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Slides on Slopes

... continued from page A1

The financial impact of sliding varies depending on the number of incidents. Mercurio indicates that each slide costs her department between \$3,000 and \$5,000, and that the average yearly cost is \$25,000. The responsibility for the slide falls on whoever owns the land. "If a slide damages a public road the city will respond and take appropriate action to either get the road open or close the road until a plan can be formulated," says Swanson. "Generally a slide will impact the road and the properties above it and below it. Responsibility will usually be determined after a geotechnical analysis has been performed."

Knowing the geological conditions of a terrain is key to evaluating the risk of slide. For example, the recurrent erosion in Bollinger Canyon happens because the cliff has alternating layers of sandstone and shale. The shale weathers at a different rate than the harder sandstone layers. While the sandstone retains its structure, a layer of shale behind it may weather away and undermine

the sandstone, causing that portion to slip off. This type of slope failure typically results in moderately small areas of break-off at a time. "Since my crews are aware of this, we do monitor this roadway for debris on a regular basis, as do the police, and the residents are very helpful in calling the Town if they notice it first," says Mercurio.

Warning signs: Watch for rocks and other debris coming down off a hillside. Look for cracks in a road surface that form a semi-circle.

In the event of a slide, contact: Lafayette: Public Works hotline, 299-3259, during business hours. After hours or in emergencies call police dispatch at 284-5010.

Moraga: 888-7026 during business hours; after hours call police dispatch, 284-2479.

Orinda: Call 253-4231 during business hours; after hours contact the Sheriff's Department at 646-2441.

Valet Parking - Coming Soon to Theater Square?

By Sophie Braccini



The parking spaces in front of Theater Square could become a drop-off zone for valet parking Photo Rob Lucacher

As he developed a business plan with partner Michael Karp, Table 24's Victor Ivry envisioned valet parking at the bottom of the stairs that lead to the new restaurant at Orinda's Theater Square. But the city did not have an existing policy that defined this type of amenity and a procedure had to be drafted. This text, supported by the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, opens the door for other businesses wanting to offer the same service.

The only place that provides valet parking in Orinda is Casa

Orinda, using its own parking lot. What Table 24 proposed is different. Karp and Ivry approached the town with a request to use public parking spaces for drop-off and pick-up outside Theater Square. "The city didn't have a policy to regulate the use of on-street parking for valet services," explains Monica Pacheco, Assistant to the City Manager/ Public Information Officer, "the Council directed staff to draft a valet parking policy that should not impact the traffic flow in the downtown area and should not impose hardships on surrounding businesses."

The policy, drafted by staff and approved by the City Council on December 21st, allows applicants to apply for an encroachment permit to designate on-street parking to be used as loading zones for valet services. Attendants then move the vehicles to a predetermined location with a surplus of off-street parking. The service may be used by anyone who wishes to do so, whether they patronize the sponsoring business or not. The City has the right to revoke the permit should the service interfere with the flow of traffic.

One possible negative aspect of the encroachment is that it will reduce the amount of available parking in the downtown area. Chamber of Commerce President Sue Breedlove addressed that issue. "Rather than having a negative effect, we think it's a very positive move," said Breedlove, "You see it all the time in areas that have limited parking - which is exactly the case in downtown Orinda. Putting cars in the garage will increase available parking, not reduce it." The Chamber enthusiastically supported the project; Breedlove cited other benefits

such as making it easier for people to patronize local businesses.

"We are now working on our application," says Ivry, "it will be an amenity to anybody going to Theater Square. Douglas Parking will charge the drivers and Table 24 will offer validation." Ivry hopes to offer the same kind of service that can be found at comparable restaurants in Walnut Creek. He also believes that some patrons are a bit apprehensive about night-parking in a large structure, and the valet service will alleviate those fears.

When contacted, Chris McGougan, manager of the Orinda parking structure for Douglas Parking, said that the project was being discussed. "We already operate valet parking in other areas," said McGougan, "the flat cost can vary from \$4-\$8 depending on the situation. We've got staff that know how to operate this and will move someone into Orinda when it is finalized."

Ivry says his application will be ready by the end of the month; he plans to offer valet service in the evening, Thursday through Saturday.

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business briefs

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Design & Interiors
3590 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette



Karen Callahan (left) and Design & Interiors' Rita Brown look for a table. Photo Sophie Braccini

Design & Interiors has moved from Plaza Escuela in Walnut Creek to the spot formerly occupied by Hollywood Video on Mt. Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette. The high-end home furnishings and interior design business has three locations in the Bay area. Founder/owner Marcy Puccetti now works in partnership with her daughter. "I started in Mountain View thirty years ago," remembers Puccetti, "at the time the demand for contemporary design was null. I have seen my clients' preference evolve from the more traditional taste, to the casual period, and now we have reach a transitional age. People want a décor that's not as stark as contemporary, but with cleaner lines and delicate finishes." The new Lafayette store feels much larger than the video store ever seemed. The space is separated by a few metal grates and the visitor can

move easily from one atmosphere to the next, ranging from contemporary style to furniture that is evocative of an affluent countryside or Tuscan-inspired estate. Everything on the floor, from the lamps to the beds, tables and sofas are for sale, but there is more to the new Lafayette store. "All of our employees are professional designers," said Puccetti. When we visited the store, Designer Rita Brown was looking for a table in one of her many catalogues with Lafayette resident Karen Callahan. The client knew Design & Interiors from their Walnut Creek store and was thrilled about the move. "Our Walnut Creek landlord wanted to transform Plaza Escuela into a food court," said Puccetti, "we were disappointed at first, but it's proven to be a good move for us; the Lafayette community has been so warm and accepting." Puccetti believes that she operates in a unique business where you become a part of a family for the time you are creating a design for and with them. "You have to understand your clients' lifestyle and create with them something they will love for many years." Design & Interiors will celebrate its grand opening on February 10th with the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce.

Free Tax Planning Webinar

Wednesday, January 26th at noon, Ballou Plum will be hosting, at no cost to attendees, a Tax Planning Webinar featuring Lafayette based tax expert Linda LaHonta, CPA. For information about how to participate, please email plan@ballouplum.com. There will be space for about 100 live attendees. You can also view the webinar at www.ballouplum.com a day or two after the event if you are unable to attend.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

- Entrepreneur's Club on Thursday, January 20, 8:30am in the Chamber Conference Room
- Green Committee Meeting on Tuesday, January 25 at noon in the Chamber Office
- Business Issues Meeting on Friday, January 28, 8am in the Chamber Office
- First mixer of 2011 on February 9, 5:30-7pm at Wells Fargo Bank.

Moraga

Chamber General Meeting on January 28, 7:30-9am. The first General Meeting of the year will be held at the Hacienda, 2100 Donald Drive. Roos's muffins and delicious coffee will be served.

Orinda

Orinda Chamber Luncheon on Friday, January 28, 2011, noon-1:30pm at the Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, Orinda. RSVP: Highly Recommended - To purchase tickets online go to the Chamber web site at www.orindachamber.org. The cost is \$30.00 per person. The guest speaker is Tom Franier, co-owner of Semifreddi's Bakery. He will be talking about "Slow Capitalism." When he started Semifreddi's with his sister and brother in law in 1984, Franier learned quickly that baking great bread and pastries requires both patience and know-how. "Lesson #1 was that you have to let the dough rise slowly and consistently," he says. "The same lesson applies to running a successful company. Since 1984, Semifreddi's has grown slowly and consistently to become one of the San Francisco Bay Area's premier artisan bakeries."

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