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**Moraga Orinda Fire District**  
**Board of Directors Meetings**  
Meetings of the MOFD Board of Directors are open to the public and take place on the third Wednesday of each month in the Board Room, Administration Building, 1280 Moraga Way, Moraga.

**Next meeting(s):**  
**TONIGHT**  
September 15th, 7:00 p.m. (Regular Board Meeting)  
October 6th, time TBA – Special Meeting  
(go to www.mofd.org as the meeting date approaches for more information)

## MOFD Presents District's Financial Overview to Tri-Agency Committee

**By Lucy Amaral**  
Representatives from the City of Orinda, Town of Moraga and Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD), who make up the Tri Agency Ad Hoc Committee - MOFD Fire and Emergency Medical Services, met August 30 for a presentation by MOFD Fire Chief Randy Bradley. The Ad Hoc committee was formed as a fact finding entity to review fire operations, wherein each group would bring information back to their respective agencies. Its task nearing completion the committee will

meet for what could be the last time later this month. Bradley presented a financial overview of the MOFD, which included the planning process, long range financial forecasts, staffing and funding equity between the two cities, as well as various revenue streams, expenditures and financial challenges. Bradley also responded to specific items requested by the committee at the last meeting, including hydrant locations and water flow parameters.

Regarding water flow, Bradley said that some areas of Orinda may not be at the preferred maximum availability of 500 gallons per minute, but when coupled with water trucks from MOFD and the expected quick response time from the fire department, there is sufficient pressure to put out most home fires if they arrive before 'flashover' (where the structure is completely involved in fire). "I am not advocating for 250 gallons per minute hydrants,

but the community needs to be informed about the risks prior to making infrastructure investments and decisions," said Bradley. "With that said, my preference would be to have adequate water and adequate pressure at all fires." Representatives from the citizen's group Fire and Infrastructure Renewal (FAIR) spoke during public comment, offering their own analysis of Bradley's presentation, disagreeing with MOFD's financial figures, staff and response distribution as well

as the funding equity between Moraga and Orinda. Discussion from the Tri-Agency members ranged from immediate disbanding of the board as no further action is needed, to scheduling additional meetings to learn more. It was decided that at least one more meeting will be held to hear the public's proposals and comments. The meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 23, 9:00 a.m. in the Garden Room of the Orinda Library.

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## Captain Vineyards – A New Commercial Winemaker in Lamorinda

**By Sophie Braccini**



Sal and Susan Captain in their Moraga cellar

Photo Sophie Braccini

As Susan and Sal Captain sit in their Moraga home overlooking their vineyard set against the backdrop of acres of open space, they open a bottle of one of their newly-labeled Captain Vineyards Petite Syrah, and finally relax after a long day of work among the vine stocks. This month the Captains achieved one of their goals: becoming an independent, commercial wine label, growing their grapes and making their wine in their own

bonded facility. Five years after putting the first plants into the clay soil of their home in the Bluffs, this is no small achievement, especially since they did most of the work themselves. "It started with a lot of education," recalls Susan Captain, "my first class was Soil Science and Management at DVC." Since then, the math major has been continuously educating herself in Napa, at UC Davis, and by visiting numerous wineries. The Captains planted

3500 vines. As of today they have the largest vineyard in Lamorinda, with 2.5 acres planted. They have Cabernet, Petite Syrah, Petite Verdot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Pinot grapes, and they are constantly working to improve the quality and the sustainability of their farm. "We were the first Contra Costa Winery to become a Certified Green Business," says Captain with pride, "EBMUD noticed that our water use was decreasing dramatically and gave us an award; we

were the first private business to get it." Captain says that they have trained their vines to use less and less water, cutting their needs by 30% this year, after a dramatic 75% cut the year before. When they saw that their grapes were turning into prize winning wines made by other wine makers they decided to do it themselves. According to Captain, growing great fruit is a necessity for great wine, but it is not enough. Their next job was to learn wine making. "That's my husband Sal's job," says Captain, "I registered him at the Napa Community College to learn wine chemistry. Being an engineer, he loved to learn all the nuts and bolts of the alchemy of wine." The meticulous Sal Captain brought additional benefits to the production. "When it comes to sanitation, for example, he goes overboard," says his wife, "the result is that we need very little sulfite in our wine." When they were ready to take the next step, to the commercial level, Captain set about becoming educated on the compliance process. "I took a compliance class," she explains, "You have to know what it takes." Their first stop was with the Town of Moraga and it proved quite painless. "They were very supportive," she says. The total time spent navigating the administrative process to get their facility bonded and be able to sell under their own label was about a

year. But now it is done. The wine from their grapes is available for sale behind an artful and cheerful label created by local artist Anna George of Lafayette. "It depicts a pear and a glass of wine, two of Moraga's unique natural gifts," says Captain. Their five different reds can be ordered online at www.captainvineyards.com.

**Lamorinda's Independent Wine Makers**  
As of today, there are three fully bonded, independent commercial winemakers in the Lamorinda Winegrowers Association - Parkmon Vineyards of Moraga, Deer Hill Vineyards of Lafayette, and Captain Vineyards. According to Dave Parker of Parkmon, a few others will be joining them soon. The Association's next project is to get a "Lamorinda" appellation for the wines (they are now sold as Contra Costa County wines). For that to happen the zone has to be declared an American Viticultural Area (AVA). "We are getting there," says Parker, "and the Captains having their own independent label and bonded facility is helping." "We won't be like a Napa," adds Deer Hill Vineyards' Bill Scanlin, "but more like a Livermore Valley, with a tour map and people coming and tasting our production." For now the wines are sold over the internet and by select local retailers, and can be found on the tables of local restaurants.

## Lafayette's Dramatic Duo

**By Lou Fancher**



Meaghan and Diella Wottrich

Photo provided

In a time when family togetherness is on the endangered species list, Diella and Meaghan Wottrich have found a novel way to beat the trend. When the Diablo Theatre Company's *Annie* opened on September 10, the Lafayette duo strolled and strutted across the Leshner stage together—taking the quaint idea of a mother/daughter dance to a whole new level. The musical, scheduled for a Broadway revival in 2012, follows the exploits of feisty orphan Annie and is based on Harold Gray's famous comic strip. Meaghan, 11, appears as Emma, an orphan friend to title character Annie. "She makes sure

we don't get in trouble with the woman who runs the orphanage," Meaghan explains. Her mother plays the role of Cecille, the maid and seamstress to Annie. "She's sweet and kind, and dedicated to making things run smoothly," Diella Wottrich says. They might be speaking of themselves: during an interview they coach and gently correct each other, sometimes overlapping in their earnest efforts to answer. "I never really pictured myself doing this," Wottrich begins. "I was so shy." It's hard to believe this tall, head-turning woman, who speaks expressively and with good

humor, ever hid behind a parent's leg. Miraculously, the passage of time and opportunities to emerge from her instinctive shell led her to where she stands today. "Now, I feel like I'm not complete," she says, about the periods when she is away from the stage. Meaghan, on the other hand, is 100 percent hooked and full of third-grade fearlessness. She's already well-versed in rules of the stage, having appeared with The Ballet School, Town Hall Theatre Company and with her mother in Contra Costa Music Theatre's *Oklahoma!* "Being onstage at the Leshner was just amazing," she says, leaning forward, her blue eyes wide with wonder. "If I looked, I could see people...but you aren't supposed to look at specific people." Her mother, drawn to the twin magnets of music and dance, remembers seeing a Broadway production of *Annie* at the age of 11. "I remember thinking, 'Gosh, I would love to be on the stage doing that!'" After high school experiences in musical theater, she pursued degrees in psychology, married, and started a family; performing in Marin's community theaters and holding onto a "long term dream of having children who were interested in theater." Now, spliced between work and children, Wottrich appears in East Bay productions. "I have an

agreement with my family that I do one a year," she says, "although this year, *Annie* came along after *Oklahoma!* and we just couldn't pass it up." Like her mother, Meaghan is more than a one-trick theater pony. She's an avid soccer player, sharing a dedication to the sport with her father. "I like being goalie best," she says. "You have to always keep an eye on the ball." On stage, she's much the same, saying, "I concentrate on myself to do the right thing and I watch other people to make sure it's all ok." They both learned more than just lines from their time on stage. "I've learned this before, but I keep learning that people who are mean in the play are actually really, really nice," Meaghan says. Her mother, practical, but no less magical, says she discovered "how much I appreciate that we have the same passion and this time together." Asked about the future, Wottrich says, "I'd love to have a leading role opportunity...but this is just fine—ensemble roles—as long as I am dancing and singing." Asked if she'd like a leading role, Meaghan nearly jumps out of her chair. "Yes, I definitely do!" she says. "I want to continue doing this for a long, long time." *Annie* runs through October 2; for more information go to www.dloc.org.

## business briefs

... continued from page A8

### News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

- Thursday, September 16, Entrepreneur's Club Meeting at 8:30 p.m. in the Chamber Conference Room.
  - 15th Annual Lafayette Art & Wine Festival on Saturday, September 18 & Sunday, September 19, downtown Lafayette.
- Moraga**
- Chamber Meeting on Friday September 24th, from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. at the Hacienda de las Flores, 2100 Donald Drive.
  - New Date for the Moraga Business Seminar: Tuesday, October 19, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Soda Center Saint Mary's College. The evening program and dinner are sponsored by Mechanics Bank. All Moraga businesses and Moraga Chamber of Commerce members are invited.
- Orinda**
- 3rd Annual Orinda Restaurant Tour on Tuesday, September 28. The evening will start with appetizers from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., will be followed by the "sampling" of downtown restaurants from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Dessert is from 8:00 to 8:30 p.m. Meet at Orinda Theatre Square. Admission will be \$30 in advance & \$35 at the door. Online purchase for tickets is available now at www.orindachamber.org/OrindaRestaurantTour2010.htm Only 250 tickets to this popular event are available, so act quickly.
  - Save the date for the Orinda Gala on Saturday, October 2, Dinner Dance and Art Auction at the Orinda Country Club.

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