

Life in LAMORINDA

A Day of Labor and Celebration

By Sophie Braccini

If you missed it, you probably won't live to see another; unless you know something we don't. It comes only once every one hundred years. What were you doing last Sunday, 10/10/10?

The non-profit organization 350.org promoted a global work party on the auspicious, and binary, date 10/10/10 dedicated to celebrating solutions to the climate crisis. Several events were held in Lamorinda. In Lafayette, Siamack Sioshansi and the Urban Farmers met to spruce up 20 urban farms for the winter, celebrate together, and present the next phase of the project that will involve many more community members who are interested in growing their own food.

Last fall Sioshansi launched the Urban Farmers, a pilot program to grow food on large properties. The plan was to select 20 sites that would provide land and water, while the organization would do all the work, share the crops among participants, and give the surplus to the food bank. Many Lamorindans spontaneously volunteered to help

with the project.

"I live in Lafayette but have no garden," says volunteer Karyn Maynard, "for me, working in the garden is a great way to interact with people of all generations, work in the outdoors and learn a lot about gardening." Maynard, a physical trainer in her late 50s, adds that she enjoys interacting with the volunteers of all ages, including many college students, who come to help.

After work on 10/10/10, the volunteers gathered at Our Savior's Lutheran Church of Lafayette to celebrate with Lamorinda residents and hear about the next phase of the project. For the coming year, gardens of all sizes can be included, but homeowners will have to contribute more.

"During the first phase, the construction of the gardens, the growing of food went beautifully," says Sioshansi, "but overall we found out that the program was not sustainable, and could not be duplicated to other communities."

Sioshansi's analysis is that the structure of the program itself was faulty; there was one

person at the top, giving directions. He now believes that only a cooperative, flat structure will produce what he is looking for: a food production and delivery system that can be replicated in hundreds of communities.

"The new model is built as a cooperative, with each homeowner being a member," he explains, "most will work a few hours a week in their garden doing maintenance, and they will be helped by volunteers during the work-intensive periods." Sioshansi added that gardens will be organized in neighborhoods to establish a support system, and that the co-op will provide needed volunteers, purchasing of supplies, mentoring, and collection of surplus. "The purpose of the co-op is to give members all they need to successfully grow their own food, and possibly share with others."

This year, Sioshansi expects that a Board will form to oversee the system. He anticipates that a contribution will be asked of farmers in order to finance the hiring of Americorp members who will manage the day to day operations. "The

participation fee should be between \$15 and \$20 a week, depending on the size of the garden," says Sioshansi.

Additional presentations for interested potential members are coming soon. The next will be on October 17, with a maximum number of 25 participants; there will also be sessions on November 6 and 7. To reserve a spot and get more information, email Sioshansi at siamack@theurbanfarmers.org or visit the web site theurbanfarmers.org.



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A Special Golden Birthday

Submitted by Chris Blair

A Golden Birthday, also called a Grand, Lucky, Champagne or Star Birthday according to Wikipedia, occurs when someone turns the age of their birthday. Julia Blair, a 5th grader at Los Perales Elementary School in Moraga, celebrated her Golden Birthday when she turned 10 on 10/10/10.

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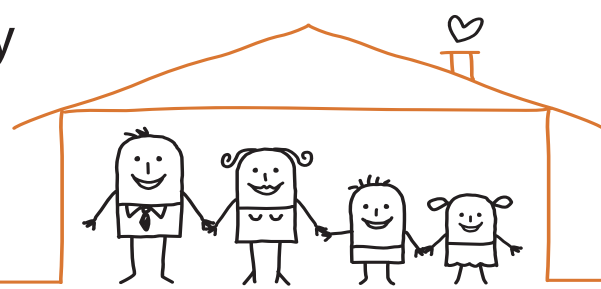
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