

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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 Wednesday, March 2, 2011

YOU ARE INVITED TO HEAR
Dr. Christine Carter
 Mon, March 21, 6:30 pm
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Photo Doug Kohen

Campolindo Soccer Wins NCS Championship

Lamorinda soccer post-season results

Campolindo boys' soccer secured a number one seed in the NCS tournament and proved to be top dogs on Saturday, February 26 in the NCS championship game. The Cougars defeated local rival Acalanes, the number two seed, 3-2.

The Cougars got on the board first early in the match. Timmy Coleman headed in a goal just five minutes into play. The Dons responded quickly as Nick Pereira put in a loose ball in the 11th minute. The Dons' Dan Glascock scored again with minutes remaining in the half to give Acalanes a 2-1 lead at the break.

The Dons' lost a player to a red card and gave the Cougars a key penalty kick. In the 46th minute, Jaison Kimura scored on the penalty to tie the game at two each. The Cougars put the game away, 3-2, in the 77th minute off a header from Harlan Raine.

"The win feels incredible; it's all surreal. To come back to my alma mater and lead an amazing group of guys to every title we could win is a feeling that I'll never forget. The way the boys came together as a team, and more importantly as a family, has truly been something special, and the team deserves everything we've accomplished," Cougars' head coach Shane Carney said.

... continued on page S2

Quote of the Week:

"When I use a word,
 Humpty Dumpty said, in a
 rather a scornful tone, 'it
 means just what I choose it
 to mean—neither more nor
 less.'"
 Read Letters to the Editor,
 page A10

Advertising



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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Lamorinda School Budgets—It's Another Roller Coaster Ride

With public school budgeting, it's often the cart before the horse. This year, like the past few years, school districts in Lamorinda are faced with developing the next year's school budgets without a clear picture of how much funding they will receive from the State.

The Governor has proposed flat funding for kindergarten through 12th grade schools, but the State's ability to provide this funding is contingent upon the extension of the current hike on income, sales, and vehicle taxes which are due to expire in June. Brown has proposed a June ballot measure to extend these taxes for an-

other five years. The tax extension will require 2/3 of the State legislators to approve placement on the ballot and a simple majority of the electorate for passage.

At press time, the battle to get the tax extension measure on the June ballot is being waged in Sacramento. In the meantime, local school districts are forced to plan for the worst case scenario. Districts must notify certificated staff, teachers and administrators, of potential lay-offs by March 15th.

A. Firth
 Read all about the our school districts' budgets on page A9

\$50K for Your Thoughts, Moraga?

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council will pay consultants at least \$50,000 to find out if Moragans are willing to pay new taxes in order to address the Town's unfunded infrastructure needs.

The consultants, The Lew Edwards Group and Godbe Research, explained that \$50,000 would pay for the first phase of their work; when Council Member Ken Chew wondered aloud what the total cost of their services would be, up to the balloting, no estimate was provided.

The first phase of the consultants' work will include a survey of 300 scientifically-selected Moraga residents intended to es-

tablish the knowledge level of the population regarding the decay of the town's infrastructure and its willingness to pony up the funds needed to remedy the situation. The survey results will be presented to the Town Council in April and a game plan for the next phases of the project will be recommended.

In the meantime the civil engineering firm Leptien, Cronin, Cooper, Morris & Poore, Inc., also hired by the Town, will be developing tax formulas for pavement and storm drain maintenance, and generating totals by property designation.

... continued on page A4

Sports/Schools S1-S4

Saint Mary's Clinches WCC Conference Title, First Since 1997



By Bryant West

The Saint Mary's Gaels accomplished a goal 14 seasons in the making — a regular season crown. Reaching this end point was a roller coast ride, especially the last two weeks: Saint Mary's suffered a three game losing ... read on page S1

Life in Lamorinda L1-L10

MOFD's Rehab 41 Helps Keep Firefighters on the Job



By Lucy Amaral

This past February, Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) firefighters were at an accident scene for more than ten hours straight when a suspected car thief crashed a pick-up truck into an electrical pole on Camino Pablo ... read on page L2

Our Homes OH1-OH8

A Trio of Spanish Revival Jewels



By Sophie Braccini

It may not be obvious to today's readers, but the enormous popular success of the 1884 novel "Ramona," by Helen Hunt Jackson, is credited for the emergence of the Mission and Spanish colonial revival style ... read on page OH1



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Lafayette

Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, March 14, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Planning Commission

Monday, March 7, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Design Review

Monday, March 14, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center in the Arts & Science Discovery Center at 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org

Proposed Mixed-Use Project Gets Encouraging Feedback

By Cathy Tyson



If approved, this will be the site of the Merrill Gardens senior housing facility along with retail space on the ground floor.

Photo C. Tyson

Preliminary drawings from a developer working with a senior living facility operator were recently presented to the Design Review Commission and received generally positive responses.

Merrill Gardens, SRM Development and Wattenbarger Architects presented their initial plans to garner feedback on a mixed-use project that will tentatively include 72 independent and assisted apartments for seniors that has a mem-

ory care unit, and approximately 6,000 square feet of retail space on the street level fronting Mt. Diablo Boulevard at Second Street. Taking advantage of the upward sloping lot, the drive-in entrance to Merrill Gardens would be located on Second Street.

"We are just getting started with the planning process, this was our initial study session with Design Review," said Ryan Leong, Merrill Gardens Development

Manager. He estimates it could take "anywhere from four to six weeks to prepare a formal application."

The development company has owned the land at the corner of Mt. Diablo and Second Street for the last three years. The site is made up of six parcels totaling 1.35 acres that housed Kennan Heinz, Yan's restaurant and a couple of office buildings behind. The rear of the project would be adjacent to an ex-

isting apartment complex.

If developed, this would be the second senior housing facility in the immediate area. Just a couple of blocks down Mt. Diablo, Eden Housing has been approved to build a 46-unit affordable senior housing complex.

Design Review Commissioners liked the proposed Arts and Crafts design, along with the retail component and inviting public space along Mt. Diablo. The project includes a generous courtyard, underground parking accessible from Second Street, a landscaped rooftop deck and protection of the mature oak tree at the corner.

Merrill Gardens is the second largest private owner/operator of independent and assisted living facilities in California, with eighteen locations across the state. SRM Development is a construction company and developer that specializes in senior housing facilities.

Students Star in Foundation's Jazz Festival

By Cathy Tyson



Left to right: Evan Gruver - Acalanes, Erin Grant - Acalanes, Charley Burt - Rossmoor, Les Peterson - Rossmoor

Photo Doug Kohen

This year marks the eleventh Lafayette Jazz Festival, presented by the Generations in Jazz Foundation. Opening night is Thursday, March 10, for Rossmoor residents at their clubhouse; the public is invited to enjoy the show Friday, March 11, through

Sunday, March 13, at the Acalanes Performing Arts Center. With bebop, swing, and Dixieland tunes there is bound to be something for everyone. Lafayette is ground zero for jazz appreciation, due in part to the dedicated efforts of the Genera-

tions in Jazz Foundation, which has embraced and fostered programs that specifically encourage students.

This year three-time Grammy winner Tom Scott with jazz greats Terry Miller, Andy Eberhard and John Burr, along with local fa-

vorites the Stanley Jazz Messengers, will play at the Friday show. Saturday features Erik Jekabson and his Quartet with the Acalanes Jazz Ensemble. Sunday's show includes talented young musicians from across the county playing in the Middle and High School Honor Bands.

The always popular Jazz Festival, the Lafayette Summer Music Jazz Workshop, and the Big Band of Rossmoor's Mentorship Program would not be possible without the generous support of the Generations in Jazz Foundation. It's run entirely by volunteers, and focuses exclusively on supporting community music activities.

"The Foundation was created to preserve jazz education, an original American art form in our community," said Tom Carter, President of the Generations in Jazz Foundation. Life lessons like passion, leadership, innovation and constantly adapting can all be gleaned from music education, according to Carter.

... continued on next page



Police Report

Tag...you're it! 2/20/11 A non-injury hit and run happened just before midnight along St. Mary's Road. The guilty party might have gotten away but left incriminating evidence, in the form of the car's front license plate, at the crime scene. After admitting to wrongdoings, said party was charged with DUI and booked at the county detention facility.

Bad Guys Beware, 2/18/11 Three men robbing a Mt. Diablo Blvd. jewelry store were surprised when, after smashing the display cases with sledge hammers, the store owner responded with gunshots. The robbers drove off, post-haste, but struck the victim's auto when they rounded the corner. An hour later, a local hospital reported a gunshot wound patient requesting body repair. Maybe later they'll get their getaway car fixed...

Smash and grabs run rampant, 2/15-2/21 No less than seven separate smash and grab reports were taken by Lafayette Police the week after Valentine's Day. Something's in the air; and it sure ain't love.

- An iPod was taken from an Acalanes High School locker room.
- A shoulder bag with personal and tax info was deducted from a car.
- A Garmin GPS was directed out the open window of a car parked in an underground lot.
- A wallet was lifted from an unlocked vehicle at Meher School.
- A laptop and case were deleted (locks forced, and a window broken) from another car.
- Items valued at \$600 were taken and \$300 damage was done to a car parked at Springhill Elementary.
- Items valued at \$400 were taken from an unlocked car parked on Hough Ave.

Take my alarm, but don't call me in the morning, 2/15/11 Medical equipment valued at nearly \$16,000 was stolen during the wee hours from a building on Mt. Diablo Blvd. The alarm went off, but the suspect(s) had fled before the alarm report was sent.



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A City of Lafayette Employment Application is required. For application, call 925.284.1968 or download at www.ci.lafayette.ca.us.

The Lafayette City Council is soliciting applicants to fill the following volunteer vacancies:



- Representative to the Advisory Council on Aging
- Circulation Commission
- Code Enforcement Appeals Board
- Community Center Foundation
- Creeks Committee
- Downtown Street Improvement Implementation Committee (DSIMPIC)
- Representative to Central Contra Costa County Transit Authority
- Senior Services Commission

To learn more about these volunteer opportunities and to obtain an application visit the City's website www.ci.lafayette.ca.us. Positions open until filled.

Karen Mulvaney: Citizen of the Year

By Cathy Tyson



Photo submitted

Karen Mulvaney was stunned to learn about being selected as Lafayette's Citizen of the Year. She graciously acknowledged the many other Lafayette residents that work hard to make this a special and unique place to call home.

Mulvaney moved to Lafayette twenty-five years ago with husband Tom, son Mason and welcomed the arrival of their daughter a few years later. She credits her parents for her chari-

table point of view, "Leave a place better for having lived there and do your best to lighten the loads of others when possible." Both she and husband Tom try to live up to their respective parents' examples and honor them by how they conduct themselves.

She has been working for the last several years in support of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation where she is on the Board of Trustees. The Foundation is responsible for the majority of funding that keeps the doors open at the Library.

Prior to her Foundation work, Karen and Tom Mulvaney were busy volunteering for schools. "Together we were involved in five campaigns for the local parcel tax and bond measures. If it weren't for Tom, I'm not certain what would have happened to school funding given the economic disasters at the State level and the enormous impact it has on local schools," said Mulvaney.

The prior Citizen of the Year was actually Citizens of the Year – a group of hundreds of residents that brought the Lafayette Library and Learning Center to life. A dinner to honor Mulvaney will be held at the Lafayette Park Hotel on March 25; call the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce for ticket information, 284-7404.

Students Star in Foundation's Jazz Festival

... continued from page A2

It all started with charismatic Stanley Middle School Music Director Bob Athayde. "We brought the logs to the fire, but he was the fuel. We wanted to capitalize on a great resource," said Carter.

The Lafayette Summer Music Jazz Workshop and the Mentorship Program with the Big Band of Rossmoor are sponsored by the Foundation. Students at the Summer Workshop participate in master classes and improvisation workshops in a close knit environment with other gifted middle school and high school youth. Money raised through the Foundation is funneled back to scholarships for students who otherwise would not be able to attend.

The students in the Mentorship Program truly enjoy working with the seniors in the Big Band. Many of the elder players actually traveled by train from town to town back in the 1940s to play with Big Bands. "It really completed the family," commented Carter about the relationship of young and old players; they happily pass along advice and support the students.

Originally spearheaded by professional musician Mary Fetting, who used to play with the Stan Kenton Orchestra, the Contra Costa County High School Honor Jazz Band is made up of very talented young people from fourteen high schools and fourteen middle schools.

The goal of the upcoming Jazz Festival is simply to bring music to the community and give talented young musicians an opportunity to play. Organizers just want to make enough to break even – that's why tickets are only \$10 for adults and \$5 for students. Tickets are available through the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, 284-7404 or www.lafayettechamber.org.

"Music changed my life," said Carter. He played a trumpet from fifth grade all the way through college. That trumpet collected dust in the closet for fifteen years, "I thought I was done after raising four kids, but I realized how much I missed it. It's kind of like riding a bike." The Generations in Jazz Foundation hopes to share and encourage that passion.

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Moraga

Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, March 9, 7:00 pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, March 7, 7:30 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Design Review

Monday, March 14, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Liaison

Friday, March 11, 8:00 am
Fire Station, 1280 Moraga Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



Police Report

Embezzlement, 2/11/11 Officers were investigating a report of embezzlement from TJ Maxx. Allegedly between mid-December and mid-February, five employees embezzled a total of \$3,889 through fraudulent transactions with fake refunds and failing to scan merchandise. Three of the five 'fessed up and admitted responsibility and fingered the remaining two employees in on the scam.

Fire, 2/15/11 Moraga-Orinda Fire Department responded to a fire on Campolindo Drive. It appears that the fire was centered around the fireplace, which had been left unattended with a fire burning – but the cause is still under investigation. The fire was contained to approximately half the home, before it was extinguished. No one was injured.

Golf clubs gone, 2/16/11 A Natalie Drive resident parked his Jeep Grand Cherokee on the street overnight. In the morning he found the rear lift gate window smashed and his golf clubs missing. Value of the clubs is estimated at \$2,100 – loss of the perfect putter – heartbreaking.

Similar auto burglary 2/16/11 Just a couple of blocks from the Natalie Drive heist, sometime during the night an unknown suspect smashed the rear window of a Honda Odyssey and took a road bicycle from the interior while the car was parked in a Buckingham Drive driveway. Bike valued at \$1,100 and damage to vehicle estimated to be \$250.

Car burglary, 2/16/11 Yet another vehicle burglary, this time on La Salle Drive. The homeowner parked her Honda in the driveway overnight, but when she returned to it in the morning the front passenger window had been smashed out and her purse was missing along with her Wells Fargo debit card. Like the other burglaries – nothing was seen or heard during the night. Cost to replace window approximately \$250. Her bank was notified and the card was stopped.

Littering at L.P. 2/17/11 Just before 10:00 P.M. cops found two cars occupied by several juveniles parked in the Los Perales Elementary School parking lot along with smashed watermelons and sprayed whipped cream all over the parking area. Officers determined the kids at the scene were not involved in the littering. No suspects or leads at this time.

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RECON Issues Road Warning

By Sophie Braccini

Repairing and maintaining a road that is in very poor condition costs 11 times more than maintaining a road that is in fair condition. 15% of Moraga's residential roads are in very poor condition today and if spending on roads does not increase that number will jump to 40% 10 years from now, resulting in skyrocketing costs to remedy the situation. Bob Kennedy, representing Moraga's Revenue Enhancement Community Outreach to Neighborhoods (RECON) team, presented a report to the Town Council on February 16 that concluded Moraga should not expect a bailout on such infrastructure problems and that a solution must be found locally.

Moraga officials often refer to Orinda roads as being the future

of Moraga roads if nothing is done today. The Orinda Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Commission's 2010 annual report was received by the Orinda City Council on February 15. The City's policy focuses on maintaining arterials and collectors, leaving residential roads in a condition of accelerating deterioration. The average rating of Orinda's residential roads is poor; 150 of the 354 residential roads are considered very poor. The cost of deferred maintenance on these roads is estimated to be at \$43 million by 2014. One of the Commission's recommendations is to allow citizens to raise private funds to repair residential roads.

25% of Moraga's 56 miles of public roads are categorized as arterials (roads that carry major traffic flow) – Moraga Road,

Moraga Way and Saint Mary's Road. The Town can apply for grants to maintain these roads; as a result, only 14% of Moraga's arterials are in poor or very poor condition.

However, 50% of the remaining roads (collectors and neighborhood roads, excluding private streets) have been rated poor or very poor. According to the RECON report, with a \$1 million annual increase in spending, in 10 years 67% of these roads would be very good and 23% very poor; if spending increased by \$2 million per year, the percentage of very poor roads would drop to 14%; and at \$3 million per year, 17% of the roads would be in poor condition while 83% would be in good condition.

The state of the Moraga's sewer and storm drains remains

largely unassessed. The system was installed in 1974 and is expected to last 55-60 years.

"Developing a sustainable plan for funding the Town's ongoing infrastructure needs is of critical importance to the Town of Moraga," commented Mayor Karen Mendonca after the meeting. "The recommendations contained in the Revenue Enhancement Committee's Report and the subsequent work completed by the RECON Committee serve to make it clear that this issue must be a top priority for the Moraga Town Council, and it is imperative that we work together to make timely decisions regarding our next steps in this process."

The RECON report is available on the Town's website, www.moraga.ca.us.

\$50K for Your Thoughts, Moraga?

... continued from page A1

"We met with Catherine Lew (President and CEO of Lew Edwards) a week ago," said Dick Olsen of the Revenue Enhancement Community Outreach to

Neighborhoods (RECON) team. "Based on the RECON work done last year, with the online survey and the focus groups, we believe that residents might have the will-

ingness to pay for the needed maintenance. The Lew Edwards Group poll will precisely assess what residents do or don't know about the situation, and their willingness to do something about it. That's the information the Council needs to make the decision regarding the next phases."

"We will have the results and will decide in May," said Town Manager Jill Keimach, who indicated that if residents were generally opposed to new taxes the project could be dropped. As Council Member Mike Metcalf put it, "Maybe people will prefer to

drive on gravel rather than fix the roads."

If it appears that residents are favorable to financing infrastructure maintenance, the second phase of the project would be a public information campaign that would run from this June to February of 2012, under the consultants' schedule. The third phase, preparation for balloting, would result in an infrastructure revenue measure on a ballot in August or November of 2012.

Read the related article, RECON Issues Road Warning, above.

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Moraga's New Librarian

By Sophie Braccini



Beth Girshman Photo Sophie Braccini

Beth Girshman, Moraga's new librarian, is ready to make her home at 1500 Saint Mary's Road. "The Contra Costa County Library has a reputation nationwide in the library world for its innovative programs," says Girshman, "they have won many awards and recognition; I am very happy to have been chosen to be part of it."

Girshman was the Adult Services/Community Outreach Librarian at the Jones Library in Amherst, Massachusetts. While browsing the Contra Costa County Library website, she clicked on the job link and saw the Moraga opening. Since she was looking for a new challenge in her career, she decided to apply – as an added bonus, her daughter lives in Berkeley.

At the Jones Library, Girshman was responsible for figuring out ways to service the underserved, through special programs, diversified collections, and programs. She was also in charge of collection development and management of the adult collection.

... continued on next page

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CP Field on Track for Restoration

The question is, what grass will grow?

By Sophie Braccini



CP field construction plan

Image courtesy Callander Associates, San Mateo

At the February 16th meeting of the Moraga Town Council, Public Works Director and Town Engineer Jill Mercurio presented the drawings of what the Camino Pablo Elementary School sports field will look like after it is rehabilitated using the Town's Measure WW funds this coming summer. The project is on track, with the approval of the other major stakeholder, the Moraga School District (MSD). One element is still undecided: what type of turf should be used?

The question of the grass is not a minor issue. The school district will be in charge of both the watering and the maintenance of the field. Mark Slichter, of Callander Associates who designed the field, said that the right decision is "a balance between durability and maintenance."

"Bermuda grass was initially recommended. It is more tolerant than many other grasses - relative to rain/sun and heavy foot traffic," said Moraga School District Superintendent Bruce Burns, "However,

Bermuda grass may require use of a spray pesticide and a pre-emergent. Both add costs and the MSD no longer uses pesticides. Also, Bermuda grass may require more frequent mowing during spring/summer months. Our gardening staff was reduced by one full time employee last year. CP's field is currently mowed once a week and Bermuda grass may require mowing twice a week, depending on the season. The issue with Bermuda grass is cost. So, we are in the process of researching other grass options."

Some of the other options mentioned by Slichter included Blue/Rye mix or Tall Fescue mix. "The decision on this question needs to be made by the School District," indicated Council Member Mike Metcalf.

User groups were also involved in the design of the new field. The restoration will include new drainage, a youth under-10 soccer field, two baseball fields, a walking path and bleachers to improve the users' experience.

Moraga's New Librarian

... continued from page A4

She initiated numerous programs including "Fireside Colloquies About Old Books," a series of lectures, appraisal sessions and workshops; and "February Feasts," an annual lecture series about all things food. "The last program I organized was with the Emily

Dickenson Museum," says Girshman, "it included children's events, a poetry writing workshop, reading, and guided tours."

In Moraga, the new librarian plans to start by reaching out to the community and finding out what residents might be interested

in. "When I reviewed the job I noticed that Moraga has a very high circulation number; I knew it was a well used library. There is a lot of original programming and if it is small it means that people are encouraged to work collaboratively."

Previous librarian Linda Waldrop had scheduled activities ahead of time, so Girshman has a few weeks of respite. "I'm good at finding people to work with," says Girshman, "and I'm always astounded at the great human spirit."

In other County Library news,

Barbara Flynn was appointed on February 15 to the position of County Librarian by the Board of Supervisors, replacing the recently retired Anne Cain. Flynn comes from San Diego County where she served as Deputy Director of the County's library system.

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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council
Tuesday, March 15, 7:00 pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission
Tuesday, March 22, 7:00 pm
(Tuesday, March 8, canceled)
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight
Wednesday, March 9, 6:30 pm
Community Room, City Hall,
22 Orinda Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
City of Orinda:
www.cityoforinda.org
Chamber of Commerce:
www.orindachamber.org
The Orinda Association:
www.orindaassociation.org

CIOC Deems Orinda's Roads in Crisis

By Andrea A. Firth

“Orinda’s roads are in crisis,” said Richard Nelson, the Chairman of Orinda’s Citizen’s Oversight Infrastructure Commission (CIOC), as he presented the Commission’s annual report at the February 15th City Council meeting.

“We are at the point where something needs to be done about it,” said Nelson. “Fifty percent of Orinda’s roads are rated as very poor...Budgeted spending is not enough to even touch these roads that are currently in very, very poor condition,” he added. Nelson and his fellow Commission members pressed the Council to increase the budget allocation for road repairs by about two-fold or

risk being unable to prevent further deterioration of the larger arterials and collector streets.

Orinda’s current road repair policy focuses the City’s limited funds on the most heavily traveled roads. Residential streets receive only emergency repairs to address exceedingly unsafe conditions.

“The current situation is that the residential roads will go to gravel. This is the policy that we have adopted,” said Commission member Alex Evans. “The cost

will kill this city off,” he added, “Our legacy is going to be that we let our streets kill off our city.”

Evans strongly encouraged the Council to find at least \$2 million a year for the roads to ensure that the city’s notoriously bad roads do not get any worse. “We can no longer dream of a big fix. The bond measures were a great idea, but they failed,” said Evans. Both he and Nelson prodded the Council to look at alternate funding options.

“Public Works are doing a

great job with the funds that they have” said Nelson. “But deferred maintenance can’t go on forever.” He suggested that if the Council was able to find additional road repair monies, resident interest in the road repair problem would increase. He did not rule out the possibility of pursuing a repair bond measure in the future.

Nelson explained that the CIOC is currently investigating the idea of benefit assessment districts to address some of the road repair needs.

As Seen in Lamorinda Cow Talk



Unlike many local motorists, the cows don't seem to mind the condition of Orinda's roads. A Lamorinda Weekly reader caught these three strolling down Ivy Drive and snacking on a few of the grassy lawns along the way. But the cows soon grew weary of the hustle and bustle of city life, so they found their way back to a trail and headed into the hills. Photo provided

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Police Report

Car Fire, 2/16/11 A car parked inside a garage on Great Oak Circle inexplicably caught on fire. There was nothing suspicious according to the police; they suspected something mechanical or electrical may have started the blaze. Damage was contained to the garage.

Parked while drunk, 2/10/11 An attendant on duty at the Shell station was troubled when a gentleman in a parked car could not be woken up, even after several attempts. Police arrived and saw the fellow asleep in the driver's seat and also attempted to wake him up – initially he didn't respond. Alert cops could smell alcohol in the vehicle and noticed the subject's watery eyes. The fellow finally got up to perform several field sobriety tests. He flunked, so he was arrested for driving under the influence and taken to the Martinez Detention Facility. Presumably he drove himself to the gas station – hence the D.U.I.

Remodel burglary, 2/07/11 An unknown suspect forced entry into a home being remodeled on Southwood Drive. Tools valued at \$1,500 were permanently borrowed. Sadly no one saw or heard anything. Perhaps the contractor consoled himself with that old folksong, “If I had a hammer.”

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Environmental Review Begins for Proposed Senior Project

By Cathy Tyson



Architect's rendering of proposed Astoria project near Wilder. Image provided

At a recent meeting of the Planning Commission, the City of Orinda announced the Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for a senior housing facility near Gateway Boulevard and Highway 24.

Developer Agemark Corporation has owned a 1.1 acre parcel near the entrance of the Wilder development for approximately two years and is interested in building a congregate care facility on the site. The proposed project, "Astoria at Wilder," consists of a two story, roughly 40,000 square foot facility with 45 units of assisted living, 15 of those for Alzheimer's or dementia patients, along with surface parking and landscaping.

"We are very excited about our

boutique assisted living community and feel that the site provides a great opportunity for us to serve an unfulfilled need in Orinda," said Forrest Westin, Vice President of Agemark.

The Draft Environmental report examines probable environmental effects like aesthetics, air quality, land use, hydrology, traffic and more. There was some concern at the meeting that adjacent ball fields will have lights and noise late into the night that may disturb the residents. The environmental report is a preliminary step in the planning process, and there will continue to be opportunities for public comment.

Michael O'Hara, Project Director with Brooks Street, repre-

senting Wilder, commented, "The location is inappropriate," explaining that the proposed project is inconsistent with the scenic corridor and the semi-rural character of Wilder. Attorney Amanda Monchamp, also representing Wilder, added that there are a number of categories omitted from the environmental report that should have been included.

Agemark has been in business since 1987, and has three types of senior facilities throughout the country: Astoria Gardens focuses on assisted living and memory care, Country House Residences are exclusively designed for Alzheimer's patients, and Kensington-Evergreen for independent seniors.

LOL at Live at the Orinda

By Andrea A. Firth



Rick Kattenburg is planning for another sell out of the second annual *Live at the Orinda* Comedy Night to be held on Friday, March 11th at the Orinda Theater. "Last year's event got rave reviews as a uniquely different fundraiser," says Kattenburg, the Chamber of Commerce Director in charge of this event. Presented in collaboration with Tommy T's Comedy Clubs and the Lamorinda Film & Entertainment Foundation, the laughter-filled evening will feature six of the Bay Area's most up and coming comedians.

"Last year we had a pretty good party prior to the show," says Kattenburg. "We will be selling Piper Sonoma champagne this year, as well as a white wine by the glass or bottle. You can carry your drinks right into the theatre as you join your friends for the laughs. The seating is open. Everyone will have a great view because of a live video feed projected onto the big screen above the comics during the performances."

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce produces this event, to help fund Chamber events that enhance Orinda. The proceeds also benefit other Orinda nonprofits. Tickets at \$30.00 may be reserved in advance until March 10th using a major credit card at the Orinda Chamber of Commerce web site, www.OrindaChamber.org, or purchased at First Republic Bank, 224 Brookwood Road. Tickets at the door, if available, will be \$35.00 per person.

"Live at the Orinda offers fun-

loving people of our East Bay communities the opportunity to share an evening of relaxing laughter while discovering all the charms of Orinda," says Sue Breedlove, Orinda Chamber Pres-

ident. "It's no wonder this has become an annual event."

"This will be one great night of comedy, so come on out for the laughs," says Kattenburg, adding, "Orinda ain't Borinda anymore."

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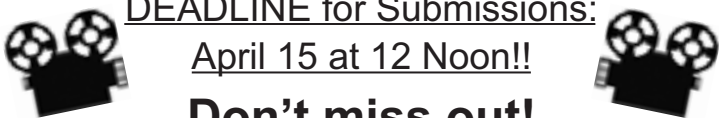
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Jewish Film Festival Comes to Orinda

By Cathy Tyson

SEE A FILM. SEE THE WORLD.



Graphic provided

First there was the California Independent Film Festival at the New Rheem Theatre in Moraga – then just recently the Orinda International Film Festival, and starting next weekend the East Bay International Jewish Film Festival makes its debut at the Orinda Theatre. Film buffs may be wondering if Lamorinda is the new cultural hub of the East Bay.

This film festival has grown from humble beginnings in 1995, “We started with one weekend at one venue,” said Riva Gambert, Director of Community Programs for the Jewish Community Foundation, “Now we’re up to four venues and more than fifty screenings.” Organizers are calling it the largest Jewish cultural event in the Contra Cost/Tri-Valley area - seeking to educate, engage,

encourage dialogue and promote pluralism. Venues include CineArts in Pleasant Hill, the Jewish Community Center in Walnut Creek, the Vine Cinema in Livermore – and for the first time ever – the Orinda Theatre. With films from across the globe including Argentina, Belgium, France and beyond it’s easy to see why their motto is “See a film, see the world.”

Gambert explains that Orinda was chosen due to the level of interest, and as a way to host screenings closer to home. “Audiences want entertainment, but are also very sophisticated, we looked for a balance,” she said of the shorts, documentaries and features that were chosen.

Kicking off the festivities in Orinda on March 12 at 7:00 p.m. is

The Matchmaker from Israel, in Hebrew with subtitles. It’s a mixture of comedy and drama set in the summer of 1968 when a teenager from Haifa falls in love with an American girl who is full of talk about women’s rights, free love and rock and roll. Following “*The Matchmaker*” is “*Naomi*,” a suspenseful, psychological mystery with some adult content at 9:30 p.m.

On Sunday, March 13, films run all day long starting at 9:30 a.m. with the family-friendly “*Little Traitor*.” Other films being screened that day include “*Lebanon*,” winner of the prestigious Golden Lion Venice Film Festival award, also nominated for an Oscar and winner of the Discovery Award at the 2010 European Film Awards; and the Israeli award-winning “*The Human Resources Manager*” – a tragic-comedic story that unfolds along a journey from Jerusalem to the snowy mountains of Romania.

Closing the show on Sunday is “*Gay Days*,” also from Israel, which documents a revolution in the fight for equality for the LGBT community from 1985 – 1998. Personal stories and archival material chronicle an extraordinary change in cultural attitudes.

Check the festival’s website for show times for all films that will be screened in Orinda and at other venues. The first screening of the festival is a Dutch film, *Bride Flight*, on March 5 at CineArts in Pleasant Hill. Go to www.eastbay-jewishfilm.org for a complete schedule, or call (510) 318-6456.

One Man Flower Crew Makes Mark in Happy Valley

By Cathy Tyson

Those large, dramatic swaths of yellow King Alfred daffodils that welcome residents to the Happy Valley neighborhood and along Deer Hill Road are the



Photo provided

work of Greg Moeller, a self-described “balding retired bean counter” and gardening nut. “There’s no nut like a garden nut,” Moeller adds.

Calling it “therapeutic” and a labor of love, Lafayette resident Moeller just wants to beautify the neighborhood for all to enjoy. Each fall the Happy Valley Improvement Association gives away thousands of bulbs with no strings attached, paid for by the nominal yearly dues it collects from homeowners.

Moeller estimates he planted 11,000 daffodils this past fall – that are in full bloom at the moment. Some are paid for with Im-

provement Association funds, but a chunk of the cost comes from his own pocket. He’s also responsible for bird houses and has been spreading poppy seeds in the area. A special thanks goes to Orchard Nursery for being so generous, said Moeller, they have been very supportive of the project.

Drivers just can’t help but wave and give a shout out when he’s weeding or planting the little triangular flower bed at the corner of El Nido Road and Upper Happy Valley or tending to his cheery flower crops throughout the neighborhood. He wants to thank residents for, “Not hitting the guy who looks homeless.”

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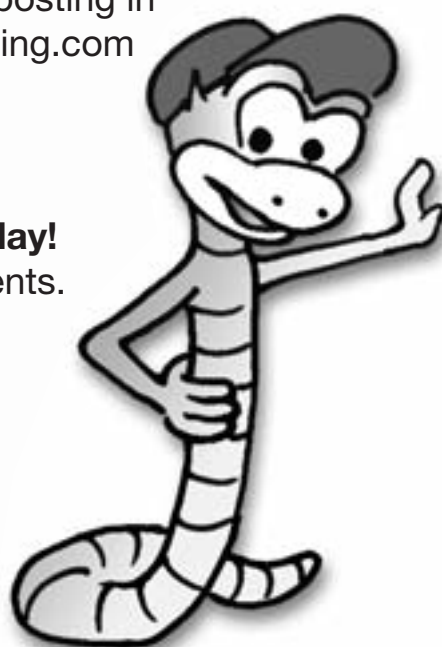
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OUSD to Bridge Funding Gap with Reserves

By Andrea A. Firth

The Orinda Union School District (OUSD) Board of Trustees voted unanimously to tap into the District's reserves if faced with a State funding shortfall for the 2011-2012 school year.

"We are in the unique situation to use our reserves in the event of State funding cuts," said Board President Matt Moran, "We are fortunate, not lucky. There has been planning." In addition to the State-mandated 3% reserve, OUSD has an addition a 17% reserve, or \$4 million.

If the temporary taxes were renewed as Governor Brown proposes and flat funding for schools achieved, OUSD would end up just about even, according to Jerry Bucci, the District's Director of Business Services. "But even, is not quite even," said Bucci, adding that OUSD is down 18% to 20% of what it should legally receive from the State due to the school funding reductions that have been implemented over the past few years.

Bucci presented the Board with two other scenarios that would necessitate dipping into the District's reserves. If the State's temporary taxes are not extended, OUSD will lose a little over \$700K in State funding, about \$330 student. If the State also suspends Prop 98, a voter-enacted proposition that guarantees a minimum level of school funding, OUSD will face a funding reduc-

tion of \$1.5 million

"Over the past few years, we've taken all the fat, then the muscle, and we're down to shaving bone," said Moran. The Board felt the use of reserves to bridge any potential funding shortfall in the next school year would eliminate the anxiety of proposing teacher layoffs and give the District a year to review and plan for how to fill the budget gap. "We do have the ability to float the District for a year," said Trustee Pat Rudebusch.

"I really don't want to hand out pink slips [teacher lay off notices] in March, so using reserves in this situation makes sense," said Trustee Julie Rossiter, but she voiced concern regarding how quickly reserves can be depleted.

Trustee Tyson Krumholz supported the use of reserve funds to address a funding shortfall, however he repeatedly voiced his concern regarding administrative costs and called for a simultaneous review of administrative salaries to ensure equity with other Districts in the area. "We have positions that are paid more than the going rate," said Krumholz, "I'm not completely comfortable with dipping into reserves without reviewing this."

The previous Board of Trustees reviewed management salaries in November of 2010 and voted 3 to 2 to adopt one of two revised salary schedules proposed.

Lafayette School Budget Dilemma Continues

By Cathy Tyson

At a recent Lafayette School District meeting, the Board reviewed a proposed Budget Reduction Plan. It wasn't pretty.

"We are wrangling with how to address a \$2.2 million dollar structural deficit," said District Superintendent Dr. Fred Brill. To make matters worse, "We are operating with incomplete information." A number of important budget components are unknown, including whether Parcel B – the proposed parcel tax – will pass; what action will be taken in Sacramento also remains a mystery.

As Brill sees it, the District is required to submit three years worth of balanced budgets, and if teachers may possibly receive a pink slip, the District is required to give them notice by March 15. Yet the revenue side of the equation won't be

known until June.

"It's a ludicrous situation," said Peggy Marchburn, Chief Communications Officer for Contra Costa County Office of Education, "creating a budget with incomplete information." She explained it's a little like Wimpy from the Popeye cartoons, who will gladly pay Tuesday for a hamburger today. "The County Superintendent's Office is working with districts to offer guidance and on-going support, but the State is withholding funds and it's not a sustainable situation."

To see the Budget Reduction Plan for yourself, go to the Lafayette School District website www.lafsd.k12.ca.us. Concerned residents are encouraged to attend the Wednesday, March 9 Board meeting at 7:00 p.m. at Stanley Middle School, 3455 School Street, Lafayette.

Moraga School District Finances Going from Bad to Worse

By Cathy Dausman

Moraga School District Superintendent Bruce Burns warns audiences that "this is another year to plan when you don't have all the info." He is busy making the budget presentation rounds, ten to date, "to anybody who will listen to me." The next School Board meeting is March 8, and Burns says "it will be big."

"This is a very interesting time to become Superintendent," says Burns, who is just seven months into the job. "We're doing the right thing," he believes, adding, "I don't want to be an alarmist."

The Moraga School District's (MSD's) last financially stable year was 2007-2008. Since then, it has been deficit-spending; Burns sets the current deficit at \$569,950. According to MSD Chief Business Officer Kathy Bell, the district's 2009-2010 per-student spending was \$8,920.

Even if existing taxes are extended, the district will lose about \$19 per student. After applying a \$280,000 one-time Federal Jobs Act grant, the result is a shortfall of nearly \$34,000. Burns says the MSD might be able to cover this loss by tapping into one-third of its financial reserves. California requires each school district to save 3% of their total revenues; the Moraga School District has saved 4%.

If the taxes are not extended, which Burns describes as "a horrible situation," the loss per student increases to \$349; and the district deficit grows to \$844,000. After budget cuts, reductions and applying reserves there would be a \$230,109 shortfall. Although the per-student dollar loss increases in this case, the shortfall is less than the first scenario because the district would then use two-thirds of its financial reserves.

If enrollment increases the deficit decreases, says Burns. Every unspent line item results in savings applied to the deficit. "Teachers [who have had hours or jobs

cut] have been through this before and it might happen again." Yet this is the scenario the district is planning for, eyeing the March 15 deadline for sending lay-off notices. Burns says the district partially offset staff reductions with funding provided by the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and the Moraga Education Foundation (MEF).

The worst case scenario is one in which taxes are not extended and Prop 98 is suspended – the district would suffer a 1.6 million dollar deficit and a loss of \$650 per student. Even after applying reserve funding, the projected shortfall would be \$748,922. If that happens, revenue loss would increase to \$1200 per student for the 2012-2013 school year. And district reserves would be gone.

The numbers will shift somewhat as expenditures continue during the next four months. Shortfall figures are estimated projections based on the information available to the MSD earlier in the year. "The second interim budget report will likely show a decrease in shortfall numbers as our enrollment increased. Increased enrollment increases revenue and decreases shortfalls," Burns notes.

Burns says twenty five percent of MSD's current operating budget does not come from the State but from sources such as PTAs and MEF. Because of that, he says it is vital to build both funds as well as to personally thank individuals and businesses who have made past contributions. Burns also hopes parents will attend the March 29 statewide PTA Advocacy Day in Sacramento, and "contact your Legislators daily...by phone, e-mail and letter. Let your voice be heard." He adds that the Moraga School District isn't just relying on donations to help ease deficit spending – at this point, Burns stressed, "We're betting on them."



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Letters to the Editor

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Editor:
Is a financial and ecological debacle possible in Orinda? The answer is yes because Orinda is not showing proper leadership in the area of supplying housing for low-income senior citizens. Current California law mandates that California cities build a certain number of apartments for low-income senior citizens. Orinda has decided to use land at 2 Irwin Way (across the street from the Safeway) to build about 70 apartments -- possibly high-rise apartments -- for low-income seniors. Orinda's plan seems well-intentioned. However, what would happen if few or no senior citizens wanted the planned apartments? For years, I have been suggesting that Orinda oppose the current law that requires California cities to build housing for low-income seniors. I favor a more efficient process: giving these seniors vouchers to be used at an apartment of choice. Unfortunately, the Orinda City Council does not have the will to oppose current state housing law that applies to low-income seniors. Worse, Orinda plans to hire an organization called Eden Housing, located in Hayward, to build the Irwin Way apartments. Eden appears to be in shaky financial condition. I have obtained copies of Eden's 2008 and 2009 federal income tax returns. Between 2008 and 2009, Eden's investment income dropped 90 percent, profit decreased 73 percent, and income fell 50 percent. In November 2010, I wrote Janet Keeter, Orinda's city manager, asking her if she had copies of Eden's tax returns. In a January 10 letter to me, Ms. Keeter, stated: "The City of Orinda does not have copies of Eden's tax returns." Unless Orinda has evidence that Eden Housing will not go broke in the midst of building the Irwin Way project, Orinda should avoid doing business with Eden. Moreover, if Orinda -- perhaps in conjunction with other cities -- had worked to create a voucher program, there would be no need for Orinda to get involved with a presumably financially unstable organization like Eden. Orinda, then, might be able to concentrate on one of its main problems: fixing the city's horrible roads. Richard S. Colman
Orinda

Editor:
I read in the press that fire stations are going to be shut down in other cities because there is not enough money to keep them open, but then I read that Orinda taxpayers are paying \$11 million in taxes to MOFD. Isn't that the same size as the entire Orinda budget? Does it really cost that much to run a fire department? One letter writer says Moraga only pays 3/4 of what we pay per fire fighter. Is there a reason for this? If we only paid 3/4 of \$11 million that would be a lot of extra money for things we don't have. At the same time, while the city is doing a great job fixing our big roads, our little roads keep getting worse and worse and the Mayor says this is because we won't vote in a new tax. Are we handing out money with one hand but begging with the other? Is anyone asking these questions? I see letter writers suggesting that we have a citizen task force to review these questions. We certainly have a lot of smart people in this town who could probably figure it out. Why not give them a try? What can it hurt? Bill Criswell
Orinda

Editor:
After all the meetings and letters concerning the equity balance of the MOFD, it appears we have yet to achieve any unbiased, complete report. Clearly Moraga and the MOFD believe their best interests are served by maintaining the status quo. Both Moraga Councilman Metcalfe and the MOFD Directors expressed at the September Tri-Agency meeting that "This is Orinda's problem". So what are the facts? Is Orinda really paying \$1 million per fire fighter, but Moraga only \$750,000 per fighter? Why, if Orinda indeed pays more, which does not seem reasonable, is the fire service to Sleepy Hollow and Orinda Downs way below acceptable standards? If the water pressure of our hydrants is also substandard, why after all these years has the MOFD failed to even start addressing the problem? Has there ever been any serious effort to work with EBMUD to do so? Approximately a year ago, the Orinda City Council conducted a survey to determine support for a bond to raise money for road repairs. Forty percent (40%) indicated a wait-and-see stance until the MOFD report was completed. Apparently it has been impossible to garner any balanced perspective of the facts since Moraga and the MOFD strive only to protect their self-interests. Thus, perhaps it is time, as expressed in recent letters, for a proposed Orinda Citizens Committee to investigate all of these claims to be sure our self-interests are protected. Much money is at stake, and in the meantime, our roads continue to deteriorate and the quality of our fire protection remains questionable. Bob and Joan Daoro
Al Sisto
Orinda

Editor:
The City of Lafayette has money designated for new offices in this years budget.. I wonder when they are going to spring the news to the public? I hear they want to put Road Tax #4 on the ballot soon. They must be waiting until after that election. They have already spent \$2,264,950 for land for a parking lot across the street. They are planning to spend another \$53,657 on it. There's no mention of the cost for the traffic light that will be needed for pedestrians to cross Moraga Road. The projected cost to purchase and convert the old library building into city offices is \$4,081,664. Add that to the parking lot expense and the bill is \$6,400,271. Someone might squawk if they knew about it. Someone might suggest finding an office building that doesn't need a \$2,000,000+ overhaul. Having an office with adequate parking on the same side of the street would make sense. But Lafayette is the city of bad ideas. You will be told about their plan, after they sign the contract. (P. S. The numbers are on pages 112, 113, & 136 of the City of Lafayette Final Budget & Workplan FY 2010-11.) Bruce R. Peterson
Lafayette

Editor:
Moraga residents are not going to like what they see when grading starts on the Rancho Laguna development. Town Council members who voted for the project may say what they like about "protecting" the ridge by trying to make the houses "invisible" from Rheem. But to so they are letting the developer carve off the ridge itself and build a road right on top. The road cuts in the ridge will reach 30 feet -- that's the height of a three-story building, and good enough for a first down in the Super Bowl. The next time you drive along Rheem past the Rancho Laguna site, look up and imagine a 30-foot slice off the top with cars driving along it. Not nice. And not what most people want for the Town. Residents put a General Plan in place to control such destructive development practices. How can we make developers follow the rules when Council members cut them deals like this? If the Town Council and the Planning Commission continue to sell out the provisions of the General Plan every time they want to fix a road, can we trust them with the future of Moraga? Sincerely,
Dan Smith
Moraga

Editor:
The 2-1 vote by the Moraga Town Council last month to approve the ridge-ruining Rancho Laguna project was nothing less than a page out of Alice in Wonderland. I'm referring to the insistence by Councilmember Howard Harpham and Mayor Karen Mendonca that the Town's General Plan admonition to "protect ridgelines from development" didn't really mean that at all; they both agreed "protect" didn't mean "prohibit." It was classic Lewis Carroll: "When I use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in a rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean-- neither more nor less." "The question is," said Alice, "whether you can make words mean so many different things." "The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master--that's all." Yes, well, I wasn't surprised that Harpham bent that part of the General Plan. In 2008 he ran on a pro-development platform and stayed true to his word. Can't say the same for Mendonca, though. A top campaign priority of hers was open space and ridgeline preservation. She argued forcefully for Measure K (which would have protected Rheem Ridge) and was the top vote getter (making her mayor) thanks to the vigorous support of the open space community. Months ago Councilmember Dave Trotter proposed a compromise that would have moved the offending houses off the ridgeline and still allow for a reasonable project. Inexplicably, Mendonca rejected it and instead sided with the developers. Politically, this vote was an integrity test; she failed it. In the past I've likened Moraga's physical beauty to an East Bay oasis, but now that Rheem Ridge has been conquered, our remaining unprotected ridgelines will soon come under assault by developers. The only way to stop this is to elect people to the Council who have the backbone to reject this kind of unacceptable development by following both the letter and spirit of our General Plan. Two years ago I supported Karen Mendonca and urged others to do the same. I won't be doing that again. Moragans: next election, please remember this Council vote. A. Richard Immel
Moraga

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Saint Mary's Clinches WCC Conference Title, First Since 1997

By Bryant West



Photo Tod Fierner

The Saint Mary's Gaels accomplished a goal 14 seasons in the making – a regular season crown.

Reaching this end point was a roller coast ride, especially the last two weeks: Saint Mary's suffered a three game losing streak which dropped their RPI from 30 to 56, but Randy Bennett's squad has a lot to be proud of. A home win against Portland on Saturday secured a share of the regular season championship which Saint Mary's hasn't had since 1997. Saint Mary's shares the title with rival Gonzaga.

Head coach Randy Bennett said after the Gaels victory on Saturday that winning the regular season title gives him more pride than the tournament title. "I think it's harder to do," Bennett said. "There aren't many upsets in winning a conference regular-season championship. You can have upsets winning a conference tournament, so that's why I think it's special." Three straight losses – a 74-66 loss to San Diego, a 75-65 loss to #24/25 Utah State, and a 89-85 defeat to Gonzaga – were not favorable to a once secure Gaels team. But a 83-69 win against Portland on Saturday night earned a 11-3 conference record and gave Saint Mary's a share of the regular season title.

The Gaels letdown, 74-66 loss, against San Diego on February 16 postponed the chance to tie for the conference title.

While Saint Mary's held a decent halftime lead at 32-24, San Diego caught fire and scored 50 second half points, including going 6-of-7 from beyond the three point line to stun the Gaels.

Senior guard Mickey McConnell scored 21 points and had six assists, while sophomore forward Mitchell Young had 24 and nine boards, but four Toreros scored in double figures.

Matt Dorr and Chris Manresa each notched 17 points.

While the Gaels played much more talented competition on Saturday, February 19, Utah State sat at #24/25 in the rankings, the game was eerily similar to the contest against the Toreros.

The Gaels played well in the first half, holding a 36-27 advantage that Bennett later said was one of the best halves they'd played all year. But again, a comfortable halftime advantage quickly dwindled away as the Aggies shot 55.6 percent, scoring 48 points in the second, while holding Saint Mary's to 28.6 percent shooting. McConnell had 16 points and four assists, while Tai Wesley and Brockeith Pane each had 22 for the Aggies.

Returning to regular season play against Gonzaga on February 24, the Gaels contest with Bulldogs became more than a rivalry game, with the conference regular season title at stake. A win could have helped the Gaels outright win the conference title.

Saint Mary's trailed by 10 in the second half at 55-45 with 14:49 to play, but Saint Mary's stormed back and tied it with 7:19 at 65 a piece after a three by Dellavedova. The teams traded buckets from there, but a three pointer from junior forward Rob Jones gave Saint Mary's a 76-73 advantage with 1:40 to play. Tough Saint Mary's defense stifled the Zags next offensive play, but a loose rebound was tipped right to Zags guard Marquise Carter who sank a tying three at 76-76 with 1:13 to play.

Both teams missed their next shots, and the Gaels had the ball with nine seconds left and a chance to win. But McConnell missed a potential game winning three, and it was all but over from there – Saint Mary's were stagnant offensively in overtime,

making just one of their seven shots as Gonzaga went on to win 89-85.

The loss tied up the conference standings and gave the Gaels their third straight loss.

McConnell had 15 points and nine assists, and sophomore guard Matthew Dellavedova finished with 24 points and five assists, but five Zags, led by Sam Dowers' 21 points, scored in double figures.

"How many big shots has Mickey made for us?" Bennett said afterwards. "Nobody hits them all."

The match-up against Portland last Saturday was the Gaels last chance to secure the conference title and they did not disappoint.

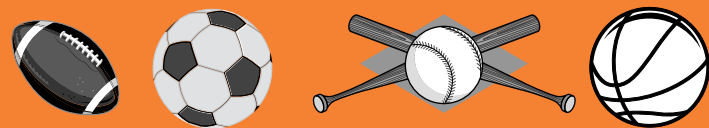
The Gaels trailed 39-38 at halftime but picked up their offense and defense in the second half. After shooting 38.5 percent in the first half and allowing Portland to shoot 55.6 percent, the Gaels started the second half on a 11-2 run capped off by three, three-pointers from freshmen guard Stephen Holt. The Gaels shot 57 percent in the second half and sank 20-of-24 free throws to hold off the Pilots.

Immediately after the game, the players and fans celebrated the team's first conference regular season title in 14 years.

"There are a lot of guys who haven't won this," Bennett said. "They better enjoy it tonight. We all feel good tomorrow. And then this week, we'll try to get better and go into this tournament playing well."

The Gaels will travel to the WCC Championships this weekend, and will play Loyola Marymount, Portland or Santa Clara in the semi-final round, which will be held on Sunday, March 6th. Should they win that contest, they will advance to the finals for the third straight year, which will be held Monday the 7th.

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SPORTS LAMORINDA'S LOCAL SPORTS



Saint Mary's Women Secure Second Place Finish

By Caitlin Graveson



Leanna Richey (#21), Louella Tomlinson (#2) and Suzie Davis (#12) celebrate Senior Night. Photo Tod Fierner

Saint Mary's women's basketball closed out the final games of the regular season with a 2-1 record to secure a second place finish in the West Coast Conference. The second place finish not only fulfills preseason expectations, but gives the Gaels a bye until the semi-finals of the WCC tournament this weekend. The Gaels also secured an automatic bid to the Women's National Invitational Tournament (WNIT) if they do not qualify for the NCAA tournament. The Gaels closed out the season with wins over the University of San Diego and the University of Portland, and a loss to #23 Gonzaga.

Saint Mary's hosted USD for their final home stand on Saturday, February 19. The Gaels celebrated PinkZone for Breast Cancer Awareness, wearing their pink jerseys, and Senior Night. Saint Mary's said goodbye to Leanna Richey, Courtney Dunn, Suzie Davis and Louella Tomlinson.

"It was pretty awesome. I am satisfied with how with how the last four years went and it was great that everyone came out to support me and the girls," Tomlinson said after the game.

USD put up a tough fight against the Gaels, opening with a 2-13 lead. Saint Mary's redshirt junior guard Jasmine Smith remained unfazed and sparked a 12-0 run for the Gaels. Smith notched 10 of the 12 points. The run gave SMC the lead which they held onto heading into the locker room up, 42-36.

The Toreros opened the second half much like the first, with a 7-0 run. Again, the Gaels fought back with a 10-2 run. The game remained close until the final minutes when Saint Mary's found themselves up just four points. Tomlinson hit a bucket to extend the lead to six and the win was

sealed from there, 77-69.

Smith had a career high 31 points. Tomlinson added 16 points and ten rebounds.

Saint Mary's hoped the momentum from the win would carry them into their rematch against #23 Gonzaga on February, 24. Head Coach Paul Thomas said their strategy against Gonzaga was focused on maintaining control and limiting guard Courtney Vandersloot's influence. "You aren't going to stop Vandersloot, so you have to contain her," Thomas said.

Unfortunately, that goal was not executed and Vandersloot notched 22 points and 13 assists in the Gaels 66-106 loss. Smith had 24 points and Tomlinson had 10 points.

Saint Mary's was able to quickly bounce-back from the loss to defeat the Pilots on Saturday, February 26. The Gaels got off to a slow start, but Portland did not take advantage and SMC was only down 2-7 early. The first half remained close and the Pilots had 27-25 lead at halftime.

The Gaels fought back in the second half with a 10-0 run to reduce the deficit. A layup by junior guard Alex Carbonel gave Saint Mary's the lead with about nine minutes to play. Saint Mary's maintained the lead to win, 62-52.

Carbonel had a career-high 20 points. Smith had 20 points while Tomlinson notched a double-double with 14 points and 13 rebounds.

"We stepped up defensively... Alex did a great job giving us a spark off the bench, while Louella and Jasmine did what they do... a great team win," Thomas said.

Saint Mary's basketball returns to action in Las Vegas in the semi-finals of the WCC Tournament on Sunday, March 6 at approximately 1:30 p.m.

Campolindo Soccer Wins NCS Championship

... continued from page A1

Campolindo defeated John F. Kennedy of Fremont 4-0 in the first round, Ygnacio Valley 2-1 in the second round and Albany 5-0 in the semi-finals to reach the championship. Acalanes defeated John F. Kennedy of Richmond 1-0 in the first round, Pinole Valley 1-0 in the second round and Dublin 6-0 in the semi-finals to reach the finals.

All three girls' teams qualified for the tournament. Campolindo drew a fourth seed but was upset in the first

round by #13 Berean Christian, 1-2. #6 Miramonte hosted #11 Acalanes in the opening round and defeated the Dons' 3-1. The Lady Mats lost in the second round to Piedmont in double overtime, 2-1. C. Graveson

(Front page photo—Campolindo players: #6 Matt Reshke, #16 Timmy Coleman, #18 Jaison Kimura, #3 Harlan Raine, #25 Sam Palano; Acalanes players: #16 Austin Deback, #17, #21 Austen Grassin, #4 Adrian Chow-dane, #9 Cam Carda, #15 Max Omick)

SMC Gaels

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Fri, Mar 4 BSB UC Irvine (Louis Guisto Field) 2:00 PM
Sat, Mar 5 BSB UC Irvine (Louis Guisto Field) 1:00 PM
Sun, Mar 6 BSB UC Irvine (Louis Guisto Field) 1:00 PM
Tue, Mar 8 MTEN Louisiana-Lafayette 1:00 PM
Fri, Mar 11 WTEN Loyola Marymount 2:00 PM
Fri, Mar 11 MBB Weber State McKeon Pavilion 7:00 PM
Sun, Mar 13 WTEN San Diego 10:00 AM
Sun, Mar 13 MTEN Texas-Arlington 12:00 PM
Sun, Mar 13 WLAX Lafayette Saint Mary's Stadium 1:00 PM
Mon, Mar 14 MTEN Northern Colorado 3:00 PM
Tue, Mar 15 BSB Nevada Moraga, Calif. (Louis Guisto Field) 3:00 PM

Schedule is subject to change. Confirm at www.SMCGaels.com

Lamorinda Basketball Post-Season Review

By Conrad Bassett



Amanda Forshay #14 scored 11 points in the win over Tamalpais

Photo Doug Kohen

The Campolindo and Acalanes boys' basketball teams were selected for post-season play. As was the case the last two seasons, two Lamorinda teams met early in the playoffs—this time Acalanes traveled to play Campolindo on Tuesday, February 22nd. Campolindo defeated their Lamorinda rivals to progress to the second round, but lost on the road to Analy.

All three of the Lamorinda girls' basketball teams made it to the NCS playoffs with top-five seeds. Campolindo and Miramonte were selected for second and third seeds, respectively and received a first round bye. Acalanes was given a #5 seed and played in the first round. All teams have advanced to the semi-finals and will play tonight, March 2nd. Campolindo hosts Miramonte at 7:00 p.m. **First Round, Tuesday, February 22nd:**

The Campolindo and Acalanes boys split their first two meetings in the Diablo Foothill Athletic League regular season, each winning on the road in two close games. The "rubber match" turned out to be close as well, coming down to the final minute.

Dons' senior Stephen Collins hit a free throw to tie it at 53 with 59 seconds to go. Twenty seconds later, Cougars' sophomore John Schmitz drilled a three pointer from the wing to give Campolindo a lead they would not relinquish. Campo won 59 to 53.

The Cougars were led by senior Carl King who finished with 16

points. Junior Robbie Wirth chipped in 13. Acalanes was led by Collins who finished with 15 points and junior James Griffin who had 11.

With the win the Cougars progressed to the second round to take on Analy. The Dons finished their season at 14-13.

On the girls' side, Acalanes, who finished fourth in the DFAL, was slotted with a home game against Drake High from Marin County.

The Lady Dons opened up a 19-7 lead after one period and never looked back as they blasted the Pirates 69 to 40. Senior Kiara Harewood had 19 points, junior Sophie Taylor dropped in 15 while senior Emani Harrison scored 13. Sophomore Marie Paladino added two three-point baskets.

Second Round, February 25th:

The Campolindo boys took the court against Analy in Sebastopol. A perennial power, the Tigers looked to be a tough challenge. Campolindo played strong and at the half they had the lead, 26-25. Analy came back in the third to take the lead heading into the fourth, 41-39. Analy remained ahead and ended the Cougars season, 59-54. Campolindo finished at 19-9. The loss eliminated the last Lamorinda boys' teams from the post-season.

On the girls' side, the stakes were high as the winners of each of these games would not only get to the semi-finals of the NCS, but would also qualify for the Northern California CIF tournament.

The Lady Mat's traveled to

Analy. The ride up on Friday night apparently did not tire the Lady Mats as they crushed the Tigers 75-46.

Analy started strong and led by five after the first period but a 16-2 run at the end of the second period, put Miramonte ahead to stay. Coach Kelly Sopak was pleased with the effort and noted, "We are healthy and playing well and the kids are enjoying the ride."

Senior Alyssa Johanson and freshman Breanna Alford both had double doubles with 17 points and 14 points respectively. They each had ten rebounds.

The Acalanes girls took their team on the road to Hayward to meet the Moreau Catholic Mariners. Acalanes beat Moreau 56-46. After trailing at the half by two, the Lady Dons came on strong behind a monster game by Taylor who led all scorers with 22 points to go along with 14 rebounds. Harewood scored 21. The Lady Dons will travel to take on the #1 seeded Bishop O'Dowd Dragons on Wednesday, March 2nd.

Campolindo's girls hosted Tamalpais. The Lady Cougars scored early and often and easily downed the visiting Tamalpais Hawks 74-29. Junior Mallory Brown opened the scoring hitting a three point shot and senior Amanda Forshay scored twice, and the Lady Cougars were up 7-0 and they never looked back. The Hawks hit a layup and then Campo went on a 17-0 run. Campo led by 24-6 after one.

The second period started the same way with junior Annelise Ito making another steal and lay up and Campo led by as many as 26. Ito, who finished with five steals, credited her teammates for giving her the opportunities. Ito said, "My teammates created great pressure and cut off all of Tam's possibilities so I was able to step in and make a lot of steals."

At 6:15 of the fourth, Ito hit two free throws and the lead was 41 and the clock would not stop again. Ito finished with 14 and Amanda Forshay added 11.

Campo was scared by the loss of both Annie Ward (sprained and swollen wrist) and Mallory Brown (stitches on her chin) to injuries. Both left the game and did not return. However, head coach Clay Kallam believes, "Both will be good to go on Wednesday."

This win, along with the Miramonte thrashing of Analy, has set up the third meeting of the year between the Campolindo and Miramonte girls—tonight, Wednesday, March 2, at Campolindo at 7:00 p.m. Campo won the two DFAL regular season meetings.

All three girls' teams qualify for the NorCal tournament which will begin the second week of March.

CYO Champions

Submitted by Robert Becker



Santa Maria's eighth grade boys' CYO team recorded a 12-0 record this season to become the National Division champions. (Top left, clockwise): Peter Jackson, Andrew Lewis, Connor Jackson, Jack Kovalik, Michael Zheng, Scott Kovalik, Mark Laughton, CJ Novogradac, David Becker, Kyle Weikert, Matthew Tom.

Photo Ting Zhang

U-13 Lamorinda Girls Soccer Gold Team Play in State Cup Finals

Submitted by Jeanna Brown



With two decisive wins in State Cup quarter and semi-finals 6-0, and 5-1 respectively, the U-13 girls cruised into the final game of State Cup against Sonoma County Alliance. The Lamorinda girls fought hard, but ultimately fell to Sonoma, 3-4, in a tight but physical game.

From left, back row: Coach Joey DeVenuta, Jane Buckley, AJ Morgan, Emily Holbrook, Gina Crosetti, Meghan Casey, Ally Ikeya; front row: Alina Tully, Rosalind Fraser, Sarah Cella, Jesse Mano, Sophia Settle, Erin Nolan, Gabby Diaz-Valdez, Bailey Yuen, Danielle Brown. Photo Alan Ikeya

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Nickerson to Take the Helm at AUHSD

By Sophie Braccini



Dr. John Nickerson

Photo Jill Ramsay

Dr. John Nickerson will become Superintendent of the Acalanes Union High School District on May 1st, upon the retirement of John Stockton. Currently serving as the District's Associate Superintendent of Educational Services, Nickerson has been involved in the District for 15 years; as a teacher at Miramonte, assistant principal at Campolindo, then principal at Acalanes before moving to the District office.

"I care a lot about this District," says Nickerson, "I feel ready for this position. In these difficult times, I can bring some stability to the District." Nickerson, who met his wife while they were both teaching at Miramonte and has children in 3rd and 6th grade in the San Ramon School District, adds that he feels fortunate to have this opportunity.

As a young graduate from the Harvard's School of Economics, Nickerson decided to respond to the request of a faculty member who was pursuing research in Kenya and went there to teach for two years. "After a few months I became the headmaster of this harambee school," explains Nickerson, "it was a life changing experience. I fell in love with the notion of becoming an educator, and developing a relationship with a community. And I was also introduced to school leadership."

Upon his return, Nickerson taught in Brooklyn, New York, before coming back to California (he grew up in

Long Beach), getting his masters and teaching credential at UC Berkeley and pursuing his teaching career first at Piedmont High School then at Miramonte.

While principal at Acalanes, he worked on his PhD dissertation with the University of La Verne. "I did my research on cognitive conflict," explains Nickerson, "I studied how we can get to the best decision when people do not agree; how this dynamic can function well." Nickerson measured productive disagreements in school districts where excellent decision-making happens. "For this productive way to work you need an environment where people feel safe to disagree, some level of trust," he says.

In his new position, Nickerson's first order of business will be dictated by the State budget. "The short term challenge is—how do we maintain the quality and great opportunity we offer our students?" asks Nickerson. "A large number of students come to school equipped to learn and excel. That said, a crisis like the one we are facing can be detrimental to the enrichment opportunities we have been able to offer and that the kids deserve."

Thanks to Measure A, that was recently passed by voters, the District should not have to issue pink slips for the 2011-2012 school year; although some temporary teachers might not be asked to come back for another

year. Nickerson says the real challenge will be the 2012-2013 school year. "There are a lot of unknowns," he admits, "and we could face a loss of funding between \$2 and \$4 million dollars a year."

Nonetheless, Nickerson is looking toward innovation. "One of the areas where we have historically struggled is in supporting students that are not achieving, not accessing the curriculum," he says. "Tutoring programs are offered; we are starting to do more parallel classes in Math and English to develop foundational skills, and some of the preliminary data suggests that it is effective. We are also working on how to differentiate teaching to a whole class, and that's increasingly challenging with class size going up."

Another area where innovation has taken place under his leadership as Associate Superintendent is testing. "This year we did something completely new in our four schools: all of the World History students in 9th grade were asked to analyze primary source documents in their historical context, and make an argument or develop a thesis," explains Nickerson, "The teachers discussed the results together and built upon it through the school year."

Nickerson also sees opportunity in the meaningful integration of new technology in teaching. "Some classes are starting to use iPads for reading at Acalanes and Miramonte," says Nickerson, "teachers report that digital reading increases the ability of students to analyze text. They can manipulate it, check words, color code by theme, and add comments as they read." He envisions, in the next 5-10 years, a world in which students don't have to carry heavy backpacks; just a digital reader to access textbooks that will be constantly updated and enriched.

"I feel lucky to be working with a staff and teachers who are so innovative," says Nickerson. The only thing that may stand in the District's way is the money.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

Acalanes Union High School District
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
Next: Wednesday, March 9, 7:30pm

Orinda Union School District
OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
Monday, March 7, 4pm

Lafayette School District
LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
Wednesday, March 9, 7pm

Moraga School District
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
Tuesday, March 8, at 7:30pm

Registration for Moraga students entering Kindergarten for the 2011-2012 school year

Moraga - March 3-4 at these schools and times:

Camino Pablo Elementary
9-11:45am, & 1:15-3:00pm, 1111 Camino Pablo, 376-4435

Los Perales Elementary
9am-2pm, 22 Wakefield Drive, 631-0105

Rheem Elementary
9am-2pm
90 Laird Drive, 376-4441

Information regarding Moraga registration requirements is available at www.moraga.k12.ca.us.

Springhill Pack 200 Celebrates 60th Anniversary

Submitted by Jean Follmer



Pack 200 Leader David Browne awards Springhill Principal Bruce Wodhams at the Blue and Gold Event. Photo provided by Suzanne Campillo

Lafayette's Cub Scout Pack 200 recently celebrated its 60th anniversary at the annual Blue and Gold Event. Original founding member, Phil Condit, was slated to attend. Born and raised in Lafayette, Condit went on to become the President and CEO of Boeing from 1996-2004. Ironically, Condit was unable to attend because his flight was cancelled due to a mechanical failure. Announcer David Browne joked that Condit was surely on a French plane rather than a Boeing.

Fortunately, retiring Springhill principal Bruce Wodhams was able to transport himself to the celebration by automobile. Wodhams has served as the Springhill principal for 24 years and has been a great supporter of the Cub Scouts during his tenure. Pack 200 honored Wodhams for his dedication over the years and the Cub Scouts enjoyed a slide show that captured their beloved principal from

boyhood through adulthood. "I am most grateful for the exceptional acknowledgment that Cub Scout Pack 200 afforded me on the occasion of my impending retirement. I was truly taken aback by the level of attention, graciousness and generosity that was provided me at last Wednesday's Blue & Gold Banquet. It is a night I will long remember and the banquet itself a tradition I will sorely miss. It has been a rare and distinct pleasure to be associated with such a fine organization as Cub Scout Pack 200 for the last twenty-four years. It has always reminded me of my own time in Cub Scouts many years ago and I thank them for keeping that valued memory so fresh. A special thanks goes to Robert Raffel, David Browne, Melissa Lee and Carol Davis for their part in last week's presentation. Thank you, scouts. Keep standing tall on the Six Pillars of Character Counts," Wodhams shared.

Family Focus

Handling Your Child's Electronics Habit

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

Is your daughter part of what I call the teen CNN syndrome where she needs to text her friends or go on Facebook practically round the clock for critical fast-breaking news—such as who got grounded or who just bought new shoes? Is your son zoned out in his computer or video game trance which can last for hours? Are you having trouble like many of us keeping up with the latest "i-something" or other device, and whether it's something you even want your child to have?

But more importantly, is your child's electronics habit interfering with family time, school and other responsibilities, a social life (for the solitary video game-players), or sleep? It's easy for children to become addicted to texting back and forth, being online, watching television, and playing video games. As a matter of fact, many adults have one or more of these habits. Each of these activities is compelling for many reasons, and they all provide recreation and diversion.

The problem arises when a child uses his electronic device in a compulsive way and is unable to break away on his own. Parents need to become the regulators and enforcers since children often have a hard time setting limits for themselves. But unless you are with your child 24/7, it is hard to control how he spends his time.

One teen I worked with, a high school sophomore, had a texting habit of over 3,000 texts a month, and that isn't even considered extreme these days. Still, that was an average of 100 texts per day which involved a lot of time. The reason I say she had a habit is that she compulsively checked her phone all day and throughout the night, resulting in interrupted and insufficient sleep. "Mia" also watched television over five hours per day on average. Mia's mom was a single parent who worked full-time, so Mia had free reign after school when she got

home. Mia refused to change any of her behavior as her grades and relationship with her mother rapidly deteriorated.

In addition to seeing Mia, who was depressed and not taking good care of herself physically, I worked separately with her mother to encourage her to set better limits with Mia. Her mother had previously resorted to nagging, yelling, threatening punishments without consistently implementing them, and virtually throwing up her hands. Now her mom needed to figure out a plan for Mia that she could monitor. And she needed to stop letting her desire to get along with Mia deter her from risking being the "bad guy" for a while.

Predictably, Mia didn't like most of her mother's new rules for her. Her mother shut down the cable TV and the home computer until she got home from work, and she also took Mia's phone away except for a two hour window of time per night when Mia could either use her phone, watch TV, or use the computer. If Mia's grades and attitude didn't improve, her mother would take away these privileges altogether. The only exception would be when Mia needed the computer for schoolwork, and then her mother would monitor its use closely. Since in the past Mia resisted her mother's attempts to regulate her electronics use, her mother would need to take Mia's cell phone to work with her and to sleep with it under her pillow at night. Extreme measures, perhaps, but Mia needed to get her life more balanced.

There were some immediate positive outcomes for both Mia and her mother. Mia had requested joining a local gym to work out and take yoga classes, but her mother hadn't wanted to spend the money. Now Mia's mom saw the importance of providing Mia with healthy alternatives to her electronics fixations and got a gym membership for both of them. Also, Mia and her mom signed up together for a

weekly cooking class. Mia got more sleep and was able to stay awake and focus better in school. And since Mia's mom now had a systematic approach, she didn't need to make impromptu and usually inflammatory disciplinary decisions, so their relationship gradually improved.

A key basis for mental, social, and emotional success is achieving balance in our lives. If your child shows signs of excessive electronics use, it is important to help him moderate his habit. Often, before children can achieve self-discipline they need external guidance and limits from the adults in their lives. And, it goes without saying that they also need you to provide them with your own good example of self-discipline. We want our children to leave space for unstructured brain time so they can think, feel, daydream, and create. We want to encourage them to interact with their friends in person and not just via electronic devices. And we want them to leave time for their families so that we can help them build lasting relationships and memories with us.



Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a marriage and family therapist in Orinda and Walnut Creek. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or margierye@yahoo.com. She is also available for parenting consultation.

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Opening Tonight at AHS: The Boyfriend

By Lou Fancher



From left: Quinn Maarse, Brennan Quinn, Lindsey Long and Scotty McCormick in costume

Photo Lou Fancher

Acalanes High School is bouncing all the way back to the 1920's with *The Boy Friend*, this year's musical, opening March 2nd in Lafayette.

Bruce Lengacher, Director of Choral Activities, has been at the school for twelve years. Each fall, he selects three musicals, then presents them to the choir.

"The entire ensemble listens to them and hears the synopsis, and then they vote," he explained.

This year, it was actually *Little Women* that won, but the orchestra didn't have the instrumentation for the libretto, so their second choice became number one.

"I think they chose it because it was upbeat. I described it as *Tempest meets the Great Gatsby*—with lots of dancing," Lengacher recalled.

Brennan Quinn, 16, plays the rich, many-sweatered Bobby Van Heusen.

"I sing bass and it goes pretty high, so that's a challenge," he said. "The show requires a lot of energy because we have to sing and dance at the same time. It's fancy footwork, but it's doable."

Lengacher said Diane Kamrin, the show's choreographer, works well

with all levels of dancers.

"She breaks it down so the kids have success, but some of them were pretty funny, before they got it," he laughed.

Quinn has learned more than just dance steps from participating in the musical.

"If we didn't have the musical, I think the class would run dry around the second semester," he speculated. "This gives us a chance to come out of our shell and get to know each other."

He's heavily involved with Leadership, the student government at Acalanes, but said choir gives him a special self-confidence.

"No one is going to judge you if you sing a wrong note, because it happens to all of us. Even when I'm outside of the class, I don't second guess myself as much as I used to."

Quinn's favorite part is a duet, *Won't You Charleston*, because it epitomizes what he is trying to say to a love interest in the production.

"I want her to stop playing games and just dance with me and be with me," he explained, voicing a preference he shares with his character.

Which leads to a relevant subject: In the 1920's, women were gaining

the right to vote. *The Boy Friend*, frothy entertainment with a cast of women toying, teasing and chasing men while attending *Madame Dubonnet's School for Young Ladies*, is hardly a Suffragette's dream.

"It's ironic," Lengacher said, "we have a very strong female presence in this class, but they haven't brought that up. They're looking at it as a show, as a snapshot of that time period, rather than as a social comment on the time."

He too, has a favorite moment in the production.

"It's when I see that kid who may have been in the shadows step out, for the first time," he said, his expression filled with twelve years of fond memories.

The production runs just under two hours and is almost entirely produced by the students. Parents chair just four of the committees, with students covering performing, marketing, production, set construction, costume design and playing in the orchestra.

With cash-strapped schools, the project sounds expensive.

"Actually, the musical pays for itself," Lengacher said proudly. "Last year, we made money. The budget for this year is under \$10,000 and securing the rights is the biggest part of that: \$3,400. Our Boosters and Lafayette Partners in Education raise funds too."

For the students, parents, and especially for Lengacher, the pay off goes beyond monetary profit.

"It's not even the singing skills they learn," Lengacher confessed, "it's the collaboration, problem-solving and gaining appreciation for things around them that makes it worthwhile."

Acalanes High School's The Boyfriend

Book, Music, Lyrics, by Sandy Wilson
March 2-5 at 7:30 p.m.

Acalanes High School Performing Arts Center

All Seats General Admission
\$15/adult, \$13 for students and seniors (age 60 and up)

Go to www.acalaneschoral.org for tickets

DAR Presents Awards

Submitted by Louise Diracles



From left: Acalanes DAR Regent Alyce Traverso, Hannah Ruben, Kayla Davidge, Emily Baltzo, Nicole Lee, Marie Hecker, and DAR Good Citizen Award Chairperson Barbara Snyder.

Photo provided

Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Regent Alyce Traverso welcomed DAR members and Good Citizen Scholarship winners and their families at a recent ceremony. She outlined the origin, purposes and activities of DAR and explained that each honoree was especially selected by their high school counselors and received a flag flown over the capital, a certificate, a DAR pin, a list of DAR principles and a Savings Bond. Chairperson Barbara Snyder introduced each winner noting some of her other accomplishments, then each read her own essay about patriotism.

Kayla Davidge (Miramonte) is a Mock Trial Team co captain, co-president of REACH, and co-captain of

Tennis. Marie Hecker (Contra Costa Christian) is a Scholar Athlete in volleyball and swimming, senior class president and a food bank volunteer. Nicole Lee (Acalanes) is a newspaper editor, founder of Key Club, and all league tennis player. Hannah Ruben (Campolindo) is a Girls State Delegate, Marine Mammal Center volunteer, and on Student Council. Emily Baltzo (Bentley) is volleyball captain, vocalist in the Contra Costa Children's Chorus, and Habitat for Humanity volunteer. Emily Baltzo was chosen as the DAR County Essay winner. Isabella Rassouli (Las Lomas) is President of the Glee Club, Lacrosse player and a John Muir hospital volunteer. She was unable to attend the ceremony due to illness.

2011 Eagle Scouts of Troop 204

Submitted by Laura van Duren



From left, back row: Max Lamb, Westin Mirner, Andrew Ahr, Austin deBack, Gabriel Samaniego, Pierce Naton;

Front row: Bradley Green, Marcus van Duren, Christopher O'Keefe, Jacob Jernigan, Trent McCormick, Andrew Megowan.

Photo Jeff Toten

On March 19, 2011, at the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church, Lafayette Boy Scout Troop 204 will honor 12 young men who achieved the Eagle Scout award, the highest rank in the Boy Scouts of America. Troop 204 has awarded this special honor to 330 scouts since 1935

To attain the rank of Eagle Scout, a scout must earn his way up the scouting ranks - from Tenderfoot to Life Scout. As a Life Scout, he must be active in the troop for at least six

months, earn at least 21 merit badges, serve as a Patrol Leader, show scout spirit. As a final step they must plan, develop and give leadership to others in an approved Eagle service project that is helpful to any religious institution, school, or community.

In addition to requirements listed above, each scout has attended the annual 50 mile backpacking trips, hiked over 500 miles, actively participated in annual Camporees, constructed and slept in snow caves and camped in the wilderness for over 100 nights.

The new Eagles and their projects are:

Andrew Ahr (Campolindo) - Painted a large classroom and conference room in the children's ministry at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church to create an inviting atmosphere.

Austin deBack (Acalanes) - Fund raising, design, and leadership of groups during the construction of five (5) tables for the teachers of Lafayette Elementary School.

Bradley Green (Acalanes) - Created and coordinated the "Power of Youth" book drive, amongst Lafayette students to raise awareness of the new Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

Jacob Jernigan (Acalanes) - Refurbished a large wooden playground structure, painted exterior doors, and refurbished and painted exterior railings for Shelter, Inc.

Max Lamb (Campolindo) - Planted a garden of native California plants to attract native bees and installed an informational sign as an educational tool at the Garden Classroom at Burton Valley Elementary School in Lafayette.

Trent Joseph McCormick (Campolindo) - Constructed a six foot tall by 90 foot long deer proof fence around a vegetable garden and built an adjoining path to the vegetable garden at Las Trampas.

Andrew Megowan (Acalanes) - Collected a variety of materials for use in the assembly of a number of tactile boards for visually impaired children in the Rehabilitation Center at Children's Hospital in Oakland.

Westin Mirner (Acalanes) - Conducted a month long sweat pant drive in the Lafayette community for the Tom Waddell Health Clinic in San Francisco that benefitted approximately 300 ill, homeless individuals.

Pierce Naton (Campolindo) - Installed an irrigation system in the new Campolindo Biology garden.

Christopher O'Keefe (Acalanes) - Created a learning center for homeless children at Shelter's Inc.

Gabriel Romero Samaniego (Campolindo) - Collected tattered US flags for proper retirement at schools, public and private businesses throughout Lamorinda; organized and put on a flag retirement ceremony.

Marcus Justin Paul van Duren (Campolindo) - Landscaped three traffic triangles for Edna Brewer Middle School in Oakland.

Moraga Lions Student Speakers Contest

Submitted by Fred and Marice George



Photo provided

On February 15 the Moraga Lions Student Speakers' Contest was held at the Moraga Public Library. The contest subject was

"Enforcing Our Borders: State versus Federal Rights." Pictured above are Fred George, Moraga Lions Club Chair; Cynthia Brzezinski, contestant

from Miramonte High School; Selena Ross, winning contestant from Miramonte High School; Blake Margrass, contestant from Acalanes High School; and Roy Hridoy, contestant from Campolindo High School.

Ross advanced to the second round (Zone) of the Lions Club Student Speakers Contest, which she won on February 26. She now goes to the next level (Region) which will be held at 12:15 on March 27 at the Contra Costa Water District offices in Concord. Ross is sponsored by our local Moraga Lions Club. If she continues to win, she could be awarded \$21,000 in scholarships. The members of the Moraga Lions Club are rooting for her.

11th Annual St. Perpetua Science Fair

Submitted by Monica Chappell



From left, back row: Cannon Armistead (7th), Devyn Brown (8th), Hayley Miller (8th), Tessa Lindberg (6th); center row: Grace Southwick (8th), Emma Nushi (6th), Kyle Wiggins (6th), Callan Hoskins (6th); front row: Madeline McPhail (8th), Megan Peirona (7th), Bella Penza (7th)

Photo Kerry Armistead

St. Perpetua School's 11th annual science fair was held on February 3rd and was hosted by the Jr. High students (grades 6-8). This hands-on exposition featured exhibits and experiments designed

with the future scientist in mind. "Our goal is for the Junior High students to be able to showcase their efforts. This event provides opportunities for students to become personally and directly involved in

scientific investigation" said Karen Goodshaw, St. Perpetua School Principal. Three winners from each grade were awarded first, second and third place ribbons and were honored at a school luncheon hosted by the Jr. High Science Teacher, Natalie Deininger. The top projects from 7th and 8th grade went on to compete in the Oakland Diocesan Science Fair which was held on February 12th. Hayley Miller and Bella Penza were both awarded Grand Champions within Behavioral and Biological Science. Cannon Armistead and Grace Southwick were honored as finalists for Engineering and Biological Science respectively. These four students will compete at the San Francisco Bay Area Science Fair on March 30th representing St. Perpetua School in Lafayette. For more information about St. Perpetua School's Science Fair results visit www.stperpetua.org.

Life in LAMORINDA

Got Fish? The Rez Does

By Cathy Tyson



On February 14, Ron Theobald caught his limit of trout in the south end of the Lafayette Reservoir. Photo provided

Over 20,700 pounds of trout have been "planted" this season at the Lafayette Reservoir, with 1,000 pounds of that delivered in the last couple of weeks. From October through June a large truck backs up to the edge of the dam and fish are delivered through a hose. Local birds enjoy deliveries as much as those that fish.

"Deliveries from Fish and Game average three-quarters to

two pounds, which is catchable," said EBMUD Ranger II Andie Leandro, "Mt. Lassen (a delivery service) delivers one and a half to two-pound fish – sometimes up to seven or eight pounds."

On February 14, Ron Theobald (pictured above) caught his limit of trout in the south end of the lake, the perfect gift for a fisherman on Valentine's Day. He had to duke it out with American White Pelicans

who were shadowing him. Not only were the pelicans a distraction, but there have been reports of river otters nibbling on caught fish.

Theobald is a former professional baseball player with the Brewers, Twins and Cubs – now retired. He's been fishing since he was 13, and now at 67 goes out almost every day. "It's a good place to meet people, kind of like a senior citizens club." He suggests going out in the early morning or evening and trolling for rainbow trout – "delicious."

Ranger Leandro recommends fishing from a boat in the south end of the lake due to the fresh clean runoff; fishing from the shore is best at Harry's Cove behind the EBMUD office.

To truly experience the call of the wild in our semi-rural enclave, boats can be rented for \$15/hour. Seniors get a deal – those 62 and over receive half-off on boat rentals. A daily fishing access permit is required and costs \$4, which covers the cost of stocking the reservoir. A California fishing license is also required, and can easily be obtained online, and printed out at home. One day, two day, year-long and for the true fisherman, a lifetime license can be obtained. Go to the Department of Fish and Game website at www.dfg.ca.gov for more information.

It's not too early to start practicing for the Outdoor Sportsmen's Coalition of California annual fishing derby that will take place at the Lafayette Reservoir on Saturday, April 16. For more information on recreation at the Reservoir call (925) 284-9669.

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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):

March 16th, 7:00pm

Regular Board of Directors Meeting, Station 41 (1280 Moraga Way, Moraga), (go to www.mofd.org as the meeting date approaches for more information)

MOFD Board Approves New Communication System, Emergency Services Cost Recovery Policy

By Lucy Amaral



MOFD firefighters prepare to extricate a driver who was trapped in a burning vehicle after crashing into a tree on Highway 24 on Wednesday, February 23. According to Fire Marshal Mike Mentink, some Good Samaritans tackled the fire with extinguishers and tried to free the victim. "Moraga-Orinda Fire District would like to thank all the people that stopped to help put out the fire. Your involvement helped save the driver's life," said Mentink. Photo courtesy MOFD

At the Moraga-Orinda Fire District (MOFD) Board of Directors Meeting held February 16, the Board approved a motion to join a new communications system authority as well as consented to establishing a cost recovery structure for fire-based emergency services.

In the staff report from MOFD to

the Board, many of the emergency service providers in Contra Costa County and Alameda County use dissimilar communication devices and varying signals, and often it is difficult to communicate between agencies. The report added that there has also been an ongoing effort to develop a standard for uniform digi-

tal two-way radio for public safety organizations.

The East Bay Regional Communications System Authority (EBRCSA) was created as a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to develop and operate an interoperable radio communications system. Using several federal and local grants, EBRCSA has developed the infrastructure for Contra Costa and Alameda County to move toward this uniform system. Currently 29 cities and five special districts (now including MOFD) are member agencies.

According to MOFD Fire Chief Randy Bradley, the District has delayed updating its current radio system in anticipation of purchasing a system that would be interoperable with other agencies. As MOFD's equipment is becoming obsolete, the Board opted to approve becoming a member of EBRCSA. The new communications system is scheduled to be up and running by January 1, 2013.

The Board also approved a schedule of fees and collection policy for recovering the costs related to fire-based emergency services such

as motor vehicle accidents, collisions, vehicle fires, extrication and hazardous materials spills.

According to MOFD, everyone who owns and operates a vehicle in the United States is required to carry, at the minimum, liability insurance. The California Vehicle Code allows fire departments to recover costs associated with responding to motor vehicle accidents. Contracting with cost-recovery provider Fire Recovery USA, MOFD would bill reimbursable claims with the at-fault driver's insurance company. If the driver does not have insurance, the recovery service would bill the driver directly.

Depending on the type of services provided by MOFD, the at-fault driver's insurance company would receive an invoice for items such as personnel, equipment materials and rental costs; any items MOFD deems necessary for the response. Fees can range from \$435 for hazardous materials assessment and scene stabilization to \$5,900 and above for an advanced response which would require a hazmat certified team, a decontamination center, disposal and environmental clean-up.

MOFD's Rehab 41 Helps Keep Firefighters on the Job

By Lucy Amaral



Photo provided

This past February, Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD) firefighters were at an accident scene for more than ten hours straight when a suspected car thief crashed a pick-up truck into an electrical pole on Camino Pablo in Orinda. Also on the scene was "Rehab 41," MOFD's self-contained medical/rehabilitation unit designed to help keep firefighters hydrated, rested and able to continue their work.

"Firefighters will spend large amounts of energy, body heat and fluids in order to cool the body," says MOFD Battalion Chief Darrell Lee. "The problem is we wear firefighter's clothing that doesn't allow the body to cool or evaporate sweat. During emergencies,

wildland fires and structure fires, we are prone to heat exhaustion or heat stroke." Rehab 41 allows MOFD firefighters and any on-scene emergency personnel to find a quiet spot to rest and rehydrate before going back into the fray.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), requires that emergency personnel receive rapid treatment, re-hydration and medical monitoring during emergency operations or training exercises.

For some Districts this can simply mean portable fans and an ice chest full of waters. In a District with remote locations and the threat of sustained wildland fires a real possibility, MOFD developed the idea of a comprehensive unit to

best serve their emergency personnel. With that in mind, the District spent the last eight years outfitting a retired ambulance, starting with the basics of water and medical equipment, then slowly adding additional items such as pop-up canopies, misters with fans, coolers, chairs, coffee pots and even blenders for fruit smoothies. Today, Rehab 41 is the only self-sufficient medical/rehabilitation unit in Contra Costa County.

For years, Rehab 41 was staffed by MOFD's paid reserves. According to Lee, these reserves held this support role during local emergencies as MOFD responded to working fires, second alarms or wildland fires. Because of budget cuts, the reserve program was eliminated last year and Lee suggested using its existing all-volunteer group, the Communication/Logistics Support Team, to man Rehab 41.

These volunteers were then trained to drive the ambulance, learned the medical/rehab protocol, and, during incidents, would remain with the unit until released by the incident commander. While medical supplies are part of Rehab 41's supply list, only EMT's or other medically-trained personnel would utilize them, not volunteers.

Rehab 41 volunteer Marty Heyman says that this unit is called into action about six times a year. Volunteers are contacted

by the District and, while there is no official 'on call' list, finding members to staff the truck is never an issue. "All of our volunteers are in the Lamorinda area so we can get to the station quickly," says Heyman, adding that volunteers range from retirees to presidents of software companies: "This team is made up of committed community volunteers who get a tremendous amount of satisfaction helping MOFD."

"The MOFD Communications/Logistics Volunteer Group is a very important component of our overall emergency response program," said MOFD Fire Chief Randy Bradley. "The expertise and dedication they bring to the table enhances our ability to provide the expected service levels that our communities deserve."

Rehab 41, which is housed at MOFD's station 41 in Moraga, has also been utilized by various agencies throughout the county for both training activities and emergency response. Lee said that during the fatal accident on Camino Pablo, Rehab 41 was a vital support system. "This was an incident that had 80 people working for over ten hours," he said. "Rehab support was able to provide water, coffee, food and a rest place for emergency workers. Fire, police, public works and PG&E all used the area to take a break during the accident."

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Celebrating "One Sunday"

By Rebecca Eckland



Sorting and organizing used baby clothes Photos Ohlen Alexander



Beth and Jimmy with their nearly completed cart



Penny Baird with Creek Kids display

Pastor of Mission John Weems is greeted and congratulated after morning services at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church for the third annual ONE Sunday event. The idea came to him three years ago, he said, "when [my son] was two, and I thought it would be nice to create a way for entire families to volunteer together."

One room of the church is devoted to Creek Kids; an organization started by three women who wanted to put an end to homelessness, but wanted their children to help in the effort. The organization utilizes the talents of young and old: tables in the room are filled with "painters." Volunteer Penny Baird explained the process of Creek's Kids: "We take these paintings and other volunteers cut them into perfect squares and then they are mounted onto stationary." The cards are remarkable: colorful, abstract, and lovely-- last year's sales also raised \$1,000 which was used to fund the Respite and Resource Center, an entity that aids those without homes.

In another room, teams of fathers, sons, mothers and daughters are assembling carts for women who receive donated grocery items but have children in tow. "These poor women go to get their groceries," Weems explains, "and they often have two children. How can they hold their bags? So we make these carts."

There's an impressive team of three: Beth and her two children, Jimmy and Ellie. Jimmy and Ellie retrieve parts from a table and Beth, who holds the nearly complete cart, tells them where to put them. They have participated every year since One Sunday's inception. Although Jimmy enjoys building carts, he said his favorite activity is to assemble the hygiene and disaster kits given to members of the community who have no money for hygiene supplies or groceries. "It's nice they have these different venues," Beth said. "We did the painting the last two years, and now the kids are old enough to do this. Actually, my oldest-- who also volunteers each year-- wants to go off-site next year to help other areas of the community."

Lisa Klein, Founder and Executive Director of "Loved Twice," an organization that sorts and sends recycled baby clothing to mothers in

need, occupies another room. Founded in 2005, "Loved Twice" has clothed 3,500 newborns with over 25,000 pounds of baby clothes. She has already filled a wall with boxes marked "boy" and "girl"-- each box representing what is needed to clothe an infant for a year. "The clothes go to social services so they are given directly to those who really need them," said Klein.

A woman approached Klein to ask, "Is there a limit to what age of clothing you accept?" The question holds the spirit of One Sunday, of every family and volunteer present: is there a limit to what I can give?

"No," Klein replied; indeed, there is no limit to what families in this community can achieve.

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Bonfire Pizzeria Heats Ups Orinda

By Rosylyn Aragon Stenzel



Bonfire Pizzeria Owners, Justin Bain, Ryan Mason and Adam Sall along with head chef Robert Huit offer Neapolitan style pizza with a California twist.

Photo Rosylyn Aragon Stenzel

Heating up the restaurant scene in Orinda, Bonfire Pizzeria is open for business. Located at Theatre Square, Bonfire Pizzeria takes a different approach to pizza; using only fresh, local, and organic ingredients.

Started by three friends who have a passion for food and a love for pizza, Lafayette residents Adam Sall, Ryan Mason and Justin Bain, are en-

thusiastic about offering good, simple food to the Lamorinda community in a family-friendly atmosphere.

Everything at Bonfire Pizzeria has been carefully thought out and researched; from the open, inviting space (designed with Don Mackinnon of Bridge City Builders) to every detail on the menu including the special pizza dough which took Mason six

months to perfect.

Their pizza is the Neapolitan style in which the dough is made with double zero flour (high protein flour) and takes two days to rise. As Mason explains, this is a method that is rarely used in pizza restaurants in this country. They use a cold fermentation method in which the yeast has time to create more flavor and yield amore

flavorful dough. This results in a crispy and chewy crust. The sauce is made from San Marzano tomatoes, and the cheese is from local creameries such as Bellwether Farms, Belfiore and Redwood Hill Farms. They offer five different specialty pizzas, and the option to build your own. The goal was to take the basics of the traditional, Neapolitan style and bridge it with the American palate.

The owners say Bonfire Pizzeria uses local, organic ingredients because that's how they feed their families at home. The salads and all the produce are grown without pesticides, and the salad dressings, such as Ranch and Bleu Cheese, are made from scratch daily. Additionally, the meat is hormone and nitrate free, and the beef is grass fed.

There is no high fructose corn syrup to be found in this restaurant. All the sodas are made from natural ingredients, including a cola with no caffeine and great for the kids to try. Speaking of the kids, there are no linens on the tables for little hands to pull off, the floor is concrete for easy clean up, Etch A Sketches are on hand to keep them entertained, and one of the three TVs always has a children's channel on.

And for the adults, the wine and beer list does not list the usual offerings. The owners, who are also wine enthusiasts, put a great deal of thought

into it; with choices, says Mason, "That are affordable, approachable, and unique." "Plus it's got to taste phenomenal," adds Sall.

They chose the name Bonfire because they loved the idea of getting family and friends together, sitting around the bonfire, roasting marshmallows and sharing stories. "Anyone who leaves Bonfire Pizzeria, leaves with a smile on their face. As cheesy or cliché as that may be, the world is tough. It's hard out there. We want you to be able to leave the baggage at the door, come in and get taken care of with people smiling, happy, and having fun," says Mason.

That said, being the foodies that they are, the owners can't stand the thought of anyone eating bad pizza. So they came up with the Bonfire Lamorinda Pizza Guarantee, says Sall and Mason, "If you eat another pizza anywhere in Lamorinda, and you're unhappy with it, bring the uneaten portion of it to Bonfire, and we'll exchange the uneaten portion, same size, on us."

Bonfire Pizzeria is located at 2 Orinda Theatre Square, Suite 144 in Orinda. For more information, call 925-253-1225 or online at www.bonfirepizzeria.com.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

business briefs

Red Chopstick Opens

581 Moraga Road, Moraga
376-7839

Li Gao opened the Red Chopstick in Moraga on February 24, across from the Rheem Shopping Center (in the spot that was previously Mandarin Garden). Not new to restaurant business, Gao has run similar restaurants in Dublin and San Francisco. While she was looking for a new place, she discovered Moraga and became interested in the community. The restaurant offers an array of Szechwan dishes, with some classics such as sweet and sour soup, Mongolian beef, and Kung Pao chicken; and some unusual specialties such as a strawberry chicken, and spicy eggplant with prawns and basil. The restaurant also offers half a dozen vegetable-based entrees.

A Posh Ribbon-Cutting

3416 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
962-9691

Posh Boutique is planning a festive ribbon-cutting party on March 24 at 5:00 pm. "We will have live music and refreshment and I will show few of my sculptures on the patio in front of the store," says owner Roya Bayat, "we invite the community to join us."

Prudential CARES Volunteer Grants Award

999 Oak Hill Road, Lafayette
283-7000

Len Cohn, Relocation Specialist with Prudential in Lafayette, is the recipient of a Prudential CARES Volunteer Grants Award. Prudential supported Cohn's hours of volunteer service by granting \$250 for B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation. That foundation is the largest Jewish campus organization in the world, it provides opportunities for Jewish students at more than 500 colleges and universities to explore and celebrate their Jewish identity.

Absolute Center Fund Raising for Local Youth

3658 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
299-9642



The staff and trainers of Absolute Center get ready for the fund raiser.

Photo provided

Every year Absolute Center, a Pilates, Yoga and Fitness Studio in downtown Lafayette, celebrates its anniversary by giving back to those in need. They call it Paying it Forward. Last year they held a successful Bone Marrow Drive for a young girl named Charlotte, who has Aplastic Anemia. In previous years the Absolute Center has supported Saint Jude's and Breast Cancer Awareness, and had a very successful fundraiser for Louise McMenamin, one of the co owners of the studio, who had a bone marrow transplant in 2006. "This year I wanted to pick an organization that was located within the community we work in," said McMenamin, "Youth Homes is based in Lafayette and the Food Bank is Contra Costa, the idea being we pay forward directly to our community." All are invited to visit Absolute Center from March 7th-11th to take part in their fitness festivities; there will be raffles to win free classes, demonstrations on the latest Core Align equipment, discounts on their boutiques items and special fitness packages; and donation to Youth Homes and the Food Bank of Contra Costa will be encouraged.

Tri-Chamber Meeting - Make Your Movie

Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda will hold a Tri Chamber Mixer at The New Rheem Theatre, 350 Park Ave, Moraga, on Tuesday,

April 26. Since the meeting will be in a movie theater, the Chambers are asking residents to shoot a video (three minutes or less in length) or create a PowerPoint presentation or slide show about how much they love their town/city. "I thought, we are in a theater and we are all proud of our city - and hey, let's have some fun," said Lafayette Chamber Executive Director Jay Lifson. Winners from each community will be shown on the big screen and win prizes. All submissions must be on a DVD. Please contact the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce for submission instructions, 284-7404.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

- Shags invites you to a Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting at Steven S. Shagrin Company, 1934 Contra Costa Blvd, Pleasant Hill (in Pleasant Hill Plaza at Gregory Lane, 2nd Floor above Diablo Trophy, Interior Suites) on Thursday, March 3, 5-7pm.
- Shop Lafayette Meeting on Tuesday, March 8, 12:30pm in the Lafayette Chamber Conference Room
- Monthly Mixer on Wednesday, March 9, 5:30pm at Better Homes & Gardens Mason McDuffie, 999 Oak Hill Road, Lafayette

Moraga

- Chamber general meeting, Friday March 25, 7:30-9am. Meeting at the Hacienda - 2100 Donald Drive. Roos' muffins and coffee will be served.

Orinda

- 2nd Annual "Live at the Orinda" on Friday, March 11th at the Orinda Theater, 2 Orinda Theater Square Orinda. 17 and over. The evening will start at 7pm - open seating; show time 8pm. Tickets: Advance: \$30 - \$35 at the door. Tickets available on the Chamber's web site at Orindachamber.org. Last year's event sold out. (See article page A7)

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com or call the office 925-377-0977

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LYNN'S TOP FIVE New Estate Tax Laws: What You Need to Know NOW!

By Lynn Ballou, Certified Financial Planner™

I recently had breakfast with good friends and colleagues Paula Leibovitz Goodwin and Annette Knox, both certified specialist in estate planning, with practices in Orinda and Walnut Creek respectively, as we were preparing for an upcoming estate tax law planning webinar. After a long discussion about all the estate tax planning related issues to consider in the 2010 Tax Relief Act, we realized that for most taxpayers, deciding what to do boils down to paying attention to a few top issues. So, although there's been a lot of press about the last minute sweeping changes Congress put in place, let's focus here on five that truly deserve your attention and consideration.

First you have to know this: at this time the new laws are in effect only for two years. As you think about these top issues, work with your advisors to craft a plan that can move on a dime if the laws aren't extended or are revised yet again. Without further extensions, most of what was due to pop into place this year will be back in 2013. I'll point these out as we go through the list.

1) The estate tax exemption for 2011 - 2012 is \$5 million per person. The exemption was due to be reduced to only \$1 million dollars per person this year, so what a great benefit! At this point, it pops back to this number in 2013 if these new laws aren't extended.

2) The estate tax exemption and the gift tax exemption are reunited. Wow - that's maybe the best benefit of all. For the next two years, no longer are you limited to lifetime gifts of \$1 million passing estate and gift tax free --- you can now increase that to \$5 million that can pass during life or at death estate and gift tax free.

And that is on top of the annual exclusion gifts of \$13,000 per person and the all important benefit of being able to pay for education and medical expenses for others outside the gifting limitations.

3) The estate tax rate has dropped to 35%. If Congress does nothing, this rate rises to 55% in 2013 for estates over \$1 million. Ouch.

4) Portability. There is now "portability" of the unused exemption between spouses. This means that a husband and wife together essentially have a \$10 million dollar exemption from gift and estate tax. The unused portion of the exemption at the death of the first spouse can now pass to the surviving spouse without any special estate planning being required. Cautionary tale: There still are several excellent reasons for continuing to use bypass trusts at the first spouse's death. Most of us leave our share of assets in trust for our spouse to use during their lifetime, providing that at the death of our spouse any residual will go to the beneficiaries we name (eg, children) and not to the beneficiaries our surviving spouse might name (eg, new spouse). This is a complex but extremely important issue to discuss with your spouse and advisors before rushing to undo existing bypass trust language or deciding not to have on in the first place because you believe portability takes care of all the issues. There are a lot of other provisions and planning issues, such as asset protection, within the realm of this topic that are too complex to go into here. Bottom line: Proceed with care!

5) Step up in basis on most as-

sets outside of retirement plans at death. Here's what you need to know: most of the assets that we leave outside retirement plans to our heirs when we die receive a step up in basis to their value at our date of death. This provision in our tax code gives tremendous relief to heirs from potential double taxation and can play a key role in your estate planning.

As a reminder, this column is not intended as legal advice. To say that this column oversimplifies the estate tax portion of the new tax law would definitely be an understatement. Now more than ever it's critical that you consult and collaborate with your team of advisors, including your accountant and attorney, as you work your way through the provisions and their meaning to your own unique situation. I hope this column will at least help you get the conversation started!



Lynn Ballou is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP®) and co-owner of Ballou Plum Wealth Advisors, LLC, and a Registered Investment Advisory (RIA) firm in Lafayette. Lynn is also a Registered Principal and Branch Manager with LPL Financial (LPL). As such, she is required by securities regulations to add the following information to this column: The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and not intended to provide specific advice or recommendation for any individual. Securities offered through LPL Financial, member FINRA/SIPC.

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ART

150 Years after the Civil War an NEH-sponsored exhibition, Lee and Grant, will be on view from through Sunday, Mar. 20 at the Hearst Art Gallery at Saint Mary's College in Moraga. The museum is open to the public Wednesdays through Sundays, 11am- 4:30pm. Adult admission is \$4; admission is free for K-12th grade students and Hearst members. A battlefield reenactment, featuring nearly one hundred NCWA volunteers, is planned for Saturday, March 19, on the Saint Mary's College campus. Information: (925) 631-4379.

Art show featuring the photography of Warren Emmett Rice at Town Hall Theater through March 25. Rice's photography includes landscapes of rural Contra Costa County, Hawaii and New Mexico as well as micro photographic images from nature. Visitors are welcome to view Rice's photography before Town Hall performances or most afternoons after 3pm. Admission is free. Town Hall is located at 3535 School St. Lafayette; (925) 283-1557.

MUSIC

Winter Concert Campolindo Concert Band and Symphonic Band on Thursday, March 3rd at 7:30pm in the CPAC at 300 Moraga Rd in Moraga. Featuring Guest Artist: Jon Brummel, Trombone, performing Arthur Pryor's The Patriot. Admission is complimentary with a reception following the concert. Please join us for an enjoyable evening of great music! Visit www.campomusic.org for more information.

An Irish Cultural Night featuring a Silent Auction, Bagpiper, Sheila Moore school of Irish Step Dancing, and Music by Kevin Roache, will take place on Friday, March 4th at St. Mary's Soda Center from 6-10pm. Sponsored by Saint Mary's College Guild. Contact Jeanie Beatson, 9 Teodora Ct., Moraga, Ca. 94556, (925) 376-3201. The monies raised go for scholarships for Financial Aid.

St. Mary's NightinGaels perform on March 16 and 17. Under the direction of Dr. Julie Ford, this mixed chorus sings a cappella and accompanied repertoire from a wide variety of styles (classical, folk, pop, jazz) and is comprised of music majors and non-music majors alike. Join us in a casual campus setting as the College's chorus sings jazz and cabaret music. Gershwin and Ellington are among the composers featured in recent programs. Wed., March 16 at 1pm and Thurs., March 17 at 8pm, Saint Mary's College, Hagerty Lounge. Cost: Free.

THEATER

Town Hall Theatre presents The Glass Menagerie, by Tennessee Williams, through March 19. For exact dates and show times, contact Town Hall Theatre Box Office at (925) 283-1557, or go to www.TownHallTheatre.com. Town Hall Theatre is located at 3535 School St. in Lafayette.

Sleepy Hollow's Aladdin Jr. - Fri. March 4 at 7pm and Sat. March 5 at 4 pm. Join Sleepy Hollow's 4th and 5th graders go on a magical and musical tour of Agrabah, City of Enchantment. All of your favorite characters are here in this stage adaptation of the Disney hit, including Aladdin, Jasmine, and of course, the Genie. Filled with magic, mayhem, and flying carpet rides, audiences' spirits will soar with excitement. Tickets may be purchased in advance www.orindaschools.org/sleepyhollow or at the door based on availability.

"Live at the Orinda" a champagne-splashed evening of live professional comedy on Friday, March 11th, Orinda Theatre, Theatre Square, Orinda. The whole community is invited to fill the 750 seat Orinda Theatre to laugh until your sides hurt. Doors open at 7pm, 17 and over only. Advance tickets: \$30 (\$35 at the door). For more information and tickets visit www.orindachamber.org.

The Campolindo High School Choral Music Department proudly presents the musical, "Fiddler on the Roof," about a poor dairyman, Tevye, and his five daughters in a small Jewish community as they try to address tradition, changing social mores, and growing anti-Semitism in Czarist Russia. Performances: Thursday, March 17 at 7:30 pm, Friday, March 18 at 7:30pm., Sat., March 19 at 2 pm and 7:30 pm, Thursday, March 24 at 7:30 pm, Friday, March 25 at 7:30 pm, and Sat., March 26 at 2 and 7:30pm. For ticket information go to www.campochoir.com.

Special events at the New Rheem Theatre in Moraga: Mar 19th at 5pm, a Special Screening of 1982 Classic Film, "E.T.", April 8th at 7pm, Jazz Band Concert and Dance with The Big Band of Rosmoor. April 9th at 7pm, Macbeth with Special Guest Jonathan Moscone, Cal Shakes' Artistic Director. For info e-mail info@thenewrheemtheatre.com or call (925) 388-0752.

LECTURE & LITERATURE

First Friday Forum will present Professor Charles Faulhaber, Director of the Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley speaking on The Bancroft Library at 150; The Past, The Present and the Future, March 4 at 1:30 p.m., in the sanctuary of the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC), 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Refreshments will be served at 1pm in Fellowship Hall. This event is free and open to the public. For further information call (925) 283-8722 or log on to lopc.org-activities.

Come join the Orinda Library, 24 Orinda Way, for a book sale Saturday March 5, from 10am-1pm. This monthly sale offers quality books for all interests and all ages.

Think Globally: Eradicating Poverty Around the World: On Monday, March 14 at 7pm, St. Mary's College will host a

speaker panel featuring representatives from three international non-profits that address issues of poverty around the globe: Kiva, an organization that arranges micro-finance loans; Beads for Life, that sells jewelry and other products created by Ugandan women; and Just Hearts, a non-profit fair trade organization developed by two Saint Mary's alum. Claeys Lounge, Soda Activity Center, Saint Mary's College of California, 1928 St. Mary's Rd., Moraga. All are welcome.

The Orinda Library presents Jurek Mazur from the Academia de Tango Argentinian in a lecture and dance demonstration of Argentine tango on Tuesday, March 16 at 6:30 pm in the Garden Room at the Orinda Library located at 26 Orinda Way. It is free to all.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

AAUW-OML continues its sisterhood project with the 12th Annual Sister-to-Sister Summit, a dynamic day for all Middle School girls, planned and facilitated by specially trained high school Big Sister mentors. New people, fun activities, interesting presentations, group discussions, great food and gifts and a Respect Rally with author Courtney Macavinta founder of Respect Rx. Deadline to Register: March 12, Fee: \$30. Optional Parent Ed. discussion: 9 - 10am. For more information and to register go to www.Sister2Sister.info.

Epilepsy & Your Child: What Every Parent Needs to Know. Saturday, March 19, 9:30am - 12noon. Join the experts from the Pediatric Epilepsy Program at Children's Hospital & Research Center Oakland in a discussion about the latest in epilepsy care, including advancements in medications, surgery, research, dietary treatment, and support options. Children's Hospital Outpatient Center Auditorium, 744 52nd St., Oakland. Cost: Free. RSVP requested by March 16 to: mstillwagon@mail.cho.org. For more info: www.childrenshospitaloakland.org.

Need Money for College? Contra Costa Association of Realtors Scholarship Foundation is offering scholarships to residents of Central Contra Costa County that have completed one year of full-time college, completed courses with emphasis on real estate, finance and/or business and have a GPA of 3.0 or higher. If you qualify, scholarship awards can range from \$1,500 to \$2,500. Further information and applications may be found on line at www.ccarscholarship.com. Deadline is April 15th.

2011 Poul Anderson Writing Contest is open to all students who reside and/or attend high school in Orinda. Entry categories are Science Fiction, Essay/Memoir, Poetry and Short Story. Submission deadline is Friday, April 22nd at noon.

Entries are judged by a panel of Orinda writers and residents. Up to four winners will each be awarded \$250 prizes at the close of this school year, underwritten by the Friends of the Orinda Library. For details visit: www.friendsoftheorindalibrary.org or email Susie Epstein, at suzepstein@aol.com.

OTHER

Brasarte presents A Brazilian Family Carnival Ball on Saturday, Mar 5, from 5-10pm, at Casa de Cultura, 1901 San Pablo Ave, Berkeley. Celebrate life at a Brazilian Family Carnival Ball. Live music and dance, kids performance, Brazilian food and drinks, costume contest. Cost: \$10adults \$5 kids under 12. For more info see www.Brasarte.com or call (510) 528-1958 or email damasceno@Brasarte.com.

The Ninth Annual "A Nite at the Races" will be staged by Rotary Club of Moraga on Saturday, March 12, at the Holy Trinity Cultural Center on School Street in Moraga. The cost is \$45 per person. The proceeds from this event will help Moraga Rotary fund its local and international youth, educational, and humanitarian causes. For information or reservations, please contact Rotarian Frank May at (925) 376-8195 or at mayfrl@comcast.net.

Friday March 18 join us in celebrating the coming spring equinox with a walk on the labyrinth in the early evening hour. Guides for walking the labyrinth will be available if desired. Join us for a quiet evening walk in preparation of spring. Walk in gratitude, reflection or prayer. Come anytime between 7-8pm. Located at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. All are welcome. For more information please call 283-8722.

The Moraga TreeLine Triathlon will take place on Saturday, April 30, 7:30 am at the Soda Aquatic Center, Campolindo

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to be missed

High School, 300 Moraga Road. The event is ideal for the beginning triathlete as well as the more advanced competitor. The swim is a challenging 400 meter sprint, followed by a 22 K bike ride out to Canyon, and culminating with a 5 K run. New youth divisions have been added this year. For more information and route details go to www.moragatri.com, or call (925) 888-7035. Registration is open.

Free Monthly E-Waste Recycling by Neighborhood Computers and 5A Rent A Space Every 1st Saturday of the month. Next Date: March 5th. Location: 5A Rent A Space plaza in Moraga. Time: 10am - 2pm.

Fulbright Hosts Needed. A special group of 40 Fulbright women from the countries of Thailand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, and Malaysia and will be on the campus of Saint Mary's College from March 30 - April 2. Although the scholars have been studying at U.S. universities for the past 2 - 6 years, many of them have never stayed in an American home. Please consider sharing your home with 1 or 2 of the Fulbright students for 3 nights. For those of you interested in learning more about the great intercultural sharing opportunity, please contact Susan Miller Reid, Director, Center for International Programs at Saint Mary's, at (925) 631-4316 or by email: smiller@stmmarys-ca.edu.

The 3rd annual Moraga Classic Car Show sponsored by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce and 5A Rent A Space will be held Saturday May 14 from 11am-4pm in the Rheem Center. Please register your classic car by visiting moragachamber.org or visit 5A Rent A Space at 455 Moraga Rd. Suite F. For more information please call (925) 247-4629.

Help for GERD-Is it Only Heartburn? A FREE health program. Dr. Saeed Zamani, Gastroenterologist and John Muir Medical providers will hold a panel discuss regarding the causes of GERD, symptoms to watch for, and treatment options including lifestyle changes and surgery. March 5, 8-11:30am, St. John Vianney Church, Mullen Commons Vista Room, 1650 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek. Information: (925) 947-4447.

CLUBS

The general meeting of the OML branch of AAUW will meet at 9:30am on March 15 at the Serbian Cultural Center, 1700 School St. Moraga. This meeting will be unique because we will have a panel representing women born in Africa who currently live in the US, or who were born in this country and have traveled or worked extensively in the huge and diverse African continent, who will discuss all of its challenges in this 21st century.

Sons in Retirement Lamorinda Branch 171 meets the first Wednesday monthly at Holy Trinity Culture Center 1700 School St. Moraga. Social hour 11am, lunch 12pm. The after lunch speaker will be Scott B Denison who has been the General Manager for the Leshner Center for the last 20 years. He is also the Managing Director of the Center Repertory Company and over the years has directed numerous productions. He will speak on Creating an Art Center. For membership information, call Larry at (925)631-9528.

Montelindo Club general meeting on Friday, March 18 will feature K. Ruby Blume, founder of The Institute of Urban Homesteading in Oakland, presenting "Put a Bee in Your Bonnet- an Introduction to Backyard Beekeeping." Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda. Refreshments at 9am., meeting at 9:30, and speaker at 10:30. The meeting is free and welcomes guests and new members. website: www.montelindogarden.com, email contact: montelindogarden@aol.com.

Moraga Garden Club will meet Thursday, March 17 at 9:30am. Join us for a special presentation by Shelagh Fritz, on the historical gardens of Alcatraz. As project director of the Garden Conservancy, Fritz has returned "the Rock" to its federal penitentiary period when the staff and prisoners actively gardened and it was abloom with lovely flowers. The club meets at Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. Membership: Linda (925) 376-2809.

Lafayette Garden Club meets 9:30am, second Thursdays monthly at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. Program for March 10: Gary Bogue, "Gardening with Wildlife, Garden Friends and Not-Friends". Contact: peter-sonb4@aol.com.

• Dining • Dining • Dining • Dining •

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Avocado Risotto? Seriously!

By Susie Iventosch

Traveling is really a fun hobby for a lot of reasons. You get to see new faces and places, learn about different cultures, and try all sorts of exciting new foods! Even travel within the United States offers so many new experiences. Two weeks ago, I was visiting San Antonio, Texas for the very first time, and I discovered that it is a foodie mecca! Right along the river walk, there must be a thousand different restaurants, bars, ice cream shops, and every kind of margarita imaginable.

One of the local traditions is table-side guacamole, where the waiter makes it on a side cart right at the table, using fresh squeezed oranges and lemons as key ingredients along with avocado, garlic, sea salt, cilantro and tomatoes. All of these things were fun and delicious, but the most interesting dish I tried was a grilled chicken breast served over a bed of avocado risotto, topped with rosemary-thyme-balsamic reduction sauce. I had never before heard of using avocados in risotto, and it was fabulous.

When I set about making my own version, I decided to give it a distinctly south-of-the-border flair, and included *roasted jalapenos, cilantro and a blue goat cheese. This was wonderful served with grilled salmon, but chicken would be great too! If you don't like blue goat cheese, then use regular blue cheese, or **Cotija cheese.



*To roast jalapeno, trim off stem, seed and cut into quarters. Brush with olive oil and season with sea salt. Roast at 400° for about 10, or until starting to brown. This process takes much of the heat out of the pepper, and leaves just the good flavor with a little kick!
**Cotija [Ko-tee-hah], dry grating cheese similar to Parmesan. The aged version is referred to as "anejo." Both are used crumbled or grated. Source: <http://www.gourmetsleuth.com/Dictionary/C/Cotija-cheese-5788.aspx>.

Avocado Risotto with Grilled Salmon and Roasted Jalapeno Peppers

(Serves 4-6)

INGREDIENTS

- Salmon
- 4-6 salmon filets, seasoned and grilled to desired doneness
- Risotto
- 2-3 tablespoons canola or olive oil
- 3 green onions, finely chopped
- 2 shallots, finely chopped
- 1-2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1½ cups Arborio rice
- 2 medium tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 1 avocado, pitted and coarsely chopped
- 1/3 cup minced fresh cilantro
- ½ cup white wine
- 3 cups chicken broth
- ¼ cup blue goat cheese or Cotija cheese
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ teaspoon white pepper
- Garnish
- 1-2 large jalapenos, seeded, and *roasted and sliced into long strips (can also chop roasted jalapeno and add right into risotto)
- 1 avocado, thinly sliced
- Fresh cilantro sprigs
- ¼ cup blue goat cheese or Cotija cheese

DIRECTIONS

Using two pots, heat chicken broth in one and in the other heat oil over medium heat and add garlic, shallots and green onions. Cook until onions are translucent and then add the Arborio rice and cook until just shiny and slightly browned, stirring all the while.
Stir in the white wine and cook over medium heat until the wine is absorbed. Then add one cup of broth and cook until broth is absorbed, stirring often. Repeat adding a second cup of broth. When this cup is absorbed, add diced tomatoes and diced avocados and stir into risotto, before adding final cup of broth. Stir until all broth is absorbed and then stir in the cheese.
Serve with a grilled salmon filet or chicken breast, and garnish with roasted jalapeno strips, slices of avocado and a sprinkling of crumbled blue goat cheese or Cotija cheese and a cilantro sprig.

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziven@gmail.com.

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Community Service

Moraga Bulls Support Our Troops

Submitted by Bernie Smit



From left, back row: Thomas Morris, Paul Coupin, Rick Nedell, Terry Caughell, Chris Hoff, Ig Vega, Tap Sittiseri, Ron Centerwall, Frank Angelo, Dan Sanguinetti, Eric Baymiller, Whit Porter, Ken Laversin, Larry Koch, Joe Martello, Randy Colombo, Raj Verma, Rich Jones, Jim Manzi; front row: Bernie Smit, Jason Woodworth (MCC Head Pro), Sal Torres, Willie Osterman. Bulls' donors not pictured: Sal Vacarro, Eric Karver, Tim Alford, Sean Absher, Matt Rei, Mark Knox, Tom Tyson, Pete Heckler, Mike Holbrook, Bret Brodowy, Bob Latham and Mark Solomon. Photo provided

When Joe Martello formed the Moraga Bulls, he probably didn't realize the depths of fellowship that would result. The Moraga Bulls are a group of Moraga Country Club members who work hard all week then get together to golf every Friday afternoon. "Most of these guys come here to

blow off the pressure of the work week and have a good time while playing a round of golf," says Dan Sanguinetti, owner of PC Professional, an Oakland-based technology company. "Joe did a great thing when he formalized this loosely knit group of golfers into what is now known as The Moraga Bulls" adds Paul Crinks, the reigning Bulls Champion.

In the past, the Bulls have rallied around some very local causes, including supporting a couple of promising local golfers. Recently, the Bulls raised money to help pay for the college educations of the children of Cary Chiappone, who passed away last October – "That was a heart-breaker and affected us all very deeply" said Tom Tyson on the loss of Chiappone, a fellow Bull.

When the Bulls' Bernie Smit got word that his lifelong best friend, Army Reservist Sergeant Russell Hiller, a 48-year-old father of young twins, was being called to duty in Afghanistan he knew that he could

count on the Bulls to step up to the plate again. "The last time I visited with Sergeant Hiller, we played golf. So I decided to send his unit an entire pallet of golf equipment. I figured they could use the equipment to hit balls during their downtime."

Smit was not surprised when the Bulls rose to the occasion. "The guys made this really easy. Everyone wanted to help." In all, Smit collected several thousand golf balls, over 20 sets of clubs, 10,000 tees, hitting mats, putting greens, golf bags, and other golf related items.

"The Bulls were very generous. Every one of them, to a man, said how much they appreciate the sacrifice of the 742nd SMC, Sergeant Hiller's unit. We take our freedom so much for granted. Then we see a unit of soldiers deploy, soldiers with similar demographics to ours, and it really hits home as to how much they are sacrificing for all of us.we just had to say thank you."

What do Early Intervention and an Elephant have in Common?

Submitted by Merilee McCormick



Girl Scout troop 32149, fourth graders from Burton Valley Elementary School in Lafayette, teamed up with Early Intervention students ages 3-5 for a bake sale fundraiser on February 17. The bake sale included gluten and dairy free treats for kids with special diets and allergies. The girl scouts baked the day before with the kids from Early Intervention and adopted an elephant from the Oakland Zoo.

The bake sale raised \$192; \$40 will go to the adopted elephant contributing to food, care, and educational programs. The remaining \$152 will be used for support materials for Lafayette Early Intervention. The girl scouts will shop from a wish list provided by the Early Intervention teachers. Thank you to everyone that participated in the success of the bake sale, supporting two important causes.

From left, back row: Michelle Davis, Sophia Urick, Claire McNally, Ava Mackay, Colette Cornish, Madeleine Singh; front row: Juliette Benazra, Maddy McCormick, Nicole Edwards. Photo provided

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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Seeds of Change

"I know that the seeds I sow I will harvest, because every action, good or bad, is always followed by an equal reaction. I will plant only good seeds this day." Og Mandino



Deep green curly leafed parsley grown in a container from seed is a culinary perennial pleaser. Photos Cynthia Brian

The first blush of spring surprised me with the warm sunny days in the first two weeks of February. I hadn't even completed the final dormant spray of horticultural oil to kill the overwintering insects on my fruit trees when the branches burst into bud, followed by bountiful blooms. Every St. Patrick's Day, I count on the magnificent magenta blossoms of the white Italian peach tree outside my dining room window to set the stage for the March 17 celebration. Not this year. The tree climaxed twenty-seven days earlier than in past seasons as did my plums and prunes, finishing their spectacular show before March even dawned.

Climate change? Global warming? What does a gardener do?

My seed catalogues have been piled high on my nightstand since early January awaiting those dreary, rainy days when I would snuggle under covers swaddled with my finest flora fantasies. Since nature makes no mistakes, and my slumbering garden hastened to awake prematurely, I knew that whether winter weather raged on or not, it was time for me to pore over my periodicals if I wanted to share my simple steps for seeding with you.

In a natural setting, plants grow mostly from the tiny miracles we call seeds. There are numerous companies offering seeds to suit every garden including heirlooms, habitat, edibles, ornamentals, flowers, and shrubs. Five ingredients are necessary to have

success with seeds:

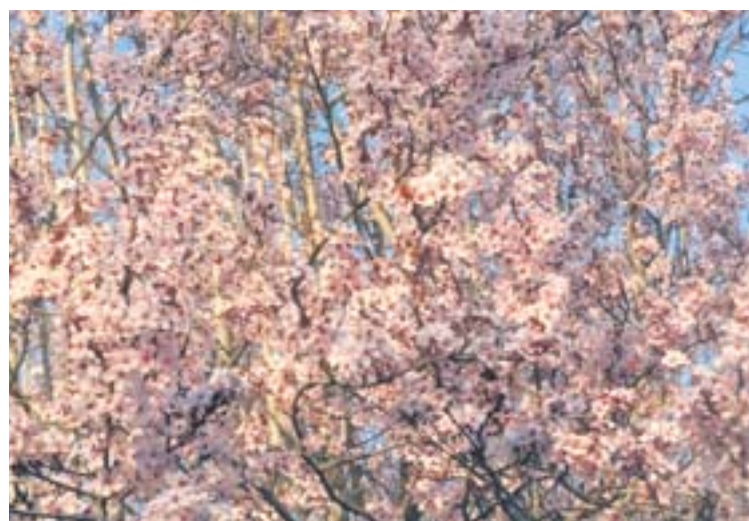
1. Prepare the soil properly by enriching it with compost, earthworms, and mulch.
2. Follow the instructions for planting printed on the seed packet.
3. Water appropriately.
4. Thin seedlings as recommended.
5. Weed the area consistently.

With our variable weather patterns, how will you know when the soil is ready and warm enough for planting seeds? Drop your pants! Yes, that's right. It's the way farmers have tested the soil for generations. If you can sit on the ground with your bare bottom for thirty seconds without feeling as if you are sitting in a cold puddle, your ground is set to go. (Warning, try this *only* in the privacy of your backyard so as not to startle your neighbors!) Another method, probably more suited to city and suburban living, is to grab a handful of dirt, shape it into a ball, and squeeze. If water drip outs like a wet sponge, your soil is too moist to plant. Instead, start your seedlings indoors.

Seed suppliers ascertain that the easiest seeds to grow are beans, cucumbers, peas, pumpkins, radishes, squash, cosmos, lettuces, sunflowers, and zinnias. Help children learn the joy of growing by giving them a selection of these simple to sprout seeds.

With my determination to Explore, Experiment, and Experience I perused numerous catalogues to discover unique seeds to change my garden dynamics.

My favorite seeds herald from many sources, with Renee's Garden, John Scheepers, and Seed Savers Exchange topping my list. Renee's Garden publicity boasts that it offers the best vegetable and herb seeds to grow successful food as well as carefree flowers that enchant the senses and warm the heart. Since I'm exploring planting vegetables in containers this season, I ordered a new herbal tea plant, Zinger Hibiscus, with attractive lobed leaves and creamy flowers that make an antioxidant packed delicious ruby-colored tea with a cranberry and



Plum trees' rosy blossoms perfume the Lamorinda skies.

floral flavor. Renee also offers French Chervil. My readers will be happy since I've received so many emails asking where this herb can be found. I'm also excited about two types of carrots, the tricolor Circus Circus and the French baby Babette as well as the baby cabbage, Pixie. I will be setting a table in the garden if Little Prince, the container eggplant, Primor, the French Baby Leeks, and the Candystrip jewel-toned beets thrive. In the flower department, I'm experimenting with Zinfandel fragrant sweet peas, Cinco de May Amaranth, Cappuccino Rudbeckia, and perfumed Heliotrope.

Seed Savers Exchange, a non-profit, member supported organization, has been the national leader in collecting and preserving heirloom veggies, herbs, and flowers for over three decades. Their catalog contains six hundred varieties with proceeds continuing their mission to preserve genetic diversity. They have a collection of over a thousand different lettuces. I have ordered their curly, frilled dark red leafed and mildly flavored Mascara and a packet mixed with Australian Yellowleaf, Pablo, Red Velvet, and five other of their favorite seeds. Their impressive selection of sunflowers has also piqued my interest.

John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds began serving fine gardens in 1908. An old-fashioned favorite are fava beans, which can be harvested in about 65 days. My Italian grandfather

always grew favas and we enjoyed eating the tiny tender pods while the older beans went into his hearty risotto. Rhubarb became a favorite of mine when I spent time in Ireland with my pen pal. If you start the seeds this month indoors, they will produce a few stalks this summer, then in subsequent years you'll get a full crop. The leaves are poisonous so don't mistake them for Swiss Chard.

Scheepers offers four types of Habitat Garden seed packs. Attract butterflies, bumblebees, hummingbirds, and songbirds, all beneficial to a healthy, happy habitat.

Both Renee's Garden and John Scheepers support earth-friendly non-profit fundraising with special pricing and discounting. Go to their web sites for more information.

Resources:

- Renee's Garden Seeds: <http://www.reneesgarden.com>
- Seed Savers Exchange: <http://www.seedsavers.org>
- John Scheepers Kitchen Garden Seeds: <http://www.kitchengardenseeds.com>

While winter rages on, don't just dream of next season's vibrant, beautiful, and delicious crops. Plot your garden today, prepare the ground, buy your seeds, and welcome the opportunity to change your garden world by reintroducing heirlooms and experimenting with new samplers. When the warm days arrive to stay, you'll be ready to welcome the herbal and floral treasures your imagination designed with seeds of change.

Happy gardening to you!

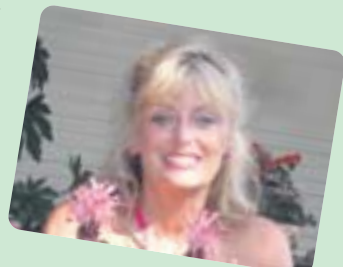
CYNTHIA'S DIGGING DEEP GARDEN GUIDE FOR MARCH

Mother Nature has been playing with us by teasing us with warmth and sunshine, then sending torrential showers and freezing temperatures! As much as we are all chomping on the bit to get outside and plant, we'd be better served by enjoying the glorious daffodils singing to the sun while preparing our soil for seeding as the temperatures grow warmer. There is still plenty of work for you to do to prepare for the Spring Equinox and dancing in the moonlight.

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant." Robert Louis Stevenson 1850-1895, Essayist, Poet and Novelist

- **EXPLORE** a creek bed to search for wild watercress.
- **EXPERIMENT** in gathering wild mustard and miner's lettuce to add to your cuisine.
- **EXPERIENCE** the Bouquets of Art Exhibit at the de Young Museum March 14-19 featuring 150 floral arrangements complimenting the permanent collection. For information visit <http://www.bouquetsofart.org>
- **PAMPER** yourself with an exfoliating and moisturizing facial from your garden. Squeeze lemon juice from your Meyer lemon tree into a bowl and mix with lavender petals and ¼ cup olive oil. Home brewed spa experience in 20 minutes.
- **FORCE** branches of crabapple, quince, forsythia, and red bud by placing your tree prunings in a bucket of water in a dark place until the buds swell. Move the branches to a beautiful vase filled with warm water and enjoy the show. Change the water daily and add a few drops of bleach to ward off bacteria.
- **TRIM** dead foliage from your ornamental grasses using sharp hedge clippers.
- **CONTINUE** to compost, compost, and compost. This is the single most important ingredient of growing a great garden. Buy an inexpensive compost bin from your local waste service.
- **SPADE** six inches of rich compost into your vegetable garden in preparation for the next season's plantings.
- **SOAK** bare-root shrubs, roses, and trees in tepid water for four hours to rehydrate them before planting.
- **BUY** seed packets from catalogues or your favorite garden center. Be brave and explore new samplers.
- **START** seeds indoors in flats to get a jump on spring.
- **SPREAD** alfalfa pellets mixed with diatomaceous earth around your rose bushes to promote large blooms and healthy plants. I buy my pellets at a feed store in 50 pound bags.
- **DIVIDE** daylilies and agapanthus now.
- **MOW** lawns weekly and fertilize with a high nitrogen mix.
- **FILTER** your indoor air with houseplants. According to NASA, 87 percent of volatile organic compounds are removed by live plants naturally. Now that is nothing to sneeze over!
- **BREATHE** in the fragrance of the early blooming gardenias and citrus blossoms. Bring in a few springs as natural air fresheners.
- **AERATE** your lawn. The soil is compacted from winter rains and foot traffic. Leave the plugs to add nutrients back into the grass.
- **CONTINUE** to protect frost tender plants with coverings.
- Mother Nature has a way of sending us unexpected cold fronts.
- **PICK** up camellias blossoms that have fallen to the ground. Decaying blooms harbor petal blight.
- **ORDER** one of my books from my web site, <http://www.star-style.com/store/index.htm> and receive a FREE packet of seeds. For details email me at Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com.
- **SHARPEN** and clean garden tools. You'll be busy next month.
- **SCATTER** a canister of California poppy seeds for a carefree, drought tolerant golden showstopper.
- **VISIT** the San Francisco Flower and Garden Show at the San Mateo Country Fairgrounds March 23-27 to witness landscape exhibits by renowned designers and attend informational seminars. <http://www.sfgardenshow.com/>.
- **RELAX** with a cup of herbal tea and a good book. Winter is wavering. Hang in there! It's almost that season of contented renewal. Until then, keep digging deep and explore, experiment, and experience.

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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 04 Issue 26 Wednesday, March 2, 2011

A Trio of Spanish Revival Jewels

By Sophie Braccini

It may not be obvious to today's readers, but the enormous popular success of the 1884 novel "Ramona," by Helen Hunt Jackson, is credited for the emergence of the Mission and Spanish colonial revival style in American architecture. Most of those homes were built in southern California, but some authentic Spanish revival style homes from the 1920's can be found in Lamorinda, as well some recent additions that share the same inspiration.

Tran Turner, who was an Art Museum Curator of 19th & 20th Century Architecture & Design and is now a real estate agent for Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Orinda, went on a hunt for such homes. "Made popular by the Spanish Colonial buildings built for the 1915 San Diego Exposition, many early California architects like George Washington Smith and James Osborn Craig subsequently brought national prominence to this architectural style in Santa Barbara," says Turner.

The Spanish revival homes have a lighter palette of colors that immediately differentiate them from the Mediterranean style. Other original features include inner courtyards, long, arcaded corridors, exterior walls coated with plaster, smaller windows, low-pitched clay tile roofs and wide, protecting eaves.

An Orinda Treasure

One of the oldest homes that Turner found during his search was built in Orinda in 1927.

"It took us two years to find this home," says present owner Julie Atkinson. The home is indeed unique. A single story structure with very thick stucco walls and a low-pitched roof

covered in tiles, it presents an asymmetrical façade. "You can see the original floor tile in the house with its unique design and the tile baseboards," says Atkinson. The blue baseboard tiles create a beautiful contrast with the brown-shen floor tile.

The bedroom wing of the building was once linked to the common



rooms by an open hallway; a previous owner, who had young children, closed the hallway with windows, but, "it retains that feel of transition to one part of the house to the next that's a characteristic of this type of architecture," notes Turner.

...continued on page OH4



After a long search, the Atkinsons found this unique Spanish style home nestled in the Orinda hills.

Photo Doug Koher

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

LAFAYETTE	Last reported: 6
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$399,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$2,300,000
MORAGA	Last reported: 9
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$125,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,050,000
ORINDA	Last reported: 9
LOWEST AMOUNT:	\$524,000
HIGHEST AMOUNT:	\$1,965,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California REsource. Neither Cal REsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

LAFAYETTE

3936 Los Arabis Drive, \$1,350,000, 5 Bdrms, 3656 SqFt, 1954 YrBl, 2-3-11

1 Dollis Park Road, \$399,000, 3 Bdrms, 1315 SqFt, 1937 YrBl, 1-31-11;

Previous Sale: \$470,000, 09-26-03

1025 Hampton Road, \$792,500, 4 Bdrms, 1955 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 1-28-11

3370 McGraw Lane, \$1,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 2656 SqFt, 1959 YrBl, 2-3-11

3954 Quail Ridge Road, \$1,585,000, 5 Bdrms, 5058 SqFt, 1985 YrBl, 1-28-11;

Previous Sale: \$1,750,000, 03-05-04

34 Sanford Lane, \$2,300,000, 4 Bdrms, 3892 SqFt, 2006 YrBl, 1-25-11;

Previous Sale: \$2,400,000, 01-31-07

MORAGA

1159 Alta Mesa Drive, \$465,000, 3 Bdrms, 2486 SqFt, 1974 YrBl, 2-4-11;

Previous Sale: \$339,000, 05-16-97

126 Ascot Court #C, \$125,000, 1 Bdrms, 858 SqFt, 1970 YrBl, 1-31-11;

Previous Sale: \$205,000, 08-06-01

2087 Ascot Drive #125, \$159,500, 1 Bdrms, 761 SqFt, 1971 YrBl, 2-3-11;

Previous Sale: \$21,000, 06-04-73

1412 Camino Peral, \$379,000, 2 Bdrms, 1126 SqFt, 1971 YrBl, 1-28-11;

Previous Sale: \$216,000, 03-19-96

700 Camino Ricardo, \$1,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 2429 SqFt, 1966 YrBl, 2-4-11;

Previous Sale: \$835,000, 07-12-10

107 Cypress Point Way, \$650,000, 2 Bdrms, 1657 SqFt, 1973 YrBl, 1-28-11;

Previous Sale: \$524,000, 06-15-04

114 Merion Terrace, \$755,000, 3 Bdrms, 2828 SqFt, 1988 YrBl, 1-28-11;

Previous Sale: \$655,000, 06-22-00

3798 Via Granada, \$730,000, 4 Bdrms, 1948 SqFt, 1970 YrBl, 2-4-11

1004 Wickham Drive, \$717,000, 4 Bdrms, 2127 SqFt, 1967 YrBl, 2-4-11;

Previous Sale: \$826,000, 07-11-03

ORINDA

140 Camino Don Miguel, \$1,965,000, 4 Bdrms, 3695 SqFt, 1941 YrBl, 2-4-11;

Previous Sale: \$1,075,000, 09-15-93

130 El Nido Court, \$1,150,000, 3 Bdrms, 3717 SqFt, 1976 YrBl, 1-26-11;

Previous Sale: \$925,000, 06-22-99

12 Hall Drive, \$722,000, 3 Bdrms, 1910 SqFt, 1966 YrBl, 1-25-11;

Previous Sale: \$920,000, 03-14-06

110 Leslie Lane, \$1,250,000, 5 Bdrms, 3058 SqFt, 1975 YrBl, 2-1-11;

Previous Sale: \$1,495,000, 10-31-05

100 Lucille Way, \$587,000, 5 Bdrms, 4108 SqFt, 1987 YrBl, 1-28-11

603 Moraga Way, \$524,000, 3 Bdrms, 1610 SqFt, 1966 YrBl, 1-28-11;

Previous Sale: \$355,000, 04-22-98

46 Muth Drive, \$658,000, 3 Bdrms, 1372 SqFt, 1961 YrBl, 1-25-11

251 Sundown Terrace, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 3509 SqFt, 1988 YrBl, 2-1-11;

Previous Sale: \$950,000, 05-08-92

235 Village Gate Road, \$560,000, 3 Bdrms, 2075 SqFt, 1979 YrBl, 2-4-11

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

LAFAYETTE

2436 Cherry Hills Drive, 94549, HSBC Bank, 01-28-11, \$815,910, 2043 sf, 4 bd

ORINDA

161 Holly Lane, 94563, Bac Home Loans, 01-20-11, \$1,374,544, 3030 sf, 5 bd



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Lots of Updates, Near Great Recreation Areas & Trails
Ideal Floor Plan, Beautiful Yard and Gardens
4 BR 2 BA 2,032 Sq Ft .23 Acre
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A Trio of Spanish Revival Jewels

...continued from page OH1

Dorothy Lamb, founder of the Orinda Garden Club in 1937, also once owned the home; she lived there until 1997. Some of the unique features she added in the spirit of the Spanish style are still present – such as a back patio with a fountain set into the hilly greenery.

The cozy rooms and long, clear walkway overlooking the front patio create an unconventional and charming ensemble seldom found today.

A Home for Her Tiles

A much more recent Lafayette home has captured some of this same charm, thanks to its new owners Thomas and Linda Delaplane, who added to the home's unique qualities. "When we bought the house the kitchen had shiny black granite counters and center isle," remembers Delaplane, "the olive trees in front had been removed and replaced with a lawn." They built a gate, creating a front patio and courtyard with a fountain. With a natural feel for Southwestern American style, the Delaplans re-

stored the house to its original character. They added mature olive trees in front, changed the metal garage doors to wood, and created an open kitchen with natural-colored tile.

The home includes a covered walkway overlooking the front patio that leads to the bedroom wing; a perfect location to display Linda's extensive collection of tiles. "I had collected hundreds of decorative tiles, from all over the country, and have been able to use many of them in this home." In keeping with the original Spanish revival style, the couple embedded some of the tiles in the stucco walls of their home, to decorate the front and back fountains, the side of the pool and many more inside and outside walls. Some are ancient, some are from contemporary craftsmen, and they seem to have found a permanent home in Lafayette.

...continued on page OH6



The Delaplans' front courtyard



The courtyards in the Delaplane home are enhanced by beautiful tiles.



Photos Doug Kohen



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Stunning craftsman-style 5 bedroom, 3 1/2 bath 3417 square foot home on professionally landscaped .74 acre lot. Custom built in 2005 the single level floor plan offers an impressive list of high-end finishes throughout. Three car garage, huge mud room and much more!

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Coming Soon!

...continued from page OH4

Casa del Sol

This love of unique detail is also a characteristic of the most modern of these three homes, "Casa del Sol," on Manzanita Drive in Orinda. "I noticed the uniqueness of this home as I was driving by," said Turner. Its present owner, local home designer Roger Deakins, designed the



The Deakins' kitchen features soft colors and natural materials.

home. He lived in it for a year with his family before putting it on the market. "The strength of the home can be seen in the broad roof lines and overhanging eaves, in the 6" X 8" redwood beams that outline the walkway around the house, and in the army of red clay tile roof shingles," says Turner.

"For inspiration I looked to the Spanish Colonial Revival architecture designed and built in Santa Barbara, and the early California Missions" says Deakins, "all the windows are trimmed with redwood; the green painting will match the copper of the gutters as it ages. I've chosen a lighter color palette throughout and used hand made material in the construction, such as the Hispano-American terra-cotta tiles covering the front steps or the hand-cut Southwest flagstone fireplace." The 4,000 square foot home perched on a hillside, with a partial second floor, is a modern interpretation of the Spanish style; with a more compact floor plan. The materials, such as the inside wall treatment made of naturally pigmented and textured plaster, bring out the Spanish revival accent.



Redwood and handmade tiles make the Deakins' home warm and inviting. Photos Doug Kohen

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The Olsen Team presents: **4 Sparrow Court, Moraga**



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This charming home is tucked away on a quiet cul-de-sac in the Camino Woods neighborhood. It is close to everything in Moraga - and is an easy walk to elementary and middle school, library, park, farmer's market and more. The home features two updated baths, French doors, dual-paned windows, and hardwood floors nearly throughout. The private grassy yard borders a small seasonal creek, and features a brick patio, bountiful pomegranate and Meyer lemon trees & more. **Offered at \$795,000**

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20 Snow Court

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Offered at \$1,495,000



37 Oak Road

Dramatic 5bd/4ba, 5006 sf cus trad on beaut .68 ac lot among redwoods & oaks. Lx mstr retreat w/frplc, updated kitchen, ofc/library, wine cellar for 1620 bottles & tasting room.

Offered at \$1,495,000



19 Hilldale Court

Situated on a pvt court w/over 1 ac of incredible grounds & an exclusive wooded setting w/big views, nearly 400 sf, 4+bd, ofc/den, gourmet kitchen, entertainer's paradise.

Offered at \$1,865,000



528 Tahos Road

Style & design come alive in approx. 5100 sf, 5bd/4.5+ba total renovation, incredible attn. to detail, light/bright w/lg windows. EZ access to grassy yd, decks, balconies, views.

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1383 Camino Pablo

Light & bright turnkey 2820 sf 5bd/3ba entertainers delight with hdwd flrs, dual panes, granite kitchen & baths. Lg pvt bkcyd, close top schools, park & hiking trails.

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7 Gloria Court

Updated 4bd/3ba on cul de sac with hdwd floors, Andersen sliders and an ideal in-law or teen set up. Level private yard...move in ready.

Offered at \$899,000



1014 Regio Court

1-lvl 3bd/2ba approx 2300 sf home blends seamlessly w/the outdoors & lovely pvt .45 ac lot. Well maintained & updated, stylish interior spaces, beyond belief views of Mt Diablo.

Offered at \$975,000



4090 Coralee Lane

Beautiful .61 acre setting. Close-in 5bd + office with 4 baths. Remodeled kitchen, open floor plan.

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819 Las Trampas Road

Custom blt 4bd/4.5ba hm on oak studded 1 ac lot in Las Trampas trail neighborhood. Pool & extensive landscape/hardscape. Fabulous floor plan with grand spaces.

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15 Candlelight Lane

Perfection in this stunning 3417 sf Craftsman-style sgl lvl hm blt in 2005. Fab flr plan, many impressive finishes & features, a very exceptional 4bd/3ba home.

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1140 Estates Drive

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416 Beacon Ridge Lane

Beaut updated approx 1800 sf w/fab newly landscaped garden/yard. Great loc. surrounded by rolling hills but nr Laf schools, shopping, hiking, good commute.

Offered at \$679,000



578 Monarch Ridge

Superbly located townhome w/outstanding views. Lovely hdwd flrs, vaulted ceilings, sep DR & lg eat-in kitchen. Nr shopping, open space, trails & outstanding Lafayette schools.

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6001 Horseman's Canyon Drive

Beaut detached 2+bd/2ba home in Rossmoor. All 1 lvl w/high ceilings thruout, gourmet kitchen, eat-in area, LR, DR, plantation shutters, recessed lights, 2-car garage, views.

Offered at \$899,000



289 Castle Hill Ranch Road

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