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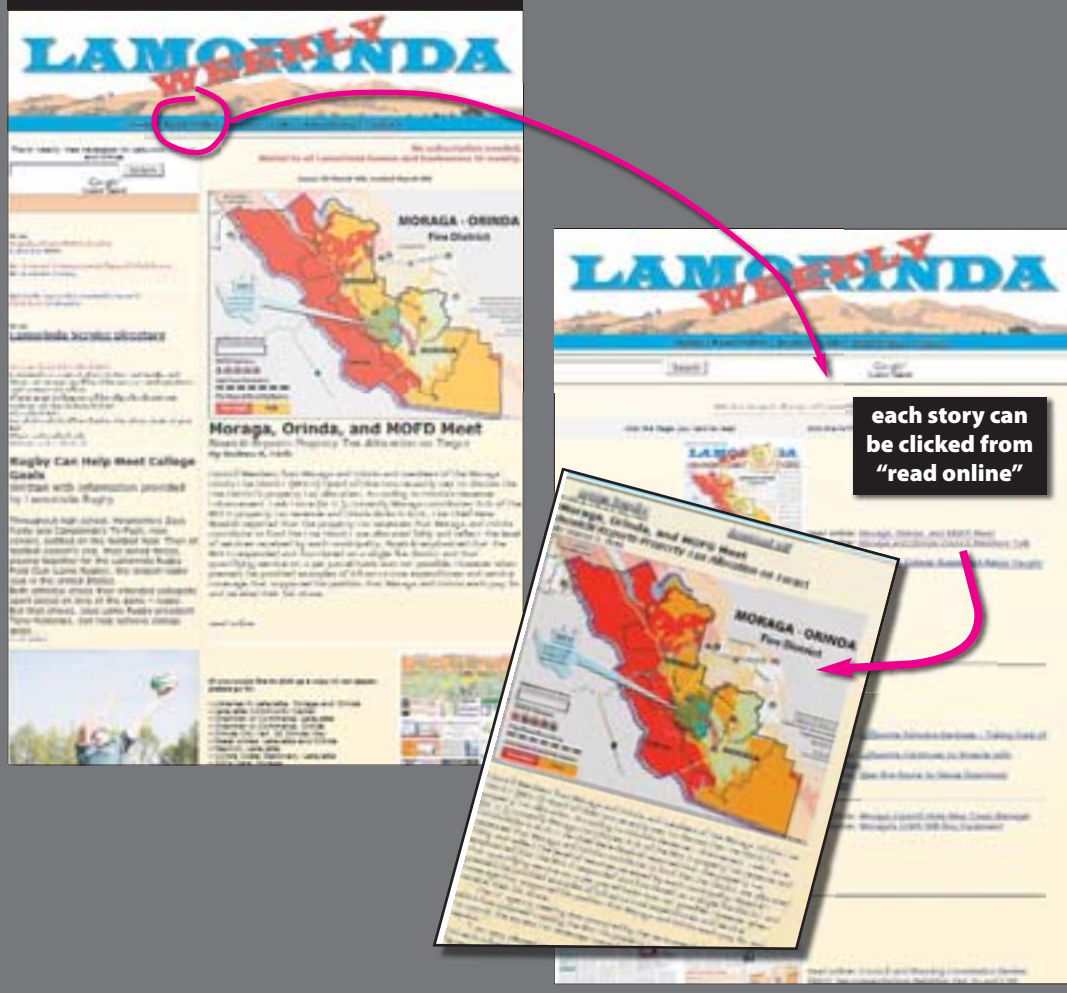
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• COMMUNITY Service •

We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions can be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, with the subject header In Service to the Community.

Acalanes Valley & Ridge

Neighborhood celebrates in sweet style

Submitted by Sue Keeley



Dreyer's party crowd

Photo submitted

I scream, you scream, we all scream for ice cream...and that's exactly how almost 100 residents of Acalanes Valley & Ridge Neighborhood celebrated. Cups and cones of Mango Tango, Take the Cake, French Silk and, of course, vanilla bean and chocolate were enjoyed by young and old. This award—from Dreyer's Ice Cream Neighborhood Salute—was the cherry on top of safety improvements on Stanley Boulevard and recognition of this fabulous neighborhood. New residents as well as some people who grew up as children in the neighborhood and shared great memories came to the gathering. "Caring. Connected. Com-

passionate. Family and community centered. Those words aptly describe our neighborhood...where we are proud to say we are not just neighbors but friends too," was part of the essay submitted to Dreyer's by 25-year resident Sue Keeley.

"My wife and I with our three boys were delighted to spend the summer's eve in the company of our neighbors," said Dave Roth. "We moved in two years ago and walking home in the twilight hours we talked about how great it would be to make a neighborhood get together like this a regular habit. We are grateful for new sidewalks and friendly neighbors!"

The neighborhood has spent much of the past year working with the city to install sidewalks and add traffic calming features to Stanley Boulevard. It's not unusual to see as many as 25 children walking to school along this busy street as well as many other residents and pooches. The recently installed sidewalk has made life safer for everyone.

Tatia MacKinnon, a resident of the neighborhood, said that as she walked down Stanley to the party it was heartwarming to see people coming out of their houses all along the way. "Everyone was talking about what a great way this was to celebrate our neighborhood."

Girl Scout Gold Award Project Benefits Crisis Center



Photo submitted

Recent Campolindo grad Hillary Foss (and helpers) assembled 388 toiletry kits at the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church on Aug. 19 for donation to the Monument Crisis Center as part of her Girl Scout Gold Award project. Foss was helped by Lafayette residents Chloe McCullough, Molly Davis, Madeleine and Julie Helvey, Orinda residents Hannah and Nolan Brown, and Sam and Lucy Foss, Moraga residents Ben Rudolph and Cameron Bell, and Walnut Creek resident Katie Ruefnacht.

Probiotics:

Good Bacteria for Dogs and Cats

By Mona Miller, DVM

The use of probiotics in veterinary medicine is becoming very popular, and certainly has a role in such disease problems as chronic diarrhea and inflammatory bowel disease. Additionally, given that the gastrointestinal tract is the largest immune organ in the body, there may be some benefit in using probiotics as a general immune stimulant. In human medicine, probiotics can be very useful in treatment plans for ulcerative colitis, inflammatory bowel disease and infectious diarrhea. However, there is still a lot that we don't know about the use of this type of supplement.

What is a probiotic? A probiotic is a protected culture of live "good" bacteria that can colonize the lower intestine. Thus, it must be protected from stomach acid so that it can move into and attach to the inner wall of the lower intestine. There the bacteria make by-products that are nourishing to the intestine and the local immune system cells found in the gut. This bacterial fermentation activity contributes 10% of daily energy requirements for humans, but only 2-7% of

maintenance energy for dogs, and very little for cats. From this it can be inferred that probiotics are more important for herbivores and omnivores than carnivores. The type of "good" bacteria varies from species to species, and the ideal probiotic should originate in the species being treated. Crossover may not be effective – that is, a human probiotic may not be beneficial for a dog or a cat.

Probiotics may have some negative effects as well, and sometimes with severe consequences. It has been demonstrated in human studies that too much probiotic in an immune-compromised individual may cause bacterial invasion of the bloodstream (septicemia). According to a recent veterinary article, there have been no reports of the same occurring in animals. However, the author of this review advised caution if probiotic supplementation was to be considered in animals who are severely immune-compromised, critically ill, or have severe intestinal disease.

There is huge variability in quality control of probiotics. These are not FDA-approved products for humans or ani-

mals. Several studies have documented inconsistencies between what appears on the label and what is actually in the product. My advice is to consult with your veterinarian and pick something that is most likely to contain what it says it does (it will probably be a veterinary product from a major company involved in nutritional research like Iams or Nestle-Purina).



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.