

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 06 Issue 2 Wednesday, March 28, 2012



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

...read on page D7

Seismic Retrofitting Lamorinda Homes

By Cathy Dausman



Retrofit bracing



Photos Cathy Dausman

Retrofit anchor bolt with plate washer (on left) shown next to original anchor bolt and small washer.

Earthquakes, large and small, are an ever-present Lamorinda possibility, since the area lies between the Hayward and Calaveras faults. While earthquake preparedness may focus on sheltering in place, many of us give little thought to ensuring that our “shelter” is habitable after a large earthquake. Lafayette resident Mason Walters believes “the best way to live in the state is to make the home safe.”

Walters is a registered structural engineer with 30 years’ experience. A principal at Forell/Elsesser in San Francisco, Walters’ local projects include retrofit work on Oakland City Hall after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, and seismic isolation design work for San Francisco’s BART and U. C. Berkeley’s California Memorial Stadium. He also spent the past 23 years taking his own advice and seismically retrofitted two homes

he owned in Lamorinda.

Older homes (those built before 1970) are less earthquake resistant than newer ones, explains Walters, because legislators didn’t update the state’s uniform building code until after the 1971 San Fernando (Sylmar) earthquake. Even today, no one is legally required to retrofit their home or to even purchase earthquake insurance. ... continued on page D4