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Back row, from left: Leonard Pirkle, Patricia Philipopoulos, Cuong Ngo, Dave Trotter, Sherry Shahrooz, George Eliopoulos, Joanne Foy, Pete Crooks; front row: Edy Schwartz, James Madio, Karen Mendonca, Beau Behan, George Retelas
 Photo Andy Scheck

“Monsieur Lazhar” Named 2012 Best Picture at CAIFF

By Laurie Snyder

A Canadian film about a teacher who transforms his pain in order to help his students transcend theirs has been on the lips of audience members and minds of reviewers since the opening of Lamorinda’s 14th Annual California Independent Film Festival (CAIFF).

Written and directed by Philippe Falardeau and nominated for a 2012 Academy Award as Best Foreign Language Film, “Monsieur Lazhar” took Best Picture at CAIFF’S 2012 Slate Awards last Saturday night at Moraga’s New Rheem Theatre. The awards were emceed by San Francisco film critic and

historian, Jan Wahl, who said of the Rheem, “This is OUR Cinema Paradiso.” Wahl also moderated a Q&A with Talia Shire and Burt Young, two of the Academy Award-nominated stars from the 1976 Best Picture Oscar-winner, “Rocky.” ... continued on page A12

Quote of the Week:

“I’m not someone who sees a communist under every leaf, but I see a communist under this one.”
 Read the article Fighting for Paradise on page A6.

Advertising

The Spring Real Estate Market is here and it's going strong! Over 100 Buyers through Lamorinda Open Homes on Super Bowl Sunday! Multiple offers last week in Orinda and Moraga! Interest rates are still at an all time low!

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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A Spirit of Cooperation at Tri-City Meeting

By Sophie Braccini

The City of Lafayette, City of Orinda and Town of Moraga assembled in Orinda last week for their annual Tri-City Meeting. Often filled with recounts of past achievements, these meetings seldom lead to action. This time, things were a little different. The three Councils made decisions on joint projects – some to which they had already committed, such as Emergency Preparedness – others with new objectives, like creating synergy in the area of public works and acting together to protest the County’s Sustainable Communities Strategy. Perhaps not surprisingly, roads and infrastructure were on the evening’s agenda. Orinda Council Member Dean Orr asked the three councils what they thought about working together to put joint transportation bids out to increase their bargaining power. Moraga Mayor Mike Metcalf

stated that market forces should be left to their own dynamic to create economy of scale. Orinda’s Vice Mayor Amy Worth agreed with Orr’s idea, and Lafayette Vice Mayor Mike Anderson added that the three cities should break the institutional barriers ahead of time so this synergy could happen. The elected bodies sent the ball to the court of the City/Town Managers to lay the ground work—the three managers responded that they had already decided to meet and work on aligning some strategies. Dennis Rein presented the results of his first six months as Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the Moraga Orinda Fire District (MOFD). Rein’s scope of work now also includes Lafayette. He has finished an inventory of all the actors who would be involved in an emergency situation, and is now working on increasing synergies between the three communities,

creating a pool of resources that could be accessed by all, and training and drilling the stake holders. Canyon resident Jonathan Goodwin, whose community was cited as a model of emergency preparedness, added that whatever the minutia of the procedures, what counts when an incident happens is whether every resident knows the answer to the question, “What do I do now?” The last two subjects of the evening, parking at the skatepark and a presentation of the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA), were also areas where cooperation flourished. Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram presented an update of the plans for new parking at the Lamorinda Skatepark, the cost of which is being shared by the three communities. ... continued on page A11

Life in Lamorinda B1-B12

Saving Grace: A Mother's Enduring Gift of Love

February 14 was National Donor Day. Cathy Dausman talks to a Lafayette mother and son who share a very special bond. B1



Sports C1-C4

SMC Bounces Back to Beat the Broncos



The Gaels drop to #21 after losing to Gonzaga. C1

Our Homes D1-D8

Lessons Learned from a Remodel

Sophie Braccini recounts her own home remodeling experience. D1



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Lafayette

Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, February 27, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Planning Commission

Tuesday, February 21, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd

Design Review

Monday, February 27, 7:00 pm
Lafayette Library & Learning Center
in the Arts & Science Discovery
Center at 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District

Wednesday, February 15, 7:30 pm
Wednesday, March 7, 7:30 pm
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd, Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, March 7, 7:00 pm
LAFSD Office
3477 School Street, Lafayette
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org

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letters@lamorinda weekly.com

Lafayette Motorcycle Cops Make a Dent in Driver Behavior

By Cathy Tyson



Last summer the City of Lafayette welcomed, for the first time ever, two motorcycles to patrol the mean streets of this corner of paradise. The bikes are significantly more environmentally friendly, cheaper to operate and more agile than traditional cruisers. More than six months into their tenure, how's it going?

Allocating resources in an environment of scarcity is a core economics lesson the City Manager and City Council took to heart in the decision

to add motorcycles to the police force. Lafayette residents are significantly more likely to die in a traffic collision than an assault or homicide. They figured it just made more sense to use budget resources where the risks are highest, the best way to prevent future deaths and serious injuries is to provide better enforcement. With only 17 sworn staff members for a population of about 24,000, Lafayette ties Danville for the lowest number of officer per capita in Contra Costa County.

"The motor officers wrote 678 citations during the last quarter of 2011. The total number of citations written by the police department rose by 27 percent over the last year," explained Lafayette Police Chief Mike Hubbard. "During that same time period, the number of injury accidents decreased by 20.6 percent."

For drivers who may not see a semi-concealed officer, the Chief points out that, "It's legal for them to sit behind bushes or in driveways. We even have driveway agreements that many citizens have signed, giving us permission to use their driveway to enforce traffic regulations." The most common ticket is written for speeding or cell phone usage while behind the wheel.

Mayor Carol Federighi reports that fines can vary from \$250 for talking on your cell phone while driving to \$685 for passing a school bus. "We're not doing this for the money," she said. "Lafayette gets on average on about 10 percent of the fines collected. For example a stop sign violator pays a \$350 fine, but Lafayette only receives \$35."

"Police work in a difficult, often adversarial, environment. It's understandable that people don't like receiving citations for speeding or using a cell phone while driving, but that's the law, and the job of the officer is to enforce it," said City Manager Steven Falk. "My experience with our offi-

cers is that they are well trained and very professional; if that's not the citizen's experience, then both Chief Hubbard and I want to hear about it."

Obviously no one wants to get a ticket. Quite a number of residents contacted for this story who have received them are unhappy with police tactics, but declined to speak on the record. One older gentleman, who preferred to comment anonymously, believes some of the public trust in the police department has been eroded by officers who hide out.

One recent change that parents will enjoy is new, very short term parking in front of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. A number of normally law abiding parents had stopped in front of the new library to pick up their kids, and have been ticketed because the curb was painted red – technically no parking to accommodate a County Transit Bus that stops there. A few weeks ago the curb was re-painted white, with very clear instructions – two minute loading zone.

"We understood when we opened the library that we'd need to make adjustments to the building as we learned how it was, in practice, used by the public. This is one of those adjustments," said Falk. "We learned that several parents had received parking citations while sitting in the red zone waiting for their kids, and that felt wrong. We hope this improves the situation."

Lafayette School District Wants Help Planning for the Future

By Cathy Tyson

"Shift happens," is the creative colloquialism that describes what's going on with the Lafayette School District. Superintendent Dr. Fred Brill along with the Governing Board and District Administrators were at Stanley Intermediate School recently to kick off the official Strategic Planning Process to guide

the District for the next five years.

The process is meant "To provide direction to what the district should start doing, stop doing and keep doing" summarized Brill. Clearly staff shares a collaborative view of their vision toward student success

Input from all stakeholder

groups is critical in molding the strategic plan, with end goal of creating a roadmap for the District. This is the time for teachers, parents and the community to offer their opinions about what is working and what needs some adjustments.

District administrators are offering a number of ways for residents to

get involved. The team will be taking the show on the road visiting Burton Valley, Happy Valley, Lafayette Elementary and Springhill through the month of February with teacher meetings in the late afternoon and parent community meetings in the evening.

... continued on next page

Police Report



Lights out, 1/23/12 Scoundrels broke a resident's two decorative garden lanterns overnight. Victims heard glass breaking in the wee hours but didn't get up to check. They're out \$600 for the pair; which probably gives them a dimmer view of humanity...

Unlocked and unlucky, 1/27/12 Someone left their car unlocked with a wallet and credit cards inside, so a thief took advantage. The car left the premises, and a credit card transaction was reported from Oakland.

Not much to work with, 1/25/12 When one car's driver rear-ended another along Reliez Station Road, there was no damage, nor any injuries. Still, the person reporting the collision insisted a written report be filed with Lafayette P.D.

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Zoning Decision on Controversial Development Possibly Coming This Spring

By Cathy Tyson

The proposed multi-family apartment project on the acreage known as the Christmas Tree lot will have to wait for a City decision on zoning of the parcel. The 315-unit Terraces of Lafayette was proposed in March of last year for the twenty-two acre site at the corner of Pleasant Hill Road and Deer Hill Road.

Vocal opponents had attended many prior City Council meetings, arguing that the already busy intersection near Acalanes High School would be negatively impacted by the additional traffic "Terraces" residents would create. Others complained the site is not appropriate for dense development.

The Lafayette City Council decided at a September 2011 meeting to pause to allow staff time to prepare a response to material submitted by the applicant – developer O'Brien Land Company. "Our analysis and responses should be completed in the next 30-60 days," said Senior Planner Christine Sinnette.

Meanwhile the project is going through environmental review. Ann Merideth, Special Projects Manager, expects the Draft Environmental Impact Report to be out in late February or early March.

"We have been gratified by the

level of excitement about the project, and the expressions of locals who are interested in having an opportunity to stay in Lafayette in an all-new rental community, built to a new green construction standard," said Terraces Project Manager Dave Baker. "We, too, are excited at the prospect, and are launching a new website in the next two weeks to show our floorplans, features and some new renderings: www.terracesoflafayette.com."

Possible rezoning would encompass the Christmas Tree lot, but also four additional properties on Deer Hill Road to a rural residential classification. Only the Christmas Tree lot, and a tiny sliver of land abutting Highway 24, owned by CalTrans, are currently zoned Administrative/Professional/Office/Multifamily, that would allow up to 35 dwelling units per acre.

The City proposed zoning change would bring the allowable density down to one dwelling unit per acre. These zoning changes have been discussed for years, but never officially adopted. At issue is the land use application by developer O'Brien for the apartment complex that was received by the City before any official zoning change was made. Look for the matter to be addressed in the coming months.

Lafayette School District Wants Help Planning for the Future

... continued from page A2

Everyone is encouraged to attend a meeting, but for those that can't make it, participation is welcomed in the online Strategic Planning Survey 2012 – four simple anonymous questions. For those that just want to read all about it, the District has also posted a comprehensive, very organized and user-friendly strategic planning portal link, front and center on the Lafayette School District homepage www.lafsd.k12.ca.us.

Feeling out of the academic loop? There's much more going on than reading, writing and arithmetic at Lafayette's five elementary schools and one intermediate school. Five priority areas are the focus of the strategic plan. The first, arguably the most important area, is student achievement - specifically higher level critical thinking. "Students are learning a different way to think about thinking," said Rachel Zinn, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, adding, "math instruction is being transformed." Audience mem-

bers were bowled over by the Power-Point presentation that explained just a snippet of how this process works.

The balance of the priority areas include: Finance – maintaining a sustainable budget, Healthy kids - healthy adults, Globalization – which includes non-English language instruction, and Technology. Part of the Character Counts program, that falls under the Healthy Kids umbrella teaches ways for students to do the right thing, just because it's the right thing to do. "We look at it as more pro-respect versus anti-bullying," said Zinn.

Through the direction of the Superintendent and staff, the point of the Strategic planning process is to support and guide the District's mission: *We embrace a rigorous, comprehensive curriculum to provide a quality education in a safe and nurturing environment. We commit to meet the needs of all students, to foster continuous learning and to promote respect.*



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| 89 SHUEY DR | 456 MORAGA RD | 1018 RIVER ROCK LN | 1729 HELIX VALLEY |
| 70 SHUEY DR | 139 PASO DEL RIO | 94 G ELDER | 2211 TICE VALLEY |
| 24 CARR DR | 1424 DE LA CRUZ | 1409 CAMINO PERAL | 1348 NAVELLER |
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| 1075 SANDERS DR | 257 SANDRINGHAM | 1418 CAMINO PERAL | 2277 STAR AVE |
| 24 FREITAS DR | 238 SANDRINGHAM | 1405 CAMINO PERAL | 4255 WILSON LN |
| 4 WANDEL DR | 235 SANDRINGHAM | 1437 CAMINO PERAL | 2 AGHALEE LN |
| 149 WALFORD DR | 1072 COUNTRY CLUB | 1416 CAMINO PERAL | 1018 RIVER ROCK LN |
| 108 WALFORD DR | 1080 COUNTRY CLUB | 1475 CAMINO PERAL | 1919 IGNACIO VLY RD |
| 4 SPARROW CT | 398 BIRCHWOOD DR | 1515 A CAMINO PERAL | 309 CORTE GABRIEL |
| 11 KETELSEN | 248 BIRCHWOOD DR | 236 VALLEY GLEN | 3545 BOYER CIRCLE |
| 8 PIMENTEL CT | 13 DONALD DR | 180 VALLEY GLEN | 938 MOHR LN |
| 133 WESTCHESTER | 1924 ASCOT DR | 205 VISTA GLEN PL | 3569 BADDING RD |
| 15 BRECK CT | 1939 ASCOT DR | 950 OAK VISTA | 3 ROBERTS CT |
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Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, February 22, 7:00pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Tuesday, February 21, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

Design Review

Monday, February 27, 7:00 pm
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd

School Board Meeting

Moraga School District

Tuesday, March 13, 7:30 pm
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
www.moraga.k12.ca.us
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

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

Break-in for a basketball?, 2/5/12
An unknown suspect broke into a portable ticket building at Saint Mary's College via a rock thrown through a rear window. The portable was ransacked, but the only thing missing was a basketball. Unfortunately trashing the place caused approximately \$1,500 worth of damage. Apparently the mysterious unknown suspect was unfamiliar with risk and reward equations.

Dry cleaning vanishes, 2/04/12
A usually dapper Via Barcelona resident reported having his dry cleaning stolen off his front porch. Apparently the blue Alex Dry Cleaning Bag was out front at 5:30 p.m. on Feb. 4, but when he went out at 9:00 a.m. on Feb 5 the bag was gone. Approximate value of cleaned and pressed clothing, \$1750.

BBs on the loose, 2/01/12
Accidents happens – that's the thinking behind an Alderbrook Place resident whose window was pierced and shattered by a BB gone wild. The reporting person does not feel that he was in any way a target – the incident just had to be documented for insurance purposes.

Bricks way out of line, 1/30/12
A six foot section of brick sidewalk at the Moraga Skate Park was lifted out of its position sometime during the night. Estimated damage \$250 to show them the straight and narrow. Could this be the work of disgruntled Occupy Moraga Youth?

Burglary, 1/30/12
A Larch Avenue homeowner reported to police that when she came home in mid-afternoon the sliding glass master bedroom door that connects to the backyard had been smashed. An expensive diamond ring and some costume jewelry were taken. Cops managed to collect some fingerprints and the case is under investigation.

Backing into a patrol car, 1/28/12
No physical injuries, unless you count kicking yourself, but an Orinda cop was outside of his patrol car on Moraga Way, writing a ticket, when a white Buick sedan backed out of a parking stall and backed into the side door of the police car. Sheer genius.

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Moraga Splits the Baby in Half

By Sophie Braccini

Nothing as dramatic as King Solomon's judgment happened at the Town Council meeting on February 8, but as council members wrestled to decide which fund to invade in order to pay a \$450,000 note, Council Member Dave Trotter invoked the biblical figure to propose splitting the envelop between the General Fund surplus and the over two million dollars in Palo Colorado Developer Fees the Town holds.

There was no question among them that the remainder of the cost of the 331 Rheem property, which the Town purchased for use as a corporation yard two years ago, should be paid in cash rather than financed; the total of the Town's surplus earns a very modest .38 percent interest and adds up to more than four million dollars. The choice of the fund was not an easy one, since each option has political implications.

Administrative Services Director

Stephanie Hom presented to the Council the mid-year revenue and expenditure report. She also proposed a policy committing net revenues from each fiscal year to the General Fund Reserve and the Infrastructure Preservation and Improvement (IPI) Fund. The Council agreed that the year end surplus be retained in the General Fund Reserve in order to maintain reserves equal to 50 percent of the year's expense, and that any additional net revenue be transferred to the IPI Fund. The reserve just reached the 50 percent target.

"We said a long time ago that we wanted (a reserve) to reach 50 percent of our General Fund expenditure, I think that is a priority," said Mayor Mike Metcalf. The fact that dipping into that reserve would send it below the target, to about 43 percent of expenditures, raised some questions. "We just passed a resolution a few moments ago to reach that 50 percent

goal, if we were to use the general fund reserve we would go below the 50 percent. Doesn't that point us into the direction of using the Developer Funds instead?" asked Council Member Karen Mendonca.

During the public comment period, resident Barbara Simpson warned the Council that using the Developer Fees fund would meet with strong public opposition because that money had always been perceived as being dedicated to recreation. Regarding the reserves she added, "You have a goal of 50 percent, not a mandate of 50 percent; to go below 50 percent is permitted."

"Using the Developer funds is the easy way out and the temptation is always there; and if you continue to do that, the money will not last long," said Council Member Ken Chew. "We don't know when we will need that money. We can rebuild our reserve and take charge of the note."

Trotter agreed, adding that the

Town would probably go back to full strength within two years.

"What is the most important sanctity?" asked Vice Mayor Howard Harpham. "We used the Developer fund once, we should do it again, so we can keep our reserve intact from the beginning."

"I'd like to propose, because we ran about a \$200,000 net revenue last year, (that we) split the baby on it. That way we'll get back to 50 percent within the next audit period," Trotter finally suggested. The Council agreed on a four to one vote, with Harpham the dissenting voice.

A resolution will be brought back to the Council on the consent agenda to pay off the \$450,000 note by taking \$225,000 from the reserve and \$225,000 from the Palos Colorado Developer Fee Fund. At this time the Developer Fee fund amounts to \$2,390,737, and the reserve to \$3,043,898.

Council Honors Campo Athletes

By Sophie Braccini



Back Row: Aaron Havel, Chris Maag, Joe Holden, Jaime Vega, Karl Thornton, Danny Fox, Brett Stephens, Vince Graziano, Wes Brumbaugh, Greg Wiessier, Ilya Lopez, Gabe Samaniego, Jack Phipps; 3rd Row: Jack Simmons, Zack Remotto, Connor Rosenbaum, Nate MacDonald, Joe Mascheroni, Blake Snider, Parsa Bakhtiari, Tim Meir; 2nd Row: Thomas Joyce, Keith Geiger, Drew Gustafson, Adam Hathaway, Kevin Fong, Daniel Johnson, Mason Windatt, J.D. McPhee; Front Row: Brigid Leach, Juliet Farman, Rachel Johnson, Brooke Martini, Carrie Verdon, Mary Orders, Megan Mcmillin, Matt Yok, Nicky Aikawa, Mark Santaguida, Ryan Hoffman, Griffin Piatt
Photo Andy Scheck

The whole Campolindo Varsity football team was there, as well as the Varsity Women's Cross Country and Varsity Men's Cross Country teams. It was a very different type of energy for the otherwise somewhat stern bi-monthly Town Council Meeting. The young athletes were there to be honored by the Town for their extraordinary achievements.

First up were the 52 members of the football team. The well-behaved teenagers, in their sports uniforms, listened to the proclamation that retold the tale

of their undefeated season that led them, for the first time in school history, to represent Northern California in the CIF State Championship.

Then came the Varsity Cross Country teams that won the DFAL and NCS championships. Individual proclamations honored Carrie Verdon, who took first place at the State Championship, and Thomas Joyce, 3rd place at State, for their unique achievements. As she stood alone in front of the audience petite Carrie Verdon received, with composure, a loud and boisterous ovation from the football team.

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Moraga will use WW Funds for Hacienda and Commons

By Sophie Braccini

Most of Moraga's Measure WW funds for recreation were spent on the renovation of the field at Camino Pablo Elementary School. The Town has until 2018 to spend the remainder of its allocation, but to get some of the \$140,000 left during this budget cycle it must submit an application by March 31, 2012.

Many needs are competing for that money, even after the Town removed Rancho Laguna Park from the picture after an Orinda resident filed a law suit against the Town. At its February 8 meeting, the Council decided to allocate \$30,000 for improvements to the bandshell at the Moraga Commons Park—an addition to the already approved \$15,000 for ADA pathway improvements—and \$42,000 for upgrades to the Hacienda de las Flores and Pavilion restrooms.

A couple of council members recused themselves from the parts of the discussion because of personal ties they have with the local foundations

that will use these funds.

First, Vice Mayor Howard Harpham recused himself because his wife Louise is treasurer of the Parks Foundation that raises money for the parks and operates the Common's Band Shell during major Town events.

Then Mayor Metcalf recused himself for the second part of the discussion because his wife Sharon is a member of the Hacienda Foundation and, as an architect, the likely project manager of the proposed renovations.

Council Member Dave Trotter asked the Town Attorney to check if there was real conflict here, "These are projects to improve property that are owned by the Town, and I don't see how Sharon or Louise would benefit from this," said Trotter, "I'd like to hear guidance (about) whether recusal is really necessary."

"My experience with Town government is that it is better to exercise caution," said Metcalf.

Moraga Police Release Crime Statistics for 2011

By Sophie Braccini

The good news in the recent figures published by the Moraga Police Department is that the number of crimes in 2011 was at a ten-year low of 196; down from 252 in 2010.

The major areas of improvement are robberies, down 67 percent (from three in 2010 to one in 2011), assault, down by 37 percent, and larceny, down by 29 percent.

The number of forcible rapes was up by 500% (from zero in 2010 to five in 2011), and auto thefts rose by 70% (from 10 to 17).

Traffic citation increased, from 1290 in 2010, to 2011 in 2011; mostly

in the area of speed and cell phone use, while adult DUIs decreased from 43 to 27.

"While reviewing the statistics with staff, we discussed possible reasons for the 40 percent drop in DUI arrests," commented Chief Bob Priebe. "While we cannot determine one single cause, it was noted by both supervisors that worked the night shifts during both years, that they had seen a tremendous increase in the use of taxis, which I think could represent some level of success in both education and enforcement efforts."

Take a Gamble on Rancho Laguna Park?

Casino Night event to raise funds for playstructure

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga Parks and Recreation staffer Kim Burrowes may not look like a seasoned poker player as she sits in the office at the Hacienda de las Flores, but she loves the game—as long as it is played for a good cause. On March 3rd, the Hacienda de las Flores will become a gambling house with Blackjack, Craps, Poker and Roulette, all to help raise money for a new play structure at Rancho Laguna Park.

"It's a good idea to give something to people to entice them to give," says Burrowes, "I've been to many of these types of game-fundraisers. It's a lot of fun, it gets the community together and we will raise money for local children's play structure."

"It is also a perfect venue for people who want to learn the games," she says. The event will be managed by Aces Up Casino Parties, a company that will bring all the tables and equipment, as well as the trained personal. "The night will be casino-style and professionally handled," adds Burrowes, "and Aces Up dealers are trained to explain the rules to beginners if needed."

Burrowes is also thinking about adding a Bingo area. "All the tables will be standing-only," she says, "so Bingo would allow people to rest for a while and still have fun."

"Your \$40 ticket buys you a drink, access to the buffet, and \$50 in

play-money (casino chips)," explains Burrowes. At the end of the night, players won't convert their chips back into money—that's the fundraising part—but the more chips you collect, the more opportunities you'll have to win the raffle prizes that are donated by Lamorinda businesses. "And if people run out of chips during the night, they can buy more," adds Burrowes.

The Moraga Movers, a local non-profit organization for active adults over age 55, enthusiastically agreed to sponsor the event. "When I was very active with the Moraga Service League (a group that does not exist anymore), we used to hold a similar fundraiser at Saint Mary's," remembers Julie Fisher, now a member of the Moraga Movers, "This was in the mid 70's and we raised money for the parks and the paramedics and it was a lot of fun." Fisher hopes that parents of kids who will use the playground will be able to attend the event.

The number of participants is limited to 150. Buy your tickets online at moraga.ca.us, or contact Kim Burrowes at 888-7036. Tickets are \$40 until 2/29, then \$50; players have to be 21 or older. Casino Night takes place on Saturday, March 3, 2012 at the Hacienda de las Flores, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga, from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, February 21, 7:00 pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, February 28, at 7:00 pm
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way
Tuesday, February 14 canceled

Historical Landmark Committee

Tuesday, February 28, 3:00 pm
Gallery Room, Library
26 Orinda Way

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District
Monday, March 12, 6:00 pm
OUSD Office
8 Altarinda Road, Orinda
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

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

ORINDA POLICE

Police Report

Tipsy on the tatami, 1/31/12
A fifty-something woman at a local Japanese restaurant showed signs of inebriation. An Orinda police officer observed her to be unsteady of gait, and having watery eyes, slow and slurred speech and possessing a strong odor of alcohol. She laughed, she cried, she called the police officer an unprintable name ...and refused to take a preliminary alcohol screening test. In spite of that, and because of her two outstanding warrants specifying no alcohol be consumed, she was arrested and taken to Martinez Detention Facility.

...and that's all there is to report at press deadline from Orinda P.D. "It's been a good week [with no crime reports written]," says Chief Jeffrey Jennings. He balances this week's low crime reports with the prior week, which showed eight arrests. "This is a great, safe city," Jennings said. He reminded residents to look out for each other, keep their eyes open and consult the police even when they think it's "silly stuff."



Maureen Wilbur

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Fighting for Paradise

By Laurie Snyder

"I'm not someone who sees a communist under every leaf, but I see a communist under this one," said one speaker during the public forum period at the Orinda City Council's regularly scheduled meeting on January 31.

The remark made in jest prompted smiles among both Council members and attendees, and was indicative of the good humor displayed during intense discussions regarding the City's finances and the potential impact to the Orinda community of the Initial Vision Scenario (IVS) developed by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) and the

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC).

A section of "Paradise Lost" was even quoted by one among the ten who expressed their opposition to the IVS and urged their fellow Orindans to become better informed about the far-reaching plan.

Often referred to as the "One Bay Area" strategy, the IVS was developed in response to California Senate Bill 375. Enacted in 2008, 375 requires "the inclusion of a 'Sustainable Communities Strategy' (SCS) integrating land-use planning and transportation in the federally mandated 25-year Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

with the goal of addressing global warming by reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from cars and trucks while accommodating the region's population and job growth."

Analysis of this ABAG-MTC plan followed Council's mid-year finance review in which members discussed a continued decline in property tax revenues by an additional two percent – over and above the one percent decline that had been previously projected for year two of the City's current two-year budget cycle. Both the audio and the staff reports for this meeting are available on the City's web site.

The staff report for this meeting

includes the strongly worded letter sent June 9 by Mayor Victoria Smith to Adrienne J. Tissier and Mark Green, the respective Chairs of ABAG and MTC, regarding the IVS:

"Most aspects of the Transit Town Center place type are appropriate for Orinda's PDA [Priority Development Area]; however, because approximately 40% of the land area within 1/2 mile of the Orinda BART station is regional open space (primarily EBMUD watershed), the number of households suggested for the place type is not appropriate in Orinda.

... continued on page A9

Orinda, the Malibu of the Bay Area

Pollsters say residents rate quality of life high; remain concerned about roads and infrastructure

By Laurie Snyder

The Orinda City Council reviewed the results February 7 of the latest poll of residents regarding Orinda's quality of life, and in particular, their interest in paying for road and infrastructure repair.

The poll was conducted from January 22 to 25 with 402 Orindans "likely to vote in the November 2012 election," including a subset also likely to vote in June. David Metz, a Partner with FM3, presented the findings.

The margin of sample error is plus or minus 4.9 percent.

Quality of Life, Safety, and Infrastructure

Ninety-eight percent of participants rated Orinda's quality of life as excellent or good (65 percent labeling it excellent). Calling the results "an absolutely astonishing number," Metz said that, of every other FM3

poll, only Malibu and one other community received such high ratings.

Traffic was not seen as a serious problem, but road and storm drain conditions were. A combined 71 percent felt that fixing public streets and repairing potholes was extremely or very important (with 53 percent labeling it very important) while 76 percent prioritized the repair of collapsing storm drains (59 percent saying very important).

And, while Metz observed reduced support for "driver, pedestrian and bicyclist safety" improvements, support for collapsing storm drain repairs rose, from 62 percent in 2006, to 76 percent in 2012.

Appetite for a Ballot Initiative

Funding mechanisms considered by those polled were: "A one-half cent sales tax funding general City services" (street and road repairs em-

phasized), street and road repair bond measures (10, 20, 60 million dollar), and a "\$200 annual parcel tax funding street and road repairs."

Passage of the sales tax increase would require approval by only a simple voter majority. A bond or parcel tax would require passage by a two-thirds majority.

Projected sales tax supporters included: "Definitely yes," (27 percent), "Probably yes" (30 percent), and four percent undecided or leaning toward yes. Conversely, 20 percent provided a definitive no, 12 percent said "Probably no", and 2 percent were undecided but leaning toward no.

In comparison, the figures showing residents' opinions regarding potential bond and parcel tax measures are shown in the chart accompanying this article.

FM3 concluded, "Of the three measures, the sales tax generated the most support."

Reasons cited by those opposed included "No more taxes" (39 percent) and general government mistrust (34 percent).

Public Forum and Council Discussion

Richard Colman, one of four Orindans at the meeting urging the Council to reject a sales tax increase, noted that California already has the highest sales tax in the nation. If proposals by the City and California's Governor both take effect, Orinda's tax would be pushed from 8.25 to 9.25 percent.

"The sales tax," said Colman, "hurts senior citizens on modest, fixed incomes."

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... continued from page A6

Others questioned the poll's cost and asked for clarification regarding the amount of revenue that might be generated.

As one of two residents in support, former Orinda Mayor Bill Judge described road repair as "unfinished business."

Council Member Severson asked Metz to clarify FM3's margin of sample error (plus or minus 4.9 percent), and was told this is "just the random chance effect" – different individuals might vote, support for the measure might change.

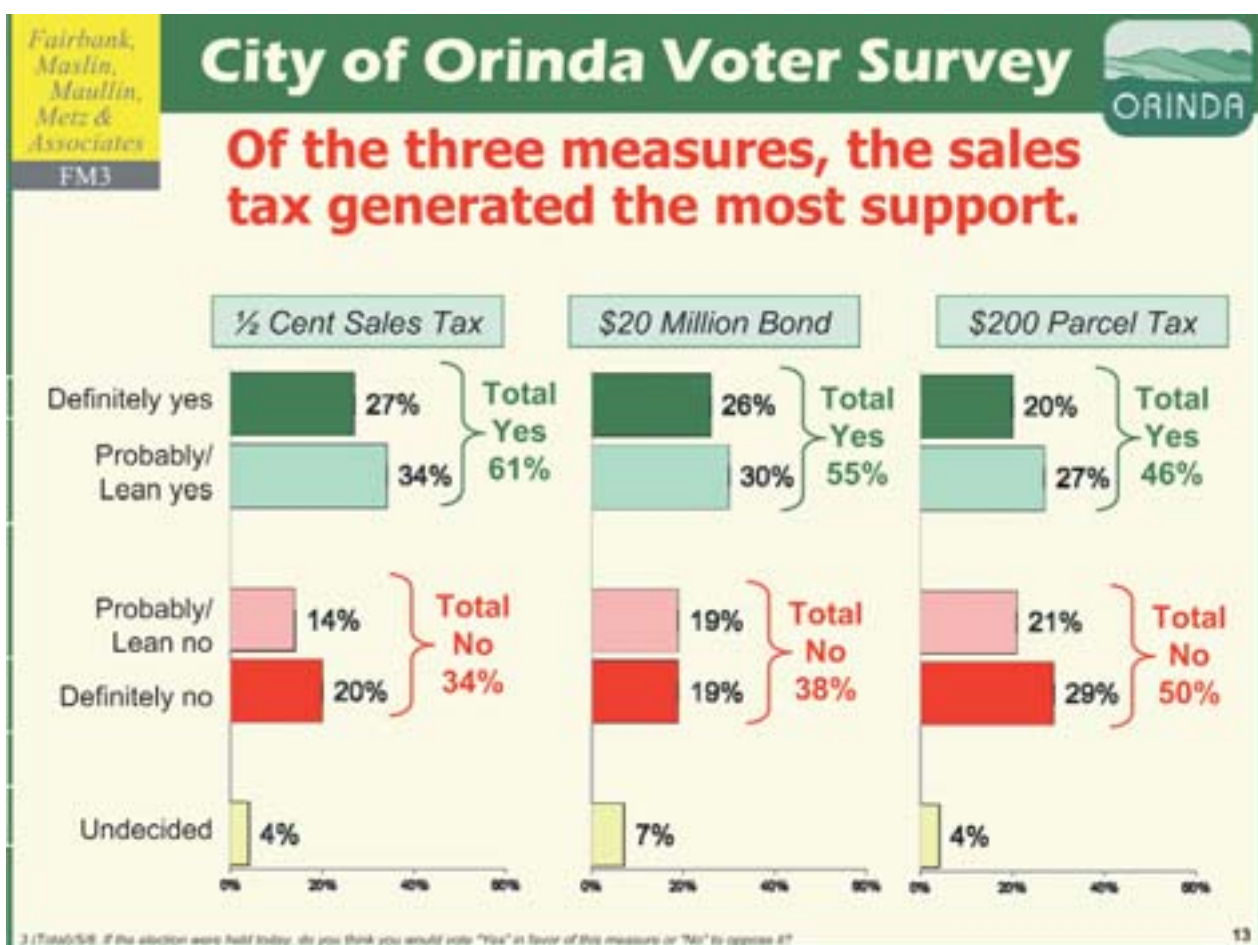
City Manager Janet Keeter advised the Council that if it wishes to raise Orinda's sales tax, it would need to bring the issue before voters in November rather than June 2012 because, by law, the City may only place general use sales tax measures on ballots of regularly scheduled general elections – unless it can show that it has a genuine financial emergency.

In response to the Council's concerns about having both a City and State sales tax measure on the same ballot, Metz advised that, in FM3's experience, when local and state tax measures are scheduled during the same election, local measures generally still pass.

If approved, Orinda's sales tax would take effect January 1, 2013; however, said staff, the mechanism for the State to begin collecting new taxes would likely not be in place until April 1 with revenues not reaching City coffers until September.

Council Member Victoria Smith observed that it will be important for the Council to clearly explain its decision to residents: "Here's the plan. We're spending the money on roads."

The Council will continue its deliberations on February 21.



<http://orinda.waterware.com/docshare/dsweb/Get/Document-4383/2012%20Poll%20Results%20Council%20Presentation.pdf>
 Lamorinda Weekly also reported in our last issue about sales tax revenue, go to:
<http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0524/Local-Sales-Tax.html>

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Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with our community!

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only).

Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis.
email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com
 Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Editor:

Orinda NOT Subsidizing Moraga.

Recent letters from members of FAIR continue to repeat the misleading claim that Orinda is subsidizing Moraga's fire service. IF it is true that Orinda subsidizes Moraga's fire service, then it is equally true that Moraga subsidizes Orinda's County services! Fact: Orinda is not paying more than its fair share of taxes for anything. Since Prop 13, every California homeowner pays the same tax rate, or 1% of assessed valuation, plus any additional taxes we have voted for like parcel taxes. How that 1% tax is divvied up changes from neighborhood to neighborhood.

In Orinda north of Ivy Drive, about 23 cents of the tax dollar is allocated to fire protection. In Moraga (plus South Orinda which used to be in the Moraga Fire District) about 19 cents is allocated. However, in Moraga 14 cents is allocated to County services while in Orinda the allocation is 10 cents.

Therefore, if FAIR's way of analyzing property taxes is correct, Moraga has been subsidizing Orinda's County services since Orinda incorporated in 1985! Following FAIR's logic, Moragans should be asking for their money back from Orinda to use to repair Moraga's roads.

Our fear is that FAIR will once again use this misleading claim to destroy any chance of passing a tax measure in Orinda to help pay for much-needed road repairs. We call on all Orindans to repudiate this false logic! It is time to move on and invest in our roads.

Ellen Dale
Orinda

Editor:

Come on Orinda --- Let's fix our roads
 Have you heard any of these comments in Orinda?

- If the City handled the budget better they could fix the roads...
- I'm angry they built City Hall -- that money could have fixed the roads...
- If Orindans paid their true fair share for MOFD there would be enough money to fix the roads...
- I live on a private road so I don't want to pay for other roads...
- I only care about my street getting fixed... tell me when that will happen
- I can't believe the City has looked at every possible way to get money for the roads...

I have heard all of them numerous times and I am sure they will continue to come up. However, the tough reality is that our community's badly deteriorating residential roads are never going to be fixed unless Orindans decide to support a new funding source dedicated to road repair.

Current costs for bringing Orinda's failing roads and drains up to an overall fair condition exceeds \$60 million. This number rises every year as the road and drain conditions continue to worsen. Our road network is like a house roof that is 60 years old and leaking. It isn't going to get any better on its own.

Here are facts that all Orindans can verify through community records:

- Orinda's entire annual budget is about \$10 million --- over 60% of that goes to police services and parks and recreation. Of the remainder, the City is able to spend \$1-2 million a year on road maintenance or replacement. These monies are well prioritized but they won't stretch to solve the problem.
- MOFD restructuring scenarios generate at best \$1 million a year for Orinda --- while MOFD changes may be desirable and fair --- the best case scenario still won't make a dent in fixing the roads fast enough to represent a solution.
- City Hall is already there --- if you didn't agree with building it you are entitled to your opinion. However, even tearing it down isn't going to keep your road from crumbling.
- You may live on a private road --but at some point you will drive on other roads in Orinda.
- The City has looked at an extraordinary range of options for funding road repairs --- and evaluated all of them with the help of many volunteer community professionals. Nothing will generate the needed level of funding except the community's willingness to contribute new funds.
- There are no State or Federal resources available for local roads beyond small and infrequent grants.
- Most Orindans are or become long term residents. We take good care of our homes and schools. We care about our community. The roads are critical to our community. We need to step up and commit the resources to fix them. Please join with your neighbors and friends that are willing to invest in Orinda.

Darlene K. Gee
Orinda

Join our Public Forum

If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda or one of its cities that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don't despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section. Just send your letter to letters@lamorindaweekly.com and let us know you'd like to be considered for the Public Forum.

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Orinda Man Charged with Embezzlement, Forgery

By Cathy Tyson

Orinda resident Carl Blake Miller had his day in court, again. The Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office filed felony criminal charges against the former real estate broker, which included embezzlement, theft, forgery, even taking money from a local Boy Scout troop, though that was later returned, this past summer. He's been out on bail since July of 2011 after pleading not guilty.

In an interesting twist last week at Walnut Creek Superior Court, two office buildings had been put up as a property bond in lieu of posting cash bail for Miller, to satisfy the \$327,500 bail amount. The owner of one of the properties wants to refinance the building, so asked Judge Bruce Mills if he could have it back. He was informed by Mills that he would have to file a proper motion, and go through the necessary procedures to complete his request.

"This changes everything," said District Attorney Ken McCormick. If half of the bail value disappears, "I'll request that he be put in custody." It's unknown at this time if someone else may step forward with another property bond, or to post bail. The next court date is set for March 22, to give the public defender more time to review documents. In addition to criminal charges, Miller is also charged civilly in a number of related cases.

Miller is the former administrator of Geneva Fund Investments, a real estate investment firm which was lo-

cated on Northwood Drive in Orinda. Key charges in the case revolve around the disappearance, possibly for personal use, of a significant amount of money. District Attorney McCormick estimates the loss at less than \$2 million, from approximately a dozen investors, and suggests Miller lived a lavish lifestyle with other people's money.

Miller is the son of famous California real estate law guru Eugene Miller, one of the founders of law firm Miller Starr Regalia who literally wrote the book – rather books; it's evolved into a twelve volume encyclopedia on real estate law, of course with the assistance of other attorneys in the firm.

"He was getting greedy," surmised Doug Kohen, who along with his father Dr. Joseph Kohen lost a substantial amount of money. "I have no sympathy for Carl. His father is probably rolling in his grave." He presumes the money is simply gone, and even if there is some kind of settlement, it would be "pennies on the dollar – if anything." Miller filed for bankruptcy protection in September.

Financial records show his spectacular seven bedroom, 5,300 square foot home in Orinda's Sleepy Hollow neighborhood, was used as an ATM, and is slated to be sold in foreclosure on the Martinez Courthouse steps on February 28. ForeclosureRadar lists the value of the house at \$2,283,000; however there are existing loans on the property of over \$2,600,000.

There's a striking similarity between Miller's situation, as an Orinda based real estate "hard money" lender, and the Ng family's Lafayette based "hard money" lending firms - RE Loans and Bar-K, Incorporated (see the article in our January 18, 2012 issue, archived at www.lamorindaweekly.com.) Although he's been at the helm of Geneva Fund for approximately ten years, prior to that, Miller worked with the Ng family at Bar-K. Both firms are now being investigated.

"Mr. Miller is seeking a responsible resolution of the case that will be fair to all parties," said Deputy Public Defender Jeffrey Landau. "Several of the Prosecution's allegations are over-reaching. Mr. Miller is focusing on providing for his family and children and responsibilities at home."

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Vice-President, Portfolio Manager and Moraga Resident

Fighting for Paradise

... continued from page A6

"In addition to the adjacent open space areas, the amount of land area suitable for development in downtown is further constrained by the narrow and long valley location of downtown that has a limited number of access points and thereby restricted circulation.... Some of these constraints to development are also assets to the community and to the region that the City is responsible for protecting."

Telling ABAG and MTC that "the household growth in the IVS is too aggressive," Smith also articulated the City's need for funding "for a local jitney to connect Orinda Village (north of highway 24) to the Theatre District (south of 24) and to BART," for improved bus service, and to cover the expenses that the City would incur as fallout from the ABAG-MTC plan.

Smith further injected a dose of reality, saying that between the City's 1985 incorporation and its 25th anniversary, Orinda added only 737 dwelling units. "It is not realistic to expect a 260% increase [to 1,920 units] in the rate of housing production in community that is mostly built out."

Although ABAG and MTC prepared four revised household and job growth scenarios in response to the input received from Bay Area community leaders, Orinda officials believe those projections continue to be way off the mark. Stating that the projections were "completely out of line and unrealistic for Orinda" be-

cause they were prepared by ABAG-MTC before the 2010 census data was released, City Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu advised the Council that staff will be telling the regional planning agencies to take another look at their figures. Council Member Dean Orr observed that the One Bay Area plan appeared "to be moving at some pace, some speed," at the direction of "jurisdictions outside of our authority," and asked if Orinda could simply opt to not comply with the regional planning. Ursu said that this was one option, but also explained that non-compliance could hurt Orinda because ABAG-MTC's planning is tied to regional housing allocations doled out by the State of California.

Orr then asked if other Bay Area cities had expressed concerns about the accuracy of ABAG-MTC's data. Ursu said there has been a great deal of "pushback," referencing the City of Lafayette's response as one example.

Smith likened the IVS to putting the cart before the horse. ABAG and MTC are expecting the City of Orinda to engage in extensive sustainability planning without providing the funds necessary to do so. She strongly urged ABAG and MTC to expand their public hearings beyond Dublin and Richmond to ensure that area residents will have their voices heard at programs presented at Lamorinda locations.

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Ambassadorial Scholar Speaks to Moraga Rotary

Submitted by Gary Irwin



L to R: Moraga Rotary President Nora Avelar and Sophie Dowse, Ambassadorial Scholar after her program at Moraga Rotary, her sponsor. Photo provided

Sophie Dowse, a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar sponsored by Rotary Club of Moraga in 2009, recently spoke to the Club about her experiences at the University of Melbourne (Australia) where she completed work for her Master of Social Work degree. Sophie also related her encouraging experiences to two groups at Campolindo High School, from which she graduated in 2005. She is also a 2009 graduate of Pomona College with a BA in Psychology. Sophie's intent, developed through the work and experiences in the Masters program, is to make her career in Child and Family social work.

with people affected by adoption. Her goals revolved around reuniting families and creating new relationships as well as listening to her clients to acknowledge their past experiences. She also worked with families providing requested services and child protection activities, and she taught parenting strategies to immigrant families and aboriginal groups.

Sophie described her involvement with several local Rotary Clubs in Australia and highlighted a special 4th of July celebration that was organized for her. She described the other Rotary Ambassadorial Scholars that she met and was amazed at the breadth of study opportunities that were represented in the group. She also showed a picture of the Clifford Dochterman tree planted while Cliff (now a Moraga resident) was the head of Rotary International.

Since 1947, Ambassadorial Scholarships from The Rotary Foundation have given more than 41,000 men and women the opportunity to study abroad.

At University of Melbourne, Sophie performed both academic classwork and field work with various agencies. For the latter, she worked at the Adoption and Family Records group in the nearby city of Yarra, where she was involved in ward-of-the-court programs and also dealt

Moraga Rotary is a local service club within Rotary International that meets most Tuesdays at noon at St. Mary's College. For information, please call Gary Irwin of Moraga Rotary at (925) 376-7688.

Spreading Holiday Cheer and Filling Hungry Tummys

Submitted by Kim Jinnett



Seated: Jessie; L-R Front: Kenna, Josie, Juliet, Clare, Maria
L-R Back: Kyra, Jesse, Chloe, Emilie Photo provided

Continuing their commitment to community service, Girl Scout Cadette Troop 30072 added some cheer over the holidays at Moraga Royale. Armed with wrapping paper, ribbons, tape, scissors and smiles, the girls decorated many residents' doors and brightened the hallways.

The Troop also helped-out at Sacred Hearts Food Bank and Thrift Store in San Jose. The girls

rotated in two shifts, helping to sort cans of food and organize various items of clothing. The girls learned that they had to separate the cans based on food that could be eaten directly out of the cans versus those that needed additional preparation or equipment. They discovered that many individuals, particularly the homeless, often have no access to can openers or ways to heat their food.

Moraga Royale Supports Rescue One

Submitted by Michael Mentink



Left to right: Jared Costanza, Matt Epperson, Jacob Airola, Greg Reams, Dianne Wilson, Julie Fischer, Mark DeWeese, Mike Rattary Photo provided

On Tuesday, January 24, Dianne Wilson of Moraga Royale presented Rescue One Foundation President, Greg Reams, with a donation of \$2,000, the proceeds of their annual "Festival of Trees" silent auction fundraiser.

Each year, Moraga Royale sponsors the Festival of Trees

event to benefit Rescue One, a non-profit organization dedicated to the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and emergency medical services in the Moraga and Orinda area. The trees are provided by Moraga Royale and decorated by local businesses, organizations and residents. The themed trees and accompanying gift packages

were purchased through a silent auction that ended on December 15, 2011.

"The Rescue One Foundation has been an invaluable benefit to the District and has donated funds for the District to purchase life-saving equipment for use by our firefighters" Said MOFD Fire Chief Randall Bradley, "and support of the community and organizations like Moraga Royale helps Rescue One continue their good works."

In the past year, the Rescue One Foundation donated the funds for the District to purchase a new Lucas 2 Chest Compression Device used in administering CPR and a LifePack 15 Defibrillator. Both of these devices are carried on the District's advanced life support ambulances.

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District would like to thank Moraga Royale and our community for their continued support of the Rescue One Foundation.

Juniors or Mad Men?

Submitted by Rosylyn Stenzel



Photo Gina Hageboeck

Lafayette Juniors hosted a Mad Men/1960s era fundraiser at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center on February 4. Pictured in costume (with faux cigarettes) are Gina Hageboeck, Veronique Kuhner,

Michelle Muller, Lisa McCauley, Carolyn Kahler, Amy Friedli, Rosylyn Stenzel and Tiffany Yates. Proceeds will benefit five local charities: CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), Lafayette Library and

Learning Center Foundation, New Day for Children, Shelter Inc., and SEED (Special Education Enrichment and Development Foundation).

As Seen in Moraga...



Susan Captain, of Captain Vineyards, discussed the various wineries in the Lamorinda area at a recent meeting of the St. Monica's Men's Club. Photo Bob Johnson

...from Front Page

Moraga Team Takes Second Place at Iron Filmmaker

By Cathy Tyson



Campolindo Dream Team members from left: Jacquie Miller, Gail Wilson, Jeff Sawdon, Charlie Lowell, Hayden Hunt, Taylor Hunt, Sam Crossley. Photo Kevin Nguyen

Like chefs that battle it out in kitchen stadium with a secret ingredient and a limited amount of time, creative future Spielbergs have just twenty-four hours to create a three minute film based on a theme at the Iron Filmmaker contest that's one event at the California Independent Film Festival. Now in its ninth year, this competition is a highlight for many local teams, seven alone came from Campolindo High School. Exhausting but enjoyable, participating in the festivities surely looks fantastic on college applications.

On Sunday, February 12, the main auditorium was packed with filmmakers, friends and family to see the final product of all twenty-five teams' hard work and to find out who won. Sponsored by ITB designs, owner and master of ceremonies for the Iron filmmaker, Adam Reeves welcomed the crowd and announced, "The quality and the talent of filmmakers this year was outstanding – it was a very close competition."

This year's secret ingredient/theme was "There's no place like home." Teams came up with an amazing range of short films on the topic, from "There's no place like Clean," by Epsilon Studios about a fastidious young woman who is grossed out visiting the filthy home of friends, to a hilarious treatment in "Breadcrumbs" a Hansel and Gretel-esque production by Dirt Road Studios.

While the competition was fierce, not every team could win. Categories were expanded this year to include Best Cinematography – which joins First, Second and Third Place, Best Performance, the Audience Choice award, Most Creative Use of Theme and Honorable Mention.

"It's a totally fun process" said Taylor Hunt, who along with fel-

low Dream Team-mates Sam Crossley, Jeff Sadon, Charlie Lowell and little brother Hayden Hunt got very little sleep during the 24 hour marathon. Campolindo seniors Hunt and Crossley hope to go to film school after graduation. They credit Mr. Seligman and his video production class at Campolindo, specifically his philosophy of "learn by doing," for giving them the necessary tools and insight into filmmaking. They were inspired by real life - a homeless man who shared his books with other less fortunate fellows for their film, "Halfway."

Hunt says the process was non-stop, all the teams were briefed on the instructions and rules and got the theme on Saturday morning at 11:00 a.m. They had to turn in a completely finished three minute film by 11:00 a.m. the next day. Their first version came in way over the time budget at four minutes and twenty seconds. Hunt says he had to cut entire scenes to have the finished product meet the time requirement. Their hard work paid off, Dream Team won the Audience Choice Award and Second Place.

This was the first year that all teams completed the project, apparently in years past, some dropped out or didn't complete their films in time. The top six vote getters will be entered in the Sapporo International Short Film Festival later this year. Master of Ceremonies Reeves joked that while the films will be entered, filmmakers are on their own for airfare to Japan.

"CAIFF is very proud to support new and upcoming filmmakers, we want to foster creativity and growth" said Beau Behan, CAIFF Program Director. "Nothing can compare to seeing your film for the very first time on the big screen."

... And the winners are:

- First Place - Team No Pins - "Guilt"
- Second Place - Dream Team - "Halfway"
- Third Place - Ningnoggs Jr. - "Run, Beard, Run"
- Audience Choice Award - Dream Team - "Halfway"
- Best Cinematography - Ningnoggs Jr. - "Run Beard Run"
- Most Creative Use of Theme - Paranoid Productions - "Man's Best Friend"
- Honorable Mention - Team Rainbow - "The Fresh Start"
- Best Performance - Terilyn Shields - Team No Pins - "Guilt"

A Spirit of Cooperation at Tri-City Meeting

... continued from page A1

He indicated that Lafayette's recommendations for the use of greener materials had been incorporated and that further review by all staffs would happen before the project goes out to bid. The parking area is scheduled to be built over the summer.

CCTA's presentation of the SCS objectives, which aim at reducing house-gas emissions in Contra Costa by creating housing and jobs closer to mass transportation, was met with almost unanimous opposition by all the council members. The plan requires that

each municipality build higher density housing close to mass transportation to accommodate what CCTA calculated will be the growth of that city. The projections of growth are seen as unrealistic and overly optimistic by the municipalities. Cities cannot be forced to build, but funds and grants can be withheld if targets are not met.

Both Lafayette and Orinda governments wrote letters detailing their concerns about the plan; Moraga's indicated that it would work on a letter as well.

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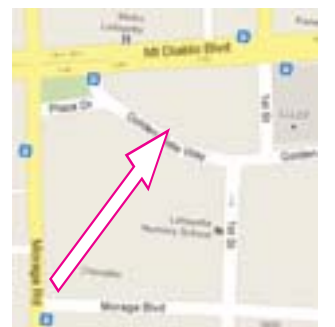
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...from Front Page

"Monsieur Lazhar" Named 2012 Best Picture at CAIFF

... continued from page A1



The Opening Night reception at the 14th California Independent Film Festival drew enthusiastic crowds. Photo Tod Fierner



Sue Olsen and Ben Olsen addressed the crowd as part of the opening ceremonies. Photo Tod Fierner

"Transamerica" and "Win Win."
"When I heard that Burt Young was being honored," said Shire, "I had to come." Their genuine affection and respect for one another was evident.

And Young was clearly touched by the audience's standing ovation, saying, "It's quite an honor. Thank you for caring."

Both later dished about what it was like to work with Sylvester Stallone.

The festival continues with a special screening of "Little Women" at the Orinda Theatre Wednesday night and more Hollywood insider tips on tap with screen legend Margaret O'Brien ("Meet Me in St. Louis") on Thursday at the New Rheem Theatre.

Key 2012 Slate Award Winners

- Best Picture: "Monsieur Lazhar"
- Best Director: Viktor Chouchkov ("Tilt")
- Best Actress: Melissa Leo ("The Sea Is All I Know")
- Best Actor: James Madio ("Applebox")
- Best Cinematography and Best Music: "Pearls of the Far East"
- Best Short: "The Stand-In"
- Best Mini-Short: "Franklin"
- Best Documentary: "The Power of Two"



After the screening of "Five Time Champion" on opening night, Orinda resident and popular NBC Bay Area news anchor Diane Dwyer conducted a Q&A with Ezra Benito, director Berndt Mader and actor Jon Gries. Photo Andy Scheck



From left: Talia Shire, Lifetime Achievement award winner Burt Young, and Jan Wahl Photo Andy Scheck

Saving Grace: A Mother's Enduring Gift of Love

By Cathy Dausman



Cynthia Grace with son Wayne

Photo Cathy Dausman

This is a Valentine's story about lasting love. No chocolates, flowers or jewelry is involved; unless you count the medical tags Wayne Grace wears tucked inside his shirt.

Grace is a kidney transplant recipient – a success story, despite steep odds, and his mother was his donor. Grace has long lived with Cynthia Grace's kidney working in his body, filtering quarts of waste products and extra water from his bloodstream. Looking fit and healthy, Wayne Grace will celebrate his 20th birthday in March. He was nine months old at transplant time.

It's almost as if Grace has two birthdays. He was a sick baby when he first drew breath in 1992; his mother says the first few months were a blur of hospital time, first in the neonatal ward at Oakland Children's Hospital, and then at San Francisco's California Pacific Medical Center. Wayne underwent daily dialysis while doctors tried to

prepare his body for surgery. Eventually, they ran out of time. While both Wayne's parents were a donor match, doctors selected Cynthia because her smaller body and kidney size made the transplant somewhat easier. And "easier" was a relative term, because adult to child kidney donation was just beginning. Had Wayne been born a few years earlier, he likely wouldn't have survived.

The family was referred to Dr. Oscar Salvatierra, who in December, 1992, removed both of Wayne's damaged kidneys and replaced them with one of Cynthia's. "I didn't give it [the donation] a second thought," she said, adding only "I wish I had a third [kidney to donate]." Despite her son's post-surgery setbacks, Cynthia says the donation was "an incredible experience." "Kids catch on [to their condition] pretty quick," she says, and "the [transplant] providers are lovely."

Relaxing at his mother's home, Wayne is at ease with his condition, although he notes that the longest he's gone without hospitalization is two years. Ironically, his last trip to the ER was the result of a skateboarding accident. He takes three anti-rejection drugs twice daily; post-op meds are standard procedure for transplant patients.

He won't bring up his transplant unless someone notices the scars on his abdomen and asks about it, but he is adamant about getting people to volunteer as organ donors. And Wayne is clearly exasperated with the large portion of teenage recipients whose transplant fails when they become non-compliant by failing to take their medicine, or follow doctor's orders. He proudly shows off the pink "donor" sticker on his California identification card. Because he was transplanted at such a young age, Wayne may outlive his donor kidney and need a second transplant. But Salvatierra, still active as Advising Dean at Stanford University School of Medicine, expects Wayne's transplant to last "a considerable while." One former transplant is now 35. Salvatierra says he is "truly thrilled at how well Wayne has done" and proud of mother and son's work as volunteers for the California Transplant Donor Network.

Today, Wayne talks about his future as a rancher or a pilot, and hones his Elvis Presley impersonation. In motherly fashion, Cynthia says that her surgery for Wayne was "a gift of life for me!" After years working in the corporate world, Cynthia changed her career path to pursue a Doctorate in clinical psychology. She wants to offer professional support to patients diagnosed with chronic or life-threatening illnesses. The Graces also hope to attend the Transplant Games of America in Grand Rapids, Michigan this July where Wayne could compete as a sprinter. "Your life changes [post-transplant]," Cynthia says. Obviously, it also keeps moving full speed ahead.



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Kidney Transplant 101

Compiled by Cathy Dausman

The kidneys are bean-shaped blood-filtering organs, each the size of a fist, located near the middle of the back, below the rib cage, on either side of the spine.

Each contains about one million nephrons, or microscopic filtering "baskets" that transfer wastes from the blood to the collecting tubules of the urinary system.

Most people are born with two kidneys; however transplant recipients and those with renal agenesis (one kidney) or renal dysplasia (one faulty kidney) lead normal, healthy lives and often only discover that they have one kidney or one working kidney when they have an X-ray, sonogram, or surgery for some unrelated condition.

Some people have a kidney removed due to cancer or other diseases or injuries.

The operation to remove a kidney is called a nephrectomy; medical kidney specialists are nephrologists. (source: National Kidney and Urologic Diseases Information Clearinghouse)

People whose kidneys are declining in function are said to be in renal failure. Those who cannot, or do not receive a transplant may undergo kidney dialysis, where a machine cleanses the blood and removes impurities on a regular basis.

Transplant organs may come from living or non-living donors. To insure a good match, a potential donor must share the recipient's blood type, and match a number of blood and tissue proteins, called antigens. Kidney transplant professionals currently define at least six specific antigens in each donor and recipient (source: American Association of Kidney Patients).

On January 20, 2012, the Organ Procurement and Transplant Network National patient waiting list showed 59,372 patients waiting for a kidney donor.

Tony Borders, Communications Specialist for the California Transplant Donor Network (CTDN) says the 8.5 million registered donors in state represent only 30% of eligible donors. Registration is offered at Department of Motor Vehicle offices when applying for or renewing a driver's license or receiving a state ID card. Registration is available online, at www.donatelifecalifornia.org or www.donevidacalifornia.org CTDN (www.ctdn.org) also staffs a 24 hour donor referral hotline at 800.55.DONOR.



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Lafayette Neighborhood Organizes to Oust Massage Parlors

By Sophie Braccini



Neighbors gather to plan their strategy.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Twenty eight people gathered at Michelle Douglass' Lafayette house February 8 for their annual neighborhood meeting. But this year, something unusual was on their agenda: finding a way to close two Mt. Diablo Boulevard massage parlors. "What is going on in the two massage parlors is advertised on the internet," said Douglass. She said an online search leads to a site with the words "erotic massage" and explicit customer comments. "People would never imagine that such a thing could be happening so close to a residential neighborhood," she stated.

The only way out of the quaint neighborhood of single family homes is through the Mt Diablo Boulevard business corridor. "There are 25 children in our neighborhood," said Douglass. "We cannot tolerate having our children exposed to this kind of activity." A teenager at the meeting who walks along Mt. Diablo Boulevard after school said he had been approached by a masseuse.

Related complaints included parking (customers preferred to park on adjacent streets instead of in front of the massage parlor), and petty theft.

The business owners deny the allegations. Ken Helppie said he and his wife Eva bought their business a few days ago, and that his wife is a state certified massage therapist. He said they were here to run a legitimate business and that nothing criminal was going on. Helppie said he knew nothing about the other business. The owner of the other massage parlor said he opened his business four months ago, that he and his staff are all certified masseurs, and that he is here for the long haul.

Carlos Gomez feels inconvenienced by his neighbors on either side. Gomez owns Moises Gomez and Associates (sewing and dry cleaning). "I talked to one of my clients... she told me she was not coming anymore because of the unpleasant surroundings of my shop," he said. Some of Gomez's employees who use the

restroom in the back of the store also had encounters that made them uncomfortable.

The group said that Lafayette Police had been contacted, but we were unable to get a statement from police before press time.

Other homeowner proposals included having a group of neighbors speak directly with the massage parlor owners, presenting the matter to the City Council, or hiring a private eye.

Lafayette attorney Budd MacKenzie attended the neighborhood meeting at Gomez's invitation. MacKenzie said the City may not be able to do much unless laws are being broken, but agreed to find out what could be done in the future. Lafayette currently does not require a use permit or a business license to operate a massage parlor.

Lafayette Planning and Building Manager Niroop Srivatsa confirmed MacKenzie's comments. She said massage parlors fall in the general personal services category and are permitted to operate in the commercial district. She suggested neighbors complain to code enforcement if there was a sign violation. Srivatsa said the code does not regulate hours of operation for businesses.

Orinda's Municipal Code (chapter 5.24) regulating massage parlors states that "no person shall act as a masseur, nor shall anyone employ a person as a masseur for others, who does not have a valid masseur permit. Every operator shall maintain a register of all persons so employed and their permit numbers, which register shall be available for inspection by the Chief of Police during regular business hours."

At the conclusion of the meeting, the neighbors decided to send a formal letter to the building's landlord, the business owners and to the City Council. They are also planning to have more communication with law enforcement. "We have a great neighborhood and neighbors, which is why this is so upsetting," said Douglass.

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Sweethearts for Sixty Years

By Cathy Dausman



Alfred and Catherine Belluomini in 2012.

Photo Cathy Dausman



Just married - the Belluominis 60 sixty years ago.

“The century has changed,” notes Catherine Zunino Belluomini, since her marriage at 19 to Alfred Belluomini, but their marriage continues. The Moraga couple celebrates their 60th wedding anniversary next week with a family luncheon for 28 guests in Lafayette. Quite a different scene from the day they spoke their vows. Married at St. Frances de Sales church in Oakland, the couple was greeted by 1400 guests at the brand new Colombo Club. The Italian social club was so new, the bride worried it might not be finished in time to hold their reception. But hold it, they did.

There were so many people at Colombo Club’s first wedding reception it required two dinner sittings to accommodate everyone. Dining was downstairs, drinking and dancing was upstairs, with

second floor wraparound balconies for guests to keep an eye on each other. By today’s standards, the Belluomini’s guest list might be considered unwieldy, but being raised in two local Italian families, it was just standard procedure. “Everybody was invited,” said Alfred. That included parents and children, cousins, grandparents, even work friends. But not all the wedding guests mingled easily. Alfred explains that their parents were first generation Italian Americans, and each married someone who spoke the same dialect. But Catherine was from Northern Italy and spoke Genovese dialect, while Alfred, from Luca, spoke a Tuscan dialect. By the third generation, Alfred laughs, “they were marrying non-Italians!”

The couple met at the Ali Baba nightclub in Oakland, where

Catherine emphasizes “there was never any trouble!” “I liked what I saw,” says Alfred of his wife. He became a structural engineer, working for Bethlehem Steel; she worked at Merritt Business College. They raised three children and now enjoy three grandchildren. Their marriage was founded on common ground: “family, food and religion.” Marriage, they say, changes with the times. They advise prospective couples to “give and take” and to expect changes every 10 years or so.

They seem to have taken their own advice, as well, because the Belluominis also formally celebrated their 25th, 40th and 50th anniversaries, and they have the 8x10 photos to prove it! Asked if they plan to stick around for an encore 75th anniversary celebration, Catherine smiles and admits “my sister has asked about that!”

Will Durst to Headline “Live at the Orinda” March 2nd

By Laurie Snyder



Will Durst - PointTaken

Photo Junior Hansen Jr.

Schizophrenically described as “a modern day Will Rogers” by *The Boston Globe* and as “The Dark Prince of Doubt” by *The Washington Post*, political satirist Will Durst is, in fact, a nice guy. Bugs Bunny is one of his heroes. Always “the object of someone’s mayhem or bedlam,” says Durst, Bugs “never instigated an altercation. Not once.” But he didn’t back down, either.

Durst, a baby boomer “forged in the crucible of the Vietnam War,” has been doing stand up since 1974 and earning a living at it since 1981. Like many Americans, he grew up watching Carson, and says that his whole family made each other laugh. “Humor was a currency around the dining room table.” The five-time Emmy and seven-time Stand-Up of the Year

nominee has appeared on venues as diverse as the Fox Network, Showtime, Letterman, and the BBC. Durst has also received accolades for a solo, off-Broadway show, “The All American Sport of Bipartisan Bashing.”

Currently, he’s hard at work mining the humor gold of the current election cycle in “Elect to Laugh! With Will Durst & Friends,” his popular show at The Marsh in San Francisco, and also performs for corporate and professional association events.

“You cannot believe how lush and rich a tropical forest,” he says of the Republican primaries, as well as the Obama years. The show has remained fresh and topical as candidates and hot-button issues have continued to rise and flame out one state after another. “The way it’s lining up,” he cautiously predicts of the Republican primaries, “it could well go to the convention.”

Durst is also somewhat of a golf god. He was invited back to blog for the Master’s for a fourth year by Augusta National while being interviewed for this article.

All of this is very good news for Bay Area residents who need a laugh break. Durst will be headlining the Orinda Chamber of Commerce’s third annual “Live at the Orinda” comedy night on March 2nd.

The event will be held at the Orinda Theatre, and will raise funds to support local non-profit organizations, as well as Chamber programs, and promises to “be one of the best,” says the

event’s originator and Chamber Director, Rick Kattenburg. Co-collaborators include Tommy T’s Comedy Clubs and The Lamorinda Film & Entertainment Foundation.

Comedians Kabir Singh (Kabeezy), Dan St. Paul, and Johnny Steele will also perform and, for the first time, there will be live music, along with a recep-

tion featuring full no-host bars, beginning at 6:45 p.m. Master of Ceremonies Michael Fender will also lend his voice, presenting music from Sinatra to Lady GaGa. Tickets are \$35 in advance (ages 17 and older) or \$40 at the door (if available). See the Orinda Chamber of Commerce web site for more details: www.orindachamber.org.

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Distracted – A Reflection of a Community

By Sophie Braccini



Eleanor Mason Reinholdt (Mama) and Louis Kehoe (Jesse) Photo Stu Selland

The new play that will open at the end of the month at the Town Hall Theater (THT) in Lafayette is relevant to anyone who is attempting to raise children. Lisa Loomer's *Distracted* is a humorous drama that throws the spectator into the turmoil of a family trying to deal with a boisterous son, his possible ADHD condition, the surrounding pressures to get him to fit in, and the different view points of health care professionals. The play is about us, our culture of constant interruptions, and the need of parents to make sure their offspring are okay.

The action begins in the morning in a family kitchen, with Mama (Eleanor Mason Reinholdt) alternately delivering weary asides to the audience, trying to meditate, and trying to get her son Jesse—who is off-stage for nearly all of the play but frequently makes his presence known—get dressed for school. Jesse is high-spirited, combative, uncooperative, and sometimes very defiant. A call from a teacher who wants to get the situation under control means the parents soon have to wrestle with the decision to medicate their son or not.

"The role of Mama is very relevant to this era," says Mason Reinholdt, "the way her decisions are seen by the community, and how she gets pressure from all sides. Mama is trying very hard to make everyone happy, her husband, her son's teacher, her community, and her son himself, of course. Realizing that it does not work, she will finally decide that she

has to do what she thinks is best, that there is no way to please everybody all the time."

As someone who is thinking about starting a family herself, the young actress finds the task of deciding what is best to be daunting, especially in communities with high expectations. "The play is written in a way that's very humorous," she adds, "with a lot of irony and also the laughter that comes from your identification with the characters, it's almost an empathic laughter." Mason Reinholdt is confident that the play will speak to Lamorinda. "Moms and dads will feel understood in a way that they might not feel in the rest of their lives," she says.

Working on the play was also a source of understanding for the two young actors who alternate playing Jesse. Nathan Correll and Louis Kehoe are both local 7th graders. They have been in different children's, and already some adult, productions at the theater. The play has given them a different view on parenting. "I saw the job of parents as an easy routine," says Kehoe, "When you look at this play, you understand what some parents have to go through; they have to be seriously determined to help their child. It makes you take a hard look at parenting."

"In the play the mom has an outside job, then she stops and has to work even harder to help Jesse," adds Correll, "the routine of parenting can go easy or hard, in this play it is hard for mom."

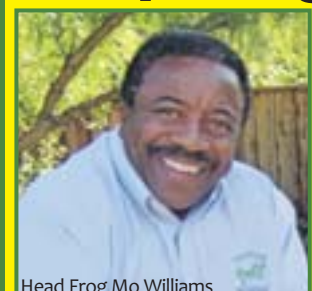
On stage, some of the actors have to play different roles. "The two doctors and the homeopath are played by the same actor, while another plays the school teacher, a nurse and a psychiatrist," says director Clive Worsley. "The immediate surroundings of the family are individual actors, but there is a bit of interchangeability in the authority figures the mother goes to in her desperate quest for answers. After a while, it feels a bit the same to her, at least in her relationship with them, in the way she feels as a parent when she encounters them."

The couple's relationship is likely to resonate with the audience as well as Mason Reinholdt and Chris Parnell-Hayes (who plays Dad) convey the increasing despair of their characters. Dad, who believes that 'boys will be boys' wants to let Jesse be Jesse, an approach that becomes increasingly indefensible once the system steps in. While Mama pursues every solution she can find, from homeopathy to pharmaceuticals, meeting with her husband's mounting skepticism.

Worsley, who is also THT's Artistic Director, chose the play because he felt the relevance of the topic. "The community at large is affected by the way we deal with these questions," he says, "we are responsibility to act together or at least to dialogue together about how we deal with this kind of thing." He adds that THT welcomes children diagnosed with different types of mental conditions. "Some of them are geniuses," he says, "and we prepare our staff to deal with it. There is room for absolutely everybody in the theater."

Distracted runs from February 25 to March 17, with previews on February 23 and 24. It is rated PG13 (for adult language and content) and is about two hours long. After the matinee performance on March 4, Dr. Brian Blaisch, M.D. will lead a talk and Q&A regarding ADHD, autism, and other learning and behavioral problems. This post-show event will begin at about 4:00 p.m. and is free of charge and open to the public, regardless if they have attended the performance. For more information and tickets go to www.TownHallTheatre.com.

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International Night in Lafayette

Submitted by Rosylyn Stenzel



Photo Matt Fabela

On February 1st, Lafayette Elementary families celebrated International Night in style complete with cuisine, entertainment and crafts from all over the world. Pictured are International Night team members

and parents, Summer Albin, Sung Hong, Paulie Prof-fett, Heidi Miller, Susan Reimer, Shannon Laskey, and Caroline Tsuyuki along with dance students from the John Paul II Polish School in Walnut Creek.

Orinda Academy Celebrates 30th Anniversary

Submitted by Miriam Schaffer

Orinda Academy, a private, non-profit day school in Orinda for boys and girls in grades 6 through 12, celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. The milestone will be celebrated at a Crab Feed on Saturday, March 3, 2012 from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at Orinda Masonic Hall. The event is open to the public.

Ron Graydon, founder and current head of school, opened the school as North Bay Orinda School in 1982. In the early 1990's the school moved to its current site at 19 Altarinda Road, which provided ample classrooms, science and computer labs, office space, and

sports fields. Its convenience to Orinda BART helped to expand enrollment beyond Lamorinda and provided transportation access for students from throughout the San Francisco East Bay.

In 2003, the school changed its name to Orinda Academy. The following year the school once again expanded with the addition of two buildings housing a fitness center with a weight room, dance studio, music room, art room and a science lab. In addition, a learning center and learning specialist have been added. The school has also formed a relationship with Student Organi-

zational Services, which has provided academic coaching for students, and Coyote Coast, which has provided counseling.

"For the past 30 years, Orinda Academy has continued to provide a challenging, college prep curriculum with small class sizes and individualized attention for smart, creative students, including those with some learning differences," says Graydon.

More information is at: <http://www.orindaacademy.org>. Event details on the 30th Anniversary Crab Feed are at: <http://tinyurl.com/7ye34tq>.

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All Fired Up for a Dragon Parade

By Cathy Dausman



Photos Cathy Dausman

A dragon was unleashed at Glorietta Elementary School, but no one seemed to mind. In fact the dragon, assembled in honor of Chinese New Year, has become a much-anticipated custom among the school's second graders, who construct its body and dance along, and their audience of other students, teachers and parents.

Teachers Erica Eldridge and Terry Schrittwieser say the event, which they think began in 1992, was a way to introduce foreign culture into the social studies curriculum. "Younger students look forward to being in the parade, and the older children always seem excited to come out and cheer on the second graders," says Schrittwieser.

A gong sounds and the dragon, representing wisdom, power and wealth, is unleashed to chase after a "pearl" of wisdom (in this case a pearl-shaped cabbage). Legend has it the longer the dragon, the more good luck it will bring. If that's true, then the Glorietta community will certainly embody "Gung Hay Fat Choy" and have a prosperous and good year.



Del Rey Elementary Students Restore Native Prairie

Submitted by Allison Perlman



From left, front row: Makenna Ferguson, Brynn Beery, Rachel Nuewirth-Stein, Abby Fleming, Kyla Meyer, Anna Carter, Michelle Lee; back row: Chloe Liljegren, Phoebe Chandler, Brigetter Finger, Noa Davidovich, Ava Killbourn, Emma Marken, Brendan McFeely, Jayson Fernbacher, Shane Hotzclaw, Andre Grosso, Yusef Mathkour, Grant Peters, John Mark Holbrook, Arman Marchiel, Sina Panah, Tighe Tejada

Photo Allison Perlman

On Tuesday, January 17, students from Orinda's Del Rey Elementary School participated in a hands-on prairie restoration project at their school. Led by a team of biologists and volunteers from The Restoration Trust, the 4th and 5th grade classes removed non-native

species, such as English Ivy, planted over a 1,000 native grasses and wildflowers and had a chance to learn the importance of prairie habitat. The restoration effort began in 2009 along Moraga Creek with teacher John Moran's 4th grade class. Students have returned to the Creek every year

to monitor their projects. The Restoration Trust is a non-profit land trust dedicated to providing educational opportunities to the community for the benefit of native habitat restoration. Visit www.restorationtrustonline.org for more information.

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10 Year Anniversary

Lynn's Top Five
Longevity Planning -- A Timely Topic

By Lynn Ballou, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™

Vera Ballou, my very loving and talented mother-in-law, passed away recently. She and her husband, Jim, moved to Heritage Estates in Livermore several years ago when it became apparent that they could no longer live on their own safely in the house they built themselves at retirement, from scratch, in the foothills of Yosemite. Fiercely independent, moving them to independent living, then to assisted living, and then involving care givers and hospice, has not been an easy process. The fact that they have four incredibly capable and intelligent grown children has not always been enough to make the path smooth. Did I mention the “fiercely independ-

ent” part? I know you can relate. Some lessons learned from this personal journey, but also from the journey I take daily with clients as these needs arise in their lives, are shared with you here.

1) While everyone is still healthy, physically and mentally, make a plan. Linda Fodrin-Johnson, founder and CEO of Eldercare Services in Walnut Creek, tells me that “sadly most people (usually adult children of aging parents) reach out during a crisis or health transition. However, we are seeing a trend in more people wanting to be prepared for this longer life and consulting with our professional team” before a crisis. I’ve seen over the years that our clients who take the time to plan in advance benefit not only from a smoother transition to the care plan they crafted while they were healthy, but they also benefited from the peace of mind of knowing that their wishes were heard and the process to implement that support was ready to go if and when needed.

2) When the time comes, gather the family – work as a team. Tap into your strengths, but get help from pros, too. Linda and I agree that a great team of pros should include a Certified Financial Planner™, an Estate Planning or Elder Law Attorney, a CPA and a Geriatric Care Manager (GCM). Linda advises that “all GCM’s should be a member of or work for a member of the National Association of Geriatric Care Managers and be certified as a care manager. This brings the most skilled and experienced professional to families because of the Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics those members follow.”

3) Don’t be afraid to bring in a Geriatric Care Manager (GCM) early on. Providing care management or the actual day to day help for loved ones as they age can be physically and mentally overwhelming. I think we often avoid tapping into other resources because of the costs as well as the concerns about intrusion into family private matters and family dynamics. However, Linda points out that a qualified GCM can go over the options available to you based on your values and review all the national and local benefits and/or entitlements thus greatly facilitating the planning phase before it becomes an actual need. She says that she “highly recommends individuals or couples meet with a GCM before doing their planning with an attorney or a financial planner because you will have a better idea of what you want when you have been exposed to all the options open to you.” By reaching out

to a pro, you leverage your time and help obtain best results.

4) This phase of life can be expensive, so start planning now. The advisory team and the actual care itself-- all these costs add up. Meet with your CFP®, Estate Planning attorney and GCM to review all your options and financial tools. One example might be a long-term care policy to help with costs and protect the value of your estate. Linda told me that many individuals don’t know all the benefits that they might be entitled to – so some entitlements might go unused.

5) The nuances of your life and those of your loved ones are very important. It’s actually not just about the changes we experience in our health status day to day. “Small things can contribute to our quality of life in big ways – such as pets, or how the bed is made, or the coffee or oatmeal is made,” shares Linda. “This means you must tell that family member or GCM what is it that gives your life meaning and purpose and what all those little things are that you enjoy.” Be sure your team know these things about you and is careful to support all the many quirks that make you uniquely, well, you! Your life and those who support you will be better for it.

When it comes to this part of life planning, putting your head in the sand is tempting, I know. Whether it’s working with your parents on these important matters, or facing your own situation, stepping up to the plate, working as a team with family and bringing in key professionals, will make this as smooth a journey as possible. Don’t hesitate to reach out to those of us who can help when needed. As you can see, there’s amazing assistance out there. You absolutely do not need to tackle all this alone.



Lynn Ballou is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional and co-owner of Ballou Plum Wealth Advisors, LLC, a Registered Investment Advisory (RIA) firm in Lafayette. Lynn is also a Registered Principal and Branch Manager with LPL Financial (LPL). The opinions voiced in this material are for general information only and not intended to provide specific advice or recommendation for any individual. Financial Planning offered through Ballou Plum Wealth Advisors, A Registered Investment Advisor. Securities offered through LPL Financial, member FINRA/SIPC.

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Saklan Names Hans-Peter Metzger as New Head of School

Submitted by Christine Kuckuk



Photo provided

Metzger was selected from a national search of top-tier independent school administrators and comes to The Saklan School from The German American International School in Menlo Park, where he has served as Head of School for the past seven years. Prior to that, he served for nineteen years as the Director of the International School of Trieste and the Udine International School, both in northern Italy. Metzger also brings international

school experience in Spain and a background as the treasurer for the Mediterranean Association of International Schools Executive Board of Directors. Before serving as a Head of School, he taught math, social studies, language arts and physical education in grade levels 4 – 12.

During his interview day with the full Saklan community, Metzger made a strong impression on the 18-student interview panel with his ability to answer their questions not only with honesty and humor but also in fluent Italian and German. He was also invited to jam with several of the students who were equally impressed by his ability to play guitar.

The Saklan School is excited to welcome Hans-Peter Metzger to its community. For a tour or application information, visit The Saklan School at www.saklan.org, stop by the office at 1678 School Street, Moraga, or call (925) 376-7900.

JM Students Enjoy Hunger Games



Photo Andy Scheck

the Hunger Games – a televised battle that only one will survive. The story that unfolds is one of sacrifice, survival, and rebellion.

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School English teacher Jill McTaggart saw an opportunity in the popular novel, which was originally published in 2008, and this year added it to her curriculum. It's the first time the book's been used in a Moraga classroom, and her students have enjoyed helping to develop and test the related assignments.

On a recent Friday, a particularly tasty project was due. To demonstrate that they paid attention to the novel's details, students created food that relates to the book. Some made foods eaten by the characters, such as bread, stew, and a delightful cake decorated with a flaming "Mockingjay" (the symbol of the rebellion), while others crafted detailed, edible versions of such things as the book cover and the battle arena. *L.Borrowman*

If you haven't heard about Suzanne Collins' young adult novel, *The Hunger Games*, you soon will – it's now a major motion picture that will open in theaters March 23. Loyal fans of the

book can hardly wait.

The novel is set in a post-apocalyptic world; one in which two dozen children, between the ages of 12 and 18, are selected to participate in an annual event –

Submit stories to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

Troop 200 Eagle Scouts

Submitted by Mark Lewis



From left: Joel Benner and Brendan Lewis

Photo provided

Troop 200 proudly announces that **Brendan Lewis** has achieved Scouting's highest rank, Eagle Scout.

Highlights of Brendan's scouting career included: Crew Chief for a 50 mile Philmont trek, Order of the

Arrow Brotherhood and Senior Patrol Leader for Troop 200. Brendan also completed Leadership Training (Brownsea). Brendan has been part of Texas Youth Rugby, the Acalanes High School Track team and Acalanes Chamber Choir.

For his Eagle project, Brendan worked with the City of Lafayette Parks Department to help eliminate invasive plants from local waterways.

Troop 200 proudly announces that **Joel Benner** has achieved Scouting's highest rank, Eagle Scout.

Highlights of Joel's scouting career include: sailing expedition at Florida Seabase, 50 mile horseback trek at Philmont, Senior patrol leader for the National BS Camporee, completed Leadership Training (Brownsea) and member of Order of the Arrow. Joel has been involved in soccer throughout his youth and is currently a pole vaulter for the Acalanes High School Track team and cross country runner.

Eagle project- Raise money and build survival kits to send back to help the survivors of the tsunami in Japan.

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Troop 303 Eagles

Submitted by Andie Sheets

On January 7, 2012, Boy Scouts of America Troop 303 of Orinda honored its three newest Eagle Scouts with an Eagle Court of Honor held at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Orinda.



Raj Bains

For his Eagle project, Raj Bains built six Points of Interest signs to identify various landmarks throughout the Wagner Ranch Nature area in Orinda. Raj also built a Directory Kiosk at the entrance of the nature trail for visitors to obtain directions to navigate through the nature area. From the engineering drawings to permits, construction, and final implementation, the project took over 300 hours and 35 volunteers to complete.

Raj is a Freshman at University of Southern California.

Mikk Eerik Otsmaa's Eagle Project was to design, build and install a large garden arbor for the Orinda Senior Village. The redwood arbor is 12'x8'x8' and is stained with a clear finish. Located at the gated entrance of the Orinda Senior Village garden, the arbor provides beauty and shade.

The project required architectural plans along with approval and



Mikk Eerik

permits from Contra Costa County, the City of Orinda Planning Dept. and the Central Contra Costa Sanitation District. Over 350 planning and execution hours were spent on this project. Mikk is a Senior at Miramonte High School in Orinda.



Brandt Martin Sheets

Brandt Martin Sheets' Eagle project involved remodeling the playground at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church Preschool in Orinda. The project included replacing wood playground chips with recycled rubber chips, assembling a picnic table, and refurbishing four large doors for the church. The project took a total of 196 hours and 30 volunteers. Brandt is a senior at Miramonte High School in Orinda.

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First Local Home Expo a Big Success

By Sophie Braccini



Vendor Bill Creasi of Sola-Brite explains his products

Photo Andy Scheck

There could not have been a better venue for the first Lamorinda Home Expo than the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building – the large window let in plenty of light, the warmth of the wood

structure and the elegance of the modern concept of the building all contributed to create a cheery, home-like atmosphere.

Mostly local vendors from architects, builders, solar vendors, organizers, kitchen

and bath specialists, landscape designers, and interior designers displayed products and offered ideas for residents who want to embellish their environment. This first local expo took place on January 28, 2012, and was organized by Lamorinda Web, a young online group that aims at getting the community together.

"I am planning some work in my house," said visitor Denah Bookstein, "this is a very nice place, the professionals are all of very nice quality, and there is something for everybody. I met a lot of talented people here. I also like the way it is set up, it created some intimacy and a pleasant atmosphere."

Lamorinda Web's Julie Novak estimated the number of visitors at about 700. "This was our first year and we didn't know what to expect," said the Special Event Manager, "it was busy the entire day, people seemed very interested and engaged and the 42 vendors were happy with the outcome."

"This show has been fabulous," said Kari Grosz, the owner of Lamorinda Construction and Consulting, "We are seeing

a lot of people who are concerned about their old homes and the repairs that are needed. Energy concerns, repairs and updates are at the top of their priorities. It is Lamorinda families meeting Lamorinda businesses, discussing how we can work together in the community."

Canyon Construction owner Chris Avant added that he appreciated the opportunity to network with other professionals. He was also pleased with the number of contacts and the level of awareness about green building expressed by visitors.

Since the owners of Lamorinda Web are three young mothers, they included a "kid zone" where parents could safely leave their kids to play while they strolled through the Expo. Presentations were conducted during the day on topics such as build-it-green, organizing your home, the design review process, and more.

"We were exhausted at the end of the day and very pleased with the outcome," said Novak "we will definitely do it again next year. We may have to move to a bigger venue."

business briefs

Back to the Table

271 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette (next to Queen Bee)
284-1120,
backtothetablecooking.com

One of the difficulties of creating a food business is finding a professional, bonded kitchen that can be rented at a reasonable price, much less one that's in Lamorinda. This gave sisters Leslie Pease and Lisa Evaristo the idea to open Back to the Table Cooking School & Production Kitchen, a place for cooking talent to blossom. They are putting the final touches to two floors, 1250 square feet each, both equipped with new professional-grade cooking appliances. They plan to open in April.

Consignment Store or Teen Center?

ReChic Boutique 101
101 Orinda Way, Orinda
519-8050

Jennifer Vigo just opened ReChic Boutique 101 in Orinda, across from the golf course. Her concept is a new twist on a traditional style of store. "ReChic Boutique 101 is a store for teens from middle school to college where they can find clothing and objects to decorate their own space," explains Vigo, "It is a consignment store with some new things as well." Vigo, who was raised in Orinda and is the mother of three (two teens and pre-teen) wants to create a safe space where youths can express themselves and also learn fun things. From 6th grade on, the store owner believes that young people want to have a space that expresses their own personality, just as their clothes do. "They don't have

to be perfect," she says, "They just need to separate from their parents and express themselves freely." The 101 part of the name of the store not only refers to the address, but to the basic level life classes that Vigo plans to offer in her store after school. "The first one we'll have in March will be Auto Shop 101," she says, "we are also working on a photography class and financial management."

New from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette
Ribbon Cuttings

Dual ribbon cutting on Thursday February 23, 5pm for European Tile & Marble and Soccer Post. Meet at 3400 Mt. Diablo Blvd., the two businesses are # 2 & # 5. Special ribbon cutting at Pedder, Hesseltine, Walker & Toth, LLP on Thursday, March 8, 5pm. This event celebrates the 50-year anniversary of this business as a Lafayette Chamber member. They are located at 3445 Golden Gate Way.

The Secrets of with High-Powered Email Marketing Campaigns

Don Wexler will present the tools to create a dynamite email campaign, March 7, 8am at the Lafayette Library & Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Don Wexler of BlastMyBiz.com will cover the ingredients of a successful email campaign. Attendees will learn about the entire process-from building a list to formatting the actual email.

Moraga



Brad and Gloria Noggle in their 5A Rent-A-Space business Photo Andy Scheck

Dinner February 28, 7pm at the Moraga Country Club for the Business Person of the Year, Brad Noggle, manager of 5A-Rent-A-Space. "Brad (Noggle) has been so intricately involved in the Chamber activities for the past four years," says the Chamber's Kathe Nelson, "he has run the Community Fair Car Show single-handedly for the last two years, he consistently reaches out to other businesses and fosters business-related networking, he serves the community in many ways, with the Lions, with e-waste recycling events, with the Santa event. He was a logical choice for 2012 Business Person of the Year." "My wife Gloria and I moved to California four

years ago to get closer to our children," said Noggle, "we previously ran our own businesses and knew the value of investing in one's community." Noggle says that people like to do business with friends, and the more you do for the community, the more you get to know people and they get to know you. "Helping other businesses is so important," he adds, "joining the Chamber and networking with other people opens up doors." Serving the community is second nature to Brad and Gloria, "and everything we do, we try to do in the highest of standards," he says. For more information, contact Kathe Nelson at 323-6524.

Orinda

The Chamber's Orinda Country Club Luncheon is scheduled for Friday, February 24, noon-1:30pm at the Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante. The cost is \$30 per person. The luncheon's speaker will be award-winning weekend anchor for NBC Bay Area News, and Orinda resident, Diane Dwyer. Reserve your seat by calling 254-3909, or e-mail the Chamber at info@orindachamber.org.

3rd Annual "Live at the Orinda" is Friday, March 2, 6:45pm at the Orinda Theatre. Tickets: Advance Open Seating: \$35 - \$40 at event. Age: 17 and older. Online tickets and more information at orindachamber.com.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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Veggie Delight

By Susie Iventosch

Cauliflower Arrabiata

Cauliflower is an underappreciated vegetable in my estimation, especially when it comes in such pretty colors nowadays! In addition to the ordinary white variety, it is available in purple, green and yellow-orange in many markets, which offers a variety of color enhancements to a dinner plate.

This recipe is actually quite spicy and very enjoyable served as a side dish, or even as a meatless entrée. You can alter the amount of pepper flakes according to your own taste, and add as much or as little grated Parmesan as you like.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 head of cauliflower, remove greens and cut into small pieces
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 small clove garlic, finely minced
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ½ to 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes (can use as much as you like according to your heat sensitivity!)
- ½ cup finely grated fresh Parmesan cheese, divided in half

DIRECTIONS

Clean the cauliflower and trim out all of the large stems, leaving little florets on stems. You can also cut the larger stems into small pieces. Toss cauliflower pieces in a large bowl with olive oil and then add half the Parmesan and all other ingredients, tossing well to coat. Turn out onto a baking sheet, sprinkle with remaining Parmesan and bake at 400° for about 10-15 minutes, or until cauliflower is al dente, but beginning to brown on top. Remove from oven and serve!



Cauliflower Arrabiata

Photo Susie Iventosch

Honey-Roasted Parsnips

Parsnips are another under-appreciated vegetable and are usually reserved for enhancing soups, or smashing up with mashed potatoes. They rarely take center stage. But, here we offer an easy dish that specifically features this forgotten member of the umbelliferae family, a group of vegetables that also includes fennel, celery root and carrots. Planted in the spring, parsnips are harvested beginning in the fall and last through most of the spring. Due to the fact they store well above ground, they are usually available in markets year-round, but be sure to select firm parsnips, as those that are limp are not fresh.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium to large parsnips
- 2 tablespoons olive oil or melted butter
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon Soy sauce

DIRECTIONS

Peel parsnips, and cut into French fry-size pieces, about ¼ inches thick by 2-3 inches long. Toss well with olive oil, honey and Soy sauce. Turn onto an oiled baking sheet, and bake at 400° for approximately 15 minutes, or until tender and golden brown. Serve at once.



Parsnips-with honey and soy sauce

Photo Susie Iventosch

Correction:

The cranberry-raspberry pie recipe in the last issue was missing the ¾ cup flour in the pecan-crumble topping. Mix it with the dries, before cutting in the butter.

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 suzieventosch@gmail.com. **These recipe is available on our web site** www.lamorindaweekly.com If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at 925-377-0977.



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You can find most of the recipes published in the Lamorinda Weekly on our website. Click Food tab

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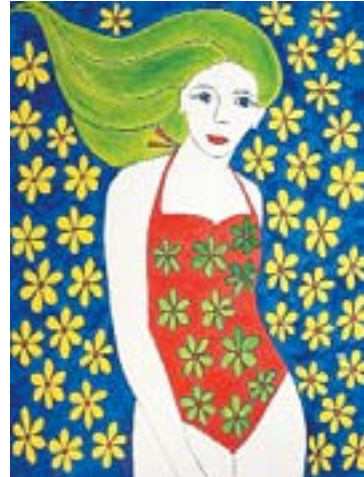
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Listener2011

is pleased to announce the opening of a new group show featuring the work of The Lafayette Printmaking Group. The six featured members of the Lafayette Printmaking Workshop (LPW) have been working together for several years under the direction of Print Master Sherry Smith Bell. The artists are hosting a free reception at Town Hall Theater on Saturday, March 3, 6:30-7:30pm.

The NEW Saint Mary's College Museum of Art presents: The Veil:

Visible and Invisible Spaces, through Mar. 25. For more information visit the museum website at stmarys-ca.edu/museum or call (925) 631-4379. Museum Hours: Wednesdays - Sundays, 11am-4:30pm. Admission: \$5 adults; K-12 graders and members free.

Moraga Art Gallery's new show, "Kaleidoscope" features the work of Gallery Member & local artist Angelica Samame, painter, as well as guest artist Karin Lechner, jewelry designer, through March 17. The Gallery is now located at #522 Center St in the Rheem Center, Moraga.**The Dorothy Davis group will be on display at the Orinda Library Gallery through the month of February. A reception will be held on Sunday, Feb 26 from 3-5pm.****Lafayette Gallery's winter show****"Heartfelt" will run through March 3. The exhibition features unique sculpture, ceramics, paintings, prints, glasswork, jewelry and photography, created by local artists. The Gallery is located at 50 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette (across from Chow). Hours: Tues-Sat, 11am-5pm; www.lafayettegallery.net; (925) 284-2788.****MUSIC****Fondettes at Aegis of Moraga. On Saturday February 18th**, the retirement community celebrates the 40's and invites the community to join in the free event that will feature The Fondettes, a vocal trio with rich three part harmony and jazzy tone quality, sing almost solely Andrews Sisters' repertoire. The event will start at 6pm with wine, cheese and hors d'oeuvres,

The Fondettes will perform 7-7:45pm. RSVP required by calling 377-7900 or email Candice.Moses@AegisLiving.com.

Campolindo Orchestra - Concierto de Aranjuez -Thursday, February 23, 7:30pm, Campolindo Performing Arts Center, 300 Moraga Road, Moraga. Admission Complimentary. Maestro Benstein has announced his retirement from Campolindo High School effective in June; join him and the musicians at Campolindo for one of the final performances of his tenure.**Piano and Chamber music played by members of the Performing Arts Society**, Friday February 24, 10:30am, Grace Presbyterian Church, 2100 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek. This free morning concert kicks off with Pastorale by Rick Sowash featuring flute, violin, viola and cello. The Schostakovich Piano Trio, Op 67 for violin, cello and piano will be played next. This classical concert concludes with Suite for Two Pianos, Op 17 by Rachmaninov. For more info go to www.ccpas.org.**Feb. 25 and 26 the CCCO will perform four of Mozart's greatest compositions**, including Symphony No. 25 in G Minor, the memorable theme of the movie Amadeus. The program also includes the overtures to Don Giovanni and Idomeneo, and the lilting Concerto for Flute and Harp. As always, Timothy Smith, CCCO conductor and musical director, will introduce each piece with educational stories and insights into the composer's life and work. Sunday, 2/26, 7:30 pm, Leshner Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, Tickets: \$10 - \$30 at the door, by phone ((925) 943-SHOW), or online at www.Leshner-ArtsCenter.org.**San Francisco Chamber Orchestra presents Main Stage Concert: The Goldberg Variations (Berkeley)** on Sunday, Feb 26, from 3 to 5pm, at First Congregational Church, 2345 Channing Way, Berkeley. Admission-free! Reserve online or by phone. Cost: \$0 (Admission free, but tickets required for non-members--available online or at door.) For more info see http://www.sfcchamberorchestra.org/concerts/mainstage/ or call (415) 692-5258 or email tickets@sfcchamberorchestra.org.**Don your dancing shoes for the Campolindo High School Jazz Dinner Dance**, March 3, at the Holy Trinity Church in Moraga. The jazz bands will make you want to dance the night away. Good food, great entertainment and close to home. Tickets are \$55 and are on sale now. Contact Diane Haley at (925) 631-1439 for reservations by Monday, February 27.**The annual Welsh American Society of Northern California 'hymn-sing' festival (Gymnfa Ganu in Welsh)** is being held March 4, 2-4pm, at the Lafayette United Methodist Church, 955 Moraga Road, Lafayette. It is not a concert for listeners but rather a 'hymn-sing' with the congregation singing in parts. It is an unique experience followed by tea and Welsh cakes! For further information call Idris Evans (925) 283-0912.**The Virginia Glee Club will perform at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church**, 66 St Stephen's Drive, Orinda, on Tuesday March 6 at 8pm. The Glee Club, recognized as a leader among American men's choruses, will present a wide range of pieces, from sacred music, Glee Club classics, folk songs and spirituals, to songs of the University of Virginia. Featured composers include Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Biebl, G. F. Handel, P.D.Q. Bach, Leonard Cohen and George Harrison. A freewill offering will be collected. For more information, contact Robert Adams at (925) 254-3770.**THEATER****The French Film Festival at Saint Mary's College**, a month long festival, opens on Thursday, March 1, 7pm

with Coco Avant Chanel (Coco before Chanel). Anne Fontaine's thoughtful exploration of the pre-fame life of the world's greatest fashion designer focuses on Coco Chanel during the Belle Epoque. The film opens in 1893 with a powerfully grim scene of 10-year-old Coco and her sister unceremoniously dumped at an orphanage and ends around World War I, a few years before the Chanel empire is launched. Free admission for students, \$3 general public. All films subtitled in English.

Town Hall Theatre presents "Distracted" from February 25 to March 17; with previews on February 23 and 24. After the matinee performance of Distracted on March 4, Dr. Brian Blaisch, M.D. will lead a talk and Q&A regarding ADHD, autism, and other learning and behavioral problems. Contact Town Hall Theatre Box Office at (925) 283-1557, or purchase online at www.TownHallTheatre.com. See article page B4.**With the words "See a Film, See the World," the East Bay International Jewish Film Festival** comes to the Orinda Theatre for a three day-run beginning on March 16. For the complete line-up or to purchase tickets, go to www.eastbayjewishfilm.org or phone (510) 318-6456.**LECTURE & LITERATURE****"Are We There Yet? Process vs. Productivity in Writing the Novel"** A Craft Conversation with Author Judith Claire Mitchell, Wednesday, February 15, 2:30pm, Hagerty Lounge, Saint Mary's College. What is it about the novel that takes so darned long? Drawing from personal experience as well as the experiences of other writers, Judith Claire Mitchell, author of the novel The Last Day of the War, will discuss common stumbling blocks encountered in completing this often unwieldy form and various practical ways to overcome them. Judith Claire Mitchell will also do a reading in the evening, 7:30pm at the Soda Center. All Readings and Craft Conversations are free and open to the public.**William Tillman: The Union's First Black Hero.** History Lecture at Moraga Library, Wednesday, February 29, 2pm. Free and open to the public, paid for by the Friends of the Moraga Library. For more information, contact Beth Girshman, bgirshma@cc-clib.org, (925) 376-6825, ext. 200. Preregistration is not required.**Friends of Orinda Library Book Sale, Thurs. March 1**, 10am to 1pm, Sorting Room and Book Shop (Book Shop is open until 6 p.m.) Inexpensive good-quality books for all ages and interests. Orinda Library, 24 Orinda Way, Orinda, (925) 254-1358.**KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS****Please join SPSK (Special Parents for Special Kids)** and SEED (Special Education Enrichment Development Foundation) of Lafayette for a free screening of the award winning documentary, "Including Samuel." Tuesday, February 21, 6:30 pm, Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Art & Science Room. Photojournalist Dan Habib rarely thought about the inclusion of children with disabilities before he had his son Samuel eight years ago. Now he thinks about inclusion every day. The film documents the social and educational inclusion of youth with disabilities. Habib documented his family's efforts to include Samuel in every facet of their lives, a journey that transforms each of them. For more information, please visit www.spsklaf.org or www.includingsamuel.com.**The East Bay Eclipse Soccer Club will be holding tryouts** for the 2012 season on the weekend of March 3 and 4. The club is open to kids ages 5-18. For more information about the times and locations of tryouts, or to pre-register for the tryouts, visit http://eastbayeclipseoccer.com/home/tryouts. If you have questions, email Director Shane Carney at director@eastbayeclipseoccer.com.

... continued on next page

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Girl Scouts 100th Birthday Dance at the Veterans Memorial Building -- Monday, March 12, 5:45-7:30pm; Lafayette Girl Scouts K-12 and Lafayette Girl Scout Alumnae. Enjoy an evening of dancing, pizza, cupcake decorating, singing. Witness the proclamations from City of Lafayette and Contra Costa County Supervisors. Countdown to 7:12pm with a candle ceremony commemorating when Juliette Low started her first troop. \$5 by February 9th. Hair care products will be collected to benefit the Bay Area Crisis Nursery. Go to www.lafayettegirlscouts.org for registration.

OTHER

You are invited to attend the February 21 meeting of the San Ramon Valley Genealogical Society from 10am-12noon at the library of the LOS Church, 2949 Stone Valley Road, Alamo. Program: Born Irish. Speaker: Cath Madden Trindle. The program will be of interest to both beginners and the more advanced genealogist. For information call Ed O'Donnell (925) 299-0881, or visit <http://srvgensoc.orgf>.

State Senator Mark DeSaulnier invites you to a Town Hall Meeting on The State Budget, Thursday, February 23, 7-9pm, Manzanita Room, Lafayette Community Center, 500 St Mary's Rd., Lafayette. Free of charge. Share your concerns and ideas for improving state government budgeting, programs and tax systems. For more information or to RSVP please call (925) 942-6082 or visit <http://sd07.senate.ca.gov>.

On February 25 from 7-9 pm Our Saviors Lutheran Church 1035 Carol Lane Lafayette will host a panel of LGBT people sharing their Coming Out stories. There will be breakout

sessions that will give attendees opportunity to ask questions and share experiences. Adults and teens from the community are welcome to come and gain a better understanding of these segments of our population. There will be beverages and finger food to share. For more information: www.oslc.net or call (925) 283-3722.

Orinda Community Foundation celebrates its 2nd birthday with a party on Wednesday, February 29 at 5 pm in Orinda Library Gallery. We are pleased to announce that over \$30,000 were given out in community grants this past year. All grant recipients and community are invited to attend event.

SMC Guild's Bridge & Bunco, Thursday, Feb 23, 9:30am-2pm, Saint Mary's College, Soda Center. Fundraiser for student scholarships. \$32 per person-includes luncheon. Please call (925) 376-4339 for info and reservations.

St. Mary's College Guild's Irish Cultural Night - Friday, March 2, 6-10pm at the Soda Center on St. Mary's College Campus. An evening of food, music, singing and dancing in the Irish Style. Reservations accepted until February 28. The evening is \$40/per person. Please make checks out to St. Mary's College Guild and mail to Pat Wiegmann, 39 Carr Drive, Moraga, CA 94556. For more information, please contact Pat at (925) 376-6088.

Lovers of laughter will have the opportunity to enjoy a champagne-filled night of comedy at the landmark Orinda Theatre on Friday, March 2nd. See article page B3.

Casino Night Fundraiser at the Hacienda, 2100 Donald Dr.; Saturday, March 3; 6 to 10 pm. See article page A5.

Protect yourself from identity theft by safely destroying your unwanted documents containing personal data and receive a free complimentary guide on record retention requirements, "How long do I have to keep what records?" The "Shred Fest" event is on Saturday, March 3rd, 10am-1pm at 455 Moraga Rd Suite F in Moraga. Sponsored by 5A Rent A Space & Hall of Taxes. All net proceeds will go to Rescue One Moraga which supports the Moraga/Orinda FireDistrict. \$5 per standard letter size box. You will receive a certificate of destruction. For more information call Peggy Hall at (925) 388-1040.

Mother-Daughter Aternoon Tea to benefit the mothers and children of Zimbabwe. Hosted by the JF Kapnek Trust. Saturday, March 10, 2-4pm at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Bring your mom, grandma, aunt, neighbor, or a friend and enjoy a scrumptious Afternoon Tea. Includes a wide selection of sandwiches (including PBJ), desserts, fruit, photo booth, and more. Suggested Donation of \$25 per person. Proceeds benefit the Kapnek Trust's programs supporting orphans and vulnerable children in Zimbabwe. To make a reservation or for more information, contact Kathi@JFKapnekTrust.org. Event suitable for children aged 5 & up.

Rotary Club of Moraga is presenting its 10th annual "A Nite at the Races" on Saturday, March 10, at the Holy Trinity Hall in Moraga. Enjoy a catered dinner (not involving crab) and a no-host bar. Listen or dance to a Dixieland band. Wager on video horse races, and double your money if your sponsored horse wins. Bid on many wonderful auction items, and enter the raffle for a big screen TV. All proceeds from this event will fund

Rotary's local youth, educational, and humanitarian causes. For information and reservations, contact Rotarian Frank May at (925) 376-8195 or mayfrl@comcast.net.

February Meeting to Focus on State Budget. Deana Davidson, President of the American Association of University Women, Orinda-Moraga- Lafayette Branch (AAUW/OML), invites the public to the Tuesday, February 21st meeting at 9:30am to experience the California Budget Challenge. Assemblyperson Nancy Skinner will host the program developed by Next10 org. Attendees will be provided with response clickers that will tally the groups' "votes" about how much to spend on schools, prisons, the environment and other state programs, as well as make choices to reduce state expenses. The meeting begins with coffee and socializing from 9-9:45am followed by the Next Ten budget presentation and discussion. The meeting will be held at the Holy Trinity Serbian Orthodox Church Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga.

LAFCO Seeks Public Member: The Contra Costa Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) is currently accepting applications for the Regular and Alternate Public Member seats. LAFCO is an independent agency created by the State of California charged with encouraging orderly governmental boundaries and efficient services, discouraging urban sprawl, and preserving agricultural and open space resources. The Commission regulates the boundaries of cities and special districts and conducts municipal service reviews and other special studies. The term of office for the open public member seats is four years expiring in May 2016. Applications are due by 5:00 pm, Friday, March 9, 2012. To download an application form, and for more information about Contra Costa LAFCO, please visit www.contracostalafco.org, or contact the LAFCO office at (925) 335-1094.

GARDEN

The Moraga Garden Club, on Feb. 16, will host Barbara Tuffli who will speak on camellias. She is a horticultural judge, landscape consultant, designer, photographer, and passionate collector and expert on camellias. Members will learn about species, flower form, pruning, disbudding, fertilizing and how to have the perfect camellias. Barbara is a former President of the American Camellia Society. The program will be part slides and lecture followed by a gorgeous array of named camellias displayed as if for judging. The meeting starts at 10am at the Holy Trinity Cultural Center preceded by a social hour at 9:30am. Guests are welcome.

The Urban Farmers are organizing this year's community-wide purchase of fruit trees.



SMC students pruning an old pear orchard

If you'd like to plant a fruit tree in your back yard, receive free help and advice on planting and caring for it, and then donate any excess fruit to the needy, contact the Urban Farmers at (415) 806-7005 or www.theurbanfarmers.org. The next free workshop is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 25.

On Friday, February 17, the Montelindo Garden Club will hear Garth Jacober, owner of Mt. Diablo Nursery in Lafayette, speaking on Camellias. Mr. Jacober is a Master Gardner and Camellia expert. He has worked in gardening and landscaping for over thirty years. The program is held at 10:30am with a social hour before. The event is held at the Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda and the public is cordially invited.

Registration for the Eighth Annual Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour, which will take place on Sun-

day, May 6, 2012, 10-5, is now open. This free, award-winning tour features 45 Alameda and Contra Costa county gardens that are pesticide-free, conserve water, provide habitat for wildlife, and contain 60% or more native plants. Included in the Tour are 5 Lamorinda garden, two of them new additions. This self-drive tour showcases a variety of gardens, from large parcels in the hills to small lots in the flats. Native plant sales and talks are offered at select gardens. Volunteers are needed. Please register or volunteer at <http://www.bringingbackthenatives.net/>.

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February 16th, 2012, 6:30PM
Closing Night with 2012 CAIFF Honoree Margaret O'Brien
Meet Me in St. Louis followed by Q & A with Margaret O'Brien

February 17th, 9 PM
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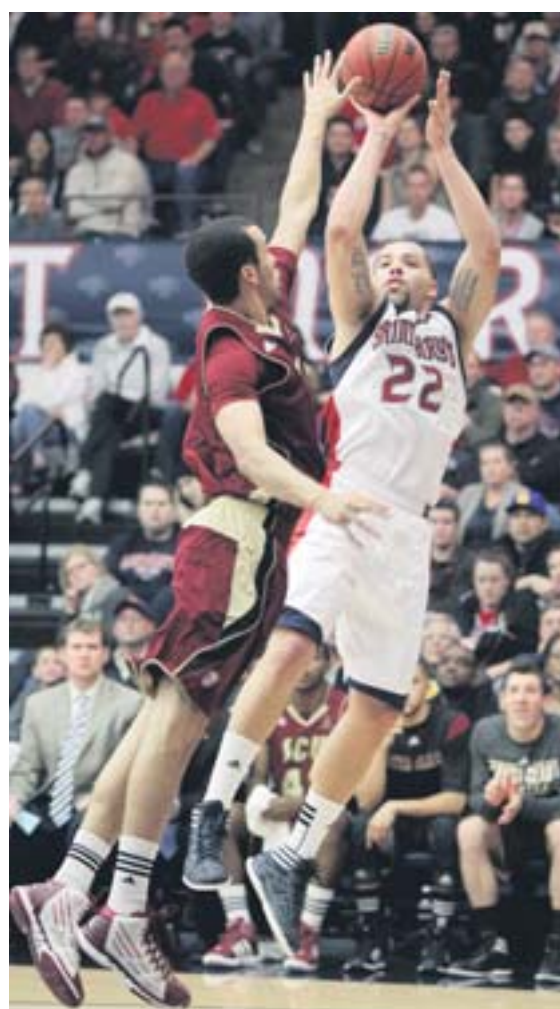
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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Saint Mary's Bounces Back to Beat the Broncos

By Alex Kozela



Rob Jones #22

Photo Tod Fierner

The Gaels' incredible undefeated WCC run came crashing to a close at the likeliest of locations. The Gaels fell to perennial rivals, Gonzaga, in front of a boisterous crowd at "The Kennel" in Spokane on February 9.

Saint Mary's, ranked #13 in the ESPN/USA Today coaches' poll, the highest ranking in the program's history, and #16 by the Associated Press, couldn't keep its streak alive last Thursday night, losing 73-59 in a match-up of WCC titans. The loss dropped SMC to #21 in the AP Poll and #16 in the Coaches Poll. Gonzaga's win over the Gaels helped propel them to #24 in both the AP and Coaches Polls.

The Gaels (22-3 overall, 12-1 WCC) got back on track Saturday at home with an 82-67 win over a plucky Santa Clara team. The Broncos were determined to pull an upset despite residing at the bottom of the WCC standings.

The win was an important one for the vulnerable

Gaels, as the Zags (20-4, 10-2) are still very much alive in the race for the regular season WCC title.

"I think it just proves how tough a team we are," said Gaels' senior forward Rob Jones, who followed a quiet eight point, seven rebound night against Gonzaga with a commanding 25 point, 12 rebound performance against Santa Clara.

"You can't be proven as tough if you don't face adversity. After last game, I just really had to come out tonight and prove to myself and everyone that I'm still here with this team," added Jones.

Despite having the worst record in the WCC (8-17, 0-12), the Broncos were a solid test for the Gaels to regain their confidence.

Jones and junior guard Matthew Dellavedova both had double-doubles, with Jones notching his 15th of the season, while Dellavedova scored 16 points and added 10 assists. Despite the 82-67 score line, the Broncos fought back on numerous occasions.

"Santa Clara's playing well for their record," said Saint Mary's head coach Randy Bennett. "I thought it was going to be a tough game, [with the teams] tough to separate."

After a back-and-forth second half that saw Saint Mary's lead 40-35 at the half, the Gaels sprang out to a 54-40 lead with 15:48 remaining. The Broncos pulled within three, trailing 62-59, after going on a 19-8 run, before the Gaels went ahead to take the lead for good.

"When it got close, I'm glad our guys responded the right way: hit some shots, got some stops. It was a good win," said Bennett.

Last Thursday in Spokane, the Bulldogs avenged the 83-62 drubbing they suffered in Moraga a month ago in a big way, as freshman Kevin Pangos hit 27 points to keep the Zags in the running for their 12th consecutive regular season title. Dellavedova scored 20 points for Saint Mary's, who shot a season-low 38 percent from the field, going 21-55, including 5-21 from three-point range.

The Gaels only trailed by three at the half, losing 34-31, and opened the second half on a 9-4 run. The Zags, who shot 52 percent from the field, including 7-15 on threes, were persistent, however. Big threes by the freshman guard duo of Pangos and Gary Bell Jr. down the stretch sealed the victory for the Bulldogs.

"We had a great stretch," said the Gaels' Jones, referring to the Gaels 11 straight wins in WCC play. "But it happens. We didn't play our best and Gonzaga got us."

The Gaels will look to complete its second undefeated home season in school history tomorrow against Loyola Marymount in the last regular season game.

Saint Mary's Women Hold onto Fourth Place in WCC

By Alex Kozela



Morgan Hatten #24

Photo Tod Fierner

After losing back-to-back games for the first time this season, the Saint Mary's women's basketball team got back on track with two straight wins.

The Gaels bounced back from tough losses to nationally-recognized opponents Gonzaga and Brigham Young with a 75-58 win over Portland at home last Thursday and a 57-47 win against rivals Santa Clara on Saturday.

The Gaels (18-8 overall, 9-4 WCC) sit in fourth place in the WCC, one game behind third place San Diego, who they face on February 23.

"They understand. They knew tonight was an important game," said Saint Mary's head coach Paul Thomas

after the win against Portland. "They know the rest of our games our important because it's going to have some bearing on our West Coast Conference standings."

Saint Mary's junior guard Morgan Hatten had a double-double, scoring a career-high 15 points, while grabbing 10 rebounds, and sophomore forward Danielle Mauldin added 13 points and nine rebounds to lead the Gaels to victory over the last-place Pilots (8-17, 1-10).

"[Hatten] was extremely focused tonight, very much in rhythm," said Thomas. "I think that had a lot to do with her focus and her mental approach to the game and her teammates did a great job of finding her."

Senior guard Jasmine Smith and sophomore guard Jackie Nared also scored in double figures with 11 points each.

"Today we all came together and everyone contributed," said Hatten. "I think that's what we need to continue to do to win out the rest of our games."

In the first half, Saint Mary's shot 62 percent and out-rebounded the Pilots 22-9. Leading by 20 points at half-time, the Gaels finished the game with 52.3 percent shooting. Saint Mary's out-rebounded the Pilots 39-28, while forcing them to turn over the ball 18 times.

"The team did an exceptional job of executing the game plan," said Thomas. "We didn't want them to get off and shoot a bunch of threes, and get a lot of early clean looks and our team did a fantastic job of not letting them do that."

Two days later in Santa Clara, the Gaels once again had a strong defensive performance, while out-rebounding the Broncos 57-23. Nared led the team with a double-double, scoring 16 points and nabbing 14 rebounds. Mauldin added 10 points.

Just like in the previous game against Portland, the Gaels limited their opponents to only nine rebounds in the first half, going into halftime with a 36-20 lead.

The Gaels extended their lead immediately after the halftime interval, leading 45-24 at the first timeout in the second half. The Broncos (10-15, 3-9) scored the last seven points of the game, but it was too little of an effort to surmount the massive deficit.

Saint Mary's will close out their home schedule Saturday against Loyola Marymount.



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Lamorinda Basketball Prepares for End of Season

By Conrad Bassett



In addition to being a leading scorer, senior captain Sophie Taylor (#20) has adopted a role as a distributor. Photo Kevin Nguyen



Molly Martin #13 Photo Kevin Nguyen

The last two weeks in local high school basketball have brought a better focus to the upcoming North Coast Section playoff picture. There was only one Lamorinda rivalry game, a doubleheader between Campolindo and Acalanes on January 31.

The girls' opened the night and the visiting Dons' looked to avenge their early season loss

to the Cougars. However, the Cougars won 59-44.

Acalanes' senior Olivia Murphy opened the scoring with a short bank. The teams exchanged baskets before Dons' junior Marie Paladino hit a three for a 7-6 lead.

Campolindo responded with a 13-2 run to end the period. Following the run, Acalanes never got closer than ten points the rest of the way.

With the win, the Cougars became playoff eligible for the NCS.

In the subsequent week, Acalanes fell to second place Dougherty Valley, 75-31, on February 3 and beat Alhambra, 55-37, on February 7. Acalanes is now 4-6 and 14-10 overall.

Coach Chris Russell has been pleased with his team's play. "Junior Molly Martin has been playing huge and more consistent lately. Senior Captain Sophie Taylor has become more of a distributor lately as teams are constantly sending double teams at her, but she is still probably the league's leading scorer."

Following the win, Campolindo had a bye. The time off did not slow them down and they easily defeated Las Lomas, 75-24. The Cougars dropped their next game to Dougherty Valley, 61-48, to fall to 6-4 in the DFAL and 11-12 overall.

Cougar head coach Elgin Leslie continues to be upbeat. "Our goal all year long has been to get better with each game, we did a much better job against Dougherty Valley this time around," he said.

Crosstown rival Miramonte crushed Dublin 93-62 led by sophomore Brienna Alford's monster double-double of 18 points and 16 rebounds. The Mats followed up with an 84-53 drubbing of Alhambra.

Miramonte escaped a near-loss against Dougherty Valley, to win 64-62. Miramonte

trailed for much of the first half and then took a ten point lead before the Wildcats came back to tie it with seconds to go.

Coach Kelly Sopak noted, "It was a great game that ended with a spectacular individual play by Devon McDonald. We received contribution all throughout our line up on both ends of the floor."

Miramonte is still perfect at 10-0 and 24-0.

The boys' competition continued to be a struggle.

Campolindo has continued to hold onto first place by eeking out a win against Acalanes. The Cougars came from behind to defeat the Dons, 75-72 on January 31.

Acalanes jumped off to an 18-15 lead after one quarter, but the Cougars came back to take the lead at the half by one. Acalanes extended their lead in the third. Campo roared back with a 27-point fourth period to run their DFAL record to 8-0.

Acalanes bounced back with two wins, a

62-60 road win over Dougherty Valley and a 74-47 win over Alhambra. The Dons are now 4-6, 15-9.

Campolindo headed over to Las Lomas and saw their perfect DFAL season end in overtime as the Knights prevailed 67-64. Their tough week was further compounded as they were upset in overtime by Dougherty Valley, 73-61. The Cougars losses drop them to 8-2, 20-4.

Meanwhile, Miramonte beat Dublin 61-56 on January 31 and continued its winning ways the following Friday night beating upstart Alhambra, 73-63. Kiran Shastri unloaded for 34 points to lead the Mats. They continued their win streak at Dougherty Valley winning 53-37. The Mats are now 7-3, 17-7.

Acalanes played host to Miramonte on Tuesday, February 14 after press time. Campolindo will play Miramonte on February 16 at 5:30 and 7:00 p.m. The first round of the North Coast Section tournament begins on February 21 and 22.



Senior Griffin Piatt (#3) goes up for a shot against defender Kevin Huber (#2) in Campolindo's 75-72 win. Photo Kevin Nguyen

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Bentley Basketball Wins League Championship

Submitted by Clay Kallam

It's never been better at Bentley. Coach Rob Rafah, in his first season as the men's basketball coach at the Lafayette campus, has guided the Phoenix to the most wins in school history. Bentley also recorded its first Bay Counties League East championship.

The key to the 19-5 overall record, and 11-0 BCL-East mark, is pair of wins over Head-Royce, a school where Rafah coached in the past. Head-Royce has been the perennial power in the league, but the young Bentley team has defeated Head-Royce two times this season. Bentley will likely face Head-Royce again in the BCL-East playoffs on Feb. 17-18.

The Phoenix are led by lone senior, 6'5" center Ben Hummel. Hummel is averaging 10.7 points per game and 9.1 rebounds. Hummel is a soccer goalie who will play for Princeton next year. "He would be something special if he focused on basketball," said Rafah.

The other starters include junior guard Nate Ellis, Malcolm DeForrest, and a pair of freshmen, Blake Kami and Josh Ross. Ellis is the leading scorer with 18.8 points per game.

With plenty of success already this year, the Phoenix are looking to make some noise in North Coast Section.

St. Monica's Wins League Title

Submitted by Cathy Hanley



St. Monica's third grade girls' basketball team won the 2012 West Diablo CYO league. The girls recorded an 11-1 season.

Front row, from left: Julia Ortega, Olivia Hillhouse, Haven Trunzo, Kate Canon, Madison Abbott; back row: Coach Dave Ortega, Channing Hanley, Samantha Johnston, Coach John Canon.

Lamorinda CYO Rivalry Results

Submitted by Hector Chao



St. Perpetua's second grade boys' basketball team took second in the West Diablo CYO league championship game. Local rival St. Monica's won the close game, 31-29.

Back row, from left: Tom Bequette, Sam Bequette, Zach Anderson, Torin Cate, Rhett Skvarna; front row: Will Groot, Michael Kuhner, Patrick Volk, Brady Burman, Marco Chao, Joe McCauley.

Photo Lisa McCauley

Miramonte Wrestling Competes in Tournaments

Submitted by Rob Becker

The last weekend in January, the Miramonte wrestling teams competed in two tournaments. At the Redwood JV tournament,

both Josh Laney and Elliot Fong placed second, and Christopher Holobetz and Luke Ostrom took home medals for third place.



Micah Spalding

Photo Tom Spalding

It was a very long day for the varsity wrestlers who went to Santa Rosa for the Colt Invitational. At the end of the day, junior Micah Spalding took fourth place with two wins and one loss. Senior Kai Shimoko took seventh with three wins and two losses.

On Thursday, January 31, Miramonte hosted Dublin, but lost a close match 39-33.

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Lamorinda United Records Upsets, Championship

Submitted by Mike Holbrook



Back row, from left: Coach Akeem Rashidi, Margaux Clarke, Alison Whipple, Cate Combi, Rachel Brickman, Sydney Yuen, Maddy Kolin; front row: Angeline Liu, Claire Gallagher, Isabel Fine, Julia Colombini, Ashley Holbrook, Lindsay Kornguth.

Photo Bill Clarke

The Lamorinda United Navy U11 girls won the NorCal State Cup Gold on Sunday, January 29 by beating Santa Rosa 4-2. The win capped a remarkable run that saw Lamorinda United open with a big upset over a top ranked NorCal team

from Los Gatos. The game ended with a 1-0 sudden death overtime victory on Jan 21 in Woodland. In the semi-final round, the LMSC U11 girls also pulled off an upset against another premier team, beating Novato 3-0.

Saint Mary's Rugby Defeats Stanford

Submitted by Tony Samaniego



Photo provided

Gearing up for the regular season, the Saint Mary's Rugby team scored a big win against Stanford. Under the lights at their rugby facility in Palo Alto, on Thursday, February 2, the SMC "A" side won their match 85-0

and the "B" side won 116-0. The Gaels' next big challenge is against the University of British Columbia, one of the premier Canadian teams, at Saint Mary's Pat Vincent Field on February 21st.

Lamorinda Weekly

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Publishers/Owners: Andy and Wendy Scheck; andy@lamorindaweekly.com; wendy@lamorindaweekly.com
Editor: Lee Borrowman; lee@lamorindaweekly.com
Advertising: 925-377-0977
Wendy Scheck; wendy@lamorindaweekly.com
Katie Malone; katie@lamorindaweekly.com
Circulation: 26,200 printed copies; delivered to homes & businesses in Lamorinda.

Staff Writers:
Sophie Braccini; sophie@lamorindaweekly.com
Cathy Tyson; cathy@lamorindaweekly.com
Laurie Snyder; laurie@lamorindaweekly.com
Cathy Dausman; cathy.d@lamorindaweekly.com
Sports Editor: Caitlin Graveson
sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com
Teen Coach: Cynthia Brian; cynthia@lamorindaweekly.com
Food: Susie Iventosch; suziventosch@gmail.com
Contributing Writers:
Andrea A. Firth, Conrad Bassett, Moya Stone, Roslynn Aragones Stenzel, Lucy Amaral, Alex Crook, Alex Kozela, Rebecca Eckland, Marissa Harnett, Lou Fancher, Nina Mohan, Barry Hunau (cartoonist)
Photos: Tod Fierner, Doug Kohen, Ohlen Alexander, Kevin Nguyen
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P.O. Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570-6133
Phone: 925-377-0977; Fax: 1-800-690-8136; email: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 05 Issue 25 Wednesday, February 15, 2012



Going Solar—Two Years Later
...read on page D6

Lessons Learned from a Remodel

By Sophie Braccini

Everyone said it couldn't be done in four months, but it was—just one week after the estimated completion date—the total remodel of a ranch house that added 800 square feet and rebuilt the entire interior; all that was left at one point was a wall. But a stressful four months it was, for homeowners who had never remodeled anything, not even a closet. We survived, without

a single, major fight.

One month into our new space, we're still settling down and after the last check was cut to the contractor we had to admit that we went over our budget by 20 percent. Was it worth it? We are sure that our living space is much more pleasant. The financial wisdom of it all remains to be assessed.

Our ranch house presented some challenges: Two of our three kids shared a bedroom, the entertainment space was far from optimal, and the galley kitchen was not the hub of our family life. When we looked for a larger space, we found out that our fixer-upper home would be hard to sell in the current market; in fact, two of our neighbors took their homes off the market because of insufficient or failed offers.

We had problems in the past finding the right design for a remodel. We thought our request was simple: add a bedroom, a bathroom, a dining room, and transform the kitchen. But our lot, with its pie-slice shape and a hill behind, was not an easy fix.

... continued on page D4



The new dining room has a western exposure.

Photos Andy Scheck



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MORAGA	3	\$420,000	\$1,285,000
ORINDA	3	\$215,000	\$929,000

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461 Donegal Way, \$425,000, 3 Bdrms, 1548 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 1-19-12;

Previous Sale: \$740,000, 05-22-06

3392 Las Huertas Road, \$1,350,000, 3 Bdrms, 2090 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 1-20-12;

Previous Sale: \$1,500,000, 06-03-11

8 Lois Lane, \$2,220,000, 7 Bdrms, 8801 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 1-19-12;

Previous Sale: \$1,260,000, 09-03-99

750 Los Palos Drive, \$560,000, 3 Bdrms, 1674 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 1-12-12

3272 Woodview Drive, \$905,000, 3 Bdrms, 2612 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 1-12-12;

Previous Sale: \$583,000, 10-08-98

850 Reliez Station Road, \$880,000, 4 Bdrms, 3283 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 1-18-12;

Previous Sale: \$850,000, 09-27-00

MORAGA

775 Augusta Drive, \$1,285,000, 3 Bdrms, 2456 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 1-18-12;

Previous Sale: \$1,190,000, 09-07-06

161 Fairfield Place, \$801,000, 5 Bdrms, 2521 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 1-20-12

7 Josefa Place, \$420,000, 2 Bdrms, 1847 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 1-19-12;

Previous Sale: \$730,000, 07-27-07

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73 Brookwood Road #31, \$215,000, 1 Bdrms, 673 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 1-18-12

237 La Espiral, \$929,000, 2 Bdrms, 2338 SqFt, 1937 YrBlt, 1-18-12;

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66 Tara Road, \$600,000, 3 Bdrms, 1404 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 1-6-12

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Highland Road, 94549, JP Morgan Chase Bank, 01-12-12, \$431,145, 1924 sf, 4 bd

Oak Street, 94549, Bank of New York, 01-19-12, \$542,547, 1394 sf, 2 bd

Pleasant Hill Road, 94549, Flagstar Bank, 01-17-12, \$439,200, 1020 sf, 2 bd

Westminster Place, 94549, Bank of America, 01-17-12, \$733,140, 2845 sf, 5 bd

MORAGA

Ascot Drive #10, 94556, Osmond Murdock Limited, 01-09-12, \$148,300, 1130 sf, 2 bd

ORINDA

La Cresta Road, 94563, RWW Properties, 01-12-12, \$623,865, 2025 sf, 4 bd

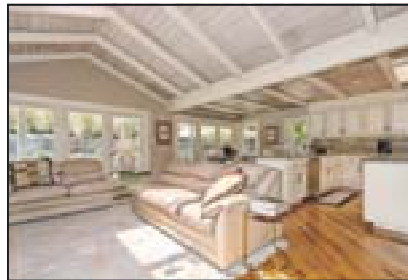
Loma Linda Court, 94563, US Bank, 01-18-12, \$669,237, 2459 sf, 3 bd



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Alamo Oaks. REBUILT AS NEW. Level ac w/Pool, Heritage Oak, meandering walking paths, circular drive & appr 3700 sf.GOURMET KITCHEN Brazilian granite, Dacor 5 burner, walk around island, hardwood, high ceilings,arched windows, Custom lighting. Master w/spa-like bth. Bonus rm AU Pair w/SEPARATE KITCHEN & entry or 4 bd, 3.5 bths . **\$1,399,000**

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Lessons Learned from a Remodel

... continued from page D1



An abundance of natural light now fills the kitchen.

But our lot, with its pie-slice shape and a hill behind, was not an easy fix. We finally asked Allan Sayles, a local architect, for his input – he came up with a great vision that pleased us all.

Having attended Design Review Board and Planning Commission meetings, I knew that following the Town's guidelines and getting the neighbors on board would save us time and money. I checked the Town's municipal code: it is accessible online at moraga.ca.us (use the quick links on the left), and paid attention to the setbacks in my zoning area.

The architect also checked and we asked for the meeting with the Town's Planning Department before we finalized the drawings. Planners took the time to look at the plan, offered their comments and confirmed that we should be able to get administrative approval. I visited all my neighbors before submitting the drawing as well, offering to show them the plans.

The rule is that neighbors receive a notification from the Town when the plans are submitted and can appeal if they feel that the remodel would compromise their privacy or would be out of character with the neighborhood. We got the Town and County permits easily. Do

not underestimate the price of the permits; everybody wants a share, including the School District when someone is adding more than 500 square feet.

That brings me to the "soft costs" associated with the project – architect, Title 24 compliance, structural engineer, permits, moving costs, renting another place; all of these added 20 percent to the cost of the construction itself.

When large municipal projects are budgeted, 10 percent is included for incidentals – the things that come up during the construction process. Among the major surprises of our project were the need for a new furnace and accompanying duct work, a new roof and hardwood floor, and a serious draining problem. Then there were a few add-ons like a new pathway to the entrance, a terrace on the hill, two additional skylights, and more recessed LED lights.

We had decided on a fixed-price bid and had four contractors submit proposals. The lower bidder, Daniel Leleu's Lamorinda Construction and Remodel, was also the one who promised to finish everything within four months. We signed the contract on August 15, moved out within a few days and the contractor started digging the new foundation right away.



Daniel Leleu builds a new foundation at the front of the home.

Leleu worked with his nephew, Ben, his brother David and one worker, Jesus. They did almost everything themselves, from digging the dirt, to laying the tiles in the bathrooms. After a month we were fortunate enough to be able to rent the house next door. From there we saw them everyday, in the heat of September and October and in the cold of December, from dawn to dusk, moving our project forward.

The rapid construction was a blessing in many ways, but represented a challenge for us. Every day choices had to be made and since we were in charge of all the finishes, a lot of research, visits and negotiating had to take place for everything from the floors, to cabinets, paints, tiles, etcetera. That's where we could have used some additional help—working with an interior designer would have eased the stress.

Now we have a very large kitchen with a center island and a charming breakfast area, and lots of natural light. The new dining room has proven very functional for the few guests we've had so far. The mud room, where shoes are dropped and bags hanged, is currently underutilized, largely because there is still so much stuff in the garage, but it will certainly prove useful in the future.

My favorite new space is the master bathroom. It feels private and serene; perfect for long, relaxing baths.

I am enjoying the sense of cleanliness and comfort that was hard to find in a house that had not been touched since it was built, some 60 years ago. Now the whole house gets warm when we turn on the heat, and the bathrooms no longer feel damp all the time. We have learned so much about construction and material that if we ever remodel again we will feel like pros.

Even the cats have adopted the new house—this must be a good sign.



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New Listing! 426 Castello, Lafayette



Located in the heart of Burton Valley. 5+ bedrooms, 3 baths, just over 3000 sq.ft. Desirable family home within walking distance to Burton Valley Elementary, bike trails, Community Center and Swim Club. Call for a private showing.

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Benefits of the Pre-Sale Home Inspection

by Andi Peterson Brown

There's always been location, location, location. And now there's inspect, inspect, inspect. In today's real estate market, contracts are almost always contingent upon property inspections. And while buyers are traditionally the party that initiates this process, it is now becoming more common for sellers to perform pre-sale home inspections before their homes hit the market.

A pre-sale home inspection has numerous benefits that can make for a smoother and less stressful close of escrow. Those benefits include the ability to:

Set a More Realistic Price – Having a more accurate picture of a home's true condition is essential to setting a price to which the market will respond positively. If desire and budget allow, repairs can be done ahead of time, preempting surprises down the line and allowing the home to make a first impression that is as appealing as it is accurate.

Absorb Impact – Buyers tend to be more receptive to potential issues when they are aware of them up front. Costly and unexpected surprises that pop up halfway through the deal can be challenging for both parties to accept and sometimes become deal breakers.

– Buyers will still perform their own inspections, but a pre-sale inspection will allow for fewer surprises that come with a price tag. Awareness of problems ahead of time allows a seller to mitigate issues and/or market the home with those repair costs in mind.



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Going Solar—Two Years Later

By Andy Scheck



The biggest of our three solar panel arrays holds 16 of the 32 panels.

Photo Andy Scheck

The time of big bucks government tax rebates or credits from solar panel installation is over, so is it still worth helping the state meet its renewable energy goals? California's goal is to increase its procurement from eligible renewable energy resources to 33% of total by 2020.

Our 6.5Kw home solar system, purchased in 2009, gave us 44% in rebates and incentives. An installer told us today's system price is 7% less, but the rebates are only 33%. The same system we bought in 2009 would cost \$2,700 more today.

Let's look at what made us invest in solar power originally. Our motivation was a mix of saving money, helping the environment, adding to our house value and being one of a growing group of renewable energy producers. Like many we try to save energy whenever we can but with a pool, air conditioning and a home office we use power all day long.

In 2008 we attended a presentation by a solar company at St. Mary's College. Shortly afterwards we contacted the company to take measurements and give us a

quote.

Roof position and shade had a big influence on the placement and performance of our system. We decided to take out one tree in front of the house. We planned to do that sooner or later anyway. That opened up a better roof position, which allowed us to get higher performance while installing a smaller system.

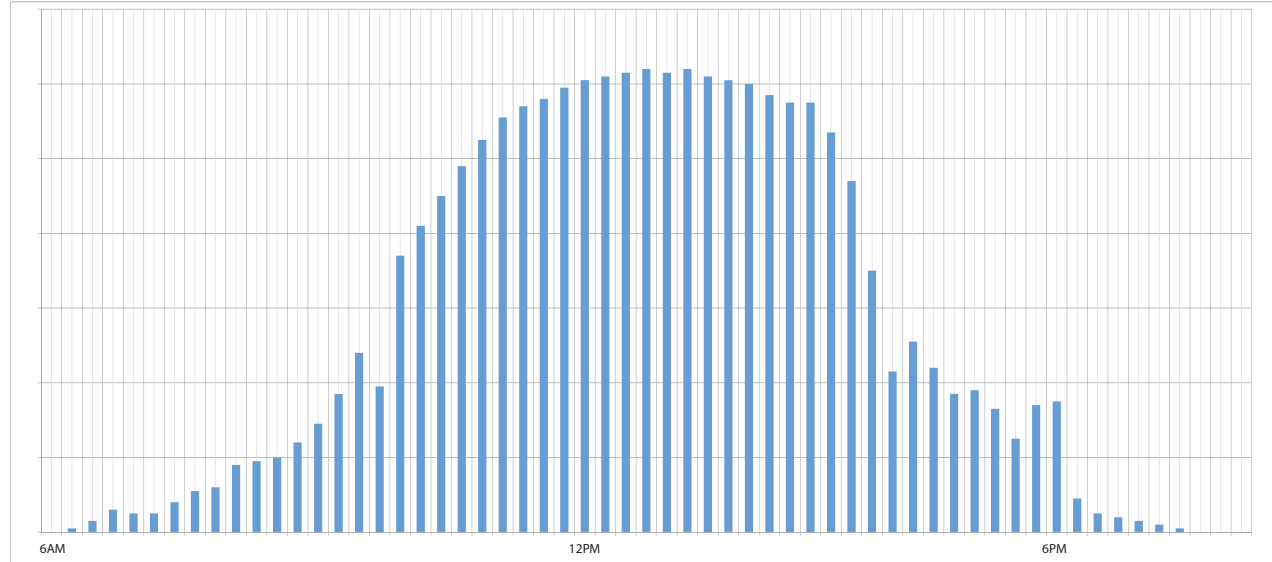
Take the time to talk about different installation options with a solar system provider. Solar systems are designed for 30 years of use and a slightly better performance will add up over the years.

Solar panels produce DC power which has to be converted to AC before being uploaded to the grid. That is done with an inverter; ours is located inside the garage because we didn't like the look of the box outside. Inverters last approximately 12 years and the replacement cost is about \$3000. The solar panel mounts and frames are black to match our black roof.

The predictions for our generated power and energy savings were as promised. ... continued on next page

In 2010 and 2011 we offset our power usage by 44% and we saved about 65% on our power bill. That means that our investment will be paid for by our energy savings in less than six years. In moments of high production our meter runs backwards, but PG&E doesn't buy power back.

In the last two years the system needed no extra care or maintenance. We are very happy with our decision to install solar panels and would recommend them both for financial and green reasons.



This chart represents a typical energy production day in the summer. Most solar companies offer a monitoring system that tracks the daily, monthly and yearly production of a solar system.



The indoor inverter is mounted on a garage wall



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New Listing

0 Monterey Terrace

Last undeveloped lot in Monterey Terrace, an exclusive neighborhood of multimillion dollar custom homes. Beaut pvt 1.15 ac site has gorgeous views, backs to open space.

Offered at \$329,000

ORINDA



New Listing

130 Meadow View Road

Cute, cozy ranch style home on fabulous .60 acre lot in the Glorietta neighborhood. Updated throuth with high end finishes. This turnkey property is a must see!

Offered at \$875,000

ORINDA



New Listing

5 La Noria

Wonderful 4bd/3.5ba mid-century modern on .70 ac in OCC. Floor to ceiling windows, hdwd in LR & DR. Sep 200+ sf ofc. Fab setting, privacy, views of golf course.

Offered at \$1,295,000

ORINDA



New Listing

33 Bates Blvd.

Vacation at home at this beautiful property reminiscent of the finest resorts. Updated open floor plan, amazing gourmet kitchen, spa bath. Rare .61 ac lvl view lot w/pool, spa, sports ct.

Offered at \$1,595,000

ORINDA



65 La Espiral

Villa Romantica! One of OCC's finest homes. 4349 sf, 4bd/4ba on .69 acre knoll setting w/lvl lawn, saltwater pool, patios/terraces. Incredible attn to detail, numerous upper-end amenities.

Offered at \$2,595,000

MORAGA



101 Brookline Street

Detached spacious 2bd/2ba + office in MCC. Wimbledon model, large bedrooms, vaulted ceilings. Great views from top of the hill. Flat yd in back, potential patio, dog run, etc.

Offered at \$695,000

MORAGA



1825 St. Andrews Drive

Stylishly updated Sequoyah detached 4bd/2.5 MCC home of 3424 sq. ft. Spacious kitchen/famrily rm combo. French drs open to courtyard, plenty of storage, striking views.

Offered at \$979,000

LAFAYETTE



3245 Judith Lane

Delightful 3bd/2ba 1204 sf hm at end of lane in beautiful oak tree setting. Updated kitchen & baths, spacious deck & patio, skylights, tranquil setting yet close to dwntwn & Bart.

Offered at \$549,000

LAFAYETTE



3398 Ridge Road

Special Lafayette Trail 4bd/3ba home nestled among oaks with views of hills on .29 acre. Easy walk to downtown, shopping, restaurants & 9 yrs. of schools. Backs to bike trail.

Offered at \$869,000

LAFAYETTE



8 Hawks Hill Court

Absolutely stunning pano views of Mt. Diablo, hills & Carquinez straits. Custom built in 2006 w/master suite, LR, DR, FR on main level, 3 more bdms & 2nd fam rm downstairs.

Offered at \$1,458,000

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3819 Palo Alto Drive

Beautifully updated Happy Valley sgl lvl 3bd/ 4ba home incl lg living suite w/frple & bath (2nd fam rm/ofc/in-law/4th bd) on .75 ac. Lovely pvt yd with pool & views.

Offered at \$1,499,000

LAFAYETTE



4145 Canyon Road

Happy Valley estate - one-of-a-kind kitchen & Mt. Diablo views are just two of the features of this gorgeous home.

www.4145CanyonRd.com.

Offered at \$2,950,000

ROSSMOOR



2600 Tice Creek Circle

Located right on the Golf Course, this 2bd/1.5ba home has a beautiful remodeled kitchen, plantation shutters, crown mouldings and an inside laundry. Easy walk to new restaurant!

Offered at \$239,000

WALNUT CREEK



New Listing

1300 Walden Road #124

Why Rent? Terrific 1st floor end unit condo in prime location! Looks sharp & ready to move in. Detached gar & commun pool. Next to Iron Horse Trail & mins to Bart & downtown.

Offered at \$289,000

WALNUT CREEK



New Listing

1520 Whitecliff Way

Rudgear Estates 5bd/2.5ba, 2604 sf jewel in tranquil country setting yet downtown close! Updated kichen {& baths, ofc, plantation shutters, commun pool, lvl lawn, patio & play area.

Offered at \$799,000

WALNUT CREEK



New Listing

687 La Vista Road

Estate home of 4bd/3+ baths in heart of Lakewood area, dramatic interior, .48 acre pvt park-like grounds backing to open space, vineyard too! Quick walk to swim & tennis club.

Offered at \$1,189,000

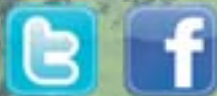
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