

Independent, locally owned and operated!

# LAMORINDA WEEKLY

Need to contact us? 925.377.0977

**COME CELEBRATE THE 5TH ANNUAL SUMMER WINE FESTIVAL**  
 AUGUST 16  
 2-5P.M.  
 SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE CAMPUS  
 SAINT MARY'S COLLEGE of CALIFORNIA  
 See Events Calendar page 15 for more info

Delivered bi-weekly to all Lamorinda homes & businesses

**\$0.00**

Volume 03 Issue 11

read it online: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com)

Wednesday, August 5, 2009



Moraga Council Member Howard Harpham (in white), Tim Freeman of Moraga Valley Kiwanis (in blue) Photos Andy Scheck



Boy Scout Alec and mom Linda Viera of Danville

## A Pear for the Pickin'



### LAMORINDA WEEKLY

Town News	2, 3, 4
Life in Lamorinda	5, 7, 8, 9
Public Forum	6
Community Service	9
Real Estate	10
Business	11
Schools	12, 13
Not to be Missed	14, 15
<b>HOW TO CONTACT US</b>	14
In the Back Yard	16
Dining	17
Sports	18, 19
Classified	18
Shop Orinda	20

#### This Week Read About:

Gassed Out	2
Retail-less at Rheem	3
Council Talks Revenue	4
Sperling, Falk, Wanken in Public Forum	6
Ehrenhaft Exhibit	7
Locally Grown Author Returns	8
Got Fruit?	9
Government Loans for Small Businesses	11
Orinda's Carpentry Camp	12
West Diablo Valley All-Stars	18

Keep those photos coming! This week's issue features several great pictures submitted by members of the Lamorinda community. If you have a photo to share with us, please send it to [pictures@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:pictures@lamorindaweekly.com).

"Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Youth Action Committee, Kiwanis, National Charity League, a few dogs...no cats," and many others came to help harvest some of Moraga's glorious pears on August 1st and 2nd, according to Rich Holden of the Moraga Park Foundation. Pear harvesters came from all over the East Bay to collect the golden goodies for donation to the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

The Moraga Park Foundation has been coordinating the pear harvest for eleven years. Some volunteers, such as Kiwanian Tim Freeman, have been loyal harvesters since the beginning. As it turns out, Moraga Council Member Howard Harpham also wields a mean pear-picker. From kids to seniors, everyone appeared to enjoy the annual harvest under near-perfect skies.

Advertising

Holden says that at one time some of the harvested fruit was saved to make pies for the annual Pear Festival, but it was difficult to keep the pears in good shape for the fall event which is held near the end of September. Although some of us over-40s have difficulty understanding how a pear shape could be hard to maintain, these days Nation's supplies the pies for the Festival and all the pears go to the Food Bank.

Karen Reed, who coordinated this year's event with Holden, estimates that about 20% of the volunteers are from Moraga. The Food Bank recruits many pickers, who often come to fulfill community service requirements in the fresh air and camaraderie of the orchard.

Most of the pears picked over the weekend grow on property belonging to the Moraga School District at

the corner of Canyon and Camino Pablo. A few volunteers joined the men's group from St. Monica's Catholic Church to harvest the trees on the church's property, and several private homes in the neighborhood offered the fruit from their trees as well.

Over 10,000 pounds of pears will be passed along to those in need by the Food Bank.

The Pear Festival will be held at the Moraga Commons Park on September 26. This reporter suspects that those Pear Pies may be responsible for the aforementioned shape—if you haven't tried one, you don't know what you're missing.

L.Borrowman/W.Scheck

LAFAYETTE • MORAGA • ORINDA

## ELENA HOOD

REAL ESTATE GROUP

CALL ONE OF LAMORINDA'S MOST SUCCESSFUL TEAMS FOR ANY OF YOUR REAL ESTATE NEEDS!

(925)254-3030 [WWW.ORINDA.COM](http://WWW.ORINDA.COM)

**COLDWELL BANKER**

### Moraga Road, Closed Again in Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson

Moraga Road will be closed to all traffic on Wednesday, August 19 from 8:30 – 4:30 for slurry sealing from Rimrock Road to Via Granada at the Lafayette city limits. Stanley Boulevard and Camino Diablo will also be repaired as part of this project, but will remain open. For drivers not exactly sure where tiny Rimrock Road is, this street is smack dab on the first sweeping curve when you're heading from Lafayette to Moraga, past Silver Springs Road and Old Jonas Hill Road. Residents should plan to use alternative routes between Lafayette and Moraga on that day.

This must seem like déjà vu all over again for residents. While it feels like only yesterday this very same thoroughfare was under construction, that was actually last year and the responsible party was EBMUD, replacing aging water pipes. According to Matt Luttrupp, Associate Engineer with the City of Lafayette, EBMUD patched the portion where the new pipes were installed, but didn't address failed sections of the roadway. This project repairs the entire road and will ultimately prolong its life. ... continued on page 8

### Pension Issues Plague the MOFD

By Andrea A. Firth

A spotlight has been shining on the small, semi-rural communities of Orinda and Moraga over the issues surrounding the retirement of the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Chief, Pete Nowicki. Residents have decried the amount of the Chief's pension, the MOFD Board has defended its actions as appropriate and by the book, and the regional and national media have latched onto Nowicki characterizing him as an example of a highly paid retiree from the public sector who was able to "spike" or boost his pension payout.

At question is the process that led to Nowicki's pension benefit of \$241,000 per year for life. Nowicki had been earning \$186,000 a year before his retirement at the end of January. His retirement benefit was augmented with accrued vacation, vacation buy-back hours, and purchased service credits—all legitimate additions under the rules of the retirement program according to both Nowicki and the Board. (The complexities of the county retirement system in which the MOFD participates are beyond the scope of this article. Some of the basics are outlined in the sidebar.) ... continued on page 7

### A Hidden Gem in the Orinda Hills



By Andrea A. Firth

As you walk down the steps alongside hand-laid stone walls to the entrance of the Oak Springs Pool, it is like taking steps back in time. The tear-drop shaped pool, nestled against an ivy-covered hillside and surrounded by oak trees, looks much the same today as it did 80 years ago when the natural spring on the hill was tapped to create the neighborhood pool. Read on page 4

### Wine at Saint Mary's, The Celebration Continues



By Sophie Braccini

On August 16, Saint Mary's College will celebrate local wines at their fifth Wine Festival. The elegant event will be held in the air-conditioned Soda Center and is limited to 500 people. The occasion will be both festive and educational, and attendees will be able to taste the wines of and speak with more than 25 different local winemakers about their vocation and techniques. Read on page 6

Mailed and delivered to 24,200 homes and businesses in Lamorinda.

PSRRT STD  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
 AD-VANTAGE

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