

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Wednesday, February 4, 2009



Protesters gathered outside Saint Mary's Soda Center prior to scheduled lecture by '60s radical Bill Ayers

Photo Andy Scheck

Ayers Lecture at SMC Leaves Audience Polarized

By Jennifer Wake

Tensions were high inside the Saint Mary's College Soda Center last week during a lecture from the college's guest speaker, former '60s radical, now professor Bill Ayers. The speech was punctuated by occasional outbursts from protesters, calling Ayers a murderer, countered by students shouting for disrupters to "Leave!" and "Go Away!"

Nearly 600 people came to see Ayers, who gained national attention during the recent presidential election, in which republican candidates referred to him as "a domestic terrorist" who "palled around" with Barack Obama. More than 150 people stood outside to protest the event, holding signs emblazoned with slogans such as "Shame, Shame, Shame!"

"We were pleased with the turnout," said Lafayette resident and co-founder of Flags for America, Jim Minder, who helped coordinate the protest. "We consider it a success since our primary goal all along was to make the community and alumni aware of who Saint Mary's was inviting onto their campus."

Prior to the event, Ayers, 64, explained that he had watched himself be turned into a "cartoon and a caricature" during the presidential election. A former leader

of the radical organization the Weather Underground, which was responsible for bombing several public buildings during the 1960s, Ayers went on to become a respected education professor at the University of Illinois. He is also the author of several books, and was named Citizen of the Year in Chicago in 1997.

Ayers' recent accolades, however, didn't change the viewpoints of many of those opposed to his past actions.

The chair of the Saint Mary's College Republican Club, Scott Cullinane, stayed outside during the lecture, stating he did not want to give Ayers "the honor or satisfaction of my presence."

Others sympathetic to the protesters, like Orinda resident Jim Boucher, believed in Ayers' right to speak. Boucher brought his daughter, Noel, (a senior at Miramonte) to the lecture to hear Ayers and see the protest. "I formed my own opinions, and I hope she'll form her own opinions," he said. "It was a great opportunity to give her a civics lesson in her own backyard."

Lafayette resident Gabriel Froymovich, however, said Ayers' lecture "was cogent, but rang hollow in the context of his past."

"Ayers orchestrated the murder of police and is

widely quoted as not regretting doing so, not ruling out repeating it and as wishing that he did more," he said. "How can he then talk about 'the incalculable value of every human being'? It was disrespectful to his victims."

While members of the Weather Underground have been tied to attacks that killed several people, Ayers has denied that the group was ever involved in killing or injuring another person during its six-year existence. Although a fugitive who lived underground during the 1970s, Ayers was never convicted of killing anyone.

Minder and many other protesters spent the day talking with students about the Weather Underground and Ayers' involvement. "I'm sad to say that it appeared that most of the students we engaged had already made up their minds, even though there is a lot of factual information out there on Google to refute their arguments," Minder said.

Saint Mary's sophomore Darryl Tom, who is studying kinesiology and hopes to become a PE teacher, said he didn't know much about Ayers' background. He simply came to hear about education reform. "Hopefully, there's going to be change, because the education system is not looking too good," he said.

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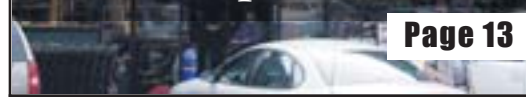
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Lamorindans Attend Inauguration '09



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Happy Valentine's Day!

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Stimulus Package: No Pork for Lamorinda

By Sophie Braccini

The Contra Costa Transportation Agency (CCTA), during its Jan. 28 meeting, approved the list of infrastructure projects that have been prepared by its 22 jurisdictions to take advantage of a possible \$825 billion federal stimulus package.

If Contra Costa County gets the anticipated \$21 million, Orinda is slated to receive \$690,000, Moraga \$665,000 and Lafayette \$740,000. The three cities have all proposed roads rehabilitation projects that are dearly needed.

While Congress debates the passage of the stimulus bill, towns and cities have been working hard to ensure infrastructure projects are ready to go.

"While the final provisions may change," said Hisham Noeimi, Engineering Manager for CCTA, "it appears that some of the funds will flow according to the Surface Transportation Program (STP) formula, and Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) will therefore distribute the funds to each county in the Bay Area."

Projects need to be designed and ready to be bid on by the time the bill is approved, so all city engineers are doing their best to be ready by the Feb. 15 deadline.

"The amount [from the government] is an edu-

cated guess from what the general package would be," says Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin, who sits on CCTA board. "The decision was made to give each entity a base of \$400,000 and to divide the remainder between them according to the size of their population and infrastructure."

Tatzin believes that the decision created a fair balance between large and small jurisdictions. "One of the strong points of CCTA has been that the organization works to achieve broad support among participating jurisdictions for its actions. As a result, all jurisdictions feel they are recognized and few get exactly what they want," he said.

In preparation for this meeting, each of the towns and cities prepared a list of projects, with the priority of being able to put them to bid within three months, and the requirement of addressing only arterials and major collector roads (federal-aid eligible).

"Millions could be spent on our roads at this time," said Jill Mercurio, Moraga's Town Engineer, "but we were told that the projects would be considered only if we would be able to break ground within three months." Mercurio and her team spent two weekends getting the documents ready and Moraga was first to file its project.

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Lamorinda Community

Calendar, Notes, News

Lafayette

Calendar	
City Council	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Monday, February 9	
Planning Comm.	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, February 19 February 5 canceled	
Design Review	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Tuesday, February 10	
City of Lafayette: http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us Chamber of Commerce: http://www.lafayettechamber.org	

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Lamorinda Teen Center
February meeting has been rescheduled to Wednesday March 10, 2009 at 7:00 PM at the Orinda Community Center

Bond Rating Upgraded to AAA

By Cathy Tyson

Lafayette's Bond rating was recently upgraded from AA to AAA by Standard & Poor's Rating Services. According to City Manager Steve Falk, "That means we'll pay less interest on our bonds, and also that no other California city is now more highly rated than Lafayette. Big kudos go to Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson and Financial Services Manager Gonzalo Silva for working hard to make it happen; to Lafayette's entire finance team for its extreme competence; and to the Lafayette City Council for holding the line for these many years."

For readers not intimately familiar with the firm, Standard and Poor's is a leader in credit ratings and credit risk analysis. Credit ratings are one of several tools that investors can use when making decisions about purchasing bonds.

Considering these economic tough times, this upgrade is even more impressive. The recent assessment states, "Standard & Poor's Rating Services raised its underlying rating to 'AAA' from 'AA' on Lafayette, California's outstanding general obligation (GO) debt based on our assessment of the city's strong financial performance with, in our view, a very strong unreserved general fund balance."

"This is something that we've been working on - chipping away at - for more than a decade," said Falk. "Credit really goes to the City Council for holding the line on expenditures."

Neighbors Win - Divisive Permit Denied

By Cathy Tyson



Sessions Road neighbors celebrate the Lafayette City Council's decision

Photo Cathy Tyson

After more than two years of public meetings, the controversial development permit application of Lot 66 at the corner of Sessions Road and Sierra Vista Way by former Planning Commissioner Dick Holt was denied, to the great relief of many happy would-be neighbors. Large contingents of them were present to once again lobby their side of the issue. Council Members were torn between the claims from the applicant's attorney and equally persuasive arguments from disgruntled neighbors and elder statesman, former Mayor and Citizen of the Year, Ned Robinson.

The denial was based upon failure to follow specific size reduction instructions. At a December City Council meeting the applicant was advised to "reduce the building gross square

footage to be more consistent with that of the Sierra Vista Way neighborhood which averages 2,400 square feet." Although the square footage was reduced from 2,898 to 2,639, Mayor Tatzin stated that was not enough and with agreement from the other Council Members moved to deny the application.

From the beginning, this story took on a life of its own. Many neighbors felt that the

City Attorney should not have deemed the lot buildable in the first place and that the original application was filled with errors. "It should not be upon these two dozen homeowners to have to defend their deeded easements at great expense simply because Holt was able to manipulate his erroneous application through the Planning Department," said Pam Swarts.

... continued on page 6



Trunk Attack, 1/23/09 -

A woman parked her car and left it in a lot on Thompson Road. She returned to find the Toyota MR2 Spider in a different condition than she had left it. An unknown suspect had ransacked the vehicle and removed property without her permission. The suspect also pried open the front hood/trunk of the vehicle. Nothing was taken from the trunk. Fresh pry marks and paint chips were discovered on both sides of the front hood/trunk. Be on the lookout for suspicious individuals carrying crowbars.

Minor Plus Marijuana Equals Arrest, 1/23/09 -

A Lafayette Police Officer spotted a car parked in front of a closed business on Mt. Diablo Boulevard. The officer approached the vehicle and the minor occupant submitted to a vehicle search. The officer happened to discover a digital scale and a metal grinder in the glove compartment and both items happened to have a green leafy residue on them. The officer kept looking and then happened to discover two glass smoking pipes and 72.7 grams of a leafy plant material inside a jar in the suspect's

backpack. The minor suspect admitted to being an enterprising young businessperson in the marijuana trade. The minor was arrested and released to his father. The case was referred to the Lafayette Police Department Youth Services Officer.

Repeat Offender, 1/24/09 -

Lafayette Police spotted a white Acura driving on First Street. The officer pulled the vehicle over for having its left tail light out. As it turned out, the driver happened to be driving on a suspended license. The driver apparently has quite a habit of driving on a suspended license since he has 8 prior convictions within the last 12 months for the same offense.

Do You Have Gas? 1/26/09 -

A concerned Old Tunnel Road resident called police when an unfamiliar subject appeared outside his front door. The subject asked the resident if he had any gas and appeared to be incoherent. Lafayette Police contacted the subject nearby and determined he was intoxicated and unable to care for himself. He was arrested and transported to the Martinez Detention Facility. It is not known if the subject was asking for gasoline or if he was asking an inappropriate personal question.

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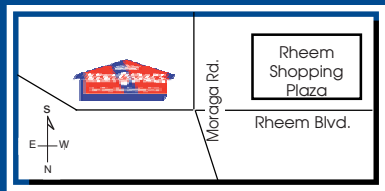


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MORAGA



Lamorinda Community

Moraga

Calendar

- Town Council 7:30pm**
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School
1010 Camino Pablo
Wednesday, February 11
- Planning Comm. 7:30pm**
Hacienda, La Sala Room
2100 Donald Drive
Tuesday, February 17
- Design Review 7:30pm**
Hacienda, La Sala Room
2100 Donald Drive
Monday, February 23
February 9 canceled
- Park & Rec 7:30pm**
Hacienda, Mosaic Room
2100 Donald Drive
Tuesday, February 17
- Liaison 8:00am**
Fire Station
1280 Moraga Way
Friday, February 13
- Town of Moraga online:**
<http://www.ci.moraga.ca.us>
- Chamber of Commerce:**
<http://www.moragachamber.org>

Lamorinda Teen Center
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Fire, 1/30/09 Police and Fire departments responded to a fire at the Rheem Valley Convalescent Hospital on Rheem Boulevard. The small fire was confined to one room and appeared to be caused by a malfunctioning electrical outlet. Hospital staff and police from Moraga and Orinda evacuated all 33 residents. After approximately 30 minutes residents were allowed to go back in. No one was injured.

Rape, 1/24/09 At 3:00 in the morning a sexual assault at Saint Mary's College was reported to the police department. Officers responded to John Muir Medical Center to investigate the incident. No other information was available.

Knife brandished, 1/24/09 Police were dispatched to the Rheem Shopping Center regarding a juvenile brandishing a knife. The victim stated he and the suspect got into an argument over \$20 that he allegedly owed to the suspect and that the suspect pointed the knife at his neck. Victim said he was not afraid and challenged the suspect to hurt him. Neither party sustained any injuries. Moraga P.D. later contacted parents of both kids and referred them to juvenile probation.

Stolen car, 1/21/09 An Alta Mesa Court resident said he parked his car in the driveway of his home on Wednesday morning. When he returned to the vehicle on Thursday morning it was gone. Officers located some of his property a few blocks away lying in the street. No suspects or leads at this time.

Please send storyideas to storydesk@lamorinda weekly.com

Upsurge in Fake Solicitors in Moraga?

By Sophie Braccini



istockphoto

As Lafayette establishes its new permit requirement for peddlers, Moraga has recently seen an increase in door-to-door solicitors. Residents are complaining, and the Police Department would like Moragans to know that people who peddle in Moraga need to carry a city permit and be ready to show valid identification.

"It was on Inauguration Day, between 4:00 and 5:00; a young blond couple, alleged college students, came to my door to raise money," recalls Joanne Furio, "the boy was holding a black leather binder, and said they were UC Berkeley students raising money for the orchestra to go to London." Furio says they indicated that their mother lived on a nearby street. The couple added that some of the money would also go to Oakland

Children's Hospital for books for children.

Furio replied that she wouldn't give money to an organization if she couldn't check them online and she asked the two to write down the name of their unit; they refused, continuing to state that they were local residents and eventually left. Furio didn't stop there, she says she called the orchestra and was told that no trip to London was planned and that they had no members with the name the young man had given. She proceeded to call Children's Hospital, which as a result of her call, issued a press release.

"The hospital has received a couple of calls from East Bay residents who said someone's apparently going door-to-door selling books and magazines claiming to raise money for our hospital," said Diana Yee, Director, Media Relations for Children's Hospital, "we do not raise donations this way (door to door). If people want to donate to our hospital, we encourage them to visit our website www.childrenshospitaloakland.org and click on the yellow "donate" button."

Janet Gilmore of the UC Berkeley Media Relations office confirmed that the Music Department does not raise money that way.

It may have been the same two people who went to a completely different neighborhood a few days later, with a slightly different tune.

... continued on page 6

Changes for Moraga's Beautification and Tree Planting Committee

By Sophie Braccini

Some had talked about sun-setting Moraga's Beautification and Tree Planting Program Implementation Committee. Its mission had been reassigned mid-term in the wake of a controversy about the Moraga Road traffic study and the setting of a new and improved Traffic and Safety Advisory Committee that took over the traffic safety part of its charter. When Christine Kuckuk, chair of the committee, presented her report to the Town Council on January 28th, it appeared that the group had achieved some important steps and that more work could be accomplished in the area of trees and beautification.

Kuckuk explained that the "tree" part of their mission had not been completed. Only a fraction of the town's trees on main arterials and town property have been inventoried and the town just applied to be part of the Tree City USA, an organization that requires a "Tree Board" to be set in place. When Council Member Mike Metcalf inquired as to the benefit of membership, Kuckuk explained that the organization provides access to grants for trees and forestry programs, gives advice and procedures for tree care and requires very little

from the town, other than celebrating "Arbor Day" at whatever time is deemed appropriate.

In her presentation, Christine Kuckuk reminded the Council of the Gates report, that had been ordered by the Town and that proposed guidelines for esthetic considerations while building on the scenic corridors. "We would recommend finding a home for this report so the public and staff have easy access to it," she said. Acting Town Manager Jay Tashiro highlighted the importance of clarifying what was to be applied in the text and what not, "property owners need to have clear guidelines about what the Town expects," he stated. It was proposed that the Design Review Board review the Gates report and add what was relevant to the design guidelines for the Town.

Mayor Dave Trotter asked Kuckuk if the committee would be available to give advice on trees and beautification as part of the Specific Plan that aims to revitalize Moraga Center, "your input would be very valuable," he said. It was decided that the committee would not be disbanded and would continue to pursue its mission, but with a new, shorter name: The Tree Planting Committee.



The stoplights at Moraga Rd and Ascot Drive are installed and ready to be turned on. PG&E is expected onsite to hook up the power in mid-February. Ascot residents couldn't be happier: "We are 20 year residents on Ascot and this is the best news to us and we wanted to let you know how happy and appreciative we are of you," wrote Carolyn Aguirre to Town Engineer Jill Mercurio.

Photo Sophie Braccini

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Prayer.....8:00am

Traditional.....9:00am

Contemporary.....10:30am

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Wednesday:

Community Bible Study....10am

REVERB (youth).....7pm

Friday Night:

BLAST! Kids Club.....6pm

Saturday Night:

Catalyst(Young Adults)..7:30pm

Upcoming Sunday Mornings At WSC

February 8th:

"The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Christians, Habit 3"

2/15: "The 7 Habits Series", Habit 4

2/22: "The 7 Habits Series", Habit 5

3/1: "The 7 Habits Series", Habit 6

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-Pastor Brad, GodThoughts, Vol.2, p.15*

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-Laura Diestler, Member



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-International Crepes, 2/24, 6:30-9:30pm
-Line Dancing Session II, 2/5, 11:00am-1:00pm
-Creative Writing Workshop, 2/7, 10:00am-4:00pm

Lamorinda Community

Calendar, Notes, News

Orinda

Calendar

City Council 7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way
Tuesday, February 17

Planning Comm. 7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way
Tuesday, February 10

Mayor's Com. Liaison 8:30am
Community Room at City Hall
22 Orinda Way

Monday, March 2

City of Orinda:
<http://www.ci.orinda.ca.us>
Chamber of Commerce:
<http://www.orindachamber.org>

- local businesses
- upcoming events

Lamorinda Teen Center
February meeting has been rescheduled to Wednesday March 10, 2009 at 7:00 PM at the Orinda Community Center

ORINDA POLICE
Eau de pot, 1/22/09 Officers stopped a 34-year-old male for a traffic violation. Upon contact with the subject, the officer noticed the strong odor of marijuana. Driver consented to have the vehicle searched. Lo and behold there was a small baggie with a green leafy substance in the console. The suspect was cited and released.

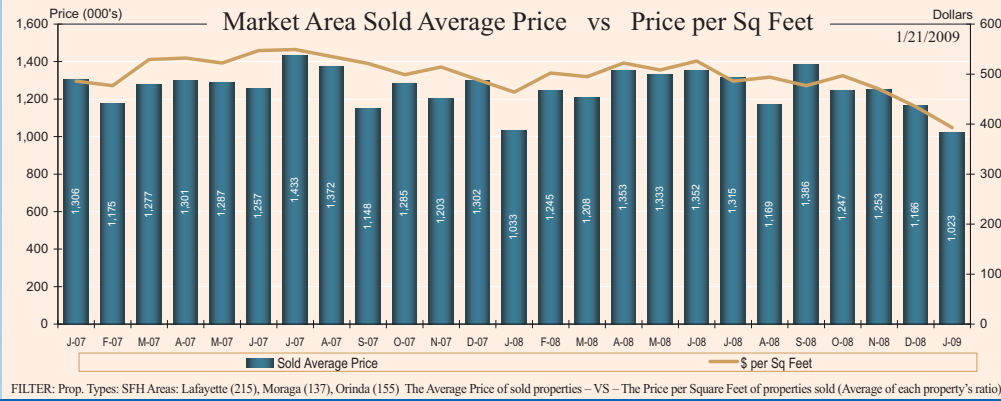
Car key theft 1/22/09 A Camino Sobrante resident called in a report of a stolen car. While officer were there, the homeowner noticed that the key that had been left in the center console of her unlocked Mercedes parked in the driveway, was also missing. Can you make it any easier for the bad guys?

I.D. theft 1/21/09 A Stanton Avenue resident got a letter from a collection agency for \$1,200 payable to COX Communications. She called the collection agency and said she has never had an account with COX. After some internal research the COX people called her back and said the account was opened with her social security number and was registered to a resident of Tulsa, Oklahoma.

P.O. evacuation, 1/16/09 All units responded to the Orinda Post Office for what turned out to be a misunderstanding. The Shift Supervisor told employees, "Everyone Get Out!" meaning to leave the office and start work. This was overheard by customers who misinterpreted the statement and left the building. Perhaps the Supervisor said it with some emotion?



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Mayor Severson Declares 2009 the Year of Action

By Andrea A. Firth



Mayor Sue Severson Photo A. Firth

Mayor Sue Severson declared 2009 as the year of action in her speech to an audience of almost 100 attendees at the Mayor's Luncheon last week, which was jointly hosted by the Orinda Rotary and Chamber of Commerce. A moving rendition of the song *The Impossible Dream* performed by Orinda resident and mezzo-soprano opera singer Lisa Vanderploeg Pugh, who was accompanied on the piano by Severson's husband Ralph, set the stage for the Mayor's speech. Then, like Don Quixote before her, Severson lay down the gauntlet and set forth her quest for the year ahead—to achieve a seemingly impossible dream and make some real progress toward fixing Orinda's roads.

Severson started off with a review of the City's achievements in 2008 highlighting the work of the Citizen Infrastructure Oversight Committee and the Revenue Enhancement Task Force, which have provided the foundation for the City Council's road-repair action plan. The money that Orinda currently spends each year on infrastructure work barely scrapes the surface of the City's road problems according to Severson. "Our ability to address the City's infrastructure needs with our current revenues is not possible," she stated. The City's total operating budget approximates \$11.5 million, of which about \$1 million goes to road and sewer repair, and the City's infrastructure needs are estimated to be well over \$100 million. "We must move forward to

develop additional sources of revenue," Severson added. "We need to act on the recommendations of the Revenue Enhancement Task Force."

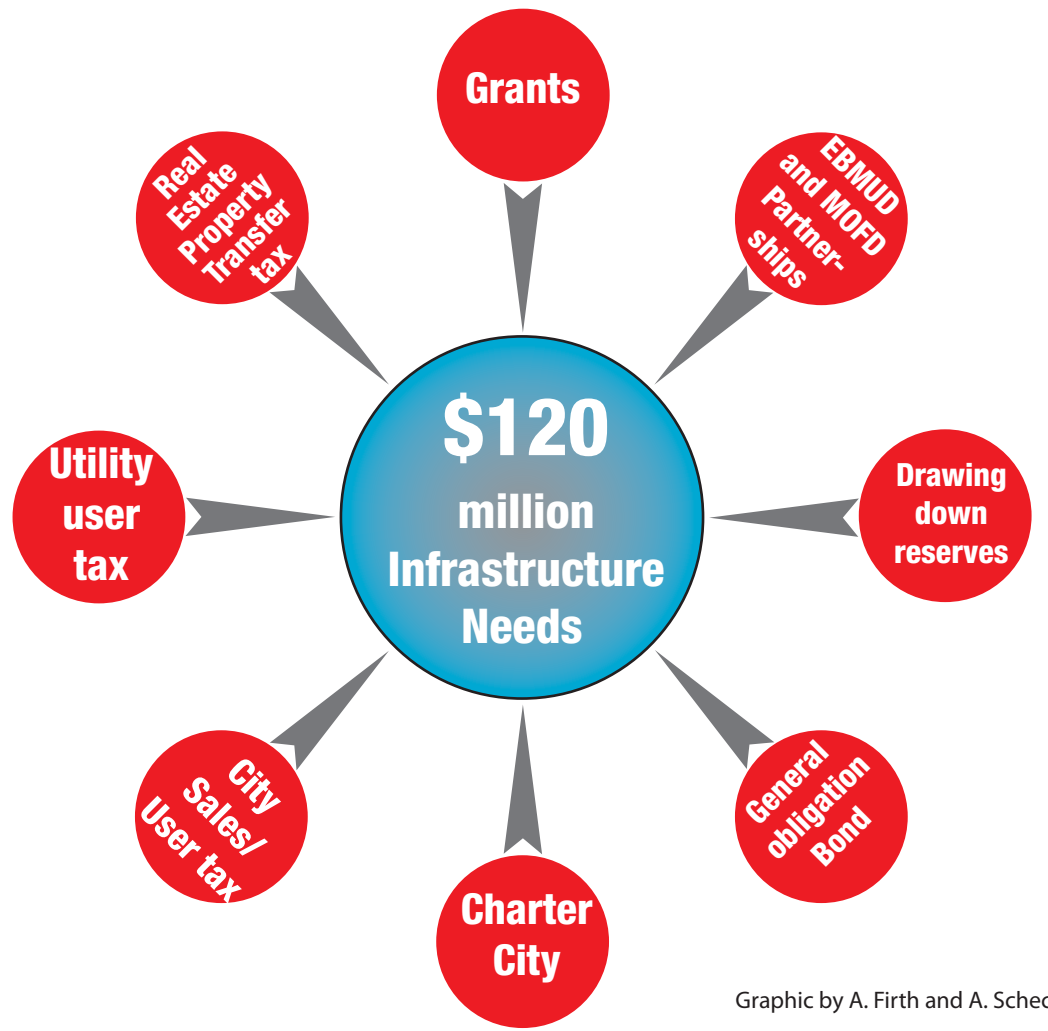
Noting that no single revenue source would provide a complete fix for the City's overwhelming infrastructure funding needs, Severson presented a multi-pronged approach to the problem. In addition to the current budget allocation, Severson identified grants, like the ones procured to repave Moraga Way; partnering with the East Bay Municipal Utility District and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District; and a draw down of the City's reserves as potential funding sources. Severson also listed new and additional taxes as possible elements of the revenue pie; these included a general obligation bond, a city sales and/or user tax, a utility user tax, and a real estate property transfer tax.

"We need broad scale local support for revenue enhancement measures," stated Severson, "Now is the time to act."

Severson acknowledged the negative impact of the State budget crisis and the weakened economy, which may lead to cuts in the revenue received from the State and reduced local sales tax revenue. She also noted that although Orinda's home values have remained more buoyant than many communities throughout the State, permit applications to Orinda's Planning Department for home building and remodeling are down 30% from a year ago.

Despite the gloomy economic outlook, Severson remained optimistic and encouraged all members of the community to work together to achieve the impossible dream. She closed her comments with her vision for Orinda—a City with smooth roads, a revitalized downtown, safer access to schools and businesses, increased public safety and awareness, adequate and affordable housing for seniors and families, enhanced scenic beauty, and shared community pride.

Achieving Orinda's Impossible Dream



Graphic by A. Firth and A. Scheck

Orinda's Director of Public Works and Engineering Services

By Andrea A. Firth

Mayor Sue Severson welcomed Charles "Chuck" Swanson to the Orinda City Staff and presented him with a City pin at the January 20th City Council meeting. Swanson was recently hired as Orinda's Director of Public Works and Engineering Services. He relocated to the Bay Area from Winter Park, Colorado where he had served as the Public Works Director, Town Engineer, and Town Manager since 1997. In her introductory remarks, City Manager Janet Keeter noted that Swanson would add needed stability to the Public Works and Engineering Departments, which had been managing with an interim director since the departure of Mark Lowery this past summer.



Photo A. Firth



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Life in LAMORINDA

Lamorindans Witness the Obama Inauguration Up Close

By Andrea A. Firth



Orinda residents Dick and Gloria Marchick with daughter Patti Kogan on Inauguration day, 2009 Photo provided



Campolindo students Mark Ranstrom, Darby Kerr, and Shannon Bruce on Inauguration Day, 2009 Photo K. Ranstrom

teacher who taught for the Acalanes Union High District for 22 years, had volunteered for the Obama campaign and purchased their airplane tickets to Washington well in advance of the election results. Up and out by 4:30 a.m. on Inauguration Day, the Marchicks, dressed in long johns and ski clothes, made their way patiently through crowds and long lines to access their ticketed seats. "We walked a long way among swarms of people," states Gloria, "but nobody pushed or yelled. Even while riding the packed Metro, people said excuse me," she adds.

The Marchicks' VIP seats were only a few rows from actor Dustin Hoffman, photographer Annie Liebowitz, and New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Despite the celebrity distractions, the Marchicks and everyone present were focused upon the history-making moment of the mid-day ceremony. "When he was announced as President of the United States, I have never felt such a tremendous surge of emotion. Everyone hugged. Everyone cried," says Gloria.

Eight Campolindo students were also part of the million-person throng on the National Mall in

D.C. for the momentous Inauguration along with History teacher Molly Henrikson and parent chaperone Kathy Ranstrom. For the Campo crowd, the Capitol building was visible in the distance as they watched Obama take the oath of office on a large video screen. Like the Marchicks, the students had also committed to the experience before the election results were known, and despite their differing locations on the Mall, their Inauguration Day experiences were quite similar.

Senior Shannon Bruce described the feeling on the Mall as simultaneously peaceful and euphoric. "It could have been a pretty intimidating crowd considering the amount of people there, but it ended up being completely opposite; everyone was incredibly happy and calm," says Shannon. The Campo group spent seven hours outside in temperatures that dipped well below 20°F. But the cold weather did not have a negative effect on the day, according to senior Christy Dye. "It was really interesting," adds Christy, "It was such a calm crowd. You would expect more rambunctious behavior, but everyone was happy and excited. It was a really uplifting environment."

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SMC Spring Creative Writing Reading Series Kicks Off

By Andrea A. Firth

Each Spring and Fall, Saint Mary's College (SMC) in Moraga brings some of today's most talented fiction and nonfiction writers and poets from across the country to share their work as part of the Creative Writing Reading Series. The Spring Series will include seven authors who will read published writing or work-in-progress and

answer audience questions on six Wednesday evenings between February and May

"We always aim to bring a diverse group of writers from across the three genres—fiction, nonfiction, and poetry," states Graham Foust, Director of the Master in Fine Arts in Creative Writing Program at SMC.

One of the highlights of the

Series will be a reading by San Francisco-based author and journalist Leslie Carol Roberts, who is a Distinguished Visiting Writer at SMC this Spring. Roberts will read from her recently published book *The Entire Earth and Sky: Views on Antarctica*.

... continued on page 6

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LAMORINDA Community

MOFD Chief Nowicki Retires and Returns

By Andrea A. Firth

After more than 23 years with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Fire Chief Pete Nowicki retired from his position as MOFD's top fireman at the end of January. He had served as the District's Fire Chief for the past two and half years. At the January 29th meeting of the MOFD Board of Directors, Nowicki was immediately rehired as Acting Fire Chief when the Board voted unanimously (4 to 0) to employ him on a contractual basis at a salary of \$14,700 a month through June of 2009.

Orinda resident Clyde Vaughn questioned the Board's decision to retain Nowicki as Acting Chief and pay both his pension and new contract salary and asked if the Board had considered promoting one of the Battalion Chiefs as an alternative. Board President Pete Wilson responded that Nowicki had been rehired at a reduced salary that would save the District about

\$70,000 on an annualized basis. Wilson stated that no formal succession plan for the Fire Chief post has been established, however he indicated that plans for a search for Nowicki's replacement were getting underway.

At this same meeting, the MOFD Board appointed Directors Fred Weil and John Wyro to participate as the Fire Board representatives on a three-party committee that will evaluate the recommendations of Orinda's Revenue Enhancement Tax Force regarding property tax allocation. Back in November, the Task Force identified the MOFD's share of the property tax distribution as a potential source of revenue to be tapped to help fund Orinda's infrastructure needs. In addition to Weil and Wyro, the committee will include Orinda Council Members Steve Glazer and Victoria Smith and Moraga Mayor Dave Trotter and Council Member Mike Metcalf.

MOFD's Borden Gets \$1,500 Grant

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District recently received a \$1,500 fire prevention grant from FM Global for the purchase of equipment to assist with fire investigations. Battalion Chief Ed Borden was awarded the grant based on his application. Borden attended an arson investigation class at the National Fire Academy last Fall and was part of a group activity that investigated a scripted fire scene. A professional-grade digital camera to assist investigating fires had been on Borden's wish list for a while, and the benefit of having a camera for fire investigation was further emphasized by his participation in the arson investigation class. The camera will assist the MOFD to determine the cause of fires and to investigate fires more efficiently.



Lafayette Business Person of the Year Tom Courtright (left), owner of Orchard Nursery, with Mayor Don Tatzin, at a dinner reception held in his honor last Friday. Photo John Sherry

Neighbors Win - Divisive Permit Denied

... continued from page 2

There were additional concerns by other Council Members about opposing claims around easements, obtaining clear title and removing trees. Council Member Brandt Andersson, alluding to the low sales price, \$20,000, "suggests it is unbuildable."

Attorney for the applicant David Bowie asserted that "there is no rational reason to impose additional restrictions." Land

owner Dick Holt stated, "I am convinced I have a legal right to develop this property."

Angry neighbors clearly disagreed and felt considering Holt's former position on the Planning Commission, that he was getting special privileges. Adjacent uphill neighbor Lakshman Watawala read from the deed to his property, "This is very clear: 'From the top of the road all the way to the bottom, a non-

exclusive easement over, under, around and through lot 66.' If this is not clear, I don't know what is." He added that all of his Sessions Road neighbors have similar language on their deeds.

Former Mayor, long time resident and retired real estate attorney Ned Robinson urged the Council, "You should recognize this easement. The people uphill could not have built with out this easement."

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From left: Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin congratulating Oliver Rotundo, Christine Mlynek and Annika Sonne along with their parents, friends and neighbors (not pictured) who diligently worked to raise over \$32,000 as a matching contribution for the Stanley-Springbrook Traffic Calming Project. For more information go to www.acalanesvalley.com Photo provided

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Upsurge in Fake Solicitors in Moraga?

... continued from page 3

"First a young couple came to my door," said a Moraga resident who would rather not be identified, "they were very clean cut and told me they were living down the street." The two asked the resident money to support the UC Berkeley Music Department. When she asked to see their permit they said they just lived down the street with their parents and gave her a name she didn't recognize; when she said so, they became defensive and left.

Two days later the same resident was solicited by another young man who said he was raising money for Campolindo High School. "I told

him that I needed a proof that was true, and he answered that his father was a local doctor who had promised to match any donation he raised," said the resident, "and he gestured up the street." The two asked the resident money to support the UC Berkeley Music Department. When she asked to see their permit they said they just lived down the street with their parents and gave her a name she didn't recognize; when she said so, they became defensive and left.

"People who canvass for money have to register with the Police Department," says Interim Chief of Police Robert Priebe, "after checking their credential and their organization, we issue a letter that they have to present along with their identification, when they peddle." The letter is on Town of Moraga Police letterhead, is dated and signed by the Chief; it identifies the organization and the area where the group plans to market. Patrols get a copy of the letter so they know which

groups are legitimate. "We issue these letters just a few times a year," says Deedie Warner, the Assistant to the Chief of Police, "and we never get complaints about these groups."

When the Police are called about suspicious solicitors they investigate and if the solicitors are not holding permits they are asked to leave. "We have seen very well organized groups that come from out of State, they stay at a local hotel and go door to door, often selling magazine subscriptions," explains Priebe. He adds that his department has never issued a citation for illegal solicitation. "Selling magazine subscriptions and lying about who will benefit from it is unethical, but it's not illegal as long as you receive your magazines," adds Priebe, concluding, "Don't give anybody cash and if you have questions, call us."

Greater Bay Area Franchise Chain Stores Recently Investigated by the State of California for Repair Fraud.



It turns out that many automotive repair facilities were recently accused by the Bureau of Automotive Repair following numerous motorist complaints. Over 100 alleged violations were filed, including the selling of unneeded services, making misleading statements, and false advertising. This includes many cases in which frustrated consumers received brake repairs at prices that were grossly inflated over the advertised "Brake Special" prices.

Many motorists are enticed by the low-cost advertised by these types of businesses. In reality, as alleged by these complaints, the motorist almost never gets the repairs at the advertised price. The fact is that these types of

shops can make no profit if work is done as advertised. These same types of shops work with quotas and commissions, that lead to trouble for consumers. Unfortunately, this is a recipe for greed to come in to play and the consumer pays the price. These practices are hurting motorists as well as the hardworking and honest repair shops. Consumers should not settle for unethical business practices. There are plenty of independent, family owned, automotive repair businesses in the Bay Area that are honest, well trained and reliable. However, they will not be found by shopping for the cheapest "Brake Special" price at some franchised chain store.

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SMC Spring Creative Writing Reading Series Kicks Off

... continued from page 5

Intimately familiar with Antarctica having spent several months there as a journalist tracking the efforts of Greenpeace, Roberts also lived and worked in New Zealand where she embraced the adventurous spirit of the Antarctic explorers who came from and passed through its shores. Roberts brings her passion for the South Pole to her to her writing and expands upon the stories of a number of the men who were members of Ernest Shackleton's legendary Antarctic expedition. "Antarctica was transformational for me," says Roberts. "It's a horrible, beautiful place. It was place that I didn't want to leave."

The Creative Writing Reading Series will kick off with Los Angeles native and short fiction writer Dana Johnson on February 18th. The Series will also include

award-winning poet and well-known editor of The Nation, Peter Gizzi; fiction and nonfiction writer Lee Montgomery, who authored *The Things Between Us: A Memoir*; and poet Kazim Ali, who teaches creative writing at both Oberlin College and the University of Southern Maine. The season will conclude with readings from Mary Volmer, who received an M.F.A. in Creative from the SMC in 2005 and published her first novel, *Crown of Dust*, in 2006, and faculty member Lysley Tenorio, who was awarded the prestigious Whiting Writers' Award in 2008 for his fiction writing.

Details of the SMC Creative Writing Reading Series can be found at <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/academics/schools/school-of-liberal-arts/departments-programs/mfa-creative-writing/reading-series.html>.

Life in LAMORINDA

Online Crime Reporting Now Available

By Cathy Tyson

Got crime? Lafayette and Orinda residents can now make online reports through the Sheriff's Office for non-emergencies where no suspect can be identified, for example: forgery, harassing phone calls, trespassing, vandalism, theft, vehicle theft, and fraudulent use of a credit card. But wait, there's more – citizens can also request vacation house checks, report illegal fireworks and file barking dog complaints.

"This gives the citizens of Orinda and Lafayette an opportunity to do their own report if there's no suspect. It's a convenience, but it

will not affect our high level of service. We will still respond to calls for service. This is just another option," said Chief Bill French of Orinda.

This online system is not for emergencies that require an immediate police response. For any urgent situation, always dial 911.

"With less time spent writing reports, Deputies could devote more time to proactive policing. Our organizational culture demands timely and personal responses to calls from our citizens. While the use of the new program reduces personal contact, we must adjust to the debilitat-

ing loss of available staff," said Sheriff Warren Rupf referring to the recent budget reductions and staff cutbacks in a prepared statement.

The fill in the blank form is quite simple and easy to use, even this reporter could manage it. Go to www.cocosherriff.com and click "File Online Report Here." All reports are reviewed, the approved report will be sent back via email as a convenience. The report can be used to file an insurance claim, if needed. Moraga has its own police force, so it doesn't contract with the Sheriff's Office.

National Charity League, Inc.

Lamorinda Chapter Celebrates 20th Anniversary

Submitted by Susie Romack



NCL Presidents (current and past):

Top row: Michele Crabtree, Trudy Barron, Tina Ross, Barbara Galligan, Sue Howard Seated: Mary Jane Arnold, Winnie Jasper, Shand Green

Over 100 members of the Lamorinda Chapter of National Charity League, Inc. kicked off their 20th Anniversary last month at their

Patroness meeting. Special guest speaker was Michele Crabtree, a resident of Orinda, currently serving as President on the National Board

of Directors. Michele is a founding member of the Lamorinda Chapter, where she served as Grade Level Advisor, Ticktock Vice President, and President (1994-1995). She shared her enthusiasm, communication skills, and ability to connect with people to our local chapter members.

The Lamorinda Chapter of National Charity League, Inc. has rapidly grown to a current membership of over 300 mothers and daughters. The girls, in grades 7 through 12, participate in a multi-faceted 6 year program which offers a wide variety of volunteer opportunities with 30 philanthropic organizations in the community.

For more information about the Lamorinda Chapter of the National Charity League, go to www.nellamorinda.org.

A Reporter's Journey in the Age of Obama:

Mark Curtis to Hold

Book Signing at Lafayette Book Store

By Lee Borrowman

One of the Bay Area's favorite newsmen, veteran political reporter and former KTVU anchor Mark Curtis, will be at the Lafayette Book Store, 3569 Mt. Diablo Blvd., on Sunday February 8th from 3:00-5:00 signing copies of his new book, "Age of Obama: A Reporter's Journey with Clinton, McCain and Obama in the Making of the President 2008."

Curtis, a Danville resident and occasional contributor to the Lamorinda Weekly, spent most of 2008 on the Presidential campaign trail working as a freelance reporter, blogger and political analyst. "It was an amazing journey; the political 'road trip' of a lifetime," he says.

The book, which was released on Inauguration Day, January 20, "chronicles my visits to over thirty states, as I followed the candidates from Iowa and New Hampshire in January; to the end of the primary campaign in South Dakota and Mon-

tana in June; then onto the conventions in Denver and St. Paul in late summer. It's not just the story of the candidates and campaigns, but the story of many average American voters I met and interviewed in bars, restaurants, shops, at political rallies and on Main St. in many towns across our great nation. It's the story of their hopes, dreams and aspirations for this election," explains Curtis.

The following is an excerpt from Chapter 8 – North Carolina:

The location was the "Lexington BBQ" out on U.S. Highway 64 west of Interstate 85.

Bill Clinton and supporters gathered there at 11:30 this morning. He shook hands and posed for pictures with about 200 people, all the while imploring them to go vote for Hillary in the North Carolina primary.

Then the ex-president headed in for lunch, and we knew this would be a long wait, no matter that

he was scheduled to be in Winston-Salem at 1 p.m. Finally about 1:20, Mr. Clinton emerged from lunch, shook hands, and signed books for some people, then stopped to greet me. As he shook my hand, I inquired, "How was the barbecue Mr. President?" "It was unbelievable," he said, "The barbecue was good. The hush puppies were good," he added. "Anything else?" I asked. "If I had the ice cream, I'd need a nap," Clinton said. He walked a few steps further and - still waving to the crowd - got into his Secret Service van.

At first I wondered, "What was I thinking? This is the most critical election in 60 years, and I ask the ex-president and husband of one of the candidates about food? Then I thought, "Lighten up, Mark. Campaigns are supposed to be fun, too!"

Curtis is currently working on his Doctorate in Educational Leadership at St. Mary's College in Moraga.

Ayers Lecture at SMC Leaves Audience Polarized

... continued from page 1



Education professor and former '60s radical Bill Ayers answers audience questions following his lecture at SMC Photo Jennifer Wake

Ayers' lecture steered far from the topic of terrorism. Even while expletives were shouted toward him, he spoke in a quiet, measured tone. He cited the urgency of social reform and the need to switch the current education system from one which teaches obedience and conformity, to one which encourages imagination and courage.

"I want small schools, small classes, more teachers, more contact," he said. "I want small groups of people asking questions."

Ayers spoke of activism, asking the audience to "pay attention, be astonished, and do something," and spoke frequently of Martin Luther King, Jr. and his work.

"I urge you to read all of his speeches, especially the one from

April 4, 1967. That was the speech in which he came out very eloquently against Vietnam."

Although supporting the right to protest, Ayers said he was offended by one thing: "They said I would warp your impressionable minds. I thought: What books shouldn't you read, also?"

Many of the questions asked after the speech were made by students and focused on education reform. Minder and Cullinane were both disappointed that protesters weren't given the opportunity to express their thoughts during the question/answer portion.

"The protest's secondary goal was to make sure they had a counterpoint to the 'one-sided lecture' by Bill Ayers," Minder said. "Our goal

was to present the students with the truth, as told by eyewitnesses to events about 40 years ago. Just when it was our turn to counter Ayers' statements, the moderator called time and told everyone to leave."

Ayers did stay after the program was over to talk with anyone who wanted to speak with him, and was quickly surrounded by a large group of audience members.

"Some individuals walked up to Ayers afterward," Minder said, "but this is not the same as using a microphone and having a dialogue in front of everyone in the room."

"I tried to get up to him," Froymovich added, "but the throngs of people trying to ask questions were too thick."

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1. Xu BeiHong (1895-1953), 'Cat,' Framed and glazed, ink and color on paper, Sold for \$3,500 on January 4, 2009.
2. Nathan Olivera, American (b. 1928), 'Head' 1967, Lithograph, Sold for \$1,872 on January 4, 2009.
3. Robert William Wood, American (1889-1979), 'Monterey Landscape,' Oil on canvas, Sold for \$6,500 on June 21, 2008.
4. Tibetan Polychrome Gilt Bronze of Yamataka, Sold for \$25,740 on August 3, 2008.
5. Napoleon III Gilt Bronze Cut Brass Tortoise Shell Mounted Boulle Meuble D'Appui Sold for \$4,973 on June 21, 2008.
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On Feb. 23rd, the Chamber Music Recital showcases some of Campolindo's outstanding classical musicians performing solo and ensemble pieces.

THEATER

BREAKING LEGS, a comedy by Tom Dulack, directed by Helen Means. The worlds of the Mafia and the theatre clash hilariously when a collage professor seeks funding to produce his new play from "the family" of one of his former students.



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"Winnie The Pooh," at the Leshner Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek. Performances are Saturday, Feb. 14 at 2:15 pm and 7:45 pm, and on Sunday, Feb. 15 at 2:15 pm.

The Fantasticks, music by Harvey Schmidt with lyrics and book by Tom Jones, runs Jan 23- Feb 15 on the Main Stage (P.A.C.) at Diablo Valley College.



Photo provided

The House on Mango Street comes alive on the stage of the LeFevre Theatre at Saint Mary's College in Moraga on Tuesday, Feb. 24th at 8pm.

Lafayette Town Hall Theatre presents "Rabbit Hole," the bittersweet 2007 Pulitzer Prize-winning play by David Lindsay-Abaire.

ART

Bert Monroy, Master Artist Tribute VIII: A Digital Artist Paints With Light through April 5. The Hearst Art Gallery of Saint Mary's College is pleased to present a major survey of the preeminent digital master Bert Monroy.

A Photoshop Demonstration with Bert Monroy will take place on March 19th at the Moraga Room of the Soda Center at Saint Mary's College.

The Moraga Art Gallery presents "The Northern Lights" in Moraga through March 14th. The show will highlight artworks by local artists Vivien Hart and Nina Tykynski.

aga Art Gallery is a co-operative gallery of 20 artists in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center, 570 Center Street in Moraga.

First Friday at Moraga Art Gallery, Feb. 6, 2009, 7-9 p.m. Nancy Robinson Oils painting demo.



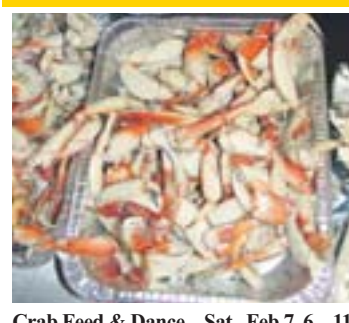
Objects of Affection by Sherry Smith Bell

"Objects of Affection," the new show at the Lafayette Gallery, 50 Lafayette Circle, runs through March 7th, 2009.

Illuminated Sculpture runs through Feb. 22 at the Bedford Gallery, Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek.

The Art Connection, well known for their watercolor and mixed media installations of abstracted landscapes and experimental artwork on paper and canvas is showing their new work at the Lindsay Dirx Brown Art Gallery in San Ramon.

CRAB FEEDS



Crab Feed & Dance - Sat., Feb. 7, 6-11 pm. Bring your appetites & dancing shoes.

Soroptimist International Crab Feed and Silent Auction -6pm on Saturday, Feb. 7 at Oakwood Athletic Club-Lower Court 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd in Lafayette.

9th Annual Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley Crab Feed on Saturday, Feb 14th Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga, 6pm: No Host Cocktails.

7PM - Dinner - Music - Dancing - Silent Auction: Merchandise, Services & Attractions, Crab Pot - Go home with a lot of cash! Tickets \$45.00 per person.

LECTURES & LITERATURE

On Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2008 at 7 p.m., the Orinda Library invites audiences to a talk by a trained BRT docent on Berkeley Repertory Theatre's (BRT) new production, the world premiere of 'In the Next Room or the vibrator play' by Sarah Ruhl.

First Friday Forum will feature Jasmina Vujic, Ph.D., head of the Department of Nuclear Engineering at UC Berkeley, speaking on The State of Nuclear Energy. The meeting will be held Feb. 6 in the Sanctuary, 1:30 p.m. at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian church 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette.

MEDITATION WORKSHOP with Brother Camillus Chavez "Meditation on the Archetypes" The archetypes are mysterious patterns we inherit through our common humanity.

Saint Mary's Kalmanovitz School of Education's Distinguished Speaker Series: Dr. Michael Pritchard - comedian, author, TV star SOS Save Our Schools - Live, Love, Laugh, Learn! Feb 21 from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Soda Center

Creative Writing Reading Series at St. Mary's College - Dana Johnson-Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2009, 7:30 pm at the Soda Activity Center.

The Princess Project is now collecting new and nearly new formal gowns and accessories as part of its 2009 dress drive. Dresses and accessories will be collected at Specialtees (977 Moraga Road, Lafayette).

The California Writers Club-Tri-Valley Branch offers writers of all genres and experience levels the opportunity to learn about their craft and share their work.

The 9th Annual Bookies Award Dinner, A Celebration of Books and the People Who Love Them, will be held on Thursday, March 19, 2009 at the Lafayette Park Hotel.

like your club to be included, please email the titles and authors you read this past year to darraw944@astound.net.

Children's Events at the Moraga Library-500 St. Mary's Rd. 376-685 Storytime: Stories and crafts for children three to seven. Tuesdays through March 17, 4-4:30 pm

OTHER

Orinda "Heart of the Home" Kitchen Tour is scheduled Wed., Feb. 11, from 9:30 am-12:30 pm. Tour six beautiful, remodeled kitchens and enjoy some Valentine cheer.

Valentine's Day Love Missions- Saturday, Feb. 14, (1:30pm & 3:30pm) and Sunday, Feb. 15 (1:30pm & 3:30pm) Celebrate with your Valentine and take a simulated space mission to the Red Planet.

Winter 2009 Hike Schedule-Lafayette Hiking Group. Feb. 14 - Martinez to Port Costa. Enjoy views of the water, trees and hills from a paved trail above the Carquinez Strait.

Dr. Mark Zier, noted bible scholar, will present the Lenten study at St. Mark's United Methodist Church, Orinda, Wednesday evenings, Feb. 25-April 8. Soup supper starting at 6:30 pm; program at 7:15. Dr. Zier has presented papers on the Glossa Ordinaria, standard commentary on the Bible from the 12th to the 17th centuries.

Lamorinda Democratic Club, Friday, Feb. 20, 7:30 PM general club meeting, 8 PM speaker: Vincent Warren, Executive Director of the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR), will analyze the role that the Obama Administration must play to restore the rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Calling Lamorinda car collectors of Specialty and Antique Cars to be shown as part of the third annual Moraga Community Faire, May 9, from 11 - 4 p.m. at the Rheem Valley Shopping Center.

Saint Mary's College Guild Game Day and Luncheon. Bridge and Bunco Thus Feb 19, 9:30 to 2:30 St Mary Soda Center. \$28 per person. Luncheon served at 12:30, wine will be available, table prizes Call Shirley Holloway 925-376-6588 for details.

A Real Estate Seminar will be presented by Loretta Barra and Ed Tracey who are both Realtors with Coldwell Banker in Orinda, on Tuesday, Feb. 10th at 6:30pm at the Veterans Memorial Building at 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette.

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

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Public Forum JOIN IT



A sense of community was palpable on the morning of Tuesday, Jan. 20, in the Europa Hofbräu restaurant on Moraga Way, Orinda.

Europa opened its doors to an early morning crowd, departed from tradition and served up breakfast beginning at 7:30 AM and turned on its three big screen TVs – loud – to permit a rapt audience to witness, together, the Presidential Inauguration, taking place all the way across our great country in Washington, D.C.

The crowd was one to be found only in America: Nabil and Maram, born in East Jerusalem; George, born in Jerusalem, many years in Göteborg; Amer, born in Amman; Esther, born in El Salvador, Steve, in Canada, Carl, in Honduras, Luisa, in San Sebastian, the Basque part of Spain; Richard, born in Braintree; Sandy, born in Tulsa; Vergie, born in Los Angeles, Carla, in Rochester, Sue, in Berkeley; Peter, in East Lansing, Mike, in Las Vegas, Bob, west of Spokane, at a little stop along the Great Northern tracks, Joe, in San Francisco; Maggie, in Fayetteville. Many others. Americans all.

A week earlier, Dave, Jim, Carl and George, sitting around in a local coffee shop, thought it would be great addition to our "inaugural experience" if we could witness it together, not sitting in front of our own TV's, in our respective living rooms. So, we approached Europa Hofbräu and proprietors Maria, George, Harry and Lori Boukis (Maria, born in Greece, operating a restaurant in America with a German flavor.) They said, "Yes." And, "We'll turn up those TV's and we'll serve breakfast, too!

So, phone calls were made; signs were put up; e-mails ricocheted around LaMorinda. On Inauguration Day, Europa – certainly the restaurant, maybe the continent, too -- was rockin'. Seventy good folks appeared – from Orinda (some who have been residents here for over 50 years)...Lafayette...Moraga...Martinez...Marin County...San Mateo County...Berkeley. The packed room reverberated with good vibes, good food and good coffee. The audience cheered -- cheered at a bunch of television sets! -- at all the right moments. Acclaim greeted the dignitaries on the screen: Past Presidents and spouses: Carter, Bush, Clinton, and -- now, soon-to-be former President George W. Bush. No matter what our diverse political views might have been, no boos. Then, the Supreme Court Justices, the Vice-President and President-Elect. At the end of the oath of office -- an oath affirmed by a man who affirms our national diversity -- Barack Hussein Obama -- the Europa erupted in applause.

The opening prayer, the oath, the speech, the poem, the music, the benediction, the Star Spangled Banner... over... all too quickly. Power was transferred peacefully -- our nation transformed.

We filed out of the restaurant. We gave our good wishes to Europa Hofbrau, to each other, to our country -- and to ourselves.

A new day in our country. In Orinda, this new day -- community at its best.

By Dave Anderson

Dave Anderson is an attorney and Orinda resident. On Election Day, Nov 4, 2008, he worked as a volunteer in a precinct in Dayton, Ohio as part of the Voter Protection Program sponsored by the Obama campaign.

Letters to the Editor



Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writers and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

All published letters will include the writer's name and town (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only), and should be 350 words or less. Letters may be edited for length or legal considerations.

email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: **Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570**

To the Editor:

Three developers are planning a 16-home planned unit development on the 20-acre property surrounding the Moraga Adobe house in southwest Orinda (near the Del Rey School).

The historic Moraga Adobe house, home of the owner of the Mexican land grant covering most of Lamorinda, may not be preserved in this development. If you wish the Moraga Adobe and several acres around it to be preserved you should e-mail planner Roscoe Mata of the Orinda Planning Department, who is reviewing the plans, and express your concerns. The e-mail address is: rmata@cityoforinda.org.

Residents in the general vicinity of the Moraga Adobe will have a strong interest in the effect of the development on the severe traffic congestion near the Del Rey School. The proposed development will add the traffic from 16 homes to the already severe Del Rey School traffic. If you live in the Lavenida area you will be concerned with the possibility of having Lavenida become an Emergency Vehicle Access route for the development. All area residents will be concerned with the possibility of the two sections of Donna Maria Way being connected as a through street. This would cause an influx of students driving to Miramonte High School and severely worsen the Del Rey School traffic congestion.

Express your concerns to: rmata@cityoforinda.org.

If you wish to be kept informed of how the development is proceeding, send your e-mail address to: barbaravau@att.net.

Barbara Vaughn
Orinda

our community, recently stated by paying property taxes for 53 years, "I believe we have done our part" (Lamorinda Sun, 1/16/09). He behaves as if Prop 13 has had no effect on him or the schools.

Since 1978, based on the assessed value of Mr. Vaughn's home (\$78,357 – CC County website), he has paid approximately \$34,700 in assessed taxes (not including bonds and parcel taxes). But in 2003, a new Del Rey neighbor, in search of a great community with the highest rated public schools in the state, purchased a comparable home for \$500,000. These homeowners will pay at least four times that of Mr. Vaughn's \$1,200 payment. With such disparate levels of taxation, the new owners will have surpassed Mr. Vaughn's 35 years' worth of property tax in just six years! Young families with school-aged children also pay an average of \$1,200 per child to parents' clubs and foundations to enjoy the education our children received before Prop 13.

It is wonderful we seniors can stay in our homes with low tax rates. So when our school officials seek an additional \$124 annual contribution, let's recognize this: honorable Orinda seniors have long supported our public schools, and we stand with them. Vote YES on MEASURE B.

Sincerely,

Sue and Ralph Severson, Carol and Scot Bergren, Mary and John Fazel, Sue and Al Farmer, Penny and Ian Baird, Phyllis and Eugene Gottfried, Ann and Lee Sorenson, Yvonne McDaniel, Jack and Barbara Bontemps, Joan and Bob Montgomery, Pam Gardiner, Nellie and Rudy Glauser, Jeanne and Jack Wickware, Kathy and Bran Yaich, Kate and Max Rittman, Pam Elder, Midge and Peter Zischke,

Jean Lyford
Orinda

To the Editor:

This is in response to Clyde Vaughn's comments about Measure B and the "high value" of Orinda property in the January 21st Lamorinda Weekly.

Clyde, no one wants new taxes, not now or ever. However, these are desperate times for California schools and especially a school district like Orinda that only receives \$5,273/student per year (unlike Hillsborough which receives \$8,150/student). Thanks to Proposition 13 we (along with most school districts in California) do not have enough funds to meet the demands of a high quality education. Now the state budget crises has put even more of a strain on our schools.

I'm thankful that OUSD does so well on such a tight budget with 85% of their financial resources going toward salaries. As for those teacher salaries, according to the School Accountability Report Card published by OUSD on Orinda Intermediate School the average teacher salary for the 2006-2007 school year was \$60,471. This is certainly not enough given the demands of their jobs and our Bay Area cost of living.

I cannot imagine why you don't think Orinda's property values are not the direct result of our top notch schools. Have you been living in a box all these years? Most of the home sales are to families with children because of the schools. If my husband and I could have maintained our wonderful, hip urban lifestyle while covering a mortgage and sending our kids to private schools we would have stayed in Berkeley! We along with many other families moved to Orinda for the schools, and only for the schools. Otherwise, I personally don't find ranch homes in the burbs and the fact I have to drive everywhere all that charming! Clyde, you will have the Orinda schools to thank when you sell your little rancher for a bundle for the great retirement opportunity that awaits you.

As for Measure B, I wish we could fund our schools differently and not have to ask Orinda tax payers to shell out more money, but we have to. As a parent of two, and in the near future three Orinda school children I am willing to pay more for this great education we receive here. Not only does a good education benefit my children, it benefits Orinda and society as a whole.

Maya McBride
Orinda

To the Editor:

A famous American has written: "If we're serious about building a twenty-first century school system, we're going to have to take the teaching profession seriously."

This American called for teachers to be paid \$100,000 annually, adding that "[h]ighly skilled teachers in such critical fields as math and science . . . should be paid even more."

He also said: "In exchange for more money, teachers need to become more accountable . . ."

Thus, it is inexcusable that voters in Lamorinda are constantly bombarded with requests for higher school taxes, and yet get nothing in return.

In November 2008, the Acalanes Union High School District received \$93 million extra from voters. In March 2009, Orinda voters will be asked to come up with 32 percent more in school property taxes.

In both cases, voters received no promises of greater teacher accountability. Why don't the Acalanes and Orinda school districts promise teachers more money in exchange for eliminating tenure? Why don't these districts offer higher salaries to mathematics and science teachers?

The answer is simple: These districts refuse to confront powerful, egalitarian special-interest groups (like the teachers' union). The time has come for voters to say no to any more tax hikes for public schools until and unless voters get guarantees of reform.

And who is that famous American who has called for education reform? His name is Barack Obama, president of the United States. My quotations come from his book, "The Audacity of Hope."

Richard S. Colman
Orinda

Dear Editor,

Many paying attention to education finance in 1978 knew Proposition 13 would cripple public education. And so it has. Its two-thirds requirement for legislated tax increases has similarly crippled state government. Proposition 13 has no sunset and lawmakers consider it the political "third rail." Orinda resident Clyde Vaughn, opposed to every measure aimed to better

Dear Editor:

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. For many Americans, financial worries are an everyday preoccupation at this time. While with the start of a new year and a new administration in Washington we have hope, residents of Contra Costa County, Lamorinda, and Orinda remain concerned about their economic futures.

The Orinda Unified School District has placed a bond measure on the ballot to be voted on this March. Not supporting a school bond measure in Orinda is akin to being unpatriotic. Last November, Measure E was passed raising property taxes to pay for improvements to the local high school district. As a candidate for City Council at that time I did not endorse Measure E for a number of reasons. Living in Orinda for the better part of two decades I have always supported school bond measures but found myself unconvinced by the need for the magnitude of improvements and the consequential tax increase that was proposed.

At this point I am concerned about the timing of another property tax increase. Orindans are not immune to underemployment, unemployment and living on a fixed income. The solution for desired community improvements invariably becomes property taxes. The reality is our City Plan has not adequately addressed the need for increasing sales tax and commercial property tax revenues thus allowing us to meet our needs for infrastructure, schools and other necessary services through means other than increasing property taxes. The Revenue Enhancement Taskforce was recently dissolved by action of the City Council. It remains to be seen to what degree the Council will effectively negotiate with the fire district. At a time in which a number of Bay Area cities are near bankruptcy due to the cost of police and fire services, our community also must be concerned about fiscal responsibility in addressing such needs. I hope that my fellow residents will ask questions of the school board, fire district board, and City Council members regarding their plans for how we might finance proposed public projects in the future outside of the old paradigm that unnecessarily relies upon property tax revenue. Wishing you all a happy new year,

Dr. Bob Larsen
Orinda

Editor:

Orinda School Tax Measure B Is Flawed.

Any parcel tax should have an ending date and not go on forever. Because this tax goes on forever, the voters have no right to adjust the tax as state financing for schools is adjusted. With an ending date the Orinda taxpayers would have the right to determine if another tax is needed.

I believe Orinda voters are not provided full disclosure of the requirements to qualify for a Senior Exemption. Seniors are led to believe they will benefit from a Senior Exemption whereas in reality the qualification requirements are so stringent very few Orindans will qualify. According to the Orinda School District Business Office, the Orinda household income must not exceed approximately \$43,050 to qualify for the exemption.

If the School District used the median income of Orinda taxpayers in their calculations, more than 70 Orinda seniors would qualify for the exemption. Instead, it appears the School District will use the overall lower median income of Contra Costa County taxpayers.

Since Orinda taxpayers will pay the parcel tax, the qualifications for a Senior Exemption should be based upon the median income of Orinda taxpayers.

This School tax proposal is flawed because I believe the tax should have an ending date, the Senior Exemption is based on wrong requirements, and voters are not given full disclosure on specifics of the tax.

Vincent Maiorana
Orinda

Public Forum JOIN IT

If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda or one of its cities that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don't despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section.

Just send your letter to letters@lamorindaweekly.com and let us know you'd like to be considered for the Public Forum.

Lamorinda's Religious Services



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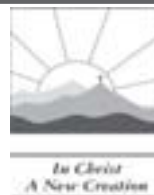
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Friday Night BLAST! Kids Club @ 6pm
Saturday Night Catalyst (Young Adults) @ 7:30pm



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LAMORINDA Seniors • Full House at Rheem for the Rossmoor Big Band



Les Peterson on stage at the Big Band Dance

Photo Andy Scheck

"It was a great evening for everyone," says Mo Levich, Director of the Rossmoor Band, "I had never seen our 3 communities work so much in harmony, the music bridged all that, we were one community dancing together." Levich believes that the evening was one of the

band's most successful events; it was sold out beforehand. "We do plan more events at the Rheem," he adds, "maybe quarterly." Levich wanted to thank Tom Peterson, co-owner of the theater, and the Lamorinda Weekly for terrific coverage.

Not to be missed

Holistic Self-Care for the Family Caregiver: A Lecture and Practice Workshop. This event will introduce holistic self-care philosophy and interactive modalities for family members in a care giving role as a means of gaining and sustaining mind-body-spirit wellbeing. Sunday, February 15th, 12:30pm till 4:00pm. Concord Senior Center. \$20 if registering before January 15 or \$25 if after January 15, 2009 deadline Cost includes lecture, two workshops and a healthy buffet. To Register On-Line: www.cjcc.org/millman and click on special events, or contact the Millman Respite Center at 925-938-7800 ext. 257 for more information.

Monday, Feb 9 from 7-9 pm.
 "The Stroke Support Group of Contra Costa County will hold its monthly meeting in the Ball Auditorium at John Muir Medical Center-Walnut Creek Campus, 1601 Ygnacio Valley Road. Kyle Sullivan, CO, will discuss WalkAide, an adaptive electrical stimulation device for drop foot. After his talk, attendees will break up into three coping groups: stroke survivors without aphasia, stroke survivors with aphasia, and caregivers of stroke survivors, each group led by a trained professional. For more information, contact Ann Dzuna at 925-376-6218. Meetings are free and open to the public.

Sat., Feb 7 and 14, 10 am to Noon
 Widowed Persons Support will be offering a series of GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS. St. Stephen's Church, 66 St. Stephens Drive, Orinda. These meetings are led by trained Facilitators. There is no charge and no need to make a reservation, just walk in. For information call: 510-932-3448.

Mon., Feb 9 and 23 - 1:30 - 2:30
 The Peripheral Neuropathy Group will meet AM in the Las Trampas Room at Hillside Club House. This will be a get acquainted and sharing of experiences time. Peripheral Neuropathy is a little known ailment and there has been no cure found. It has been found that people can help each other by sharing their experiences with Peripheral Neuropathy. There is no cost. For questions of any kind please contact Nancy Ostrander at 930-9524 or Carolyn Cash at 254-8195.

Mon., Feb 9 and 26 1:30-2:30pm
 Bi-Monthly Caregiver Support Group. Caring for frail older adults in the home often creates great stress and emotional anguish for spouses and family members. Licensed geriatric care manager Carol Shenson, M.A., CMC, offers a bi-monthly support group for family members who are considering or currently involved with the direct care of an older relative. To sign up, call 284-5050. Drop-ins welcome.

Tuesdays, Feb 10, 1-2:30pm
 Mollie Fujioka will relate what it was like to be traumatically uprooted by order of the United States government to live under harsh conditions at the infamous Tule Lake interment camp in California during WWII. She will cover not only what life was like during those childhood formative years - she graduated from high school there! - but also how she and her family have managed not only to survive but to thrive. Lafayette Community Center, 500 St Mary's Rd.

Thu. Feb 12 & 26, 1:00-2:30pm
 Embracing Aging with Story and Movement. Marlyns Tobias, InterPlay leader and dancer. Ease, joy, and playfulness can be an integral part of your life. We will share our stories and discover the wisdom of our bodies through movement. All bodies and hearts welcome. Lafayette Community Center, 500 St Mary's Rd.

Thu. Feb 12 & 26, 10:30 - noon.
 Positive Living Forum presents eminent speakers and a wide range of topics that will stimulate and guide participants towards a more ideal and positive life experience. Drop-ins are welcome. Lafayette Community Center, 500 St Mary's Rd.

Fridays, Feb 13 and 27, 1-2:30pm
 Self-Discovery and Aging - Creative Writing Workshop. A creative writing workshop based on the themes of self-discovery, aging, and healing will be offered by Izabela Filipiak, international lecturer and writer. Participants will create both semi-autobiographical and fictionalized narratives seeking inspiration from Leonora Carrington's deep, funny, and imaginative novel, The Hearing Trumpet, and other literary masterpieces as well as their own life experiences. Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Rd.

Thursday, February 19, 1-3pm
 Italian Antipasti—Recipes from Italian families will be used to assemble, serve and taste delicious dishes suited for elegant parties. Emeritus College instructor Lucia Falcone, a native of Italy and author Over Bridges Across Tables, will present one session from 1 to 3 p.m., Thursday, February 19, at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Marys Road, Lafayette. The fee: \$30. To register or obtain a free copy of a spring catalog, visit www.dvc.edu/emmeritus or call (925) 906-9105.

Friday Feb 20, 1:30 - 2:30pm
 Afternoon Piano Jazz Café at the Community Center Featuring Members of the Contra Costa Performing Arts Society on. The music varies from show tunes and jazz standards to original compositions. There is no charge, but, a small donation would be appreciated. Light refreshments are offered. Call Lafayette Senior Services at 284-5050 to let us know you are coming. Lafayette Community Center, 500 St Mary's Rd.

Fri. Feb 27th, 11:30am -12:30pm
 Anne Randolph Workshop. Injuries due to falls are the single major reason for hospital admissions. Come and learn how you can take control and stop yourself from becoming a statistic. All it takes is a willingness to change (just a little). There is no charge. Please call (925)284-5050 to register. Lafayette Community Center, 500 St Mary's Rd.

Lafayette Senior Services Commission meets on the 4th Thursday at 3:30 - 5:30: PM at the Lafayette Senior Services Center. Interested citizens may view meeting agendas at the City of Lafayette office or at www.ci.lafayette.ca.us.

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LAMORINDA Seniors

Meet Lafayette's New Senior Workout Instructor

By Cathy Tyson



Seniors participating in the Muscle Shapers class at the Lafayette Community Center

Photo Cathy Tyson

The Lafayette Community Center has a brand new exercise instructor for seniors, who contributes more than just upbeat Glen Miller tunes to the Muscle Shapers class.

Along with three pound free weights, Gaila Leberz brings a wealth of academic dance experience and a lengthy job history of working with older adults in dance and movement therapy. Having taken over from instructor Sherry Ayres, landing this position was part good timing, part kismet.

"The customers are ex-

tremely excited," said Annie Blodgett, Community Center Administrative Assistant noting that the seniors insisted, "in a nice way" that a replacement be found. Leberz had just moved to Moraga from Carmel at the time.

Lucky class participants at the Center benefit from her academic background. While a student at UC Santa Cruz, Leberz decided she'd like to be a professional ballerina. But at almost six feet tall – that was not in the cards. So she stayed in school and obtained a B.A. in Theater

Arts/Dance from UCSC. Following that, she went to NYU and studied modern dance with the legendary Martha Graham at NYU, graduating with a Master of Fine Arts degree in Theater Arts/Dance. In 1995 Leberz went back to school and received a Master of Arts in Dance and Movement Therapy from UCLA.

She has put all that training to good use, teaching for ten years in L.A. and three years in Carmel where she worked with seniors as a movement therapist and exercise teacher.

This recent move to Lamorinda, just one in a long line of moves, was due to opera singer husband Louis Leberz's new status as "Artist in Residence" at Saint Mary's College. Starting from an early age, because her Dad was a diplomat with the Foreign Service; Leberz has lived all over the world. As a child, wherever the family went, be it Brazil or Venezuela, her mom made sure to sign Gaila up for dance class because it was her passion, and a great way to make new friends.

As a young woman, she moved to Germany and Switzerland, then back to the States as Louis' career flourished.

Now at the Lafayette Community Center, she teaches the Muscle Shaper class to active seniors. They really enjoy the fast-paced session, which starts with a fifteen minute warm up, thirty minutes of light weights and fifteen minutes of stretching. Each facet is designed to help with balance and strength and the entire hour is accompanied by upbeat big band music. Classes are held Monday Wednesday and Friday from 10:30 – 11:30.

"Come and try it, the first class is free, see if you like it," encourages Leberz. Additional classes are just \$5. Just bring your own three pound weights and a cushioned mat. For those who prefer to exercise while seated in a chair, there is talk of starting a Tuesday and Thursday class, with a similar format and perky music. For more information, contact Gaila Leberz at (925) 388-0624 or the Lafayette Community Center at (925) 284-2232.

A Dozen Ways to Age Well

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

"The idea is to die young as late as possible." Ashley Montagu



Richard (86) and Anna Marie (80) Lininger of Lafayette swim at least one hour every morning at Oakwood Athletic Club in Lafayette. Over the last ten years, Anna Marie went from 10 laps to now swimming a mile a day Photo Andy Scheck

My father, with characteristic cynicism and humor, says about aging, "If you're lucky enough, you'll get there!" To further that fortune, why not promote living a longer time in good health? A goal can be to age well, stay vibrant, strong and flexible, and slow down the incidence of disease. My following suggestions are simple and can be added to your daily life with a minimum of expense:

1) Improve absorption of the food you eat – After age 50, digestive enzyme production decreases, and supplementation may be prudent. When food passes through the digestive tract, the opportunity for nutrient absorption is brief. If food is not absorbed, nutrients are not taken in and nutritional deficits can occur. Full-spectrum digestive enzymes (with proteases, lipases, and amylases) can be taken at low doses with large meals of the day to prevent this.

2) Lower blood pressure – This can be done through stress reduction, exercise, the intake of omega 3 fats, lower salt intake, biofeedback, and of course, medication. It's important to lower blood pressure in order to decrease strain to the cardiovascular system. In a recent meta analysis, garlic was found to decrease systolic blood pressure. Consult with your doctor or nutritionist.

3) Lower cholesterol – Besides statin drugs, there are a number of ways to lower cholesterol. Fiber can help, since it pulls cholesterol out of the body during digestion. Ground flax seeds are a good form of fiber and also have been shown to reduce the incidence of colon cancer.

4) Prevent vitamin B deficiencies – Deficiencies occur from age, alcohol intake, stress, and enzyme defects. Vitamin B12 can be given in the form of inexpensive injections, and can be helpful with maintaining cognitive function during and after stressful incidences. Shots increase tissue levels more rapidly

than vitamins.

5) Increase omega 3 fat intake – These fats assist the body with mood, memory, cognitive function, cardiovascular health, the reduction of inflammation, and skin, hair and nail quality. 1,200 mg. of EPA and 800 mg. DHA are standard adult dosages; this may vary depending on the desired effect.

6) Monitor vitamin D levels – This fat-soluble vitamin is essential for bone quality, and has antidepressant and anti-cancer functions. Many people have low Vit. D levels, and it is most common in the elderly. The blood test is called 25-hydroxy Vitamin D. Genomics tests can also be performed to check for low levels of Vit. D receptors. A person low in receptors would benefit from higher than average doses of Vitamin D, in order to saturate receptors and allow adequate absorption.

7) Add fiber – Fiber helps lower cholesterol, and can prevent constipation and colon cancer. Fruits, vegetables, beans, peas, lentils and unrefined grains such as wheat, rye or oat berries are the best source of fiber; refined foods made of wheat and sugar are not.

8) Avoid/Limit refined carbohydrates – In earning my master's degree in nutrition, I was surprised to learn that carbohydrates are not required for the maintenance of life in humans. The "3 whites", white flour, white sugar, and salt, promote deterioration, not nutrition.

9) Exercise – This is one of the main ways to stay young in later years. There are so many ways to stay active – walking, hiking, yoga, weightlifting, classes in dance, jazzercise, aerobics, swimming. The choice is up to you, and depending on your level of ability and interests, quite abundant.

10) Stretch – Staying flexible is probably one of the main activities ignored until it is significantly decreased. Yet, stretching

can improve coordination, which can save one from falling, losing grip of objects, and associated strains and sprains.

11) Manage stress – Divert that stress by staying connected to others. Volunteer, become a mentor, call and email friends and family often. In essence, do not isolate. You are valuable to the community!

12) Have adventures – Outdoor travel, indoor exploration, it's up to you. Be creative. Express yourself. Try new things. Research shows that those who continue to learn keep brain cells healthy.

In a future article, I will introduce the concept of "healthspan." Until then, be well, take charge of your health, and consult health professionals who are interested in helping you with your health and fitness goals, not just disease management.



Dr. Theresa Tsingis, D.C., M.S., practices at Lamorinda Nutrition, 89 Davis Road, Orinda. She can be reached at drtsingis@comcast.net or (925) 254-1080.

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Stimulus Package: No Pork for Lamorinda

... continued from page 1

"Contracts for all of these projects could be awarded within 90 days pending selection for funding," said Steve Falk, Lafayette City Manager. "The 90-day deadline to award and 30 days to obligate the funds are the most current timeframe requirements that we have received from the CCTA." Falk noted that these priorities, projects, and even project descriptions are subject to change.

In Orinda, staff had prepared an ambitious list of projects amounting to more than \$2 million, which boiled down to a pavement rehabilitation project of a continuous 4,530 foot section of collector streets at Charles Hill Road, Honey Hill Road, and Miner Road.

Lafayette had prepared a list of seven projects with a cost amounting to nearly \$4 million. With \$740,000, Lafayette would focus renovation on Deer Hill Road and its overlay, along with minor repairs on 1.2 miles of a major two-lane regional arterial, along with related bike lane upgrades, and minor sidewalk and shoulder improvements. On St. Mary's Rd., work would include overlay over 3/4 of a mile of the major two-lane regional arterial along with related shoulder improvements and drainage.

In Moraga, Mercurio had a list of three projects that could be ready to go within the time-frame. The allocation allows for applying a rubber cape seal to Moraga Road between Buckingham Drive to Draeger Drive.

The three towns are happy with the allocation, even though they obviously could use more. "I'm not at all disappointed by the \$740,000 that Lafayette might receive," said Falk. "This is very good news! It's money that we would not otherwise have received."

"Every bit helps," added Monica Pacheco, assistant to the Orinda City Manager. "We are pleased to receive the money so we can begin work on much need road repairs."

Unless the schedule from MTC or the federal government changes, Tatzin explained that funds might be reallocated if some jurisdictions are not ready within three weeks. Some jurisdictions allocated millions might have a harder time approving projects by the Feb. 15 deadline (Richmond got more than \$4 million and San Pablo \$3 million).

"I expect that all jurisdictions, including the three Lamorinda cities, will work very hard to meet the deadline."

If all goes according to plan, the work will start this summer.



Kurt Piper

Presents...

5 Great Lafayette buys!



1750 Reliez Valley Road

- 4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, 2800 sq. ft.
- Nearly 1/2 acre lot. Flat backyard.
- Remodeled kitchen and baths.
- Dual pane window and other upgrades.
- Huge downstairs bonus room.

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990 Condit Road

- 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, 2100 sq. ft.
- Flat 1/4 acre lot. Paver patio & driveway.
- New master suite and other upgrades.
- New Dual pane windows throughout.
- Oversized two car garage.

Offered at \$979,000



42 Knox Drive

- 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, 1700 sq. ft.
- 1/2 acre lot in a park-like setting.
- Updated kitchen and baths.
- Soaring ceilings and walls of glass.
- Private location. Happy Valley school.

Offered at \$799,000



916 Colina Court

- 2 bedrooms, 1 bath, 900 sq. ft.
- Charming cottage. Flat backyard.
- Hardwood floors. Wood doors.
- Cozy brick fireplace.
- Walk to town, trail and schools.

Offered at \$599,000



3518 Hamlin Road

- 4 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, 4100 sq. ft.
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- Complete remodel and expansion.
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- Great close in location.

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Lamorinda Home Sales continued



LAFAYETTE	Last reported: 3
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$600,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,250,000
MORAGA	Last reported: 3
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$470,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,510,000
ORINDA	Last reported: 6
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$650,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$2,800,000

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

1170 Brown Avenue, \$600,000, 12-30-08
 1534 Rancho View Drive, \$1,200,000, 5 Bdrms, 2310 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 12-29-08
 3153 Somerset Place, \$1,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 1911 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 1-5-09

MORAGA

1248 Larch Avenue, \$1,510,000, 5 Bdrms, 3392 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 1-9-09
 179 Miramonte Drive, \$470,000, 3 Bdrms, 1742 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 1-6-09
 41 Sanders Ranch Road, \$1,170,000, 3 Bdrms, 2341 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 12-30-08

ORINDA

35 Candle Terrace, \$2,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 4216 SqFt, 1992 YrBlt, 12-30-08
 82 Claremont Avenue, \$650,000, 3 Bdrms, 660 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 12-26-08
 65 Coral Drive, \$985,000, 4 Bdrms, 1982 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 12-30-08
 539 Miner Road, \$1,700,000, 5 Bdrms, 3806 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 1-9-09
 570 Orinda Woods Drive, \$1,735,000, 4 Bdrms, 2980 SqFt, 2005 YrBlt, 12-30-08
 15 Whitehall Drive, \$750,000, 3 Bdrms, 1850 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 1-6-09

Tax Freedom Day

By Stephen D. Tonjes, CPA

For 2008 Tax Freedom Day was April 23, 2008. We are waiting to hear what day it will be for 2009. Each year the Tax Foundation calculates the number of days that taxpayers must work in order to pay the federal and state income tax, social insurance taxes, sales and excise taxes, property taxes, corporate income taxes, other taxes, and estate and gift taxes. Taxpayers spent 113 days laboring to pay the taxes that the taxing authorities said they owed for 2008. As we head into this tax filing season we hope that you are giving some thought to your personal Tax Freedom Day.

How can you celebrate your personal Tax Freedom Day sooner? It really comes down to planning and understanding where the opportunities lie and

where there are pit falls. Let us focus for a moment on the federal individual income tax. The key areas are:

Determining your Gross income:

- (a) exclusions and tax exempt income;
- (b) deferral opportunities;
- Deductions from gross income to arrive at Adjusted Gross Income (AGI);
- Deductions from AGI arriving at taxable income;
- Regular tax rates, capital gains rates, penalties and interest;
- Taking advantage of tax credits; and
- Minimizing the alternative minimum tax monster and the kiddie tax.

We start by determining your gross income. That should be easy right? For example if

your employer pays for your medical insurance that is part of your gross income right? The answer is no. Though your employer paying for your medical insurance is part of your compensation it is not part of your gross income. The tax law provides certain exclusions from gross income, of which employer paid medical insurance is one of them. If an item is excluded you will never pay income taxes on it. Are you taking advantage of all the exclusions that are available to you? Are you discussing what these exclusions are with your tax advisor? Now that you are taking advantage of the items that are excludible what next? We start looking at ways to defer the income taxes that you would otherwise pay on a taxable event. Some common methods of

deferral are contributions to a Section 401(k) plan, Section 1031 like-kind exchanges, installment sales, and annuities. Are you taking advantage of all your deferral opportunities?

Then we start looking at your deductions. What deductions are deductible from gross income to arrive at AGI? This is important because there are a number of limitations that are triggered based upon what your AGI figure is.

We will explore these deductions, tax rates, tax credits, the alternative minimum tax monster and the kiddie tax in future columns. In the mean time we encourage you to talk to your tax advisor and then we can all celebrate Tax Freedom Day sooner rather than later.



Stephen D. Tonjes, CPA, is a partner in the firm Tomei & Tonjes, LLP in Lafayette CA. Steve has thirty years of diversified tax experience and is a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants and the California Society of Certified Public Accountants. Stephen D. Tonjes can be reached @ (925)-283-8700, Ext 105. Steve@tomeiandtonjes.com.

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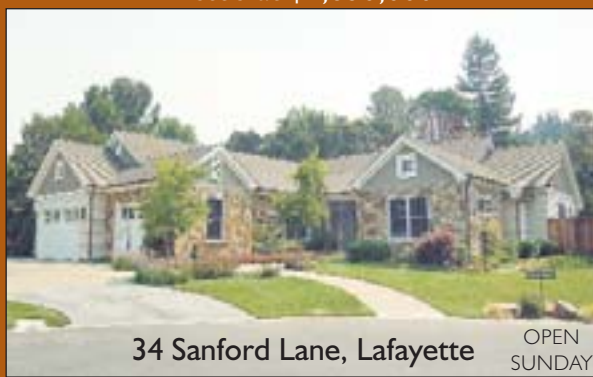


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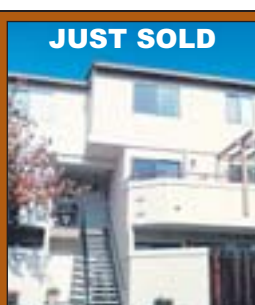


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business briefs

ClimatePath Brings Clarity to Carbon Offsetting, www.ClimatePath.org, PO Box 6125, Moraga, 265-1710

The urgency of doing something effective to fight climate change struck ClimatePath co-founder Dave Rochlin as he was working in the Fair Trade industry. The recurrence of tornadoes that were devastated plantations in poor countries dawn on him as a dramatic consequence of our consuming behaviors. With partner Katy Foreman he decided to establish ClimatePath, a service that let individuals and businesses purchase the carbon offsets of their choice. "If you are on an international flight, your carbon consumption jumps, there are ways to offset your contribution to the carbon emissions that has been released in the atmosphere," says Rochlin, "what we propose is to give our customers a clear choice of how they want to offset this. For example, contributing to a specific reforestation project might be a direct compensation that you might want to choose." Acting as a service provider, ClimatePath helps determine individuals' or businesses' footprints and the clearer way to become carbon neutral. "We are set up part as a non-profit and part as a commercial business," explains Rochlin. This composition allows for donations to be tax deductible. "It is urgent to act," says a determined Rochlin, "some even say it is too late, but if we all examine how we live and act on it, we will reverse the trend." Conservation and offsetting are the two most efficient ways of doing this, as long as you apply to offsetting clarity and efficiency. That's what ClimatePath is doing, using the techniques of social activism, fair trade traceability and web communication. (See Rochlin and Foreman's monthly column, Green and Greener, in every other issue of the Lamorinda Weekly).



Dave Rochlin Photo provided

Mammogram and Pelvic Exam Center Opens at the Mercantile Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, 3595 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite 350, Lafayette, 962-9129

Alta Bates Summit Women's Health Center in Lafayette opened in November with state-of-the-art digital imaging mammography screenings and pelvic health physical therapy services.

Wine & Cheese, and Banking? Pacific National Bank in Moraga will host a Customer Appreciation Day Saturday, Feb 7th from 1-4 p.m., 1470 Moraga Rd., Moraga, 631-1820

Pacific National Bank thanks the town of Moraga for all its support. To show the community how much their business is valued, the bank will host a gathering at the Moraga branch. There will be raffles and food, and since Valentine's Day is around the corner, that will be the theme of the day.

St Mary's Florist Goes From Bricks To Web-Only Operation stmarysflorist.net - 376.5558 - moragaflores@yahoo.com

Sandra Meilly has been running St Mary's florist for 3 1/2 years in the Moraga Center next to Longs Drugs. But times are getting tough for an industry offering what many consider a luxury item and Meilly couldn't continue with her margins getting eroded. "We will continue to do business via the website and thru the phone," says Meilly, who believes that not having to pay for rent and utilities will be enough savings to keep her afloat and will prevent her from having to raise her prices. "We will continue to offer the same quality floral creations," she says. The florist already had a web site that she has developed to accommodate larger traffic. She plans to continue to work with the same suppliers and will share a small local studio to create the arrangements. "The fact that we remain local allows us to offer free Lamorinda delivery," explains Meilly, who lives in Orinda. She adds that orders reaching her before 2p.m. will be delivered the same day. "I anticipate that half the people will call me and the other half will order from the web site." The website proposes standard flower arrangements that have been created for giving ideas and easy shopping, but Meilly will be happy to continue to accommodate special requests.

News from the Three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

Try Lafayette First announces the winner of the holiday season campaign. As promised, the Chamber of Commerce gave out \$1000 worth of gift cards and prizes to one of the many residents who pledged to try Lafayette first for their holiday shopping. Frank Stran of Lafayette was the lucky winner with gift cards from many businesses including Postino, Sharp Bicycle, Clocks Etc, the Lafayette Book Store, Knoxx, Powell's Sweet Shoppe, Lafayette Car Wash and many more.

Access to Capital Workshop - Saturday, February 7 - JFK University - 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. Lafayette Chamber of Commerce is partnering with the Greater Concord, Martinez, Pleasant Hill and Walnut Creek Chambers to present a workshop entitled "Access to Capital" on Saturday, February 7th at JFK University, 380 Civic Drive, Pleasant Hill. This workshop is designed specifically to help business owners find the much needed capital to run your business during this very difficult time. Cost is \$25 for Chamber members / \$30 for non-members. Space is limited. To RSVP call Ingrid at 687-0700.

Monthly Mixer - Wednesday, February 11 - 5:30 p.m. - The GNU Group - 3445 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
 The GREEN Committee - Wednesday, February 18 - 12 noon - Lafayette Chamber Conference Room
 Entrepreneur's Club - Thursday, February 19 - 8:30 a.m. - Lafayette Chamber Conference Room

Moraga Chamber of Commerce

During its January 30th meeting the Chamber invited Stu Carty, Regional Director of Constant Contact. His company's software allows users to better manage their online marketing campaigns. Roos Pal from Terzetto Cuisine who has been a user for a few months, testified that the messages she has sent to her customers presenting special events have been very successful, immediately converting into many reservations. On February 17th he will come back for a more practical workshop on Constant Contact from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Hacienda de las Flores.

Monthly Mixer - Tuesday, February 24th - evening meeting at 6 p.m. at the Hacienda de las Flores. Pot luck dinner, bring a dish to share!

Orinda Chamber of Commerce

Orinda Chamber Mixer Thursday - February 26th, 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Orinda House, 65 Moraga Way, Orinda. Ron Bonner, owner of The Orinda House will be hosting the event, and Cathy Lonsdale of NorCal Publishing (Orinda Chamber Directory Publisher) is co-sponsoring.

The Chamber is now offering the "second generation" of "Shop Orinda" bags. These bags are of great community and environmental benefits, and the new rendition is even better than the first. Merchants can pick-up bags any Wednesday at the Chamber Offices (located at 26 Orinda Way), or can now order and pay online on the Chamber's web site.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com or call our office at 925-377-0977.

Diablo Foods and Local Merchants: a Relationship that's here to Stay

By Sophie Braccini



Connie Collier with a cart full of local products Photo Sophie Braccini

When Connie Collier (the daughter of Lafayette Diablo Foods founder Ed Stokes) went to the Jan. 24 San Francisco International Food Expo, she was on a local mission. "I'm always on the lookout for what is produced locally," she says. "With dozens of products that would satisfy the pickiest 'locavores,' Diablo Foods makes a conscious effort to promote producers from the East Bay (and North Bay for the cheeses)."

The range of local products that the store carries is as wide as the store itself.

You can find Black Diamond beer from Concord and many wines from the East Bay including the Parkmon Vineyard label from Moraga, in the beverage section, or condiments such as Cal-Q BBQ sauce from Danville, Comforts dressings and tomato sauce from San Anselmo.

Looking for something sweet? The dessert section includes Gelato Classico from Concord, the luscious Recchiuti chocolate sauce from San Francisco, or the Mountain Fruit jams from Chico. You can even find locally processed Lotus Foods rice and Coffee Magic which has been roasted locally for 30 years.

"When we started to sell our olive oil retail, the logical place to sell it was Diablo Foods," says Sandi Lutsko, producer of Capey

Olive Oil. "We live on the hill behind the store, and our kids went to school together. I knew they would

be interested in the kind of quality product we are making."

When the Lutskos looked to buy land in order to grow more plants, they had to go a little further than their native Lafayette - buying a 70 acre parcel in Capey Valley, 80 miles away, where baby olive trees had been planted. When the trees started producing, the Lutskos harvested it, had it pressed, and entered a regional contest. They won. Since then, the olives are harvested and pressed the same day with their company carrying the seal of the California Olive Oil Council.

"It guarantees that our first press olive oil is genuine, has been tasted for flavor and is less than two years old," says Lutsko proudly.

"This is the kind of story that I love," says Collier. "We know the people, how they work and we are proud to offer their products to the public."

Diablo Foods is also promoting organic cosmetic and cleaning products made by a Lafayette mother, Laurie Walter, owner of the Chartreuse line.

"I've been working with Connie since last October," says Walter.

... continued on page 17

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mately 2644 square feet, and amenities including: formal living and dining rooms, open family room, large sumptuous master suite, hardwood floors, dual pane windows with plantation blinds, and a newly refinished sparkling swimming pool.

The family-friendly neighbor-

hood has sidewalks, a community pool, is close to Campolindo High School and within a short distance to BART.

For a life of calm and tranquility, you'll want to call this house your home.



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SCHOOL CALENDAR

School Governing Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2009 at 7:30
(location of the 2/4 meeting has been changed to Las Lomas High School Theater, 1460 S. Main St., Walnut Creek)

Monday, February 9, 2009 at 6:00
– Special Meeting to hear public comment and input on the proposed budget cuts (location: Del Valle Library)

Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2009 at 7:30
(*Ed. Note: Budget-related actions may be taken at this meeting)

Lafayette School District

LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
Wednesday, Feb. 18 at 7:00

Moraga School District

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
Tuesday, Feb. 10 at 7:30

Orinda Union School District

OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
Monday, Feb. 9 at 4:00

Lamorinda Schools

It's LASF Science Fair Season

By Jean Follmer

The LASF Science Fair season is here and the Lafayette schools are busy with preparations. The LASF Science Fairs require many hours and often months of planning and behind-the-scenes efforts of many dedicated volunteers. Springhill Elementary was the first Lafayette School to hold its LASF Science Fair this year. "We started planning in November and it took over 65 parents and volunteers," said Springhill LASF Science Fair Co-Chair Sharon Kidd. The efforts proved successful and the school experienced a higher student participation rate than last year. "Almost all of the classes had over a 50% participation rate and I think that's really impressive," said Springhill Co-Chair Rhodora Del Rosario.

The rest of the Lafayette schools have LASF Science Fairs scheduled later this month and in March: Happy Valley Elementary on February 19, Lafayette Elementary on February 26, Burton Valley Elementary on March 19 and Stanley Middle on March 25. Mary Ilyin and Maureen Bagley are co-chairing the LASF Science Expo at Stanley this year. Ilyin chaired her first LASF Science Fair as a Lafayette Elementary parent and is now chairing Stanley's LASF Expo for the second time.

Stanley holds the LASF Science Expo every other year, alternating with the LASF Rube Goldberg Fair. Ilyin said she and Bagley have been planning the Stanley Expo for months and she'll have logged between 80 and 100 hours by the time it's over. The Stanley Expo will include options such as a wheelchair obstacle races, a head injury specialist showing what can happen if you don't bother to wear or buckle your helmet, star-gazing with the Lawrence Berkeley Labs, the Lindsay Wildlife Museum and Guitar Hero. "We try to have a diverse group. We try to have it diverse enough so kids who are into astronomy can look at the stars and kids

who are into animals can experience animals. Science is in everything we do in life," said Ilyin. Ilyin encourages the public to attend the LASF Science Expo at Stanley.

Lafayette Elementary parent Janet Estee is co-chairing the



school's LASF Science Fair this year. Estee is a Molecular Biologist and works on gene therapy at Sangamo BioSciences. "Last year I was a guest scientist at the (LASF Lafayette Elementary) science fair and I wanted to get more involved," said Estee. Guest scientists are generally parent volunteers in white LASF lab coats. The lab coats make the interviews seem more official to the students and a number of the volunteers are actually in a science-related field. They interview the student scientists about their projects to discover what may have motivated the student to do the particular project and what they learned.

Through LASF, Estee has partnered with the Lafayette Library. Estee said Youth Services Librarian Donna Lenhardt has been especially supportive and has placed numerous scientific experiment books and posters on display throughout the library. "The library has been great pulling the books. The books were gone so quickly at Lafayette Elementary," said Estee. Estee has a personal collection of antique science glassware that is currently on display at the Lafayette Library.

Estee and her 3rd grader daughter have taken the "science ex-

periment" to a new level. Last year, her daughter extracted DNA from common household products like strawberries and dishwashing soap. Estee said "This year we're going to set up an assembly line so they (the other students) can see how different reagents work." A reagent is a test substance that is added in order to bring about a reaction or to see whether a reaction occurs. They'll show the DNA of an onion. "It starts out a soapy mixture with chopped up onion and then we pour on the isopropyl alcohol. They'll see how the DNA will go through the different layers. The DNA actually just floats up and you can see the strands. I went through it with my daughter, but she actually did it. My daughter wants to do neuroscience – it's sweet of her to want to understand what I do," said Estee.

LASF has been actively involved in the Lafayette and Acalanes Union High School Districts since 1980. LASF is instrumental in providing "curriculum-based programs and support in the areas of science, math, history, writing, foreign language, technology, art, and music to the students of all of Lafayette's public schools." The volunteer organization was founded "in response to education cutbacks resulting from Proposition 13." LASF Executive Director Myrna Kimmelman said the level of participation at each of the LASF Science Fairs is outstanding. The fairs are also visible venues for LASF itself. "I think it's a really wonderful way for the schools to learn more about what LASF does," said Kimmelman. With generous community support and the efforts of over 100 volunteers, LASF was able to raise over \$1 million for the Lafayette public schools last year. LASF is already an essential educational component of the Lafayette Schools. With the current budget crisis, LASF's involvement will only become more critical for Lafayette's public schools.

Not to be missed

"The Truth About Girls' Middle School Experience", a Q&A with a panel of high school girls from all four schools in the Acalanes High School District. These girls have not only attended our local middle schools, but also work with current middle school girls in so they really have a pulse on what is happening in our community. The panel is brought to you and moderated by AAUW (American Association of University Women), aauwoml.org. Join us for a free and lively session Wednesday, February 18th 7:00-8:30 at Orinda Intermediate School Multi Purpose Room. Light refreshments served.

Acalanes High School will hold a blood drive on February 19, 2009 from 8:30 - 2:30 in the Big Gym. Students are strongly encouraged to donate; the public is also welcome. Blood Centers of the Pacific will conduct the drive, with the support of the Acalanes Health Council, Acalanes Leadership Blood Drive committee, Acalanes Parents Club and Healthy Choices committee.

We encourage our donors to sign up online <http://tinyurl.com/bmhft6> That way they are in the database for Blood Centers of the

Pacific and can easily be sent reminders about opportunities to donate. You can donate blood every 2 months! School Nurse Dvora Citron's Blackboard website also has more info on the Blood Drive (tab to the left): <http://tinyurl.com/5zena8>.

Acalanes Parent Ed Presents: Drive Smart, Stay Safe. The California Highway Patrol offers this free class at Acalanes on Tuesday, February 24th, 6:00-8:00 pm, Cafeteria. This program, sponsored by the CHP, is for parents and teens to attend together. It is designed to reduce the number of teenage injuries and deaths resulting from motor vehicle collisions. Space is limited, to register for the class, please sign up at: <http://www.acalanes.k12.ca.us/adulted/html/pehighschool.htm> Class # 056214.

Or email: LGSENDME@SBCGLOBAL.NET

The California State Summer School for the Arts (InnerSpark) is now welcoming applications for 520 motivated high school-aged visual, literary, media and performing artists for its 23rd session in July 2009. The selected students will have the unique opportunity to spend four weeks

studying and working with professional artists, writers and performers of national stature. Instruction is offered in the fields of Animation, Film/Video, Creative Writing, Dance, Music, Theater, and the Visual Arts. The talented teenagers who successfully complete the program receive three units of California State University course credit. Application forms and instructions see www.innerspark.us or call the Sacramento headquarters at (916) 274-5815.

Healthy Bodies, Healthy Mind in High School, College, and Beyond: Helping Your Teen Thrive With Positive Self Image, Tuesday, March 3rd, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm, Acalanes Theatre, no fee. Topics Include: Parent Influence Weight as a Cultural Obsession, Sexuality/Social Life--How self image affects decisions, eating and exercise. What happens when they leave home? Sponsored by Acalanes Parent Ed, for more information email lgsendme@sbcglobal.net.

"Peace through Art and Writing Challenge." The contest is open to Contra Costa County high school and middle school students. The students are invited to enter any of three categories: Essay, Creative Writing, or Art in any medium. All entries are evaluated by independent judges. The theme of this year's challenge is "If you were the President, what measures would you implement to advance world peace?" The deadline for submitting entries is Friday, March 6, 2009. Students are asked to deliver or send their work to the Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek, CA 94596 (writing entries may be emailed to WritingContest@mtdpc.org). Cash prizes, ranging from \$50 to \$500, depending on grade level and achievement, will be awarded to winners

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Family Focus

High School – The Best Years of Our Lives?

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

People in my line of work can say the same thing about practicing therapy as Forrest Gump said about life: "Therapy is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're going to get." Some unpredictable issues arise from time to time.

I've been seeing a college sophomore, "Mia," for over a year, working with her on building confidence and developing healthier relationships. Recently she mentioned how upset she is to have missed out on the best years of her life. When I asked her to explain, Mia said her high school years were supposed to be the best time of her whole life, but she didn't enjoy them. Evidently, she had heard this notion from her parents, a teacher, and some of her friends.

The problem with this concept is twofold; if these years are indeed the best years, then what is there to look forward to afterwards? And if they are the best years, but people like Mia didn't enjoy them, how sad and depressing to have missed out!

This idea must have origi-

nated decades ago, before many of the current pressures in high school existed. The pressures these days are immense: excelling in academics, sports, and other extracurricular activities, being popular and well-liked, getting into a good college, being physically attractive, and maintaining good relationships with family and friends. Often there are financial concerns, family disruptions, and emotional issues with which to contend.

I asked some friends whether their high school years were the best ones of all and got a mixed response. As for me, I think I peaked in fifth grade! No matter what our own experiences were, we need to be careful not to create expectations in the minds of our children. They need to know there is much to look forward to, and the pressures they face in high school will ease in many respects as they get older.

Many college students from the Lamorinda area remark how they find college much easier than high school. Fortunately, they have been well-prepared in our schools,

and they finally have more time for themselves after the harried pace of high school. By college, some students think that these must be the best years of their lives.

High school students need reassurance that while these years are full of ups and downs, the best is yet to come.

I am preparing a column on parents' regrets. We all have some regrets about what decisions we have made as parents. What would you say or do differently in retrospect? Hearing about other parents' regrets can help us avoid feeling too guilty and also allow us to learn from each other. Please email your regret to margierye@yahoo.com. I will use your name only if you authorize permission; otherwise the submissions will be anonymous.

Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a marriage and family therapist in Orinda and Walnut Creek. She can be contacted at 925-376-9323 or margierye@yahoo.com.

Glorietta Auction Goes Online

By T.R. Audley

January marks the home stretch for grade schools that are planning spring auctions. In years past, funds raised might have transformed playground structures or upgraded computer labs. This year, however, with state education budget cuts looming, there may be more fundamental demands for auction dollars.

With these higher stakes and potentially less dispensable income in the pockets of school families, auction committees are pressed to try new approaches. One school has turned to technology for help. On January 21st, Orinda's Glorietta School began their auction online and they're already reaping a reward. "In the first 5 days, we closed bidding on items," reports Catherine Pines, Glorietta's auction chair. Prior to event planning last year, Pines stumbled upon a New York Times article about BiddingForGood.com, an online auction site for non-profits. "You go on the website, browse for a charity and then see what they have for sale," says Pines.

Online presales have thus far

included "time sensitive" and "buy now" items. Also posted are out-of-state items such as tickets to the US Open in New York. "Our family has emailed friends in New York so they can bid as well," says Pines.

eMarket, the company that operates BiddingForGood.com, offers

aga, who used the site for their auction last year, "and it's hard to judge the impact, I just know it was necessary." Last year's physical auction site for Los Perales School was too small to display all the items for sale. The story is similar for Glorietta School this year. Out of the over 300 families at Glorietta School, only 170 can attend the auction night due to space limitations. "It's first come, first served," says Pines about ticket sales. "So the online auction is even more important this year to give everyone a chance to participate."

While hopefully allowing for wider family participation, local auction chairs have discovered another perk of auctioning online. "It creates a sense of community at school and a buzz before the auction night," Preto and Pines agree. Since the site allows bidders to see the email user names of those bidding against them, Pines reports "parents are talking and joking with each other at school about who is winning items. It's fun!" Glorietta School's online auction will run through February 18, 2009 at BiddingForGood.com.

Moraga Education Foundation Announces Annual Campolindo High School Mini-Grant Recipients for 2008-2009

Submitted by Erica Zeidenberg

The Moraga Education Foundation (MEF) has announced the recipients of the Campolindo High School 2008-2009 MEF mini-grants. Each year MEF rewards innovation in the classroom by funding teacher-requested "mini-grants". This year the Campolindo MEF Mini-Grants Committee awarded eleven projects totaling \$17,295.50. The awards encompass projects from the science, visual and performing arts, technical education, physical education, special education and social studies departments.

The Campolindo mini-grant awards are for projects this school year. Mini-grants are typically announced in late spring for the next school year. The 2008/09 mini-grants being funded at Campolindo High School are as follows:

SCIENCE DEPARTMENT

Molecular Structure Modeling Set (teacher R. Eaton)

Chemistry and Advanced Placement Chemistry students will build molecules and gain a better understanding of their structure, properties, and intermolecular forces *Inside the Atom (M.Dunaway)* Chemistry students will learn atomic structure and demonstrate the existence of electrons through the use of a paddlewheel Crookes' tube **VISUAL & PERFORMING ARTS DEPARTMENT** *Perfect Portraiture (D. Hovey-LaCour)* Digital photography students will

sharpen their studio photography techniques through the use of larger studio lighting equipment *Careers in Event Production (J. Seligman)* Video Production Students II/III will plan and implement the closing performance of a multimedia festival through the use of professional stage lighting, various drum trigger kit modules, and musical instrument digital interface (MIDI) devices

TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT Campolindo Woodshop Modernization Phase 2: *Table Saw Replacement (D.Dupont)* Students at every level of Wood Technology classes will benefit from using a state-of-the-art Saw-Stop table saw and accessories, as they surface rough lumber into smooth wood for a multitude of wood shop projects

PHYSICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT *Alternative Swimming Activity with the Speedo Hydro Belt (N. Fagan)* Physical Education students with special needs or sports injuries will benefit from the use of a flotation belt during their aquatic physical education activities

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT *Additional Ninth Grade English Resource Materials (B. Holmlund)* Students with learning needs will benefit from using multiple CD sets and synopses of literary works read in Ninth Grade English

SOCIAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT

New World Atlases for Modern World History Projects (L. Herzig) World Atlas classroom reference sets will enhance World History students' understanding of geographic features of the countries they study

Using Literature to Enhance the Study of History (B. Vinton) Classroom sets of Marjane Satrapi's graphic novel *Persepolis* the Story of a Childhood will enhance World History students' understanding of the Middle East and the Iranian Revolution

Bringing to Life the Civil Rights Movement (M. Henrikson) United States History students will deepen their understanding of the civil rights movement by watching the documentary *Little Rock Central High: 50 Years Later* and by reading classroom sets of *Warriors Don't Cry*, the autobiography of Melba Pattillo Beals, one of the Central High students integrated in 1957

Psychology Videos and Manipulatives (B. Rosenberg) Psychology students will study the structure of the brain through manipulating life-size brain models and they will enhance their understanding of human behavior by viewing 26 "Discovering Psychology" video presentations

To learn more about MEF, visit www.mef.moraga.k12.ca.us.



The Stanley Middle School Jazz Messengers, directed by Bob Athayde and assisted by Tommy Davidson, visited all four Lafayette elementary schools to perform their *Around the World in a Day* tour. Although Athayde had suffered a recent back injury, he was present and in great spirits. Photo submitted by Krista McGuire

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College Admissions: The Big Tests

By Elizabeth A. LaScala, Ph.D.

There are few topics that flood my Inbox more than questions about standardized testing. If you plan to apply to one or more selective colleges and universities in the United States, you already know—or will shortly discover—that most require applicants to submit scores from one or more standardized tests. The big tests are the SAT and the ACT.

The latest version of the SAT has 3 sections—critical reading, math and the newest section, writing, which requires students to compose a short essay in response to a prompt as well as answer multiple choice questions. Generally, scores on the SAT are tied to critical thinking and problem solving skills. The SAT is “coachable” so students who put in the time and effort (and parents who write checks) can often improve their scores.

The other big test is the ACT. It has its origins in the American College Testing Program which began in 1959 at the University of Iowa. The ACT was once used exclusively in the Midwest and South, but it is now popular throughout the country. The ACT is more content oriented than the SAT, and ACT questions are more directly tied to what a student learns in grades 7 through 12. The ACT focuses on 4 areas—English, math, reading and science reasoning. There is an optional writing component, and I recom-

mend students take it. It is required by many colleges, and the scores can help determine the student’s placement in college coursework. Virtually all schools that require a student to take standardized admission tests will accept scores from the SAT or the ACT, and many students submit both.

So now you are probably wondering “What test should I take and how much do these scores really matter in the actual admissions process?” Students often take the ACT and the SAT and then decide which test they prefer. There is a high correlation between performance on the SAT and ACT, but once in a while a student performs much better on one of them. If so, this is the test on which to focus your attention.

Students often ask how much test scores matter. Frequent mailings, popular press, college rankings and the general hype surrounding college admissions can vastly distort the importance students place on standardized tests. The most recent report by NACAC (National Association for College Admission Counseling) states that although test scores count significantly in the evaluation of a student’s academic strengths, the overall GPA and rigor of coursework take precedence.

Another common concern is when to test and how to prepare. Most experts recommend students

take one round of standardized tests by the end of the junior year. Although test preparation can be helpful, it is important not to crowd your school schedule with excessive test preparation at the expense of your grades. Many of my clients take their first SAT and/or ACT with minimal preparation in the spring of their junior year. Some wait until summer. After they get their score reports, they have more information about where to focus further preparation. I also recommend that students take free practice tests. Several reputable companies offer proctored practice tests which are scored and sent back, often with valuable feedback. This strategy can be helpful because the scores do not become part of the permanent record, and the student benefits from the practice and analysis of results. Of course there are always students who want to prepare more extensively. The kind of preparation you choose depends on what kind of learner you are and what you can afford in terms of time and money. If you benefit from structure and assignments to stay on track, a group seminar approach can do the trick. If you are a more independent and self directed learner, you can study on your own. If cost is a factor, there are several good study guides and software programs available. My guiding philosophy is that the best preparation for both tests is doing

the best academic work possible. Then you can focus test prep on test-taking strategies rather than subject matter.

A Word on Score Choice

The College Board announced Score Choice in June 2008. As announced to the public, Score Choice is intended to reduce student stress by allowing students to decide which scores to send to colleges. In the past, students had to submit all scores. Since this announcement the college admissions world has pondered, debated, and criticized the policy from every imaginable angle. One common view is that the policy favors wealthier students who can afford extensive preparation and multiple testing attempts. Whether the focus is on issues of equity or how the test prep industry benefits from a business perspective, the facts that students should know are very simple:

Students now have a choice of which SAT scores to provide admissions officers. Colleges have always determined their own admissions requirements and that has not changed one iota because of Score Choice. Since Score Choice was announced,

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institutions across the nation are announcing their policies with respect to it. For example, Yale University recently announced that it will require applicants to send all scores from all test sittings.

My concern as a college advisor is that the already complex admissions process may become more stressful than ever. Some colleges may want to see all scores, others may permit students to choose; meanwhile, a student must pay strict attention to each college’s policy in order to know what to send and when. This could potentially lead to gaps in applications and missed deadlines while a student waits for the most recent round of test scores. My advice to students is to prepare well for whatever test(s) you choose to take, and use practice tests to gain

confidence and improve chances for better scores. Then take the test and send the scores. And put standardized testing behind you, relax, and move on to the next step in the college admissions process.

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.

Miramonte Benefit:

Heart of the Home Kitchen Tour—February 11th

By Andrea A. Firth



Sara Menke with daughter Peyton and son Asher are pictured at the five-seat dining bar in their newly remodeled kitchen in Orinda

Photo A. Firth

The upcoming Heart of the Home Kitchen Tour will showcase six beautifully remodeled kitchens throughout Orinda. From 9:30am to 12:30pm on February 11th, patrons are invited to visit the variety of homes and kitchens that have been assembled for the Tour ranging from a contemporary Italian-styled kitchen within a vintage 1930’s Art Deco home to a country-style kitchen featuring a warm color palette with copper hood and sink to a cozy family kitchen with a baking station, seating nook, and recycling features.

Not to be missed is the newly remodeled kitchen and pantry in the Menke family’s Mediterranean style home. It’s worth the mile-long trek up their steep and winding street to enjoy the vista and witness the transformation of this 1950’s cinderblock home into an Italian paradise. “Supposedly this house was built with more cement than any house

in Orinda,” states Sara Menke, “It even has a bomb shelter.”

Sara, her husband, and three young children have lived in the home for three years. They worked with Orinda contractor Jerry Texdale to convert what had been a red-walled kitchen with shiny, black marble tops into a warm, open contemporary-styled kitchen with Italian accents that more aptly suits the style of the home and their family. The deep brown cabinets are made with an exotic Italian wood, appropriately named Penelli Sapelli, and paired with honed granite in honey black sand and warm yellow and sand-colored tones on the walls and floors. The kitchen includes kid-friendly refrigerator drawers and a family-fitting, five-seat dining bar. A spacious pantry adjacent to the kitchen houses a large refrigerator and looks out onto the patio. Large six to eight foot windows provide impressive views

of the Moraga Valley on one side and Lost Valley and the Oakland Hills on the other.

The Heart of the Home Kitchen Tour will also include designers from Studio Mehler in San Francisco, who will be on hand in two kitchens to answer questions. Orinda-based artist Allison McCrady will offer four paintings in a silent auction and Ron Morgan of Loot in Lafayette will provide a floral arrangement for the raffle. Several other prizes will be available for raffle ticket purchase at the kitchens. Proceeds from the Tour will go toward grad night for the current Miramonte Junior class.

Tour tickets cost \$25.00 and are available at McDonnell Nursery, Orinda Books, Entourage, Allison McCrady Gallery, Lazy K Nursery. Miramonte families can also purchase through the school’s web store. Tour Hotline: 925 235-7232.

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One Warm Coat Drive - Over 55 girls from Rheem Elementary school attended a Hawaiian themed party hosted by 8th grade JM Girl Scout Troop #1540. Guests were asked to bring a used coat to donate to the "One Warm Coat" organization. 84 Coats were collected and donated to the Monument Crisis Center in Concord. Submitted by Karen Seyranian



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Valentine's Treats

By Susie Iventosch



Lafayette Store manager at the Teacake Bake Shop, Chi Hoang, right, and Kelly Tong, left, display the wide assortment of cupcakes and cookies available. Photos Susie Iventosch

Tucked neatly into a corner at 35 Lafayette Circle in Lafayette, the inviting kitchen and store front of Teacake Bake Shop is open to satisfy even the most demanding sweet tooth. Here one can purchase, or special order, cupcakes and cookies for everyday... or special occasions such as Valentine's Day, special anniversaries or birthdays!

The selection includes cookies such as Coffee Toffee Chocolate, Apricot Almond, Chai Latte White Chocolate, Tickle Me Pink (made with cranberries and white chocolate), Lemon Pout and my personal favorite, Oatmeal Coconut Chocolate. Cupcake fantasies range from chocolate to vanilla with daily specials of key lime toasted coconut, honey tangerine, carrot and coffee bean in between, each with a complementary butter cream frosting.

Agnes and Tim Hsu, husband and wife proprietors, opened the first of the three Teacake Bake Shops in Emeryville in 2005 to bring full circle Agnes' academic training in nu-

trition and lifelong passion for baking. Ever since she was a little girl growing up on the outskirts of Paris, she enjoyed diving into buttery Parisian croissants, crusty baguettes and of course, pain au chocolate.

When she was two years old, her family left Vietnam to start a new life in Europe, where she and her three sisters settled into St. Charles, a boarding school run by strict nuns who expected high standards of personal performance of the girls. Here Agnes fell in love with French pastries and cuisine. And, because the convent was self-sustaining, the nuns raised vegetables, chickens and rabbits to provide for the students. Though some might complain of hard work and a stark environment, Agnes credits her experience there for instilling in her a formidable work ethic and a love of scratch baking with the highest quality ingredients and a keen attention to detail.

In fact, when Agnes was five years old, she remembers her mother asking her what she wanted

to be when she grew up, and Agnes replied, "I want to open a boulangerie (bakery)."

Agnes and her family relocated from Paris to the United States in 1983, and Agnes earned a B.S. in Nutritional Sciences from UC Berkeley in 1997 and followed up with a Master's in Nutrition in 2000 from the University of Washington.

Due to have their first child any day now, Agnes and Tim will be nurturing both a newborn baby girl, and three Teacake Bake Shops.

When asked about future plans, Agnes says she'd love to expand the number of stores, but for the near term, given the current economy and the expectation of a new baby, she and Tim are keeping their focus on the three established stores in Lafayette, Emeryville and Corte Madera.

"The Lafayette area is a close-knit community and we've really enjoyed being a part of it," she said.

Store manager, Chi Hoang, says a lot of families frequent the

store. A lot of moms bring their kids into the Lafayette store to pick out a treat," she remarked. "Cupcakes seem to have a special appeal to them. I come from a big family of six kids, so it's really fun for me to see how excited they are when they come in."

In addition to the basic flavors, customers can enjoy daily cookie and cupcake specials as well as shortbread and two types of brownies. Agnes was kind enough to share with readers the recipe for her very special rich and moist brownie bites, made it miniature cupcake tins.

Cupcakes are \$3 each, and cookies are \$2. There is a special Valentine's assortment, packaged in a darling red and white box.

For more information or to place special orders, please call or visit the Lafayette store at 35 Lafayette Circle, phone, 283-9900, or visit www.teacakebakeshop.com.



These recipe is available on our web site. Go to: www.lamorindaweekly.com Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com

Teacake Bake Shop Brownie Bites

*I converted this from metric into U.S. measurements, so the result may be just slightly different from those you can purchase at the stores.

Ingredients

- 1 1/8 cups granulated sugar
- 3 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla (good vanilla such as Nielsen Massey Madagascar Bourbon vanilla)
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup Dutch process cocoa powder, sifted
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 5 ounces semisweet chocolate (Guittard or Callebaut quality)
- 2 ounces unsweetened chocolate (same type)
- 1/4 pound (1 stick) unsalted butter

Directions

Melt chocolate and butter in microwave for a few minutes until melted. (Time may vary depending upon your microwave speed.) The chocolate and butter mixture should be warm to the touch, not hot, when added to the remaining ingredients, so cool slightly before using. Place sugar in mixing bowl. Add eggs to sugar, one at a time, mixing on medium speed of electric mixer or by hand mixer for about 30 seconds after each, until light and fluffy. Mix in vanilla and scrape down sides of bowl. Mix dries together and set aside. Add melted chocolate/butter to sugar/egg mixture on low-medium speed until well blended. Be careful to not over mix. Scrape down sides of bowl. Add dries by hand and stir just until blended. Grease or line mini-muffin tins with liners and scoop about 2 tablespoons of batter into each cup. Bake at 350 degrees for about 20-25 minutes. Tops should be shiny and inside of brownie bites should be moist and fudgy.

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... updated November 26, 2008 ...		
American		
Bistro	3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-7108
Chow Restaurant	53 Lafayette Cir, Laf	962-2469
Quiznos	3651 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	962-0200
Ranch House	1012 School St, Mor	376-5127
Terzetto Cuisine	1419 Moraga Way, Mor	376-3832
The Cheese Steak Shop	3455 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-1234
BBQ		
Bo's Barbecue	3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-7133
Burger Joint		
Flippers	960 Moraga Rd, Laf	284-1567
Nation's Giant Hamburgers	400 Park, Mor	376-8888
Nation's Giant Hamburgers	76 Moraga Way, Ori	254-8888
Café		
Express Cafe	3732 Mt. Diablo Blvd # 170, Laf	283-7170
Ferrari- Luca Delicatessens	23 Lafayette Cir, Laf	299-8040
Geppetto's cafe	87 Orinda Way, Ori	253-9894
Rising Loafer	3643 Mt. Diablo Blvd Ste B, Laf	284-8816
Susan Foord Catering & Cafe	965 Mt. View Drive, Laf	299-2469
California Cuisine		
Gigi's	1005 Brown St., Laf	962-0882
Metro Lafayette	3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-4422
Shelby's	2 Theatre Sq, Ori	254-9687
Chinese		
Asia Palace Restaurant	1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor	376-0809
Chef Chao Restaurant	343 Rheem Blvd, Mor	376-1740
China Moon Restaurant	380 Park St, Mor	376-1828
The Great Wall Restaurant	3500 Golden Gate Way, Laf	284-3500
Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine	1 Orinda Way # 1, Ori	253-9852
Lily's House	3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #A, Laf	284-7569
Mandarin Flower	581 Moraga Rd, Mor	376-7839
Panda Express	3608 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	962-0288
Szechwan Chinese Restaurant	79 Orinda Way, Ori	254-2020
Uncle Yu's Szechuan	999 Oak Hill Rd, Laf	283-1688
Yan's Restaurant	3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-2228
Coffee Shop		
Millie's Kitchen	1018 Oak Hill Rd #A, Laf	283-2397
Squirrel's Coffee Shop	998 Moraga Rd, Laf	284-7830

Village Inn Café	290 Village Square, Ori	254-6080
Continental		
Petar's Restaurant	32 Lafayette Cir, Laf	284-7117
Vino Restaurant	3531 Plaza Way, Laf	284-1330
Duck Club Restaurant	3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-7108
French		
Chevalier Restaurant	960 Moraga Road, Laf	385-0793
Hawaiian Grill		
Lava Pit	2 Theatre Square, St. 142, Ori	253-1338
Indian		
India Palace	3740 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-5700
Swad Indian Cuisine	3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	962-9575
Italian		
Giardino	3406 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-3869
Knox Restaurant, Lounge	3576 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-5225
La Finestra Ristorante	100 Lafayette Cir, St. 101, Laf	284-5282
La Piazza	15 Moraga Way, Ori	253-9191
Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria	975 Moraga Rd, Laf	284-3081
Michael's	1375 Moraga Way, Mor	376-4300
Mondello's	337 Rheem Blvd, Mor	376-2533
Pizza Antica	3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-0500
Postino	3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-8700
Ristorante Amoroma	360 Park St, Mor	377-7662
Japanese		
Asia Palace Sushi Bar	1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor	376-0809
Blue Ginko	3518-A Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	962-9020
Kane Sushi	3474 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-9709
Niwa Restaurant	1 Cammino Soprante # 6, Ori	254-1606
Serika Restaurant	2 Theatre Sq # 118, Ori	254-7088
Tamami's Japanese Restaurant	356 Park St, Mor	376-2872
Yu Sushi	19 Moraga Way, Ori	253-8399
Jazz Dinner Club		
Joe's of Lafayette	3707 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Laf	299-8807
The Orinda House	65 Moraga Way, Ori	258-4445
Mediterranean		
Petra Café	2 Theatre Sq # 105, Ori	254-5290
Oasis Café	3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-8822
Turquoise Mediterranean Grill	70 Moraga Way, Ori	253-2004
Mexican		
360 Gourmet Burrito	3655 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-1270
El Charro Mexican Dining	3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-2345
El Jaro Mexican Cafe	3563 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-6639

La Cocina Mexicana	23 Orinda Way, Ori	258-9987
Mucho wraps	1375-B Moraga Way, Mor	377-1203
Baja Fresh Mexican Grill	3596 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-8740
Celia's Restaurant	3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-8288
El Balazo	3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	284-8700
Maya Mexican Grill	74 Moraga Way, Ori	258-9049
Numero Uno Taqueria	3616 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-1333
Pizza		
Mountain Mike's Pizza	3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-6363
Mountain Mike's Pizza	504 Center St, Mor	377-6453
Pennini's	1375 Moraga Rd, Mor	376-1515
Round Table Pizza	361 Rheem Blvd, Mor	376-1411
Round Table Pizza	3637 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-0404
Village Pizza	19 Orinda Way # Ab, Ori	254-1200
Zamboni's Pizza	1 Cammino Soprante # 4, Ori	254-2800
Sandwiches/Deli		
Bianca's Deli	1480 Moraga Rd # A, Mor	376-4400
Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub	64 Moraga Way, Ori	254-7202
Gourmet Bistro Café	484 Center St, Mor	376-1551
Kasper's Hot Dogs	103 Moraga Way, Ori	253-0766
Noah's Bagels	3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-0716
Orinda Deli	19 F Orinda Way, Ori	254-1990
Subway	396 Park St., Mor	376-2959
Subway	3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf	284-2627
Subway	Theatre Square, Ori	258-0470
Seafood		
Yankee Pier	3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	283-4100
Singaporean/Malaysian		
Kopitiam	3647 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf	299-1653
Steak		
Casa Orinda	20 Bryant Way, Ori	254-2981
Tea		
Patesserie Lafayette	71 Lafayette Cir, Laf	283-2226
Tea Party by Appointment	107 Orinda Way, Ori	254-2206
Thai		
Amarin Thai Cuisine	3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd # B, Laf	283-8883
Baan Thai	99 Orinda Way, Ori	253-0989
Royal Siam	512 Center Street, Mor	377-0420
Siam Orchid	23 Orinda Way # F, Ori	253-1975
Vietnamese		
Little Hearty Noodle, Pho & Pasta	578 Center Street, Mor	376-7600

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.



Happy Valentines

Shop locally whenever you can. Only your support of our local businesses will keep them open!



Couples Massage—You Rub My Back and I'll Rub Yours

By Andrea A. Firth



James Kizziee shows Orinda residents Jennifer and Mike Vigo the techniques of a good massage. Photo A. Firth

A good massage is an exhilarating experience, and who isn't up for a little more excitement in his or her life? We all deserve a good rub down to relax those tense muscles, soothe the aches and pains, and alleviate the stress

that we harbor in our bodies. But time and resources typically prohibit most from the benefits of a rejuvenating massage at the end of each long work week. For those with a partner, Orinda-based massage therapist James Kizziee may

have the answer—couples massage.

A certified massage therapist for over 18 years, Kizziee conducts couples massage sessions teaching clients how to employ his massage techniques on each other. "About 15 years ago, I had a female client who wanted to get her husband a massage for his sore back. She was concerned that he would not be comfortable with a male massage therapist," explains Kizziee. "So I suggested that she let me show her how to do the massage," he adds. Couples massage has been an integral part of Kizziee's massage business ever since.

Kizziee, whose six foot two inch frame and broad muscular physique contrasts with his smooth voice and easy-going manner, provides a good balance of technical training while keeping the couples sessions fun and relaxing. His in-home massage practice, which covers a 200-square mile radius stretching from Sacramento to San Jose and Danville to Pacifica, has been growing consistently among Lamorinda residents.

Orinda natives Mike and Jennifer Vigo, who have been individual massage clients of Kizziee for over five years, recently worked with him on couples massage. "My husband's back always hurts, and I

never felt that I was strong enough to help him out," explained Jennifer, a petite woman, as she followed Kizziee's verbal directions and mimicked the hand strokes he simultaneously used on Mike's back. Although she seemed slightly nervous at the outset, Jennifer was quickly put at ease and became comfortable with the process as Kizziee moved about the table and guided her through the steps of the massage. Mike, this session's beneficiary, said little and may have been so relaxed that he fell asleep.

After the first couples massage session, Kizziee recommends that the newly trained masseuse provide his or her partner with a daily massage for seven days. In the next session the roles are switched and the massage recipient learns to give the massage. He notes that the massage can be whole body or confined to the neck, shoulders, or feet.

Kizziee is quick to point out that there is nothing sexual about his practice of couples massage. However, he does believe that it can enhance relationships. With Valentine's Day coming up, will flowers and chocolates do the trick? Or perhaps you will treat your partner to a soothing massage? Kizziee can be reached at 925.798.8898.



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Diablo Foods and Local Merchants: a Relationship that's here to Stay

... continued from page 13

"She's very supportive and unlike other retailers, is ready to work directly with producers and try new things."

Walter mainly sells her products through a network of independent consultants, so she was delighted to work with a business that would allow in-store demonstrations. Diablo Foods is open to new vendors, explained Walter, because of their long experience and deep roots in the community.

Denise O'Keffe – another mother who is balancing life and business – makes Bo's Best Pancakes mix that sells at Diablo Foods. "Diablo was the first retailer to take my mixes," she says, "I live in Lafayette so I naturally went to see them, they were wonderful and for the last seven years have been great partners."

O'Keffe now sells nine different mixes that can be found in about a dozen stores in the Bay Area, and her business continues to grow very steadily.

One of the longest local relationships Diablo Foods established was with the Cake Box Bakery in Lafayette which provides the store with packaged dinner buns. "We sell thousands of them during the holiday season," says Collier, "They have been around for as long

as we have: more than 40 years."

You can also find local products from less than 100 miles away in Diablo's cheese department. Suzanne Koplos is a gourmet and an expert on local cheeses at Diablo Foods. Although there are no cheeses from Contra Costa County, she has explored the riches of Marin and Sonoma counties.

Among her favorite cheeses are the Point Reyes Blue, the truffle goat cheese from Cyprus Grove in Arcata, and the Monterey Jack from Bella Cheese in Sonoma. Diablo even carries a camembert and brie that are made in Marin County by Rouge et Noir French Cheese Company.

Another great local source is in the fish department. Besides the crab, halibut, and sea bass which have all been fished in the area, Diablo Foods carries a local caviar: Tsar Nicoulai. Their eggs that are hand produced at their aquafarm in California's Central Valley where they raise the white sturgeons that are indigenous to the Pacific Northwest. The meat department offers local lamb and poultry, and provides grass-fed hamburger from Holding Farm.

Diablo Foods is now part of the "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" network.

"People want to buy local foods for different reasons," says Collier. "For some, it's because they want to support the local economy, for others it's because they like to know where what they eat comes from. They like the high quality and they want traceability, while others want to minimize the carbon footprint of what they eat."

Cost, however, is not a factor. "Most of the time," says Collier,

"the local producers propose real specialties, creative and high quality products, and their quantities are still small, so they do not have the economy of scale that other nationally distributed brands have."

Nonetheless, she believes that the growing trend is here to stay and with her team she is working on a labeling system that will highlight locally made items.

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Cynthia's Digging Deep Gardening Guide for February



Cynthia Brian

February is usually the wettest month. Last February I lectured throughout South America where the seasons are the reverse of ours. I witnessed lupines in the warm climate of Chile in all shades of the rainbow that towered over six feet. In the Falkand Islands, the chilly earth was covered in a beautiful three-inch thick berry ground cover that blanketed the cliffs where the penguins played. In just a few days, I'm off to cruise throughout the Caribbean on another lecture tour where I'll be branching out my garden repertoire. Before I leave, I want to make sure to give you just a few tips, although you can be a bit lazy in the garden in February. The cold weather actually helps the harvests of the fall. If you were smart and planted your bulbs, tubers, rhizomes, and corms last fall, this month you will enjoy the blush of beauty as the new growth emerges from the damp soil, stretching their painted heads towards the sunlight. Crocus, daffodils, anemones, Dutch iris, amaryllis and even the blossoms of plum trees brighten our yards with their vibrant colors towards the end of the month.

- FROST can kill your tender plants so watch out for clear, still nights and protect your plants with sheets, tarps, cardboard boxes or plastic. Don't touch the leaves.
- SHARPEN dull blades of your pruning shears by using a small metal file and pulling across the blade at the same angle as the cutting edge. Re-sharpen after every two or three hours of use.
- PRUNE your fuchsias and give the cuttings to a friend or plant elsewhere in your yard for color later in the season. Also prune your evergreen shrubs such as pittosporum, euonymus, buddleia, and rosemary.
- ROSES should already have been cut back, but if you are tardy, make sure to prune the first week of February.
- BULBS for summer planting may be purchased now before there are none left in the stores. Don't plant them, though, until next month.
- LAST CHANCE to plant bare root trees and roses.
- REPOT houseplants this month and they'll have a great spring growth.
- SPRAY deciduous plants, trees, and roses with the final dose of dormant spray to ward away disease and insects. Only spray if they have not begun to bud or they could be damaged.
- LEARN more about composting. Take a free class or gather information from the internet.
- FLOAT a few camellias in a glass bowl for instant indoor joy. Camellias are in full February flourish. Don't cut back azaleas and camellias until blooms have faded in spring
- PICK Meyer lemons and Navel oranges this month. The lemons are delicious in teas, pies, salads, meat dishes and just about everything. The oranges are the perfect snack or lunch box fruit.
- BIRDS are still hungry and need their protection. Don't forget to keep feeding our fine feathered friends.
- BUY orchids to brighten the winter blues for your interior spaces. A variety of species boasting a rainbow of colors and textures are now available in your local stores. Orchids are long lasting, easy to care for, and add an elegance that few plants can equal. And if you baby them as I do, they'll bloom for you again next year!
- READ about Monet and his glorious gardens while you have the down time.



Biostack Composter

Happy Gardening to you from Cynthia
Cynthia Brian
©2009 www.GoddessGardener.com
On April 16, 2009 Cynthia will be the luncheon speaker at the Moraga Garden Club.
Cynthia's new book, Be the Star You Are! for TEENS debuts on 9/9/09. Pre-sale orders can be made by contacting Cynthia@goddessgardener.com

**• In the B
Digging Deep-Failure, Flowers, and Febru**

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"What I need most of all are flowers, always, always." --

Claude Monet, 1840-1926, Impressionist painter and life-long gardener



Every February I long to see flowers blooming in my garden. Alas-that is not to be as February in Northern California is always the bleakest month as nature sleeps soundly. Gazing out at the gloomy landscape, I am always thrilled by the surprise smattering of bulbs that have begun to push their weary heads above ground at a time when I crave bits of beauty. Perhaps that is why for the last twenty years of his life, Monet painted only one subject-his gardens in Giverny where bulbs played the leading role. It is fitting to write about Monet in these financially challenging times because it appears that his taste in bulbs and corms was shaped by his own money difficulties. Everyone knows of his beautiful water lilies floating tranquilly on the Giverny pond. Monet also loved painting irises in every shade of blue and purple, richly colored dahlias, and gladioli in pinks, reds, and bi-colors. The early trumpet daffodil and the purple saffron crocus are now appearing in my garden, and like Monet, my spirits are lifted.

Loving to cook with saffron, years ago I thought I'd be smart and save myself money by planting hundreds of saffron crocus bulbs. I planned on harvesting the dried stigmas to use in cooking, especially my favorite family recipe of Risotto alla Milanese which is heavily flavored with saffron. Little did I know that it takes 75,000 blossoms or 225,000 hand-picked stigmas to make a single pound which explains why saffron is the world's most expensive spice. I did indeed hand pick the delicate blossoms and

three thread-like stigmas from each bulb which, when dried yielded only a teaspoon! So much for becoming a saffron bulb farmer!

Since we have more time to dream about gardening in February than actually going outside and doing the work, this is a perfect month to start thinking about setting up a compost bin. Lately I've been receiving more emails from readers asking me how they can be more earth friendly by not putting so much waste in the garbage. Although most residents use their green cans, why not learn to compost and re-use your organic materials to enrich your own soils? I have always had big compost piles and everything from my kitchen and garden is recycled, reused, and repurposed into fertilizer for the yard. We used to call my son's goat the "environmentally correct weed eating and fertilizing machine" as she'd eat all the plants, weeds, trimmings, and cuttings we discarded and her manure went right back into the garden in a perfect circle of life.

Based on the letters I received, I realized that not everyone wants a compost pile, but how about a compost bin? I recently acquired a Biostack from the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority. It is a sleek stacking composter with an expandable system allowing more tiers to be added as necessary. No tools were required for the assembly and its solid black color made it literally disappear in a corner. Since the best time to start composting is in the spring when the temperatures are a bit warmer to allow the bacteria, fungi, and mi-



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All photos Cynthia Brian

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microorganisms an opportunity to break down organic matter, I wanted to give myself a head start on learning as much as possible about using my new garden helper. An information booklet comes with the Biostack with recipes on how to accelerate the decomposition process. In addition, composting workshops are held for free throughout the county to assist residents to start growing a healthy garden. You can order a Biostack or find out about free classes by calling the Home Composting Hotline:(925) 906-1801.

My motto in life has always been "failure is fertilizer" because I don't believe in mistakes. Learning from life digging in the dirt, I figure that when something doesn't thrive, I throw it on the compost pile, then use the new earth to plant a fresh garden. Lessons from nature adapted to daily living, I guess you'd call that.

What goes in a composter, you are probably wondering? Just about everything organic is my response. I rarely use the garbage disposal in my kitchen because my system is two-fold. I have a five-gallon bucket outside my door for all the non-meat food scraps, vegetables, bread, and fruit to be fed to my barnyard animals. In addition, they eat my rose cuttings, weeds, and tree trimmings and all non-poisonous edible plants that I've discarded. Weekly I clean their manure mixed with hay and put it in the compost pile. Added to that goes all the leaves, lawn clippings, bark, coffee grinds, tea leaves, shredded newspaper, and any other organic material. I don't put dog or cat feces, meat scraps, bacon

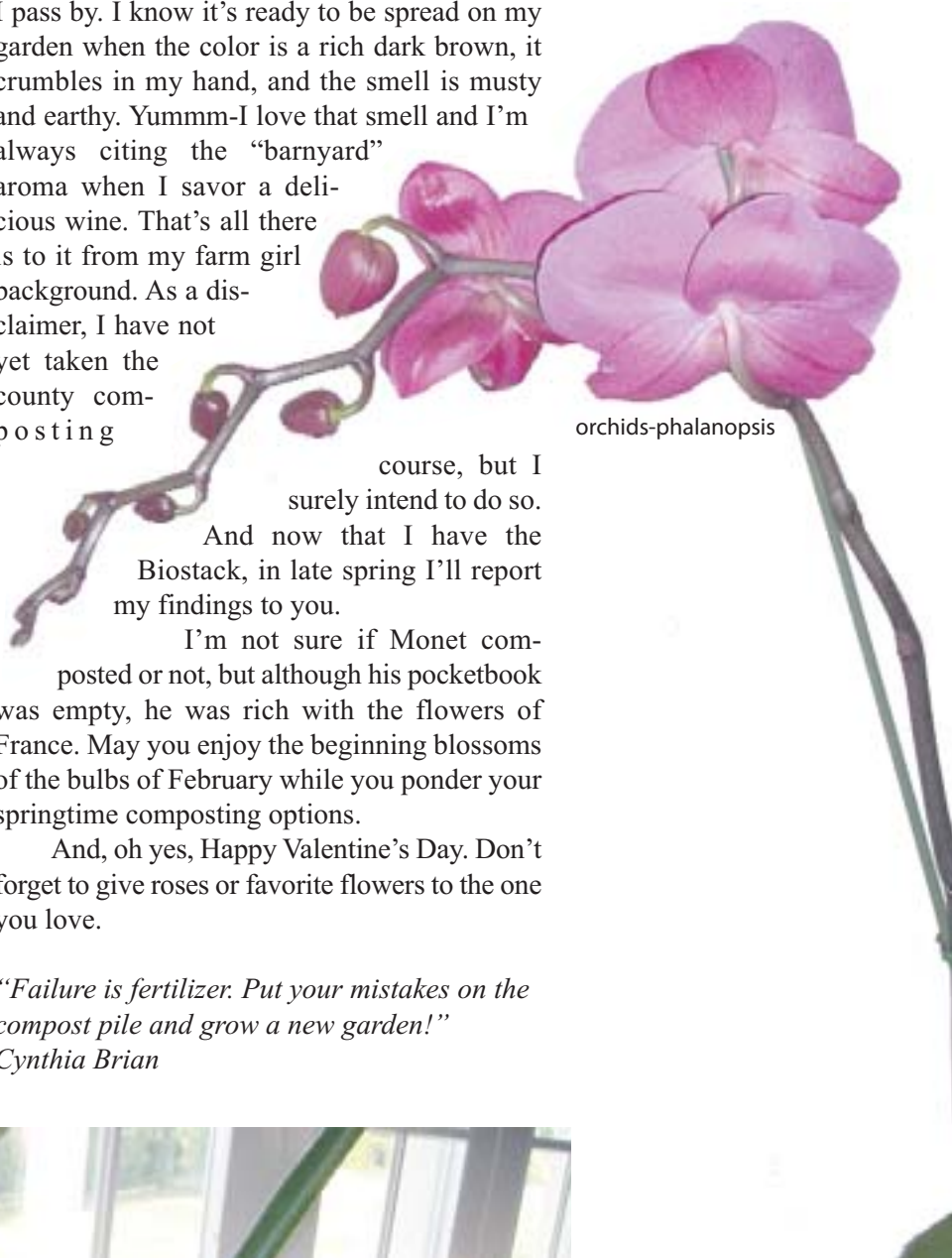
grease, plastics, or diseased plants into the pile. The pile gets turned with a pitch fork whenever I pass by. I know it's ready to be spread on my garden when the color is a rich dark brown, it crumbles in my hand, and the smell is musty and earthy. Yummm-I love that smell and I'm always citing the "barnyard" aroma when I savor a delicious wine. That's all there is to it from my farm girl background. As a disclaimer, I have not yet taken the county composting

course, but I surely intend to do so. And now that I have the Biostack, in late spring I'll report my findings to you.

I'm not sure if Monet composted or not, but although his pocketbook was empty, he was rich with the flowers of France. May you enjoy the beginning blossoms of the bulbs of February while you ponder your springtime composting options.

And, oh yes, Happy Valentine's Day. Don't forget to give roses or favorite flowers to the one you love.

"Failure is fertilizer. Put your mistakes on the compost pile and grow a new garden!"
 Cynthia Brian



orchids-phalanopsis

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Lady Mats 5-1 in League Play

Submitted by Mark Johanson



Mats' Liza Katz takes the ball up the court during Dougherty Valley game
 Photo Jordan Fong

Santa Maria CYO Night at Miramonte

Submitted by Kim Miller



Photo Kim Miller

Santa Maria Catholic Church held its first CYO night at Miramonte High School. All players

and coaches were invited to attend the "Lady Mats" game against Alhambra on January 30.

After the game several Santa Maria girls joined the Lady Mats in the team room for a question and

answer session. The Santa Maria girls were pleased to learn that every Lady Matador player had played on a CYO team and most played for our hometown parish, Santa Maria, including Anderson, Johanson, Katz, McDonald, K. Miller, N. Miller, Reid and Rosenzweig. Christenson played for Catholic Community of Pleasanton (CCOP) and Golden played for St. Bonaventure.

Santa Maria players are gearing up for the playoffs and Diocese Championships, now knowing that two Miramonte players, N. Miller & K. Miller, both played on Santa Maria CYO Diocese champion teams.

The CYO girls told the Lady Mats that they "can't wait to become Lady Mats themselves."

In the meantime, the players asked this year's squad to sign jerseys, shoes, hats and game programs.

Then, when it was time to go, the Lady Mats and CYO players huddled for one final cheer together.

The Lady Matadors enter the second half league play with a 5-1 record, its only league loss to Dublin, 46-38. With an overall record of 14-6, the Lady Mats have improved the consistency of their play throughout the season under first year coach James Kizziee, blending returning veterans with first year players.

Key contributors include seniors Chelsea Christensen and Katie Reid, juniors Stephanie Golden, Lauren Kimble and Kristine Miller, and sophomores Alyssa Johanson and Liza Katz. The team is also currently ranked #17 by MaxPreps in North Coast Section (NCS) across all divisions.

The DFAL record looks impressive, but Kizziee says he's not taking early success for granted. League contenders are strong this year. Some league games have been close -- Campo, 60-56; Acalanes, 49-43; Dougherty Valley, 53-47. But he be-

lieves the girls are playing better. Kizziee says that the team's turnover rates started out high, averaging around 25 per game. That's now improved, he explains, because the team is working together better on the court.

The Lady Mats enter a four game league stretch over the next ten days; a road game at arch rival Campolindo on Monday 2/2 (score not available at press time), followed by home games against Acalanes on Wednesday 2/4 and Dublin on Friday 2/6, and then another road game against league newcomer Dougherty Valley on Monday 2/10.

Coach Kizziee says he isn't into making predictions about the second half of the season; he takes it one game at a time but he knows the potential of his players and what they can accomplish when everyone's on the same page:

"The whole thing is if we just keep playing like we're playing -- like a team."

Lady Gaels Give Pack the Pavilion Fans Double Overtime Show

By Mikaela Cowles



Lahde goes for the shot in Gaels' win against San Diego

Photo Tod Fierner

On January 24, in the game Saint Mary's entered in this season's NCAA Pack the House attendance contest, fans got a peak at women's collegiate basketball at its best as the Lady Gaels upset defending WCC champions, San Diego, in

double overtime. The final score was 76-74.

Saint Mary's built its game around underclassmen success and upperclassman perseverance. Local favorite, starting freshman guard Katie Batlin, set new career-highs in

both scoring and rebounds, posting 27 points, 11 rebounds, four assists and three steals.

"I love to build off the fans," said Batlin, talking about the unusually large crowd of 713 fans, a season high.

Sophomore Louella Tom-

linson added to Batlin's performance with 18 points, nine rebounds and six blocks. Together, Saint Mary's underclassmen scored 65 of the team's 76 points. While the younger ones put points on the board, senior Maija Lahde pulled down a game high of 13 rebounds.

The Gaels ended the first half shooting 36.1 percent and forcing the Toreros into 11 turnovers. San Diego, however, came out strong in the second half and scored four straight points to bring them back within seven.

The hard fought game continued as both teams traded run for run. San Diego's Kiva Herman tied the score 60-60 with 25 seconds remaining. The Gaels had possession, but didn't score.

The first overtime opened with Batlin and Herman trading basket for basket. With 10 seconds left on the clock and the score tied, 68-68, Lahde's attempt at a jumper did not fall. The Toreros broke away for a fast break, but Batlin came up with a huge defensive stop, leaving the game tied. Again.

Head coach Paul Thomas, known for his well-conditioned, up-tempo teams, had the Gaels more then prepared physically to battle through a second overtime.

Later, Batlin talked about the intensity of Thomas's running and lifting schedule: "I hate to say that it paid off, but it paid off."

Opening the second overtime with senior leadership, Lahde drove to the rim for two points. The Toreros did not go down easily, continuing to match Saint Mary's, bucket for bucket. With the game tied 64-

64, and five seconds left on the clock, Lahde scored a jumper from the middle of the key.

"I guess third time's the charm," Lahde laughed, speaking afterwards about the victory.

The Lady Gaels won the game against San Diego but it remains to be seen how Saint Mary's will fare in the WCC division of the Pack the House attendance contest. Qualifying games can be played until March 8.

Pack the House is the NCAA's second-year national effort to grow attendance for women's basketball. Saint Mary's markets Pack the House as Pack the "Pavilion," a nod to its gym, the McKeon Pavilion.

Last year, almost two-thirds of Division I NCAA membership -- 198 institutions -- participated in the contest, attracting more than 592,000 fans across the Pack the House games, with 96 institutions breaking single-attendance records and five programs recording their first-ever sell-out game. SMC competed last year but Portland won for the WCC.

Staci Hamaguchi, Saint Mary's Director of Athletic Pro-

motions, said they worked hard to find ways to draw in fans, including having local youth teams sell tickets and holding a raffle for two court-side tickets when the Saint Mary's men's team faces Gonzaga on February 12.

"We had a packed GA (General Admission) side, could have fit some more people in there, but it was great we got the attendance that we did," said Hamaguchi.

The San Diego game's official attendance figure of 713 is below last year's Pack the Pavilion game against Santa Clara, which officially recorded 877 in attendance. But 713 is the current season high and boosted the season-to-date average attendance to 512.

More than anything, Hamaguchi said, those that came got to see a great game, experiencing first hand how exciting women's collegiate basketball can be.

"Hopefully the fans that came through the door had a great time and come back to future Gael games," said Hamaguchi.

Exactly the point of the NCAA Pack the House challenge.



Photo Tod Fierner



SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Campo Defeats Acalanes in Moraga

By Conrad Bassett



Campo's Adam Mancebo goes for the lay-up surrounded by Acalanes defenders (L to R) Zach Bloom, Steve Maze, and Tyler Caldwell. Photo Doug Kohen

The Campolindo boys and girls basketball teams concluded the first half of the Diablo Foothill Athletic League season by beating Acalanes last Friday. The Cougar girls beat the Lady Dons 56-42, while the Cougar boys hung on for a 52-49 victory.

In the girls' game, Campolindo jumped off to a 32-18 half-time lead and were not really challenged the rest of the way. Amanda Forshay led the team with six steals and added 12 points while Annie Ward scored 19 to lead all scorers, including hitting five 3-point baskets. Coach Clay Kallam was able to liberally substitute in the second half. Ashlie Neff led Acalanes with 13.

On the boys' side, Campolindo scored early and often, holding off a furious Acalanes comeback to win. In the first period, Campo opened up a 17-11 lead, led by Chris Bassett-Bouchard's eight points, including two 3-point shots. The Cougars padded the lead in the second and took a 29-18 lead into intermission.

In the third period, the Cougars increased the lead, and early in the fourth led by 15.

Then back came the Dons. The Cougars committed several fouls, allowing the Dons to get to the free throw line where they finished 10 of 14. Campo led by six with less than 15 seconds to play when Acalanes' David Gomez hit a three from the corner.

Acalanes fouled Campo. After Campo missed both free throws and with less than two seconds to go, Chris Dyer deflected a desperation shot by the Dons, and Campo had the win.

The Dons' Steve Maze led all scorers with 14 points before fouling out. Chris Dyer finished with 12 points, seven rebounds and seven assists to lead a balanced Cougar attack. Kellen Ito added nine rebounds.

The first half of the DFAL basketball season is now complete with the three Lamorinda boys' teams, Miramonte, Campolindo, and Acalanes in 1st, 2nd and 4th place, respectively, among the seven teams in the league. On the girls' side, Miramonte, Campolindo and Acalanes are 2nd, 3rd and 5th, respectively.



Lady Cougar Rose Fruci takes it to the hoop. Photo Doug Kohen

Shoot Out at Acalanes

By Chloe Hull

It was a good day for the Lamorinda high school girls' basketball teams at the Acalanes Shoot Out, held at Acalanes High on January 24th. Although Acalanes lost a thriller at the buzzer, both Campolindo and Miramonte decisively won their games.

Fourteen teams from around the Bay Area competed in the tournament, which has been put on annually for the last ten years. This year's tournament was marked by the return of Corrie Mizusawa, who played for Acalanes in 1999, the first year of the tournament, and returns now as head coach of the Acalanes girls' basketball program.

The Acalanes Dons, currently 10-10 overall (2-4 DFAL), lost a heartbreaker to Hayward's Moreau Catholic, whose overall record is 15-5. After a tough battle with seven lead changes throughout the game, each team made several clutch free throws as the game clock wound down.

Acalanes freshman Sophie Taylor brought victory within reach of the Dons by making a key play late in the fourth quarter, drawing a shooting foul and sinking both free throws. Unfortunately for Acalanes,

Moreau ultimately prevailed, 64-61, as they successfully converted two free throws to seal the win at the end of the game.

Earlier that day, the Campolindo Cougars faced University of San Francisco High School in the first game of the tournament. The Cougars, with a 16-4 overall record (4-2 DFAL), convincingly won the game, 76-54. Campolindo pulled away immediately, moving ahead 27-8 by the end of the first quarter and never relinquishing the lead.

"Though we got off to a good start, we relaxed a little in the second quarter and allowed them to get close," said Coach Clay Kallam. "We need to maintain our intensity for 32 minutes a game, not just 20 or 24."

The Cougar's center, junior Meghan Ringer, dominated the low post, scoring 14 points and pulling down nine rebounds. Overall, Campolindo controlled the boards with 40 rebounds to University High's 21, which allowed the Cougars to maintain control of the game.

The Matadors of Miramonte, currently 14-6 overall (5-1 DFAL), played Pleasanton's Amador Valley, and successfully stomped the competition, ending with a score of 60-40.

Head Coach James Kizzie commented, "We dominated the first half by holding the opposition to 5 points in each of the first two quarters, although I was a little concerned about our turnovers in the second half."

Despite their turnovers, the Matadors' post players dominated the paint and their guards handled the ball with finesse, ending with a comfortable victory for Miramonte.

In other Shoot Out games, Dublin beat El Camino (67-46), Berkeley beat St. Mary's High (54-63), and Deer Valley beat St. Patrick-St. Vincent (62-29).

This year's Shoot Out was successful from both athletic and financial standpoints. East Bay girls' basketball fans enjoyed seven strong match-ups, while the hosting schools raised funds to support their teams.

For the first time since 2000, the Acalanes and Campolindo girls' basketball programs co-hosted the event, which enjoyed support from many local businesses. Funds raised were shared equally.

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Lamorinda Middle School Girls Win League Tournaments

By Sophie Braccini and Gint Federas



8th grade tournament champions Stanley Wildcats (pictured left to right): Front Row (L-R): Marie Paladino, Lauren Fruci, Liz Kroetch, Jamie Jacobs; Back row: Assistant Coach Sarah Day, Molly Pines, Grace Francis, Kathryn Hill, Sam Anderson, Coach Joe McElroy, Katie Greer, Nicole Shimotake, Molly Martin, Meghan Hill. Photo Naomi Jacobs



7th Grade Tournament Champions JM Marauders (pictured left to right): Front Row: Dana Wong, Marissa Monopoli; Back row: Jiwon Chung, Megan Adachi, Samantha Garcia, Jenny Leserman, Meredith Stone, Andrea Lucacher, Katie Coates; Rear: Coach Costello; Missing from picture: Antonia Harold. Photo Gint Federas

Lamorinda middle school girls' basketball teams won both the 7th and 8th grade league tournaments this year. Each advanced to their respective January 22 championship games by competing against teams from schools that span Contra Costa, Alameda, and Solano Counties, though not every middle school within those borders is in the league. Orinda Intermediate, for example, isn't on the list.

In the final games, Joaquin Moraga's 7th grade team beat Stanley, 43-39, while Stanley's 8th grade team defeated Albany, 36-17.

The Lady Marauders (8-4, regular season) overcame a tough Stanley Wildcat squad (12-1, regular season) in the 7th grade league championship game, held this year at Foothill Middle School in Walnut Creek. This hard-fought battle

was tied 23-23 at the half. Dana Wong led Moraga with 27 points, including a crucial 3-pointer that pushed JM ahead of Stanley by two points. Near the end of the game, another three-point attempt gave her 3 shots at the line, prompting the Stanley coach to call for timeout. After play resumed, JM kept the lead until the final buzzer.

"In all the years I have coached, I have never seen such unselfish players," said Terry Costello, the JM coach. "They played to make the team win. They passed. They strategized. Only the result counted, not who was the one scoring."

At the awards ceremony, Costello singled out Megan Adachi with a special trophy, saying that Adachi was the "heart" of the team. At the 8th grade tournament,

held this year at Stanley Middle School, the Wildcats enjoyed home court advantage as they triumphed over the Albany Cobras, 36-17, in the 8th grade girls' championship game, having advanced to the finals by beating both Piedmont and Joaquin Moraga.

"We had a powerful defense and pressed efficiently," explained Coach Joe McElroy, about the championship game. "Albany, which is a great team, didn't get many opportunities to shoot."

Lamorinda high school girls' basketball fans take note - 10 of the 12 girls on the Stanley 8th grade championship team are headed to Acalanes.

"I'm sure that most will continue playing there with the same spirit," said McElroy.

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SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Lady Mats Keep Dons Scoreless

By Joey Epperson



Mats' deBack controls ball by Acalanes' Blee (left) and Whittom during Mats win, 4-0 Photo Bob Johnson

On January 28, the Acalanes Lady Dons (10-3-3) traveled to Miramonte to face last season's NCS champion Lady Matadors (8-0) in a battle of two cross-town DFAL soccer powerhouses. The Dons had not suffered a loss in ten attempts, their last loss dating all the way back to December 17, against Alhambra. But the Mats offense was intense. Though Dons' goalkeeper Angela Lescala-Gruenewald compiled 7 saves, the Mats prevailed, 4-0.

The Matadors came out firing with an early goal by Katherine Sander, assisted by Marissa Corsetti. The following ten minutes saw three Matador breakaways fended off by the spectacular saves by Lescala-Gruenewald.

With 19 minutes remaining in the half, the Mats continued their attack by way of a beautiful left-footed goal from Mekenna deBack to make the score 2-nil Miramonte. It seemed as if the Dons were

going to get on the board just under ten minutes remaining in the half after a cross from Michelle Caine to Celina Velasco. However, with the Matador defense closing in on her, Velasco missed, just high off the crossbar.

The start of the second half saw beautiful ball handling by the Matadors, led by deBack and Sander. Off a pass from Sander, the speedy deBack turned the corner and took off down field, which left only one defender to beat. Cutting back to the middle, deBack put the ball past the keeper into the bottom left corner of the goal, giving her a second goal on the night and making the score 3-0 Mats.

Looking to split the Miramonte defense on a strong counter with 28 minutes left, Velasco went down with a low back injury and had to be taken out of the game. Down this key player, the Dons took another shot on goal in the 15th minute, but Manning's save kept the

Dons scoreless.

It was all Miramonte after that, as Sander showed more fine dribbling and then scored to give the Matadors their 4th goal of the night.

Focusing on the team's chemistry, Mats captain, senior Elaine Tanski, explained how they've achieved a 31-1-2 two-season record: "We returned a team full of seniors so we have a lot of experience, and we have also been playing together for a long, long time, which gives us an edge when it comes down to the wire."

This time things certainly clicked right for the Matadors, who made 16 attempts on goal. If not for Lescala-Gruenewald's intense protection of the Dons' goal, game results would have been more lopsided.

Both teams continued DFAL play Friday. An Acalanes home game against Alhambra ended in a tie, 1-1. Meanwhile, the Mats trounced Dublin, 8-1.

LMSC Alum Sassano Inspires Youth Soccer Players

Submitted by Mary Brown



Photo Mary Brown

Youth athletic programs can be the launching pad for a career in sports, even right here in our own backyard. For professional football, there is Ken Dorsey from Orinda. For Olympic swimming, there is Natalie Coughlin, who grew up in Lafayette. And for professional soccer, there is 23 year old Luke Sassano, an Orinda native and Cal graduate who now plays Major League Soccer (MLS) for the New York Red Bulls. The Red Bulls reached the MLS finals for the first time after drafting Sassano in 2008.

From the age of 11 until 18, Sassano played soccer for the Lamorinda Soccer Club (LMSC), a soccer program for Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda youth ages 7-18.

Every weekend in January, drivers along Highway 24 could see

150 kids on Bentley High School's new state of the art turf field. These young players, ages 7-11, were participating in LMSC'S Winter Development Clinics, working through 9 stations over the course of the morning, covering skills ranging from dribbling moves to footwork to "one on one" practice.

On January 17, LMSC welcomed Sassano home to visit with these young players who are as eager to practice the fundamentals and play soccer as he was many years ago.

Sassano spent time with the players on the field, alongside Technical Director, Mohamed Mohamed, and his Winter Clinic Instructional Team of professional coaches, college players, and older LMSC players. In between, the kids

gathered with balls, t-shirts and player cards to collect the autograph of this real life, professional soccer player in their midst.

After the ink in Sassano's Sharpie had finally run dry, Sassano reflected on these young soccer players: "It was great spending time with them and seeing how youth soccer has grown. Coming here is like visiting family. At LMSC, I learned not only the skills, but (also) the passion, persistence, and teamwork to reach my goals in soccer and in other life situations. I feel fortunate to have been coached here, and it continues to be a great ride."

As if to make the point, a 9-year-old player returning for a second season -- having finished a morning of good, hard work and fun -- stepped into one of the cars at the long pick-up line at the curb and announced to his parents, "Soccer rocks!"

For information about LMSC or upcoming 2009 team tryouts, visit www.lamorindasoccer.com.

Acalanes Out-Pins Dougherty Valley

Submitted by Joyce Reyes



Photo Joyce Reyes

The Acalanes wrestling team won a decisive 48-10 dual meet victory over Dougherty Valley's 7-man varsity squad on Thursday, January 30, on the Wildcat's San Roman campus.

Acalanes junior Robert Royster is pictured using a head and arm lock to go for the winning pin in the

217-pound weight class against Dougherty Valley's Gilbert.

Four other Acalanes wrestlers also won matches by pin -- Matt Feld (at 127 pounds), Conor O'Herin (154), Chris Scanlin (191) and Mike Rule (287).

Dougherty Valley opened in 2007 and has yet to have a senior

Acalanes 48, Dougherty Valley 10 At Dougherty Valley

- 105: double forfeit
- 114: double forfeit
- 121: Gerald (DV) d. Reyes 17-1
- 127: Feld (A) p. Ruckman 5:09
- 132: double forfeit
- 137: double forfeit
- 142: R. Gilbert (DV) p. Reardon 1:58
- 147: Rudin (A) by FF
- 154: O'Herin (A) p. Andrade 1:27
- 162: Lindgren (A) by FF
- 173: Zayac (A) by FF
- 191: Scanlin (A) p. Campbell 1:38
- 217: Royster (A) p. Gilbert 3:19
- 287: Rule (A) p. Nunez 2:58

class. Its growing program made a good showing at the meet, winning two of the seven matches actual wrestled, one by pin and one by decision.

Three weeks remain of regular season dual meets and then it's on to the DFAL championships held this year at Campolindo on February 21.

Lamorinda Rowers Invited to High Performance Sculling Camp

Submitted by Resa Lenczowski



Photo Rosie D'Orazio

Two Lamorinda teens were among three Oakland Strokes' rowers who attended the January 8-11, invitation-only High Performance Camp in Tempe, Ariz. These rowers, pictured left to right, are Jessica Buffington (Berkeley High) and Miramonte juniors Kelly Bauer and Elizabeth Lenczowski.

The High Performance Camp provides Junior National Team coaches the opportunity to work with a select group of athletes early in the

year, and is considered an integral part of the preparation for the U.S. Rowing Selection Camp held in June.

Athletes participating in the June camp compete for a position on the 2009 U.S. Junior Selection Team, which ultimately competes at the Junior World Championships in France in August.

High Performance Camp invitees are typically standout "scullers" who have earned top race results at national sculling competi-

tions and have demonstrated technical performance, endurance and strength.

"Selection Camp can open the door to a wide range of international training and racing opportunities," says Strokes women's varsity coach, Ian P. Simpson.

Buffington, Bauer and Lenczowski competed at regattas on the east coast last summer, including the Club Nationals in Camden, NJ. Lenczowski also competed internationally at the Royal Canadian Henley in Ontario.

Oakland Strokes, Inc., is one of the premier rowing programs on the west coast. The program is open to full-time high school students interested in learning to row and compete in the sport. Its program includes Junior Men's and Junior Women's crews at both varsity and novice levels.

In addition to technique and fitness, the Strokes program emphasizes teamwork, leadership, initiative, dedication and fellowship.

For more information, go to www.oaklandstrokes.org

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SPORTS

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Matadors Dismantle Knights in Walnut Creek

By Kevin D. Shallat



Davis Louis finishes his drive with a finger roll in Mats win against Alhambra, 61-41

The Miramonte Matadors boys' basketball team took their five game DFAL winning streak on the road on Friday, January 23, facing Walnut Creek's Las Lomas Knights. The Knights focused on shutting down 6'9" Eric Obeysekere and kept him to 14 points. But all that attention on Obeysekere cleared space for Jared O'Leary who scored five 3-pointers and was 4-4 at the foul line. The Mats finished off the Knights, 70-56, upping their DFAL record to 5-0.

The Knights got off to a 5-0 lead, and soon after extended their lead to 16-10. Obeysekere did his best to get his teammates going early, but they were unable to knock down their shots.

Las Lomas power forward Kyle Klinck got open for easy looks early on, scoring the majority of his 14 points in the opening minutes of the game. After the Matadors found a way to stop Klinck, it was only a matter of time before their shooters warmed up. After a three-pointer by Payam Vadi, and a jumper by Obeysekere, Las Lomas' Davis Louie was able to tie the game at 20-20 on a steal and a finger roll. Louie (one of three Las Lomas captains) finished with 11 points and 9 assists.

After tying up the game, the Matador shooters made themselves right at home, and with long time Miramonte fan and supporter Jim Stockholm in the

stands, it looked a little like home, too.

Spenser McDonald was a big reason the Mats were able to break out to a comfortable lead before halftime. McDonald knocked down all three of his three-pointers in the first half, as Miramonte cruised to a 34-22 halftime lead. He finished the game with nine points, nine rebounds, three assists, and three blocks.

In the second half, the Knights endured a steady dose of Obeysekere and Jared O'Leary. Obeysekere played a very patient, unselfish game. He could have shot the ball more, but he seemed determined to keep his hot shooters involved.

When asked if his team felt at home on the road, Obeysekere was absolute: "We're battle tested. We start five returning players from last year. We know what to do. We had a very good year last year. Two of our main scorers are back. We're ready to go. We can play anyone on any night."

That proved true Friday when the Mats beat Alhambra 61-41.

Miramonte heads into the second half of league play, including away games at Campo, Dougherty Valley and Alhambra. Campo and Dublin are currently next behind Miramonte in league standings, each with a 4-2 record.

When the Line Between Safety and Showboating Blurs

By Robin Schoettler Fox



Photo Jordan Fong

In his first of several dunks during Friday's Mats game against Alhambra, 6'9" Eric Obeysekere got a technical foul for what the referee felt was unsportsmanlike behavior - hanging on the rim for too long. Or maybe it was pulling himself above the rim (not seen in this picture) on the backswing after his legs had gone nearly parallel to the baseline, having approached the dunk full-throttle. No official details were released.

Safety, hang time, even the lift to get over another player. It's all a judgment call - for referee and player. When is it showboating?

"The rules allow Eric to pro-

tect himself and the player underneath," said Mats Coach Dave Brown, the day after the game. "It's a judgment call whenever a player hangs on the rim, so I won't second guess the referees. However, I know that Eric was only concerned with safety, and not interested in making a statement."

The technical did not impact the outcome of the game, which Miramonte won, 61-41. But when he made his next dunk, Obeysekere released nearly immediately. And fell on a teammate.

Two technical fouls in a single game would have meant ejection, and a one game suspension.

Coach Angilly to Host Free Lacrosse Clinic for Middle School Boys

By Robin Schoettler Fox

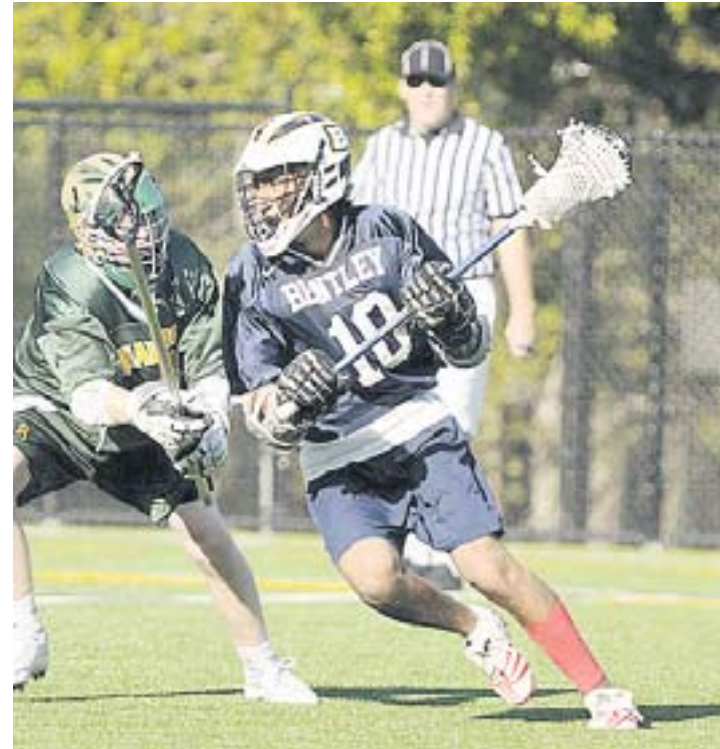


Photo submitted by Emily Haas

Lacrosse coach Greg Angilly will host a free, two-hour lacrosse clinic for all Bay Area 6th, 7th and 8th grade boys on Saturday, February 7, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. The clinic will be held rain or shine on the Bentley School lacrosse field, located just off Highway 24, in Lafayette.

All players need to bring their own pads, helmet, gloves and stick.

Angilly has recently been named Bentley School's boys varsity lacrosse head coach. Previously, he was head coach at lacrosse powerhouse St. Ignatius Prep (San Francisco), where he compiled a 6-year record of 107-15 with a dominant California lacrosse program that sent numerous players to NCAA Division I teams.

Angilly stepped down from the St. Ignatius head coach position several months ago, citing a desire to spend more time with his family and focus on growing his business.

But it was hard to stay away from lacrosse, and Bentley held special appeal.

"Lacrosse has played a large part in my life and I'm excited to work with the young men at the Bentley School," says Angilly. "The opportunity to work and learn from (Bentley Athletic Director) Rusty Taylor was something I couldn't pass on. Equally compelling was the chance to build a new program predicated on hard work and honoring the game, principals which should lead to great success."

The clinic? It's a chance, says Angilly, for participants to work on some stick drills while furthering a passion for "the fastest game on foot."

For more information about Bentley and the lacrosse clinic, please contact Emily Haas, Associate Athletic Director of Bentley School at ehaas@bentleyschool.net



SMC Gaels Home Games

- Thu, Feb 5**
Men's Basketball (McKeon Pavilion)
San Francisco, 8:30PM
- Fri, Feb 6**
Women's Tennis
Rice, 12:00PM
- Sat, Feb 7**
Women's Basketball
Santa Clara, 2:00PM

- Wed, Feb 11**
Men's Tennis
Hawaii, 3:00PM
- Thurs, Feb 12**
Men's Basketball (McKeon Pavilion)
Gonzaga, 8:00PM
- Sat, Feb 14**
Women's Tennis
Pacific, 1:00PM
- Men's Basketball**
Portland, 7:00PM
- Sun, Feb 15**
Women's Tennis
Nevada, 11:00AM
- Women's Lacross (Saint Mary's Stadium)**
Albany, 3:00PM

- Tue, Feb 17**
Softball
Pacific, 1:00PM
- Baseball**
Pacific, 3:00PM
- Wed, Feb 18**
Men's Tennis
San Francisco, 3:00PM
- Thurs, Feb 19**
Men's Basketball (McKeon Pavilion)
San Diego, 8:00PM
- Fri, Feb 20**
Baseball
Oregon, 2:00PM
- Sat, Feb 21**
Baseball
Oregon, 11:00AM

- Men's Tennis**
Loyola Marymount, 12:00PM
- Baseball**
Oregon, 2:30PM
- Men's Basketball (McKeon Pavilion)**
TBA
- Sun, Feb 22**
Men's Tennis
UC Davis, 1:00PM
- Baseball**
Oregon, 1:00PM
- Women's Lacross (Saint Mary's Stadium)**
UC Davis, 1:00PM

For up to date schedules see: www.smcgaels.com

Varsity Home Game Calendar ••• High School Varsity @ Home •••

- Wednesday, February 4**
Girls Basketball
Acalanes @ Miramonte, 7pm
- Boys Basketball
Acalanes @ Miramonte, 5:30pm
- Boys Soccer
Ygnacio @ Acalanes, 6:15pm
- Las Lomas @ Campolindo, 6:15pm
- Dougherty Valley @ Miramonte, 6:15pm
- Thursday, February 5**
Wrestling
Alhambra @ Campolindo, 6pm
- Dublin @ Acalanes, 6pm

- Friday, February 6**
Girls Basketball
Alhambra @ Acalanes, 7pm
- Dougherty Valley @ Campolindo, 7pm
- Dublin @ Miramonte, 7pm
- Boys Basketball
Alhambra @ Acalanes, 5:30pm
- Dougherty Valley @ Campolindo, 5:30pm
- Dublin @ Miramonte, 5:30 pm
- Girls Soccer
Las Lomas @ Miramonte, 6:15pm
- Boys Soccer
Dougherty Valley @ Acalanes, 6:15pm

- Wednesday, February 11**
Boys Soccer
Dublin @ Acalanes, 6:15pm
- Alhambra @ Campolindo, 6:15pm
- Thursday, February 12**
Girls Basketball
Las Lomas @ Miramonte, 7pm
- Boys Basketball
Las Lomas @ Miramonte, 5:30pm
- Wrestling
Acalanes @ Campolindo, 6pm
- Alhambra @ Miramonte, 6pm
- Friday, February 13**
Girls Soccer
Campo @ Acalanes, 6:15 pm

- Boys Soccer**
Acalanes @ Campolindo, 6:15pm
- Alhambra @ Miramonte, 6:15pm
- Wednesday, February 18**
Girls Soccer
NCS playoffs start, games tbd
- Boys Soccer
NCS playoffs start, games tbd
- Friday, February 20**
Girls Basketball
Campolindo @ Acalanes, 7pm
- Boys Basketball
Campolindo @ Acalanes, 5:30pm

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