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Public Forum **JOIN IT**

The Case for Open Space

A recent poll of Lafayette voters showed that preserving open space is our highest priority, even higher than improving public education or repairing our roads. We are fortunate to be surrounded by open ridges and hillsides where we still see more trees than houses. The open hills and ridges are what make highway 24 a scenic route. But the open space we experience is not just a view. Everywhere we go, we are aware of the openness around us. Our winding streets provide vistas of our hills and remind us that we live on and around them. From many of our homes and yards, we are aware not only of our neighborhood, but of the landscape beyond it. In the downtown, we don't just drive from block to block. We have the context of the topography around us – as the view changes, we understand that we are

moving through a spacious valley surrounded by a complex of hills. Many of us spend time in parks, on trails, and along our creeks. These smaller open spaces are no less critical to our sense of our community and our environment. They reinforce our appreciation that not everything is paved and landscaped, that we have a connection to the land we occupy. That same poll of Lafayette voters showed that open space was not high on the list of things we want to spend our money on. In part, this is because there are so many other important uses for our tax dollars. In part, it is because many people assume our open spaces all belong to us. In fact, much of the open space around Lafayette is still in private hands. To preserve our open spaces and the special sense of space they provide requires action on several fronts. First, Lafayette has set priori-

ties to acquire and preserve open space. Acalanes Ridge was one of those identified priorities. Lafayette, Walnut Creek, East Bay Regional Parks, and the Muir Heritage Land Trust combined our resources and experience to acquire and permanently preserve that key open space. That illustrates the second action, cooperation between agencies and organizations with an interest in preserving open space. Money for acquisitions will be tight for the foreseeable future, and cooperation is essential. Third, we need to continue to plan for the preservation of open spaces and to create opportunities to open parks, creeks, and trails so that we not only see open space, but experience it. Preserving open space will require persistence and creativity, but it is essential to maintain the identity of our communities. Brandt Andersson (Mayor, City of Lafayette)

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.

Community Service

Smoke Alarms: Up, Down and All Around

Submitted by Grace Santos

In an effort to better educate communities throughout the U.S. about smoke alarm recommendations, the nonprofit National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) is promoting "Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With!" as the theme for this year's Fire Prevention Week campaign, October 3-9. The Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) will participate in the campaign. "Many homes in Moraga and Orinda may not have any smoke alarms, not enough smoke alarms, alarms that are too old, or alarms

that are not working," says MOFD Fire Marshal Michael Mentink. "We want residents to understand that working smoke alarms are needed in every home, on every level (including the basement), outside each sleeping area and inside each bedroom. And, if a smoke alarm is 10 years old or older, it needs to be replaced." According to Mentink, smoke alarms can mean the difference between life and death in a fire. NFPA statistics show that working smoke alarms cut the chance of dying in a fire nearly in

half. But they must be working properly to do so. The association's data shows that many homes have smoke alarms that aren't working or maintained properly, usually because of missing, disconnected or dead batteries. Roughly two-thirds of all home fire deaths result from fires in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms. The MOFD will be hosting an Open House (more info at www.mofd.org) during Fire Prevention Week to promote "Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live

With!" locally. Through educational, family-oriented activities, residents can learn more about the power of smoke alarms, newer options for installing and maintaining them properly, and ultimately, how to better protect their loved ones from fire. NFPA and the MOFD agree that interconnected smoke alarms offer the best protection; when one sounds, they all do. This is particularly important in larger or multi-story homes, where the sound from distant smoke alarms may be reduced to the point that it may not

be loud enough to provide proper warning, especially for sleeping individuals. The Moraga-Orinda Fire District offers the following tips for making sure smoke alarms are maintained and working properly:

- Test smoke alarms at least once a month using the test button, and make sure everyone in your home knows their sound.
- If an alarm "chirps," warning the battery is low, replace the battery right away.
- Replace all smoke alarms, including alarms that use 10-year

batteries and hard-wired alarms, when they're 10 years old (or sooner) if they do not respond properly when tested.

- Never remove or disable a smoke alarm.

To find out more about Fire Prevention Week programs and activities in Moraga and Orinda, please contact the MOFD at 925-258-4525. To learn more about "Smoke Alarms: A Sound You Can Live With!," visit the NFPA web site at www.firepreventionweek.org.

Tree Restoration Project on North Shore of Lake Cascade Nears Completion

Submitted by MJ Walburg



Photo provided

On Monday, September 13, Horticultural Services, Ltd. began the last phase of the restoration tree project along the north shore of Lake Cascade. Sponsored by the Orinda Garden Club in conjunction with the centennial celebration of the Garden Club of America and with the consent of the

Orinda Country Club, which owns the lake, the tree restoration will include pruning of over 100 trees along the lake front. Fifteen Cork Oaks (*Quercus Suber*) were planted by OGC in the early '40s. The original California native oaks, laurels, madrones, maples, alders and elders were planted by

Edward DeLaveaga when he developed the lake in 1922. In the early 40s the Garden Club received permission from OCC to enhance the planting around the lake and again in 1965 the ladies received money from Richfield 011 for civic beautification and planted more trees including weeping willows, acacias, scotch broom, oleanders, manzanitas, birch, bottle brush, toyon and climbing Banksia roses. Lake Cascade is a popular meeting place for runners, walkers and bird watchers. Protected by California Fish and Game, it has also become a popular bird sanctuary. The clearing and pruning has enhanced the area and provided greater views of Orinda's hills and wooded landscapes. Money for the project was raised by members of the Orinda Garden Club through contributions, special events and a successful silent auction.

Lamorindans Help Shelter Animals

Submitted by Cheyenne Ziermann



Cheyenne Ziermann with a small portion of the donations received. Photo provided

Over the past several months Campolindo senior Cheyenne Ziermann has been industrious in her efforts to obtain donations for her Girl Scout Gold Award Project, using school email blasts and posting announcements in local publica-

tions. Her ongoing project is to help shelter animals and she collected towels and blankets, toys, supplies and other supplies for cats and dogs at the Peninsula Humane Society. She would like to thank the Lamorinda community for all their help with her project: "The support from people in Lafayette, Orinda and Moraga to help these poor animals was just incredible," Ziermann writes. "Almost every day when I came home from school, bags had been dropped off at my home. The library in Orinda, where I was allowed to set up a drop-off box, called me because the box was overflowing. It wasn't just old towels and blankets, there were leashes, dishes, new toys and even treats from Trader Joe's! It took my mom and me three full car loads to bring everything to the Humane Society in Burlingame. At our last drop-off, the president of the Humane Society happened to be there and he helped us unload. He was overwhelmed by so much generosity. All donations were very much appreciated." Ziermann ends her letter with a heartfelt acknowledgment to the community: "Thank you for helping shelter animals and for helping with my project."

Grandparent's Day

Submitted by Jessica McCormick and Bethany Ruthnick



Kathy Fowler and granddaughter Alexandra share a frosty snow cone. Photo provided

To everything there is a season, it is an adage as simple as it is true. At Moraga Royale, residents have reached the pure enjoyment point in their lives. After years of family rearing and service to the community, these fine folks have more than earned the right to sit back and savor the fruits of lives well lived. For this very reason Moraga Royale recognizes the second

Saturday in September as Grandparent's Day. Over 400 friends and family members were in attendance for the 4th annual celebration. Kids and adults alike enjoyed many of the fun filled activities that were offered. From a petting zoo filled with goats, turtles and an albino python, to pony rides and a live jazz band...but everyone's favorite attraction was the

Dunk Tank. One dollar got you three throws and the opportunity to submerge Mike Lawrence, manager of CVS and Moraga's Business Man of The Year. Second string dunk-ees included Moraga Royale staff Al Pyne and Loto Rickman. No matter who festivity-goers opted to soak, all proceeds went to the Rescue One Foundation, a nonprofit organization assisting our local fire department. The men and women of Station 41 showed their support and made a spectacular entrance on the very fire engine they use to keep us safe. And so, as little ones scampered about with brightly painted faces and kids of all ages feasted on BBQ, savory popcorn or cool snow cones the band played on. Grandparents were everywhere you looked sharing insights, and recalling laughable anecdotes. Each of them, a reminder to the rest of us that the best is truly yet to come.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Dictionary Distribution

Submitted by Thomas Black



Photo Courtesy of Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary

Thomas Peeks, president of Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary (LSR), observes as a third-grader at Springhill Elementary School in Lafayette looks up a word in the personal copy of the Webster's Children's Dictionary he just received from the club. This marks the 13th consecutive year LSR has donated dictionaries to every third-grader attending public school in the city. In all, some 300 copies were distributed. Since the inception of the program in 1998, the club has invested nearly \$50,000 total in purchasing the dictionaries. Like all Rotary clubs internationally, LSR is an ardent and enthusiastic supporter of education.