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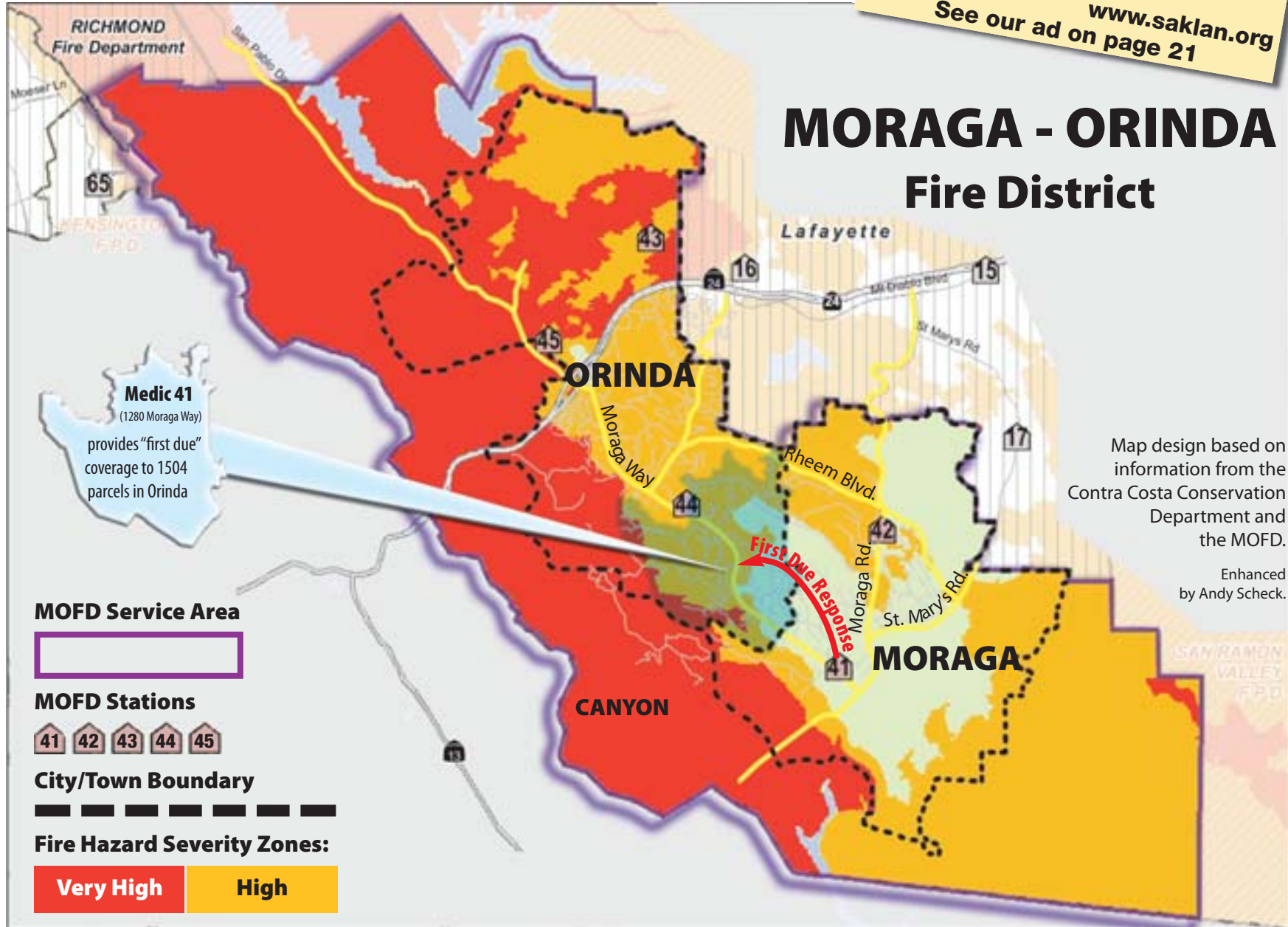
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Volume 02; Issue 26

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Wednesday, March 4, 2009



Council Members from Moraga and Orinda and members of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Board of Directors recently met to discuss the Fire District's property tax allocation. According to Orinda's Revenue Enhancement Task Force (RETF), currently Moraga contributes 35% of the MOFD property tax revenue and Orinda kicks in 65%. Fire Chief Pete Nowicki reported that the property tax revenues that Moraga and Orinda contribute to fund the Fire District are allocated fairly and reflect the level of services received by each municipality. Nowicki emphasized that the MOFD responded and functioned as a single fire district and that quantifying service on a per parcel basis was not possible. However when pressed, he provided examples of infrastructure expenditures and service coverage that supported his position that Moraga and Orinda each pay for and receive their fair share.

The tri-agency meeting was prompted by the recommendations of the RETF which has proposed capping the MOFD's property tax revenues at 4.5% with plans to commit the excess tax revenues toward Orinda's much needed infrastructure repairs.

"I am very pleased to see you all here," stated Art Haigh, Chair of Orinda's Infrastructure Oversight Committee and a member of the RETF. "It is my fervent desire to address Orinda's rapidly deteriorating infrastructure," he added. Haigh stated that the RETF had identified the need to explore two issues: the funding inequity between Moraga and Orinda and the high cost of the MOFD services as compared to other districts. This two-hour meeting was only able to tackle the first issue posed by the RETF.

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Moraga, Orinda and MOFD Meet

Nowicki Reports Property Tax Allocation on Target

By Andrea A. Firth

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this week

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RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

Moraga and Orinda Council Members Talk Trash

By Sophie Braccini



Council members David Trotter, Karen Mendonca, Victoria Smith and Steven Glazer listen to Steven Moore, President & CEO Pacific Rim Recycling in Benicia
Photo Andy Scheck

On March 1st, the solid waste residential rate increased by 7.7% in Orinda, from \$25.23 to \$27.35, by 4.2% in Moraga, from \$19.98 to \$20.82 and in Lafayette by 9.02% from \$19.83 to \$21.62. On February 26, the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority's (CCCSWA) Executive Director Paul Morsen invited some local city council members who also sit on the CCSWA Board to tour some CCSWA partners and facilities. The tour was followed by a discussion of strategic goals.

Moraga Council Member Karen Mendonca and Mayor Dave Trotter, and Orinda Council Members Victoria Smith and Steve Glazer are recyclers in their everyday lives and advocates in their cities, and they all chose the assignment of sitting on the CCSWA Board because of their commitment to recycling.

"I am involved because I want to work to increase our recycling rate and to keep hazardous sub-

stances out of the waste stream," said Glazer.

Trotter explained, "I have an interest and some previous background in solid waste matters...for a number of years during the 1990's I represented garbage collection and recycling companies as an attorney."

... continued on page 13

St. Mary's College Suspected Rapist Caught

By Cathy Tyson

On Friday February 27, 20-year-old St. Mary's College student Blake Johnson was arrested in class for the January 23 alleged rape of a fellow student who wishes to remain anonymous. "She was instrumental in identifying the suspect," said Moraga's Interim Police Chief Robert Priebe.

Johnson was booked at the Martinez Detention facility and released after posting \$100,000 bail. The case will be presented to the District Attorney on March 4, 2009.

Summer Camps 2009

see pages 19-21
25 Camps listed

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Lamorinda Community

Calendar, Notes, News

Lafayette

Calendar	
City Council	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Monday, March 9	
Planning Comm.	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, March 5 Thursday, March 19	
Design Review	7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room 500 St Mary's Road Tuesday, March 10	
Senior Services	3:30pm
Community Center, Alder Room 500 St Mary's Road Thursday, March 26	
City of Lafayette: http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us Chamber of Commerce: http://www.lafayettechamber.org	



Missing Power Source, 2/12/09 – The Lafayette School District reported 52 solar panels stolen from the roof of a school. The unknown suspects also stole a district-owned van to transport the panels. The missing items are valued at \$87,016. There are no suspects or witnesses at this time.

Broken Window and Missing Briefcase, 2/18/09 – Another window was smashed in the parking lot of the Oakwood Athletic Club. The good news is the crime was caught on a surveillance tape and the bad news is the camera was too far away. A light blue sedan backed into the space on the passenger side of the victim's vehicle. A fuzzy suspect was observed exit the blue sedan from the passenger side and walk to the passenger side of the victim's vehicle. At that point, the victim's window washed smashed and several items, including a laptop and a briefcase, were stolen.

Broken Window and Missing Tools, 2/19/09 – A Monticello Road resident heard a loud smashing/crashing sound outside his home and went outside to investigate with a flashlight. The victim discovered the side front window of his truck was smashed and his garage door was up. The suspect had apparently smashed the truck window and opened the victim's garage door with the opener that was stored in the truck. The victim said tools are missing from the garage and he had not given anyone permission to take them. There are no leads or suspects at this time.

Shoplifting at Safeway, 2/19/09 – An alert Safeway clerk noticed a customer stuff several items into her purse and leave the store without attempting to pay for them. The clerk followed the suspect into the parking lot and told her to return to the store and empty her purse on the Customer Service desk. The suspect complied and the goods valued at \$48.53 were recovered. The brave clerk detained the shoplifter until Lafayette Police arrived. The Officer placed the suspect under arrest, read her rights and transported her to the Martinez facility. The suspect told the officer under Miranda that a "friend" had told her to shoplift from the Lafayette Safeway because it was easy. She also admitted to shoplifting at the store in the past. Did she not understand Miranda? Perhaps she thought it was Opposite Day.



Lafayette Stimulus Package – Taking Care of Business

By Cathy Tyson
City staff aren't just paying lip service when they say that Lafayette is open for business. In an innovative move to encourage business growth and make development more attractive during our current financial meltdown, they have adopted a number of cost reductions to entice businesses to locate here, their own Stimulus Package. "The City Council and the Lafayette Redevelopment Agency Board recognize that Lafayette has been negatively impacted by the economic downturn currently plaguing California; and

that this economic downturn has created a ripple effect across the community causing a slowdown in the development of property," said City Manager Steven Falk in a prepared statement.
Incentives in the Stimulus Package include:
- Waiving the fee for a sign permit
- Waiving the Waste Management performance security fee
- The cost of street trees required to be planted as a condition of development will be reimbursed if developer submits a building permit application by 12/31/09.

- The expiration date of hillside development permits, design review and land use permits will be extended for one additional year from the date of expiration.
- Walkway construction and improvements will be reimbursed up to \$50,000, if required as a condition of development.
The City of Lafayette is clearly making an effort to tempt businesses and development that in turn would strengthen the local economy. Given the current recession, only time will tell if it works.

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New Bus Route to Serve Downtown Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson



County Connection Bus Photo courtesy www.motorbussociety.org

Commuters, especially those going to jobs on the east end of town, will be pleased with County Connection's upcoming route 25. Starting at the Lafayette BART station then travelling along Mt. Diablo Boulevard to Pleasant Hill Road, at which point it hops on the freeway to its final destination – the Walnut Creek BART station, this route will link workers all along the corridor to transit. Currently, the only option is walking from the BART station, which is convenient for Safeway workers. Those employed at the Lafayette Park Hotel – not so much.

Lafayette Transportation Planner Leah Greenblatt lobbied heavily for the increase in service. In part due to last summer's transportation survey, and after making the case that existing bus routes didn't connect to BART, this could be just the ticket to get commuters out of their cars.
Service starts March 22 at 7:30 a.m. and will run through 6:30 p.m. on an hourly basis. For more information go to www.ccta.org. This is just one of many systemwide service changes going into effect this spring. Due to budget shortfalls, a common refrain these days, fares will increase as of March 22. Adult tickets are now \$1.75 will be \$2.00 as of that date. Seniors and the disabled now pay \$.85, but will soon pay \$1.00. See website for additional fare increases. Bus to bus transfers will remain free.

Lafayette Continues to Wrestle with Specific Plan

By Cathy Tyson



Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan Community Workshop at the Veterans Hall Photo Cathy Tyson

The process of creating the Lafayette Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan marches on. In the final Community Workshop of this multi-year, multi-faceted project, citizens were invited to provide input on overall plan direction and specific recommendations and priorities. There has been an almost unprecedented public response so far, the Lafayette Homeowners

Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and past city council candidate Gabriel Froymovich have all urged citizens to get involved. Initiated in May of 2007 as a response to development pressure and antiquated 20-year old plans, the goal of this plan is to develop a vision and strategy for the long-term future growth of Lafayette. Mayor Don Tatzin in his opening remarks

at the recent Community Workshop reminded attendees that there will be many other opportunities to discuss the plan in the months to come. In addition to individual citizen input, during the first week of March the Circulation Commission, the Creeks Committee, Downtown Strategy Advisory Committee and the Planning Commission will all be discussing the draft plan.

More than a dozen round tables were set up in the Veteran's Hall to allow participants to discuss and provide input on five specific topics provided by organizers. Attendees were also asked if there are specific aspects of the Plan they liked, are unclear about or think need to be refined.
An introduction by Jim Stickley, Principal, at consulting firm Wallace, Roberts and Todd, included an overview of the discussion topics: community character/establishing districts, refining development regulations, adding downtown parks and creek greenways, improving downtown circulation and parking, and finally improving streetscapes.
... continued on page 6

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City seeks volunteers for participation on the new City Charter and Communications Committee

The Lafayette City Council is soliciting applicants to serve on a newly approved City Charter and Communications Committee.

This new five to seven-member committee will have two tasks, the first is to investigate the pros and cons of becoming a charter city and make a recommendation to the City Council on whether Lafayette should take this step. Existing nearby cities which operate under charters include Piedmont and San Ramon.

The committee's second task is to use the city charter investigation as a case study to develop more effective ways for the city to communicate with its residents and businesses. It is hoped that the methods of communication developed in this effort could be adapted to improve all future communication by the city with its constituents; on a wide variety of issues.

The committee will be asked to deliver its report regarding becoming a charter city in September 2009. Work related to communicating the findings and recommendations to residents may take longer.

Members of the committee will be appointed by the City Council on the basis of education, community involvement, training and experience in the fields of city government, communications, public outreach, finance, and related fields.

Questions regarding the committee may be directed to the Mayor at DTatzin@lovelafayette.org.

Individuals interested in this volunteer position may obtain an application from

The City's website at www.ci.lafayette.ca.us or
City of Lafayette Offices
3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 210 or

Call the City's Clerks Office at (925) 284-1968 and an application will be mailed. Completed applications must be received by 5:00 pm on Friday, March 6, 2009.

The Lafayette City Council is also soliciting applicants to serve on a newly approved City Open Space Committee.

Lamorinda Community

Moraga

Calendar

- Town Council 7:30pm**
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School
1010 Camino Pablo
Wednesday, March 11
- Planning Comm. 7:30pm**
Hacienda, La Sala Room
2100 Donald Drive
Monday, March 16
- Design Review 7:30pm**
Hacienda, La Sala Room
2100 Donald Drive
Monday, March 9
- Park & Rec 7:30pm**
Hacienda, Mosaic Room
2100 Donald Drive
Tuesday, March 17
- Liaison 8:00am**
Fire Station
1280 Moraga Way
Friday, March 13
- Town of Moraga online:**
<http://www.ci.moraga.ca.us>
- Chamber of Commerce:**
<http://www.moragachamber.org>



Mystery spine, 2/21/09 There was a small decomposed spine along a trail behind Saint Mary's Road, according to a resident who phoned police. The reporting person gave directions to the exact location of the spine, officers located the spine but couldn't determine if it was from an animal or from a human being. A local veterinarian could also not determine where the spine came from. The case was referred to Contra Costa Animal Services for further investigation; they picked it up from the police station. The trail is now spineless.

Annoying Telephone calls 2/21/09 A La Salle Drive resident had received numerous text messages of a threatening nature. Apparently two former employees were harassing her about their last paychecks. The call-ee wanted the police to come by her tanning salon business to make sure the former employees were not there to harass her. Officers contacted one of the callers and advised that this is a civil matter, stop sending the texts and to handle the matter through small claims court.

Potential identity theft 2/17/09 A Saint Andrews Drive resident had been contacted from U.S. Bank regarding an attempt to pass a fraudulent cashier's check bearing the victim's name. One of the two suspects possessed a false California driver's license with the victim's name, date of birth and license number. A savvy teller declined the transaction and the suspects left the bank. Here's hoping the surveillance camera was on.

D.U.I. 2/19/09 At the corner of Woodside Drive and Hardie Drive there was a traffic collision that involved a drunk driver. The 56-year-old female was screened at the scene and had a .19 blood alcohol level. The suspect was transported to the Main Detention Facility in Martinez and her vehicle was towed.

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Moraga Council Hires New Town Manager

By Sophie Braccini



Michael Segrest Picture courtesy of the Snowmass Sun

A wind of cohesiveness swept through the Town Council as it unanimously agreed to sign the contract hiring D. Michael Segrest as Moraga's new Town Manager. The five Council Members spoke highly of their chosen candidate and clearly responded to some negative comments that were presented by residents in attendance at that night's Council meeting. Mike Segrest will start work on March 23.

Segrest comes from Snowmass Village, a small resort town in Colorado, where he was hired as Town Manager in 2002 to handle a large commercial and mixed-use development project (more than 600 housing units are included in the Base Village development). He was also instrumental in the building of a recreational facility.

Segrest was hired by Moraga after a comprehensive hiring process that distilled more than 80 candidates to three finalists and the negotiation of a contract. "The hiring process was conducted very thoroughly," said Jay Tashiro, who has been Moraga's Interim Town Manager since the departure of Phil

Vince last year. Tashiro described a process that included community input to define the new Manager's profile, many interviews, meetings of the top 3 candidates with the Town's department heads and thorough review of all references.

Some residents expressed concern about the financial package that was offered to Segrest in a time of financial constraints: "Given Moraga's challenging financial condition, lack of adequate staff and police protection, and our rule of being a minimal government I'm appalled at what you are proposing," said resident Lee Bren, who estimated the total cost of hiring Segrest at \$300,000 for the first year.

The hiring package includes an annual salary of \$180,000, a \$500/month car allowance, a temporary housing allowance of up to \$3,000/month for one year, and other benefits including relocation costs, vacation, sick and administrative leave time, health and other insurance, and participation in the Public Employees Retirement System.

... continued on page 6

Moraga's COPS Will Buy Equipment

By Sophie Braccini

On February 25th Moraga's Interim Police Chief Robert Priebe asked the Town Council for authorization to spend the \$100,000 grant awarded to the Town under the State of California's "COPS" (Citizen's Options for Public Safety) program on the purchase of equipment, rather than using it to hire a 14th police officer. Priebe said he believes it is likely that the grant will not be renewed after this year, and his department is in critical need of replacement equipment. The Council approved the request.

In previous years, COPS funding was distributed to local jurisdictions in October and had been used in Moraga to fund a 13th police officer. In the heat of the budget crisis, the State did not release funding in 2008 for the current fiscal year. The Town modified its budget accordingly, paying the 13th officer from its own resources. At the time, there was some discussion that should COPS funds be received, they might be used to pay for a 14th officer.

"Recent correspondence with Contra Costa SLEOC (Supplemental Law Enforcement Oversight Committee) warns of future funding cuts," said Priebe. If the funding were to be cut off, the Town would either have to lay-off the new officer or fund the position from the Town's general fund.

"The COPS revenues are required to fund 'front line municipal police services,'" Priebe stated, "this can be equipment, personnel or special programs." He ran down a list of the Moraga Police Department's (MPD) equipment needs. Priebe said that the MPD's cars are equipped with mobile data computers that were purchased used from the County but are now outdated and in need of replacement.

Priebe would also like to equip his officers with new Tasers, explaining, "Right now they have the old model that has the shape of a gun and has been incriminated in the Oakland case." He hopes to provide each officer with a newer model that includes a camera that records video when the Taser is turned on.

The Interim Chief said he also needs items such as a new radio system for better communication, guns, a radar unit, an off-road motorcycle, crime scene evidence equipment, a traffic data collector and specialized training for new officers.

"There are a few things that are just nice to have," said Priebe, those are items that we really need, with the exception maybe of the motorbike." The Council unanimously approved the proposal as Mayor Dave Trotter warned, "But understand that you won't be able to exceed the \$100,000 by a penny."

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- 3/22: "Working With God", Part 2

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- T'ai Chi Chih/Qigong, 3/19-5/7
- Dare to Dance (stretch, tone, move), 3/17-5/21
- Creative Writing Workshop, 3/21

Lamorinda Community Calendar, Notes, News Orinda

Calendar	
City Council	7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library 26 Orinda Way Tuesday, March 17 Strategic Planning Workshop at 9:30am in the Community Room at City Hall, 22 Orinda Way	
Planning Comm.	7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library 26 Orinda Way Tuesday, March 24	
Traffic Safty Advisory Committee	
Sarge Littlehale Community Room 22 Orinda Way Monday, March 16	
Mayor's Com. Liaison	8:30am
Community Room at City Hall 22 Orinda Way Monday, April 6	
City of Orinda: http://www.ci.orinda.ca.us Chamber of Commerce: http://www.orindachamber.org • local businesses • upcoming events	



Suspected "Meth" maker 2/23/09 A smart pharmacist reported some suspicious activity – the purchase of cold medicine that included the ingredient pseudoephedrine – which is used to make crystal methamphetamine to the police, noting the vehicle description and license plate number of the get away car. When police pulled over the suspected vehicle they found 25 boxes of medicine containing pseudoephedrine from six different Rite Aid stores along with a 22 page list of Bay Area Rite Aid locations. Driver was arrested for possession of a precursor with intent to manufacture.

D.U.I. 2/21/09 Orinda police gave assistance at a car crash incident on Highway 24 at Pleasant Hill Road. The driver was parked sideways in the number four lane blocking traffic and reeking of alcohol. The 21-year-old male was slurring his speech and had urinated on himself. The young man was arrested at just after 2:00 a.m. – isn't that the time that bars usually close?

Orinda Motors robbed, 2/16/09 Sometime during the night an unknown suspect(s) broke into the business and removed property valued at over \$4,300 from the main office and shop area. Missing items include computers, tires, wheels, tools, even the ceiling fan from the bathroom was taken. No fingerprints were found.

Bold shoplifter, 2/12/09 An 18-year-old white male from Lafayette pushed a shopping cart containing two 12-packs of Bud Light out of the store, bypassing the front cash registers. "It was stupid thing to do," the young man said. He alleged that all of his friends have done it, so he believed he could get away with it. The store manager didn't press charges, but banned him from the store for a year.



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Council and Planning Commission Review PPRTF Recommendations

Neighbor Opt-In and FAR Changes Uncertain

By Andrea A. Firth
The City of Orinda set out to create a streamlined, objective, and user-friendly process for residential and commercial development—an admirable goal and herculean task. After 140 meetings and over a year of work by the eight members of the Planning Process Review Task Force (PPRTF), Council Members Tom McCormick and Amy Worth, and the City Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu, a 99-page draft report listing 61 ways to improve the City's planning process has been presented to the Planning Commission and City Council for their review and input.

"I was a member of the Task Force and support everything in the draft report," stated Ted Urban at the start of the recent meeting of the Planning Commission and City Council. However, he noted that some of the recommendations in the report would require changing Orinda's General Plan and therefore necessitated careful scrutiny. And it looks like that scrutiny will take several more meeting hours before a final report can be generated for the City Council to adopt.

At the February 24th meeting, Planning Director Ursu carefully reviewed the recommendations and answered questions regarding the rationale behind and potential impact of the proposed changes. After three hours, the group had provided feedback on the first 18 of 61 recommendations. While most of the recommendations breezed through with a nod, smile, and praise from the Commission and Council, two of the proposed recommendations generated lengthy discussion and garnered equivocal feedback.

Neighbor Opt-In. The proposed Neighbor Opt-In recommendation would allow residential projects of 1,500 square feet or more to bypass the Planning Commission (as long as no requests for a public hearing are received) if the resident obtains the written consent of adjoining property owners. The consent process would require that the neighbors have the opportunity to review the project plans and design standards and that story poles be posted and viewed. "The intent of the recommendation is to improve communication in the community and to have neighbors build neighborhoods," stated McCormick. However, Council Member Smith and several members of the Planning Commission were reluctant to remove the Planning Commission from the approval mix and felt that the proposal tipped the balance too far toward the neighbors.

Dean Orr, the current Chair of the Planning Commission, expressed a general uneasiness with turning the planning process over to the community noting that the Commission's job is to view individual

projects while keeping the community as a whole in mind. "We can all wrap our heads around a 1,000 to 1,500 square foot addition, but a project with no ends is not so easy," stated Orr. He also felt that the Neighbor-Opt In option might set up unrealistic expectations that neighbors' signatures would guarantee approval.

Planning Commissioner Louise Adamson concurred with Orr's concerns, but she added that the idea of neighbors communicating and working together was a component to the planning process that should be strongly encouraged. Adamson suggested some alternative incentives for gaining neighbors' consent that would still include a review by the Planning Commission.

Floor Area Ratio. The current policy for floor area ratio (FAR) limits the size of a home based on the size of the parcel. The Task Force has recommended that the FAR standard no longer be an absolute limit on the maximum home size for a given parcel and instead serve as a trigger for design review. Ursu explained that the design review trigger would provide greater flexibility for small additions (50 to 300 square feet) on smaller lots (less than .5 acres). While currently these additions might put the home beyond the allowable FAR, the project might not have a negative impact on neighbors and could provide benefit to the homeowner.

"There are some small lots that have ridiculously low FARs and similarly there are huge lots with very large FARs," stated Orr, but he expressed uncertainty about the Task Force's change. "My concern is with lots in the 20,000 square foot range. I wish we could adjust the FAR more definitively versus asking for design review and obtaining a variance." Council Member Glazer also expressed doubt. "I have always had

a problem with the FAR and felt it was an artificial number," he stated, "but I'm not sure this recommendation is an improvement."

The Planning Commission and City Council will continue to meet to review the remaining 43 recommendations of the PPRTF. These meetings are open to the public and will be noticed on the City website.

Neighbor Opt-In
Current Guideline: Residential projects that are 1,500 square feet or greater require a public hearing by the Planning Commission.

Why Change?: Many projects meet the applicable standards, undergo more scrutiny than necessary, and do not require a public hearing.

Proposed Change: Residential projects that are 1,500 square feet or greater can be approved by the Zoning Administrator (i.e., the City Planning Director) without a public hearing before the Planning Commission, if the adjoining neighbors provide written consent. Neighbors must be provided the plans and design standards for review and be able to see the project story poles in place. The Zoning Administrator can deny or refer a project to the Planning Commission at anytime.

Floor Area Ratio
Current Guideline: The floor area ratio (FAR) standard sets a maximum limit for the size of a home based on the size of the parcel.

Why Change?: The current FAR standard sets unrealistic expectations for the maximum size of homes on large lots and unnecessarily restricts the size of homes on smaller lots.

Proposed Change: Allow the FAR standard to serve as a trigger for design review versus an absolute limit. Re-evaluate the application of this more flexible FAR standard in two years or after 10 relevant projects are completed.



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Orinda City Council Sets Strategy—Prudent Fiscal Management the Priority

By Andrea A. Firth

In a relaxed, collegial, workshop format, Orinda's City Council met with several members of the City Staff to establish goals and objectives for the year. All agreed that infrastructure remained the City's number one problem. However, the Council set clear direction that its number one, overarching priority is prudent fiscal management. As the Council and Staff reviewed the City's plans related to infrastructure, public safety, planning and economic development, and customer service and community outreach, the discussion often returned to the need to implement programs as cost effectively as possible.

"Can we be more efficient? Are we doing our best?" were questions raised by Council Member Tom McCormick. He suggested that the City conduct an internal review of all departments and programs to look for efficiencies and ways to save money. Mayor Sue Severson agreed that an internal review was appropriate noting that the City had already set the plans for enhancing revenue in motion through the implementation of the recommendations offered by the Revenue Enhancement Task Force.

City Manager Janet Keeter reported that the City had no cuts planned and was working to "hold

the line" on the City budget. Keeter and Administrative/Financial Services Director Beverli Marshall also reported that input from members of the Finance Advisory Committee, formerly the Budget Committee, had been very helpful in last year's budget process and would be part of the process again this year. "We really celebrate the work of the Budget Committee," stated Council Member Amy Worth.

Improving public communication was another important priority identified by the Council Members. As an example, Worth pointed to the significant amount of work done by the Planning Process Review Task Force and the need to bring the group's recommendations to the community in a big way. Although the Council liked the look of the City's new website, members were frustrated by its less than user-friendly access to information. "Three and four clicks to find something is too many," stated McCormick. In addition, McCormick repeatedly called for the City to establish and grow effective email distribution lists for communicating to residents.

The City Council and Staff will continue the Strategic Planning Workshop on Tuesday, March 10 at 9:30am in the Community Room at City Hall.

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Life in LAMORINDA

Jazz Record Producer Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

By Jennifer Wake



John Burk

It's one thing to love the sound of jazz. It's quite another to be known as a visionary for the genre. In recognition of his important work in the world of jazz, Executive Vice President of A&R and Chief Creative Officer of the Concord Music Group, John Burk, will be presented with a lifetime achievement award on Saturday, March 7 at the Acalanes Performing Arts Center during the 9th annual Lafayette Jazz Festival.

Burk worked as an independent musician/producer/engineer

until 1989 when he was recruited by Concord Records' founder (and Bay Area jazz icon) Carl Jefferson to be his successor in guiding the label.

"Carl Jefferson had a great love for jazz, and it was with his vision that the Concord Pavilion became a reality," said one founder of the Generations in Jazz (GIJ) Foundation, Maurice "Mo" Levich. "Because John Burk is both a musician and an engineer, he is able to produce a sound and balance; he has an incredible ability to recognize talent."

During his career, Burk has produced more than 100 albums and has worked with wide array of talent including George Benson, Al Jarreau, Paul McCartney, Jill Scott, Tito Puente, Gladys Knight and many more. One of his productions, Ray Charles' "Genius Loves Company," won a record 8 Grammy awards including Album of the Year and Record of the Year. Burk was also one of the visionaries for the Lafayette Summer Music Workshop that, for the past 11

years, has taught young people about the American original art form of jazz.

"The future of jazz and education was what we all had in mind when we met in [John Burk's] office in 1998," Levich said. "Behind it is a lot of heart and soul. Our foundation is a presenting foundation that presents young students, and allows them to see the future through professionals and jazz educators. Funds from the Festival go to the foundation so we can continue to present this American art form within the community and continue our role in education."

In a conversation with Levich, Burk said he would personally like to "further promote the education of jazz to American youth." He envisions podcasts from different artists, forming a network of student jazz enthusiasts, and allowing direct communication with well-known jazz musicians.

"It would be great to connect Concord Music Group fans with artists and artists with fans," Burk said.

Burk is the third to receive the GIJ lifetime achievement award; others included Bay Area broadcast legend Al Hart and current Rossmoor resident Frank Como, who was Lionel Hampton's arranger for 20 years.

Other award recipients this year include ninth-grader Connor Anderson and his brother, tenth-grader Trevor Anderson of Concord, who will receive the Harvey Rosenblum Scholarship Award, and Lafayette resident Greg Lahey, who will receive the Community Service Award.

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Lafayette Jazz Festival Not to be Missed

The ninth annual Lafayette Jazz Festival will kick off on Thursday, March 5 with a private party at the Del Valle Clubhouse in Rossmoor. The following is a list of the Festival's participating bands, times and locations:

Thursday, March 5 (7:30 p.m.) – Double Take, which features students from Stanley Middle School ages 12 to 14, will open for the Big Band of Rossmoor which will feature the Bay Area's own Mary Fetig on saxophone and Countess Felder from the Alabama Hall of Fame on vocals. Del Valle Clubhouse in Rossmoor. Tickets, \$5.

Friday, March 6 (7:30 p.m.) – The award winning Stanley Jazz Messengers, directed by Bob Athayde, will begin Friday night's evening of music, followed by the Faces of Jazz (featuring Rich Fongheiser and Bob Athayde, and other local musicians). The Acalanes Performing Arts Center. Tickets, \$5.

Saturday, March 7 (7:30 p.m.) – Touted as "the Big Night," the evening will begin with the Acalanes Jazz Ensemble followed by the first East Bay appearance of Ray Brown's Great Big Band. The band is led by composer, arranger, trumpet player and teacher Ray Brown, who has worked as jazz trumpet player and arranger for the orchestras of Stan Kenton, Bill Watrous, Bill Berry, Frankie Kapp-Nat Pierce, and the Full Faith and Credit Big Band. The Acalanes Performing Arts Center. Tickets, \$10.

Sunday, March 8 (6:30 p.m.) – The festival's final traditional performance will feature the Contra Costa County Honor Middle School Jazz Band and High School Jazz Band (with guest directors Dave Gregoric and Dr. Aaron Lington). The middle school bands represented are from Diablo View, Diablo Vista, Foothill, St. Perpetua, Sequoia, Walnut Creek Intermediate and Stanley Middle School. The high schools represented are Acalanes, Campolindo, College Preparatory School, College Park, El Cerrito, Northgate, Home School and Las Lomas. The Acalanes Performing Arts Center. Tickets, \$5.

Tickets are available at the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce (www.lafayettechamber.org or (925) 284-7404.

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• **LAMORINDA Community** •

Lafayette Continues to Wrestle with Specific Plan

... continued from page 2

Despite a detailed explanation in his overview, a couple of participants at this reporter's table were very concerned about proposed height limit changes. Although when asked if the table would prefer the existing 76 station or an attractive mixed use three-story building, the unanimous answer was the new structure.

One table mate felt that, "Lafayette is a small town, it's important to build to that scale." regarding refining development regulations. There seemed to be palpable concern about the possibility of changing building height limits from 35 feet to 42.5 feet, even with upper story setbacks. On the other hand, a couple who developed a three story building in the center of town, with retail on the bottom and living space on the upper floors noted, if they weren't able to have three stories the project would not have penciled out financially.

What was an empty lot in the heart of downtown now has shops that contribute sales tax to the city, and happy residents who very rarely need a car because they can walk to nearby businesses.

On the whole it seemed liked most participants agree with the community vision (in italics below), as stated in the Downtown Strategy and Specific Plan, they just didn't quite agree on how to get there:

A downtown that retains its small town charm, is vibrant with pedestrian activity, is safe and comfortable, offers a variety of unique shopping and dining choices and has a unique combination of built form and landscape character in keeping with its surrounding natural environment - characterized by oak-studded hillsides and cool shady creeks. A downtown that encourages economic activity beneficial to the community through the encouragement of small local businesses and enhancement of its tax base - generating revenue that continues to enhance and maintain a high quality public space environment.

For more information go to www.lovelafayette.org for the official Draft Plan, Executive Summary, comments, workshop notes and more.

Businesses Discuss Strategic Plan



Mike Anderson presents the plan to business and property owners
 Photo Sophie Braccini

More than 110 business owners crowded Temple Isaiah's meeting room on Feb 24 for a presentation of the downtown specific plan organized by the City of Lafayette and the Chamber of Commerce. A panel composed of City Manager Steve Falk, Lafayette developer Steve Cortese, Council Member Mike Anderson and Chamber member Ann Denny answered questions. Here are some of the questions and answers:

The city is planning to have certain zones become parking or public areas, will Lafayette use imminent domain to materialize the plan?

Falk said Lafayette has no such intention. The plan will set the rules for when someone wants to redevelop a business/property. Cortese added, "The purpose of the plan is to give a view of what could happen within 20 years; it's what could happen."

The city is planning a public walkway along the creek; when someone has a property there and will want to remodel that property will he have to comply with this project?

Falk's short answer was, "Yes."

Why build housing in the downtown?

Falk outlined the reasons: To provide housing for seniors who want to downsize and stay in Lafayette, and housing for first time buyers and young families; also adding condominiums in the downtown area will help preserve open space. He added that "it's better to develop where there is already some development." Finally, he said, "This could help with the city's affordable housing mandate."

How can the parking problem be resolved?

Falk: "The consultant has proposed a central parking (Campana area) that would be used by employees of nearby business and schools and would free up parking for customers. The plan also proposes to consolidate exclusive small parking that individual stores have to create pocket parking in the back of stores.

Why increase the maximum height to 42 1/2 feet?

Cortese explained, "That's the height of the Mercantile, it allows for higher ceilings for the first floor retail area which is what is required today, plus add two levels above."

How will the problem of traffic congestion be solved?

Anderson answered, "We first need a better understanding of our traffic problem. One solution that has been proposed by the consultant is adding connecting streets that would parallel Mount Diablo and release that street. Another solution would be to build a tunnel under Mt Diablo to directly link Moraga traffic to the freeway." He added that the engineering of the project would be very complex and very expensive.

S. Braccini

Moraga Council Hires New Town Manager

... continued from page 3

"This salary is similar to what our previous Town Manager received and is less than what I had in Corte Madera," said Tashiro.

"We want to give our Manager pay equity with the towns and cities around us," added Council Member Chew, "it is important for his credibility."

"To get a well qualified professional you need to stay with the market rate," said resident Jeff Schwartz in support of the Council's choice, "a great town manager can make or break a town with the directions and decisions he makes, the people he hires, his management style... from what I know, we have the right person."

Others expressed doubts about the non-democratic aspect of a process in which residents were not directly involved in the selection of their town manager.

"The Council reviewed this, a sub-committee reviewed

that, but something was missing -- the public. Where was the public?" asked resident Dennis Wanken.

"I understand the concern and we did our best to include local groups in defining the profile for our Manager," answered Council Member Karen Mendonca, "but as the process continued, we could not open it up too much because the position of the candidates would be compromised and we needed to protect confidentiality." She reminded the audience that residents elect their Council Members for the purpose of representing them and to act as their agents in choosing what is best for Moraga.

Council Member Mike Metcalf summarized the Council's position by saying, "Mr. Segrest was brought into a community (Snowmass Village) that had a hard time deciding what it was going to do in terms of development. Under the direction of the Council, he got

things done. We've been dead in the water for the last ten or fifteen years and he is ready to come here and deal with everything that will be thrown at him, and I admire him for that."

Mayor Dave Trotter explained, "We spent many hours interviewing all the candidates in closed sessions, and Mr. Segrest gained a very good grasp of the nuances of this community in a very short period of time. He was head and shoulders above the other two final candidates." Trotter added that Segrest appeared to have been the staff's choice as well.

Council Member Howard Harpham directly addressed the source of the discontent, "I understand the rage which can come when you start off with a lot, but not all, of the information." he said, "I wish I could share with you the resume, the experience and the statements that were made... We hired this man, we should support him, so he succeeds."

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LAMORINDA Community

What's it Worth?

Appraisal Event Held at Orinda Theater

By Andrea A. Firth



Michaan's Appraiser, Jane Alexiadis, with Lafayette resident Lisa Albert
Photo A. Firth

Lafayette resident Lisa Albert turned up at the appraisal event held in Orinda's Theater last week with a large painting of farmers working in a rice paddy. "It's not quite the style of our home, but I was curious to find out more about it," Albert said of the painting that had been hanging in her home for years.

As she presented the painting to Jane Alexiadis, an appraiser with Michaan's Auctions, Albert shared some interesting background, or provenance in antique terms. Albert and her husband received the painting from her husband's parents. Albert's in-laws

had lived in the Philippines during World War II and were both POWs. They survived the War but lost all their possessions and home and returned to the States to settle and rebuild their lives. The couple went back to the Philippines in the late 1940's to try to revive their shipping company and purchased this painting by the well-known Philippine artist Fernando Amorsolo. Alexiadis was familiar with Amorsolo's work and had done some research in advance, so she was able to provide Albert with background on the artist, examples of his work, and an approximation of the painting's value.

"Ideally we are provided with some information about the painting or item we are trying to appraise," explained Alexiadis, "but there are many different ways to solve the mysteries that surround the pieces we evaluate." As an example, Alexiadis explained that she sometimes consults with a horticulturist or botanist to identify the plants in a painting to help her to pinpoint the location and period of the scene depicted. Michaan's appraisers can often provide an evaluation on the spot or will follow up via email or phone after getting further information.

Michaan's Auctions holds weekly appraisal events at their showroom in Alameda. This was the first time that they hosted an appraisal event in Orinda, and several area residents made appointments in advance for evaluations of decorative art including an old violin, a set of silverware, cocktail shakers, and Asian fine art and prints. The appraisals are free, and Michaan's can facilitate the sale of items through their monthly Estate and Annex Auctions. Michaan's will hold their next appraisal event at the Orinda Theater on Thursday, April 23rd from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. For more information got to michaans.com.

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Fundraising in Today's Economy

By Cathy Tyson

It was standing room only for the presentation, "Fundraising in Today's Economy," sponsored by the Lafayette Community Foundation. "We want to bring as many resources to the community as we can," said emcee Anne Grodin, Foundation Board Member. The Community Foundation supports projects that promote the civic, cultural, educational and environmental health of Lafayette. Helping other non-profits is right up their alley. Since 2000 they have given over \$141,000 to support a long list of community non-profit organizations.

"It was a wild success," said Grodin noting this event was the first of its kind for the foundation. "We found there was a great need for information in the community. We feel this is part of our mission, expanding philanthropy and giving locally."

Recognizing that the many non-profits they've supported

over the years are feeling the financial pinch of the current economic downturn, the Community Foundation recognized this was a perfect opportunity to put together a free seminar that would offer advice and tips from Bay Area fundraising experts.

Sara DuBois, Director of Development of the East Bay Community Foundation suggested that "fundraising is really all about relationships." She acknowledged times are tough, but recommended being pro-active and going to donors to maintain a relationship even if the money is not there now. "Don't treat donors like an ATM - keep them in the loop with e-mail and newsletters." She also suggested seeing if there are other non-profits to partner with to increase efficiency and for larger organizations, bequests a good option for donors who can't give now.

"It's definitely a time to go out of your way to thank donors and to develop a sense of urgency - why it's important to give now," said Jan Berckefeldt, Executive Director of the Maybeck Foundation.

One tip offered by Linda Peterson, a Communication Consultant with Peterson, Skolnick & Dodge is to hone your story to its absolute essence, "say what you do and why it matters." She also suggested emphasizing donor needs that only donors can fill and reiterated the notion of cultivating relationships. She had the audience in stitches with rules of engagement regarding the courtship of a potential donor.

The one thing all the panel experts agreed and joked upon was the over-used phrase "in today's tough economic times," and suggested instead emphasizing the importance of continuing support.

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Orinda Council Supports 55% Threshold for Local Tax Measures

By Andrea A. Firth

The biggest financial challenge facing Orinda is how to fund the City's \$120 million in infrastructure needs—this is no secret. Residents regularly dodge potholes and for two years running Orinda's roads have had the distinction of being named the worst in the Bay Area. Twice the City has placed infrastructure bonds before the voters and failed to obtain the required 2/3 approval by a narrow margin. City Council, staff, and Task Force volunteers continue to strategize ways to obtain grants and additional revenue sources to address the infrastructure needs, and the problem persists. Most recently the Council worked the legislative angle.

At the February 17th City Council meeting, the Council adopted a resolution in support of a bill authored by California State Assembly Member Jared Huffman that would amend the State Constitution and lower the voter

threshold to 55% for special local taxes. Currently, local taxes require a 2/3 voter approval—a bar that is often difficult to reach. [Local taxes used to finance school facility improvements are an exception and require a 55% voter approval—a change approved through Proposition 39 in 2000.]

According to the Mayor Sue Severson, the Contra Costa Mayors Conference has begun to expand its advocacy efforts. Civic leaders cross the County have been encouraged to take a more active role in support of legislation that will enable cities to retain greater local control for priorities that they have established. To that end the Council considered and adopted the resolution in support of lowering the voter threshold, however the Council's action will not amend the 2/3 requirement—that will require approval by the State legislature and a statewide vote.

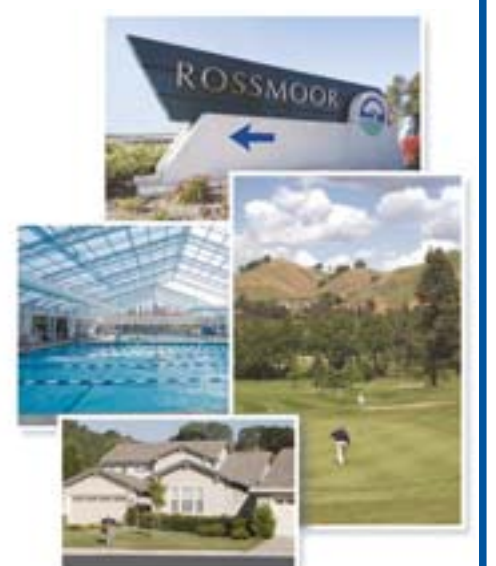
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MUSIC
Generations in Jazz Presents the 9th Annual Lafayette Jazz Festival:
 Thurs March 5th – Sunday March 8th. Enjoy performances by The Rossmoor Big Band, Double Take Stanley Middle School Jazz Messengers, Faces of Jazz, Acalanes School Jazz Band, The Ray Brown Great Big Band and Contra Costa County Honor Jazz Bands. Tickets, venues and pricing available at the Lafayette Chamber (925) 284-7404 or www.lafayettechamber.org. See story on page 5.

A BICENTENNIAL CONCERT of works by Haydn (d. 1809) and Mendelssohn (b. 1809) will be presented at Our Savior's Lutheran Church at 7:00

pm on Saturday, March 14. Haydn's Mass in Time of Anguish and excerpts from Mendelssohn's Elijah will be performed by OSLC singers joined by professional soloists and instrumental ensemble, with Martin Morley conducting. Free admission; freewill offering collected.

Enjoy the 40's and 50's music of Eddie Williams – a self-contained one-man show – a mix of vocals and instrumentation featuring Eddie on vocals, guitar and saxophone. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served while you listen to Eddie perform the music of Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby and more. Thursday, March 19 from 6:45 pm to 8:15 pm. This is event is free and open to the public. Please RSVP by March 16th to Candice Moses 925-377-7900 or e-mail to candice.moses@aegisliving.com.

ABOVE THE VIOLET an adventure tale by Laura Means Berchdorf. Directed by Randall Nott. What happens when a determined 8-year-old girl decides to show her equally determined, fossil collecting, 10-year-old brother that she is sorry for ruining his surprise? A cast of wildly entertaining and diverse characters is unleashed in this well paced show for the whole family. Leshler Center for the Arts (Knight Stage 3) 1601 Civic Drive Walnut Creek. March 6 through March 22. For tickets and exact show times call Leshler Box-Office (925) 943-SHOW. \$18.

Midsummer Night's Dream will be presented by the award-winning Diablo Valley College Drama Department; opening March 20th and running every Fri-Sun. thru April 5. Tickets range from \$5-15, with special community-outreach matinees during the week for school-aged children and their classes. (If you are an educator, and would like to arrange to have your students attend, please contact Marsha Fulk at (925) 687-4445 for details and booking.) General Public performances will be held Friday and Saturday Evenings at 8pm and Sundays at 2:30pm. Tickets can be purchased by calling (925) 687-4445 or by emailing- mfulk@dvc.edu.

LAFAYETTE TOWN HALL THEATRE COMPANY PRESENTS THE ODD COUPLE (Female Version) March 28 – April 25. The Female Version Adds a Twist to Neil Simon's Superbly Written Comedy (Rating – PG-13) Contact the Town Hall Theatre Company Box Office for exact dates and times. For Tickets: 925-283-1557. Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, Lafayette.

The Moraga Art Gallery presents "The Northern Lights" in Moraga through March 14th and then the new group show "Inner Spirit" will open March 17th. The new show will feature the work of Nancy Robinson who thoroughly enjoys the creative process. She has always been fascinated with the human figure; "there is nothing more beautiful. But even more so is the spirit. I find that is what attracts me. And that is how I paint. Nancy started with pastels and watercolors and has been working with acrylics and oils for the past few years. The public is invited to the Opening Reception on Saturday, March 21,

◆ **Not to be missed** ◆

from 3-5 pm at the Moraga Art Gallery, 570 Center St, Rheem Valley Shopping Center/next to Longs Drugs. Open Tuesday through Sunday, 12-5 pm. 925.376.5407.

"Objects of Affection," at the Lafayette Gallery runs through March 7th and the new show, "Food, Glorious Food" opens March 10th. Gallery Hours: 11 – 5 pm Tuesday – Saturday, 50 Lafayette Circle, 925-284-2788.

"Faberge Tiffany Laliqum" March 25- 2:00pm, Moraga Library. A Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco docent lecture based on the current exhibit at the Legion of Honor running through May 31. The exhibit provides first comparative study of three great jewelry and decorative arts designers: Peter Carl Faberge, Louis Comfort tiffany, and Rene Laliqum.

LITERATURE & LECTURES

Mysterious California Book Discussion Series—Kirk Russell's "Shell Games." On March 19: 1:00—3:00 p.m. and 7:00—9:00 p.m. Moraga Library Facilitated book discussion of Russell's John Marquez novel which takes place along the northern California coast and features a unique sleuth: an ex-DEA who now heads a special investigative unit.

Moraga Book Sale -March 7-10 a.m.to 1:00 p.m. The Friends of the Moraga Library are conducting their annual inventory reduction sale in the parking lot behind the Library. Come and find your favorite materials and authors out of some 1000 reasonably priced books. For more information, call 925-376-6259.

KIDS

Children's activities at the Moraga Library: Storytime- Stories and crafts for children three to seven-Tuesdays through March 17, 4:00—4:30 pm; Lapsit -Stories, songs and bounces for baby and caregiver-Wednesdays through March 18, 10:00—10:20 a.m. ; Toddlertime-Stories, rhymes and fun-Ages 2 to 3-1/2 with adult participation-Wednesdays through March 18, 10:45—11:15 a.m.

Powell's Sweet Shoppe, 3591 Mt. Diablo Blvd in Lafayette, will celebrate its 1st Birthday on Saturday, March 14 starting at 10 a.m. Special guest Mike Tee Vee of Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory fame will be signing autographs all morning. You can also win a chance to have lunch with Mike at one of Lafayette's restaurants. 1,000 Wonka Bars will be given away with 5 chances to win a Golden Ticket!

PARENTS

On Saturday, March 7 from 10am-

◆ **Not to be missed** ◆

3pm, Las Lomas student Resham Ramsay, as part of her Girl Scout Gold Award, will present an "Anti-Stress Fest" to help Acalanes District Communities deal constructively with the stress in our lives. This project is being presented in conjunction with the Girl Scouts of America and is open to staff, parents, and students from all district schools. Come spend the day and participate in activities to help reduce whatever stresses you have in your lives! Los Lomas HS gym, 1460 South Main Street in Walnut Creek.

Meditating Moms & Dads ... Finding Peace in the School Parking Lot. Sherry Berman MA, has been working with people who are struggling through the different transitions in their lives including parenthood, divorce and career change. As a career and life transitions counselor and spiritual director, Sherry draws from a variety of therapeutic foundations, to help people transition through the challenging times in life in ways that are positive and healthy. Tuesday, March 10, 2009, 7:00-8:30pm, library. No fee, register at the event or on-line (course # 05-6109) http://adulthood.acalanes.k12.ca.us.

Topics on every Middle School Parents' Mind, Wednesday, March 11 7-9 pm, MPH, Orinda Intermediate

School, 80 Ivy Drive, Orinda. Irene Coleman (MFT), Lafayette and Mark Bressler, Lafayette Academy, will deal with the many different aspects of a middle school students' life and how it impacts the family around. Some of the topics that will be covered: Why reading comprehension is even more important than soccer? The significance of your child's learning style (includes a take home assessment.) Why grades don't tell the whole story. The emotional and physical challenges faced by middle schoolers and their parents and families-including information on alcohol and drugs. How to nurture your child along the middle school path.

"Children and a Healthy Media Environment," presentation by Dr. Richard Freed -Wednesday, March 11 at 7 p.m. Children's addiction to video games and the Internet is a fast-growing problem. Learn how to protect your child in this interactive talk (for parents only). 7 p.m., Wagner Ranch Elementary School Library. Sponsored by the Wagner Ranch Parents Club. Dr. Freed speaks nationally on the health effects of children's media use; his work has been published in the journal Pediatrics and Mothering Magazine; and he has appeared on CBS Bay Area TV News. For more information www.richardfreed.com.

The Exquisite Sounds of the Tilden Trio in the Chapel at Saint Mary's College
 Submitted by Betty Bell-Amarant



The Committee for Lectures, Art and Music will present three virtuoso artists for an afternoon of superb music in The Chapel at Saint Mary's College on Sunday, March 15 at 2:00pm.
 After collaborating for decades in various ensembles, The Tilden Trio was formed in 2004 by Juilliard schoolmates, Sam Oliver (first violin, San Francisco Symphony), Peter Wyrick (Associate Principal Cello, San Francisco Symphony) and June Choi Oh (Piano Faculty, San Francisco Conservatory of Music). The Trio has appeared in the Berkeley Chamber Series, Noe Valley Chamber Series, Chancellor's Series at University of California, San Francisco and San Francisco Symphony Chamber Music Series at Davies Symphony Hall. Known for their solo and chamber music experience, each of these accomplished musicians has performed nationally and abroad.
WHO: Committee for Lectures, Art and Music at Saint Mary's College
WHAT: The Tilden Trio
WHEN: Sunday, March 15, 2009 @ 2pm
WHERE: Saint Mary's College Chapel, 1928 Saint Mary's Road, Moraga,
TICKETS: Suggested Donation \$25 general; \$20 seniors (65+); \$12 SMC faculty, staff and non-SMC students; \$2 SMC students
INFO: 925.631.4381 or visit www.stmarys-ca.edu



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WomenSing, a 50 voice chorus, will perform Sunday, April 5 at 4:00pm, Saint Mary's Chapel, 1928 Saint Mary's Road, Moraga. "Stars" by Dublanc and Randall Thompson, contemporary Norwegian music, music in celebration of Mendelssohn's 200 birth anniversary, and the mystical Holst's Choral Hymns from the Rig-Veda. Ticket prices are: \$25 reserved \$20 general \$18 Seniors/students \$10 youth 18 and under. Tickets may be purchased online at www.womensing.org, at the door, or by calling (925) 974-9169.

THEATER

Contra Costa College Drama Department Artistic Director Clay David directs a landmark production of Lorraine Hansberry's "A RAISIN IN THE SUN" at the Knox Center for the Performing Arts Center, March 4-8, at 8 p.m. According to David, the play centers on the Younger family who find themselves at a crossroads when the family patriarch dies and leaves them with \$10,000 in insurance money. "Dreams," says David, "can make a life worth living, but they can also be dashed by bad decisions. "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a Raisin in the Sun?" Corner of El Portal Drive and Castro in San Pablo. 510-235-7800 ext. 4274 \$15.00 General \$10.00 Students.

Irish dancers from the Moore School of Irish Dance in Walnut Creek will be performing award-winning Traditional

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Brown Bag -Study Skills & Learning Styles-Thursday, March 12, Noon - 1:30pm, library Walnut Creek Intermediate School, 2425 Walnut Blvd, Walnut Creek. Why does my child listen to music while doing homework? Discover Your Child's Learning Style. Come and find out how to help your student learn more effectively and efficiently by tapping into his/her learning style. We will discover how sensory and emotional stimulation play an important part in your student's learning process. We will also be discussing the role of stress in your student's life. No fee, register at the event or on-line at (course no 05-6112) <http://adulted.acalanes.k12.ca.us>.

The REAL Impact of Sports in Lamorinda- Wednesday, March 18 7:00 pm Stanley Library. Join us for an exploration into the physical and emotional impacts of sports on our middle schoolers. How do we avoid 'over participation', which leads to physical injuries and mental burnout. Why, when we get on the playing field, do we overlook disrespectful behavior, bullying and unsportsmanlike behavior, all in the chase for a win? And how do we help our children enjoy sports in our community?

Robin Bousquet, Sports Medicine Center for Young Athletes, Children's Hospital, Oakland; Erika Carlson, Sports Psychologist, Excellence in Sports Performance, Walnut Creek.

PERSPECTIVES

Jan Passion and Ellen Furnari: The Nonviolent Peaceforce. Wednesday, March 11 at 7:00 pm, Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center at Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, Owl Room, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek, CA 94596 (925) 933-7850 www.mtdpc.org.

ClimatePath.org is hosting the **March 12, 2009 movie event** as they are having a kick off evening at the Rheem Movie Theatre. There will be wine and appetizers, and music from 6 pm to 7 pm, followed by the movie, "Who Killed the Electric Car?" After the movie, coffee and sweets will be served. Please visit the host's website (<http://www.climatepath.org>) or www.sustainablelafayette.net

Science and Religion—"**What is our hope at the "End of Time?"**" is the topic for the March 16 meeting at 7:15 in the Davies Room, Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Based on the book, *God of Hope and the End of the World* by Cambridge physicist and Episcopal priest, John Polkinghorne, the discussion will include scientific, biblical and theological viewpoints. For further information the church at 283-8722 or email, edschoenberger@1964.sun.com.

Please submit: Events: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com
Stories: storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com
Letters: letters@lamorindaweekly.com
Opinion: letters@lamorindaweekly.com

The Future of US-Cuban Relations and Foreign Policy under Obama. Lafayette Library welcomes award-winning journalist Reese Erlich on Wednesday, March 18 at 7:00pm to discuss the uncertain future of US-Cuban relations. Cuba is currently in the midst of a historic transition as the half century rule of Fidel Castro has come to an end. In his newest book, *Dateline Havana: The Real Story of U.S. Policy and the Future of Cuba*, Reese Erlich lays out President Obama's options and challenges regarding Cuba. This free program is presented by World Affairs Council, East Bay chapter. Registration/Reception: 6:30 PM, Program: 7:00 PM.

Ygnacio Valley Republican Women Federated, Wednesday, March 18, at 5:00 PM—No Host Cocktail Party/General Meeting at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill with Special Guest Speaker Dana Walsh the 2008 Republican Candidate for Nancy Pelosi's seat—come enjoy delicious hors d'oeuvres and listen to this wonderful speaker. It's a great time for friends and neighbors to get together. \$30 RSVP: Barbara Allen: 925/672-5061 or jngcabot@pacbell.net or our website: www.yvrfw.org

Vigil- Iraq War Year Six -March 19th at 7:00pm corner of Deer Hill and Oak Hill Road, across from the Lafayette BART station. Sponsored by: The Crosses of Lafayette, Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center Lamorinda Peace & Justice Group, Buddhist Peace Fellowship.

The Commonwealth Club -Robert Baer: Inside Iran, Tuesday, March 24, 6:30 pm. After spending 25 years as a CIA operative in the Middle East, Baer believes America needs to negotiate directly with Iran. Considered a leading expert on the Middle East, Baer visited Iran to interview suicide bombers, a grand ayatollah, the hard-line chief of staff of Iran's military forces and the terrorist chief of Hezbollah. Find out why Baer maintains that America's hopes in the Gulf lie in peaceful collaboration or even alliance with the fastest growing power in the Middle East. 6 p.m. check-in, 6:30 p.m. program, book signing to follow. Cost: \$12 members, \$18 non-members, \$7 students (with valid ID.) The Veterans Memorial Hall, 3780 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

OTHER

Sex After 50: Keep the Fires Burning. Have you ever wondered why your sex drive may change with menopause and aging? Have you wondered if there is anything that can be done about these changes? Join us for a conversation with Risa Kagan, MD to learn more. Thursday, March 26, 6:30 to 8:00 pm, Women's Health Center in Lafayette, 3595 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite 350. RSVP: 510-869-6137.

◆ Not to be missed ◆

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church will be hosting a "Community Treasures" Garage Sale on Saturday, March 7 from 8 am - 2 pm. Money raised will support the Youth Program's Mission Trip to Mississippi to assist Katrina victims.

Free, open classes on Brain Wave Vibration, March 7, March 21, March 28, 10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m at Dahn Yoga, The Rheem Center, 452 Center Street, Moraga, 925-377-9642. Brain Wave Vibration involves the gentle, rhythmic shaking of the body, through which the practitioner can quickly lower high-frequency brain waves in order to reduce stress, and promote healing in the body.

3rd Annual Run for Kieran -Sunday, March 8, at 9 am starting at Stanley Middle School. Fun run (2 miles) for all ages. Baby joggers welcome. *For the more "competitive runners" we are offering a 7 mile run this year! Fee - \$20/participant. For more information, contact the Quinn family at quinnsix@sbcglobal.net.

MORAGA MOVERS March 9 luncheon will feature a delicious St. Patrick's fare—Corned Beef and Cabbage with all the trimmings. Our featured speaker, Steve Kendall, has earned rave reviews for his talent in analyzing handwriting. Reservations for the March 9 luncheon must be made by Wednesday, March 4, by 5 PM (925) 376-6622. The \$15 price of the meal (which includes gratuity and tax) is payable at the entrance.

AFTERNOON TEA will be held Thursday March 12 from 1 - 3 p.m. at the Lafayette Community Center in the Sequoia Room. Join us for some friendly conversation and goodies. Helen Stimson will demonstrate some new recipes and share her ideas and variations for a relaxing afternoon tea. The price is \$20 for non-members and \$18 for members. To register, contact Emeritus College (925) 906-9105.

Town Hall Theatre's Annual Fundraiser – Friday, March 13, 6:30 to 11:00. Please join us at Town Hall Theatre for a night of fabulous food, complimentary drinks, bidding and entertainment. Bid on spectacular live auction items and enjoy some Town Hall style entertainment featuring our THK instructors and teen assistants. Party tickets and raffle tickets for an overnight stay at Lafayette Park Hotel are available at: www.townhalltheatre.com.

Moraga Rotary Club's Night at the Races! Saturday March 14, Holy Trinity Hall, 1700 School Street, Moraga. Gates open 5:00pm. Enjoy a great catered dinner with no host bar. Wager play money on six video horse races, and bid on wonderful live and silent auction items. Tickets: \$40.00 per person. For ticket information or to reserve a group table, contact Vickie Devlin at 707 738-5026 or Dardoodles@aol.com.

Hearst Gallery
 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 world-renowned Photoshop artist and teacher, known for pioneering and innovative digital painting technique. The exhibition opened in January and continues through Sunday, April 5. 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. 7-8 pm - demonstration, with an exhibition walk through with artist from 8-8:30pm. Free to the Public. Call (925) 631-4379 for more information.

Exhibition hours: Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 am until 4:30 pm
 Admission: \$3 adult; children 12 and under free; free parking
 Web site: <http://gallery.stmarys-ca.edu>. Telephone: 925-631-4379
 For more information about upcoming events at Saint Mary's College, visit the college website at <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/news-and-events/events.html>.

◆ Not to be missed ◆

THE HEARST ART GALLERY OF SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE PRESENTS FREE DIGITAL ART DEMONSTRATION MARCH 19, 7 P.M.



Thursday, March 19, 7 – 8 p.m.,
 Soda Activity Center, Saint Mary's College
using software as brush and canvas, noted artist Bert Monroy will offer a public Photoshop demonstration and question and answer session.

The Gallery will be open from 8 to 8:30 p.m. so that participants may view his new exhibit.

**Master Artist Tribute VIII:
 A Digital Artist Paints With Light.
 On view through April 5**

Exhibition Hours: Wednesdays - Sundays, 11 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 Gallery Admission: \$3 adult; children free; Gallery members free
www.hearstartgallery.org
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Please submit events to:
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Generations in Jazz Presents the 9th Annual Lafayette Jazz Festival

Del Valle Club House, Rossmoor
Thursday, March 5th, 7:30 PM
 Opening Night Private Party by Invitation Only
Kaiser Permanente Senior Advantage, Sponsor
 THE ROSSMOOR BIG BAND & DOUBLE TAKE
 \$5 ticket, call Lafayette Chamber 284-7404

Acalanes Performing Arts Center
Friday, March 6th, 7:30 PM
Diablo Foods, Sponsor
 STANLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL JAZZ MESSENGERS & FACES OF JAZZ
 \$5 ticket

Saturday, March 7th, 7:30 PM
Oakwood Athletic Club, Sponsor
 ACALANES SCHOOL JAZZ BAND & THE RAY BROWN GREAT BIG BAND
 \$10 ticket

Sunday, March 8th, 6:30 PM
Sponsor: Bill Graham Supporting Foundation of the Jewish Community Endowment Fund
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Campus Happenings

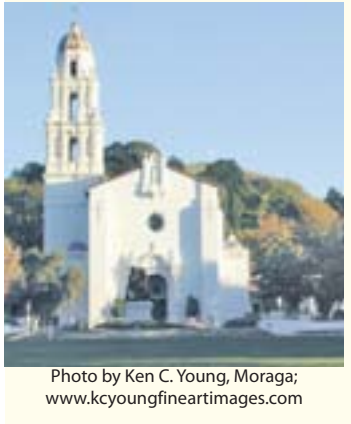


Photo by Ken C. Young, Moraga; www.kcyoungfineartimages.com

Music
 The Committee for Lectures, Art and Music will present three virtuoso artists for an afternoon of superb music in The Chapel at Saint Mary's College on Sunday, March 15 at 2:00pm. Call (925) 631.4381 or visit www.stmarys-ca.edu

Open House
 BA in Leadership & Organizational Studies for working adults; hybrid online format M.A. in Leadership. Open house March 14th 10am-11:30; RSVP www.stmarys-ca.edu/leadershipinfo.

Creative Writing Reading Series at St. Mary's College
 Wednesday, March 25, 7:30 p.m., Soda Activity Center
 Leslie Carol Roberts is the author of *The Entire Earth and Sky:*



You are invited to a very special evening of music.

Enjoy the 40's and 50's music of Eddie Williams – a self-contained, complete, one-man show – a powerful mix of vocals and instrumentation featuring Eddie on vocals, guitar and saxophone.

Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served while you listen to Eddie perform the music of Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby and more.

Thursday, March 19, 2009
 6:45 p.m. to 8:15 p.m.

This is event is free and open to the public.
 Please RSVP by March 16th to Candice Moses 925-377-7900 or e-mail to candice.moses@aegisliving.com.

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Lamorinda's Religious Services




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9 a.m. Sunday Service: Holy Communion - with St. Giles' Choir.
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 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. 925-376-5770

Willow Spring Church
1675-1689 School Street, Moraga
 www.willowsspringchurch.org
(925) 376-3550
Sunday Service Times:
 Prayer @ 8am, Traditional @ 9am,
 Contemporary @ 10:30am

Weekly Activities:
 Wednesday Community Bible Study @ 10am
 REVERB (youth) @ 7pm
 Friday Night BLAST! Kids Club @ 6pm
 Saturday Night Catalyst (Young Adults) @ 7:30pm

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE
 Church Services and Sunday School (up to age 20); 10 - 11 AM
 Informal Testimony Meeting, Wed 7:30 - 8:30 PM
 24 Orinda Way www.christianscienceorinda.org
Free public lecture March 20 at 7:30 p.m.
 "The Healing Power of the Golden Rule." See our website for details.

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, 433 Moraga Way Orinda

 8:15 a.m. Traditions Worship Service
 9:15 a.m. Coffee Fellowship
 9:40 a.m. Education for all ages
 10:45 a.m. Celebrations Worship Service
 Childcare available for ages 5 and younger
 925-254-3422

Our Savior's Lutheran (ELCA)
 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette
 283-3722 • www.oslc.net
Sunday mornings at OSLC:
 Classic Worship, 8:15 am
 Education Hour, 9:30-10:20 am
 Contemporary Worship, 10:30 am

Choral Masterwork Concert
 7pm 3/14 (see website)

St. Anselm's Episcopal Church
 A Loving Community
Sunday Services: 8 and 10 AM
 Active Youth Program, Childcare
 682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, 284-7420, www.stanselms.ws

City seeks volunteers for vacancies on the City Open Space Committee



The Lafayette City Council is soliciting applicants to serve on a newly approved City Open Space Committee.

This new five-seven-member body will be responsible for drafting an open space plan, identify open space opportunities, developing a strategy to acquire open space and to serve as advocates for the acquisition and preservation of open space in Lafayette.

The committee will be asked to deliver its draft plan to the City Council in October 2009.

Members of the committee will be appointed by the City Council on the basis of education, community involvement, training and experience in the fields of city government, and related fields.

Questions regarding the committee may be directed to the City Manager Steven Falk at sfalk@lovelafayette.org.

Individuals interested in this volunteer position may obtain an application from

The City's website at www.ci.lafayette.ca.us or
 City of Lafayette Offices
 3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 210 or

Call the City's Clerks Office at (925) 284-1968 and an application will be mailed
 Completed applications must be received by 5:00 pm on Friday, March 6, 2009.

The Lafayette City Council is also soliciting applicants to serve on a newly approved City Charter and Communications Committee.

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 Our Neighbors,

Many of us who choose to live in the Bay area take pride in our region's reputation as "tolerant." White/black, Muslim/Jew, conservative/liberal, gay/straight - we, for the most part, try to get along.

So, imagine living in Orinda as a lesbian couple knowing that "traditional family values" is used as justification to restrict your rights, ala Prop 8. Imagine trying to assimilate into Orinda as a person of color knowing that 1% of the population is African American and even less is Hispanic, according to census data. Imagine being a senior citizen in Orinda and finding yourself identified as capitalizing on Prop 13 for paying your taxes, all because you are outspoken (see recent letters to the editor).

Orindans, we can do better. We can be respectful and accepting of our differences. We can and should be more inclusive. Or, shame on us.

Bob & Kim Larsen
 Orinda

To the Editor,

The treatment Edward Vogt reported receiving from the City of Orinda (Letters to the Editor, 2/18/09 issue) illustrates just how oppressive local governments can be toward property owners. I wouldn't have believed it, had it not brought back memories of our family's experience with the Orinda planning process in 1994 when building our house. We had to endure factually incorrect and logically flawed input from Orinda's Design Review Board, which tried to force us to build our house on the lowest portion of our large hillside lot where it would have had essentially no view, despite our proposed upslope building site having had full neighbor support and zoning compliance. In their seemingly well-intentioned desire to make our proposed house less visible from afar, the Design Review Board demanded we move the house to the downhill setback despite the fact that it would have involved removing more trees and made the house far more visible from the local street. Other demands included our installation of an elevator, a dark green roof (resulting in a higher summer AC bill), and that a "certified arborist be required to supervise all grading and construction activities" - a requirement even our highly respected and seasoned arborist said was ridiculous. Only after considerable effort and aggravation did we prevail against the city, keeping the uphill view location we enjoy today, and thereby avoiding what would have otherwise been a significant loss in property enjoyment and value. Others we know of have been less fortunate and, over the years that followed, we personally saw some other unjustifiably hostile actions by the City against nearby property owners.

City-imposed land-use rulings, however well-intentioned, are often made by personnel lacking in legal land-use knowledge, planning experience and impartiality, and can result in severe destruction of land value and onerous cost burdens on an individual property, that can far outweigh any purported benefits to the community. Often these rulings smack of an underlying intent to impede development or, at best, to achieve near-perfection without any regard to cost imposed on the property owner, rather than to reduce environmental and visual impact in a balanced, reasonable manner.

Orinda, with its forward-thinking, educated, and fair-minded citizenry and city council is in a good position to start, today, to set an example of sane environmental policy balanced with due respect for civil rights, by ceasing the practice of imposing homeowner restrictions that are out of proportion with any actual benefit to the community.

Sincerely,
 Joel M. Libove.
 Orinda

Editor:

If you're lucky in your lifetime, you'll live long enough to witness one of those one-in-a-lifetime event. I was fortunate enough to witness such as event at last night's Moraga Town Council meeting. The event I witnessed was the evolution of a representative democracy into the new "selective representative democracy." This new form of democracy re-paves the conventional political organizational chart from where our elected representatives are accountable to the public to the public being held accountable to elected representatives.

This sea-change in political science occurred when the Moraga Town Council took it upon itself to enter into a new contractual agreement for a town manager without the input or solicitation of public comment. This "stealth" contract contains a total annual compensation package of nearly \$300,000. Please keep in mind that the former Oakland City Administrator was compensated nearly as much for a population of 20 times that of Moraga. To round out the night and to a stunned audience, each and every member of the Moraga Town Council proceeded to pontificate and lecture to those who were unfortunate enough to be subjected to this self-serving diatribe. One of the highlights of these personal lectures was when one councilmember opined that Moraga suffers from a negative public perception brought about by "you citizens." In fact, the negative public opinion was brought about, for the most part, by the dysfunctional and argumentative Moraga Town Council itself. The other highlight was from one councilmember masquerading as the local equivalent of Nancy Pelosi who matter-of-factly told the audience that "you elected us" and "you entrusted us" and "let's give this man a chance" and "let's welcome him." I guess I would feel welcome if somebody guaranteed me \$300,000 a year. The irony is not lost with me. As a former candidate for the Moraga Town Council, I was privy to many personal conversations with three current sitting council members. Without exception, both publicly and privately, budget considerations were of paramount importance. However, the contrast between their election promises and their elected decisions is striking. The council reiterated the need to look at adjoining locales such as Lafayette or Orinda for comparable compensation packages. But the comparison failed to include the fiscal state of the adjoining communities budgets. Lafayette and Orinda enjoy well-managed and well-planned budgets. Unfortunately, Moraga has enjoyed neither of these qualities. I ask that colleges and universities look at this new "enlighten" version of representative democracy and see if it works for their communities.

Dennis Wanken
 Moraga

Public Forum **JOIN IT**

On the Selection of Moraga's New Town Manager

I write to you today both as a resident of Moraga and as President of the Moraga Citizens Network, a group that has worked for four years towards transparency in our town government. On Wednesday, February 25, 2009 our Town Council unanimously voted to hire Michael Segrest as Moraga Town Manager. The Council initiated a thorough nine-month process to find a manager that would work well with the Council, Staff and residents, as well as a person who would enable Moraga to work through the financial challenges it faces.

I feel it is important for Moraga residents to know what the process was that resulted in the hiring of Mr. Segrest, and how open and available it was to all residents.

The five men and women elected to represent Moraga citizens started the process by choosing Jay Tashiro in June, 2008, to be the Interim Town Manager. He was chosen, in part, because he had experience in assisting the Corte Madera Town Council in recruiting his successor as a Town Manager prior to his retirement. On July 9th, at an open regular meeting of the Town Council, the Council directed Mr. Tashiro to prepare a Request for Proposal (RFP), a 25 page document used to secure an Executive Recruitment Firm. The council chose to employ a professional search agency, rather than handle the search on its own. On the agendas of the next four Council meetings was something related to the Executive Recruitment Firms, providing interested citizens with opportunities for participation.

During the second half of September, Ms. Peckham of Peckham & McKinney, the selected firm, interviewed a cross section of the town in order to develop a Town Manager profile and prepare a recruitment brochure. All Council Members were interviewed individually, as were all department heads, the fire chief, President of the Chamber of Commerce, General Manager of the Country Club, and a representative from St. Mary's College. All of these individuals represent sizeable numbers of Moraga residents, so through them, the Moraga community had a part in developing that profile.

In late October, the recruitment brochure for the Town Manager position was completed, and posted on both the Town website and the Moraga Citizens Network website. This document was available for viewing on the Town website until early December, when the application process was closed. It is still posted on the MCN website. Eighty-seven applications were received; Ms. Peckham reduced that to 15, by using the profile developed.

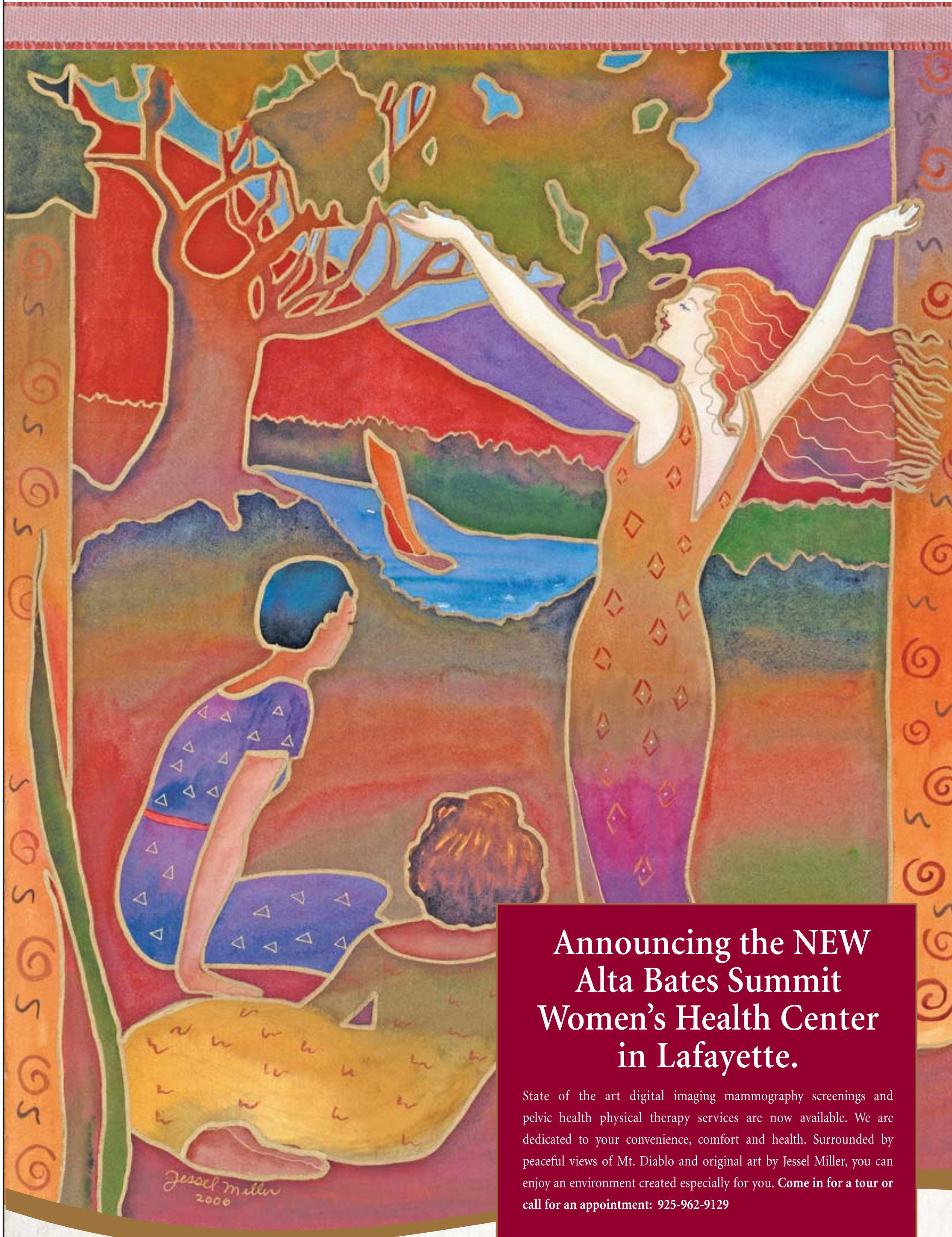
In January, three Special Council meetings were held to: 1) review the 12 top candidates' qualifications, 2) to interview and then prioritize the top seven candidates, and 3) to interview the top 3 candidates and prioritize those. These meetings were not open to the public, though the council did discuss holding a public meeting. On January 28, Mr. Segrest emerged as the top candidate, so Ms. Peckham initiated a reference check that included criminal, credit, and employment history. At a Special Meeting on Feb. 3, the Council reviewed the reference report presented verbatim and the tentative offer of the Town Manager position, which included the Council-established parameters for the sub-committee comprised of Mayor Trotter and Vice Mayor Chew. The Council Sub-committee and the Town Attorney met with Mr. Segrest to negotiate an employment agreement, which was completed on Feb. 19. The process came to a conclusion on Feb. 25, when, after hearing comments from the public and answering questions, the Council voted unanimously to hire Mr. Michael Segrest.

Regarding a benefit package, this too has been public, listed in the recruitment brochure mentioned above, and in more than one Council meeting. The Council decided that it was worth offering a good salary to a highly qualified Town Manager, because his judgment, knowledge and experience could save the town hundreds of thousands of dollars. Additionally, experience has shown that equity in pay is important in securing a qualified person. The Moraga Town Manager's base salary will be \$180,000, in the same range as the town managers of Orinda, \$172,000, Martinez \$194,000 and Lafayette \$209,000. Vacation and sick pay, along with retirement and other benefits, are comparable to the city managers mentioned above.

Educated and informed citizens create a vital healthy community. Moraga Citizens Network commends the Council and Jay Tashiro for their thorough transparent process.

Ellen Beans, Moraga

E X P E R I E N C E M A T T E R S



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March 26th, 6:30-8:30pm

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Life in LAMORINDA

Freecycle, a Sustainable Way to Pass Along The Goods

By Sophie Braccini



Craig Isaacs with his Freecycle barbecue. Picture courtesy of the Isaacs family

Becoming a member of Freecycle is easy; so is using it, and you don't have to own a bicycle. Freecycle stands for free recycling - all you need is anything cluttering

up your home that would be better off with someone who might be able to put it to good use.

"I wanted to find a way to get rid of things, but be sure that it could be re-used by someone who would really appreciate it," says Erin Hull, a Lafayette mom who's been using the free service for a year, "finding a local group where people offer and/or grab stuff for re-using them was just perfect."

The Lamorinda group of free recyclers is a spin-off of the original association that was founded 5 1/2 years ago in Arizona by Deron Beal. At the time, he was working with a small non-profit organization, RISE, which provides recycling services to businesses. He watched perfectly reusable items being thrown away and looked for a way for non-profits to get access to it for free. Beal sent out the first e-mail announcing the Freecycle Network™ to 30 or 40 friends and a handful of nonprofits in Tucson, Arizona. "As a result, we are currently keeping over 500 tons a day out of landfills," he says on his website, "this amounts to five times the height of Mt. Everest in the past year alone, when stacked in garbage trucks." The original cause of helping non-profits get what they need for free is still one of the main uses of the service.

The motivation is the same for

the owner/moderator of the Lamorinda group, Ken Dreyfuss. The goal of Lamorinda Freecycle is to reduce waste in Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda by connecting individuals who are throwing away goods with others who are seeking them. "A lot of non-profit groups are accessing our site," says Dreyfuss, "teachers, schools, and even a cat group, among others, are getting some of what they need on Freecycle."

Craig Isaacs of Lafayette, who has been using the group for years, agrees, "I've seen a lot of non-profits on the site, school teachers who need stuff for their class, boxes of crayons, scissors," he said, "and once I happened to have many of them; it's a great system." Isaacs remembers giving a dog kennel to the SPCA, and many other things to individuals as well. "I've given away a computer hard drive, Mac books, I gave away a video player, a basket ball hoop, things we don't need anymore and someone else could. This is a break in the buying cycle we are caught in." Isaacs has also acquired items on Freecycle, "the favorite thing I got is a barbecue, and it's the best barbecue!" he says.

To make sure that the network runs smoothly and commercial free as it grows, the role of the moderator is key. "I check the messages daily," says Dreyfuss, "I try to control the

content, and accept new members." Dreyfuss says he does not have to intervene very often. "Sometimes I have to remove messages that propose the reselling of things, which is not the purpose of the group," he notes, "no money is ever involved." The moderator can delete messages, and ban a person from the group; Dreyfuss remembers having done this only three times in five years.

Hull continues to use the service with a sense of usefulness, "I gave a full box of play-dough tools for toddlers to someone who needed it for her nephew," she says, "it is very useful for artists as well, who need things that I would see as garbage, like broken tiles, for someone's garbage is someone else's art."

Some of Hull's friends told her that they were a bit wary of leaving things on their porches; Hull herself has sometimes delivered or agreed on a pick-up place. Isaacs has people come to the site of his Lafayette business. "Check the safety tips and rules that are posted on the web site," says Isaacs, adding that he never heard of any issue arising from his network. For more information, go to the web site: freecycle.org, and the Lamorinda group: //groups.yahoo.com/group/LMFN-Lafayette-Moraga-Orinda/.

More Free Recycling in Moraga

Beverly Harper, a Moraga mother of three boys ages 3, 5, and 7, organized a different sort of free recycling event last month. "I've been focusing on ways to help out people in our community with this whole financial crisis that we're in right now," said Harper, "I decided that it was getting ridiculous for all of us to be spending money on great quality kids' apparel when putting groceries on the table and paying the mortgage should be our priorities."

Clothes that are outgrown in what seems like weeks, shoes worn once and cast aside, ski wear that sees snow a few times and then ends up in the Goodwill bag could be recycled right here where friends and neighbors can re-use it.

Harper contacted several friends and local organizations such as the Moraga Junior Women's Club, Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church's (MVPC) Mom's Council and the Lamorinda Mom's Club and asked them pull out their gently used kids' clothing items and bring them to MVPC, which donated space and tables for the event.

Harper estimates that 40 to 50 families came through and almost everything was gone by the end of the morning. There was a large amount of small clothing, from newborn to toddler, but there were also some great items in larger sizes including cleats and ski wear for young teens. "There was no need to bring something in order to take something," said Harper, "but I definitely encouraged people to partake, reminding them that this was set up to benefit all of us."

Harper is planning another event on March 12 from 9:00am-noon at MVPC. She is not opposed to people outside of the community participating, but she doesn't do any official advertising, just email and word of mouth. Harper can be reached at bali42@yahoo.com.

For people with Alzheimer's there's no time to lose.

Alzheimer's disease is a neurodegenerative disorder—a disorder in which brain cells are lost. It is characterized by progressive loss of memory and cognitive function, such as movement control and decision-making ability. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia in the elderly and affects about 18 million people worldwide—5 million in the U.S. alone. Although there's currently no cure for Alzheimer's disease, research is under way to find a new investigational treatment aimed at slowing the progression of the disease. The current medications are mostly aimed at maximizing the remaining brain activity. That's why the ICARA study was created—to explore a new investigational treatment option.

Throughout the 83-week study, participants may receive the investigational drug, study-related physical exams and laboratory services at no charge. All participants will be monitored by a medical team, including a nurse or study coordinator and a physician.

Ask your doctor if the ICARA study is right for you. For more information,

Dr. Kathleen Toups
Bay Area Research Institute
3736 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite #204
Lafayette, CA 94549
925.283.9006



If you are 50 to 88 years of age and have a diagnosis of probable Alzheimer's disease, you may be eligible to participate in the ICARA study.

Moraga, Orinda, and MOFD Meet

... continued from page 1

Approximately 30 individuals and a group of ten firefighters attended the meeting. Orinda residents, many of whom commended the three agencies for meeting and initiating a public dialogue, dominated the public comment segment of the meeting. Several members of the RETF strongly encouraged the Council Members to employ an independent consultant to investigate the matter. And a couple of Orindans advocated that City secede from MOFD and form an independent fire district.

Following the public comment, Moraga Mayor Dave Trotter, who chaired the meeting, moved the group quickly through the agenda infusing an occasional humorous quip, which helped to alleviate some of the tension in the room. All eyes were focused on Chief Nowicki as he reviewed the definition and utilization of the fire flow tax, provided a historical perspective of the District's formation, and described the distribution of emergency and fire protection services in detail. Along the way Nowicki responded to a number of questions posed by the Council Members on a variety of issues related to the Fire District.

Response Zones. There are two fire stations in Moraga and three located in Orinda. "The apparatus [stationed in] Orinda respond predominantly to households in Orinda. The fire engines and emergency vehicles stationed in Moraga also cover many homes in Orinda," stated Nowicki. "It's important to remember that stations are responsible for covering a 1.5 miles radius around the station," he added. This leads to 20% to 25 % of the Moraga stations providing coverage in Orinda explained Nowicki.

When asked if Orinda could contact with Moraga to obtain that "25% coverage," Nowicki replied, "That just makes bad bed fellows. It's not good business." He expanded on this comment noting that surrounding districts routinely provide coverage through a reciprocal agreement. "We responded into Lafayette 98 times last year. We know we need to back them up," he stated. In return, Lafayette regularly responds to calls that emanate from Saint Mary's College in Moraga.

Fire Flow Tax. Moraga and Orinda merged to form one fire district almost 12 years ago. At that time, Moraga had a fire flow tax in place and Orindans voted to establish this special tax to assist with providing funds for fire protection and emergency service equipment and water distribution facilities. The tax is applied by parcel and calculated by multiplying the tax rate (currently 6 cents per parcel)—established annually by the Fire District Board—by a fire risk flow factor (based on factors such as square footage and the inclusion of a sprinkler system). The average Orinda/Moraga home carries a fire flow tax of about \$80 to \$100 per year.

Water Pipes. An element of Orinda's infrastructure problem is the status of the City's water pipes that are old, small in size, and often corroded further narrowing the water flow. It is EBMUD's responsibility to repair broken water lines at which time pipes are upgraded to the more optimal unobstructed six-inch pipe. However, the party responsible to replace the many old and intact water pipes that deliver suboptimal amounts of water and pressure is less clear. Nowicki explained that the fire flow tax is not specific to addressing water flow

and water pipe systems, and the Board's policy has been to apply the tax dollars to equipment and facilities and not personnel. "We feel that the MOFD should be a part of getting the water pipes upgraded, but we will not be able to address this issue for half a decade," stated MOFD Board Member John Wyro.

High Severity and Unincorporated Areas. There is a larger amount of high fire hazard severity area in Orinda as compared to Moraga, according to Nowicki. These areas require wild land apparatus and training. Nowicki also augments staffing capabilities at high-risk times in these high-severity zones. The Chief also described the District's boundaries, which include Canyon and unincorporated parts of Moraga.

Other Differences. Nowicki explained that when the MOFD was formed, Orinda had significant infrastructure needs. There were no paramedic resources, two stations needed to be razed and rebuilt, the equipment was old, and training was needed. "Almost all of the infrastructure needs have been met in Orinda," stated Nowicki, noting that it has taken time to make up the inequities that were inherited with the merger. He also stated that it is easier for the Fire District to respond in Moraga due to the wider and newer roads, and that Orinda placed more calls for emergency and fire service than Moraga. Nowicki reiterated that the MOFD responds to the needs of Orinda and Moraga as a single and unified District.

The Tri-Agency Committee will meet again on Thursday, March 26th at 7 p.m. in the Orinda Library Auditorium to continue their discussions.

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• Life in LAMORINDA •

Mountain Lion Sightings in Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson

Mountain lions have recently been sighted at the Lafayette Community Park and also along the Lafayette-Moraga Trail. While this type of cat is not something you see every day, they are a natural part of this region's environment, according to Jennifer Russell, Director of Lafayette's Parks and Recreation Department.

Wildlife ecologist Steve Bobzien with the East Bay Regional Park District emphasizes putting sightings in perspective, "Mountain lion attacks are extremely, extremely rare. If you think about the millions of people who are recreating in their habitat every day, the cats are doing a good job of avoiding people." He noted an interesting contrast: "There are over 950 serious dog bites per day in the U.S. that require medical attention." And they call dogs man's best friend. In the entire United States between 1890 and 2004 there were a total of 88 re-

ported confirmed attacks on humans, according to the Arizona Game and Fish Department.

Over half of California is mountain lion habitat and they can be found wherever deer, their primary prey are found, according to the California Department of Fish and Game. Mountain lions are the loners of the animal kingdom - quiet, solitary and typically avoid people.

What to do if you or your kids are out and about in the Community Park or hiking in the area? Lafayette's Parks, Trails and Recreation Department, the East Bay Regional Park District and the Department of Fish and Game all offer this advice:

- Don't let small children wander out of sight
- Keep pets on a leash
- Make noise
- Do not approach the lion
- Do not run from the lion
- Face the lion, wave your arms

slowly and speak in a loud voice

- Try to appear larger
- Do not crouch down or bend over
- Back away slowly, giving the lion an opportunity to escape
- Fight back if attacked

Coyotes are a different story. "They tend to frequent the urban - wildland interface and are very adaptable. You want to demonstrate that approaching humans has a negative effect," said Bobzien. He recommends yelling, screaming and throwing rocks at them.

In a statement, Director Russell said, "If you see a mountain lion and it's just walking through the park, call the Parks, Trails and Recreation Office at (925) 284-2232 and give them specific information on the size of the animal, the location and the direction it was headed. If the animal is acting aggressively, call local police dispatch at (925) 284-5010."

Ham Radio Operators Put to the Test

By Sophie Braccini



Canyon's Emergency Operation Center (Jonathan Goodwin in red) Photo Sophie Braccini

"Imagine a big fire raging in our highly fire sensitive areas, for each one of us the first concern will be to know which evacuation routes we can take," says Marty Heyman, a volunteer emergency coordinator for Orinda. The evacuation routes do not stop at the border of each city, so on February 21 emergency volunteers from Canyon, Lafayette, Montclair, Moraga and Orinda joined with the local fire departments to conduct a test of their ability to communicate in an emergency. Amateur, or 'ham,' radio operators are key to the success of such communication, because tra-

ditional land lines and cell phones might be inoperative.

The test sites were the Emergency Operation Centers (EOC) in each of the five areas. Participating vehicles, equipped with radios, patrolled freeways and main arteries from Mountain Blvd. in Montclair, to Walnut Creek, Claremont and all the main sites in between.

"The test was very successful," said Jonathan Goodwin from the Canyon EOC, "with all our hills there are some sites that cannot reach other specific points, but through relays and/or amplification

we can get through to each other."

An Orinda neighborhood equipped with Family Radio Service (FRS --an improved walkie talkie radio system) was included in the test. "It is critical that neighborhoods get equipped and become capable to communicate with the emergency amateur radio network," says Heyman, "when major disaster happen, it has been observed that 90% of the time neighbors are rescued by neighbors, they need to have the tools to communicate their situation and emergencies when the normal communication network fail."

The group encourages residents to get trained as amateur radio operators and/or join CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) and get a FRS system. For more information contact CERT, www.lamorindacert.org

Amateur Radio Training
Free six week course
Begins May 6th 7-9pm
Mt. Diablo Amateur Radio Club
The Salvation Army-Concord
Contact: John Primus, KI6OUY
primus@astound.net
(925)825-7670

Moraga and Orinda Council Members Talk Trash

... continued from page 1

The first stop of the day was at Pacific Rim, a CCCSWA contractor in Benicia that handles recyclables such as what we put in our brown containers as well as the curb side recycling they provide twice yearly.

"I am environmentally conscientious and a huge recycler," said Mendonca, "but not an expert, and during this visit I've learned a lot."

The group was shown the highly mechanized and sophisticated sorting process that allows the contractor to prepare bundles of paper for China, extract glass and metal for reprocessing and send plastic bottles on their way to reuse. About 93% of what they receive gets recycled, the rest ends up in the landfill.

The second stop took the team to Martinez, to the Contra Costa Transfer and Recovery Station that's owned by Allied Waste, a company that holds franchise agreements with CCCSWA.

"I was most impressed with the care taken by Allied Waste to do two things; first, to very thoroughly sort the stuff coming in to them, that is the recyclables and the garbage, to make sure that both get to the appropriate place so as to maximize recycling, and second, to move materials in and out so quickly," said Smith.

The third stop at the Pittsburg landfill was most impressive by its

size, efficiency and oddly surreal beauty. The visitors were greeted by the site engineers who presented their topology and technology. "I was most impressed by the landfill," said Mendonca, "it looked more like a park, and their complex process deals with efficiency and safety with such enormous amounts of waste."

The group took a car tour along the vast acreage of the site, seeing the almost-operative methane facility that will produce three megawatts of electricity starting in April, and the wetland that has been restored for local children. Nestled in the bare hills, the section of land where the garbage is dropped is signaled by flocks of hungry seagulls that tour it endlessly.

From the site, the view expands to the Bay, homes and a windmill farm. "I appreciated the fact that the landfill operators cover the garbage twice daily, so as to minimize the impact on the neighboring communities," commented Smith, "I really thought they were acting as good neighbors."

The site will be in service until 2053, after that date it will become a golf course, or return to its original state of pasture.

The afternoon was dedicated to a presentation of the 2009-2010 strategic goals of CCCSWA and discussion of possible ways to increase the amount of recyclable material in our waste stream.

Steve Glazer said, "Orinda's recycling rate has slipped below 50% of its trash flow and is failing to meet the state requirements. Our community is very environmentally sensitive and if they can be made aware of our poor standing and the easy ways to reuse and recycle our trash, we can do much better."

Smith added, "In order to increase our diversion rate--both because the state requires us to and because it's the right thing to do for our community-- we have to concentrate on new areas. To me, that means increasing our food waste recycling by residents, and also including expanding the CCCSWA commercial food waste recycling program to Orinda restaurants, better control over the disposal of construction waste, and we need to seriously expand recycling by businesses."

The situation in Moraga is a bit more positive. "With respect to recycling, the specific goal for Moraga at present is to continue meeting our AB 939 solid waste diversion requirement (i.e., achieve at least a 50% diversion rate on recyclables and green waste so that these materials do not go to landfill)," said Trotter.

Mendonca concluded, "Managing our waste is a great responsibility," she said, "this is the right thing to do and another very important way to take care of the planet."



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Wilder To Restore Wildlife in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



View from Mulholland Ridge to Saint Mary's college

Photo Andy Scheck

During its February 25th meeting, the Moraga Town Council crafted a resolution to accept a \$50,000 restoration project submitted by Wilder Development to mitigate the environmental impact of their major housing construction in

Orinda. The project calls for the creation of a pond on Mulholland Ridge, off of Donald Drive, that will help restore the natural habitat and improve drainage.

At a prior meeting, the Council refused the donation because it in-

cluded no funds with which to maintain the pond after the first five years. This time around, the Town negotiated the funding of a \$10,000 endowment for ongoing maintenance.

Warden Nicole Kosicki of the California Department of Fish and Game, which imposed the remediation requirement on Wilder, had originally opposed this solution since the agency wants to see concrete work being done with the remediation money. "Ms. Kosicki is a very tough negotiator," commented Mayor Dave Trotter, "we want to commend her flexibility. We would have liked more money for the endowment, but that's what we got."

In addition, Kosicki assured the Council that in the event of flood damage to the pond, the Town would not be responsible for restoring it and nature would be allowed to take its course.

Palos Colorados Project: If You Snooze, You Lose

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga's Planning Commission and Design Review Board (DRB) met jointly on February 23rd to approve the precise development plan for the Palos Colorados project subdivision. The document contains the plans of the semi-custom homes that could be built on the site by Richfield Investment Corporation, without the DRB's approval. As they examined the details of the plan, both the Commission and the Board raised more questions than could be answered by the documents at hand and residents in attendance expressed serious concerns as well.

At its previous meeting on February 2, the Planning Commission was asked to approve the plan. The Commissioners felt then that they needed to have the input of the Design Review Board, in particular regarding architectural design issues and about the project's design guidelines.

At this point, the developer has presented eight different semi-custom home designs that need approval. Rick Sabella, Richfield's president, explained to all in attendance that he expects that most property owners will want to custom build their homes; however, about 20% of the 123 residences could be, according to his experience, built using the models included in the

plan. These representations were accompanied by the project's design guidelines, a set of rules that will ensure a certain harmony in the development. These internal guidelines are subject to compliance with the Town's guidelines.

The public expressed three main concerns: First, the size of the homes far exceeds the original 2800- 4800 square feet(sqft) that was originally planned. The lots exceeding 20,000sqft (half of the total) are eligible to see construction in excess of 5000sqft, in fact the biggest semi-custom home is 6700sqft, not including the garage and a potential secondary unit.

Second, when the vested tentative map was approved, all parties were told that green building elements would be included in the plan later in the process. It has now been determined that the law applicable is what was in effect at the time the document was approved, which was before the town passed its green building ordinance.

Third, residents asked why secondary units should be included in the plan if their acceptance as affordable housing by the State was dubious.

Planning Director Lori Salamack easily explained the size matter. Per an agreement between the town and Richfield, Moraga will not get half a million dollars from the developer if the size of the home is limited below 5000sqft. The developer said he was prepared to limit the size and not pay the monies; this suggestion did not thrill the Commission. Vice-Chair Bruce Whitley insisted that a ratio between lot size and floor area for lots above 20,000sqft be calculated. At this time the Town does not have such ratios and

does not impose size limits.

When the green building element came up for discussion, Richfield's attorney explained that the town green building ordinance couldn't apply to the project since the vested tentative map was approved before the Council passed a green building ordinance. She added, "If you snooze, you lose."

Whitley promised, "We will apply the highest scrutiny to your project."

When Chair Margaret Goglia asked the Town's attorney, "Has the train left the station?" He replied, "Partially," adding the areas in which the Town could impose conditions were now limited.

When it came to looking at the different home designs Scott Rivers, the architect for the developer, made a compelling presentation and everyone on the DRB agreed that the homes seemed very well thought out. However they indicated that they did not have enough time to thoroughly review all the aspects of the documents and asked for more time.

Commissioner Lee Hayes, who was sitting on the Commission for the last time and has a background in landscape architecture, made a point to raise all the elements that, in his view, were missing in the document from that vantage point. He asked the next version include elements on water usage, size of the trails, hardscape in public areas, color palette, type of permeable surface used for walkways, type of retaining walls, type of drainage and more.

The Planning Commission and DRB agreed to reconvene at a later session to continue their scrutiny of the project.



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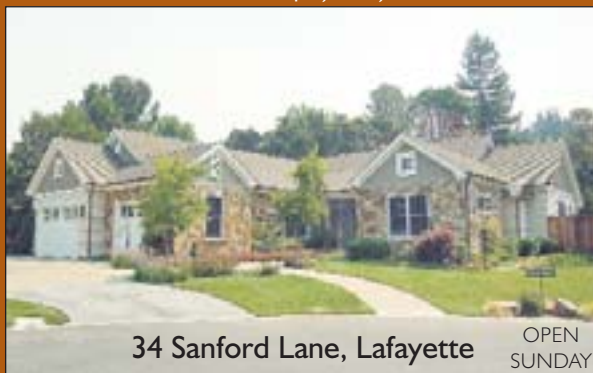
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business briefs

A Zeeba of a Different Stripe

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Simin Lalefar says she didn't have a choice. The land where her store stood was bought by the town of Dublin in an imminent domain action. "What better place than Lafayette to move my store?" asks Lalefar. "My parents had a home in Orinda, I always loved the area and have many friends here." One month ago, she opened shop for her collectibles, vintage accessories, antique furniture, women's clothing and accessories. "The community has greeted us very warmly," says the store owner, "they like to come here and hunt for unexpected treasures." Zeeba is located next to Knox on Mt Diablo Blvd.



Simin Lalefar in her new store, Zeeba, in Lafayette Photo Sophie Braccini

Big Hat Press, Where Local Authors can get Published

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Diablo Rapid Print has launched a new business: Big Hat Press, its new book-publishing subsidiary. Big Hat specializes in personal publishing and offers a variety of services to help authors complete their book project. "Whether it is your personal memoirs, poetry, a history book, a cookbook, or perhaps a fictional story you have written, we can help you get it done," says owner Polly Bemson. The business owner sees her target clientele as individuals and companies that write for their own pleasure and want to share with their family, friends or clients. Big Hat offers a complete service for authors: design, formatting, an ISBN and barcode. "If customers want it, we can help them put their book on Amazon and we will handle the delivery service directly." Clients can choose among a variety of binding styles and printing options. The cost of the books will vary depending of these options, as well as the number of books ordered. "Most of our clients order 250 copies," says Bemson, "and you can order 20 books for about \$609, including the setup." Bemson prefers it when people come to her store to get their new book. "We can mail it of course," she says, "but seeing the look on their face when they first hold their new book is a precious moment." Big Hat Press will host a ribbon cutting ceremony with the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce on Thursday March 19 at 4:30 p.m.

Curves in Moraga Fights for Survival

384 Park St, Moraga, 376-0110

The Curves gyms in Lafayette and Orinda closed in February but the Reynolds, who own the Moraga franchise, are not giving up. The Lafayette Curves had been under new management for less than a year and the start up results weren't enough to create a positive momentum. In Orinda, Pati MacDonald had been managing the Curves in Theater Square for years. She owns another franchise in San Diego but according to her it's not doing so well. MacDonald had to get a full time job with the County in order to pay the bills, "it's just a sign of the times," says MacDonald. In Moraga, Dave Reynolds and his wife will not give up in spite of challenging times. "Many consider fitness a luxury," says Reynolds, "may be they could think of their health and well being as a first necessity item, what better investment can you make than in your own health?" Reynolds organized a strategic meeting with some 30 clients to plan for future marketing actions. "We have 175 clients," says Reynolds, "it would be nice to reach the 250 range." As part of the new marketing plan, during the second and third weeks of March, every new client who brings in a bag of groceries for the Food Bank will receive free sign-up fee.

One of Moraga's Oldest Restaurants Closes its Doors

356 Park St, Moraga

Tamami's restaurant served its last diners on Valentine's Day. It was a very emotional evening, the Ongs have owned the place for more than 25 years and it is their warm personalities as much as their food that made their long success. However, the latest recession was too much for the restaurant to survive, "it was time for us to sell," says owner Fely Ong, "we got an offer from a Chinese couple and had to make a quick decision." Tamami's will be missed. "We have been eating there almost every Friday night, my husband and I, since we started dating, about 20 years ago," says Moraga resident Karen Orwig, "it was as much about the relationship as it was about the food. We saw Fely's kids growing up and they've known our daughter since she was born." Orwig doesn't know where she will have dinner on Friday nights now, "there are other good restaurants in the area, but nowhere that makes you feel at home like Fely did."



The Ong family during the last evening in Tamami Photo courtesy of Tamami's

Community Marketing, Does It Work?

By Sophie Braccini



Community event at Aegis where business owners and town officials meet Photo courtesy Moraga Chamber of Commerce

Some say it works, others say it doesn't, there are books written about it and opinions galore. "It" is community marketing, or how to engage and cultivate business in the communities that naturally congregate around one's product and/or service. In Lamorinda it typically takes the form of business owners giving their time to community activities and/or contributing goods and services to community functions. For business owners, it is part of a virtuous circle where what you give will come back to you in many different ways.

Grant Stubblefield started his business as a result of his community involvement. Fresh out of St Mary's College, he joined the Moraga Chamber of Commerce and helped implement the Shop Moraga First campaign. His volunteer activities led to the startup of his own business, naturally called, "Community Marketing."

Getting around and helping out has been Roos Pal's modus operandi even before buying Terzetto Restaurant in the Moraga Shopping Center. "I always wanted to do social work," says Pal, "so I joined Kiwanis." Pal believes that her social activism is what has made her business successful. "I serve on the Parks Foundation, I support the Chamber of Commerce and I enjoy it," she says. "Roos does things right," comments Stubblefield, quipping, "Don't ask what the community can do for you, ask what you can do for your community."

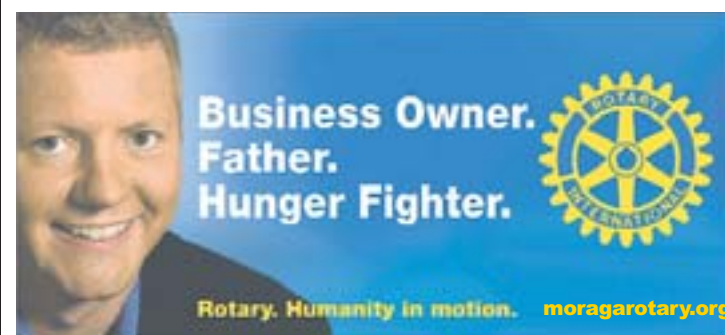
Jay Lifson of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce says, "That's what chambers do, con-

necting people to people." Lifson believes that most people get involved with volunteerism because they decide it's the right thing to do or because they've been asked to help out, but that they should not be looking for immediate rewards. "The only pay-back one should expect is an opportunity to help," he says, adding that he's seen that people often get back more than what they've invested.

"In Lafayette the quantity of businesses that have been practicing community marketing is innumerable," says Lifson. Business owners such as Ed Stokes (Diablo Foods), Mike Reardon (Oakwood Athletic Club), Dave Arghandiwal (Casa Gourmet Burrito), Anthony Ruiz (Fastframe) and Mo Levich (Generations in Jazz), among others, each give their expertise, time, and donations whenever they can.

Keith Miller, the President of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce and a real estate agent, follows the same credo. "When I joined the Chamber of Commerce, I had no idea what it could really do for me," states Miller, "but now after so many years of networking I'm convinced of its importance and try to persuade my agents to join." Miller offers Carlos Rangle, of Shelby's Restaurant, as a good example of someone who gives his time and energy to the community. "He was on our Board of Directors and always contributes to our events."

... continued on page 23



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Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

- Shop Lafayette meeting Tuesday March 10 8:00 a.m. chamber conference room
- Green Committee Wednesday March 18 11:45 a.m. bring your lunch, chamber conference room.
- How to survive in today's economy presented by Mechanics Bank 3640 Mt Diablo Blvd. Tuesday, March 24, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. RSVP lafayetteevents@mechbank.com.

Moraga Chamber of Commerce

Chamber meeting, Hacienda de las Flores, Fireside Room, Friday, March 27, starting at 7:30 a.m.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce

Special Roundtable Coffee Business Idea Sharing Event, Thursday, March 26, 8:00 a.m. to 9:15 a.m., Village Pizza, 19 AB Orinda Way. Come hear what fellow Chamber Members are doing differently in today's market and share what you are doing, as well. Enjoy coffee & pastries, too. Mark your calendar for this informative event. \$5.00 per person (paid at door).

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NOTES ABOUT VETERINARY SCIENCE

By **Mona S. Miller, DVM**

This column was inspired by a recent conversation with a friend, during which I was asked, "If I were in your office, would I call you 'doctor'?" The answer is "yes" – as a small animal general practitioner in Lamorinda, I provide preventive health care, general surgery and treat disease in a variety of species including dogs, cats, birds, reptiles, rabbits and rodents. Veterinarians are licensed doctors, and the field has expanded in the past 50 years to include specialists as well as licensed nurses. The future holds potential for sub-specialization in disciplines such as small animal cancer surgery and equine sports medicine/lameness.

Veterinary science is the application of medical, diagnostic and therapeutic principles to a variety of animals, such as companion and domestic, exotic and wildlife, and production animals. Links to humans are found in issues of zoonoses (diseases that can be passed from animals to humans) and infectious disease surveillance and control. Veterinarians can find jobs in private practice, biomedical research institutes, academia, food production, government and military services.

To become a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, one must

have completed a four-year graduate program at a veterinary school (usually after obtaining a four-year Bachelor of science or art degree), and hold a state license to practice. Licensing requirements vary from state to state, but generally consist of both national and state board examinations. Most veterinarians in general practice enter the workforce at this point. Some do a one-year internship program in general medicine and surgery, usually the first year after vet school, in order to gain experience in intensive and/or high volume hospitals.

Specialization began in 1951 with the development of the College of Vet Pathologists. A specialist has completed a two to four-year residency program in the specific field, and has passed a set of rigorous examinations. Today, the American Veterinary Medical Association recognizes 20 specialty fields, including toxicology, laboratory animal medicine, poultry, reproduction, anesthesia, behavior, clinical pharmacology, dermatology, emergency and critical care, internal medicine, microbiology, nutrition, ophthalmology, preventive medicine, radiology, surgery, zoological medicine and dentistry.

Registered Veterinary Technicians are valued as pro-



Dr. Mona S. Miller lives in Lafayette with her 4 year old son, yellow Labrador Retriever and grey cat. She has worked at Four Seasons Animal Hospital in Lafayette since moving here in 2001. She attended Cal as an undergrad, and received her DVM from U.C. Davis. She can be reached at Four Seasons, 938-7700, or by email to MonaSDVM@aol.com.

fessional nurses. To accomplish this, the nurse must complete general education requirements equivalent to a two-year Associates degree and then a two-year program to achieve an Associates degree in Veterinary Technology, and pass a licensing examination.

There are 28 veterinary schools in the United States. The first American school was the Veterinary College of Philadelphia, which operated from 1852-1866. There are now two vet schools in California. The School of Vet Med at University of California, Davis is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. In 1998, the College of Vet Med at Western University of Health Sciences in Pomona became the newest veterinary school in America in over 20 years, and graduated its first class in 2007.

Boy Scouts Visit Lamorinda Weekly

By **Sophie Braccini**



Troop 200 examines the recycled paper on which the Lamorinda Weekly is printed Photo Sophie Braccini

Eleven energetic and curious Lafayette 1st grade boys swarmed publishers Wendy and Andy Scheck's office on February 20th as part of a Boy Scout project. Troop 200, Den 4 (Tiger Cub Scouts), was on a mission to understand how communication happens in our community.

Troop leader Matt Owens and co-leader Beth Hutson were accompanied by a few parents herding the Springhill Elementary students as they moved from station to station in the Schecks' office. First, they

learned how newspapers are made out of only four colors (red, yellow, blue and black) on huge printing machines that are as tall as a three-story house.

In the studio, they saw the computer systems that allow the team of reporters and editors to communicate their stories to the publisher and saw how stories and pictures are placed by Andy Scheck in the electronic file that is sent to the printer in Santa Rosa.

Wendy Scheck explained to the boys how community members send news and messages to the newspaper so they

can be printed to inform the public. Her daughter Amanda, who is in middle school, showed the boys how she uses Photoshop to enhance pictures. "We open eyes a lot," said Scheck, referring to group pictures where there is always someone with their eyes closed.

At the end of the presentation the boys were excited that they were going to be featured in the next issue of the paper, a real life example of community communication. "I learned a lot and I think they did, too," concluded Hutson.

New Tax Bills Will Bring Change Soon

By **Stephen D. Tonjes, CPA**

Two big tax bills will affect Californians: The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and the tax provisions that were included in the California budget. Though there are only a few provisions that could affect your 2008 income tax filing there are a number of items that need to be acted upon quickly. Otherwise it could end up costing you money. Let's look at some of the key provisions and the key dates they contain:

March 1, 2009 to March 1, 2010 - If you buy a brand-new, never occupied home you may qualify for a California credit of 5% of the purchase price up to a maximum credit of \$10,000. There are no income restrictions. The State of California has set aside \$100 million for this credit. Once taxpayers have utilized credits totaling that amount any other taxpayers who would otherwise qualify will be out of luck. California is going to post on the Franchise Tax Board web site a counter that will give a running total of the credits available. It is expected that all the credits will be utilized within the next three to four months.

April 1, 2009 - The sales tax rate in Contra Costa County is going to 9.25% effective April 1, 2009. That is because California is raising the sales tax rate by 1% on April 1, 2009. Try to make any major purchases prior to that date.

April 17, 2009 - The date by which you are allowed to revoke the waiver of the federal net operating loss carryback period. The general rule is that when you have a net operating loss the federal government requires you to carry back that loss to the prior two years. You can elect to forgo the carryback and instead carry it forward to future years. For small businesses (gross receipts of less than \$15 million) you can now elect to carryback

your 2008 net operating loss 3, 4, or 5 years. A good way to recover some of the taxes you paid when business was better.

May 19, 2009 - The California DMV fee will increase on May 19, 2009. The rate goes from 0.65% of the value of the automobile to 1.15%. If you purchase a \$50,000 automobile after May 19, your DMV fee will increase by \$250.

December 1, 2009 - The federal government enhanced the "first time homebuyer credit." The original law applied to principal residences purchased on or after **April 9, 2008 and before July 1, 2009**. It granted a refundable credit. The credit is equal to 10% of the purchase price up to a maximum credit of \$7,500. The credit had to be recaptured ratably over a 15-year period. For example Sam buys a principal residence for \$300,000 in 2008 and claims a \$7,500 credit. Sam must recapture as an addition to tax, \$500 each tax year from 2010 through 2024. If Sam were to sell the home within the 15 year recapture period the balance of the credit would be immediately recaptured. The "new law" applies to purchases made after **December 31, 2008, and before December 1, 2009**. It retains all the rules of the old law with the following changes:

- The credit is increased from \$7,500 to \$8,000; and
- The regular recapture rules are removed. You don't have to pay it back unless you sell the house within 36 months.

A taxpayer may elect to report a 2009 purchase as if made in 2008; that is, they can report a 2009 purchase on their 2008 return and take the credit there. They do this on Form 5405.

December 31, 2009 - You can deduct on your federal return sales tax paid on the purchase of a "new" car bought on or after Feb-

ruary 17, 2009, and no later than December 31, 2009. The deduction is available even for taxpayers that don't itemize. The deduction is reduced for taxpayers with incomes over \$125,000 and eliminated for incomes over \$135,000 (\$250,000 and \$260,000 on a married filing joint return).

There is a new California credit for increasing the number of full-time employees. The credit is \$3,000 per qualified employee if the total full-time employees increase over the prior year. The credit only applies to businesses with fewer than 20 employees. This is a great provision for those who are considering starting a new business.

There are many other provisions but we wanted to bring to your attention some of the critical dates that we don't want you to miss. We encourage you to talk to your tax advisor.



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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Lamorinda Schools

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

In Other News...



The Campolindo orchestra's most recent performance featured Brahms' Violin Concerto in D Major and Prokofiev's famous "Peter and the Wolf," preceded by an instrument petting zoo for kids in the Performing Arts Center foyer. The "zoo" featured young musicians from Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School's music program, as well as Campolindo's, doing demonstrations for the many youngsters who came early to check out the musical instruments that give voice to Peter, the Wolf, the Grandfather and other characters. Photo Milton Wong, Campolindo Music

Rotary Club of Lafayette Scholarship Program 2010-2011



Rotary Club Scholarship Program seeks 2010-2011. Applications Grants are the perfect opportunity for students who are interested in studying abroad

The scholarships, which are designed to further international understanding and goodwill provide for study abroad in more than 150 countries where Rotary clubs are located. Some 800 scholarships of various types will be available worldwide. During their studies abroad, Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholars act as "ambassadors of goodwill". Through appearances before Rotary clubs and districts, schools, civic organizations, and other forums, the scholars represent their homelands and work to further international understanding.

For an application, contact Geoffrey Zimmerman at (925) 698-3683 or geoffreyzimmerman@hotmail.com. A completed application is due on or before March 31, 2009.

Interested students may want to consult the Rotary website at: <http://www.rotary.org/en/StudentsAndYouth/EducationalPrograms/AmbassadorialScholarships/Pages/About.aspx>

The Rotary Foundation Ambassadorial Scholarship program is the world's largest privately sponsored international scholarship program. Focused on humanitarian service, personal diplomacy and academic excellence, the program has sponsored more than 38,000 Rotary scholars abroad since it began in 1947.

Winners of the Orinda Rotary Speech Contest



Maria Theophanous, 1st place winner



Alexa Graulich, 2nd place winner



Jordan Moshe, 3rd place winner



Sean Houseworth, 4th place winner

Photos C. Wells

Lafayette Rotary Club



Pictured left to right: Sandi Mitchel, Kevin Porep, John Sherry, Lee Delyly and the second graders. Below one of many thank you letters.

For the second year in a row, the Lafayette Rotary Club presented 2nd grade teacher, Kevin Porep, of La Escuelita Elementary School in Oakland, with a check for basic supplies such as pencil and paper that are not furnished by the school. The children were so excited and offered the Rotary a folder of thank you notes. Porep works part-time at Diablo Foods in Lafayette.



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2009 Eagle Scouts of Troop 204

Submitted by Brooks Pedder



Pictured L-R, Back: Mike Nixon (Acalanes), Andrew Noonan (De La Salle), Kaid Collins (De La Salle), Michael Lue (Acalanes), Trentyn Blomquist (Acalanes), Chad Martini (Campolindo); Front: John Girvan (Acalanes), Andrew Bontemps (Acalanes), Andrew Atkins (Acalanes), Zack Dashner (Campolindo), Marshall Pedder (Campolindo), Joshua Goldberg (Campolindo) Photo provided

On March 21, 2009, at the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church, Lafayette Boy Scout Troop 204 will honor twelve young men who achieved the Eagle Scout award, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America. Troop 204 has awarded this special honor to 318 scouts since 1935. The Eagle Scout Class of 2009 is the second largest group in the history of the Troop and the

Mt. Diablo Silverado Council to achieve Eagle. To attain the rank of Eagle Scout, a scout must earn his way up the scouting ranks - from Tenderfoot to Life Scout. As a Life Scout, he must be active in the troop for at least six months, earn at least 21 merit badges, serve as a Patrol Leader, show Scout Spirit, and plan, develop and give leadership to others in an approved

Eagle service project helpful to any religious institution, school, or the community.

In addition to requirements listed above, each scout has attended annual 50 mile backpacking trips, hiked over 500 miles, actively participated in annual Camporees, constructed and slept in snow caves and camped in the wilderness for over 100 nights.

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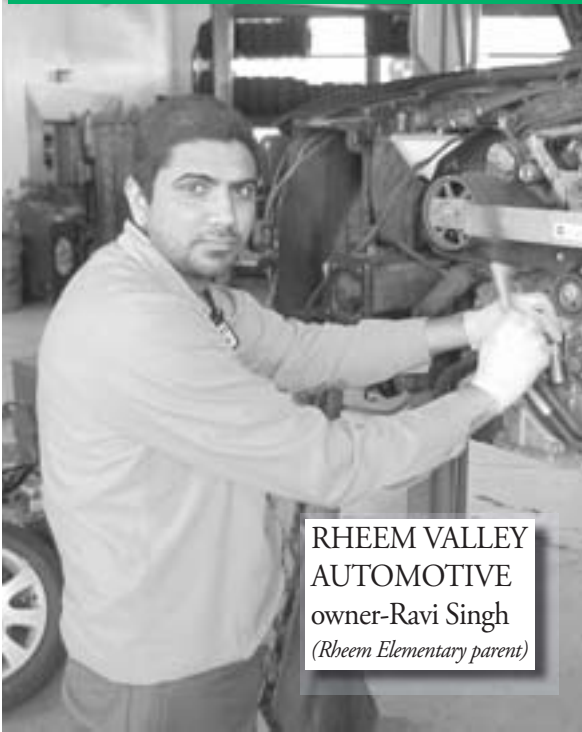
SCHOOL CALENDAR

School Governing Board Meetings
Acalanes Union
 High School District
 Board Room AUHSD Office
 1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
 Wednesday, March 4, 2009 at 7:30
 Wednesday, March 18, 2009 at 7:30

Lafayette School District
 LAFSD Office
 3477 School Street, Lafayette
 Wednesday, March 18 at 7:00
Orinda Union School District
 OUSD Office
 8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
 Monday, March 9 at 4:00

Moraga School District
 Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
 School Auditorium
 1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
 Tuesday, March 10 at 7:30

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The Waiting Game in College Admissions

By Elizabeth A. LaScala, Ph.D.

So you've completed the college essays, ordered your transcripts, and pushed the submit button on your last college application. Now what should you do while you wait for responses? First and foremost, continue to be actively engaged in doing your best academic work. This is critical because colleges review final transcripts to be certain no courses were dropped and grades did not plummet. If something does change, be proactive and communicate directly to the schools with an explanation. This way you may be able to avoid a very unpleasant surprise, like a rescinded admissions decision later in the spring.

This is also a good time to visit schools you were not able to go to see yet. Don't wait for the acceptance letter to visit campuses. The decision deadline, May 1st, arrives soon after acceptance letters—so be prepared. If academic or financial concerns make visiting a campus impossible, continue to familiarize yourself with colleges in other ways. Read blogs, examine course catalogues, review housing considerations, email faculty, students and undergraduate admission counselors in order to make comparisons that will help you make an informed decision. Colleges expect and encourage applicants to research options carefully.

Do I Need to Choose a Major to Choose a College?

As you wait for responses, it is important to remember that you do not need to declare a major to select a college. If you have applied to schools that are good fits and have programs that meet your interests and needs, you should not have the added pressure to choose a major. In a recent report by the Association of American Colleges and Universities, employers who were surveyed identified teamwork, critical thinking and reasoning, and oral and written communication skills as the top competencies they search for in new hires. Rather than focus on a particular major, employers identified five areas to acquire

- proficiency:
- Learning to think critically and creatively
 - Problem solving
 - Developing the ability to speak comfortably to different audiences in different settings
 - Thinking about educational aspirations from a global community perspective
 - Writing well in every discipline

College advisors are ahead of the curve when they encourage students to apply to institutions where these valuable skills are emphasized during all four undergraduate years.

Writing Well Should Be at the Top of Your List

If I were to prioritize the above skills I would start with writing well in every discipline. Good writing requires critical thinking and creativity. When you write, you also practice problem solving, for example when you determine how best to tackle an essay or research paper. Someone who may never be a great speaker can still greatly influence others by writing. Moreover, good writing transfers easily to effective oral presentations. Finally, written words can be translated into any language, so communication, like mathematics, is a universal language.

In my practice I help students improve their writing. Waiting until the college essay needs to be written may be waiting too long. When you write better, grades improve, test scores rise and you turn out better-quality college application essays.

It is important to bear in mind that writing is not an end in itself, but a process that helps you develop your ideas and think creatively, critically and logically. Here are some tips:

1. Start with an outline. You've heard it a thousand times, but here it is again. An outline helps you to stay on course, identify main points, and make a strong conclusion.
2. Write more than one draft. As you write you may discover that one of your last paragraphs is your best or that you've

changed your point of view. That means writing helped you think through your thoughts and refine them. This is part of effective writing! Take the time to rewrite your outline and get yourself on track with your new focus.

3. Keep your audience and assignment in mind. For example, avoid book report summaries, when your teacher asks for an analysis. Remember your teacher has read the book!

4. Proofread. Take a break, and return to your work with fresh eyes. Make sure your writing is clear, well supported and makes sense when you read it aloud.

Writing takes time and practice. Allow sufficient time to show your draft to others, like a trusted peer who understands the assignment. Perhaps your teacher is willing to look over your draft. A new perspective can help you polish your writing. A final word: what you read influences how you write. Your reading material becomes a teacher. Keep this in mind when you choose between a popular book you can breeze through and a more challenging novel.



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.

Lamorinda Schools

High School Girls Talk about Their Middle School Years

By Sophie Braccini

Parents came in large numbers to Orinda Intermediate School on the evening of February 18th to hear a panel of high school girls discuss "the truth about middle school girls." The bulk of their questions ranged from self-esteem, to friend trouble, adaptation to change, the truth about boys and the real high school scene.

The eight students who comprised the panel came from Acalanes, Campolindo, Las Lomas and Miramonte. They are part of the group of girls who will lead the "Sister-to-Sister" summit in March and they have been in training for the summit for the past six months with the American Association of University Women (AAUW).

Middle school is a trying time for girls who want to fit in while everything changes: their bodies, their school, their friends (who sometimes turn against them) and boys (who are entering the picture). It was reassuring for anxious parents to see and talk to 8 diverse and well-adjusted girls who had been through the middle school ordeal and could offer some perspective on what the future holds.

After a short presentation in which the students introduced themselves and evoked briefly their worst and best experience in middle school, Ksenija Olmer, the moderator from AAUW, asked the questions that parents had written on cards.

The first questions addressed survival tips and the boosting of self-esteem. "Branch out, meet new people," recommended Acalanes' Sarah Gilson; "be yourself and don't give in to peer pressure," said Miramonte's Shalini Majumdar; "surround yourself with people who make you feel good about yourself," added Acalanes' Anna Eames. The positive aspect of meeting new people and finding the right group of friends was a theme that came back many times during the evening.

When asked what the girls

would change if they could go back to middle school, Las Lomas' Katherine Holzheimer said, "I wish I would have branched out more, rather than staying in my same group of friends," while classmate Jett Gendron added, "I wish I had known that I wasn't alone, that other girls felt like me." Eames said she wished she had known about the Sister-to-Sister summit that AAUW organizes for that purpose, helping middle school girls connect to each other and recognize they are not alone.

Underneath the confident image the panel presented to the crowd, sometimes sadness related to a middle school experience resurfaced. Campolindo's Sarah Mohammed recalled a hurtful event when some of her best friends suddenly turned against her. She recommended that middle school girls be reminded that things change and only get better.

Finding that right group of people is a key to high school happiness, according to the students, and they added that the fluidity between groups lessens the clique problems. "The lines are blurred," said Campolindo's Danielle Booth, "everyone travels between groups."

"Sports help a lot," added Majumdar. The positive impact of participating in sports came back many times for issues as different as friendships and body image. Answering a question from the parent of a very short 6th grader, Holzheimer said, "we have a 4'11" player on our soccer team, she is ferocious, that's who she is and she embraces it."

The concept of being true to yourself and not worrying so much about what others are thinking appeared to be one of the benefits of growing up: "I wish I had known there was not only one behavior, or only one style of shoes that were acceptable," said Gilson. Mohammed remembered being very concerned about what others were thinking about her appearance and behavior.

Parents' questions shifted

to issues regarding boys and sexual behaviors in middle school and beyond. The high school students dismissed almost completely the allegation of promiscuity in middle school. "The biggest deal would be to hold hands," said Booth "and I never felt any pressure about becoming more active." They generally admitted that dating in middle school was more about fitting in than real feelings.

The girls confirmed that in high school the level of sexual activity was much higher, but they all reported having never felt pressured into anything.

Same thing with alcohol and drugs, "it all depends who you hang out with, and it's easy to stay away from it if you want to," said Gendron. They all added that being able to call their parents in sticky situations had been a safety net.

All of the girls acknowledged that open communication with both their parents helped them navigate the middle and high school scenes. "My dad helped me vent," said Gilson, "I always had open communication with my mom," added Booth.

At the end of the evening, parents enthusiastically applauded the panel. "What a great group of young women," said Carol Shenon, the mother of a 6th grade girl, "they really expressed what it was like to be in middle school and gave us a perspective about what to look forward to." Shenon was impressed by the maturity and the long way the girls seem to have gone within just a few years.

"The benefit of that experience is what we want the middle school girls to get during the Sister-to-Sister summit," said Olmer, "it creates a bridge and a perspective for the younger ones, during a day that's divided between fun activities and group discussions."

The Sister-to-Sister summit will be held at OIS on March 7th from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Pre-registration is required, call (925) 942-0102.

Acalanes Wins

Contra Costa County's 2009 Academic Decathlon

Submitted by Jonathan B. Lance



Photo submitted by Diane Morrell, Contra Costa County Office of Education

Acalanes High School was announced as the overall team winner of the 2009 Contra Costa County Academic Decathlon. This is Acalanes' third year in a row as the County's team winner. The top high school teams that followed Acalanes were (in order) Campolindo, Miramonte and Monte Vista in Danville.

The Academic Decathlon was directed by the Contra Costa County Office of Education with the assistance of community volunteers. The Academic Decathlon provides an opportunity for high school students to compete as individuals and teams in a series of ten academic tests and demonstrations including: art, economics,

language and literature, mathematics, music, science, essay, interview, and speech (both prepared and impromptu). The curriculum for this year's test was Latin America with a Focus on Mexico. Acalanes High School will represent Contra Costa County at the California Academic Decathlon that will be held in Sacramento March 14-16. The National Academic Decathlon will be held in Memphis, Tennessee May 22-25. "The Academic Decathlon is a wonderful event for our high school students," said Contra Costa County Superintendent of Schools Joseph A. Ovick, Ed.D. "My congratulations to all the schools and students who partici-

pated, and a big thank you to all the teachers and volunteers who made the event a booming success. Best wishes to Acalanes High School team as they advance to the state level competition," continued Ovick.

The high school teams are made up of nine students, grades 9-12, with a maximum of three students in each of the following divisions: Honors (3.75-4.00 GPA), Scholastic (3.00-3.74 GPA) and Varsity (2.99 GPA and below). For the complete team and individual scores of the 2009 Contra Costa County Academic Decathlon, visit www.cocoschools.org/edsvcs/events/decathlon.htm.

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SUMMER CAMPS

2009 / #1

presented by Lamorinda Weekly

3rd Annual Summer Camp Guide

Part 1, Full Day, Academic and Overnight Camps
(Part 2, half-day camps & classes, April 1, 2009)

25 Camps listed on the next pages.

You may download our Summer Camp Guide: www.lamorindaweekly.com

Summertime Teens

By Sophie Braccini



Katie (Recreation Leader) and Jenna (Jr. Recreation Leader) with summer campers in 2007
Photo courtesy Lafayette Parks and Rec

Teenagers getting up past noon every day and spending way too much time in front of a screen is not what most parents want to see all summer long. In our affluent communities it is not rare to see young adolescent spending weeks in Paris or Beijing or signing up for out-of-state enrichment programs such as a two week ballet class in New York or forensic science in Washington D.C. Others who have more modest budgets won't have as many options this summer with community colleges and school districts reducing their offerings. But there will still be interesting options for our youth, from internships, to jobs, and traditional or more unusual camps.

The very first options that are close to home are the Parks and Recreation departments which offer both summer classes up to age 16 or 18 and Counselor in Training (CIT) programs that can become real summer jobs as teens gain experience.

"We hire adolescents who will be freshmen in high school in the fall," explains Linda Dezzani, Recreation Manager in Orinda. "The first year they are CITs and get just a stipend, and as they gain experience they can be hired in subsequent years as group leaders and instructors."

In Lafayette, the CITs register like any other campers and pay 1/2 tuition. They work alongside the counselors during the "Camp Awesome" sessions offered by Lafayette. "Some of our CITs come back the following years as real counselors," says Jonathan "ACE"

Katayanagi, Recreation Program Coordinator in Lafayette, "for them it is a real learning experience and they have fun."

Both cities offer traditional summer camps for teens. Soccer, tennis, basketball, creative writing, video, rock and roll, theater, 3D animation, chess and more.

In Moraga, Parks and Rec Director Jay Ingram hires student 15 years and older as junior counselors, "We don't have a junior counselor program. As much as I would like to do a program of this nature, I don't think we will have the time to do it. If we end up with a real strong staff that might be a different story."

The other big classics of the summer are creative arts and sports. Very locally, for example, Sewnow Fashion Design offers a variety of one week camps for teens in fashion design and sewing. In the creative arts area, St Mary's College offers camps such as the Figure Drawing for Teens workshop for age 13 to 18.

But nothing should stop you from exploring more unusual options, such as sending your teen to learn Blacksmithing or Glass-Tube Sculpture at the Crucible (thecrucible.org) in Oakland.

Many teens choose to spend a great part of their summer practicing their sport of choice. Most private clubs provide summer opportunities to sharpen skills.

St Mary's is a popular place for teens, with resident and non-resident camps. "Going to an Athletic Summer Camp such as Saint Mary's College not only provides

teens physical skills and health benefits, but is an opportunity for healthy social interaction, as a self esteem builder, stress reliever, as well as teaching responsibility, leadership, and cooperation," says Adam Kennedy, Director of Summer Athletic Camps at Saint Mary's.

If students are academically inclined, the local junior college, Diablo Valley College (DVC) in Pleasant Hill offers a wide variety of classes. Unfortunately, due to budget restrictions, classes are being cut while the number of students increases.

"DVC gives priority to college students," explains a Campolindo counselor, "and the classes might get crowded."

Budget permitting, parents may want to consider the private sector. Among the many local institutions, Orinda Academy has been offering a very popular and comprehensive program that runs for 2 or 4 hours a day, in 3 week sessions. You will find high school math, social study and English classes as well as enrichment classes such as Digital Music Production, Rock/Jazz Band or Japanese. The Acalanes School District no longer offers credit for these classes.

Highly motivated students can explore UC Berkeley's catalog as well.

Some parents consider summer to be a time for ... vacation. "My view of the summer is that it should be to large extent free, so kids can decompress and de-stress," says Ksenija Olmer who has two daughters, one in high school and one in college. "They should learn something new, read a lot and be a bit bored so they are excited when school starts again and not exhausted from taking classes the whole summer."



Moraga Parks & Recreation Paint Ball Camp at Moraga Commons
Photo Andy Schreck

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Session 1: June 22-July 14
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Teens at work, sewnow in Lafayette
Photo courtesy of sewnow

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SUMMER CAMPS

Camp listings collected and compiled by Wendy Scheck

Presented by La...

Adventure Day Camp (Walnut Creek)

Adventure Day Camp is proud to announce its NEW site at The Seven Hills School in Walnut Creek. Adventure Day Camp is a traditional summer day camp for children ages 3-14. In a low pressure and relaxed atmosphere, children gain confidence and skills in a wide range of camp activities; including swimming, horseback riding, sailing, arts, sports, archery, drama, music, rock climbing, hiking, overnight camping, and much more. Children are assigned to small groups with one adult Group Leader plus an assistant. Home transportation is available from most areas. **June 15 - Aug 14.**
Phone: (925) 937-6500
www.adventuredaycamp.com, Full Day

Camp Awesome (Lafayette)

The City of Lafayette Parks, Trails & Recreation Department is offering a variety of reasonably priced camps with an emphasis on FUN. Camp AWESOME (9am-2pm) at the Lafayette Community Center offers cooking, arts and crafts, hiking and sports. AWESOME Afternoon Camp (2pm-5pm) is an extension of Camp AWESOME and will feature the Awesome game room, play on the RINK, art projects and more! Both camps are open to children ages 4-14. Please visit our website or pick up a copy of our brochure (available on March 9) for more information about all our great camps and summer activities.
(925) 284-2232 www.LafayetteRec.org
Full Day, Half Day

Summer at Bentley School (Lafayette)

Bentley's Advanced Studies Program (ASP) is designed for students in grades 7 through 12. Classes will meet 5 times a week for either two, three or four weeks depending on the course: enrichment classes in the Arts, Sciences and Humanities.
June 15 thru Aug. 14,
Phone: (925) 283-2101 x 3254,
Website: www.bentleyschool.net.
Full Day, Half Day, Academic

Berkeley Rep School of Theatre (Berkeley)

Each year, the Summer Theatre Intensive offers middle and high school students the chance to create an original piece of theatre and perform it on one of Berkeley Rep's main stages. Daily classes include acting, play creation, movement, improvisation, and more! Electives and seminars include hip-hop and salsa dance, lighting and sound, directing, playwriting, and beyond.
Session 1 (grades 6 - 8) is June 22 - July 17.
Session 2 (grades 9 - 12) is July 20 - August 14.
 Register now!
Phone: (510) 647- 2972.
Website: www.berkeleyrep.org/school
Full Day

Camp Edmo (Moraga)

Catch the "Edmo Vibe" this summer! Camp Edmo (powered by Edventure More!) features fun, hands-on activities for entering K-5th graders designed by the Bay Area's top museums: *Exploratorium, *CA Academy of Sciences, *Museum of Children's Art, *Zeum and the *YMCA. Campers rotate through themed Arts & Science, Animation and Recreation activities every day! 09' Arts & Science themes: Fantastic Flyers, Gizmos & Gadgets, Planet Heroes. 09' Animation themes: Clay-toons, Comic Strips, and Toy Stories. Location: Rheem Elementary School in Moraga.
Camp runs Mon-Fri., 9am-3pm.
 Extended Care offered. Optional organic hot lunch available too!
Phone: (415) 282-MORE (6673)
Website: www.campedmo.com
Full Day

Camp Galileo (Lafayette)

Voted "Best Camp for Kids" in Bay Area Parent and the San Francisco Bay Guardian, Camp Galileo is a summer day camp serving kids in Pre-K through 5th grades. Kids enjoy art, science and outdoor programming every day, wrapped in fun camp traditions and delivered by highly enthusiastic staff. Our hands-on curriculum is developed in partnership with The Tech Museum of Innovation, de Young Museum and Klutz. Camp Galileo will be hosted in Lafayette at Bentley Upper School from **June 22 to August 7.**
Phone: (800) 854-3684
Website: www.galileo-learning.com
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 OPTIONAL Field Trips to GOLDEN SKATE, PUMP IT UP and other GREAT local attractions!
 OPTIONAL Specialty classes in Ceramics, Carpentry and more!

June 15th-August 14th, Monday-Friday, 8:30am-5:00pm
PLUS - extended care available: 7:30-8:30am and/or 5:00-6:00pm!

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(925) 283-7100
www.huskyhouseforkids.org

Husky House "Everything Under the Sun" (Lafayette)

Get ready for good, old fashioned FUN at our "tried and true" camp! We are located in Lafayette and have weekly sessions beginning June 15th through August 14th. Children, ages 4 years 9 months through 12 year olds may attend. You may choose full and half day options as well as EXTENDED CARE. We are flexible and the price is right! Children will enjoy arts/crafts, cooking, sports/games, water play and MORE! You may also sign up for optional specialty classes and awesome field trips!
Phone: (925) 283-7100
Website: www.huskyhouseforkids.org
Full Day, Half Day

iD TECH CAMPS (Moraga)

AMERICA'S #1 TECH CAMP- iD Tech Camps is for beginner to advanced students ages 7-17. Experience summer fun and make your own video games, websites with Flash®, digital movies, C++ or Java programs, graphic art, robots, 3D models, and more using the best industry-grade software. Weeklong day and overnight summer technology programs at St. Mary's College of California and UC Berkeley. Additional multi-week programs for teens ages 13-18 include the iD Gaming Academy, iD Film Academy and iD Programming Academy. Register early and save with special seasonal promotions. Space is limited.
Mention promo code CA99 for additional savings.
1-888-709-TECH (8324),
Website: www.internaldrive.com
Full Day, Overnight

Lafayette Summer Music Workshop (Lafayette)

This weeklong music workshop for teens, youths and adults offers an intense immersion in the world of jazz. Learn from jazz luminaries such as Mary Fetting, Frank Martin and Wayne Wallace. Hang with fellow musicians, chow down at the lavish daily barbecues, and finish your week with a marathon jazz fest featuring more than two dozen Lafayette Summer Music Workshop bands and their mentors. **August 3-7.** Discount for reservations prior to May 1. Fees cover a full week's worth of master classes, music theory, jam sessions, combos, lunch and snacks each day. A limited number of scholarships are available!
Website: www.lafayettejazz.wordpress.com.
Full Day

Moraga Sports Camp (Moraga)

The goal of the Moraga Sports Camp is to let a kid be a kid. We desire to be a place where kids can run around and enjoy themselves without the pretext of constant competition or the pressure to constantly win. Kids get to choose their activities; they can run around when they want to and choose a more relaxing game when the mood strikes them.
Brett Lorie or Jerry Gruen at (925) 949-6339.
Website: www.moragasportscamp.com
Full Day

Adventure Day Camp

A traditional summer camp in Walnut Creek

Activities

- Swimming
- Horseback Riding
- Sailing
- Kayaking
- Climbing
- Tennis
- Art
- Sports
- Drama
- Biking
- Archery
- Skateboarding
- Camping
- Canoeing
- Hiking

Session Dates:
 August 9th -August 16th
 (7 days)
 August 9th - August 20th
 (12 days)
 Ages: 8 - 16

Age 4 - 14
(925) 937-6500
adventuredaycamp.com

A sleep away program by Adventure Day Camp

Puravidacamp.com
(925) 937-6500

Camp Pura Vida (Yorkville)

A Sleep Away Program operated by Adventure Day Camp, "Pura Vida" is a phrase mostly heard in Costa Rica that roughly translates to "enjoy life" or "live life to the fullest." A perfect name to symbolize the atmosphere and spirit you'll find at Camp Pura Vida. Our Campsite, nestled among redwood trees and the Rancheria River offers a beautiful and tranquil setting for the program. Activities include hiking, sports, horseback riding, camping, arts, drama, and more.
Aug 9th - Aug 16th (7 days)
or Aug 9th - Aug 20th.
Phone: (925) 937-6500
Website: puravidacamp.com
Overnight

Rancho Del Lago summer camp (Briones)

At our week-long summer camps, children learn to ride and care for our gentle ponies. We also make arts and crafts in our shady pondside setting. Our instructors are excellent riders with camp experience. We teach the balanced seat and direct reining, basic to both English and Western riding. The hours are Full day: 9am to 3:30pm or half day : 9am - 12:30pm, or 12pm - 3:30pm-
 Camp Site: 2331 Rancho Del Lago, Briones,
Phone: (925) 370-6439
Website: www.rancho-del-lago.com
Full Day, Half Day

Sewnow! Fashion Design (Lafayette)

Learn fashion design and sewing at sewnow! fashion studio. We offer a variety of one week camps for juniors (2nd & 3rd Grade), kids, and teens. Camps are half-day, mornings or afternoons, or full day. Have a fun week in our exciting studio learning new skills and expressing your creativity - and walk away with two unique personalized fashion items. Camps include all fabrics, notions, computerized custom-fit patterns, and custom embroidery.
 960 Moraga Rd. (1 block south of Mt. Diablo), Lafayette.
Phone: (925) 283-7396
Website: www.sewnow.com.
Full Day, Half Day

SMC Summer Camps (Moraga)

Summer will be here before you know it! It is not too early to register for Saint Mary's College Athletic Summer Camps. With 40 years of excellence, SMC offers 30+ sports camps on one of the most picturesque campuses on the West Coast. Saint Mary's offers boys and girls Overnight, Day, Team, and Specialty Camps for ages 5-18. Summer 2009 offers All Sports, Baseball, Basketball, Golf, Lacrosse, Rowing, Soccer, Softball, Tennis and Volleyball.
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2009 / #1

Lamorinda Weekly

3rd Annual Summer Camp Guide

Part 1, Full Day, Academic and Overnight Camps

(Part 2, half-day camps & classes, April 1, 2009)

You may download our Summer Camp Guide:

www.lamorindaweekly.com

Cal Shakes (Orinda)

Cal Shakes Summer Theater Programs: Five- and two-week Conservatories offer training to more experienced theater enthusiasts. Two week camp is less intense and also an ideal introduction for newcomers. Morning skills classes may include acting, improvisation, stage combat, text, and movement. Afternoons are spent in rehearsals for public performances of plays and scenes at the end of the program.

Dates: **June 22- Aug 7th** Ages: **8-18 years**
Scholarships available. To register:
Phone: **Ava Jackson - (510) 548-3422 x.136**
Website: **www.calshakes.org/camps**
Full Day

Chabot-Space Explorers Summer Camp (Oakland)

Take your child far while staying close to home this summer. Blast off on an "ed-venture" that will be remembered for a lifetime. Chabot Space & Science Center offers week long full-day camps for kids entering grades 1-8, who are interested in science and having fun! It's a summer packed full of space and science exploration, hikes in the Redwoods, planetarium and theater shows, and exciting outdoor activities.

Camp dates from **July 6 - July 31**.
Phone: **(510) 336-7426**
Website: **chabotspace.org**
Email **summercamp@chabotspace.org**
Full Day

The Crucible (Oakland)

The Crucible is a non-profit educational facility that fosters a collaboration of Arts, Industry & Community. Through training in the fine and industrial arts, The Crucible promotes creative expression, reuse of materials, and innovative design. In The Crucible's age-appropriate classes youth 8-18 can learn about welding, blacksmithing, glass, art, and more. Special half-day classes are, scheduled, making it easy to choose a full or half day experience. Four sessions:

June 15 - 19, Jun 29 - Jul 3, Jul 27 - 31, and Aug 17 - 21. 1260 7th Street Oakland
Phone: **(510) 444-0919**
Website: **www.thecrucible.org**
Full Day, Half Day

The Golden Gate Boys Choir (Lafayette)

The Summer Music Camp is a careful balance of musical instruction, choral rehearsal, sports, arts and crafts, and all-camp activities, plus quiet time for rest and reflection. We use the facilities at the Oakland Diocesan Youth Retreat Center in Lafayette, a well-kept site with plenty of room for hiking and playing plus locations for classes, choral rehearsals, and meetings. Residential & Day Camp. Boys ages 7-14

Session I: **7/27 to 7/31** Session II: **8/3 to 8/7**.
**Discount for early registration -Deadline May 31.
CIT program for ages 16-18 with a musical background. Camp site: Diocesan Youth Retreat Center, 1977 Reliez Valley Road, Lafayette.
Phone: **(510) 887-4311**, Website: **www.ggbc.org**
Full Day, Overnight

CAMP HACIENDA (Moraga)

This summer Moraga Parks and Recreation will be offering CAMP HACIENDA, a day camp for kids ages 5-12 that will incorporate sports, games, crafts and more in the safe, secluded environment of the Hacienda de las Flores! Come for a full day or a half day. 9 weeks total.

June 17 to August 14, 2009
Full Day 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., \$175 per week.
Morning Extended Care fee (8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.): \$8
Evening Extended Care fee (4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.): \$12
Min/Max 10/50.
Phone: **(925) 888-7045**
Website: **www.moraga.ca.us**
Full Day, Half Day

JCC Summer Camp (Lafayette)

Plan now for a sensational summer at the Contra Costa JCC! Our summer camp programs for children and young people (ages Toddler to 16 years old) offer fun activities including swimming, arts and crafts, sports, music, field trips and more. Extreme Skateboard Camp, Shelanu on Wheels, Art Camp, Barrett Lindsey-Steiner's Standing Ovations Theatre Arts Camp are returning for 2009!

Some camps 9am-3pm. Extended Care offered.
Phone: **(925) 938-7800**
Website: **www.ccjcc.org**
Full Day, Half Day

JFSLA- Soccer Camp (Moraga)

The Julie Foudy Sports Leadership Academy (JFSLA) is back in MORAGA for the summer of 2009! The JFSLA is a unique, week-long residential academy for girls (ages 12-18, with intermediate to advanced soccer skills) where soccer, leadership training, and community service UNITE! Julie Foudy-- former Captain of the US Women's Soccer Team, 2-time Olympic Gold Medalist and World Cup Champion, and US National Soccer Hall of Fame 2007 Inductee-- and her world class staff teach students the ingredients to be a leader on the field AND in life. The JFSLA will be at St. Mary's College in Moraga the week of **July 26-31st**.
Website: **www.juliefoudyleadership.com**
Overnight

Mountain Camp (Lake Tahoe)

Mountain Camp is a private, co-ed, traditional resident camp located 2.5 hours from Lamorinda on the shore of beautiful Ice House Lake near Lake Tahoe. Founded in 1966, Mountain Camp is accredited by the American Camp Association and our program focuses on promoting a positive self-image and developing friendships and community. Activities include: Sailing, Ropes Course, Mountain Biking, Wake Boarding, Water Skiing, Arts and Crafts, Guitar, Archery, Performing Arts, Sports and Games and much more. **We offer 1 to 4 week sessions** - Wait lists have already begun in some sessions so make your plans now.

Phone: **(415) 351-2267**
Website: **www.mountaincamp.com**
Overnight

Orinda Academy (Orinda)

Orinda Academy, a co-educational, independent, college preparatory school serving grades 7-12, will offer two Summer Sessions this year. All classes are UC approved. Orinda Academy is WASC accredited.

Session I is **June 22 - July 14**
Session II is **July 16 - August 7**
Classes are 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Tuition is \$700 per session, \$1,300 for both sessions. Courses include Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra II, English for grades 9-12, Composition, Literature, US History and a Middle School Basic Skills Review class. Japanese, Rock/Jazz Band or Digital Music Production- 2 hour sessions \$400. For information, contact Nettie Anthony-Harris, Director of Admissions.
(925) 254-7553 x 305, www.orindaacademy.org
Full Day, Half Day, Academic

Roughing It Day Camp (Lafayette)

Lamorinda's Home-town Camp for 36 years & voted Best of the Bay! An all-outdoors day camp located at the Lafayette Reservoir for children 4 1/2 - 16 years. Activities include: instruction in horseback riding, swimming lessons, trail riding, canoeing, kayaking, fishing, boating, sports, crafts, environment education, outdoor adventure & more! Roughing It also offers Horse Camps (3rd-10th grades) and Little Raccoons program (pre-K 2nd grade). Transportation provided from home and group bus spots. Before and after camp programs available. Helping Children grow in wonderful ways for over 37 years!

(925) 283-3795; Website: www.roughingit.com
Full Day, Half Day

Camp Saklan (Moraga)

9 Weekly Sessions - June 15 - August 11; Ages 3 - 11
Located on the Saklan school campus, Camp Saklan is open to the public and delivers a unique camp experience filled with fun, new friends and opportunities to discover! Each week is carefully designed to incorporate our mission to expand the heart, mind and character of every child. Camp programs and activities are lead by our well-trained, dedicated staff in a caring, safe environment. Weekly themes include dance, drama, magic, circus arts, singing and much more. Also, back for a 2nd year is our Kindergarten Readiness Camp which prepares children for Kindergarten, developing their Math, Reading, and Writing skills as well as essential social and life skills.

(925) 376-7900, Website: www.saklan.org
Full Day, Half Day, Academic

The Lamorinda Weekly Summer Camp listings are not paid advertising. Our intent is to provide a useful reference guide. In the event we have inadvertently printed misinformation please let us know. LW is not liable for errors or omissions.

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For more information drop-in, call, or visit: **www.sewnow.com**



sewnow! 960 Moraga Rd., Lafayette [1 block S of Mt. Diablo] (925) 283-7396 info@sewnow.com

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GRADES 4 - 8, SEPARATED BY GRADE

DATES: July 13 thru July 24 (M - F)
TIMES: 1:30 - 5:00 P.M.
FEES: \$270 (T-shirt included)

FOR REGISTRATION FORMS, CONTACT:
925/280-3950 x-5163, kmacy@acalanes.k12.ca.us

Want to join a swim team?



Come join Sun Valley Swim Team (SVST) this summer for the perfect combination of competitive spirit and team fun!

Non-pool members are welcome to join our team. You'll love our sense of community and our new pool! In addition to swim team (ages 5-18) we also have a Pre-Team program for ages 4-5. We are also offering a pre-season stroke clinic coached by the Cal Women's Swim Team.

Clinic is open to all swim teams.

Come join Sun Valley Swim Team

Swim team registration is **Sunday, March 15th 12-2pm** at Sun Valley Pool (1000 Leland Drive, Lafayette)

For more information, check out www.SwimSunValley.com or contact BVE parent Tracy Broback at GoRays@SwimSunValley.com.



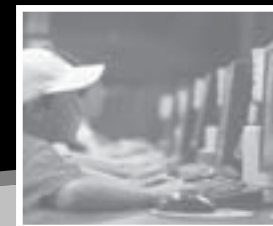
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- Web Design
- Filmmaking
- Programming
- Surf & Tech
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Weekly Sessions

June 15 - August 14
Full Day & Half Day Programs

Kindergarten Readiness
4-week program

Mini Campers
ages 3 - 5

Explorers
ages 6-11

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Music • Swimming • Dance
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and more!

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IN THE BACK YARD

Digging Deep—Gardening with Cynthia—WINTER WEARY WONDERLAND!

By Cynthia Brian

What is paradise but a garden, an orchard of trees and herbs full of pleasure and nothing there but delights? William Lawson



Cynthia Brian

It had been a really horrible winter. Rainy, cold, gray, and depressing. We were outdoor kids and had spent too many days inside. The first rainless day in March, my sisters and I decided to run away from home. We told Mom and Dad about our plans to go find sunshine and happiness. With a chuckle, they asked if we needed help packing. "No," we responded, "we're old enough to pack our wagon ourselves." We were three, four, and five years old respectively, living on a big ranch far from the madding crowd. Our grandparents had bought us this red Radio Flyer with removable wooden sides for

Christmas, and we were eager to escape.

The packing began. We included all of life's essentials: our dolls, toy cash register, dinosaurs, pogo sticks, jump ropes, play phone, puzzles, picture books, miniature tool set, stuffed animals, hula hoops, Monopoly money, rock collections, roller skates, a plastic shovel, and our battered shared tricycle, which was tied to the back of the wagon. Items like food, water, clothing, and blankets never crossed our minds.

Excitedly, we kissed our parents good-bye and told them we were off to wonderland. They acted as if running away was a

common occurrence and wished us a safe and happy journey. Mom handed us a sack of sandwiches she had packed, and Dad suggested we take along our dog Bullet (named after Roy Rogers and Dale Evans's dog) to protect us. With our cowboy hats on our heads, our holsters on our hips, and our stick horses as our mode of travel, we started off, singing "Happy Trails to You" as we pulled our heavy load.

Suddenly we saw heaven ahead. Mustard—tall yellow spires blanketing the fields—beckoned us to come play. Breaking into a run, we dashed toward this beacon of springtime. The mustard plants were taller than any of us. We could stand and not be seen by each other a few feet away. "This is it!" we exclaimed.

"Let's set up house!" As we unpacked our valuables, we stomped around in the mustard making rooms for each of us and putting everything in a special place. "This is the kitchen, this is the porch, this is the living room, this is the bedroom, this is the garage." We lay down in the mustard and rolled around, inhaling the pungent fragrance of this intoxicating plant.

Bullet found squirrels to chase and barked with enthusiasm. The sounds of rushing water filled the air and we wandered over to the creek. There we found miners' lettuce, dandelions, wild strawberries, and watercress growing. Pretending we were pioneers, we made a salad using our dolls' utensils and settled in for our first meal together. We thought it was absolutely delicious! Our shoes came off, and we waded into the water but it was too cold to think of swimming or catching polliwogs. We quickly decided that throwing rocks



yellow mustard

Photo Cynthia Brian

would be more fun. Lots of wildflowers—shooting stars, lupines, and poppies—adorned the banks, and we picked big bouquets for our new home in the mustard fields.

The rest of the day was spent playing hide-and-seek in the mustard, arranging and rearranging our treasures, and hunting for new rocks. Time sped by, and before long it was dark. The moon came up, and the night sounds sent shivers down our backs. None of us dared show fear. The coyotes howled, the owls hooted, and Bullet barked at night-foraging rabbits. At first we had retreated to our separate mustard bedrooms, but soon the three of us curled up together and counted the stars while Bullet was posted as sentry. We decided that this was the happiest day of our lives, but we wondered if Mom and Dad missed us.

None of us were awake when Dad came to get his girls. We woke up in our own beds in the morning, the smell of Mom's cooking wafting from the kitchen. At breakfast we all agreed we had indeed found the Promised Land far, far away, and we shared stories of our thrilling adventure with our parents who listened with rapt attention. We didn't realize that our enchanted faraway world was only a mile down the road, on our own property. We had never left the ranch.

There truly is no place like home.

March is the miraculous month when we weary of winter and search for the signs of spring. Although February provided many days of solid rain, this year in California we pray for more to assure us a drought-free summer.

I am just this day returning from a lecture tour throughout the

Caribbean where the sun shone brightly, bronzing my skin and my emotions. The azure warm sea satisfied my senses as I snorkeled amidst underwater gardens. The swaying palms on the beach beckoned me to wander deeper into the lush landscapes where I photographed flowers, trees, and cottages, breathing deeply from the essence of life. Once again, I was that little girl experiencing paradise, or the Promised Land.

Just as quickly as my escape had begun, it was time to return. Thankfully, the cheerful wild mustard blanketing the hillsides and the singing daffodils greeted my arrival as they trumpet a new birth. Flowering peach, plum, and pear trees perfume the heavens and my personal orchard. How I appreciate the emerald hillsides in anticipation of the vernal equinox.

Welcome to Lamorinda! There is no place like our home.



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flowering peach tree

Photo Cynthia Brian

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EVENTS:

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

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hyacinth

Photo Cynthia Brian



daffodil (narcissus)

Photo Cynthia Brian



crocus

Photo Cynthia Brian

Cynthia's Digging Deep Gardening Guide for March

"He who wants to eat a good supper should eat a weed of every kind."

Italian proverb

March heralds weeds to eat! On a trail near you, you'll find fresh crunchy Miner's lettuce, pungent mustard, creek watercress, dandelion, and wild strawberries. Take photographs to determine if any of these wild delicacies are growing in your garden. If so, toss a spring salad of edible weeds and enjoy my childhood indulgence! We are gearing up for spring and there is more work now that spring has almost sprung. Aren't you excited?

- PREPARE your soil for the upcoming spring planting utilizing your new compost materials. You did start a compost pile or bin since reading my last column, didn't you?
- COMPOST all your organic materials as explained in last month's column. Remember, you may add your coffee beans, tea leaves, vegetable peelings, shredded newspaper, leaves, grass clippings, woodchips, chicken manure, and non-diseased weeds to your compost bin.
- CHECK your oak trees for the pesky oak moth larvae. The caterpillars are quite beautiful with black and yellow markings. If you think you have Monarch butterflies, think again. Call in the pros unless you like bald trees.
- MOW your lawns weekly. We didn't have much to do with lawns in the winter but with the increased light and warmer days, our grasses are growing rapidly. Think of mowing as exercise!
- FEED you lawns with high-nitrogen fertilizer and pull any noticeable weeds. (If they are dandelions, they ARE edible as long as you haven't sprayed with a toxic material).
- SOD or SEED now when the weather is dry. If seeding, you may need to cover your lawn with netting as our flying friends, the birds, truly enjoy feasting on newly planted lawns.
- FERTILIZE this month. The winter rains have drained the soils of needed nutrients. It's up to you to feed all plants including fruit trees, annuals, roses, and shrubs. Mature trees need their nitrogen booster. Wait to fertilize rhododendrons and camellias with an acid fertilizer until next month when they are finished blooming.
- DIVIDE perennials such as phlox, day lilies, agapanthus, and yarrow. Give to friends or find a new space in your place.
- PEST ALERT for the creepy crawlies this month as the weather warms. Use a hose to spray aphids or a spray gun with a little household detergent. Vigilance is necessary with the slugs, snails, and earwigs that munch on the new sprouts.
- NETTING is a must to keep birds and small animals from eating your newly planted vegetables or color spots.
- MULCH to conserve moisture for the summer drought. We didn't really get enough rain this year to lower our water bills, so make sure to place three to four inches of mulch in your garden. When July arrives, you'll be able to afford that extra hose!
- REMOVE camellia blossoms that fall to the ground as the spent blooms are not good for the mother plant. Add to your compost pile.
- VEGETABLE planting time is here for potatoes, herbs, beets, peas and carrots, peppers, and eggplant. I love broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower and there is still time to grow these edibles which may help prevent cancer.
- CHOOSE bulbs for your summer satisfaction including begonias, dahlias, gladiolus, watsonia, and callas.

Community Marketing, Does It Work?

... continued from page 15

In Orinda, another example is the venerable Orinda Motors owned by Allen Pennebaker. Allen, in conjunction with his marketing strategist John Vanek, continues a proud tradition of community service. "This is our way of giving back to the community that makes us successful," says Vanek, "it is not something for which a precise return on investment can be quantified, but we've always seen it as the right thing to do."

Orinda Motors is reaching out to the entire Lamorinda community and has joined both the Moraga and Lafayette Chambers. "There, we meet people we can work with and support each other," says Vanek, "it is important to keep the money in the community and spend it where it will come back to you."

Keeping the money in the community is something that

Bill Snider, owner of Moraga Hardware, couldn't agree with more. "It's not only about shopping Lamorinda first," says Snider, who actively supports local schools and clubs, "it's about supporting local business owners who give back to the community every day."

But Snider has concerns about the effectiveness of community marketing. "When people lose their jobs they look at every way possible to save money. When they need something they may not consider who's supporting their schools or their local clubs. They go where they think they will save money." Snider says that people too often have not enough consideration for value added service, community contribution or the long term benefits of supporting locally-owned businesses. "They may not realize that the true cost of a product is not what you pay for at the reg-


ister," he adds.

Andy Scheck, a marketing expert and publisher of the Lamorinda Weekly, agrees that community marketing is not a panacea for all businesses at all times. "You need to consider how many customers you need per day and how quickly you need to contact them," says Scheck, "for example, if you have a two-day sale on milk, community marketing will not do you much good; but if you are a mortgage broker, networking in your community is key."

Scheck adds that word of mouth is often more useful to businesses that provide an experience people like to talk about, like a restaurant. "Community marketing is a long term investment that's very important, but most of the time, it is only a part of each business' unique marketing mix," he concludes.

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Dining Dining Dining Dining

For the Love of Leprechauns

By Susie Iventosch



Petar's Irish singer Sinead Healy Photo Susie Iventosch

Leprechauns were among my favorite childhood fantasies. As a little kid, I knew in my heart that one day I would actually meet Lucky, the Lucky Charms leprechaun - a chance meeting at the end of the rainbow. With a twinkle of an eye, he would vanish, leaving only a memory and a pot of gold.

These one-eighth Irish eyes were not smiling the day the truth ushered forth. No such thing as a leprechaun? Was this some kind of trick? It was a somber revelation, the nostalgia eternal.

For many of us, there is no good substitute for a stealthy little leprechaun, not Santa Claus, not the Easter Bunny, and - though she earns high marks in my book - not the Tooth Fairy. All pale in comparison to the tiny green gnomes.

To fill the void, we rekindle childhood fascinations by playing lighthearted tricks - green footprints here, gold dust there, and with a wee bit o' luck, perhaps we will lure leprechauns back into our lives. (I, for one, am holding out hope!)

Or we can head down to Petar's in Lafayette, order up Guinness and lap up a bowl of Irish stew. Perhaps you didn't know that Petar's celebrates St. Patty's Day twice each month. Every other Tuesday the restaurant turns just a little bit Irish, featuring Irish stew along with the beautiful voice and piano of Sinead Healy performing a montage of Irish and American tunes.

Petar's, founded in 1959 and owned by Nosrat and Jeanette Kermainejad since 1999, serves lunch six days a week and dinner daily with live music Tuesday through

Sunday evenings. Nightly dinner specials range from osso bucco, to lamb shanks, braised short ribs and roasted turkey.

Though Kermainejad holds a degree in civil engineering, (his five brothers are also engineers) he only worked a brief stint in that field, designing highways and bridges in Iran. The rest of the time he has spent in the restaurant business, mostly owning them, but he's right at home in the kitchen, too. One of eight children, he says he used to follow his mom around when she cooked, helping out where he could.

"I was the designated taster," he remembers. "I really enjoy cooking, but Petar's Irish stew comes from Rusty, one of my chefs from an earlier restaurant venture."

Randy Hellrung and Nicole Kreigenhofer of Antioch stopped in for a drink on the way home from the airport the night I visited Petar's. "We were sitting at the bar and heard the young lady singing a beautiful Irish tune, and saw the Irish stew on the menu, and decided we had to stay," Hellrung said.

"We felt like we were nestled into a cozy Irish pub in Killarney and were just waiting for everyone to start talking with an Irish accent," he added. "All we needed was someone to light a peat stove and we'd be sitting in Ireland!"

After tasting Petar's Irish stew, Kreigenhofer said, "For a good bowl of comfort food, this really fills the bill."

32 Lafayette Circle Lafayette, CA 94549 Phone: 925-284-7117 www.petars.com

RECIPES

Included here are two versions of Irish stew. Petar's is a thick, hearty stew made with lamb veggies and barley. The "Brothy" stew, a compilation of several different recipes and made with Guinness stout beer, is a bit more "brothy" and delicious served with thick slices of French bread.

Brothy Irish Stew

(Serves six or so)

Ingredients

- 2 1/2 pounds shoulder lamb chop, or shoulder block, cut into small chunks*
1 teaspoon sea salt
1 teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 cup Guinness, or other stout beer
3 or 4 large new potatoes cut into quarters
1 parsnip, peeled and cut into medium-sized chunks
1 pound baby carrots
2 cups pearl onions, parboiled and peeled (any color is fine)
1 1/2 cups beef or chicken stock
3 tablespoons parsley, chopped
2 teaspoons fresh thyme
2 bay leaves

Roux for thickening (1 tablespoon melted butter and 2 tablespoons flour mixed into a paste with 1/2 teaspoon salt and 2 tablespoons stout beer)

Directions

Season lamb with salt and pepper. Heat oil in Dutch oven, or other large pot with tight-fitting lid, and sear lamb for 2-3 minutes, just to seal in juices. Remove lamb from pot and set aside.

In same pot, pour beer and boil for one minute, scraping up any bits of left-over meat. Place lamb back in pan. Cover with stock. Bring pot to boil and immediately reduce to a simmer. Cover pot and simmer for 45 minutes. Open lid and layer veggies on top of lamb leaving potatoes for top layer. Cover and continue to cook on low simmer for another hour or until meat is tender and falls easily from bones and veggies are cooked through.

If you want to thicken the sauce a wee bit, stir roux into stew and heat until slightly thickened.

Serve hot with thick slices of French bread.

NOTE

*Since I am no expert on meat cuts, it's always a bit of a challenge when looking for just the right cut for certain dishes. I rely on the advice of my butcher to get it right! I went into Lunardi's (939-6477 ext. 3) meat department looking for lamb shoulder meat for my Irish stew, and the very knowledgeable and friendly butcher, Dan Kidd, told me the best piece of the lamb to use for Irish stew is the lamb shoulder block. This is the end piece leftover from cutting the lamb shoulder arm and lamb shoulder blade chops. This particular section is very flavorful, but it has a lot of bones, which make it even better for stewing, but difficult to cut into small pieces at home. Dan said that is never a problem, because they are happy to split it, seam out the fat and cut it into stew sized pieces on the butcher saw. All you have to do is ask, or call ahead. He said it is one of the most flavorful parts of the lamb, too.



Petar's Irish Stew Photo Susie Iventosch

Petar's Irish Stew

(Enough for a crowd)

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup cooking oil or olive oil (or butter)
5 pounds lamb shoulder pieces
8 ounces barley
20 ounces small white onions
24 ounces white turnips
4 medium carrots, sliced
1 pound celery, sliced
3 medium potatoes
Salt and pepper to taste
Chopped fresh mint

Directions

Cut lamb into desired size pieces. Sauté in pan with half of the oil. When meat is browned, remove from pan and add vegetables to the cooking oil and sauté, adding more oil, if necessary.

Meanwhile, in a separate pot, bring about 4 quarts of water to boil and add barley. Reduce heat and cook for 35-40 minutes, until barley is almost cooked. Add the barley and cooking liquid to the meat and vegetable mixture with some chopped mint. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and simmer for one to two hours. Serve with more chopped mint, or mint leaves as garnish.

This recipes are available on our web site. Go to: http://www.lamorindaweekly.com Susie can be reached at susiven@hughes.net

Advertisement for Terzetto Cuisine Cafe featuring special menus like Kids Night (99c), Senior Night (\$9.95), and Friday Prime Rib Night.

Advertisement for Petar's restaurant with a new bar and updated menu, including Irish Stew on Tuesdays.

Advertisement for Knox Restaurant & Lounge featuring Italian comfort food and March Madness specials.

Advertisement for Cheese Steak Shop with a 'Buy One King of Philly' offer and a \$3.00 discount.

Table listing Lamorinda's Restaurants with columns for restaurant name, address, phone number, and website.



SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Miramonte Boys and Campo Girls Advance to NCS Semi-Finals

Tonight the boys play at home while the girls are away

By Conrad Bassett



Miramontes' Payam pump fakes two Acalanes defenders in their Friday night victory pictured: David Gomez (33), Payam Vadi (22), Eric Obeysekere (35)

Photo Jordan Fong

The NCS Division III playoffs looked like a DFAL tournament on Friday night as the Miramonte boys beat the Acalanes Dons 66-49 and the Campolindo girls defeated Miramonte 71-63 in quarter final action in their home courts.

The Dons, by virtue of their earlier defeat of Campolindo, headed to Orinda looking for another upset.

The game was one of several momentum changes with the Matadors having the final one. In the first period, Miramonte jumped off to an 8-2 lead behind Eric Obeysekere who scored four points on his way to a 22 point, 10 rebound evening. The Dons fought back by scoring the last five points of the period and the first six of the second led by David Gomez who quickly hit two threes and two other shots in the run.

The Dons went up nine at 26-17 when Zach Bloom drilled a three but then the pendulum swung back to the Mats who ended the period by scoring 15 of the last 17 points to erase the deficit.

The third period saw the Dons again come back with eight straight points behind Taylor Caldwell who finished the night with 11 points and 13 rebounds. The Matadors took the lead for good at 39-38 on a Davis Louie jumper at 3:02 to go. The teams traded baskets and Acalanes cut the lead to 48-45 with 6:06 left in the fourth on a Steve Maze layup and free throw before the Matadors pulled away scoring the next 12 in a row punctuated by an Obeysekere block with Louie grabbing the rebound and firing a strike to Chris Hatfield who finished with a layup.

Dave Brown's Mats are host-

ing Piner tonight, Wednesday, March 4.

The Dons finished the season at 15-13.

On the girls' side, it was the third meeting of the season between the local rivals. The Cougars scored early and often, jumping off to an 18-7 lead and fighting off several Matador challenges to head to a semi-final matchup on the road against #1 seed Bishop O'Dowd tonight.

The middle two periods were played very closely as the Cougars pulled to a double-digit lead early in the third period. However, behind Stephanie Golden's hot hand, the Mats closed the deficit to 51-48 heading to the fourth period. Golden scored the first basket of the fourth (she finished with a game high 30 points) and it was a one-point game.

Then the momentum switched as the Cougars opened up the lead with Stephanie Triggas hitting a couple of key three-point jumpers and Annie Ward adding to her team high 24 points.

Meghan Ringer added 14 points and had 8 rebounds while Triggas had eight assists for Campo. Golden added 11 rebounds and three blocks on the Miramonte side.

The Lady Mats finished at 19-9.



Liza Katz presses the ball after getting a rebound Photo Jordan Fong

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The Upside, Downside and Flipside of Passion

By Linda U. Foley



Heather Wilson

Photo provided

Campolindo graduate Heather Wilson is the picture of health and femininity, her flowing blonde tresses caressing her shoulders. It's hard to believe that this woman once had a day job in banking while maintaining the weekend persona of "Crashing Girl," the moniker of a nationally recognized motocross icon.

Wilson began racing motorcycles, a field dominated by men, in her mid-twenties and was a ranking pro by the age of 30.

In the sporting arena, motocross is a demanding and rigorous competition. Arduous training, strength, mechanical know-how, and racing-smarts aside, there is the inherent, unavoidable burning and crashing. Having undergone dozens of surgeries for seriously debilitating injuries, often followed by months of rehab, Wilson never lost sight of her determination to end up on The Podium, to get back in the

saddle. Not satisfied with her top ranking amidst a field of male athletes, Wilson wrote marketing proposals to her sponsors to better promote their products, and herself as an athlete. Her marketing endeavors, along with her race performance record, gained her the attention and trust of some 23 sponsors.

Wilson also developed a dedicated fan base by focusing on the younger crowd, initially offering posters, "Heather bears," and stickers. Next came Heather Makeovers, which made kids' bikes look akin to her motorcycle. Make-up (no smudge mascara) and hair products followed.

She laughs, "Haven't come up with a non-smear lipstick yet."

Wilson's notoriety coupled with her desire to inspire youngsters to reach their potential, brought her into another arena -- motivational

speaking. Her speaking engagements, including Sister-to-Sister, a program helping junior high girls transition into high school, focused on self-esteem, pursuing personal passions, the evils of gossip, importance of long-lasting friendships, and 'making it' in a man's forum without compromising your femininity.

"I would ride onto the stage... decked out in all my gear... take off my helmet and shake out my hair. Not surprisingly, the girls always wanted to know first how my hair looked so good being scrunched under the helmet. Later on, they all wanted to know how I 'made it.'"

A tempestuous journey to achieving her goal of being one of the Big Three on the Podium has come at an ultimate price. Her latest injuries have ended her racing career, permanently. Nonetheless, Wilson's energy and confidence are contagious. Undaunted, she deems all her experiences as a learning process to other areas of success and self-fulfillment. Her current focus is to complete her degree at Saint Mary's in — no surprise — marketing, which eventually may include designing riding gear intended to enhance the female athlete.

There's no doubt, Wilson will succeed in whatever she undertakes and leave an indelible and feminine mark. The old song, "I am Woman, Hear me Roar," may have been written for someone exactly like Crashing Girl.

Born to Ski?



Taariq Saffouri races the Giant Slalom at Sugar Bowl

Photo Deven Hickingbotham

Taariq Saffouri started skiing when he was four years old. He joined the Alpine Meadows racing team, part of the Tahoe League, when he was eight. At age nine, he began to show real promise as a racer, finishing in 8th place in the 9-10 age group; a serious contender, competing against boys who live in the Tahoe area and ski daily. This year Taariq, who is now in 5th grade at Rheem Elementary School in Moraga, blew away the competition in the first race of the season,

taking 1st place in the Giant Slalom in the league's opening race at Sugar Bowl on January 10, 2009. He's currently ranked #2 in the Tahoe League 9-10 Boys division.

"Taariq demonstrated that he had a talent and passion for skiing at (an) early age," says his mom, Reem Saffouri. "He showed an interest in race teams when he was six; every time he saw the team training he would say, 'Mom, I want to join the race team.'"

Taariq placed third in the

Slalom race on Saturday, February 7, at Diamond Peak. He was also given the distinction of being the forerunner and opening the Far West race at Alpine Meadows; an honor, explains Reem Saffouri, because, "Far West is the equivalent to Orinda Aquatics (year-round swimming) in this area, whereas Tahoe League is like OMPA."

The next race for Taariq will be on Sunday, March 22, at Alpine Meadows.

L. Borrowman

Send sports stories and ideas to:
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SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Saint Mary's Opens Lacrosse with a Loss

By Mikaela Crowles



SMC freshman Juliet Munroe scores one of her three goals against Albany, recording her first SMC career hat-trick

The Saint Mary's women's lacrosse team dropped their season opener on February 15, losing to the Albany Great Danes, 14-9, in Moraga. The newly painted field included the initials JAM beside the Gaels bench, in memory of freshman teammate Jenny Martinez, who died mid-December in a car crash in Colorado.

On the swampy field in the torrential downpour of the Moraga Hills, the Gaels struggled with pass completion and dropped several balls. The Danes took advantage of Saint Mary's mistakes early and were the first to score, taking a quick lead 2-0 with goals from Kayla Best and Julie Bush.

Before the game, head coach Lauren Uhr said: "I think we're a lot faster this year. We've spent a lot of time in preseason working on stick work and footwork. I think it's really going to pay off."

And it did. The Gaels worked out their early jitters, improving their stick control as senior midfielder P.J. Hainley scored off an assist from

Maggie Schwab.

As the first half continued, the Gaels went back and forth with the Danes. Saint Mary's went into the break 5-7, advantage Albany, but still holding on to a chance to win.

Best earned her final goal of the game with 23:12 left, bumping the Albany lead 5-8. Hainley wasn't finished and answered with back-to-back goals cutting the deficit to 8-7 Albany with just 18:53 left on the clock.

In the remaining minutes of the game the Danes kept Hainley's touches to minimum, as she finished the game with four goals and two assists. The rain did not let up, and Saint Mary's execution suffered severely.

"Most of the girls were complaining about their hands being cold," said Coach Uhr. "I definitely think the weather affected us."

Albany continued their attack with four more goals, extending their lead to 12-7. Hainley attributed this turn of play to "a couple critical [Saint Mary's] drops, which changed the whole game's dynamic."

Photo Andy Scheck

Freshman Juliet Munroe scored with 3:36 left on the clock. Any hope for a Gaels comeback was squashed when Albany's Christine Grueniger scored her second goal of the game with 1:20 to go. Munroe snuck in a final goal for Saint Mary's with just 23 seconds left, giving the Gaels a 5-goal loss.

Coming off last year's 2-16 "building" season, the Gaels have high hopes for the 2009 season. Junior goalkeeper Hilary Gardner said, "We played 30 solid minutes. Now we just have to play 60."

Coach Uhr is confident the Gaels will perform well this season. She said they learned a lot about themselves in the first game, adding: "We really have to focus on defending inside out and taking the shoots we know we can make. Those are the things the will help us win."

The road may have started out rocky for these Lady Gaels, but Coach Uhr believes that Jenny's death has "brought the girls closer together and forced them to realize not to take anything for granted."

DFAL Wrestlers Advance to NCS



Miramonte's Sam Worth and Campolindo's Matt Kurkjian shake hands before battling

Pictured at Campolindo on February 21, Miramonte's Sam Worth battles Campolindo's Matt Kurkjian at 135 pounds, in the only local match-up of the DFAL Championship final rounds. Worth won by decision, 7-1, but both wrestlers were among the 17 local wrestlers who advanced to the NCS Championship, held at Newark Memorial High School last weekend, by placing top three DFAL in their weight class. These included (by school):

- Acalanes: O'Herin (1st-160), Rule (1st-215), Rudin (2nd-140), Royster (2nd-189),
- Campo: Jackson (1st-125), Flowers (2nd-119), Toupin (2nd-130), Kurkjian (2nd-135), Robinson (2nd-145), Caspillo (3rd-103), Vehar (3rd-160), Angelides (3rd-189) and Field (3rd-285).
- Miramonte: Worth (1st-135), Ericson (2nd-152), Pummer (2nd-215), Birss (3rd-140)

Photo Andy Wandesforde

SMC Men's Basketball Wraps Up 2nd Place In WCC

The Saint Mary's men defeated Loyola Marymount 68-55 last Saturday evening to finish second in the West Coast Conference (WCC) standings. The Gaels' next stop is the WCC Tournament in Las Vegas on Sunday, March 8.

Four Gaels hit double-digits in

the win. Carlin Hughes paced the Gaels with 16 points, as he finished the game shooting 6-of-12 overall, while making four 3-pointers. Hughes also added six rebounds and a game-high five assists in his final regular season game as a Gael.

Senior Diamon Simpson had

15 points and a game-high 12 rebounds, while Wayne Hunter and Omar Samhan had 11 and 10 points respectively. Samhan finished the game with 10 points and 10 rebounds for his 12th double-double of the season and 19th of his career.

L. Borrowman



The Campolindo Junior Varsity Girls won the DFAL championship on Friday, February 20, beating Acalanes 58 - 40. The JV girls are coached by Scott Anderson and Bob Francis. The players are: Krissy Lukins, Meghan Nelson (co-captain), Annelise Ito, Erin Nakahara, Allison Shulenberg, Ruthie Shapiro (co-captain), Rachel Kaufman, Katie MacLeod, Adrienne Moore, and Tessa Cunha (two freshman players, at left, Nicole Forbes and Melissa McCue, joined in the final victory game)

Submitted by Tina Brier

Communication – A Key to Finding the Right Collegiate Athletic Program

By Chris Strausser, Founder of Getting in Edu

Editor's note: Lafayette resident Chris Strausser's new venture, Getting in Edu, focuses on providing high school student athletes and their parents direct access to the expert advice of today's college coaches and admissions officers. Lamorinda Weekly asked Strausser to share collective insight from his interviews with these experts about the importance of communication to the successful transition from high school to college athlete. For more info, go to GettingInEdu.com.

A big myth of collegiate athlete recruiting is that the process starts on July 1st of an athlete's senior year. But wait until then to start thinking about collegiate opportunities, and expect disappointment.

Bret Simon, head coach of the Stanford men's soccer team offers this warning to high school athletes: "Waiting to be discovered is one of the most common mistakes high school student-athletes make today."

By July 1st of their senior year many top athletes have already made verbal commitments to athletic programs. That's because successful communication between athletes and collegiate programs starts much earlier. The key is that contact is initiated by the athlete, conversation that's legal because the NCAA allows coaches to return emails, speak on the phone (with restrictions), and meet during unofficial campus visits.

That's not to say that coaches aren't looking for top athletes before they hear from them. They are looking – often at younger players. Today's coaches say they are doing more research, watching more high school sophomores compete, trying to find talent before other coaches do. But time and recruiting funds are limited. Top athletes have choices. It's a better allocation of resources, coaches say, to focus on athletes who genuinely want to go to their particular school. Even coaches with travel budgets that allow them to attend showcase tournaments and camps often focus only on those kids that have already expressed interest in their school and athletic program.

So how does an athlete make that early contact? Email works best. But know -- what you write, questions you ask, even grammar -- it all makes a difference. And here's the challenge -- there are no specific rules. Each school and coach is different. The best advice? Be genuine. Study that school's programs. Ask

pertinent questions. Don't pester. And, if there's a video of the athlete, ask before sending.

Some coaches only want to be sent a link to a YouTube video clip. Others, like Cathy Swezey, head coach of the Vanderbilt women's lacrosse team, don't look at videos at all because, says Swezey, they don't tell you how coachable a kid is, how they respond to mistakes, and what kind of teammate they are.

If the biggest mistake a high school athlete can make is waiting to be discovered, the biggest mistake his or her parent can make is narrowing the search focus.

"Too many parents make scholarship (money) the highest priority, and put too much pressure on their child to focus on the scholarship schools," says Jenny McDowell, head coach of the 2008 National Champion Emory women's volleyball team.

The problem, coaches and admissions personnel say, is that narrowing that focus ignores the student's needs -- what's the best educational, social and geographic fit. All things that make college a successful overall experience.

And then there are the parents who over-manage the process, giving decision makers the wrong impression.

Kevin Dyerly, Director of Admission at Whitman College says: "Nothing drives admissions officers more nuts than hearing from parents the word 'we.' Each year we hear from parents, 'We did the application,' 'we'll send the common application supplement,' and 'we'd like to set-up an interview.' Of course, this doesn't help or reflect well on the child."

And it's not only admissions officers who notice.

Coaches coach athletes, not their parents. They want athletes who are passionate about their sport, fully committed to what a particular school's sports program has to offer.

It doesn't matter whether Mom or Dad are die-hard alums.

Says Felix Mercado, head water polo coach at Brown University: "Too many parents put their interests ahead of their child's. We, as coaches, usually see through it. I can tell the kid who is genuinely excited about Brown from the one who is considering it because their parents want them to."

Successful early communication? It begins with honest discussion between parent and athlete, and involves the college coach sooner than you might think.

Avoid disappointment. Start those conversations now.

Send sports stories and ideas to: sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com or call 925-377-0977

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Rugby Can Help Meet College Goals

Written with information provided by Lamorinda Rugby



Zack Purdy, lifted by Cole Huntley (front) and David Eastman, wins this "line out," in Lamo Rugby's February win against De La Salle, 51-0

Photo by Karen Drinkwater

Throughout high school, Miramonte's Zack Purdy and Campolindo's Ty Fach, now seniors, battled on the football field. Then at football season's end, they joined forces, playing together for the Lamorinda Rugby Field Club (Lamo Rugby), the largest rugby club in the United States.

Both athletes chose their intended collegiate sport based on love of the game—rugby. But that choice, says Lamo Rugby president Tony McKenzie, can help achieve college goals.

Last year, 12 Lamo Rugby players joined college rugby programs. Six now play rugby for Cal, a team that's won 24 of the last 28 NCAA national championships. Two play for Saint Mary's, a program consistently ranked top 10 nationally.

"These kids are getting the opportunity to get into great schools that they probably would not be able

to attend without their rugby credentials," says McKenzie.

Purdy joined Lamo Rugby just three seasons ago to take a break from varsity basketball and water polo.

Says Purdy: "I loved rugby immediately. It is a sport of continuous action and hitting that is just made for me. I love the fact that everyone gets to run the ball as well as play both offense and defense."

Ty Fach, Lamo Rugby's player president, received his first rugby ball at nine while visiting England, where rugby has near national sport status (behind cricket). He was an instant fan. A few years later, Fach discovered that John Dixon, an MOL coach, was also involved with Lamo Rugby's youth program. Fach signed up and, according to family lore, "never looked back."

Rugby is one of the oldest collegiate sports in the United States,

dating locally to 1882 at Cal and 1888 at SMC, whose website calls it a game of "elegant violence." Players hit and tackle hard, like football, but without pads and helmets.

Purdy and Fach got a taste of rugby's international popularity last summer on a Lamo Rugby trip to New Zealand, where rugby is the national sport and professional games are often played in filled-to-capacity stadiums that rival the American pro football experience.

"The first professional Super 14 Rugby game that we saw in Auckland was spectacular," said Fach. "I love the speed and power of the game. It is amazing how big and athletic those pro rugby players are."

Lamo Rugby's 350 members aren't all super-sized. But there are speed players like Campo's "Rocket" Rodriguez and Las Lomas star running back Chase Herring who fill out the 15-man varsity team.

Lamo Rugby doesn't make cuts, says McKenzie, even for high school players. Everyone plays some. How much depends on experience and capability. Kids as young as 1st grade play in youth leagues.

"Rugby is a game for all," says McKenzie.

Fach is waiting to hear from engineering programs and plans to play rugby in college.

Purdy has verbally committed to Cal's rugby program, along with Lamo Rugby teammate Cole Huntley, a former fullback on San Ramon Valley's football team.

In college, rugby is typically a club sport, with few scholarship opportunities nationwide. Cal rugby player families pay tuition, though they can access the same financial aid opportunities as any Cal student. At Cal, rugby players live in the athlete dorm and can access the school's athletic department advantages, including personal academic tutors.

And then there's the key to that an all-important door—admissions department attention.

In today's competitive college environment, that's arguably a game-winning goal.

For more rugby information, go to lamorugby.com

RSF0x

SPORTS

LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Bishop O'Dowd Falls to Local Champs in Boys and Girls NCS Soccer Finals

Dons and Lady Mats Take Section Titles



The Acalanes Dons had been ranked #2 going into Saturday's game against #1 Bishop O'Dowd, but a scoreless game with two overtime periods ended in a 5-3 victory by the Dons after a penalty kick fest. Goalie Logan Spittler had 6 saves, while Reuben Komisar, Nate Sonnenthal, Coleman Ruffin, Sasha Chalak and Nic Carrillo nailed penalty kicks.

(Pictured: Shasha Chalak #17, playing at home in January)

Photo Doug Kohen



The Lady Mats captured the NCS title last Saturday as the team, ranked #2, defeated the top-seed Bishop O'Dowd Dragons 4-0. A hat-trick by junior forward McKenna deBack (pictured in an earlier game) and an early point by senior Elaine Tanski brought the Mats their second straight section title.

Photo Robert Johnson

For up to date schedules see: www.smcgaels.com			
Home Games	Time	Event	Opponent
Fri, March 6	2:00 PM	Baseball	Sacramento
	3:00 PM	Men's Tennis	Santa Clara
	4:00 PM	Women's Lacrosse	Stanford
Sat, March 7	1:00 PM	Baseball	Sacramento
Mon, March 9	2:00 PM	Women's Tennis	Penn
Wed, March 11	3:00 PM	Men's Tennis	Alabama-Birmingham
Thurs, March 12	1:00 PM	Softball	Northern Illinois
	3:00 PM	Softball	Northern Illinois
	3:30 PM	Women's Lacrosse	Robert Morris
Fri, March 13	3:00 PM	Baseball	UC Santa Barbara
Sat, March 14	11:00 AM	Baseball	UC Santa Barbara
	2:30 PM	Baseball	UC Santa Barbara
Sun, March 15	1:00 PM	Baseball	UC Santa Barbara
Tue, March 17	2:00 PM	Softball	Princeton
	3:00 PM	Baseball	Cornell
Wed, March 18	1:00 PM	Softball	Canisius
	3:00 PM	Baseball	Cornell
	3:00 PM	Women's Lacrosse	Colgate
	3:00 PM	Men's Tennis	Northern Colorado
	3:00 PM	Baseball	Cornell
Fri, March 20	3:00 PM	Softball- Invitational	Central Connecticut
Sat, March 21	11:00 AM	Women's Tennis	Boise State

VARSITY HOME GAME Calendar ••• High School Varsity @ Home •••			
Wednesday, March 4	Tuesday, March 10	Monday, March 16	Thursday, March 19
Boys Basketball – NCS Semi-final Piner @ Miramonte, 7:30pm Softball Albany @ Acalanes, 3:30pm Boys Lacrosse Livermore @ Campolindo, 7pm	Boys Tennis Miramonte @ Acalanes, 3pm Boys Lacrosse Clayton Valley @ Campolindo, 7pm De La Salle @ Miramonte, 7pm Girls Lacrosse San Ramon Valley @ Acalanes, 7pm	Baseball El Cerrito @ Acalanes, 4pm Tuesday, March 17 Boys Tennis Las Lomas @ Campolindo, 3pm Dougherty Valley @ Miramonte, 3pm Softball Acalanes @ Campolindo, 4pm (Scrimmage) Boys Lacrosse Campolindo @ Miramonte, 7pm Girls Lacrosse Las Lomas @ Acalanes, 7pm Miramonte @ Campolindo 7pm	Boys Tennis Dougherty Valley @ Acalanes, 3:30pm Softball Dublin @ Campolindo, 4pm
Thursday, March 5 Boys Tennis Campolindo @ Miramonte, 3pm	Thursday, March 12 Boys Lacrosse San Rafael @ Campolindo, 7pm	Wednesday, March 18 Baseball Washington High @ Campolindo, 3:30pm Boys Volleyball Campolindo @ Miramonte, 6pm Girls Lacrosse Acalanes @ Miramonte, 7pm	Friday, March 20 Baseball Albany @ Acalanes, 3:30pm Swimming/Diving Dougherty Valley @ Acalanes, 3:45pm Boys Lacrosse Miramonte @ Acalanes, 7pm Boys Volleyball Miramonte @ Acalanes, 6pm
Friday, March 6 Baseball College Park @ Acalanes, 3:30pm Swimming/Diving Dublin @ Acalanes, 3:45pm Girls Lacrosse Monte Vista @ Acalanes, 5:30pm	Friday, March 13 Baseball Riordon @ Campolino, 3:30pm Swimming/Diving Dougherty Valley @ Miramonte, 3:45pm Boys Lacrosse Amador Valley @ Miramonte, 7pm Girls Lacrosse Davis @ Acalanes, 7pm		
Saturday, March 7 Girls Basketball – NCS Championship See cifncs.org for details Boys Basketball – NCS Championship See cifncs.org for details			

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