

Earth Day and Other Spring Celebrations in Lamorinda

By Sophie Braccini



The Bike Rodeo during Lafayette's 2010 Earth Day Celebration Photo provided

Spring has sprung, and Lamorinda's ready for it. For three weekends in a row this month, Lamorinda offers activities ranging from Earth Day to spring cleaning – The Wildlife/Earth Day Festival on April 17 in Orinda, Earth Day in Lafayette on April 23, and Moraga Beautiful Day on April 30th are opportunities to build community and help out Mother Nature.

Start in Orinda for the 10th Annual Wildlife/Earth Day Festival that will take place in the beautiful Wagner Ranch Nature Area (next to Wagner Ranch Elementary School, 350 Camino Pablo Road in Orinda) on Sunday April 17th from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. "The Friends of the Wagner Ranch Nature Area will conduct this free festive program to celebrate and support environmental education programs in the Nature Area," says Naturalist Toris Jaeger. The 18 acres of meadows, forest, ponds and stream are a unique outdoor classroom where environmental education programs for children are conducted. It is also a historical site and has served Orinda school children for 30 years. The program on April 17th, designed with families in mind, will offer games and discoveries for adults and children alike – including a chance to test-drive Chevrolet's electric Volt, giant solar balloon, arts, crafts and games, as well as food. For more information go to www.fwrna.org.

The following weekend, head to Lafayette for the Annual Earth Day Picnic and Celebration, on the Plaza in downtown Lafayette from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; the Bike Rodeo starts

at 9:00 a.m. This is the 6th annual Earth Day event presented by Sustainable Lafayette, the City of Lafayette and the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. The day will start with the Bike Rodeo at Stanley Middle School, a popular event for kids who come with their bikes and learn from the pros how to safely navigate the suburban landscape. "Young kids really get into the event and appear to learn from it," says Sustainable Lafayette's Bart Carr, who organizes the rodeo, "and parents are very appreciative." There will also be Eco Way, a chance meet Lafayette green businesses and products, buy veggie starters, and visit with local environmental groups. Other activities will be offered before and after a "Picnic on the Green." For more information, go to www.sustainable-lafayette.org.

If you're not exhausted by all the partying and feel like giving back to your community, Moraga is the place to be at the end of the month. On April 30th you won't be fed or entertained. You will have to get up early and go demonstrate your love of nature by giving a few hours of work to make the town "Moraga Beautiful." "We would love to have volunteers to help at the Commons Park this year," says Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram, "I would recommend wearing old clothing because you will be painting some of the park amenities. The Town will supply gloves, brushes, paint and stain." Volunteers should arrive at 8:45am, ready to work from 9:00 a.m.-noon. For more information, contact Ingram at jingram@moraga.ca.us.

Not to be missed

SPRING EVENTS

Zumbathon for Japan! A fun, community event Sat, April 16, from 4-6pm at the Lafayette Library Community Hall Dance for a cause with Midori Miller, our Bay Area's iconic Zumba guru & her fellow instructors while you help Japan. Minimum donation: \$20. Raffle tickets: \$5 each (prizes include two free hotel stays at Renaissance Clubsport, pottery by a renowned local artist, dental services & teeth whitening, and so much more!) Advanced reservations recommended. E-mail Elena Pang at ebpwoman@comcast.net / ph: (925) 212-2035. Make checks payable to: Consulate General of Japan, Memo: Attention - Japan Earthquake Relief Fund Send to: 8 Austin Ct, Orinda, CA 94563

10th Annual Wildlife/Earth Day Festival on Sunday April 17th 1- 4pm, Wagner Ranch Nature Area, 350 Camino Pablo Rd., Orinda. The free festive program to celebrate and support environmental education programs in the Nature Area will offer an electric Volt to test drive, a Raptor Show, ARF dogs, Eagle Shield's trailer of energy efficient systems, a giant solar balloon, native plants for your garden, Arts and crafts, delicious food, music and games, and more – see www.fwrna.org.

Lafayette Earth Day celebration, Saturday, April 23rd: (9am - 11:30am) children K-5th grade can learn practice bike safety on the outdoor course at Stanley Middle School with a festive parade to Lafayette Plaza Park; (11:30am – 1:30pm) enjoy a local, organic, sustainable lunch at the downtown Plaza Park with live music and activities; (11:00am - 3pm) Plaza Way will be turned into "Eco-Way" featuring the "Backyard of Tomorrow" that demonstrates the latest green gardening techniques and materials. Also visit with a number of local environmental groups including Sustainable Lafayette, The Urban Farmers, Lafayette Farmers' Market, Trust in Education, CCC Solid Waste Authority, and more. For info see www.sustainablelafayette.org.

The Cultural Nights at Saint Mary's College take place every spring semester. LU'AU: Celebrating the Polynesian Cultural and Community, Saturday, April 30. Registration 5:30-6pm, doors open at 6 pm. Asian Cultural Night, Thursday, May 5. Registration 5:30-6p.m., doors open at 6pm. Both events will be at the Soda Activity Center, Saint Mary's College of California, 1928 St. Mary's Rd., Moraga.

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

Cinco de Mayo celebration on Thursday, May 5, 4:00pm to 7:00pm at Hacienda de las Flores, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga. Live Mariachi Band, Tortilla making, Pinatas, Games for Children, Authentic Mexican Food, Margaritas, Beer and Soft Drinks, available for a nominal charge. Free parking and shuttle from Rheem. Shopping Center. Sponsored by the Hacienda Foundation and the Town of Moraga Parks and Recreation Department.

Moraga Community Faire, Saturday, May 14, Rheem Shopping Center. Fun for all ages.: classic car show, 26' climbing wall, big bounces, food, local wines, cold beer. Listen to a Campolindo chorus and some local jazz bands. For details, visit www.moragachamber.org.

The first annual "With help comes hope walkathon" will be Saturday, May 14 at Heather Farm Park in Walnut Creek. Registration for the 5K event will be from 7:30 to 8:30 a.m. All funds that are raised will support our life-affirming services—24-hour crisis lines, grief counseling program, youth services, homeless services, and 211 information and referral. To find out more, call our business office at (925) 939-1916 or go to www.crisis-center.org.

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