

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Jay Lifson with hat in hand

Photo Doug Kohen

Save the Sparkle

By Cathy Tyson

Although twinkle lights may not qualify as an endangered species, the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce is hoping the season of giving will start early this holiday season and is asking for donations to keep the twinkle lights twinkling in downtown Lafayette.

When the City Council was forced to trim its budget this year, the banner program was saved, but twinkle lights got the axe. It's hard to quantify the benefit of festive lighting on holiday shopping, but it goes a long way toward making spirits bright.

Although the city purchased new strings of LED lights recently that use a fraction of the electricity that the old ones did, it costs approximately \$8,000 per season to maintain and re-string as needed. Jay Lifson, the Executive Director of the Chamber, is in the process of calling around to see if he can get a lower bid for the job.

Consider yourself invited by the Chamber of Commerce to be part of the solution. The Chamber is asking for donations, by Novem-

ber 15, to cover the expected cost of keeping the lights on. Generous merchants have given a portion of that amount already. Lifson said that all donations, no matter the size, are welcome - checks can be made out to the Chamber of Commerce, which also accepts credit cards. If residents and businesses are exceptionally generous, donating more than the anticipated cost, the Chamber will roll over any extra amount to next year's twinkle light fund. For more information, call the Chamber at (925) 284-7404, or drop by the office at 100 Lafayette Circle, Suite 103, Lafayette, CA, 94549.



Quote of the Week:

"They said make yourself at home, so I brought my dog."

Read "Charismatic Author Impresses Audiences," page A8

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Grand Plans for Orinda's Mini Park

By Cathy Dausman

When 1960's era eastbound Highway 24 traffic exited into Orinda, drivers encountered a stark, industrial first impression of the city—a "welcome" sign supported by a chain link fence, and dwarfed by the signal light, telephone and utility poles surrounding it. A photo of the area is featured in William Bronson's book, *How to Kill a Golden State*, and is a measure of just how far the city beautification project has come.

Today that site, a designated mini-park, features mature redwoods, park benches, a fountain, several memorial plaques and drought resistant vegetation—and it is on the verge of an update. The city is collaborating with PG&E, which owns the property, the Montelindo Garden Club and the owners of Theatre Square with plans that include removing some redwoods, which interfere with PG&E transmission lines, and two nearby magnolia trees, which have outgrown their street boxes; replacing the redwoods with strawberry trees and the magnolia trees with crape myrtle, beefing up native plants and grasses, raising the landscape rockery, and installing an illuminated, arched metal sign on the west side of the clock tower. Discussions also include installing an art

wall/fence as a backdrop to soften the view. Cost estimates are \$50,000 to \$57,000; each participant will contribute either financially or in-kind.

Orinda's first park was officially designated a mini park in the mid-1970's. The triangular area is

located at the northwest corner of Camino Pablo and Brookwood Road. Landscape architect and Orinda resident Nora Harlow drew up the park's original design as a gift to the city.

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Photo provided

Life in Lamorinda B1-B12

Local Libraries in the Digital Age—it's About the Experience



By Sophie Braccini

A September survey by Harris Interactive confirmed that digital readers are a hot commodity, and that they get people to read more books. The trend does not surprise or worry Lamorinda's... ..read on page B5

Sports C1-C3

Lamorinda Prep Basketball Will Fight for DFAL Title



By Conrad Bassett

High school basketball season kicked off on Monday, November 7 with the first day of practice. For the first time in several years, the defending league champion is not Acalanes,read on page C1

Our Homes D1-D8

What So Proudly We Hail



By Laurie Snyder

Just over the rise of a hill and around the bend of one of Orinda's many winding roads, Old Glory flutters, lifting and resetting with each breeze, drawing the eyes of passers by, up and away... ..read on page D1