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Volume 03 Issue 11

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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

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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.

"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.

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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

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Lafayette

Lamorinda Community

Lafayette

Calendar

City Council 7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room
500 St Mary's Road
Monday, August 10

Planning Comm. 7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room
500 St Mary's Road
Thursday, August 20
August 6 cancelled

Design Review 7pm
Community Center, Manzanita Room
500 St Mary's Road
Tuesday, August 11

Senior Services 3:00pm
Community Center, Alder Room
500 St Mary's Road
Thursday, July 23

City of Lafayette:
<http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us>

Chamber of Commerce:
<http://www.lafayettechamber.org>



The Speeder and the Bird, 7/10/09 – A Rancho View Road resident called police to report that he'd been standing at the road when a neighbor stopped her car and threw a rock at his right foot. When police arrived, they learned the neighbors have a history of reciprocal offenses. The man lacks appreciation for the rate of speed at which the woman appears to travel down Rancho View Road and indicates this regularly by displaying his middle finger to her when she speeds by. On this particular day, Speeder had three other people in her car. It is possible that her passengers gave her the courage she needed to stop and exchange words with Bird Man. Speeder insisted that she did not throw a rock at Bird Man and there was no visible injury to his foot.

Tag Swapping is Not Acceptable, 7/12/09 – Lafayette Police routinely ran the plates of a Mitsubishi Eclipse traveling on East Bound 24 at Pleasant Hill Road. It turned out the tags were registered to a truck and the tags were expired. The officer believed the Eclipse may have been stolen so pulled it over and called for back-up. It turned out that the Eclipse driver owned both cars and had switched the plate from the truck to the Eclipse. The driver was cited and released at the scene.

Improper Waste Disposal, 7/13/09 – A S. Lucille Lane resident called police to complain that a neighbor was disposing of her yard waste by flinging it over the fence of the complainant. The physical description of the waste is not known.

Armed Robbery, 7/15/09 – Two unknown suspects entered the Hank & Frank bicycle store on Mt. Diablo Boulevard and robbed five people and the store register. The suspects were dressed in black hooded sweatshirts with the hoods tightly pulled. They were also wearing black sunglasses and gloves. One suspect carried a semi-automatic handgun. After taking \$1,165 in cash, the suspects fled in a late 1990s gold Chevrolet Tahoe.

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Hit Hard and Gassed Out in Lafayette

By Glenn Nosse



Construction site on the corner of Brown Ave. and Mt. Diablo Blvd. Photo Glenn Nosse

When John Ingram surveyed the gaping craters that up to two weeks ago held thousands of gallons of gasoline, he said, "I'll just have to tell my children the place got hit by an asteroid."

Ingram has operated the Lafayette station since 1977, located at the corner of Brown Ave. and Mt. Diablo Blvd. After years of attempting to compete with franchisees he has relinquished his claim as the last independent gasoline dealer in Lafayette. "Sad to see the big guys take over... I was unable to compete with their volume and prices. The tanks were still new and not leaking," said Ingram.

Ingram's Trans Am station began as an Atlantic Richfield station, "The one with the Red Flying horse," he proudly recalls. When the holes are backfilled, his station will join other independents like the Olympic station on the west end of town that was demolished and now stands as an empty lot.

Despite being forced out as a dealer, Ingram is able to look at the positive side. He says he will continue to operate Trans Am as a repair facility, expressing confidence in an economic rebound to the eastern commercial district of Lafayette.

A block away, the vacated Marx Brothers Motors, next to defunct Butler Conte Dodge, remains abandoned. Glenda Warmoth, an

assistant planner with the City of Lafayette, says the Marx Brothers land is under consideration for a forty-six unit, senior apartment complex to be owned and operated by Eden Housing. With construction scheduled for January, 2010, "It's too early to tell if the car repair will blend with future projects in the area," said Warmoth.

Across from the station, the newly remodeled Forge shopping complex is ready for tenants. "I would like to know what becomes of that gas station property," says Forge owner Tony Lukazewski, "Right now, it's been a lot of noise." Lukazewski hopes to attract a more upscale and vibrant crowd much like that of the redeveloped west end.

Ingram said his Trans Am gas station is the oldest station in Lafayette, built in 1922. He realistically reflects how his industry, like the economy, has changed since he originally opened. "I can remember an old blacksmith working behind the current Shell station down the street. You could ride down Mt. Diablo and get your horse shoe-ed. That was only thirty years ago."

Work on Ingram's site continues, paving over what once were the tanks and pumps. The repair shop remains open during the demolition. Ingram recalls the end of an era saying, "Just, no gas."

Trial Dates of Farmers' Market Approved

By Cathy Tyson

After much discussion the Lafayette Certified Farmers' Market got the official thumbs up for just three trial days, down from the originally proposed five. Look for some street closures around Plaza Park on three Thursdays in September - 3, 10, 17 from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Although a number of sites were evaluated, City Council Members chose Plaza Park as the best location to enhance a sense of community and for a potential multiplier effect; for every dollar spent at the market, shoppers spend additional dollars at nearby establishments - perhaps getting a haircut at the adjacent barber shop, picking up some dog food, or grabbing dinner.

Despite vocal community support, on-going concerns about parking lingered. Members of Sustainable Lafayette and Acalanes students volunteered to be crossing guards and monitor parking. One supporter said, "We do believe it will strengthen the community and you can make some good money from parking meters." Another enthusiastically chimed in, "It's high time! Wake up guys!" Noting the proximity of Chateau Lafayette, another supporter said, "I believe the centralized location is essential for seniors to walk there."

Council Member Anduri said it's a "no-brainer" and was "amazed at the set of correspondence" the Council received - 63 letters in support of the Market. Other members weren't quite so sure; Council Member Carol Federighi said, "It's an interesting balancing act, but I'm willing to go along with a test." Council Member Mike Anderson, while noting he supports the market said, "I'm afraid it could be a disaster" and "We may regret it."

An independent evaluation will occur after the trial program to see if future markets are warranted. At that time, location issues or a potential change in venue can be addressed.

Library Hosts First Ever Chess Tournament

By Cathy Tyson

Several residents answered the call to be part of the Lafayette Library's first ever Chess Tournament on July 25. This free event for players of all skill levels and ages drew many of the "regulars" from the library's Chess Club that meets once a month along with a handful of newcomers.

Rebekah Brainich, Library Assistant, Teen Services, said that although no future tournaments are scheduled at the moment, "it was popular enough that we probably will do it again soon."

The tournament couldn't have come to fruition without the help of Farhad Azimzadeh, a former professor at Lamar University with a doctorate in Civil Engineering. Every third Saturday of the month, he volunteers his time to teach chess to beginning and intermediate players as well as offer homework help at the library.

"When I moved to Moraga about 10 years ago, I helped some children at the Moraga Commons to play chess as teams. I have a dream of creating local chess teams, who can explain their ideas to their teammates in a short amount of time. I would like to add more collaboration and teamwork to the game of chess," said Azimzadeh, who learned to play at the age of twelve.

About five years ago he started the chess program at the Lafayette Library, and has continued to think strategically with ambitious future plans. "I would like to grow my tutoring/mentoring help into a community-based tuition-free University. So when I retire in next 10-15 years, I have my teaching hobby lined up for me. The community-based tuition-free University that I have in mind will be a hybrid of on-line and on-land University with no fees, focusing on the needs of the community."

Free chess instruction for beginning through intermediate players is offered every third Saturday of the month from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m. on a drop in basis. Azimzadeh also gives homework help on the third Saturday of every month from 3:00 - 4:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome. For more information, call the Lafayette Library at (925) 283-3872.

Total Eclipse Coming to Plaza Park

By Cathy Tyson

Not of the celestial kind. Rock the Plaza is making its 2009 debut on Friday August 14 at Plaza Park with the band Total Eclipse, performing classics from the 1970's and 1980's. This is a great opportunity to come together with friends, neighbors and co-workers, pop down on the grass, enjoy some great music, share a bite to eat and reminisce about the return of fashionable checkerboard Vans sneakers. Songs like "Brown Eyed Girl" and "Bad Case (of lovin' you)" never go out of style, and who knew the sneakers would be trendy once again for the younger set. Maybe everything old really is new again.

The following Friday, August 21, will feature the ever popular Spazmatics "Nerds that rock." Closing the series on August 28 is The Synthetics.

For the first time ever, a very special, very mysterious (read: we couldn't find out who) local teen band will be performing at 5:30, prior to the headliner at 6:00. Hungry listeners can pack a picnic or pick up some delicious food and drink from the Lafayette Rotary Club on site.

These three free concerts are sponsored by The Chamber of Commerce, the City of Lafayette and Red House Studios, Cedric Chang Design, Minuteman Press of Lafayette and others.

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| Calendar | |
| Town Council | 7:30pm |
| Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School 1010 Camino Pablo none in August | |
| Planning Comm. | 7:30pm |
| Moraga Library 1500 Saint Marys Rd Monday, August 17 | |
| Design Review | 7:30pm |
| Moraga Library 1500 Saint Marys Rd Monday, August 10 | |
| Park & Rec | 7:30pm |
| Hacienda, Mosaic Room 2100 Donald Drive Tuesday, August 18 <small>(check back if canceled)</small> | |
| Liaison | 8:00am |
| Fire Station 1280 Moraga Way Friday, September 11 | |
| Town of Moraga online: http://www.ci.moraga.ca.us | |
| Chamber of Commerce: http://www.moragachamber.org | |



False alarm frenzy, from 7/21/09 – 7/27/09 the Moraga Press Log identified nine incidents of false alarms, all at different locations, during a very short timeframe. Not one was for an actual bad guy trying to break in. Incidents ranged from a technician working on a Bank of America ATM machine, to a home on Birchwood Drive, to a home on Paseo del Rio and beyond. "MPD officers conducted an exterior perimeter check with negative results. There were no signs of forced entry" is the usual explanation. For the most part, it really is safe here in Mo-town.

Firework gone wrong, 7/26/09 An 11-year-old boy from Sanders Drive severely injured his left thumb and forefinger while checking on a homemade firework that he thought was a dud. The subject had apparently put the powder residue from a sparkler into a metal CO2 cartridge, wrapped it in duct tape, inserted a fuse and lit it. After waiting a couple of seconds for it to go off, the young man bent down to pick it up - when it exploded. He was transported to Children's Hospital in Oakland.

D.U.I., 7/23/09 Police conducted a welfare check on the driver of a vehicle parked on Moraga Road, south of Hansen Court at 3:30 in the morning. The car had a fair amount of damage to the driver's side and, according to the police report, "appeared to have recently been in an accident." Cops noticed the smell of alcoholic beverages emanating from the interior of the vehicle. Oddly enough the driver flunked a field sobriety test, and was arrested. The nose knows.

Panty theft, 7/22/09 A caller reported to the police department that her brassier and a pair of panties were removed from her suitcase while on a recent trip. The reporting person stated that she believes the theft happened during her layover at the Detroit airport, and that they were worth approximately \$300. The report was requested to document the incident for insurance purposes. Nothing wrong with quality undies, perhaps the bra had platinum underwire?

Dogs Will Play...For Now

By Sophie Braccini



Dog supporters came with signs and T-shirts to advocate their cause Photo Sophie Braccini

On Wednesday, July 22, the Moraga Town Council determined that a dog park in which off-leash canines and other visitors can be physically separate is the long term solution in Moraga. In the interim, while this concept is studied and eventually implemented, the Council adopted a modified ordinance that clarifies the hours for off-leash activities at Rancho Laguna Park, but does not limit dogs' access to any area except the parking lot.

The auditorium at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School was filled with dog supporters on the night of the meeting. Some were wearing custom

bright blue t-shirts reading "Rancho Laguna Dogs." Most favored leaving Rancho Laguna as is, a place where dogs can roam off-leash at certain times of the day.

Lamorinda residents who have been enjoying the park for years lined up to convey the importance of the park in their lives and that of their canine companions. "This is the only place I can go with my dog," said Kay Biondo, a senior Orinda resident who added that she shops in Moraga now that she brings her dog to the park. "This is the happiest place on earth," stated Nancy Bluford, also an Orinda resident, ... continued on page 8

More Stores Closing in the Rheem Center

By Sophie Braccini

On September 20th Blockbuster will close its Rheem Center store and transfer most of its employees to its Lafayette location. Frank Chao has finally gave back the keys for Fudge Alley to Kimco Realty Corporation, owner of the Rheem Shopping Center. Is it just the bad economy or is there a problem at this Center?

Randy Hargrove, from Corporate Communications at Blockbuster, indicated that the traffic pattern at the Rheem Center had changed over the past two years, with many stores closing. Their lease is up on September 23, and the company was not able to negotiate a new agreement with the Center's management. They hope that most of their customers will go to Lafayette to get their movies or order by mail or online.

This is not great news for the Moraga's sales tax revenue income. Moraga Town Manager Michael Segrest is concerned about the situation; he has been engaged in discussions with Kimco since his

arrival in Moraga, trying to gage their intentions and determine what the town can do to help the dynamic. "I have been talking to Kimco and encourage them to fill the vacant spaces," said Segrest, "they mentioned that the center they had bought needed repairs and updates, and that they would like to see improvement in the signage policy of the town." According to Larry Tessler, Vice-President of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce and member of the Revenue Enhancement Committee, Moraga used to sustain its two vibrant shopping centers, even with a smaller population than exists today. "What happened is that Walnut Creek and Lafayette came alive commercially," says Tessler, "those two cities have developed their commercial potential. They are better positioned geographically than Moraga is to attract the nearby population. As a result, business in Moraga has been drawn away from the town."

The owner of the Moraga Center, Joan Bruzzone, has her own explanation for the town's economic difficulties. ... continued on page 5

Fire Races Across Moraga Hillside

By Sophie Braccini and Lee Borrowman



Fighting the fire from above and on the ground Photo Bob Johnson

A wildfire burned five acres of the hillside behind the Rheem Center in Moraga late in the afternoon of Sunday, July 26. Crews from Contra Costa County Fire and Cal Fire came in aid of the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD). The fire was brought

under control in an hour. The cause of the fire was originally considered suspicious; MOFD Battalion Chief Darrell Lee and Moraga Police Chief Robert Priebe collaborated in the investigation. ... continued on page 10

Mail Carrier Honored

Submitted by Kathe Foster



Anne Blount Photo provided

Many friends living in the Moraga Country Club (MCC) community gathered on Friday, July 31st to honor Anne Blount, who has delivered the mail in the area for over 35 years. A reception was held at the MCC pool area to recognize the retirement of their long time postal delivery lady.

A certificate of appreciation from the neighborhood group stated: "Anne Blount, for over three decades you have done much more

than deliver the mail. You have brought a friendly smile, a cheerful greeting and enjoyable conversation on your daily visits. We wish you happy retirement and many years of good health and happiness. From Friends and Neighbors of Moraga Country Club."

Miss Blount officially retired from the U.S. Postal Service on July 30. She plans to move to Oregon to care for her horses, which have been a long time interest.

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-Cassie Kocher, Nursery Director and St. Mary's student

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Contemporary.....10:30am

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REVERB (youth).....7pm
Friday Night:
BLAST! Kids Club.....6pm

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-Mo and Ann Forslund, Members

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Look for the Fall Activity Guide in your mailbox this weekend! Classes begin September 8th.

Orinda

Lamorinda Community

Orinda

Calendar

City Council 7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way
Tuesday, August 18

Planning Comm. 7pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way
Tuesday, August 11

Historic Landmarks Comm. 3pm
Gallery Room, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way
Tuesday, August 25

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

City of Orinda:
<http://www.cityoforinda.org>
• all meeting notes
• calendar updates

Chamber of Commerce:
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• local businesses
• upcoming events

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Orinda's Council Talks Revenues and Investments

By Andrea A. Firth
Orinda stands to lose just over \$400,000 in property tax revenue during this fiscal year if the State "borrows" the full eight percent of the Proposition 1A tax grab outlined in the recently passed budget. Orinda's Finance Advisory Committee will be recommending to the Council that it use reserves to cover the shortfall when they weigh in on this at the mid-year budget review, which should occur in January, according to Administrative and Financial Services Director Beverly

Marshall. The State is required to pay back the cities and counties within three years, however the specific terms of the repayment and the interest rate to be paid are unknown at this point. Orinda maintains a minimum of \$5 million in reserves. The State's attempt to take the Highway Users Tax, or gas tax, was not included in the final budget. The gas tax represents \$265,000 a year to the City and is designated for infrastructure projects. Although tax revenue will decline through the State's "borrowing," property tax growth in Orinda looks to be better than expected. The City's current budget conservatively includes a property tax growth rate of 1.6%. According to the County Assessor's report to the Board of Supervisors, the assessed value in Orinda has increased by 5.39%. At the most recent City Council meeting, Marshall recommended to the Council that a larger, but still conservative,

factor of 3% growth be incorporated at the mid-year budget review. At this same meeting, the City Council members also discussed the City's investment policies citing some concern over the fact that the City has two investments with the fledgling CIT Group, which represent \$750,000 combined. Mayor Sue Severson and Council Member Steve Glazer both expressed the need to revise the City's investment policies to ensure greater diversification, noting their surprise that the City had recently made a second investment in General Electric. Bob Thompson, a member of the Finance Advisory Committee, was on hand at the meeting and advised the Council to take a wait and see approach to the CIT Group situation. He also explained that the Finance Committee was in the process of reviewing the investment approach and that a revised policy would be coming to the Council for review in the fall.



Felony vandalism, 7/28/09 Someone used an unknown object to cause damage to the front and rear driver's side of a police vehicle while it was parked unattended on Highland Road between 7/28 and 7/29. Estimated damage \$500. Unbelievable, clearly the culprit is unaware of budget cuts.

Car vandalism, 7/28/09 Sometime during the night an unknown suspect smashed the front right passenger window of a car parked in an Overhill Road carport directly adjacent to the house. The owner said he didn't hear or see anything during the night. Perhaps someone had green envy and wanted to trash this fairly new Toyota Prius. Maybe the same unknown suspect that trashed the police car?

Identity theft, 7/12/09 A semi-unknown suspect attempted to open three credit card accounts in a St. James Circle resident's name and also charged \$50 worth of gas at the Orinda Chevron station. The victim had the credit card in her possession and doesn't know how the suspect obtained her credit card number. The victim believes the suspect is a family member who is a parolee and is currently at large.

Busted hanging around, 7/20/09 In the middle of the afternoon, a concerned citizen noticed a subject loitering at Broadview Terrace and Overhill Road and placed him under citizens arrest. Turns out the loiterer was an unemployed man who had no business being there and happened to be on parole.



Photo Steve Glazer
Matt Moran, who was recently elected to the Orinda Union School District Governing Board, receives a city pin from Mayor Sue Severson. Accompanying Matt is his nine year-old daughter, Reilly, a 5th-grader at Glorietta School.

A Hidden Gem in the Orinda Hills

Oak Springs Pool Turns 80

By Andrea A. Firth



Photo provided by Orinda Historical Society

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.

"It really is a hidden gem. It's an oasis," says Kathy Duffy, a member for over twenty years, as she looks out at the pool which is located a short distance from the bustle of Highway 24 but feels far removed from the hectic pace of a commuter's life. "It's like having your own backyard pool, and it's a great place for kids," she adds as she observes two children who have the pool to themselves on a warm and sunny July afternoon. The diving board, a feature that has disappeared from most modern pools, is a big draw, and pool toys, noodles, and floats are always permissible explains Duffy.

Built in 1929, when mostly trees populated the Oak Springs neighborhood and just a few cottages dotted the hill, the effort to create a spring-fed pool for the benefit of the neighbors was spearheaded by longtime Orinda resident Nathan Gray. "[Gray] owned about 200 parcels and sub-divided a lot of the hill," says Chris Flum, who grew up in the neighborhood and remembers hearing stories about the development of the area from Gray.

By the mid-1940's a clubhouse was added, a homeowners' association was formed, and the pool became the central meeting place for the growing community that had settled in the area. Kids' game nights and parent socials were all part of the draw. And rumor has it that in the early days, the sheriff, highway patrol, and other local officials would drop by the clubhouse

during their breaks to do a bit of gambling.

"Back when I was growing up, it really was the mecca of the hill," recalls Flum. "It was a warm and friendly place," he adds, which is a big reason he joined the pool when he returned to the neighborhood to raise his own family. Flum also remembers that the starting blocks had to be strategically placed around the odd-shaped pool to ensure competitors at the swim meets each swam the same distance. Oak Springs Pool no longer supports a swim team, which is an attractive feature for members who appreciate the unrestricted access to the pool throughout the summer.

Solar panels were installed on the lot adjacent to pool in the mid-1980's long before being green was cool, and the pool is kept at a comfortable 80° throughout the season which runs from late Spring to early Fall. The clubhouse, which was updated along the way to include a fully-functioning kitchen, retains the charm of an old cabin in the woods with knotty pine paneling, single panel windows, a brick fireplace, and twinkle lights strung from the ceiling. For a modest fee, the clubhouse can be rented all throughout the year, notes Duffy. "People have used it for all sorts of activities from ballet and karate classes to African drumming, book clubs, and birthday parties."

With 40 member families, Oak Springs Pool is never crowded. "We could probably grow to a hundred families, and it still would not have a negative impact," states Duffy who is working with the Board to increase the membership. As the Treasurer on the pool's Board, Duffy is acutely aware of the costs associated with maintaining the facility. "We don't want to lose this," she says. "We think it is important to keep this going."

Flum, who enjoys the space and solitude that the pool provides,

agrees that membership needs to grow in order to adequately maintain the facility and provide the amenities people want, such as Wi-Fi which was recently added pool-side. He is trying to bring back the game nights that he enjoyed as a child to share with his boys, seven year-old Gavin and nine-year old Phoenix. "I want to bring back that community feel," concludes Flum. For more information about the Oak Springs Pool go to www.oakspringspool.com.



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Oak Springs Pool today Photo Andy Scheck

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Life in LAMORINDA

Wine at Saint Mary's, The Celebration Continues

By Sophie Braccini



Guests at the 2008 festival, Jack McClanahan and Drue Hulmer
Photo courtesy of Saint Mary's College

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. 100% of the event's proceeds will fund student scholarships.

Christian Brothers and wine share a long tradition. In her "Brief history of wine" (Breve histoire du vin) Laurence Lucas explains that grapes almost completely disappeared from Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire and that "It is the Church who, to honor the tradition of the Last Supper saved vineyards." So 120 ago when San Francisco Archbishop Joseph Alemany suggested to the Saint Mary's Christian Brothers to produce altar wine from their vineyard at their Villa de la Salle in Martinez they engaged in the development of their production. The operation became the well-known Christian Brothers Winery. Heublein bought it in 1989 when the

Brothers decided that wine making was taking too much away from their primary educational mission.

But the love of great wines continues as a tradition on the campus. In the 80's Saint Mary's used to organize an outdoor wine festival that became too large and a bit unruly. More recently, Cindy Cooper proposed a more restrained version. Cooper is a college alumna who has served as the Vice President of Events for the past few years. "I suggested five years ago that we organize a wine festival to raise money for student scholarships and welcome back alumni, friends, family, and neighbors to the college."

The 2009 Festival will feature both large productions and more intimate family-owned labels, including California Cellars, Concannon Wines, David Arthur Vineyards, Parkmon Vineyards, Pride Mountain Vineyards, Mantra Wines and Realm Cellars. The afternoon event takes place from 2 to 5 p.m., and will include appetizers and microbrews from area breweries. It will be preceded by a special private tasting, for those with VIP tickets, of old vine Zinfandels presented by a testing

panel of SMC Alumni.

The alumni group "Gael in Wine" was instrumental in the organization of the festival. It was founded in 2001 by Robert Kozlowski. The 81-year old gentleman's life took him from chemistry to winemaking.

"I graduated in 1950 in organic chemistry, and worked for Chevron for 36 years," says Kozlowski, "in 1962 I started to make wine at home with a friend from Lafayette, then I became an advisor for Kenwood and ended up being one of the six owners of the company." Kozlowski founded Gael in Wine eight years ago and the group now counts more than 80 members. "Many of our members will be pouring at the Festival," says Kozlowski, "they will be identified by a special sign."

Mike Kumelis is a younger member of the group who will be pouring from his winery, Mantra Wines in Hillsburg, at the event. A '91 Saint Mary's graduate, he runs the family winery. "Being part of Gael in Wine is of great interest to me," says Kumelis, "we share wine making ideas, and all wine makers are open and free. Bob (Kozlowski) was at Kenwood, his generation had a different way to winemaking, and it is enriching to share with him."

This year's event will include a silent auction, because many wineries have donated tastings and tours of their facilities, as well as signed magnums. "It is a great opportunity to add to your wine cellar, or just get started," says Cooper. "Also, each attendee will receive a beautifully etched wine glass with the signum fidei logo."

Tickets are \$30, VIP tickets are \$40. For information call 631-4200 or visit www.stmarys-ca.edu/wine

More Stores Closing in the Rheem Center
... continued from page 3

"The only thing that can help two shopping centers is for there to be more 'roofs', as the saying goes," says Bruzzone, adding that the difficulty and the time spent trying to get approval for any new building sites, plus the constraint of all the rules, regulations, plus impact fees, are daunting. The Moraga Center does not have the same high numbers of empty spaces as Rheem, but it faces difficulties as well. "We are a small family business," says Bruzzone, "that has always believed that we are in this together. If they are doing well, that reflects happily on us as well, if they are doing poorly, we feel their pain, and suffer also."

synergy is one of the elements that make a shopping center successful. "I do not know what Kimco's strategy is. They are one of the larger professional shopping center owners in the country. They make their own business decisions," said Tessler, "Kimco can see like everyone else that the center is emptying. They know that retail stores thrive when critically massed, that they feed off each other."

"If businesses fail or leave it means that they are not making enough business in Moraga," added Segrest, "and we go back to the same equation that tells us that 75% of what Moragans buy is spent out of town." Segrest believes that the



Photo Wendy Scheck

Specific Plan that the town will adopt will be a good framework for Moraga business to develop.

The Revenue Enhancement Committee is working on the issue, with a sub-committee chaired by Tessler on economic development. The meetings are public and held at the Hacienda de las Flores, the first and third Monday of the month until December when a final report will be submitted to the town.

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8:45 a.m. Nursery Care Available
9:00 a.m. Worship Service in the Sanctuary
10:00 a.m. Fellowship Time in Gregersen Hall
10:30 a.m. Nursery Closes

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Adult Education, 10:30-11:15 am
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www.willow.springchurch.org
(925) 376-3550

Sunday Service Times:
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The Living Room (Young Adults Service) @ 7:30pm
Services for youth and children after worship during the 10:30am service

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Wednesday REVERB Youth Group @ 7pm
Friday BLAST! Kids Club @ 6pm

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Public Forum

JOIN IT

To the Moraga, Orinda, and Canyon Communities:

Our Fire Chief's pension has recently received a lot of attention in the press, in the blogosphere, and within our communities. Unfortunately, thanks to a dis-information campaign by leaders of Firefighters Union Local 1230, much of what you have seen or heard on the subject is grossly inaccurate. My intent is to set the record straight.

Yes, our Fire Chief received a pension that significantly exceeds his previous base salary. No, your Fire District's Board of Directors did not "spike" his pension by adding significant "goodies" at the last minute. Let me explain what really happened.

It is important that I state upfront: The current public employee pension system in Contra Costa County is badly broken. Intuitively, it seems illogical that a retirement system should award a retiree a pension that exceeds the average base salary she/he earned during her/his last few years of service. However, as a direct result of the California Supreme Court's landmark "Ventura County" decision that affects many County Retirement Systems – including ours – and the "3% at age 50" pension benefit enacted by our State's Legislature, that is exactly what is happening throughout our State. I should also note that almost the same methodology is used in computing both the Fire Chief's and a firefighter's retirement pay. The problem is therefore not just limited to the Fire Chief's pension. Locally, the problems are compounded by significant recent losses in the Contra Costa Employee Retirement Association's (CCCERA) investment portfolio. The end result of that combination of factors is our County's currently dysfunctional public employees' pension system.

It has been suggested that the Chief's pension was primarily boosted by "spiking" that resulted from a supposed last-minute change to our Fire Chief's contract. Not So! Contrary to false assertions by the leadership of Local 1230, the additional vacation sell-back of some 60 hours in each of 2008 and 2009 that our Board agreed to accounts for only 3.9% of the Fire Chief's total pension. That specific change was made so that the Fire Chief's pension would be computed on a basis similar to the calculations for the lower-ranking Battalion Chiefs and Administrative staff.

Totally ignored so far in any press reports or other public discussions of the Chief's pension is a major difference between the public safety employee pension system in our County and the typical private pension system. The fire district's employees contribute very substantial amounts of their base pay to the pension fund. Our Fire Chief regularly contributed 26.5% of his base pay to the retirement system. Moreover, as is permitted by the County retirement system's rules, he also contributed significant additional personal funds to purchase actuarially determined credits for additional service time. He therefore should not be unfairly criticized for optimizing his retirement by simply following the rules while simultaneously maximizing his personal financial contributions.

At the same time, it certainly is legitimate to question and criticize the entire Contra Costa County pension system itself in its present form and with its present features. The Moraga-Orinda Fire District's Board of Directors has been working diligently for quite some time to try to effect substantial changes that would have financially benefitted all parties – including transferring out of the County's system.

Yes, we have also certainly looked at the possibility of changing to a two-tier system including a 401(k)-like defined contribution element. As a result of employees' legally vested rights, current State legislative constraints, and collective bargaining requirements, we have neither the unilateral power nor the authority to adopt a two-tiered pension system. Accomplishing that objective would take both the concurrence of Local 1230 and passage of a specific enabling Act by the California State Legislature.

Yes, we could consider reducing the Chief's salary as well as those of all the District's firefighters. The reality of the marketplace precludes that solution. We're a small fire and emergency medical services district that must compete with San Ramon, Contra Costa County, and other neighboring fire agencies. Were we to offer substantially lower salaries and benefits than our competitors, our ability to recruit and retain the excellent firefighter-paramedics that we now have would be completely undercut. Inevitably, the very high quality of fire and emergency medical services our communities currently enjoy would be significantly reduced.

How can we fix all this? Major reforms are needed. It's way past time for our State Legislature, the Governor, local government, and the public safety employee unions to start working collaboratively to address the issue before it bankrupts many of our State's Counties, Cities, and Districts.

The MOFD's Board of Directors has been trying very hard, within extremely limiting legal and other constraints, to do our part to fix the pension system so that it provides for a fair and equitable retirement opportunity for all public employees.

I ask that Local 1230 and the other key stakeholders join us at the table so that, together, we can be part of the solution.

Frank Sperling
Moraga
(Frank Sperling is Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Moraga-Orinda Fire Protection District and represents Division 1)

The Sacramento Shuffle Steal

On Friday, the State Legislature passed a devastating take of \$2.05 billion from local redevelopment agencies as part of a 30-bill package that allegedly will close most of the State's current budget deficit. The State has Prop 98 obligations to schools and, because it is broke and unable to meet those obligations, the Legislature chose to hijack local redevelopment funds and use them instead. As written, the State intends to take \$1.7 billion from local redevelopment agencies in FY 2009-10 and another \$350 million in FY 2010-11. In response, California's cities are preparing a lawsuit to challenge the State's action.

The Legislature also voted to "borrow" \$1.9 billion from cities' property tax revenues. This is legal under Prop. 1A, which allows the State to borrow, but limits the borrowing to twice every ten years and further provides that the money borrowed must be repaid with interest within three years. It is our experience that in instances when somebody borrows something from somebody else, it is typically done so with mutual consent and with the presumption that the borrower will return the item or pay back the amount borrowed. The only exceptions, of course, are teen-aged children and, now, apparently, the State of California. We don't recall being asked

by the State to borrow our money, and we've yet to meet a local government executive who believes the State will make good on their debt within three years.

What does this mean for Lafayette? The first year impact to Lafayette's general fund will be about \$480,000 – equivalent to about 5% of expenditures. If there's a shred of good news here it's that, when preparing the budget last spring, Administrative Services Director Tracy Robinson conservatively presumed that the State would shortchange us by \$540,000 – and so the impact to Lafayette's budget is actually about \$60,000 in the plus column.

The hit to redevelopment is more serious, with the impact to the Lafayette RDA projected at \$1.1M for FY 2009/10. The natural question: what does this mean for the library project? According to Tracy, the RDA has cash balances of about \$3.4M and – prior to Friday – expected to accrue another \$2.4M during this fiscal year, adding up to total resources of \$5.8M for the fiscal year. Against those resources, the RDA has debt obligations of \$1.5M and projected operating expenditures of \$856K (thus totaling about \$2.4M in expenses for the fiscal year) and had long planned to spend another \$4.0M in capital funding to finish off the library project. This would have required a loan of about \$600,000, which could easily have been funded by the Library Foundation or, if need be, the City. The State's grab, however, will boost the loan amount needed by \$1.1M, to a total of \$1.7M. This is still fundable, but less easily so. It will require some serious conversation with the Trustees of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation and also with the City Council. The State's grab will also likely prevent the RDA from doing any other projects anytime soon.

If you think this is bad, consider that the Legislature also wanted to take another \$1 billion a year in gas tax funds from local government (and, because that proposed take was for two years, the total was about \$2 billion). The Senate passed the measure but fortunately – under intense pressure from California's cities, including calls and notes from Lafayette's own staff and council members – the Assembly rejected it.

Steve Falk
Lafayette

(Excerpted from Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk's "City Manager's Friday Summary," which can be viewed on-line at www.lovelafayette.org. Alternatively, readers can receive a weekly e-blast of the Summary by dropping an e-mail request to sfalk@lovelafayette.org.)

Traffic Safety Near Los Perales School

I would like to comment regarding the recent article concerning the proposed installation of traffic mitigation devices adjacent to Los Perales (LP) School. First and foremost, this particular traffic flow issue should be focused on education and not traffic enforcement as indicated in the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC) Traffic Calming Guide Traffic Calming Measure Level 1. Clearly, most of the occupants waiting along Corliss Drive during peak morning and afternoon ingress/egress times consist of LP parents. For example, a mother speaking on behalf of the Los Perales Parent-Teacher Association testified in the May 6, 2009 TSAC meeting that she often drove her own children to LP. She also testified that she lived approximately two blocks away. Another example would be on December 4, 2008 at about 8:15 A.M., I personally witnessed 34 personal vehicles not including school buses backed up along Corliss Drive waiting to enter Wakefield Drive.

It should be noted that many well-intentioned individuals expended a great deal of personal time assisting in the implementation of sidewalks along the east side of Corliss Drive from Camino Ricardo to Wakefield Drive. The sidewalk was installed to allow students to walk to school instead of being personally driven in private vehicles. Vehicles idling during these peak traffic times subject adjacent residents to inordinate amounts of carbon based fumes and unburned hydrocarbons. Additionally, the sheer volume of these vehicles create an impediment to emergency vehicle response time should they be needed.

When I submitted my Transportation Action Request (TAR) form to the Town of Moraga in January of this year, I clearly indicated that turn restrictions during these peak hours would mitigate most of the congestion problem. Since the mid-1990's I have consulted with former Moraga Police Chiefs Barry Kalar and Mark Ruppenthal regarding this on-going problem. Our discussions focused on the need to create a semi-circular flow of traffic via the use of turn restrictions during these peak hours. Traffic proceeding north on Corliss Drive turning east on Wakefield Drive would be permitted at all times without the need to come to a complete stop. Traffic exiting Wakefield Drive onto Corliss Drive would have to turn right during these peak hours and would eliminate the major cause of the traffic congestion. Traffic proceeding south on Sullivan/Corliss Drive would not be allowed to turn left into Wakefield Drive during peak hours. As a result, stop signs would only be needed on Wakefield Drive for those vehicles exiting from LP. This scenario would create the semi-circular flow of traffic needed to help mitigate the current traffic congestion. As stop signs at the intersection of Corliss Drive & Wakefield Drive would be active 24 hours a day, 7 days a week the opportunity for constant traffic congestion is increased as well as being unnecessary.

Finally, let me point that everybody advocates for traffic safety particularly in the proximity of public schools. But until such time as personal driving habits change, all stakeholders in this issue must attempt to engage in a meaningful and thoughtful dialogue to address the many issues associated with this unique location.

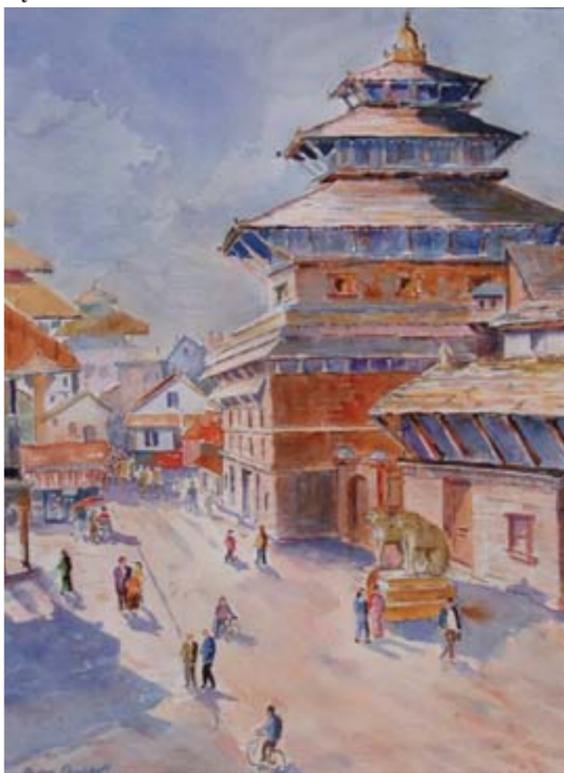
Dennis Wanken
Moraga
(Dennis Wanken is a former Moraga School Board member who worked on the sidewalk installation; he has lived near Los Perales School since 1991.)

If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda or one of its cities that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don't despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section. Just send your letter to letters@lamorindaweekly.com and let us know you'd like to be considered for the Public Forum.

Life in LAMORINDA

Watercolor Artist, George Ehrenhaft, Exhibits at the Orinda Library Gallery

By Andrea A. Firth



A street scene in Nepal done in water color by Moraga artist George Ehrenhaft.

Photo provided

Moraga resident, George Ehrenhaft, will display 30 watercolor paintings at the Orinda Library Gallery through the month of August. Based on a theme he calls "The Near and the Far," the selection of landscape paintings includes vistas of several local spots includ-

ing the Lafayette Reservoir, Moraga Ranch, Tilden Regional Park, and Mount Diablo juxtaposed with scenes from his travels to China, Nepal, and Italy.

Ehrenhaft started painting seriously when he retired from teaching high school English in West Chester County after 33 years. Essentially self-taught, he prefers to paint landscapes plein-air—i.e., in the outdoors. When he and his wife started to winter in a rented home in the Oakland hills to escape the snow and cold of New York and be closer to their daughter and grandchildren, he discovered a great environment for plein-air painting and a vibrant and supportive art community. "The competition is fierce," states Ehrenhaft with a smile. About five years ago, brush and easel in tow, he and his wife made a permanent move west and landed in Moraga.

Ehrenhaft quickly became a part of the East Bay art community through his participation in plein-air painting groups, art shows, and the Lamorinda Arts Alliance. "I did not know a soul here," says the artist, but he soon made friends. The walls of Ehrenhaft's home are filled with paintings he has done along side the works of several local artists.

Ehrenhaft's talents do not end with his art. He is a bit of Renais-

sance man. "I have always been very interested in building," states Ehrenhaft, who has done a number of large renovation projects on his own homes over the years. "I've poured foundations, hung sheetrock, electrical. I've done it all," he says. He combined his interest in building with his academic background and wrote and illustrated a book entitled, *The Builder's Secret*. "I traveled the country, met a variety of self-builders, asked how they learned and what they did, and wrote their stories" he explains. Ehrenhaft then complimented the text with his own pen and ink drawings.

When he is not running the trails with the Orinda Roadrunners or taking a hike with a local hiking group, Ehrenhaft also finds time to continue to do some academic writing and editing. His art remains a competing interest, and he is fairly prolific. Ehrenhaft typically generates two completed paintings a month. "Water color is not a very forgiving medium," he says, and he claims to discard three of every five paintings he starts. But he seems up to the challenge. "Water color is such an interesting medium. You never know what is going to happen."

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Pension Issues Plague the MOFD

... continued from page 1

Union Reacts. In early July, members of I.A.F.F. Local 1230, the union representing the MOFD firefighters and paramedics, wrote to the Board of Directors expressing their displeasure with the Chief's now notorious pension package and the timing of an amendment to the Chief's contract. "The Chief convinced the Board to approve an amendment to his contract on December 10th [2008] that gave him a substantial amount of extra vacation to add to his last year's compensation and hence pension as well," states union representative Mark DeWeese. "None of this extra vacation was ever funded for and the Chief announced his retirement three days later on December 13th to start drawing from his now inflated pension."

"Personally, I was disappointed to be a recipient of this letter, especially during negotiations," states Frank Sperling, one of the five members of the MOFD Board. "The implication that this was a last minute deal is absolutely incorrect." Fellow Board member Brook Mancinelli was surprised by the union communication. "I am unbelievably perplexed by the union's letter," says Mancinelli, noting that the union also receives some of the vacation accrual benefits that were part of the Chief's pension calculation.

The Contract Amendments. In February of 2008, the MOFD Board approved an amendment to the Chief's contract that allowed him to sell back 200 hours of accrued vacation time. The Chief had no vacation buy-back provision in his initial contract (initiated in July of 2006), according to Sperling. He felt the vacation buy-back was reasonable and placed the Chief on par with the lower ranking Battalion Chiefs who are able to sell back up to 198 hours of vacation annually. Vacation sell-back is a negotiated item that is not currently part of the local firefighters' contract.

In December of 2008, the Board again amended Chief Nowicki's contract to include paid holidays, administrative leave that could be converted to vacation leave, and a bump in the vacation sell-back time to 260 hours. A few days later the Chief's retirement was officially announced. The timing of these two events has the rank and file frustrated. "No other employees get amendments made to their contracts right before they decide to retire," states DeWeese.

According to Chief Nowicki, he began talking to the Board about revisions to his contract late in the Spring of 2008, and they came to an agreement on the terms of the amendment by late August. He says legal review and other delays kept the approval of the amendment from being placed on a Board meeting

agenda until December. Nowicki says that he did not begin to consider retirement until November.

Sperling confirms that the Board had been in contract discussions with the Chief for over six months. He believes that he became aware that the Chief was retiring sometime in the fourth quarter of 2008. "The need to be competitive in the marketplace and the need to ensure equity within the District drove my decision [to support the Chief's contract amendment]," states Sperling.

Communication Chasm. The union has yet to receive a formal response to their letter from the Board of Directors, but direct communication between the two groups is a challenge. "It has been a long standing Board policy not to talk with the union representatives during contract negotiations," states Sperling. This policy is in place to avoid the potential, real or perceived, that conversations are construed as side deals, he explains. Contract negotiations between the Board and the

union started in February and are ongoing.

"Morale is low and frustrations are high with respect to the Board of Directors and the issues surrounding the Chief," states DeWeese. However he is quick to add, "The firefighters still love their jobs and enjoy providing a high level of service to the communities of Moraga and Orinda." Chief Nowicki admits that the agency's morale may be impacted, but he agrees that the MOFD employees remain focused. "The department's response to the community and the operational tempo is tremendous. Nothing else matters but taking care of business once they arrive at work."

What next? The Chief's retirement and pension benefit have raised a number of philosophical and practical questions for the District. The next work session of the MOFD Board on August 5th will include a discussion of the Board's response to the press and community reaction to the pension issues.

The structure and rules associated with the Moraga Orinda Fire District's (MOFD) pension program are complex. Here are some of the basics:

- The MOFD has three bargaining units: the firefighters and paramedics, I.A.F.F. Local 1230; the Battalion Chiefs and Fire Marshall, the Chief Officers; and the administrative staff. The Fire Chief negotiates his/her own contract.
- All MOFD employees participate in the Contra Costa County Employees Retirement Association (CCCERA) defined benefit plan. All safety employees (firefighters and managers including the Chief) contribute to the retirement system—significantly. The contribution rates ranges from 23% to 28% of salary.
- The plan provides for 3% at 50—As of the 50 years of age, eligible employees are entitled to a pension benefit equal to 3% of his/her annual salary (based on the last 12 months of employment) for each year worked. Example: A 50 year-old employee who retires after 30 years of service earning \$100,000 during the last 12 months of employment will receive 90% of their current base salary, or \$90,000/year in pension benefit for the rest of his/her life. [\$100,000 (salary) x 3%/year x 30 years = \$90,000]
- Within the CCCERA program, MOFD safety employees may factor up to one year of accrued vacation time into their final pension calculation. Differentials (e.g., a uniform allowance), unused sick leave accruals, vacation buy-back, and service credit purchases may also be factors in the final pension calculation.

Is the county retirement system sustainable?

The sustainability of the CCCERA retirement program has been questioned. In 2005 the MOFD issued Pension Obligation Bonds to pay off the District's unfunded liability of \$28 million. "There was a massive unfunded liability in the magnitude of hundreds of millions of dollars for the entire county retirement system that came about due to CCCERA's less than stellar investment return which fell short of their actuary's projections," states MOFD Board member Frank Sperling. Although the District's contributions to the retirement system for this fiscal year have not increased, the future does not look bright. The impact of the economic downturn and market decline of the past year will be not be reflected in the District's contributions to CCCERA until next year.

Whether the county's retirement system is the best option for the MOFD in the long run has also been questioned. The MOFD Board had investigated a switch to the State public pension fund, CalPERS. For Board member Brook Mancinelli, CCCERA is the problem. He was a proponent of a move to CalPERS believing it would have reduced the contribution rates and provided a more stable and financially beneficial program for the District. Sperling suggests another alternative. "I would like to provide a good retirement program for the MOFD employees and at the same time reduce the risks associated with our current defined benefit plan. A 401(k)-type plan could be a good alternative."

A. Firth

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Moraga Road, Closed Again in Lafayette

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... continued from page 1

“No streets will be closed to traffic during the patch paving, crack filing, or the chip seal process, but traffic delays are to be expected due to lane closures and traffic control,” said Luttrupp. Only Moraga Road will be closed during daytime hours for the very last phase of the project, because it’s so narrow.

Chip sealing is scheduled for Friday August 7 for all three roads, slurry sealing will occur on Wednesday August 19 and Thursday, August 20.

Acalanes Alumni Signs Books at Storyteller

By Sophie Braccini



Elise Broach (right, sitting) signs books for Susan Karr (center) and her two children Samantha and Kevin Wall
Photo Sophie Braccini

Elise Broach is a successful children literature author who lives in Connecticut. But her busy life doesn't keep her from coming back every year to Lafayette to visit her parents, some old friends and

Life in LAMORINDA

spare's Secret" ready for signature. Her mother, Susan Kaar who teaches drama at Pleasant Hill Middle School, is a great fan of Broach. "Those are terrific books," she said, "they are wonderful read aloud for younger children and great fun for teenagers." Kaar particularly likes the fact that the author gives credit to her readers for having intelligence, "her use of words is wonderful," she added, "and the plots are clever and enriching."

Broach holds a Ph.D. in American history and uses her knowledge in her stories. "When you study history, the plots and characters are provided for you... you just have to find your own angle on the events you're describing," she says.

Broach describes writing as a very early calling. "I loved to write from the time I was very young," she said, "I made my first picture book when I was in 1st grade. My teachers and school librarians were

a huge influence on me because they were always so supportive of my work."

Broach lived in England before moving to Lafayette where she went to Acalanes. "At Acalanes, I was very involved on the Aklan Yearbook staff, and made friends with other budding writers who went on to do it professionally," remembers Broach, "my friend Ann Christie is a published poet and teaches college writing classes. I'm still in touch with one of my English teachers from Acalanes, Carolyn Meek, who was a wonderfully encouraging and insightful critic of my work. She left teaching to run the Lafayette Book Store for many years, and has been a lovely advocate of my books."

Books by Elise Broach include "Shakespeare's Secret," "Masterpiece," "When Dinosaurs Came with Everything" and "Wet Dog!"

... continued from page 3

define the hours for off-leash activities. From April 1 to September 30, dogs are permitted without leash from park opening to 9:00 a.m. and from 6 p.m. to park closing, and from October 1 to March 31 at the same hours in the morning and in the afternoon from 4:00 p.m. to park closing.

"In most communities there are fenced dog parks," said Council Member Mike Metcalf, and that's where we are heading." Metcalf believes that the funds the town will receive from Measure WW -- for parks and recreation facilities -- could be used for a dog park.

Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram urged the Council to pursue a long-term plan for the park. The Parks and Recreation Commission will conduct community outreach activities to assess the needs of all potential park users and find a fenced solution for the dogs.

The Council wanted to strike a balance to address the needs of all its citizens. For the Council, the risk of litigation involving the Town if an accident happens is unacceptable. "You have to plan for an unfortunate event even if the probability is very remote," said Council Member Howard Harpham, "because if it happens it is a catastrophe, and the town, and the dog owner, will lose everything."

Because there is no physical barrier at this time, the Council's short term solution was to clearly

Dogs Will Play...For Now

Some warned of the potential dangers associated with dogs roaming freely where kids play. "I know from experience the tragedy that can come from dogs out of control," said Moraga resident and dog owner Bob Reynolds.

Dog advocates responded swiftly. "I am a physician and have seen dog bite injuries," said Moraga's Tyler Smith, "but this mostly happens in homes, caused by family pets that are not exercised enough; incidents in dog parks are unlikely." The Moraga-born father of two young children added that if the safety concern was overwhelming, a solution could be to fence the playgrounds at Rancho Laguna.

Other residents expressed concerns at having the park "confiscated" by dog owners. Moraga resident Virginia Faulkner had hip replacement surgery; she would like to use the paved area around the park for rehabilitative walking.

Microchip – Invisible, Yet Effective Identification

By Mona Miller, DVM

The most recent publication of the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association contains an article, one of the first of its kind, that describes the effectiveness of microchips in returning lost animals to their guardians. A microchip is a rice-sized identification device that is implanted (injected) into the connective tissue under the skin, usually between the shoulder blades of a dog, cat or rabbit (in a bird it is injected into the pectoral musculature). It contains a bar-coded number that is read with a scanner, based on radio frequency technology. At the time of implantation (done by a veterinarian, shelter, animal rescue

organization or breeder), the owner must register his/her personal information (name, address, contact phone numbers) with the microchip company. The idea is that if the pet were lost and scanned by a shelter, vet or rescue group, the owner can be traced via the phone numbers provided.

Injection can be performed without anesthesia (although I prefer to do this at the time of spay or neuter when possible, since the needle is big). The biggest "complication" I have seen, in over 20 years of veterinary experience, is that the microchip can migrate. This is important because the scanner should be held not only over the shoulders and back, but also on the sides and bottom of the chest when looking for a microchip. Experienced scanners are aware of this, and scan the animal in multiple spots.

In the study mentioned above, 53 shelters in 23 states participated during an 8-month time period, providing a total of 7,704 microchipped animals (this number includes 3,225 owner-relinquished animals, 4,083 strays and 396 "others"). The results of this study show that owners could be found for 74.1% of microchipped dogs and 63.5% of microchipped cats. The ability to find owners was higher for purebreds vs. mixed breeds, and for animals who were spayed/neutered vs. intact. Interestingly, animal shelters had a higher chance of finding an owner when the owner information was in the shelter's own database, and a significantly lower chance of finding an owner when it was left up to the

owner to register with the microchip company. This underscores the importance of the crucial step of owner responsibility to register and keep current information with the microchip registry. In this study, the main reasons an owner of a microchipped animal could not be found were incorrect/disconnected telephone number, no response to telephone calls/letter sent by the shelter, or that the animal was registered to another group (such as shelter/veterinarian/rescue group who performed the implantation). In Canada and most countries in Europe, the services of microchipping and registering are bundled together. However in the United States these are treated as separate processes.



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.

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COMMUNITY Service

Matadors Want your Fruit and Veggies

By Maggie Sharpe



Left to right: Brandon Huang, Conor Volpe, Jonathan Wong, Ashraf Mathkour and Matt Ward, all juniors at Miramonte High School

Are your zucchini and tomato plants producing more than you and your next-door neighbors can eat? Orange and lemon trees laden, but you don't have the time or energy to get out and pick the fruit? Well, not to worry.

A group of Miramonte High School students has come up with a great idea for your extra fruit and vegetables. The students (juniors Conor Volpe, Brandon Huang, Matt Ward, Jonathan Wong and Ashraf Mathkour) have

organized a community service project this summer to gather fruit and vegetables from local residents in the Lamorinda area and donate them to the Contra Costa Food Bank in Concord.

"We will pick the produce at a convenient time, give you as much as you want, then take the rest over to the food bank where people in need can get the fresh fruit and veggies," says Volpe, 16.

Volpe says he got the idea from seeing fruit in his neighbor-

hood just go to waste.

"Where I live there is lots of fruit just falling off the trees," he says. "A friend had so many pears on their tree that they didn't know what to do with them."

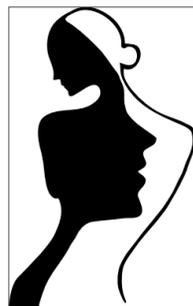
Volpe says the food bank is excited about the students' project.

"The lady at the food bank even said she would come and pick up the fruit and vegetables if we couldn't deliver them," says Volpe.

However, one of the students, Matt Ward, 16, says delivering the produce should be no problem.

"I drive a bus—a VW bus—so I can transport all the fruits and vegetables we can get," jokes Ward.

If you have fruit or vegetables that you would like the students to pick and donate to the food bank, please call 925-631-6635 or email extrafruit123@gmail.com. There is no charge and the donation may be used as a tax write-off.



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Local Child Safety Seat Inspections: August 19 Event and Beyond

Submitted by Grace Santos, Moraga Orinda Fire District



Photo provided

If you have children or grandchildren, you already know from experience that child safety seats are not as easy to master as one might expect. From selecting the right seat to understanding how seat belt systems lock, car seats can be very confusing.

According to the John Muir Trauma Services' Child Passenger Safety Program, 82 percent of the 2,300 car seats checked by its Contra Costa Car Seat Safety Coalition in 2008 were not used correctly. "This is not far off," says Child Passenger Safety Program Coordinator Carol Powers. "National rates claim 3 out of 4 car seats, or 75 percent of car seats are not installed properly."

Even though child safety seats have vastly improved over the years and the death rate for children by motor vehicle crashes has gone down, crashes still remain a top cause of death and injury to children. "Using a child safety seat correctly is the one variable that a parent or caregiver can most easily influence to keep a child safe while traveling on the road," says Powers.

What is a parent to do? Many caregivers are turning to the growing numbers of nationally certified car seat technicians to sort out their car seat conundrums. Getting your car seat's selection and installation checked by a trained professional is key.

Here in the Lamorinda area,

the closest place for a "car seat check" is at the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD). The Fire District has long promoted child passenger safety education with certified child passenger safety technicians on staff. A founding member of the Contra Costa Car Seat Safety Coalition, MOFD collaborates to host public check-up events as well as its own car seat fitting stations.

"Our next Child Safety Seat Inspection event is Wednesday, August 19, from 10 a.m. to noon at Station 41, at 1280 Moraga Way in Moraga. It is open to anyone and best of all, it's free. But if you can't make the event, we do take appointments," says MOFD Firefighter Jon Bensley, coordinator of the District's car seat program and car seat technician.

To arrange an appointment, send an email to carseatmofd@gmail.com. Bensley advises planning ahead because advance notice helps in coordinating a meeting time and place with technicians who work a variety of shifts.

Be advised to bring your car seat instructions with you and install a new car seat before coming to the inspection event. "The instructions are the key to knowing how a car seat works. If you can't find your instructions, we won't turn you away. We keep instructions in our car seat supplies," says Powers, who coordi-

nates the team of Contra Costa Car Seat Safety Coalition technicians working the Moraga event.

Assisting with the August 19th Child Safety Seat Inspection event is newly certified car seat technician and MOFD Fire Prevention & Public Education Secretary, Grace Santos. If you have questions about the event, call Grace at 925-258-4525. Grace says that the fire station bays will be open for the event so there will be shade for most who attend.

If you have general questions about child passenger safety, call the Coalition phone line at 925-941-7989.

Lafayette Safety Fair – Families Come Out for the Show

On Saturday August 1 the first Lafayette Safety Fair was held at Stanley Middle School. The event was organized by the Lafayette Emergency Preparedness Commission and the Lafayette Crime Prevention Commission.

The beautiful summer sun shone brightly over the agencies that came to Lafayette to show residents the tools and support available to them to keep themselves and their families safe: our two local fire agencies, the Lafayette and East Bay Regional Park Police, Red Cross, child abuse services, animal rescue, disease prevention, and many others.

About 150 people showed up, mostly young families, attracted by the impressive exhibitions. The two helicopters that East Bay Park Police landed on Stanley's field were a big hit, as was the police K9 patrol, the mounted police and the bike rodeo.

"For a first time it was a good success," said Fred Lothrop, Chair of the Lafayette Emergency Preparedness Commission. "We felt very pleased that people were interested in the various aspects of safety, and with the excellent cooperation of all the agencies that came."

Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk came to the Fair and seemed impressed by the display. "Given all the equipment that was on the site, it would have been an ideal time to have an earthquake!" quipped Falk.

S. Braccini



Lafayette Police Officer teaches proper hand signals Photo Doug Kohen



David (14) and A.J. Boucher (16) of Orinda watched the REACH helicopter demo Photo Jim Boucher



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Fire Races Across Moraga Hillside

... continued from page 3



Photo submitted by Moraga Police Officer Randy Pacheco

On Friday, July 31, Priebe said that no evidence was found that the fire was caused by human intervention. "A popping sound had been heard," stated Priebe, "but we found no evidence on site of any wrong doing." He added that unless a witness comes forward, the investigation is closed.

The fire spread up the hillside towards multiple structures on Ascot

Drive. "We threw a lot of equipment at this fire," said MOFD Fire Marshal Michael Mentink, "We always call for reinforcement at this time of the year when a brush fire starts close to buildings. In some of the area of the hill the weed abatement had not been completed," he continued, which makes our work more difficult and it reduces our ability to protect structures."

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According to Moraga Mayor David Trotter, Lou Fancher's ten-year old son Nicholas Johnson was the first to spot the fire on the middle of the hill behind the Rheem Theatre. He and his mother heard a popping sound, like a fire cracker. "It took me a minute to call 911 when my son told me he saw the smoke," said Fancher, "but the fire had already multiplied by five."

Fancher was so concerned about the speed of the spreading fire that she left her Ascot Drive apartment with her son to watch the efforts of the fire department from the safety of the Rheem Center.

Firefighters continued to watch for hotspots late into the night. "The deployment of forces and the efficiency was very impressive," said Fancher, "we thanked the firemen for all their work."

Lamorinda Home Sales continued

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| | LOWEST AMOUNT: | \$550,000 |
| | HIGHEST AMOUNT: | \$1,225,000 |
| | MORAGA | Last reported: 10 |
| | LOWEST AMOUNT: | \$260,000 |
| | HIGHEST AMOUNT: | \$1,450,000 |
| | ORINDA | Last reported: 10 |
| | LOWEST AMOUNT: | \$660,000 |
| | HIGHEST AMOUNT: | \$2,050,000 |

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

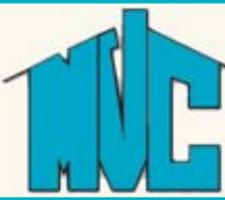
- LAFAYETTE**
- 554 Arrowhead Drive, \$1,025,000, 4 Bdrms, 2027 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 6-26-09
 - 3172 Camino Colorados, \$838,000, 3 Bdrms, 1971 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 7-7-09
 - 3621 Chestnut Street, \$550,000, 1426 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 6-30-09
 - 1104 Laurel Drive, \$898,000, 4 Bdrms, 1948 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 7-7-09
 - 3367 Moraga Boulevard, \$900,000, 3 Bdrms, 2225 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 6-26-09
 - 1037 Pleasant Hill Road, \$627,000, 4 Bdrms, 1443 SqFt, 1932 YrBlt, 6-30-09
 - 1022 Sunrise Ridge Drive, \$1,225,000, 4 Bdrms, 3539 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 6-30-09
 - 19 White Oak Drive, \$1,130,000, 4 Bdrms, 2056 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 7-6-09

- MORAGA**
- 111 Ascot Court #B, \$260,000, 2 Bdrms, 1106 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 7-2-09
 - 718 Augusta Drive, \$745,000, 3 Bdrms, 2065 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 7-8-09
 - 25 Broadmoor Street, \$660,000, 2 Bdrms, 1887 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 7-2-09
 - 111 Calle La Montana, \$800,000, 4 Bdrms, 1946 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 7-7-09
 - 3718 Campolindo Drive, \$810,000, 4 Bdrms, 2200 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 7-7-09
 - 57 Corte Maria, \$1,450,000, 5 Bdrms, 3624 SqFt, 2001 YrBlt, 7-2-09
 - 139 Hodges Drive, \$850,000, 4 Bdrms, 1825 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 7-8-09
 - 159 Natalie Drive, \$900,000, 4 Bdrms, 2235 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 7-2-09
 - 9 Sanders Ranch Road, \$1,265,000, 4 Bdrms, 3032 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 7-2-09
 - 10 Sparrow Court, \$1,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 2494 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 6-30-09

- ORINDA**
- 11 Beaconsfield Court, \$870,000, 3 Bdrms, 1924 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 7-1-09
 - 19 Camino Del Diablo, \$985,000, 4 Bdrms, 2060 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 7-1-09
 - 212 Camino Sobrante, \$2,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 2851 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 6-30-09
 - 387 Camino Sobrante, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 3437 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 6-30-09
 - 215 Crestview Drive, \$1,720,000, 4 Bdrms, 3961 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 7-2-09
 - 327 El Toyonal, \$660,000, 3 Bdrms, 1212 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 7-8-09
 - 23 Oak Road, \$888,000, 3 Bdrms, 2308 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 7-7-09
 - 6 Southwaite Court, \$674,000, 3 Bdrms, 1654 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 7-2-09
 - 22 Via Moraga, \$1,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 3082 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 7-2-09
 - 13 Washington Lane, \$995,000, 3 Bdrms, 2011 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 6-30-09

Lamorinda Foreclosures continued

- LAFAYETTE**
- Chestnut Street, E-Trade Bank, 07-02-09, \$550,000, 1426 sf
- ORINDA**
- Darnby Court, JP Morgan Chase Bank, 07-06-09, \$980,011, 2064 sf, 3 bd
 - Meadow Lane, Rbi Financial Group, 07-01-09, \$569,900, 1743 sf, 3 bd



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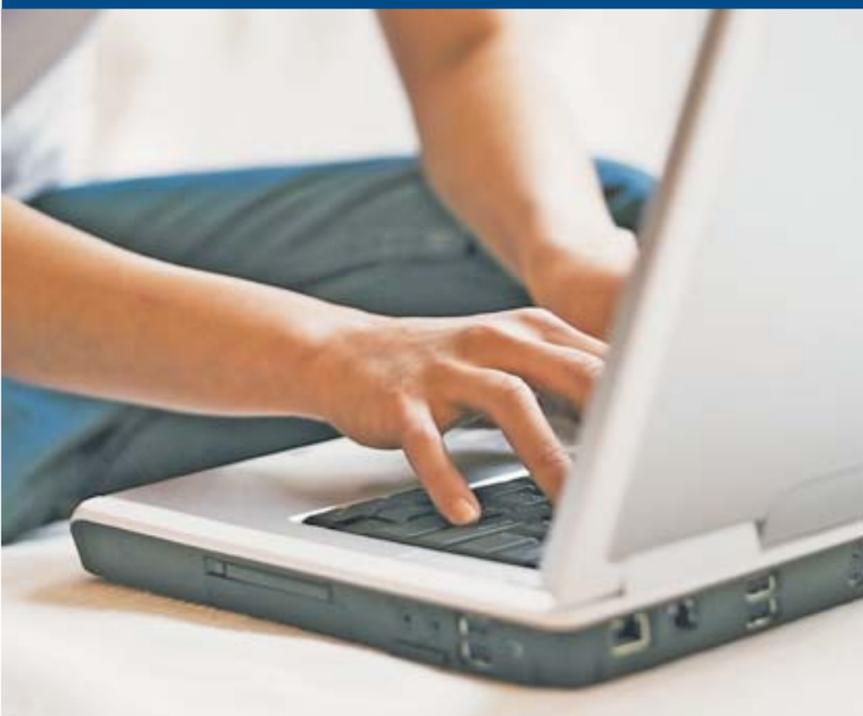
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MOFD Trains with REACH



Photo Ohlen Alexander

On Wednesday July 22, Moraga-Orinda Firefighters trained with REACH Air Medical Services, an air ambulance operator. REACH is one of several

medical helicopters in the area that provide rapid transport for critical trauma patients. According to Moraga Orinda Fire District Battalion Chief Darrell Lee, the

Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) uses air ambulance transport 4-6 times a year.

"We use the same concepts that trauma systems have used for decades, called the 'Golden Hour.' Trauma victims must reach definitive surgical care within the first hour in order to have a better chance at survival," Lee explains. Decisions on when to call an air ambulance are based on critical trauma, time and distance to the closest trauma center.

Opportunities for training with helicopters are a luxury due to the high cost of jet fuel, according to Lee, but MOFD looks for ways to train firefighters, paramedics, captains and police officers.

"The training increases the knowledge of working around helicopters and the safety precautions that must be adhered to. We have a responsibility for the safety of the firefighters, patient, bystanders and flight crew when calling for an air ambulance transport," says Lee.

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business briefs



Debra Abdelfattah (left) and Diane Goetting in their new store, Time After Time
Photo Sophie Braccini

Time After Time: New consignment store opens in Lafayette

3608 B Happy Valley Road, Lafayette, 283-6354
On August 1st Debra Abdelfattah and Diane Goetting were busy as bees getting food on the table for their opening, greeting friends, re-adjusting price tags on furniture and tying on balloons on the post of the building at 3608 Happy Valley Road to signal their new store. "Time After Time" is located in the back of the building, behind the Wells Fargo bank located at the corner of Mount Diablo and Happy Valley. There, the two friends display the unique pieces that people want to recycle. "In a time like this many people want to sell the objects and furniture they no longer use," says Abdelfattah, "we select what is unique and charming and are happy to have people come by, check it out and decide if they have a use for it." She and her friend Goetting had wanted to go into business together for a while, they were just looking for the right opportunity. The result is a store full of interesting pieces, from sofas and armchairs to paintings, necklace holders and dishes. The two will partner with Tran Jewelry to carry older fine jewelry as well. Business hours are from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays.

Novelx Wins Prestigious R&D 100 Award

The Lafayette firm that was featured in our April 15 issue was the winner in July of the R&D 100 Awards for its innovative Scanning Electron Microscope. Recipients are selected by an independent judging panel and the editors of R&D Magazine. Novelx's product, the mySEM, is a comparatively very small scanning electron microscope (SEM) for imaging and characterizing nanoscale objects and materials. According to Rita Peters, editorial director of R&D Magazine, "Winning an R&D 100 Award provides a mark of excellence known to industry, government, and academia as proof that the product is one of the most innovative ideas of the year." The Novelx mySEM is commercially available and in use by several leading university research centers for the imaging of nanoscale objects and materials in a wide variety of fields that include Materials Science and the Life Sciences. For more information visit www.novelx.com.

News from the Three Chambers of Commerce

- Lafayette**
- Lamorinda Music & Gifts will hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony with the Chamber of Commerce on Thursday August 20 at 5 p.m. at 81 Lafayette Circle.
 - The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, the City of Lafayette and Red House Studios announced this year's summer music series: "Rock the Plaza". The 'Rock the Plaza' series will take place in Lafayette's Plaza Park at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road. The headliners start at 6:00 p.m. and are presented free of charge. Arrive a little early for a good spot on the lawn and a chance to hear the opening "teen" bands.
 - Entrepreneur's Club, Thursday, August 20, 8:30a.m., Chamber Conference Room
- Moraga**
- The August Chamber meeting will be Tuesday, August 25th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Moraga Commons Park. Spouses and or significant others are invited to join in the yearly Chamber Barbecue.
- Orinda**
- Second Orinda Restaurant Tour on September 29. The Tour is a component of the Orinda Chamber of Commerce's "Shop Orinda Campaign." The event is scheduled this year for Tuesday, September 29. The fun will start at Theater Square with appetizers from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The restaurant Tour itself is from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and will include the favorite local restaurants, and dessert from 8:00 pm. to 8:30 p.m. The event benefits the Orinda Schools. Tickets should be purchased in advance for \$30.00 per person; tickets at the door will be \$35.00. Purchase your ticket online at www.orindachamber.org/OrindaRestaurantTour2009.htm.

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

A Government Source for Business Loans

By Sophie Braccini

When sales and profits are down and a business really needs an infusion of cash it can be hard to convince a banker. There is another source of funds that businesses may qualify for, the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Small Business Loans. It is Federal money that can be borrowed at a fixed 3% rate, for a duration of 5 years, in amounts from \$1,500 to \$140,000 (depending on the type of business). Business owners need a business plan and must demonstrate that they will save or create jobs with the loan.

What are Community Development Block Grants?

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program provides annual grants to state and local governments to fund a wide range of economic development projects, such as affordable housing, infrastructure improvement, assistance for low-income earners, and inner city revitalization. It was enacted by President Gerald Ford in 1974 and has been one of the longest continuously run programs at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Local government may use CDBG grants to create pro-

grams that provide grants, loans, and/or technical assistance to small businesses.

How does a business get a loan from the program?

Businesses cannot apply for CDBG grants directly to HUD. Local governments receiving CDBG grants use the funds to create loans for small businesses. In Contra Costa County, businesses can either access loans through certain cities (like Walnut Creek or Concord). Others, like businesses in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, apply through a firm that administers the program for the County, the Urban Financial Services Group (UFSG).

"The CDBG Small Business Loan Program helps small businesses to create and retain jobs for low and moderate income individuals by obtaining financing for business investments," says Bob Clayton of UFSG, "the Program focuses on two types of businesses, the very small businesses with very low income and the businesses that want to expand their operation, or need assistance to survive."

The process to get one of these loans is different from that of a bank. "You have to present a

business plan explaining where you want to take your new or existing business, as a way to confirm your commitment to your own success," states Clayton, before adding that his company can help in writing the plan. The owners need little if any collateral, and if their credit score is low, they need to show that they have been making prompt payment

to their creditors for the past six months or more. According to Clayton it takes from 40 to 60 days to get the loan, "but it can be faster if people already have a business plan and an accounting program," he said.

For more information call 952-9158 or email urbanfinancialsbc@gmail.com.

Network Marketing for Moms, Passion Makes it Easy

By Sophie Braccini

Kathy Franklin was a publicist in her previous life (life-before-kids) and a part time outdoor photographer. Then the Moraga mom discovered Juice Plus+ from a friend and became passionate about the concept, so much so that she is now a representative for a company called National Safety Associates (NSA), the firm that sells the product. "It is a part time job I can do from anywhere...truly," says Franklin, "and it really doesn't feel like work. It is fun."

Franklin started her relationship with Juice Plus+ last January. "Once we started taking Juice Plus+ I realized quickly that I would be sharing it with friends and family and the home based business model was perfect for me," said Franklin. NSA claims that the product is not a vitamin, but the micronutrients of fruits and vegetables put into a capsule, chewable or gummie, using a proprietary process of juicing, drying and turning the result into powder.

Going into business was simple for Franklin. "All I have to do is share the information with others and I can do that in person, at a presentation, with a brochure or through my website," explains Franklin. She says that her conversations seem to happen more at school and sports events than anywhere else. "I love it when someone is open to hearing more about the product and I am careful to make sure my friends don't think I am just trying to sell them something...I'm not. I hope my sincerity comes through," says the passionate mother.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

Franklin explains the business model as a mix between network marketing, corporate business and virtual franchise. "In true multi-level-marketing you aim at transforming every customer into a dealer; it is not the case here," she says.

The corporate office set up her website and virtual office and they do all of the shipping and billing. Franklin doesn't have to stock anything or worry about any of the financial aspects of the business. According to Franklin her results have been very good. "I work about two hours a day and sometimes go to a conference or workshop," she says, "I do not have yet a full time pay check, but I see it as a real possibility."

Kathy Franklin's web site is www.kfranklinsharesjuiceplus.com.

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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, Aug. 26, 2009 at 7:30pm

Lafayette School District

LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
Wednesday, Aug. 19, 2009 at 7 pm

Orinda Union School District

OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
Monday, Aug. 24 at 6:00pm

Moraga School District

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Moraga Resident Makes Deans List

Submitted by Stephanie Brooks

Moraga native Jayne Illovsy, a University of Denver Daniels College of Business undergraduate student, made the Dean's List for Spring Quarter of the 2008 and 2009 school year.

The Dean's List honors those undergraduate students who have achieved a quarterly grade point average of 3.75 or above while taking at least 15 credit hours.

Pizza Read-A-Thon at the Moraga Library

By Sophie Braccini



Mother and son having a great time at the 2008 Moraga Pizza Read-A-Thon building on the success of last year's first Pizza Read-A-Thon, the Moraga library invites children of all ages and their families on August 8 at 6:00 p.m. for an evening of reading and fun.

The first Moraga Pizza Read-A-Thon attracted more than 70 people. Children and their families met in the meeting room of the Moraga library and after indulging in the pizzas offered by the

librarian, laid down with their "blanky" or in their sleeping bag for a special moment of shared reading with their parents.

"I read about this idea in one of our publications and I thought it would be a lot of fun," said Sandy Steiner, the Moraga children's librarian. "We have many reading programs during the week. This evening event is just to provide the kids with a quiet time with their

Photo courtesy of the Moraga Library parents, concentrated on reading." Due to limited space, Steiner wants families to register, and knowing how many guests she will have will allow her to order the right number of pizzas.

"Sign up just started on August 4," said Steiner, "we will have plenty of books to choose from and people can bring their favorites. We will also have a simple craft and play a bingo game."

Working the Levels in Carpentry Camp

By Jennifer Wake



Carpentry Camp students Seiji Minowada and Martin Olson on July 29 work on projects at the Orinda Community Center

Photo Jennifer Wake

With the smell of sawdust, the clatter of hammers and rasp of saw blades filling the air, six students in Orinda Parks and Recreation's Carpentry Camp worked diligently on various projects last week.

The summer camp has been a popular mainstay for Lamorinda kids for the past 23 years, with instructor Julie Cole teaching an average of about 15 students a week the last couple of years. "With 11 weeks in the summer, that's 165 kids," said Cole, a lifelong teacher who earned her secondary school lifetime credential from UC Berkeley and taught junior high school math before teaching carpentry.

Orinda resident Martin Olson hammered nails into wood, after drilling holes into the foot-long board and designing a lever

and pull for his wooden pinball machine – a level 4 project – the topmost level being 21.

"I think (the camp) is cool because you make things and you can learn to use lots of tools like a crosscut saw and a brace drill," Olson said.

For Cole, carpentry is a great, fun way to improve strength, coordination, drawing, and math skills.

"And where would we be without people who can build and fix things?" she asked.

Students make their projects by hand from board foot of lumber, doing all the steps: measure, draw a line with a square, clamp, saw, rasp, file, drill, nail and saw. "It's great to have the kids for four days in a row; they can learn so much that brand new kids can become experts on the basic tools quickly," she said. "I

also get to see the older kids that I have known for years who are now on the higher levels, but too busy during the school year."

Seven-year-old student Seiji Minowada has been coming to Cole's carpentry camp since he was 3. He's made items including a stool and a helicopter, and is currently working on a foosball table. "That's level 12," Cole said.

As calls for help rang out during the camp last week, Cole nimbly rushed from one student to the next, often sitting on the ground, offering suggestions, unscrewing screws, pounding nails and working through problems with students.

"I keep busy," she said. "It's easier when everyone's working on low-level projects; high level projects take more time. It's great, though, seeing the kids every year get better and better."

The Collective Sound at St. Mary's Rocks

By Jean Follmer



Vocalist and guitarist, Barrett Buscher of Denver, Colorado, rehearses with The Collective Sound at St. Mary's College

Photo provided

lack many essential creative components of music, including writing it. "There is art and photography in schools, but not a lot of creativity in music," he said. "I play a lot and I write a lot and I did get a music degree. I believe in writing and that is what I really enjoy about music."

In week two, the kids learn to record music and shoot a video at Ex'pression College for the Digital Arts in Emeryville.

"Technology is another missing link to the education system," said Smith, who explained how they introduce the kids to writing software and show them how to use it.

The idea is to show kids that they can produce their own music and make a living doing it. In the past, musicians had to rely on a big recording studio and sell one million records to be successful. Smith says that has changed: If a band records and produces their albums themselves, they only need to sell about 60,000 records to be able to make a living.

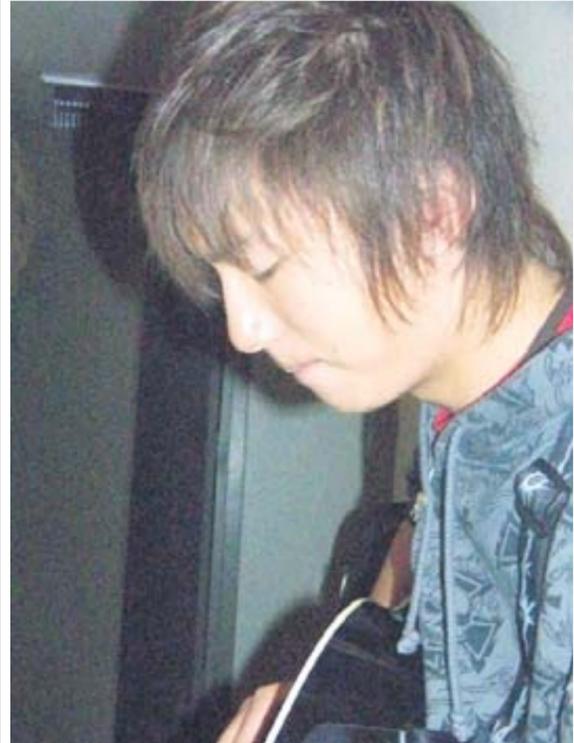
"I think, conceptually, when you look at the progression of music and creativity, we're in an interesting time since we have access to millions of pieces of music now," he said. Smith added that online sites like Pandora offer new bands more accessibility to listeners because the music is categorized and so easily downloaded.

The final week of camp is tour week. This year, TCS will head to San Francisco, Redding, Chico and the famous Radio Star Studios in Weed.

In just the first two days of camp, the kids had been split into bands based on talent, instrument and interest, with each band having an experienced musician as a counselor. Some campers had already written songs.

"We really do get some pretty talented kids," said Smith. Young musicians from all over the world and throughout the United States attend the academy – some from as far as France, Korea and Denmark. Smith said about half of the attendees are in bands at home.

For more information about TCS, visit www.thecollectivesound.com.



Guitarist William Lucy of Korea rehearses with The Collective Sound at St. Mary's College

Photo provided

The Collective Sound (TCS) – the world's first touring music camp – made its temporary summer home at Saint Mary's College this year. Young musicians ages 12 to 18 refine and expand their musical creativity, learn to record and produce music using the latest technology, and go on tour during the three weeks of the non-profit summer Rock & Roll music academy, which started last week at SMC.

During week one, the kids are grouped into bands based on talent, instrument and interest. They write and rehearse an original song to be performed at the end of the week. In the afternoons, they go to classes to learn about music technology and to listen to guest speakers from the music industry.

While TCS Director Zac Smith believes the band and orchestra programs in schools are great experiences, he also feels they

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Research Program Gives Insight to Undergraduates

By Jennifer Wake



Ozone project team members Matt Jackson (front left), Easar Forghany (back left), Joel Burley (standing) and Katy Orr (right)
 Photo Valerie Burke

This summer, 10 additional undergraduate students have been conducting research alongside top faculty thanks to a one-year \$117,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to create a Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) site at Saint Mary's College.

More than 60 students applied for the coveted research positions, which gave undergraduates an opportunity to tackle a research problem that provides academic development, and hands-on problem-solving skills, beyond what can be accomplished in a classroom, or even in a teaching laboratory, said Saint Mary's associate chemistry professor Valerie Burke, Ph.D. Students conducted research in the life, physical, social and behavioral sciences.

For SMC senior Katy Orr, the experience led her and her research team, headed by SMC chemistry professor Joel Burley, Ph.D., to mountain peaks at Yosemite, and to the White Mountains just east of Bishop to collect national park air quality data.

"There are only a handful of permanent mountain-top ozone monitors in the world, which records ozone levels in each location every five seconds," Orr said. "We have a total of nine monitors now, one of which might become a permanent mountain-top installation, and we go on data collecting trips every two to three weeks."

The REU program allows students to experience the challenges, frustrations and rewards of research, explained Burke, so they have an idea of what to expect if they choose graduate school or employment in industry. "And they get to contribute new knowledge in their disciplines. . . . They study something no one has ever done before."

REU student Jill Rea-Dilling has been spending the past several weeks culling through data to present to a production company that is creating a documentary on recidivism within the prison system. She has done so with the benefit of experience. Rea-Dilling spent 22 months incarcerated at various prisons following an identity theft conviction.

"I never thought about the prison system before I was there. It was a life-changing, humbling experience," she said. While in prison, Rea-Dilling saw many women return after being released, and believes a lack of quality vocational programs is one reason for the high recidivism rate. "In 2007, fifty percent of people in prison that year sat idle," she said. "They're not teaching the young ones who are



Summer research students working on their poster presentations, which will be presented at a research symposium on August 14
 Photo Valerie Burke



Elizabeth Sandoval-Torres uses a rotary evaporator to remove solvent and isolate her reaction product getting out what will help them."
 Photo Valerie Burke

For Rea-Dilling, the REU experience has given her the opportunity to search for answers as well as to discuss her findings, and brainstorm her own personal goals with her faculty mentor, Saint Mary's sociology and anthropology professor John Ely, Ph.D., who is heading the recidivism project. This close interaction with Saint Mary's faculty is one of the unique benefits of the REU program.

"In addition to teaching advanced techniques and instrumentation, for example, the faculty may chat about their experiences in graduate school, and talk about colleagues working in industry," Burke said. "In subtle or overt

ways, we try to open our students' eyes to the many possibilities ahead of them."

Rea-Dilling now plans to pursue a degree in penology – the study of punishment and prisons.

As for the REU program, Saint Mary's is working hard to have it mix smoothly with the ongoing School of Science Summer Research Program, (which has been part of Saint Mary's curriculum for the past 20 years).

"Knowing how valuable the research experience can be," said Burke, "we will keep working to improve and expand the research opportunities for SMC students, and for students outside SMC who do not have comparable research programs."

Science in the Kitchen ~ Easy Experiments for Kids

By Jonathan Winter



Epsom salt mixed with very hot water and food coloring forms crystals
 Photos Jennifer Wake

When you think of crystals, do you think of diamonds, emeralds and Indiana Jones? Did you know that we use crystals every day in the kitchen? Two kinds that you eat regularly are salt and sugar. Crystals, after all, are simply a regular pattern of atoms or molecules. If you have a strong magnifier or microscope at home you can see the regular shapes of sugar and salt.

Here are two recipes for building real crystals. The first one makes fast crystals, the second takes longer, but you can eat the second kind when they're done!

1. Gather these supplies for quick crystals:

- Epsom Salts (available at the drugstore)
- Food coloring (optional)
- Measuring cup
- A clean jar
- A spoon
- Hot water from the sink

2. Start your experiment:

Get the hottest water you can from your sink. It doesn't have to be boiling. Measure out ½ cup of the hot water into the jar. Slowly stir in ½ cup of Epsom salts. Stir constantly so they dissolve as much as possible. Add two drops of food coloring if you wish. Now set the jar in the back of your refrigerator for at least three hours without dis-

turbing it.

3. What happened?

When you dissolved the Epsom salts, they broke into smaller parts called ions. As the solution cooled, the ions bonded again, hooking onto each other into long delicate needle shapes. Reminder: Don't eat these crystals! They wouldn't hurt you, but they won't taste good!

4. Gather these supplies for edible crystals:

- Sugar
- Water
- Food Coloring (optional)
- Stovetop and Pan
- Clean Jar or Glass
- A few inches of cotton string
- A spoon
- A pencil or stick
- Paper towel or napkin

Start your second experiment:

With adult help, heat 1 cup of water until it boils. Turn the heat off and slowly stir in three cups of sugar, stirring constantly until all of the sugar is dissolved. Add two drops of food coloring if you wish. Carefully pour the solution into the clean glass. Tie the string onto the

pencil and dip the string into the solution (The string should not touch the bottom of the jar). Now roll the string in some sugar and set it aside. When the solution is completely cool, gently lower the sugar-coated string into the solution, suspending it over the top of the glass with the pencil or stick. Try not to knock off any of the sugar on the string. Set the jar on a windowsill or another safe place where it won't be disturbed. Put a small piece of paper towel over the top of the jar to keep dust out. You will have to wait up to three weeks for crystals to form on the string. The longer you wait, the bigger the crystals will get. If crystals start to form on the bottom of the jar, transfer the solution and string to another clean jar.

What happened?

The sugar on the string acted as a seed crystal, a place for the other crystals to attach to. Over time as the water evaporated, the sugar was left behind. You just made rock candy!



Jonathan Winter has been a science teacher at Lafayette Elementary School in Lafayette since 2001. He lives in Moraga with his wife, children, numerous pets – and he experiments frequently in his kitchen.

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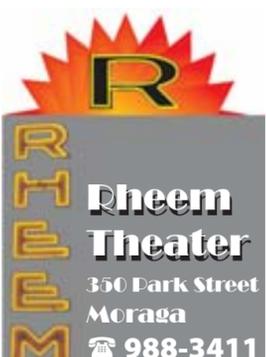
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Not to be missed

to 5pm, 50 Lafayette Circle in downtown Lafayette.

Bedford Gallery's exhibition Full Deck presents an anthology of skate art from the 1960's to the present and will run through Sept. 13. Over 300 decks borrowed from artists, skaters, and makers from across the country, will be on display. EVENT: Bg Skate Day, Saturday, August 15, 1-4pm. Art activities in the gallery 1-3pm; Pro skate demo 3-4pm. Free admission. Telephone: (925) 295-1417. Website: www.bedfordgallery.org Admission: General \$5; Youth (17 and under) \$3; Children 12 and under, free; Tuesdays free.

Susan Paulson will be exhibiting her original paintings during the month of August at Fastframe of Lafayette. Paulson, who grew up in Orinda and whose mother was an art teacher, is a mostly self-taught artist. She studied interior design at Western Design in SF and became an interior designer, which she credits for keeping her in a creative environment working with colors and textures. Last year Paulson studied art in Paris and was inspired, much like the impressionists, by the natural light in France. FASTFRAME is located at 3571 Mt. Diablo Blvd., next to Postino's. Call owner Anthony Ruiz at 283-7620 for more information.

California in Relief: A History in Wood and Linocut Prints is on view through Sunday, Sept. 20, and features nearly 100 works of art spanning 100 years of California art history. The exhibition is curated by Art Hazelwood, who also curated the highly praised 2002 William Wolff retrospective, "Masquerade and Revelation." Public Hours: Wed - Sun, 11 AM - 4:30 PM. Admission: \$3 adults; kids 17 and under free; Gallery members free. Gallery Telephone: (925) 631-4379. Website: hearstartgallery.org.

Award-winning watercolor artist George Ehrenhaft will display 30 paintings at the Orinda Library Gallery during the month of August. See article page 7.

MUSIC

Summer concert series - join your neighbors on Thursday evenings at the Moraga Commons Park for a relaxing free concert in the park. Bring your picnic blanket or lawn chairs to the grassy hillside in front of the band shell. Enjoy the music while your children enjoy the park. The volunteers of the Moraga Park and Recreation Foundation will even cook dinner for you with the Snack Bar opening at 6:00 pm. Concerts start at 6:30 pm and end at 8:30 pm. August 6 Motor Dude Zydeco - Cajun. August 13 littledog2 - a local band playing R&R. August 20 Dave Crimmen - Rockabilly.

Friday, August 7th The Lafayette Summer Music Workshop will be hosting non-stop music being performed from 3:30pm - 9:00pm at Stanley Middle School. The annual jazz camp sponsored by Generations in Jazz features bands made up of this year's attendees. For more information visit www.lafayettechamber.org or call (925) 284-7404.

San Francisco Opera Guild, East Bay Chapter Presents: Meet the Maestro! Sunday, August 30th, 5:30 p.m. at the Veteran's Hall, 3780 Mt. Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette. Chapter members and the general public are invited to meet Maestro Nicola Luisotti, the new Musical Director of the San Francisco Opera. Maestro Luisotti will be interviewed by David Gockley, San Francisco Opera General Director. After the interview our audience will be invited to ask questions. Hors d'oeuvres, wine and other beverages will be served. Cost: \$45 (approx. \$30 tax deductible) All proceeds benefit the San Francisco Opera's education programs for students K-12 and to help promote the careers of aspiring young singers. Information: Silvia Lin, (925) 838-9255 or LLLLL@juno.com.

The 'Rock the Plaza' series will take place in Lafayette's [Elam & Margaret Brown] Plaza Park at the corner of Mt.

Not to be missed

Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road. The headliners start at 6:00pm and are presented free of charge. Arrive a little early for a good spot on the lawn and a chance to hear the opening "teen" bands. Here is this year's line-up...

August 14: Total Eclipse-vocal heavy tunes from the 70s and 80s- www.totaleclipseband.com

August 21: The Spazmatics -due to popular demand, we're bringing back the geeks- www.sfbands.net/Spazmatics.htm

August 28: The Synthetics - popular & danceable covers- www.thesyntheticsband.com

THEATRE

D.V.C: Department of Drama Announces Auditions August 26-28 for its Production of URINETOWN. Director: Ryan Mark Weible "One of the most uproariously funny musicals in recent years, URINETOWN is a hilarious tale of greed, corruption, love, and revolution in a time when water is worth its weight in gold.

Orinda Starlight Village Players presents "Cyrano de Bergerac", the classic story of a man who believes his oversized nose makes him unworthy of love, especially Roxanne's. When he uses his poetic words to help another man win her love, the twists and turns make for a poignant, humorous tale. Friday and Saturday night at 8:30 p.m. through August 15th, matinee on Sunday, August 9th at 4:00 p.m. and one Thursday performance on August 13th at 8:00 p.m. Bring a picnic dinner, a camp chair or cushion, and layered clothing to be comfortable under the stars. Tickets are \$15 for regular admission and \$7.50 for seniors/students. Call (925) 253-1101 or email info@orsvp.org. The theater is located in the Orinda Community Center Park, 26 Orinda Way.

"Maids & Matrons", a new comedy by Kathryn G. McCarty will open at the Leshner Arts Center August 19th. "Kathy's plays use comedy to explore sensitive political and social issues," said Director Clay David. "It's a screwball comedy, slapstick at times, about a dysfunctional family's preparation for the biggest wedding of the season. From start to finish, it's a catastrophe, but the family pull together to get past all obstacles. August 19 - 21, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday at 8:15, Sunday at 2:15. Leshner Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek. FOR TICKETS CALL: (925) 943-SHOW. WEBSITE: Galateaplayers.com.

Woodminster Summer Musicals presents "Singin' In the Rain" as the second show of their 43rd season in Joaquin Miller Park. A cast of over 40 tap-dancers up a storm. Performed under the stars in historic Woodminster Amphitheater in beautiful Joaquin

Miller Park (3300 Joaquin Miller Road, Oakland) on August 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, and 16 at 8 p.m. Single tickets are \$25-\$40, with discounts for seniors and children. Woodminster also offers several special ticket opportunities including season tickets, half price for groups, and Kids Come Free. Tickets are available through www.woodminster.com, or by calling (510) 531-9597, or through Ticketweb.com.

Contra Costa Christian Theatre will be presenting Willy Wonka for one weekend only, Aug 7th and 8th at the DVC Performing Arts Center. This performance by CCCT's teen summer conservatory is directed by Steve Kinsella, from the Kinsella Theatre Group in Brentwood and choreographed by Shelly McDowell. Show Details: Performances: August 7 & 8 at 7:30pm, August 8 at 2pm, Place: DVC Performing Arts Center, 321 Golf Club Road, Pleasant Hill. Tickets \$15. For more information & to pre-purchase tickets: www.cchristiantheatre.org.

Cal Shakes presents Samuel Beckett's "Happy Days" August 12- Sept 6th. We are all alone in the face of death, and all alone in the face of life—how can this stark truth be funny? But in Samuel Beckett's brilliant hands it is, as you'll find out when you see Cal Shakes' production of Happy Days. Artistic Director Jonathon Moscone brings the work of the Nobel Prize-winning Beckett to the Bruns stage for the very first time with this astounding portrait of a woman buried up to her waist in sand, and in the comically painful toil of her life. Bruns Amphitheater: 100 Gateway Blvd., Orinda. Box office: (510) 548-9666 or www.calshakes.org.

LITERATURE

Orinda Books Poetry Reading, Saturday, August 8 at 3:00pm, Cheryl Dumesnil will read from her new poetry collection, "In Praise of Falling." 276 Village Square, Orinda (925) 254-7606. orindabooks@thegrid.net. www.orindabooks.com.

Orinda Theology Group. A new theology discussion group has been formed by members of the Orinda Community Church. We select books of interest to the group members and meet once a month to share insights from our reading. We wish to invite anyone interested to join us every third Tuesday of the month, at 7p in the library of the church hall at 10 Irwin Way. We have taken the summer off but will reconvene Tuesday, Sept 15 at 7pm. The book currently under study is Deepak Chopra's "The Third Jesus" which may be purchased at Orinda Books. Mention "Orinda Theologians" to get a discount there. If you have any questions, contact Orinda Community Church office at (925) 254-4906.

ART

The last Saturday Artists' Market of the summer will be on Sat, Aug. 8th from 11am-4pm at The Lafayette Gallery, 50 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette, California. The parking lot of the Lafayette Gallery is transformed into an inviting outdoor market place with artists displaying and demonstrating their art.

The Moraga Art Gallery presents a group show "Transparent Emotion" featuring the work of Monet Foster and introducing new members through August 15th. Moraga Art Gallery, 570 Center St, Rheem Valley Shopping

Center, next to Longs Drugs. Open Tuesday through Sunday, 12-5 pm. (925) 376-5407. www.moragaartgallery.com.

"Feathers, Fur and Fins," at the Lafayette Gallery, honors the creatures large and small that enrich our lives. The show is open through August 22nd. As a special feature during the show, the community is invited to bring in pet photos and related quips to be posted on the gallery's bulletin board. On Sat. August 8th, a drawing will take place for bulletin board entrants. Two winners may choose a portrait of their pet as a prize. Gallery Hours are Tuesday to Saturday, 11am

The Moraga Art Gallery presents a new group show, "Bold Statements" by local Bay Area and Lamorinda artists showing watercolors, oil painting, collage, ceramics, photography, mixed media, jewelry and glass design. August 18 - October 31. The Gallery is doubly featuring the work of Angelica Samame, painter and jewelry designs by Laura Paige. The public is invited to the Opening Reception on Saturday, August 22, from 3-5 pm. Moraga Art Gallery, 570 Center St, Rheem Valley Shopping Center/next to Longs Drugs. Open Tuesday through Sunday, 12-5 pm. (925) 376-5407.

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Not to be missed

KIDS

Wee Wednesday Summer Classes (10:00am-10:50am) Each Wednesday brings a different topic to discover with your preschooler or toddler. Wee Wednesday classes are a combination of instructor-led lessons and self-guided, hands-on experimentation and exploration. Parents must attend the entire class with their children. \$12 for first child / \$10 each additional child. Members: \$6 for first child / \$5 each additional child. Call the Box Office at (510) 336-7373 to register. Chabot Space & Science Center. 10000 Skyline Blvd. just off Highway 13 in the Oakland hills. For more information, visit www.chabot.space.org.

Back-to-School Shoe Sale to benefit kids in Africa, Saturday, Aug. 29 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The J.F. Kapnek Trust, which works with orphans and vulnerable children in Zimbabwe, has partnered with The Nurture Center in Lafayette to sell hundreds of pairs of brand new children's shoes to support preschool and pediatric HIV/AIDS prevention programs in Zimbabwe. Brands include Keen, Stride-Rite, Primigi and many more in sizes toddler to children's 4. Each pair is only \$15. All proceeds support Kapnek programs. Come early for the best selection. 3399 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. Details: info@JFKapnekTrust.org or www.JFKapnekTrust.org.

Orinda Idol 2009 Finalists Sing! Orinda Farmer's Market August 29th 10:15am-12:15pm, Orinda Idol 2009 FINALS! Orinda Theatre September 13th 11am-7:30pm It's Free! Come Early! Competition Schedule: 11:00-12:30 Elementary Gr. K-2 & 3-5; 1:00-2:15 Middle School; 2:45-4:00 High School; 4:30-5:45 Groups Gr. K-5 & 6-12; 6:15-7:30 Announcement of Winners.

The Books and Band Bash Benefiting Dancing under the Stars -Sunday Sept 13, 4-9pm. Get your party shoes on and dress to impress! Enjoy live music, dancing, autograph sessions, book sales, celebrities, martial arts demonstration, great food, drinks, and mocktails. (No alcohol will be served.) Party features 1+3 bands, 13 music sets, 13 raffles, and 13 book contributors autographing the new book! \$13 for event only (food and drinks not included) Place: Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga. For ticket info call (925) 377-7827. Event is sponsored by Be the Star You Are!®, a local literacy charity, celebrating its 10th anniversary and is all organized by local high school teens. <http://www.bethestaryouare.org/10thAnniv.html>

STS Foundation, a non profit student exchange organization, is looking for

new host families in Lafayette for two students: Ulysse, a 16 year old boy from Colombes, France and Lorena, a 15 year old girl from Burghann, Germany. They are both excellent students and will have their own spending money and health insurance. The family provides a separate bed, family meals and a safe environment. If your family is interested in being a host family please call Lillian at 1-800-522-4678 or send an email to lillian@stsfoundation.org. For more information visit www.stsfoundation.org.

OTHER

Summer Wine Festival - Sunday, August 16, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Saint Mary's College of California invites the public to an afternoon of socializing, a silent auction and wine tasting from more than two dozen California wineries at the College's 5th Annual Summer Wine Festival. Enjoy an affordable afternoon of fun, delicious appetizers and micro brews from area breweries, while supporting the College's scholarship fund. Where: Saint Mary's College of California, Soda Activity Center, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. Cost: Tickets: \$30, VIP Tickets: \$40. For more information call (415) 845-8779 or (925) 631-4200 or visit stmarys-ca.edu/wine/. Free on campus parking is available. See story page 5.

Every fourth Wednesday of the month, Avalon School of Massage Therapy and the Avalon University of Metaphysics holds a free community Healing Night from 7:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. at Avalon, 1280 Boulevard Way, Suite 214, Walnut Creek, California. During this Drop-In Clinic, Reiki Masters will be available for energy and chakra clearings and to perform Reiki to promote emotional and physical well-being and harmony. For more information, please call (925) 280-6500 or visit www.avalonofwalnutcreek.com.

Fall sessions of Tai Chi through the Moraga Parks and Recreation Dept. Registration will begin during the first week in August. Call (925) 888-7045 or go to: www.moraga.ca.us.

"It's a Luau!!" Join Beachcomber Singles for a Fundraiser for Juvenile Hall Kids. Saturday, August 22 in Hercules in the afternoon through to the night. Authentic Polynesian food including a Kaluha Pig and over 30 authentic Polynesian dancers. Many door prizes to win, drawing starting at 7:30 p.m. Music for dancing by "Now Playing" from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. Reservations are \$30; call Jerry at (510) 799-2207 EARLY for a space. Bring your favorite beverage and a gift for the girls suitable for ages 10 to 18. Dress Hawaiian and bring your swim suit.

On Saturday, September 19th from 10am - 2pm the town of Orinda will host the 5th Annual Classic Car Show. This free event, presented by Orinda Motors, continues to benefit the Seniors Around Town transportation service. In addition to American and European classic and modern exotic cars, this year's event will feature special exhibits of classic and custom motorcycles as well as vintage race cars. If you are interested in entering a car or motorcycle, please email Chip Herman: ChipHerman@hotmail.com. The car entry fee is \$50 for cars and \$35 for motorcycles. Entry fees are a tax-deductible donation. The Show will be held in Orinda Village at Orinda Motors, located at 63 Orinda Way.

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Appraisal Clinic at Hearst Art Gallery, Moraga: "What's In Your Attic?" On Wednesday, Aug. 12, from 10am to 3pm, when the Hearst Art Gallery of Saint Mary's College in Moraga will host a Bonhams and Butterfields appraisal clinic. Specialists will be on hand to appraise historic and modern California and American paintings, furniture, decorative arts, Asian art, and jewelry. Suggested donation is \$10 per item, with all proceeds benefiting Hearst Art Gallery exhibitions and educational programs. Gallery admission is free on Wednesday with an appraisal donation.

Join more than 500 Bay Area residents as we participate in The Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network's (FAAN's) Walk for Food Allergy: Moving Toward a Cure. It will take place in San Francisco, at the Music Concourse in Golden Gate Park, by the De Young Museum and California Academy of Sciences on Sat, Sept 12: Check-in 8:30 AM, Start 9:30 AM, Entertainment/Children's Activities until 12:00 PM. FAAN (www.foodallergy.org) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing public awareness of food allergy and its consequences, to providing advocacy and education, and to advancing research on behalf of all those affected by it. Volunteer to help organize the Walk or to help on Walk Day. For more information, please visit www.foodallergywalk.org.

If you have an overabundance of fruits and vegetables from your back yard garden, here's a great way to help those in need. The Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center of Walnut Creek is collecting your fresh garden produce weekly and transporting it to the pantry shelves at the Monument Crisis Center (MCC) in Concord. There are three locations where you can drop off your fruits and vegetables. 1. Morning Drop-Offs at the Peace Center Office on Mondays between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM. The Peace Center is located at the Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, 55 Eckley Lane in Walnut Creek 94596. The website is www.mtdpc.org. 2. Evening drop-offs Thursdays, from 6:00-8:00 PM at 1346 Keywood Court, Concord. 3. MCC, 2350 Monument Blvd. Suite B, Concord. The Center has Food drop off hours on the following days: Monday - Thursday 9:00am - 3:00pm and Tuesday 9:00am - 6:00pm.

The Widowed Persons Support offers the following activities during August: The LUNCH BUNCH will have a luncheon at TAHOE JOE'S, 999 Contra Costa Boulevard, Pleasant Hill on Saturday, August 15 at 1:00 p.m. Price \$15.00, includes entrée, beverage, tax and tip. For reservations call Dorothy Bohannon 925/937-6883 or Carolyn Beasley 925/254-6297.

The 40th Reunion for the Campolindo High School Class of 1969 will be held at Terzetto Cuisine 6p-11p,

September 19, 2009. The cost is \$35 pp and reservations are needed by September 1. Contact Rhonda at (925) 253-9043 or rpd51@aol.com for more information.

SENIOR

Cooking Class- Pumpkin Gnocchi- Just in time for your Thanksgiving feast. Come and enjoy making one of the most delicious Italian dishes: Gnocchetti di Zucca (pumpkin gnocchi) sprinkled with fresh goat cheese. Instructor, Lucia Falcone, was born and raised in Murano, Italy. If you like good food, come join us, and bring your appetite. This cooking class meets Thursday, September 24, in the Sequoia Room at the Lafayette Community Center, from 1 - 3. The price is \$25 for nonmembers and \$23 for Emeritus College members. Price includes lab fee. To register contact Emeritus College (925) 906-9105.

To celebrate Grandparents Day on September 13, The Vagabond Players has announced an Outstanding Grandparents contest. It is open to Contra Costa County residents whose grandparents or great-grandparents also live in the county. Judges will be looking for entries that reveal the positive influence of a grandmother-grandfather couple on their kin and others, according to the sponsor. The grandparents of the three chosen entrants will receive gift cards from participating restaurants and merchants. Entries must be 200 words or less, and postmarked no later than August 28. Send entries to The Vagabond Players, 608 Twinbridge Ct., Pleasant Hill.

Please submit events to:
calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

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In the Back Yard

Digging Deep-Gardening with Cynthia

Lions, Tigers, and Bears...Oh My

"Nature teaches beasts to know their friends." William Shakespeare

By Cynthia Brian



Bees at work

Photo Cynthia Brian

As I was wandering through my gardens, I began to count the varieties of wildlife that inhabit my personal Garden of Eden. There were cottontails, a family of deer, including three bucks, quail, hummingbirds, doves, finches, mockingbirds, robins, blue jays, an assortment of unidentified birds, and the lone hooded oriole. Soaring

overhead were red tail hawks and buzzard vultures while on the ground the gophers still plagued my lawns, and the raccoons raided my recycle bin. Scampering across the hills were two coyotes and a red fox, and I discovered the tracks and scat of bobcats. Skunks make their occasional appearance while slithering from my apple tree to my vegetable

garden was a three-foot long king snake. This indeed is the wild kingdom.

Meandering through my orchards, I looked down to recognize a plethora of plants that were named after animals. With a chuckle, I decided to discover what "animal" species flourish in my dirt. Here's a list of flowers, bushes, weeds, and trees, in no particular order, that all are named after a creature from the land, sea, or air.

Which ones do you have in your paradise?

| | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Lambsquarter | Deerweed |
| Cats Ear | Wolfs Bane |
| Chick Weed | Dogbane |
| Coyote Bush | Foxglove |
| Buzzard | Henbane |
| Breath | Horse Chestnut |
| Duck Salad | Lambs Ear |
| Cockle Bur | Leopard's Bane |
| Flea Bane | Bee Balm |
| Henbit | Donkey Tail |
| Goosefoot | Butterfly Bush |
| Turkey | Locust Tree |
| Mullein | Cockscomb |
| Horseweed | Gopher Plant |
| Pig Weed | Hen and Chicks |
| Prickly Ox Tongue | Pussywillow |
| Goose Grass | Skunk Plant |
| Foxtails | Snake plant |
| Cat Tails | Starfish |
| Swinecress | Flower |
| Birdseye | Zebra plant |
| Pearlwort | Dandelion |
| Goosefoot | Bear's |
| Fat hen | Breeches |
| Dogwood | Tiger Lily |
| Elephant Ears | |
| Catnip | |

Do you have more to add to this list? I have always named my animals after other animals. We had two dogs named Wolf and Bear, a horse named Spider, and a goose named Cat. The only the critter named properly was the potbelly pig, appropriately called Miss Piggy. No wonder nature gets confused when our nomenclature is off species!

After my last column about Smart Summer Solutions, I received a wonderful tip from Carol, a reader in Orinda, who had a successful suggestion for the gopher invasion. Her remedy for those pesky invaders is to put chocolate Exlax in their holes. She doesn't think it kills them, but she did say they leave for at least a year. When they do return, they get



Happy Gardening to You!

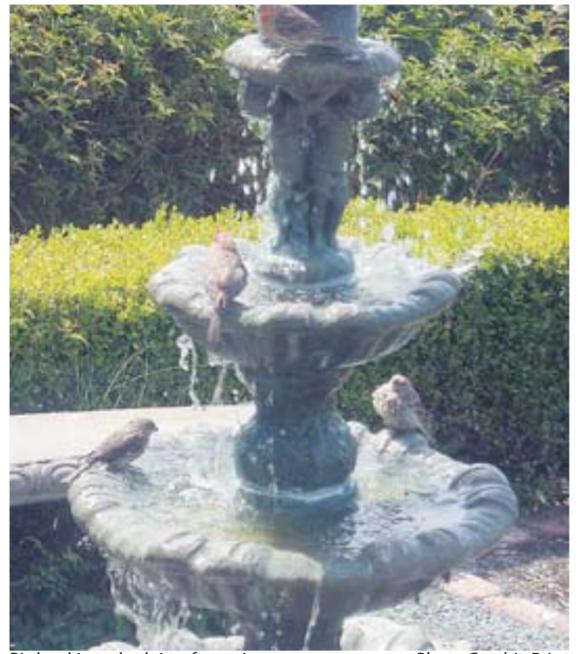
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Tune into Cynthia's weekly radio show, Starstyle-Be the Star You Are! at
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another laxative feeding and they disappear once again. I'm experimenting with her novel idea now and will keep you all posted. With all the owls perched in my oak trees, one would think that the gophers, moles, and voles would provide a feast fit for these night hunting hooters.

Speaking of pests in the garden, I have received several questions about non-chemical ways to rid the yard or slugs and snails. Since it's summer, your garden should not be too infiltrated, but come winter, these voracious munchers attack your plants with an appetite that could feed a rhinoceros. If you have frogs, toads, and snakes, you are in luck, as snails and slug infested beds are an all-you-can-eat buffet. When you water too much, or have a shade garden, you are creating the perfect habitat for a bumper crop of slugs. In my book, Be the Star You Are! 99 Gifts for Living, Loving, Laughing, and Learning to Make a Difference, I wrote a chapter called The Gift of Creativity whereby I give you my secret formula for ridding your garden of these vermin. You start with hand picking these mollusks (wear gloves as they are slimy), and then perform a new step called "The Snail Stomp". If you don't like dancing, you might fill containers with beer to allow these slippery sliders to crawl in for a drunken drowning. (Actually the snails and slugs aren't drawn to the alcohol but to the brewing fermentation of the hops.) Barriers such as copper strips, wood ashes, soap shavings, and anything salty also work.

If you are battling aphids, try dousing your plants with a strong hosing of water. You may also need to put a tablespoon of liquid detergent in a spray bottle and spray both sides of the leaves. Repeat as needed until the bugs have disappeared. Introduce ladybugs into your garden, and they'll clean up your plants in no time as aphids are their favorite food. An adult ladybug will eat up to a thousand aphids a day. In ancient times, ladybugs were considered good fortune and predicted a bountiful harvest. Release lady bugs in the morning or after sunset and make sure to water your garden before releasing so the lady bugs drink the moisture from your leaves, thus deciding to live in your garden.

At no other time of the year are backyard birdbaths and ponds more important than now when it is late summer. I admit I am always writing about the benefits of birds to the healthy climate of our gardens because they are the lions of our suburban jungles. In summer, most birds eat insects and if you don't have a birdbath, a fountain, or a saucer of water for them to bathe



Birds taking a bath in a fountain

Photo Cynthia Brian



California Kingsnake

Photo Cynthia Brian

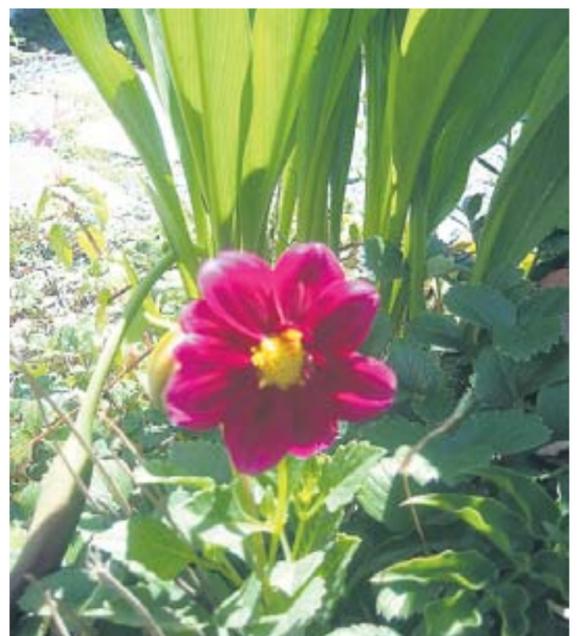


Photo Cynthia Brian

and cool themselves, you may miss one of the great joys of the season. Don't fill water to the top because although birds may be able to drink, they won't be able to splash around. You can put rocks or pebbles in the birdbath that they can stand on. Replace the water often and if possible, install a re-circulating pump. One last thing when positioning your birdbath—make sure it is in the open away from predators. Although birdbaths may look great with plants draping over them, birds won't play in them because of the possibility of peril. Also, be on the look-out for baby birds falling from

nests. Just this morning I found what I thought was a dead baby but when I picked it up, the little bugger was still breathing. After wrapping it in a cloth, I warmed it on a heating pad, climbed a ladder to find the nest in the Japanese Maple tree, and returned the infant snugly to its siblings. A few minutes later the three mockingbird fledglings were hungrily calling for mom.

The next time you go out into your backyard sanctuary, be on the lookout for lions, tigers, and bears. Of course, you may recognize them as dandelions, tiger lilies, and bears breeches! Oh my!

Cynthia's Digging Deep Garden Guide for August

As we approach the end of summer, it's time to start thinking about our fall gardens. Since we have a mild winter here in Lamorinda, fall is an excellent time to sow many of our garden favorites for a winter and spring maturity. I'll be writing more about fall plantings in the next issue of Digging Deep, however, I want to encourage you to spend a few of your last lazy days of summer pondering how you can continue to grow your own healthy food throughout the winter. A few of the vegetables to put on your fall planting list are beets, peas, kale, lettuce, spinach, Swiss Chard, and radishes. By growing your own food, you have control over the nutrition and freshness your family will enjoy. Most of all be soothed and comforted by the joys of nature.

What's in full bloom in August besides roses, oleanders, society garlic, and marigolds? Enjoy clematis, hollyhock, dahlia, lobelia, zinnia, petunias, bougainvillea, pink bower vine, buddleia, gladiola, cannas, pentstemon, Shasta daisy, begonia, agapanthus, yarrow, potato vine, pink silk trees, crepe myrtles, lavender, celosia, firecracker plant, geranium, my favorite four-o'clocks, and many other summer annuals. Snip a few sprigs to bring summer indoors.

"Flowers have an expression of countenance as much as men or animals." Henry Ward Beecher

- DEADHEAD summer annuals and perennials for a burst of fall color. Be careful to leave some foliage as photosynthesis is still in process to nourish the plant for the upcoming winter.
- FILL your fountains with fresh water and watch the bird show. Add one near your office window for a bit of relaxation and distraction throughout a long day.
- SOAK deeply. Lawns need special attention during the heat.
- PRUNE the suckers that grow from trunks of trees and roses. They zap the strength of the mother plant and can kill the rootstock.
- CLIP sprays of roses to enhance both your indoor and outdoor entertainment.
- LAWN mower blades need to be set to the highest position so than grass roots are shaded from the hot August sunshine.
- HARVEST fruits and vegetables. Fresh picked corn, tomatoes, pears, and zucchini are the tastiest this month.
- PICK herbs in the morning, use fresh, or dry upside down in a cool dark room for later culinary creations.
- SEARCH for snails and slugs by flashlight at night and try my original "Snail Stomp" dance.
- RAKE any fallen leaves, remove diseased stems and leaves from plants.
- PLUCK dandelions from your lawn and toss in your salad for extra zip and vitamins.
- ADD a container filled with brightly colored zinnias and marigolds to spice up your patio.
- WATCH for baby birds falling from nests. When you find a baby, keep it warm until you can locate the nest where you'll gently return the flier.
- PULL out the pillows and plop on your lawn to watch the stars.
- FIRE up your barbecue to grill peaches, pears, and nectarines straight from your trees for a tasty, healthy dessert.
- SWING in your hammock and read a book.
- TEACH a friend to dig deeply. Love is in the air!

May the sun shine in your garden and the stars in your heart.

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From Court to Kitchen

By Susie Iventosch



Mikaela Cowles Photo Tod Fierner

We are touting one of our very own this week. Mikaela Cowles, a contributing writer to the Lamorinda Weekly sports section, happens to be a very good cook! The former Gaels five-year scholarship basketball player is working toward a Masters of Fine Arts in Fiction Writing at St. Mary's College. She is writing a fiction-style cookbook for her thesis, which she hopes to have published after graduation.

"The book is a collection of fictional stories," Mikaela explained. "I have a food element in every story and include a recipe with each."

Mikaela said the recipes come from a variety of sources, but some are recipes that her mom originally taught her and then she adapted to suit her own style. Others she learned to make on her own by researching the Internet or pouring through cookbooks.

"I wanted to learn how to make risotto, so my boyfriend bought me a risotto cookbook," she said. "I also went online to learn more about the dish. I like

to explore online to learn about different food concepts."

Mikaela's favorite risotto is made with sautéed shallots, garlic, artichoke hearts and a tiny amount of Asiago cheese. Apparently she is not alone in her love of this dish, her friend and roommate, Julie McAvoy said this is one of her all-time favorite "Mikaela" dishes, too.

"Mikaela has always been a fabulous cook," Julie pointed out. "She is very inventive with recipes and invites her friends over to try them out. Her recipes are always delicious, but still, she is constantly coming up with ideas to improve them. I think my very favorite is her artichoke heart risotto."

Julie and Mikaela co-authored a book their senior year at St. Mary's to show college students how to eat and drink well – cheaply. The book is aptly named Work Hard, Party Hard and though not published, was a lot of fun for the girls to produce.

"We had tons of fun writing our book," Julie said. "It was supposed to show how to

cook good food for college students on a budget. We not only talked about recipes, but also included dinner party games, the best way to find good wine sales and the staples to always have on hand."

According to Mikaela, one of their professors, Mike Riley, has authored several cookbooks and after reading the draft, he put Mikaela in touch with different writers and cooking groups to get her more involved in the cooking world.

"He taught me a lot about how to format a cookbook, including recipe layout and introductions," she noted.

Mikaela is in her second year of grad school, and hopes to have her manuscript completed by March. She currently

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works at "across the way" in Moraga, a novelty home goods store that carries an eclectic collection of outdoor furniture, candles, dish and bath towels, barbecues and table wear, among other interesting household items.

"I'd love to write for a food magazine, but unfortu-

nately, there is not a lot of money in writing, so I'm not sure," she said. "But, writing and communicating are vital for anything I pursue. After working in sales at 'across the way' who knows? I might like to go into high-level sales some day. It's really fun and challenging!"

Born and raised in Seattle,

Mikaela plans to return to Washington after she completes her master's degree.

"I'm a Northwest girl!"

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Mikaela's Artichoke Risotto

(Serves 6 as a side dish, or 4 as a main dish)

INGREDIENTS

- 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
- 2-3 shallots, minced
- 1-2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 can (15-ounce) artichoke hearts, drained and finely chopped
- 1 cup Arborio rice
- ¼ cup white wine
- 1/8-1/4 cup Asiago cheese, grated

DIRECTIONS

Heat olive oil in pot over medium-high heat and cook shallots until translucent, but not browned. Add garlic and sauté just until fragrant. Then add risotto and cook for about one minute. Add wine, and continue to cook, stirring all the while, until liquid is evaporated. Reduce heat just a little bit, and add broth, one soup ladle at a time, stirring into rice, but then leaving alone until absorbed. Then add another ladle of broth, continuing the process until all broth is used. At the very end, stir artichoke hearts and cheese into rice mixture. Serve hot as a side dish, which Mikaela does, or as a main dish, as I did!



Photo Susie Iventosch



Susie Iventosch

This recipe is available on our web site.

Go to:

www.lamorindaweekly.com

Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com

Many of our readers like Susie's recipes. Our website now features a link to our recipe page where you can read, print or download all of the recipes we have published.

If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at 925-377-0977

LAMORINDA's Restaurants

... updated July 8, 2009 ...

| | | | | |
|---|----------|--|--|--|
| American | | | | |
| Bistro , 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 283-7108 | | | |
| Chow Restaurant, 53 Lafayette Cir, Laf, | 962-2469 | | | |
| Quiznos, 3651 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 962-0200 | | | |
| Ranch House, 1012 School St, Mor, | 376-5127 | | | |
| Terzetto Cuisine, 1419 Moraga Way, Mor, | 376-3832 | | | |
| The Cheese Steak Shop, 3455 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 283-1234 | | | |
| BBQ | | | | |
| Bo's Barbecue , 3422 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 283-7133 | | | |
| Burger Joint | | | | |
| Flippers , 960 Moraga Rd, Laf, | 284-1567 | | | |
| Nation's Giant Hamburgers, 400 Park, Mor, | 376-8888 | | | |
| Nation's Giant Hamburgers , 76 Moraga Way, Ori, | 254-8888 | | | |
| Café | | | | |
| Ferrari- Lucca Delicatessens, 23 Lafayette Cir, Laf, | 299-8040 | | | |
| Geppetto's caffe, 87 Orinda Way, Ori, | 253-9894 | | | |
| Mamounia Express Cafe, 3732 Mt. Diablo Blvd # 179, Laf, | 299-1372 | | | |
| Rising Loafer, 3643 Mt. Diablo Blvd Ste B, Laf, | 284-8816 | | | |
| Susan Foord Catering & Cafe, 965 Mt. View Dr., Laf, | 299-2469 | | | |
| California Cuisine | | | | |
| Artisan Bistro, 1005 Brown St., Laf | 962-0882 | | | |
| Metro Lafayette, 3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 284-4422 | | | |
| Shelby's, 2 Theatre Sq, Ori, | 254-9687 | | | |
| Chinese | | | | |
| Asia Palace Restaurant, 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor, | 376-0809 | | | |
| Chef Chao Restaurant, 343 Rheem Blvd, Mor, | 376-1740 | | | |
| China Moon Restaurant, 380 Park St, Mor, | 376-1828 | | | |
| The Great Wall Restaurant , 3500 Golden Gate Way, Laf, | 284-3500 | | | |
| Hsiangs Mandarin Cuisine, 1 Orinda Way # 1, Ori, | 253-9852 | | | |
| Lily's House , 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #A, Laf, | 284-7569 | | | |
| Mandarin Flower , 581 Moraga Rd, Mor, | 376-7839 | | | |
| Panda Express, 3608 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 962-0288 | | | |
| Szechwan Chinese Restaurant, 79 Orinda Way, Ori, | 254-2020 | | | |
| Uncle Yu's Szechuan, 999 Oak Hill Rd, Laf, | 283-1688 | | | |
| Yan's Restaurant, 3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 284-2228 | | | |
| Coffee Shop | | | | |
| Millie's Kitchen, 1018 Oak Hill Rd #A, Laf, | 283-2397 | | | |
| Squirrel's Coffee Shop, 998 Moraga Rd, Laf, | 284-7830 | | | |
| Village Inn Café, 204 Village Square, Ori, | 254-6080 | | | |
| Continental | | | | |
| Petar's Restaurant, 32 Lafayette Cir, Laf, | 284-7117 | | | |
| Vino Restaurant, 3531 Plaza Way, Laf, | 284-1330 | | | |
| Duck Club Restaurant, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 283-7108 | | | |
| French | | | | |
| Chevalier Restaurant, 960 Moraga Road, Laf, | 385-0793 | | | |
| Hawaiian Grill | | | | |
| Lava Pit , 2 Theatre Square, St. 142, Ori, | 253-1338 | | | |
| Indian | | | | |
| Swad Indian Cuisine, 3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 962-9575 | | | |
| Italian | | | | |
| Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria, 975 Moraga Rd, Laf, | 283-3869 | | | |
| Knox Restaurant, Lounge, 3576 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 284-5225 | | | |
| La Finestra Ristorante, 100 Lafayette Cir, #101, Laf, | 284-5282 | | | |
| La Piazza, 15 Moraga Way, Ori, | 253-9191 | | | |
| Mangia Ristorante Pizzeria, 975 Moraga Rd, Laf, | 284-3081 | | | |
| Michael's, 1375 Moraga Way, Mor, | 376-4300 | | | |
| Mondello's, 337 Rheem Blvd, Mor, | 376-2533 | | | |
| Pizza Antica, 3600 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 299-0500 | | | |
| Pizzeria Amoroma Restaurante, 65 Moraga Way, Ori | 253-7662 | | | |
| Postino, 3565 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 299-8700 | | | |
| Ristorante Amoroma, 360 Park St, Mor, | 377-7662 | | | |
| Japanese | | | | |
| Asia Palace Sushi Bar, 1460 B Moraga Rd, Mor, | 376-0809 | | | |
| Blue Ginko, 3518-A Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 962-9020 | | | |
| Kane Sushi, 3474 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 284-9709 | | | |
| Kirin Sushi, 356 Park Street, Mor | 376-2872 | | | |
| Niwa Restaurant, 1 Camino Sobrante # 6, Ori, | 254-1606 | | | |
| Serika Restaurant, 2 Theatre Sq # 118, Ori, | 254-7088 | | | |
| Yu Sushi, 19 Moraga Way, Ori, | 253-8399 | | | |
| Mediterranean | | | | |
| Petra Café, 2 Theatre Sq # 105, Ori, | 254-5290 | | | |
| Oasis Café, 3594 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 299-8822 | | | |
| Turquoise Mediterranean Grill, 70 Moraga Way, Ori, | 253-2004 | | | |
| Mexican | | | | |
| 360 Gourmet Burrito, 3655 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 299-1270 | | | |
| Casa Gourmet Burrito , 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf | 284-4415 | | | |
| El Charro Mexican Dining, 3339 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 283-2345 | | | |
| El Jaro Mexican Cafe, 3563 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 283-6639 | | | |
| La Cocina Mexicana, 23 Orinda Way, Ori, | 258-9987 | | | |
| Mucho wraps, 1375-B Moraga Way, Mor, | 377-1203 | | | |
| Baja Fresh Mexican Grill, 3596 Mt. Diabale Blvd, Laf, | 283-8740 | | | |
| Celia's Restaurant, 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 283-8288 | | | |
| El Balazo, 3518D Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 284-8700 | | | |
| Maya Mexican Grill, 74 Moraga Way, Ori, | 258-9049 | | | |
| Numero Uno Taqueria, 3616 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 299-1333 | | | |
| Pizza | | | | |
| Mountain Mike's Pizza, 3614 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 283-6363 | | | |
| Mountain Mike's Pizza, 504 Center St, Mor, | 377-6453 | | | |
| Pennini's, 1375 Moraga Rd, Mor, | 376-1515 | | | |
| Round Table Pizza , 361 Rheem Blvd, Mor, | 376-1411 | | | |
| Round Table Pizza , 3637 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 283-0404 | | | |
| Village Pizza, 19 Orinda Way # Ab, Ori, | 254-1200 | | | |
| Zamboni's Pizza, 1 Camino Sobrante # 4, Ori, | 254-2800 | | | |
| Sandwiches/Deli | | | | |
| Bianca's Deli , 1480 Moraga Rd # A, Mor, | 376-4400 | | | |
| Europa Hofbrau Deli & Pub, 64 Moraga Way , Ori, | 254-7202 | | | |
| Kasper's Hot Dogs, 103 Moraga Way, Ori, | 253-0766 | | | |
| Noah's Bagels, 3518 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 299-0716 | | | |
| Orinda Deli, 19 F Orinda Way, Ori, | 254-1990 | | | |
| Subway, 396 Park St., Mor, | 376-2959 | | | |
| Subway, 3322 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf, | 284-2627 | | | |
| Subway, Theatre Square, Ori, | 258-0470 | | | |
| Seafood | | | | |
| Yankee Pier , 3593 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 283-4100 | | | |
| Singaporean/Malaysian | | | | |
| Kopitiam, 3647 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Laf, | 299-1653 | | | |
| Steak | | | | |
| Casa Orinda, 20 Bryant Way, Ori, | 254-2981 | | | |
| Tea | | | | |
| Patisserie Lafayette, 71 Lafayette Cir, Laf, | 283-2226 | | | |
| Tea Party by Appointment, 107 Orinda Way, Ori, | 254-2206 | | | |
| Thai | | | | |
| Amarin Thai Cuisine, 3555 Mt. Diablo Blvd #B, Laf, | 283-8883 | | | |
| Baan Thai , 99 Orinda Way, Ori, | 253-0989 | | | |
| Royal Siam, 512 Center Street, Mor, | 377-0420 | | | |
| Siam Orchid, 23 Orinda Way # F, Ori, | 253-1975 | | | |
| Vietnamese | | | | |
| Little Hearty Noodle, Pho & Pasta, 578 Center St., Mor, | 376-7600 | | | |

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SPORTS LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS NEWS

Under Par and Above Average

Photo and information provided by Barbie P. Kallerud



Photo provided

Campolindo High School student Bjorn Kallerud has hit a hot streak on the golf course. In the last six months he has placed in the top ten in eight tournaments. He also was named the 2008-2009 Most Valuable Player of the Diablo Foothill Athletic League (DFAL).

- March 14-15:** First place (149) at the California Junior Tour at Foxtail Golf Course.
- April 4-5:** Third place (145) at the California Junior Tour Spring Championships—Coyote Creek.
- June 15:** Second place (68) at Spring Creek; Qualified for the Junior World Golf Championships
- June 22:** Medalist 36-hole win (142, two under par); Qualified for United States Golf Association (USGA) Junior Amateur
- June 24:** Fourth Place 36-holes (147, three over par) at Nor Cal PGA Championships, Paradise Valley golf course
- July 7-8:** Seventh place (second best score on second day, one over par) NCGA/JGANC
- July 13-17:** Made the cut at Junior Worlds (cut was made after the first three days) at Torrey Pines (84, 73, 71).
- July 27:** Tied for eighth place (71, 71) at the USGA Amateur Qualifying, missed qualifying for the USGA Amateurs by two strokes.

Boys Win Silver and Gold at the Judo Championships

Submitted by Joanne Lin



Photo Joanne Lin

Derek Lin, incoming ninth-grader at Miramonte High School, left, won the silver medal in the 53 kg division at the 2009 Junior National Judo Championships held July 11-12. Sensei Conrad Hisaka is pictured middle along with teammate Ryan Hisaka, right, who won the gold medal in the 48 kg division and was named Most Outstanding Male Competitor by the United States Judo Federation.



Photo Bob Johnson

The Soda Moms women's 50 and over water polo team competed in the Senior National Games this weekend at Stanford. They finished second in the competition. The Senior National Games are currently underway around the Bay Area, <http://www.2009seniorgames.org/>. Approximately 10,000 athletes from around the country will be competing over the next two weeks.

Gaels Look Ahead

Future Basketball Player Selected to Boomers 2009 Roster

Written with information provided by Rich Davi



Future Saint Mary's basketball player, Matthew Dellavedova, was selected to be one of 12 players to compete for

Australia's top national team, The Boomers. The Boomers are headed to South America for six games where they will play Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay twice before returning on August 10. The campaign is part of preparation for the 2009 FIBA Oceania Championship in New Zealand, beginning August 23 in Sydney, Australia, where World Championship seeding is on the line.

Dellavedova averaged 10.9 points, five rebounds and three assists per game in nine games while competing for the Australian Institute of Sports in the

Southeast Australian Basketball League. He also was captain of the Australian U19 team at the FIBA U19 World Championships in New Zealand earlier this month. *C. Graveson*

Third-grader Wins Bronze in National Competition

Submitted by Amy Jeter



Photo provided

Moraga resident, eight-year-old Ryan Jeter (left), won a bronze medal in both Kata (forms) and kumite (sparring) at the Amateur Athletic Union Karate Nationals Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

Send sports stories and ideas to:
sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com
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Team Effort Leads to Success

West Diablo Valley All-Stars Play in Western Regionals

Submitted by Bruce Kelley and Ann Chen

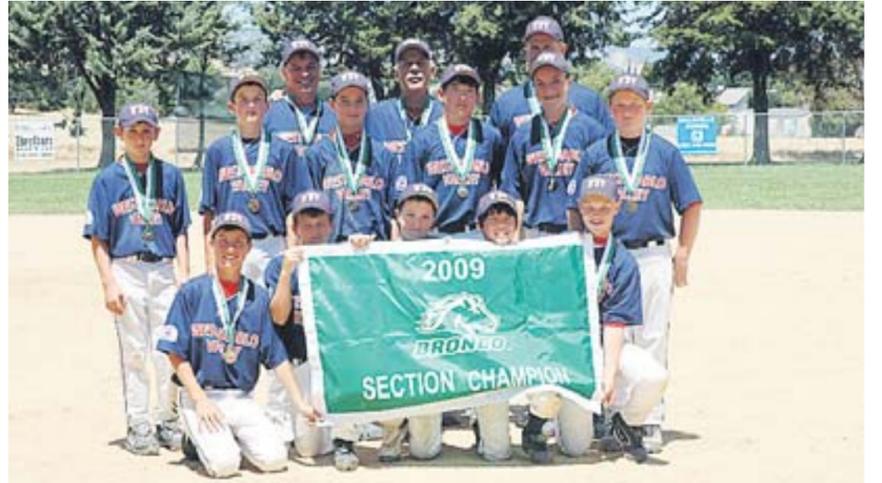


Photo Michele Armosino

The West Diablo Valley (WDV) Broncos, a team of all-stars from Moraga and Orinda, reached the Western Regional Tournament in San Jose last week. WDV had qualified for the Regional tournament earlier in July by winning the Sectional Tournament in Vacaville, where the team, growing in confidence, dispatched four opponents in a row by a combined score of 56 to 6. The local all-stars were only two wins away from qualifying for the Bronco World Series in Monterey.

The team, managed by Milt Panagotacos, took the first two games in the tournament with spectacular defense, timely hitting, aggressive base running, and solid pitching. Losses to powerhouse squads from Modesto and Morgan Hill ended the team's hot streak.

The first win of the Western Regionals, a 5-1 victory against one

of the favorites in the tournament, Blossom Valley, demonstrated the boy's potential for success. The win came from a combined team effort. Pitchers James Vaccaro and closer Jake Rider shut down Blossom Valley's potential for offense while in-the-field defense came from Neil Kelley, Ben Skinner, Scotty Smoot, Brandon Armosino, Megan Reid and Tommy Larsen, Scotty Chen and Neal Weikert. Offense was led by Chen with three hits.

In the second win of the tournament, a 4-2 victory against Sierra Valley of Sacramento.

Kelley led the pitching efforts for five innings. Vaccaro pitched lights out in the last two innings for the save. Armosino and Reid Gibbs led the offensive attack with two hits each.

The match-up against Morgan Hill, the eventual tournament win-

ner, proved to be a tougher challenge for WDV. Morgan Hill took a three-run lead early in the game. The Broncos answered back with a run led by Vaccaro's two-run homer over the left-center wall. Kelley rode the offensive momentum to third base by stealing second and third. Smoot drove Kelley home by taking a base-on-balls and running to second to draw the throw, allowing Kelley to score. The Bronco's offense ended there however and Morgan Hill took control of the game and the victory, 6-3.

The Broncos were eliminated from the tournament with a loss to Bel Passi of Modesto.

Panagotacos said, "As we saw, to win the tournament at this level is extremely difficult, but I wouldn't have put anything past this group. It's one of the finest teams I've coached."

Don't Miss Out on a Love Game

Moraga Country Club hosts Stead Open

Submitted By John Greenblatt



Stead Open 2008 Photo Sheryl Cardiff

While swimming is often the focus of the summer season, the Moraga Country Club has not forgotten that the tennis season

is in full swing. Tuesday, August 4th marked the first day of the Stead Open which runs through Sunday. The tournament has a 26-year history and has been sponsored by the Stead Family of Fine Automobiles for 23 years.

With a \$25,000 purse, the tournament attracts top Satellite, collegiate and local players. Local entrants this year include Tyler Browne, a Las Lomas graduate and current assistant tennis coach at UC Berkeley; Chris Rasmussen, a Miramonte graduate and former Stanford player; along with Nick Ballou (Campolindo), John Karsant (Acalanes), Mike Reiser (De LaSalle), and Evan Rose (Campolindo), currently playing for the Golden Bears.

Last year's tournament champions, Maria Sanchez, currently playing for USC, and Robert Yim, a touring professional, are also returning to defend their titles.

The tournament features men's and women's singles and doubles as well as mixed doubles. Matches begin each day at 9 a.m. Thursday evening also features two matches and a barbeque at 5:30 p.m.

Semi finals start at 9 a.m. on Saturday. The women's doubles final takes place on Saturday at 1 p.m. The rest of the final matches begin on Sunday with the women's singles at 9 a.m. and are followed by the men's singles, men's doubles and mixed doubles.

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Lafayette Little League All-Stars

Submitted by Todd Bequette



Back row coaches/managers: Greg Young, Adam Henderson, Cliff Eisner, Brian Berry, and Dan Ventrelle
 Back row players: Grant Young, Tommy Namura, Drew Ventrelle, Tommy Henderson, Matt Bostwick, Greg Genovese, Adam Remotto, Max Flower, Jake Berry; In front: Jack Eisner, Ryan Cardiff
 Photo Sheryl Cardiff

District 4 11-year-olds All Stars

Lafayette 9 North Oakland 2

Stylish lefty Grant Young gave up one earned run and pitched a complete game to lead the Lafayette Little League 11-Year Old All-Stars to an opening win in the District 4 Tournament. The Lafayette Stars were led at the plate by Max Flower, who went two-for-four with a two-run homerun. Flower's homer was followed immediately by a Tommy Henderson solo shot, as the teammates went back to back. Lafayette lead-off hitter Drew Ventrelle went two-for-four and scored two runs for the Lafayette Stars and Adam Remotto turned in several sterling plays at second base. Troy Schmidt, Robbie Donovan and Russell Tanner all had hits for North Oakland who were coming off a nice win over Clayton Valley the previous night.

Lafayette 4 Alameda 2

Great pitching, stout defense and timely hitting were the key components for the Lafayette Little League 11-year old All Stars 4-2 victory over the Alameda All Stars. The win earned Lafayette the right to play for the District 4 Championship. Grant Young held Alameda to two runs over five and a third innings and also contributed a two run home run blast in the top of the third to put Lafayette up 2-0. Lafayette extended the lead to 4-0 in the top of the sixth as Adam Remotto and Jake Berry had clutch RBI singles. Lafayette exhibited strong defense as they had no errors and turned in two web gems. Alameda scoring threats were put out as right fielder Jack Eisner made an inning ending circus catch in the bottom of the first and left fielder Drew Ventrelle executed a perfect relay throw to Young in the second to nail an Alameda runner at home plate, ending the inning. Alameda bats came alive in the sixth as Robby Jackson led off with a double, followed by a RBI single by David Cruz. Cruz then scored on a Peter Leung RBI double making the score 4-2. After an Alameda strikeout, Max Flower relieved Young and retired the next two batters to close the game.

Lafayette 10 Alameda 9

Lafayette Little Leaguers made history last Monday night in Concord, winning the first District Championship in league history with a gut-wrenching victory over Alameda. Matt Bostwick and Adam Remotto each

hammered a homerun and knocked in three to power Lafayette in a see-saw affair. Alameda jumped out to a two-run lead in the top of the first, but Lafayette grabbed the lead back in the bottom of the inning, scoring three after two were out on a triple by Max Flower, an RBI single by Tommy Henderson, and Remotto's big fly. After Alameda tallied three more in the second, Lafayette struck back with four runs in the bottom of the third on a double by Henderson, a single by Remotto, and sacrifice bunt by Greg Genovese, and Bostwick's moon shot over the centerfield fence. The tough Alameda team fought back in the top of the fourth on the strength of a two-run homer by Jennifer Lewis, but Lafayette held on for the win. The 11-year old boys now advance to the Sectionals in Petaluma.

District 4 10-Year-olds All Stars

Lafayette 5 Clayton Valley

The Lafayette 10-Year Old All-Stars began the 20-Team District 4 Tournament on a winning note, edging a tough Clayton Valley team. Lafayette was led by a stellar pitching performance by Grant Jackson, who allowed only two hits and six total base runners in five dominant innings. Jackson was supported by strong defense, including a sizzling double play by Andrew McKendell and Alex Baldwin. The Lafayette Stars got clutch RBI hits from Jack "Big Cat" Cassidy, Devin Regan and Josh Goodell, who hammered a double to the left field wall. Also delivering big hits were Sam Dinerman, Cole Gallagher, McKendell and Jack Stryker. Regan earned the save, closing the door on Clayton Valley in the sixth.

Lafayette 5 Continental (Walnut Creek) 0

Behind the dominant pitching of Jack Cassidy the Lafayette 10-Year Old All Stars remained undefeated and un-scored upon in the District 4 Tournament, whitewashing the Continental Little League All Stars from Walnut Creek. Cassidy pitched a complete game 4 Hitter and only allowed 5 total base runners. Lafayette's defense sparkled, led by two double plays, Grant Jackson and Josh Goodell combining for one and Alex Baldwin and Goodell on another that closed out the contest. Devin Regan, Josh Goodell, Cole Gallagher, Grant Jackson and Jack Stryker had big days at the plate for the Lafayette Stars.



Back Row (l to r): Buddy Rowell, Mark Vicencio, Jon Ewing
 Middle Row (l to r): Matty Vicencio, Tyler Ewing, William Grace, Jason Cornell, Ryan Regan, Michael Bone
 Front Row from left to right: Ty Whelehan, Seppi Ortman, Ben Ross, Dexter Varrelmann, Robby Rowell
 Photo Todd Bequette



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Nothing 'Sleepy' About It

Sleepy Hollow hosts Invitational Swim Meet

Submitted by Andra Berkman

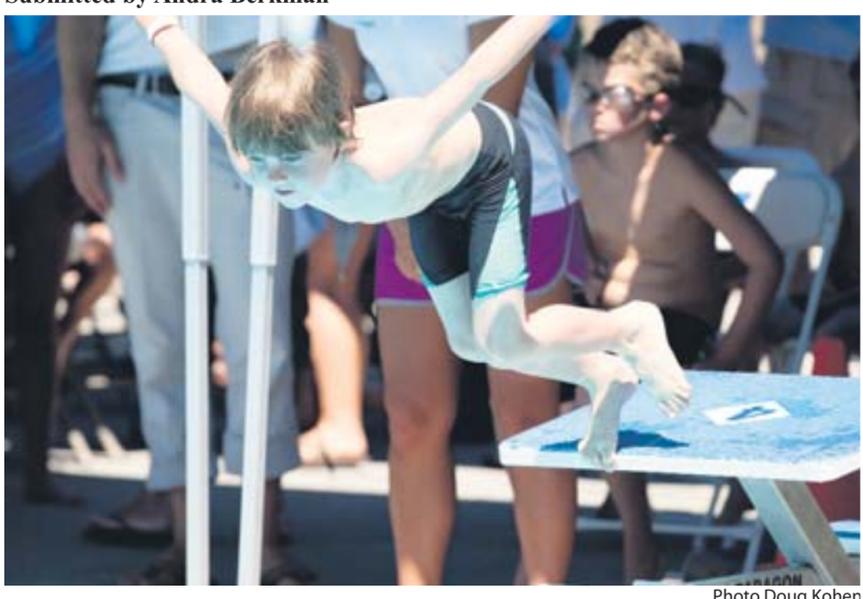


Photo Doug Kohen

On Sunday July 26, Sleepy Hollow Swim and Tennis Club held its 23rd Annual "B" Invitational swim meet. There were approximately 800 swimmers competing from nine swim clubs from the Orinda-Moraga Pool Association. The weather was perfect for this all-day meet. Sleepy Hollow head coaches Matt Ehrenberger and Kevin Honey have strict parameters for swimmer entry submissions; only those who qualify as 'B' swimmers in their respective events can compete. The great benefit: all entered athletes have an opportunity to excel and achieve top placements. Congratulations to the following swimmers who earned high-point awards:



Allison Burkhalter of Sleepy Hollow

Photo Doug Kohen

High Point Winners:

- 6 and under women – Emily Miller, 6 – Moraga Ranch
- 6 and under men – Fritz Bretall, 5 – Orinda Park Pool
- 7-8 women – Peyton Smith, 7 – Sleepy Hollow
- 7-8 men – Andy Kang, 8 – Miramonte Swim Club
- 9-10 women – Charlotte Curran, 10 – Orinda Park Pool
- 9-10 men – Peter Klem, 10 – Orinda Park Pool
- 11-12 women – Abby Brzezinski, 12 – Sleepy Hollow
- 11-12 men – Alex Eberle, 12 – Orinda Country Club
- 13-14 women – Elodie Kwan, 14 – Sleepy Hollow
- 13-14 men – Matt Solit, 14 – Sleepy Hollow
- 15-18 women – Kelly Singsank, 17 – Sleepy Hollow
- 15-18 men – Pierce Haley, 17 – Sleepy Hollow; and Mark Coufal, 15 – Moraga Valley Pool (Tie)



Photo Doug Kohen

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