaching practices are in classes you will take as a freshman and think about whether these are the ways you learn best

(e.g., lectures versus small group seminars or a little of both)

- Learn about how and when students can access faculty (e.g., regular office hours; availability after class, email messages)

Here are strategies to use to learn about the schools on your list:

- Use multiple sources; read several guidebooks and compare reviews. If you find conflicting information, ask an undergraduate admissions officer at the college to clarify.
- Talk to advisors who know colleges well enough to add to your information base.
- Use the web and dig deep. Go beyond the marketing of the college's website to glean all the information you can about the college's “personality.” Look at the depth of course offerings in areas that interest you; check out special seminars and guest speakers; read the school's newspaper to get a feel for “hot-but” issues, often reflective of student body's political and social orientation. “Google” the college and find news articles or even the most recent baccalaureate address.
- Email faculty and students who are doing things that interest you. Ask a well-researched question. Do you get a response in a timely way? Do you get a response?
- Contact your regional admissions representative and introduce yourself. Then ask several well thought out questions that you could not easily find answers to yourself.
- Visit the college, preferably after you have done good research. Stay overnight, talk with students about

their experiences, and arrange to sit in on one lower and one upper division class in subjects that interest you.

- Arrange an interview. College selection is a two-way street. If you have done your research, you will shine in the interview and learn more about the school.

You are going to spend at least four years at college. So it is you, the student, who needs to be selective. My advice is to identify about 15 schools you might be interested in and take a preliminary look. Select 10 for further study and try to answer the question “Why would I want to go there?” In the end focus on a handful of colleges you are truly interested in. Do your homework and you will be applying to colleges that meet your needs, interests, and learning style. Your effort will pay off. If you know what you are searching for in a college, you will increase your chances of acceptance, in part because you will do a far better job articulating your hopes and interests in your application essays.

Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. is a certified college advisor who lives and works in Lafayette. Dr. LaScala draws on 20 years of higher education experience to help guide and support the college admissions process for students and their families. She has 3 children—one a graduate of Cal Poly (San Luis Obispo), one a sophomore at MIT and the youngest, a junior in high school. Contact Dr. LaScala at (925) 891-4491 or [elizabeth@doingcollege.com](mailto:elizabeth@doingcollege.com).

## New School Bus Service for Acalanes High School

By Jean Follmer

The Lamorinda School Bus Program has extended its service by offering morning bus service to Acalanes students in the Reliez Valley area. Stanley Middle School routes 22 and 29 currently have availability because a number of 8th graders moved on to Acalanes this year. Route 22 runs down Re-

liez Valley Road to Pleasant Hill and Route 29 serves the Gloria Terrace/Stage Coach Drive area before running down Taylor Boulevard to Pleasant Hill. Service is available every morning but Wednesday due to Stanley's late Wednesday start time. The cost of a bus pass is \$150 for the period December, 2008 to

June, 2009. “This is the first time we've been able to offer service to Acalanes High School since we started in 1994,” said LSBP Manager Juliet Hansen. For more information, or to purchase a bus pass, visit [www.lamorindaschoolbus.org](http://www.lamorindaschoolbus.org) or call 925-299-3216.



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# Lamorinda Schools

Lafayette Elementary • Los Perales • Miramonte • Orinda Academy • Orinda Intermediate • Saklan Valley School • Sleepy Hollow • Springhill • Stanley Middle • St. Perpetua School • Wagner Ranch

## Author Paul Feig Visits Saklan Valley School

Submitted by Debbie Parish (edited by Jean Follmer)



Back Row – Kevin Rice, Griffin Dey, Ariana Bovoso, Daphne Williams, Gabriella Barattolo, Ari Frankel, Isabelle Forlin, Nick Barendregt, Ben Griswold  
Front Row – Walker Franklin, Mac Goldman, Jack Brahney, Miles Deane-Grundman, James Rokas, Sarah Dey, Lauren Quittman, Isabelle Thimesch, Danielle Sitzman, Spencer Martin, Christine Quinones and Paul Feig

During his recent book promotion tour, author Paul Feig visited with Saklan Valley School's 5th, 6th and 7th graders. His visit with the students was both informative and highly entertaining. The students were swept away into the real life of a Hollywood actor, writer, director, comedian and now, children's book author. Mr. Feig has published his first book in a new series entitled, "Ignatius MacFarland: Frequentaut!"

Saklan students were quickly drawn into Mr. Feig's childhood stories which were, in part, inspiration for the main character, Ignatius MacFarland. The story revolves around Ignatius, or Iggy, who after being teased one too many times, decides to build a rocket. Maybe extraterrestrials are nicer than his

classmates? When his rocket takes an explosive wrong turn, Ignatius ends up in another frequency run by former English-teacher-turned-dictator, Chester Arthur. Mr. Arthur has taken the art, culture, and advancements of our world, shared them with this new frequency, and convinced the creatures around him that he's a genius. It's up to Iggy and Karen, another trapped frequentaut, to expose Mr. Arthur for the fraud that he is — and to hopefully make

it home alive. Ignatius MacFarland: Frequentaut! is part comedy, part science fiction, and part fantasy, and as Mr. Feig told the Saklan students, "this debut novel makes being a geek, well, kind of cool."

Mr. Feig read one of the opening chapters and discussed the steps involved in creating a storyline. He also shared details of the writing process and the discipline that every writer must have in his/her writing schedule to success-

fully publish a book. He graciously answered student questions and inspired all of the students to dream big. Mr. Feig directs the popular TV series, The Office and 30 Rock but is best known for creating the NBC television series Freaks and Geeks, a semi-autobiographical comedy-drama set in a Michigan high school in 1980-1981, and for playing Mr. Eugene Pool during the first season of the sitcom Sabrina, The Teenage Witch.

## Local Schools Make Honor Roll

By Jean Follmer

The Orinda Union School District recently announced that all five of its schools have been selected by California Business for Education Excellence and Just for the Kids-California as some of the public schools in California to receive the title of "2008 Honor Roll School." Del Rey Elementary, Glorietta Elementary, Orinda Intermediate, Sleepy Hollow Elementary and Wagener Ranch Elementary were all recognized as "2008 Honor Roll Schools." "The Orinda School District is proud of our continued recognition by the business community honoring the outstanding academic achievement of all five of our schools," said Dr. Joe Jaconette, superintendent. "Our school board, faculty, and staff are working diligently to preserve our programs in an era of extreme financial uncertainty."

Moraga's four schools (Camino Pablo, Rheem and Los Perales Elementary schools; Joaquin Moraga Intermediate) also made the list, as did the four elementary schools in Lafayette (Burton Valley, Happy Valley, Springhill and Lafayette Elementary) and Lamorinda's high schools (Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte).

The CBEE/JFTK-CA offers two Honor Roll categories: Star Schools and Scholar Schools. According to CBEE/JFTK-CA, Star Schools "are those with significant populations of socio-economically disadvantaged students that have shown a significant increase in grade-level proficiency and achievement gap reduction over four years." Scholar Schools, like those in Lamorinda, "are schools that are showing significant aca-

ademic achievement levels, but do not have a significant socio-economically disadvantaged student population." This year, 214 schools received the Star Schools Award and 697 schools received the Scholar Schools Award.

"We know from the success of these schools that it's possible for all schools and all students in California to reach high levels of academic achievement, to close achievement gaps and to reach 100 percent grade-level proficiency on the California Standards Test," said Jim Lanic, Ph.D., President of CBEE. "Honor Roll schools are on track to do it. By highlighting these schools, recognizing their achievement and giving them a voice we hope other schools can learn from these schools' proven best practices and achieve the same results." For more information, visit [www.cbefoundation.org](http://www.cbefoundation.org).



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The Los Perales Elementary School Chorus, featuring 32 4th and 5th grade students under the direction of Carol St. Claire, offered up its Winter Choral Program on Wednesday, Dec 3. Proud parents and other spectators enjoyed an array of seasonal music and some Swing dancing to Rockin' On Top of the World  
Photo Kris Dunning

## Moraga Dad Gets Jefferson Award for Spearheading High School for Children with Learning Differences

By Sophie Braccini

Ken Dreyfuss is just a normal dad who wants the best for his children. His dedication led him to start a new school and for this achievement he received the Jefferson Award for Public Service in September of this year. The Jefferson Awards are administered by the American Institute for Public Service. The national foundation was founded by Jacqueline Kennedy-Onassis in 1972 to encourage and honor people for their contributions through community service.

Dreyfuss's daughter was diagnosed with ADD at an early age and the family saw her struggling. "My daughter went to Rheem but was getting lost in the structure and her self esteem was really poor," said Dreyfuss.

The family decided to register her with a private school in Oakland, Raskob Day School, a very old institution that specializes in children that have language-based learning difficulties such as dyslexia, ADHD auditory processing disorder, non-verbal learning disorders or Asperger's syndrome, and they were pleased with it. But when the Holy Name University, that was managing the high school, reclaimed that space there was nowhere for the kids to continue their education.

With a group of parents, Dreyfuss led the creation of a brand new school, Bayhill High School, a unique private institution in the East Bay that serves students in grades 9-12, providing very small class size and teaching that focuses on individual needs

and students' potential for success.

"The difference for my son has been immense," says Lafayette resident Rick Eggerth, whose son was diagnosed with a variety of learning differences in 2nd grade, "He is now at the top of his class, loves school, and feels like things are working, none of which were true in middle school." Eggerth believes that the learning model Bayhill uses – small classes (10 or less), a high degree of teacher and teaching assistant involvement with each of the kids, and lots of multi-media and hands-on teaching modes – works very well for his son. "And being in a small school, where everyone has learning differences, means he doesn't feel isolated from the rest of the kids that don't have such issues, because everyone has similar issues," Eggerth adds.

This uniqueness is what motivated Dreyfuss to jump-start the project. "We were 10 to 12 people on the steering committee," he said, "the school opened in September 2007 after a year of work with parents and educators."

Dreyfuss believes the group was so successful because the old high school closed, so they had the students ready to enroll, and the trained staff was eager to start in the new structure. The fund raising effort was crucial to their success and the group managed to raise \$400,000 in that first year.

"Since we opened the school, (our) population has grown faster than we anticipated," Dreyfuss was pleased to acknowledge, "Our pub-

licity, through our web site, works and as soon as the word got out, we received registrations." Children are coming from as far as Marin County and San Francisco, Bayhill being the only available option in the East Bay.

"I was not involved in the creation of Bayhill," says Eggerth, "but I did become a board member at the beginning of my son's sophomore year (he's a junior now). I'm very involved now, and it is very fulfilling and gratifying work, because the school is so needed and so important to the people involved with it."

Dreyfuss believes that there is a large demand out there in spite of the tuition that's close to \$21,000 a year. "We hope to create a scholarship endowment," says Dreyfuss, who doesn't want the school to be just for rich kids. Bayhill is in the process of becoming a certified non-public school, so students with special needs who are referred by their public school district will be able to attend while the district pays the tuition.

Eggerth and his son are starting to research colleges. "We don't know where he'll be going, but it will be something with a good LD (learning differences) program," he says, "There are more schools that offer strong LD programs than there were in the past, and the awareness of LD needs is growing."

"In college they are much more accommodating of differences," says Dreyfuss, "the worst time is K-12."

For more information go to <http://www.jeffersonawards.org/> and <http://www.bayhillhs.org/>

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**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](mailto: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**



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.

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**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 24<sup>th</sup>, 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.  
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 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. 925-376-5770

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**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

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# Holiday Shopping List

## For Mom

- ✓ Custom designed Diamond Pendant from *Trans Jewelry* (40% off) 925-283-2137
- ✓ Custom jewelry from *Ware Designs*- 3416 Mt. Diablo Blvd
- ✓ Unexpected inspiration for your Holiday gifts, *Hen House*- 20 Lafayette Circle
- ✓ Workout program from *Fitness Together*- 3586 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite B

## For Dad

- ✓ Affordable quality watch from *Novina Fine Jewelry*- 3559 Mt. Diablo Blvd
- ✓ Wool Robe from *Pendleton*-3543 Mt. Diablo Blvd- 925-299-6907
- ✓ Personal book recommendation \$15 -*Lafayette Book Store*-3569 Mt. Diablo Blvd
- ✓ Workout program from *Fitness Together*- 925-962-0497

## For Ashley and Sara

- ✓ Vintage dresses from *The Rhythm Room Exchange* - 3330 Mt. Diablo Blvd
- ✓ Discount designer fashions (additional 30% off!) *Sandy's* -3569 Mt. Diablo Blvd

## For Steve

- ✓ AC Milan Jersey from *Soccer Post*- 3618 Mt. Diablo Blvd

## For the family

- ✓ Travel Planning & accessories from *World Travel Headquarters*-3624 Mt. Diablo Blvd
- ✓ Tickets for Miracle on 34th Street, *Town Hall Theatre*- 925-283-1557

## For the office team

- ✓ Free appetizers with drinks at *Petar's*, 32 Lafayette Circle- 925-284-7117

## For the neighbors

- ✓ Holiday cupcakes at *Teacake Bake Shop*, 35 Lafayette Circle, 925-283-9900
- ✓ Stacking Stuffers from *Powell's Sweet Shoppe*- 3591 Mt. Diablo Blvd

## For Grandpa

- ✓ Custom Picture Framing at *Fastframe* - 3571 Mt. Diablo Blvd, 925-283-7620

## For Aunt Dee

- ✓ Bernina, fabrics, books and classes from *The Cotton Patch*- 1025 Brown Ave

## For Rover & Kitty

- ✓ Bone chew toy & Cat Dancer from *Lafayette Pet Shoppe*-3517 Mt. Diablo Blvd

## TO DO:

### Before driving to Tahoe

- ✓ Get oil and filter changed at *Greg's Automobile* (\$29.95) -925-283-0323

### Before the party

- ✓ Alter dress - (10% off) from *Creative Alterations*, 3420 Mt. Diablo Blvd
- ✓ Get the car washed and detailed at *Lafayette Car Wash*-3319 Mt. Diablo Blvd

### Before the in-laws arrive

- ✓ Beautiful new carpet from *Blodgett's Floor Covering* - 3291 Mt Diablo Court

### Store all my Holiday decorations and gifts

- ✓ *Central Self Storage*, 3330 Mt. Diablo Blvd, 925-962-1940

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I hereby sign this pledge to TRY LAFAYETTE FIRST!

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email or Phone no. \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to be informed about local discounts, programs, and events

\*Lafayette Chamber members, participating merchants, and their families are not qualified. One entry per household. Winner will be notified early January 09.

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925.283.4801

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**Professional Automotive**  
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Dining • Dining • Dining • Dining

Crunchy Holiday Treats!

By Susie Iventosch

With the holidays rapidly approaching, it's time to think about baking cookies and making candy as little gifts for teachers, friends, granddads and stocking stuffers. I just love home-made toffee, but never had much luck making my own ... must have missed that chemistry lesson!

Apparently, the candy had not reached the hard crack stage, which can be tricky, because you don't want to cook it so long that it burns. After a little research, I went back

for a fourth attempt, this time taking the candy through the hard crack stage and cooking it there for a bit longer than my instincts told me to, but not long enough to get much past 310 on the candy thermometer. This time it worked very well, and the result is delicious!

If you have the desire to try to make candy on your own, here are recipes for the English toffee and peanut brittle. But, if you don't feel that urge, you can always trek down to Loard's Ice Cream & Candies in Orinda or Moraga, and purchase from their beautiful selection of sweets. They also sell adorable ice cream snowballs, made to order with your choice of ice cream and toppings, and adorned with holly and a candle. These festive little treats go for \$3 apiece.

Loard's has been at the Orinda location for 56 years, and according to current owner Brooks Stubblefield, the ice cream is still made in small batches at the San Leandro factory. The Loard's process uses minimal whipped air producing a denser, creamier ice cream, which is available in some 60 flavors. It could take a while to study this fabulous selection of flavors before deciding on your custom snowballs, but don't let it deter you, they are really fun! Please call or stop by the store to place special orders.

Loard's Ice Cream & Candies
230 Brookwood Road, Orinda
Phone: (925) 254-3434
560 Center Street, Moraga (Rheem Shopping Center)
Phone: (925) 376-3431



Photos Susie Iventosch

English Toffee

Ingredients

- 1 cup butter (salted or unsalted)
1 1/3 cup sugar (use only pure cane sugar)
1 tablespoon light corn syrup
3 tablespoons water
1 cup finely chopped, blanched and toasted slivered almonds
(Trader Joe's carries unsalted, dry-toasted slivered almonds, which are perfect for this.)
12 ounces melted Ghirardelli 60% Cacao Bittersweet chocolate chips

Directions

- Place butter, sugar, water and corn syrup in large saucepan and cook over low heat until butter is melted.
Increase heat to medium-high and continue to cook, stirring constantly. The mixture will foam up and increase in volume as the water is cooked off.
Once the water is cooked off, the mixture will collapse and begin to thicken. As this happens the temperature will begin to rise.
Continue to cook and stir, until mixture reaches the "hard crack" stage. There is some variation on what hard crack temperature really is, but I take it to be between 305-310 degrees on the candy thermometer and remove it from heat source before it can reach 320. The candy will change to a slightly darker color just as it is ready to take off the heat, but be careful not to overcook, as it will burn and separate. And, if the mixture doesn't reach the hard crack stage, the toffee will be very soft and crumbly rather than crunchy. This is the hardest part!
Remove pan from heat and immediately spread mixture into a greased (or PAM'd) 9x13-inch baking dish. Use a silicon spatula to even out. Cool thoroughly.
When completely cool, spread top with half of the melted chocolate and press half of the almonds into the chocolate. Again allow to cool completely. This will take about 30 minutes.
Place waxed paper over toffee, and invert. Then spread remaining chocolate on the second side and press remaining nuts into the chocolate. Allow to cool completely again, so chocolate is solid.
Break into pieces and store in a secret hiding spot as fast as you can! (Lots of nuts will fall off as you break it, but store them along with toffee for snitching!)



Peanut Brittle

Ingredients

- 1 cup sugar
1 cup light corn syrup
12-14 ounces raw Spanish peanuts, skins on is fine (can usually find in bulk food section)
2 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon vanilla
2 teaspoons baking soda

Directions

Mix sugar and syrup in heavy skillet. Add peanuts and cook over medium heat until mixture is golden-brown (amber) in color and peanuts begin to pop, approximately 15-20 minutes, or until candy thermometer reaches hard crack stage (approximately 305 degrees.) Remove from heat and add vanilla and butter. Stir in baking soda and pour mixture into buttered jelly roll tin. Cool and crack. This candy sets up immediately.



These recipes are available on our web site.

Go to: www.lamorindaweekly.com
Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com

New Year's Eve Party

Live Jazz Band "Friends of old Puppy"

Buffet Dinner-includes salmon, chicken, prawn pasta, dessert, two glasses of wine, and a champagne toast at midnight!

Wednesday, December 31st

\$55 9pm to 1am

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www.terzettocuisine.com

Mon: 7am - 2pm; Tues-Sun: 7am - 8:30pm



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LAMORINDA's Restaurants
... updated November 26, 2008 ...
Table with columns for restaurant name, address, phone number, and location.

The Lamorinda Weekly (LW) Restaurant Guide is not paid advertising; our intent is to provide a useful reference guide. We hope that we have included all Lamorinda restaurants on this page, except those that told us they did not wish to be listed. LW is not liable for errors or omissions. In the event that we have inadvertently printed misinformation or excluded a restaurant please let us know (info@lamorindaweekly.com) so that we may correct our list for the next issue.

SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Lady Gaels Take Second in Thanksgiving Tournament

By Kevin D. Shalatt



Gaels' Louella Tomlinson fights to put up a shot through a Hoosier swarm Photo Sheryl Cardiff

Nobody can accuse the Saint Mary's Women's basketball team of scheduling weak opponents...

half, but the Gaels found themselves down by 15 points at halftime. They were able to trim the lead to 13 in the second half...

The Hoosiers gave the Gaels every opportunity to take the lead early in this game, as Indiana's play was sloppy at the onset...

point scorer, Jontelle Smith, who remained sidelined with a knee injury.

The Hoosiers won 18 games in the Big Ten last year. Part of the reason for their current success can be attributed to their forward, Amber Jackson...

The Gaels usually look to run on their opponents, but it was Indiana who controlled the pace of this game. The Hoosiers were able to score on a number of fast break opportunities.

Saint Mary's forward Maija Lahde led the Gaels in the first half. She managed six rebounds and two assists in the period.

The score got away from the Gaels in the second half, but there were plenty of bright spots for Saint Mary's as well. Freshman guard Katie Batlin showed flashes of the ball handling that made her such a valuable recruit coming out of Miramonte High.

"She is a joy to coach," said Head Coach Paul Thomas. "I couldn't be prouder to coach someone like Katie."

Sophomore guard Erika Ruiz made the most of her 18 minutes on the court. Ruiz went 3-4 from the field and finished with 10 points. Freshman Ashlee Smith played like a veteran...

The Gaels look to build upon their runner-up finish at the Thanksgiving Classic, as they continue to play top-notch teams in preparation for league play.

Gaels Fall to New Mexico State in NCAA Tourney

By Mikaela Cowles

The Saint Mary's Women's volleyball team lost in the first round of the NCAA Division I conference tournament to New Mexico State. In a four set match the Gaels won the first 25-22, but gave up the last three, 16-25, 21-25 and 15-25.

Megan York earned the first point of the match for either team with a kill, but New Mexico responded, to tie the set. Though the Gaels took a three-point lead, they allowed the Aggies back in the game with several unforced errors. As New Mexico tied the score and then gained the advantage...

The second set was a brand new look at both teams as the Aggies came out strong and gained the early lead, 8-3. New Mexico began hitting their zones, targeting 8 with great accuracy, completing 14 kills in 26 swings with only one error. The Aggies' high hitting percentage combined with multiple unforced errors by the Gaels let the set end quickly.

New Mexico's senior middle hitter Amber Simpson later said, "The other team let up during the third game and we really took advantage of it."

The proof? The Aggies opened the third set with an 8-1 lead. York ended New Mexico's run with a kill. The Gaels fought back in the third going on a 9-4 run, but lost their momentum at the end as New Mexico tied the score and went on a 6-2 run to win the set.

The Gaels opened the fourth set 8-7, a lead they never saw again. New Mexico took the fourth set easily.

Saint Mary's finished the season 20-8.

Head coach Rob Browning said: "We are disappointed, of course. We always expect to win. Our girls played hard, but they are a young team. They might not always do everything right in terms of execution but our girls always play hard every night."

Saint Mary's graduates five seniors. They will return nine players, however, not the least of which are star outside hitter Megan York and libero Alita Fisher.

The Gaels are disappointed with the NCAA tournament results, but they show the makings of a great and experienced team for next year.

Triple Threat Tackles East Coast Lacrosse

Submitted by Phyllis Frazer



Pictured in front row: Jessie Esteban, Jillian Bush, Zaynib Hamze, Casey Bowles, Rachel Ozer, Caroline Federighi; Middle row: Devon Frazer, Erin McGillivray, Katie Mitchell, Paige Southmayd, Melissa Trisko, Jenna Alberts; Last row: Maddie Saxton, Morgan Lear, Aimee Dewan, Alex Seclow, Katherine Herzog. Not pictured: Coach Dearborn David and Coach Noemi Hites Photo Jim Mittelberger

History was made in mid-November when the varsity team of Triple Threat Lacrosse proved to the national lacrosse community that California lacrosse was a force to be reckoned with. Seventeen girls from high schools throughout the East Bay came together as one to face the best the East Coast had to offer in the Mid-Atlantic Lacrosse Tournament in Owings Mills, MD.

Lamorinda: Devon Frazer and Katie Mitchell from Acalanes, Rachel Ozer from Campolindo, and Alex Seclow from Miramonte. The other girls on the team go to various East Bay high schools, including Monte Vista, Foothill, San Ramon Valley, Dublin and Amador Valley.

Triple Threat came into the tournament as the underdog. They faced down the competition and went undefeated as they entered the

Championship game. Though Triple Threat led throughout most of the game, an unfortunate call in the last 30 seconds resulted in a goal for the team from Philadelphia, allowing them to pull ahead of Triple Threat. The final score was 5-4.

Though Triple Threat may have lost, they surpassed anyone's expectations of what a California team could accomplish against the lacrosse dynasty of the East Coast.

Local Rowers Begin Road to Junior National Team

By Annie Mudge



High Performance campers pictured from left to right: Dana Walsh (Miramonte); Claire Grover (Miramonte); Nikki Dahlberg-Seeth (Miramonte); Ali Mittelberger (Head Royce); Barbara Barnes (College Prep); Kelly Bauer (Miramonte) Photo provided

Six rowers from Oakland Strokes, Inc. have been identified as top junior female rowers in the nation. Four are Miramonte students: Danna Walsh, Nikki Dahlberg-Seeth, Claire Grover and Kelly Bauer.

of the selection process to identify the athletes who will represent the United States on the 2009 US Junior Selection Team, which will ultimately compete in France at the Junior World Championships in August.

"Six rowers being invited from one junior rowing team is fairly remarkable," said Strokes Women's Varsity Coach, Ian P. Simpson. "Oakland Strokes rowers will make up 21% of the 28 sweep rowers who have been identified and selected from across the United States to attend the 'invitation-only' High Performance Camp."

"Rowers invited to High Performance Camp have demonstrated the technical performance, endurance and strength to qualify for a close look for next summer's Selection Camp and the potential for perhaps rowing for the US Junior National Team," said Simpson. "Selection Camp can open the door to a wide range of international training and racing opportunities."

Communicating by text message with the Lamorinda Weekly on Day 2 of camp, Miramonte senior Claire Grover wrote: "The biggest surprise is how relaxed and supportive an environment (the camp) is. I came prepared for crazy intensity, and while it is physically demanding, the coaches are really looking out for you and mainly just

trying to make you a better rower." Asked about competitive energy among campers, Grover added that, since it wasn't a try-out, things were more low-key. "Everyone seems mainly focused on themselves and just trying to improve instead of focusing intensely on what everyone else is doing."

Oakland Strokes, Inc. is one of the premier junior rowing programs on the West Coast. With both Junior Men's and Junior Women's crews at varied levels, Strokes emphasizes the values of teamwork, leadership, initiative, dedication and fellowship, as well as rowing technique and fitness. Oakland Strokes rowers have also enjoyed successful academic achievement. Among those considering college-rowing prospects, Grover has already picked. She's headed to Stanford after graduation.



SMC Gaels Home Games

Table with 4 columns: Date, Time, Home Team, Away Team. Games include Shamrock Classic, Moraga, Men's Basketball, and Women's Basketball.

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# SPORTS

## LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

### Stellar Campo Cross Country Season Ends 2nd in State

By Matt Atwood



With Campolindo's fastest finishing time of 15:41, Senior Robert Pulford came in 16th out of over 200, having helped set a team pace to secure the Cougars 2nd place finish at the California State Meet in November Photo Matt Atwood



Campolindo's Paul Jackson, a junior, takes a hill alongside Acalanes senior Ethan Mark. Mark's 6:21 5K time was the Dons' fastest in the race Photo Matt Atwood

Have you seen a pack of high school boys running around Moraga? Most likely it is the Varsity boys cross country team from Campolindo High School, and they go by the names of Robert Pulford, Ross Geiger, Michael Brondello, Colby Pines, Paul Jackson, Tim Baffi and Nate Cox. Most of these boys have been running together for the last three years, and they knew that this year was going to be special.

After training all summer, the boys went into the season excited and with a positive attitude. Their work ethic, along with Coach Woolridge's support and instruction, paid off at the Stanford Invitational, with the Varsity boys' taking first as a team, and Robert Pulford finishing second for his individual time in the Division III category.

From there, the team only got better. They came in the first in the league championship, DFALS. Then, winning by only five points over Petaluma High School, the boys came to another stunning victory again in North Coast Section.

Next stop was the California State Cross Country Meet in Fresno on November 30th. Four of the seven Campo runners finished within a 24 second span, taking 16th, 19th, 23rd and 31st in a field of over 200 5-K runners, based on individual times. The remaining three Campo runners weren't far behind.

As a team, the Cougars took second place in Division III, behind only Barstow. Campo was, however, the fastest 5-K team ever to come from North Coast Section.

### Cougars Advance, then Finally Fall

By Alex Crook



Tommy Stevens (8), Cookie Kazzaz (25) Photo Doug Kohen

All was well for Campolindo football until the Cougars faced #1 seeded Cardinal Newman in the third round of NCS Division II playoffs.

#### Second Round -- Campo v. Ygnacio Valley

Campo came off a bye week going into the second round home game match-up with Ygnacio Valley on November 29. To start the game, the Warriors carried the ball slowly down the field in the first quarter to score on an 8-yard touchdown run from Sapaund Khan with 10 seconds to go in the quarter. Campo's equal-

izer came in the second quarter with Cookie Kazzaz running for an 8-yard touchdown, leading to the half-time score of 7-0.

In second-half play, Tommy Stephens' 21-yard beauty to Anthony Fadelli put the Cougars up 14-7. With just under a minute left in the 3rd, Ygnacio's Khan scored on a 3-yard run, tying the game at 14 going into the 4th. Campo started the 4th quarter at the Warriors' 45. Two runs from Kazzaz put them on the 8, and he then ran it into the end zone for a 21-14 Campolindo lead.

Campo started to wear down the Warriors' ensuing possession, coming up with a 4th down sack to give the Cougars the ball. Ben Rudolph's 38-yard missed field goal put life back on Ygnacio's bench, only for Campo once again to take it away, and the final score of 21-14, advanced the Cougars into the next playoff round, a Friday night game against Cardinal Newman on this tough competitor's Santa Rosa home field.

#### Third and Final -- Cougars face Cardinal Newman

#1 seeded Cardinal Newman came to this third round Division II playoff game undefeated with an 11-0 record compared to Campo's 10-1, the Cougar's only loss coming early in the season.

Cardinal Newman came out of the gate explosive. About 4 minutes into the contest, Newman quarterback Randy Wright scored on a 6-yard touchdown run with Wright adding the extra point to give his Cardinals an early 7-0 lead. 52 seconds later, Casey Miller recovered the Campo fumble and the Cardinals took over at Campo's 13. This time Cardinal Newman coughed up the ball, so with the teams exchanging turnovers, the Cougars took over from their 1 yard line.

Cardinal Newman later struck again with a 2-yard run from Jeff

Badger to extend the lead 14-0, and that's how the quarter ended.

40 seconds into the 2nd quarter, Campo got on the board with a 2-yard run from Cookie Kazzaz, to pull within a touchdown, 14-7.

The Cardinals answered right back with a quarterback keeper for a 24-yard touchdown run from Randy Wright. With 3 seconds left, Wright converted a 24-yard field goal, so the halftime score read 24-14, Cardinals.

Early in the 3rd, Jeff Badger was at it again with another 2-yard touchdown run. It was 31-14, Cardinal.

In the final quarter, Campo came up with a big 4th down stop, but the Cougars couldn't capitalize, and they had to punt back to Newman, who later converted. Joe Ferguson ran in a 24-yard touchdown to put his team up 38-14. Kazzaz came back with a 4-yard score, plus the 2-point conversion. The Cougars had cut the lead to 38-22.

Campo then scored on a 7-yard pass to Garrett Holmes, but Michael Knott picked off the 2-point conversion to kill Campo's chances of winning. Cardinal recovered the onside, and Campo finally fell from the Division II playoffs.

A tough loss against a tough competitor, but a Cougar season well played.

### Miramonte NCS Playoffs



Miramonte's captains Andrew Rivin (54) Jake Kaplan (44) Scott Penskey (60) and Conor Lowery (2) get ready to start the NCS semifinal game against Novato Photo Jordan Fong

VARSITY HOME GAME Calendar ••• High School Varsity @ Home •••			
<b>Wednesday, December 10</b>	Boys Soccer: Northgate @ Campo, 6pm Acalanes @ Miramonte, 6:15pm Girls Soccer: Miramonte @ Acalanes, 6:15pm	Wrestling Miramonte @ Acalanes, 6pm	<b>Friday, December 19</b> Girls Soccer Dougherty Valley @ Miramonte, 6:15pm
<b>Thursday, December 11</b>	Girls Soccer: Cal High @ Campo, 6pm Wrestling: Campo @ Miramonte, 6pm	<b>Saturday, December 13</b> Girls Basketball Hayward @ Campo, 8pm	<b>Saturday, December 20</b> Boys Basketball Acalanes v. Salesian @ Saint Mary's College, time TBA
<b>Friday, December 12</b>	<b>Monday, December 14</b> Boys Soccer Alameda @ Acalanes, 6pm	<b>Monday, December 15</b> Boys Soccer Dublin @ Miramonte, 6:15pm	<b>Monday, December 22</b> Girls Basketball Concord @ Acalanes, 7pm
	<b>Tuesday, December 16</b>	<b>Thursday, December 18</b> Boys Basketball San Ramon Valley @ Acalanes, 7pm Wrestling Miramonte @ Acalanes, 6pm	

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