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Photos Ohlen Alexander

Small Town Fun at the Moraga Pear and Wine Festival

By Sophie Braccini

Under last Saturday's deliciously mild sun, families and older residents alike came to the Pear and Wine Festival at the Moraga Commons Park for a good time, rejoicing in the simple pleasures of living in a community with a small-town ambience.

For the first time, Moraga's famous pears were joined by grapes at the annual fall event. An easy-going tone was set for the day by Mayor Karen Mendonca when she rolled up her pants and went on stage to crush grapes with her bare feet. The pear recipe and pear pie-eating contests were rivaled in fun by a wine-pairing mini-class and the Lamorinda Winegrower Association's (LWGA) wine

tasting. "It was one of our most successful Festivals," commented proud organizer John Haffner. "This is something I always wanted to do, since I was a child and saw Lucille Ball do it on I Love Lucy," said the mayor, when offered the opportunity to crush grapes provided by the LWGA. Mendonca confided that it had felt wonderful, "like a foot massage." LWGA's Tony Rollo organized the crushing, along with Parks and Recreation staff. "I cut some of my own barrels and brought them here," said Rollo, who owns Vincenza Ranch Vineyard, the town's third bonded winery, "that's the way it's always been done."

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Quote of the Week:

"I wanted to express my thanks and appreciation to Jennifer Russell...for listening to my concerns..."
 Read Letters to the Editor, page A9

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Productive Summer Interns Wow Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson



Summer Intern Megan Canales working the Planning counter at the City of Lafayette offices.
 Photo C. Tyson

Embracing summer interns for more than thirty years, the City of Lafayette has been a training ground for bright eyed students from nearly the dawn of time – or the incorporation of the city. This summer six young men and women contributed to keeping the city running, gained valuable experience and lightened the load of staff members- a good deal all the way around.

"This year's crop of interns, which include Zoe Merideth and Zachary Baron (Planning), Jay Yu (Public Works), Spencer Stahl and Robert Burt (Engineering), and Megan Canales (Planning), has been a particularly good group," said City Manager Steven Falk. "To give you a sense of their range consider that, just as Zoe departed to begin her Master's Degree program at Harvard University, Robert will be entering his senior year at Miramonte High School."

"I know how invaluable an internship can be to someone fresh out of college," said former intern and now Planning & Building Services Manager Niroop Srivatsa. "In the Planning Department, our

interns get to participate in such important tasks as the General Plan update, the Downtown Specific Plan, amendments to the zoning ordinance and development review and are able to present their work to the Planning and Design Review Commissions and the City Council. The City benefits from their fresh perspectives and innovative ideas. So it's a win-win situation."

In fact the city's longest-tenured employee at thirty years and counting, Jennifer Russell, who is now the Director of the Parks Trails and Recreation Department, started as an intern. Falk reports that two of Lafayette's interns – Dan Singer and Karen Stein – went on to become city managers (Stein once filled that position in Moraga).

Assistant Planner Michael Cass must really "Love Lafayette," he attended Acalanes High School and started interning while attending St. Mary's College. Falk now calls him, "a grizzled veteran and key member of our planning staff"

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Life in Lamorinda B1-B12

Cal-ESAR: They've Got your Back(country)



By Cathy Dausman

Lamorinda's branch of California Explorer Search and Rescue (Cal-ESAR) is the nicest bunch of people you never want to meet—at least on the job. Cal-ESAR is a volunteer wildernessread on page B1

Sports C1-C3

Lady Cougars Serve up a Win



By Marissa Harnett

The Lamorinda high school girls' tennis teams are starting DFAL conference play. Campolino is enjoying a 3-0 run in the DFAL and are 6-1-1 overall. Miramonte has split its out-of-league record but also remains undefeated in leagueread on page C1

Our Homes D1-D12

Orinda's Rain Trackers



By Andrea A. Firth

"In California for so many years, we could count on no rain from May to October. But this year it rained measurably in June," says Lynn Trowbridge. She has lived in Orinda since the mid-1970's and startedread on page D1