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Rehearsal at CAPA studio

Photo Mina Lucacher

CAPA Nutcracker – Lots of Work for a Great Show

By Sophie Braccini

Whether you love the Sugar Plum Fairy, the tin soldiers, the Nutcracker Prince or simply the magic of this holiday ballet, the California Academy of Performing Arts (CAPA) production of *The Nutcracker* this Friday, Saturday and Sunday is sure to

wow audience members as it has for the past 20 years. More than 100 girls from the local company, as well as parents and friends, participate in this classic. And it takes the whole CAPA-community to put the show together. For the 'CAPA-girls,' *The Nutcracker* represents a re-

curing dream as year after year dancers vie for one of the coveted leading roles. But according to parents, teachers and the girls themselves, they compete while keeping a spirit of cooperation and support for each other.

... continued on page A12

Advertising

Quote of the Week:

"Either my high school has an unusually low number of LGBT students, or some are simply too afraid to let others know that they're homosexual." Read Letters to the Editor, page A8

SANTA HOLIDAY PHOTOS
 FRIDAYS 2PM-7PM
 SATURDAYS 10AM-7PM
 SUNDAYS 11AM-6PM
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Grandparent Scam Taking Advantage of Trusting Seniors

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure

By Cathy Tyson

Scammers preying on elderly victims are at it again, according to Lafayette Chief of Police Eric Christensen. "We've seen a dramatic increase in the amount of email and telephone scams lately," said Christensen. The latest ruse involves a phone call allegedly from the consulate in Lima, Peru claiming a granddaughter or grandson is in danger or has been arrested and needs from \$1,000 to \$1,800 in order to pay a fine and be released from jail. Would-be criminals instruct potential victims to get cash out of their bank, then use Western Union to send the funds to Peru. Recently a quick-thinking clerk at a CVS store with a Western Union outlet was able to persuade a senior citizen that it

City of Lafayette Police Department
Crime Bulletin
 November 2012
GRANDPARENT SCAM

The City of Lafayette Police Department is alerting residents to a recent crime trend that is affecting our neighborhoods. The purpose of this bulletin is to prevent additional residents from falling victim to this type of crime.

was a scam. The chief offers this advice: if a mystery solicitor claims a grandchild or loved one is in trouble and needs money to resolve the situation, take a few minutes to attempt to contact that person to verify if they are indeed in trouble. Next, if you have any questions, call the police. "We're here to help," said Christensen. ... continued on page A12

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Are you going out of town?

If you will be away over the holidays and have not made arrangements for someone to pick up your Lamorinda Weekly, please call or email us and we will have it picked up for you. Our next two delivery dates are December 19 and January 2. homedelivery@lamorindaweekly.com, (925) 377-0977

LAMORINDA WEEKLY
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Life in Lamorinda B1-B14

D.U.I.

Drinking and driving? Cathy Dausman works with Moraga PD to illustrate one possible outcome. Page B1



Sports C1-C3

Cougars Victorious 'til State

Simon Tryzna recaps Campolindo volleyball's run to the CIF Championship. Page C2



Our Homes D1-D8

Have a Very Berry Christmas!

Hoe, hoe, hoe-ing with Cynthia Brian. Page D5



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Lafayette

Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Arts & Science Discovery Center,
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 7:30 p.m.
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd., Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
Stanley Library
3477 School St., Lafayette
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us
Phone: (925) 284-1968

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org

After Long Delay, Woodbury Condos Coming to Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson



Image provided

Calling it thoughtful design on a human scale, Planning Commissioner Karen Maggio and her colleagues voted unanimously to approve a revised version of the upscale Woodbury Condominiums at the former site of the Hillside Motel behind the Veterans Memorial Building.

Proposed in 2007, the ambitious original project had 80 condominium units, later reduced to 65 in four three-story buildings with underground parking. Although it was approved in 2008, the housing market took a nose dive and plans were put on a lengthy hold. The recently approved revised project is smaller and will contain 56 residential condominium units in seven buildings that follow the con-

tour of the hillside on the two and a half acre site. The majority of units, 42 to be exact, will be three-bedroom condominiums, with the remaining 14 to be two-bedroom; the average square footage is slated to be 1,800 square feet with generous private outdoor areas.

Developer Matt Branagh sees the target market for these units as mature Lafayette residents whose kids have grown and gone. "Empty nesters have deep roots in the area and are looking for a high quality, fun place to enjoy their hard work," said Branagh. "The Woodbury's luxury units will offer them the freedom to entertain the family for Thanksgiving and the next day, lock the door and go to the desert for a month, worry-free. It's a vision my

late father created and my brother and I hope to carry forward."

As part of the project, there will be improvements made to the EBMUD aqueduct right-of-way that lies directly south of the project, ad-

acent to the Veterans Hall and associated parking lot. Plans for the strip of land that contain large water pipes include a handicap accessible multi-use pathway, upgraded landscaping, and public art. Another component of the Woodbury project is 18 affordable units for low- and moderate-income residents that will be located off-site, but within downtown Lafayette.

City staff commented that although the project has been significantly revised, the applicant has not abandoned attention to detail. Lafayette-based architect Scott Thomsen of Ward-Young Architects is responsible for the revised design that incorporates shingled buildings with some Craftsman elements.

... continued on page A9

Wait - There's More

A new Branagh building across the street



Image provided

Looking for final approval in early January, Matt Branagh of Branagh Development and architect Scott Thomsen have teamed up again just across the way from the Woodbury to produce a nearly 10,000 square foot, two-story medical office building on the corner of Risa Road and Mt. Diablo Boulevard, called EcoVive West. "It's a blend of modern and historic agricultural design," said Thomsen of Ward Young Architects. "We envisioned blending Lafayette's past style with Lafayette's current architectural vernacular. We have also worked hard to unite the building with the surrounding landscape, keeping it as natural and untouched as possible."

With the grand Veteran's Memorial Building right across the street, keeping this structure slightly subdued was part of the plan. A recent city staff report noted, "The applicant incorporated a number of mechanisms to break-up the bulk and mass of the buildings, such as utilizing a variety of materials, overhangs and windows and doors of varying shapes and sizes. If all goes according to plan, the developer hopes that construction will start this coming spring.

please...

...thanks!



Police Report

Nov. 11-24

Alcohol:

11/19 3700 block Mt Diablo (drunk in public, just down the street from the police department...judgment impaired?)

Animal control:

11/11 1900 block Reliez Valley Rd
11/12 1900 block Reliez Valley Rd
11/18 1000 block Sunnybrook Dr

Battery:

11/22 1200 block Del Arroyo Ct

Burglary/Fraud/Theft:

11/12 3900 block El Nido Ranch Rd (auto)
11/14 Olympic @ Pleasant Hill Rd (auto)
3300 block Mt Diablo Bl (petty theft)
11/15 900 block Leland Dr (commercial burglary)
11/19 3400 block Moraga Bl (auto)
11/20 3500 block Brook St (credit fraud)
11/21 100 block Reliez Valley Ct (auto)
100 block Del Rey Ct (auto)
3600 block Happy Valley Rd (petty theft)
100 block Del Rey Ct (auto)

1200 block Cambridge Dr (fraud)
11/23 600 block Glorietta Bl (petty theft)
3600 block Happy Valley Rd (petty theft)

Driving:

11/15 Crestmont @ Happy Valley (accident, major injuries)
11/17 Moraga Rd @ St Mary's Rd (DUI)
Sessions @ Sierra Vista Wy (hit & run)
11/18 Moraga Rd @ Mt Diablo (hit & run)
1000 block Upper Happy Valley (accident)
11/19 3300 block Mt Diablo (DUI)
11/20 Glenside @ Reliez Station (hit & run)
Hwy 24 @ Oak Hill Rd (DUI)
11/21 3200 block Marlene Dr (hit & run)
800 block Mountain View (reckless driving)
11/22 Deer Hill @ Happy Valley (hit & run)
Acalanes @ Hwy 24 (reckless driving)
Olympic @ Reliez Station (reckless driving)

Shooting/Fireworks:

11/20 900 block Acalanes (shooting)
11/23 3400 block School St (fireworks)
Moraga Rd @ St Mary's (shooting)
11/24 600 block Los Palos (fireworks)
1100 block Nogales St (fireworks)
3200 block Camino Diablo (fireworks)

Traffic stops:

82, week of Nov. 11-17
100, week of Nov. 18-24



Lafayette Volunteer Vacancies

Community Center Foundation is dedicated to renovating and expanding the Lafayette Community Center.

Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan

Implementation Committee (DSIMPIC) The Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan, adopted in 1988, guides developers and staff in making improvements to street frontage in downtown Lafayette to develop a cohesive, positive visual image for Lafayette's downtown while providing amenities to make the downtown a more comfortable, safer and enjoyable place.

Crime Prevention Commission studies safety issues in the City and works to educate the public.

Emergency Preparedness Commission coordinates preparation and planning efforts to mitigate the effects of natural and man-made disasters.

Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission - Reviews and supports effective management and operations of existing park facilities to maximize public enjoyment, continue to seek funding and develop the Community Park, Trail System and other City parks.

To learn more about these volunteer opportunities and to obtain an application visit the City's website www.ci.lafayette.ca.us or call Joanne Robbins at 925-299-3210. Positions open until filled.



YOLANDA "JOLIE" VEGA

Thank you, Lafayette,
for your vote.

While I did not earn a
seat on the City Council,
I appreciate your
confidence in me.

New Addition to Worst Roads List?



Last weekend's heavy rains, a leaky water pipe and a clogged culvert that caused water to pool on Mountain View Drive eroded and undermined the roadway creating a large sinkhole that may take months to repair permanently. Photo provided

KB Home Condo Project Gets Green Light

By Cathy Tyson

After endless public testimony and a private meeting with the City of Lafayette's attorney, the KB Home project was approved on a 3-1 vote at last week's City Council meeting that ran late into the night. Council member Don Tatzin was the only dissenter and Brandt Andersson recused himself. It was down to the wire for the proposed condominium project with four residential stories over street-level parking slated for the gravel parking lot behind Panda Express. Council members knew they had to act before a Dec. 6 legal deadline spelled out in the Process Agreement that governs this project. The approval is conditional upon a complete set of plans that will be reviewed by the council and the Planning Commission, and that both bodies can strongly support and approve.

At a meeting the week before, council members asked for additional simulated views from KB Home from Dewing Avenue and Diablo Foods. They were concerned how prominent the building would be when viewed from different locations in the downtown area. At the current revised height of 55 feet, this new project will be as tall as the adjacent Town Center apartments.

While the history of this particular project stretches back for many

years, the developer was criticized for failing to act when repeatedly cautioned that the Planning Commission and Design Review Committee found the building just too large for the site. KB produced the most recent iteration of the revised project that eliminated the fifth residential floor just two weeks before the deadline. Prior owner Lafayette Residential Partners transferred the property known as Town Center III back in late 2008.

Two city council meetings were held that ultimately led to the project's approval. At the last meeting the attorney for the developer, Margo Bradish, addressed the council: "KB has complied with these agreements, now it's time for the city to do the same."

Council member Carl Anduri questioned the developer's reasoning, asking why they waited until October to finally provide the council with revised smaller scale plans?

Architect Jeffrey Heller commented in the first of two city council meetings on a flyer produced by project opponents that had been circulating through town. "That drawing is a complete fraud," he stated. He pointed out the lowest level of the proposed building was drawn higher than it actually is.

... continued on page A9

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Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

Design Review

Monday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

School Board Meeting

Moraga School District

Tuesday, Dec. 11, 7:30 p.m.
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
Phone: (925) 888-7022

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org



Police Report

Bicycle fairy? 11/28/12 A resident of Chalda Way found a bike abandoned on the driveway of her complex. Cops took possession of the bike to prevent it from being stolen, no details on the particulars of this bicycle, but if you're missing one, call Moraga P.D.

Traffic accident, 11/25/12 A pedestrian was crossing the street from the Dollar Store to the parking lot when an elderly female driver hit him. The fellow had moderate injuries but refused to be taken to the hospital. Cops gave the driver a ride home.

D.U.I., 11/24/12 What were you thinking? A driver failed to yield while making a right turn onto Moraga Road and in doing so cut off a Moraga police officer on patrol. The driver was given a series of field sobriety tests and flunked – turned out he had a blood alcohol level of 0.16 percent, enough to get a free ride to the Martinez Detention Facility.

Another D.U.I., 11/24/12 Cops pulled over a white BMW at 1:50 a.m. on Corliss near Crossbrook due to a burnt out rear license plate light. The driver looked less than sober with red, watery eyes, slurred speech and smelled like booze. This person also took field sobriety tests and flunked. He signed a promise to appear notice and was later released to his sister.

Happy ending, 11/23/12 Someone found a cell phone on top of Mulholland Ridge, the location of a popular hiking trail and off-leash dog area. A good citizen turned it in to the police department who located the owner, a 15-year-old male who lives in town. Phone was later released to the father of young man.

Residential burglary, 11/22/12 Sometime between 2:30 p.m. and 9:45 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day an unknown subject forced entry into a Rheem Blvd. home through the locked front door. The homeowner reported that a laptop and miscellaneous jewelry were taken. No leads at this time. How's that for giving thanks?

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Measure K Passed, Now What?

By Sophie Braccini

Don't check your receipts just yet for the extra 1 percent sales tax Moraga residents overwhelmingly approved Nov. 6; it won't take effect until April 1, 2013. In the meantime, the Moraga Town Council and finance staff will work on putting together an oversight committee and setting in place a mechanism that will allow the town to bundle a good portion of the tax revenue. The Public Works Department will also get its shovels ready and prep the roads for the needed repairs. If all goes according to plan, residents should start seeing their Measure K dollars at work in the summer of 2013.

Not only did Moraga residents go to the polls in record numbers – over 80 percent, the highest rate in the county – but they overwhelmingly supported Measure K, which increases the sales tax by 1 percent to raise money for road and infrastructure repair. The numbers came as a nice surprise to town officials because last May the polling

agency Godbe Research predicted that a fairly slim majority would vote in favor of the measure.

In his State of the Town presentation in November, Mayor Mike Metcalf chalked up the discrepancy to the major outreach efforts conducted by a small group of Measure K volunteers led by John Haffner.

Metcalf also asked and answered the question, "Now what?" The election results have just been certified. Metcalf said that the next tasks for the town council entering the new year will consist of appointing an independent oversight committee and working with what he called the "bond team" to obtain a few million dollars immediately to address delayed infrastructure maintenance.

According to Sam Sperry, a Moraga resident and recently retired municipal bond attorney with 40 years of experience in the area of California land-secured and bond financing, the only available mechanism for linking general fund revenue to a borrowing

transaction, which the town has used previously, is a lease and lease-back of town-owned real property assets. The Constitution of California requires a two-thirds voter approval to legally pledge general fund revenue in the form of a bond. Measure K was placed on the ballot with a simple majority requirement only. Eileen Gallagher, from the investment banking firm of Stone & Youngberg with whom the Town works, concurs. Beyond that, she would not be more specific at this time, since the discussions with the Town have not started yet. "A better term than bond would be securities," said Gallagher. The council is expected to review options in January.

Town Engineer and Public Works Director Edric Kwan is putting his study team in place. "I am currently developing a great pavement management consultant team and will be issuing Requests for Proposals for pavement design services and for construction management/inspection services," he said. He will be using this fiscal year's pavement

funds of \$200,000 to prepare streets (base repairs) for the next fiscal year's construction project, treating various streets with a rubberized cape seal. "Town Council authorized me to apply for grant funding from CalRecycle that will reuse old California tires in the rubberized cape seal treatment." He added, "If the grant's awarded, the additional funding will augment our Measure K funding."

According to Kwan, StreetSaver software (a pavement management program) has identified a list of potential street segments that are appropriate for a rubberized cape seal treatment. This preliminary list will be refined based on additional field observations and professional input from the town's consultants. "If all goes well, we anticipate starting construction in the summer of 2013," said Kwan. "There will be a heavy emphasis on public outreach, potentially with Measure K signage on more visible streets like arterials and perhaps some collectors."

Who Will Be Moraga's Next Mayor?

By Sophie Braccini

Who will be Moraga's next mayor? Your guess is as good as ours. Usually, the vice-mayor becomes the mayor the following year; but the current vice-mayor, Howard Harpham, did not run for re-election this year. To add to the confusion, during the last election of a mayor and vice-mayor, the town's long tradition of elevating members of the town council to the mayor's seat according to the num-

ber of votes they received in the general election was broken. At the council's Dec. 12 meeting two new members will take their seats and a new mayor will be selected.

Before you break out your crystal ball, here are a few points to consider:

In Moraga you can't be mayor two times in a row—so it won't be Mayor Mike Metcalf again in 2013.

It seems unlikely that one of the two rookies, Phillip Arth or Roger

Wykle, would be chosen—their experience of public affairs is too limited, although Wykle has served on the Planning Commission for three years.

That leaves Ken Chew and Dave Trotter most likely to be mayor. After Trotter's turn was passed up last year when Karen Mendonca nominated Howard Harpham as vice-mayor, the council adopted a non-binding notation: "The Town

desires to fairly rotate the offices of Mayor and Vice Mayor of the Town Council among the five members of the Council." Since Chew was the mayor in 2010 and Trotter in 2009, we predict that in 2013 it will be Mayor Trotter and Vice-Mayor Chew.

But the Moraga Town Council has proven itself capable of surprising even its most dedicated observers.

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The Rheem Theater

Hollywood Studios are going digital and we need your help to keep the Rheem Theatre doors open! In order to continue serving the community all the projectors need to be converted to digital format by 2013, at a whopping 70k for each projector.

The support from the Lamorinda Community is what will save this beloved theater which serves many local schools, senior groups, and local organizations.

Thank you for your support!

Correction, issue date Nov. 21, 2012—Moraga's Plan for the Adobe Takes Shape: If you found this article confusing, you are not alone. About halfway through the fourth paragraph, the text of the Adobe article disappears and part of a completely different article, "Thumbs Up for 50+ Units of Housing" takes its place; seamlessly and without warning. The original article, as it should have appeared, is reprinted here; with apologies to our readers and our reporter.

Moraga's Plan for the Adobe Takes Shape

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council has a plan to save the Joaquin Moraga Adobe from becoming a private club house for 13 homeowners, wanting it preserved as a historical treasure that is open to the public for educational purposes. Trouble is, the Adobe is in Orinda—so last week the Town Council sent a letter to the City of Orinda.

The Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe (FJMA) recently appealed the Orinda Planning Commission's approval of the development of the Adobe property; the appeal will be heard by the Orinda City Council in January.

Introducing the agenda item at the council's Nov. 14 meeting, Town Manager Jill Keimach said that Moraga was respectful of Orinda's process and that the letter was an effort to start a discussion while proposing very specific strategies aimed at preserving the Adobe as a historical site. The staff report reads in part, "The first goal is to provide public access to the Adobe structure in order to educate and showcase the Adobe structure as it was initially

built in 1841, in conformance with the Historical/Cultural Resources Study by the Architectural Resources Group." The second goal is to preserve the view from the Adobe's porch.

The council believes the best solution is for FJMA to purchase both the Adobe and Lot 12, a piece of land where the developer plans to build a house that would, according to FJMA, annihilate the panoramic view from the Adobe's porch—the view that drew Joaquin Moraga and his family to that location in the first place. FJMA would restore and maintain the building as a museum, with help from the Moraga Historical Society.

FJMA President Kent Long expressed hope that with the weight of the town thrown into the battle, albeit "at the 11th hour," the dynamic will change. The property owner and developer, J&J Ranch, requested a delay before the appeal of the project is heard by Orinda's council and Long views this as a positive sign; he anticipates new discussions with J&J Ranch will take place before the

hearing.

If negotiations with the developer are successful, FJMA's challenge would be to find enough money to purchase the property. "Now that we have a plan, we can approach foundations and private companies who might be willing to participate in a non-profit venture," said Long.

Michael Olson of J&J Ranch shared a few thoughts the day after the meeting. "The Town of Moraga reached out to us and gave us a heads up about the letter to the City of Orinda," he said. Although he would not comment on the proposal itself, he indicated that one of the reasons he had to ask to postpone the Orinda hearing was to resume discussions with FJMA. "We have always been open to talking with them and explore options that would be mutually beneficial," he said, "but we also needed to move on with the project."

"The developer is interested in doing the right thing," said Orinda Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu, who added he is hopeful that a compromise would be found.

Runaway Librarian Settles in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini

There is a twinkle in the eye of Diane McDonnell, Moraga's new librarian – a spark that promises interesting surprises for residents. A long time Placer County librarian, McDonnell's worked in branch libraries and on the administrative side of the public library system. But she and her husband wanted to run away. Not from their children and grandchildren in Placer County, but from their lives

there. "We were ready for the next adventure," she says. "We wanted some unpredictability in our lives." Contra Costa County Library asked her which of four libraries with openings she would like to work at and she chose Moraga.

"I researched statistics about the different municipalities and set my heart on Moraga," says McDonnell. "I got the sense that the library was important to the

community here. I also saw many values that are important to me like family, open space, individualism."

For McDonnell and her husband, who is also a librarian, this is a return to the Bay Area. "I was raised in the Santa Clara/Los Gatos area," she says. "I looked into what the Contra Costa County Library had to offer because it has such a reputation for excellence and innovation." ... continued on page A9

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Square footage, acreage, and other information herein, has been received from one or more of a variety of different sources. Such information has not been verified by Alain Pinel Realtors. If important to buyers, buyers should conduct their own investigation.

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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Dec. 18, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District
Monday, Dec. 10, 6 p.m.
OUSD Office
25 Orinda Way, Suite 200
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org
Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

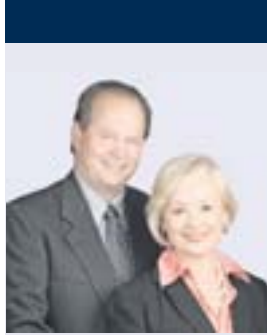
The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org

ORINDA POLICE Police Report

Dude, where's my car?
11/24/12 A woman complained to Orinda police that her car was stolen over Thanksgiving weekend—apparently taken right from her driveway. She thinks the thief may have taken the car key from her mailbox. Neither car nor keys have been returned to sender.

Oh THAT probation...
11/28/12 A 51-year-old male was stopped just past midnight at Orinda and Santa Maria Way. When asked, twice, if he was on probation he said "No." A records check proved otherwise. The forgetful soul was arrested and transported to Martinez where he was booked.



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Orinda City Council Considers Forming Public Safety Commission

New service opportunity for residents in the works

By Laurie Snyder

More Boy Scouts than adult Orindans were on hand to hear the Orinda City Council conduct business at its Nov. 27 meeting. Council members discussed the possible reconstitution of a disbanded Public Safety Commission in follow up to their Sept. 4 deliberations regarding the same matter.

As residents may remember, Orinda's last Public Safety Advisory Committee was born Aug. 17, 2004. Comprised of seven council-appointed members, it was given "duties related to the review and establishment of City policies and programs in the areas of emergency preparedness and crime prevention." According to the Sept. 4 staff report, however, the group "segued into more of an implementation group carrying out policies, training, and programs"—and that was a problem. OPSAC's actions conflicted with the council's initial resolution, resulting in "compliance issues with the Brown Act."

The city council dissolved OPSAC in 2009, opting instead to support the emergency preparedness and response efforts of various volunteer groups.

One such group is the Citizens

Emergency Response Team (CERT). CERT's steering committee is comprised of two representatives each from Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda, and develops CERT policies and recommendations. Another is the Orinda Citizen's Corps Council which "coordinates CERT, Neighborhood Watch, Emergency Communications, Fire District Communications and Logistics volunteers." Both Lafayette and Moraga have similar bodies. Their mission "is to harness the power of every individual through education, training, and volunteer service to make communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to respond to the threats of terrorism, crime, public health issues, and disasters of all kinds."

At the time that the city council disbanded Orinda's Public Safety Commission, it also tasked council members Steve Glazer and Amy Worth (currently mayor and vice-mayor respectively) with the formation of a subcommittee to assess Orinda's various public safety efforts, including the aforementioned citizen's council and the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee which reviews

Orindans' requests for traffic calming measures.

The council subcommittee met Oct. 26. Attendees at the public meeting included Police Chief Jeffrey Jennings, Moraga Orinda Fire District Chief Randy Bradley and MOFD Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein, and City Manager Janet Keeter. The Glazer-Worth subcommittee suggested that Orinda hold a joint meeting with the Town of Moraga annually — at which MOFD would be invited to present the fire district's annual report to the two councils and the public.

Members also suggested that Orinda city staff present an annual disaster preparedness report, assessing the state of citizens' preparedness and the city's readiness, and providing updates regarding citizen HAM radio and Orinda Citizen's Corps Council operations.

In addition, the subcommittee recommended that the city council create a new city public safety commission under a new charter. Five Orinda citizens would be appointed to the commission, which would "be advisory to the Police Chief and City Manager. The Committee would not be in-

involved in police personnel matters." The proposed commission, meeting twice per year, would discuss the police budget, emergency plans, annual crime statistics, Citizen's Corps activities, and police involvement with civic events such as Orinda Night Out and the 4th of July Parade.

"This was a unanimous recommendation," said Worth who noted that the subcommittee considered the input of both emergency services professionals and volunteers involved in disaster preparedness and response.

Although the Town of Moraga does not have a similar committee or commission, the City of Lafayette has formed a city council subcommittee to review its public safety issues. Jennings described the proposed new public safety commission as "a great conduit to get my message out about public safety."

Next steps: Keeter will invite Moraga's Town Council to participate in an annual joint meeting, and will return to a future council meeting with wording allowing the council to create a public safety commission. City Clerk Michele Olsen will then begin announcing and recruiting for openings.

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It's Not Just a Library, It's a Destination

By Laurie Snyder



The Orinda Library's staff and volunteers match Orindans with great books, uncover answers to life's most puzzling questions, and patiently teach even the least tech savvy to use e-readers. From left: Robbin Milne, Lin Look, Raminah Mousseli, Bonnie Sanders, Sandy Jones, Nadine Imada, Beth Girshman, Eric Ralphs, Ruth Boyer, Eric Lee. Photo Ohlen Alexander

"It's funny that we think of libraries as quiet demure places where we are shushed by dusty, bun-balancing, bespectacled women. The truth is libraries are raucous clubhouses for free speech, controversy and community. Librarians have stood up to the Patriot Act, sat down with noisy toddlers and reached out to illiterate adults. Libraries can never be shushed." – Paula Poundstone, comedian and national spokesperson for Friends of Libraries U.S.A.

Twens on commando missions huddling to complete school assignments. Sun worshipers in search of beach book nirvana. Do-it-yourself-dads trying to

figure out how to undo what they just did to a drain pipe. The budding poet who doesn't know it. Tiny tots toting books twice their size, impatiently tugging mom-

hands toward book check-out. Orindans clearly love their library. More than 13,000 of the city's 17,643 residents are cardholders. ... continued on page A11

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ORINDA \$1,950,000
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Frank Woodward DRE# 01335916



LAFAYETTE \$2,750,000
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Kathy McCann DRE# 00946092



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ORINDA \$1,189,000
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Walter Nelson DRE# 01461463



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Maureen Wilbur DRE# 01268536



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Lana Fitzpatrick, CB Agent

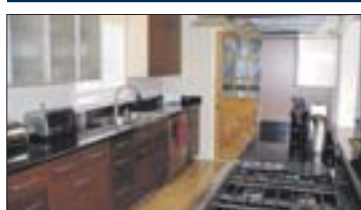
"We have had the good fortune of partnering with Lana to sell our previous home. She is an ABSOLUTE professional, an amazing resource of local Lamorinda information and a tremendously hard-working agent. This has been a tough market and we know that Lana always had our best interests in mind throughout the process. Lana is thoughtful and insightful but at the same time, she treated our buyers and their agent with respect. We highly recommend Lana as an excellent realtor for buying and selling in the Lamorinda area." - Brandon



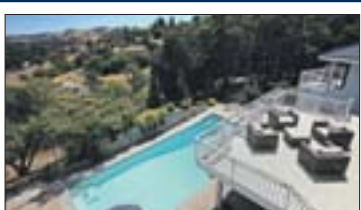
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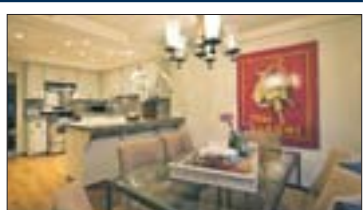
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Letters to the Editor



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:

Years ago, a study was released giving the statistic that about one person in every ten is gay. There are around 1300 students at Miramonte, and as a student there, I know of only a handful of individuals who have openly come out. Either my high school has an unusually low number of LGBT students, or some are simply too afraid to let others know that they're homosexual.

I wouldn't be surprised at all if the latter was true. And it's the largest, most-respected institutions in our society that contribute to this fear. Religious groups like the Catholic Church tell us it's a perverted sin to be attracted to the same sex. Recently, the Boy Scouts of America refused to give a Moraga boy his Eagle Scout rank because he was openly gay. Proponents of the "protecting marriage" movement tirelessly make the case that the institution of marriage itself is meant for a man and a woman, despite the fact that men and women have been getting divorced at a rate of about 40-50% for years.

I attended Catholic school for nine years of my life, and I know that the church's teachings of love and compassion are the complete antithesis of the hypocritical stance that Catholicism takes on homosexuality and gay marriage. I was a Boy Scout long enough to know that the scouts' values of service, kindness, and helpfulness don't fall in line with its administration's judgmental thinking. And I as I grow older I recognize that marriage is based on the ability to love, cherish, and commit to another, and not on sexual orientation or gender.

For those who are gay at Miramonte and the rest of the world, who haven't yet come out, I don't blame them. They are confronted by a world that doesn't accept but rather shames them for something over which they have no control. Powerful forces in our society have led them to believe that their simple difference in preference is in fact a disorder. It's time that these institutions realize not only their immense hypocrisy, but also the tremendous damage they are inflicting upon others.

Brian De Luna
Orinda

Editor:

The police department personnel and paramedics who saved the life of cardiac-arrest victim Jim Engelhardt [*Lamorinda Weekly* November 21, 2012] received well-deserved praise for their successful resuscitation efforts. But what about those unnamed Good Samaritans, the bystanders who started CPR before the professionals arrived on the scene?

We encourage our citizens to learn CPR and AED operation as well as emergency first aid, because seconds count in cases like these. The bystanders who initially stepped in may well have made a critical difference between success and failure in this patient's outcome. They too should be recognized for their role in his recovery.

Eugene L. Gottfried, M.D.
Orinda

(Editor's note: We have attempted to discover the identities of the above-referenced Good Samaritans, but nobody seems to know who they are. Do you? Please let us know by emailing lee@lamorindaweekly.com.)

Editor:

Le Colbert, Paris, 17 Nov. 2012
My parents, from northern Germany, tell me of a delightful evening at Le Colbert in Paris, France, with a couple from Lafayette, CA. To their great dismay they misplaced

the couple's email address. We'd be most delighted if you could contact me, their daughter living in Oakland, at abrown@dvc.edu.
A très bientôt,

Amélie Brown

Editor:

So, the Orinda City Staff has announced the award of the prestigious Golden Nugget Grand Award for Best Senior Housing Community -- On the Board, to the pending Eden Housing project in Orinda, all before a shovel is even in the ground. Prestigious for whom?

A little digging at www.goldennuggetawards.com reveals that the Golden Nugget Awards are actually granted by the PCBC, which translates to Pacific Coast Builders Conference, a self-serving trade event for developers and such, sponsored by the California Industry Building Association. These awards themselves are sponsored by Builders Magazine. Only a real estate development insider, with something to gain, could tout this "award".

If a trade association wants to go around patting its own members on the back, so be it, but is that really newsworthy, or prestigious for the citizens of Orinda, who are looking down the barrel at a high-rise, high-density, low-income, residential housing project within the city's commercial district?

Perhaps, not so much.

Owen Murphy
Orinda

Editor:

Sharply lower home values in Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda are likely to occur if the federal government goes ahead with plans to limit tax deductions for home-mortgage interest and property taxes.

Lamorinda -- a collective term for Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda -- contains many well off residents earning high annual incomes. Such residents are likely to itemize deductions on their federal income taxes. Itemization allows tax deductions for home-mortgage interest and for property taxes.

Here is an hypothetical example: Suppose a Lamorinda home has a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage for \$800,000. If the loan's interest rate were 4 percent, the yearly mortgage-interest payment would be about \$46,000. (If the loan is new, mortgage payments go mostly for interest.) The property tax on the home might be \$12,000 annually. Together, the two payments equal \$58,000 a year.

The owner of the home would, under current law, be able to deduct \$58,000 from his annual income.

Currently, some members of Congress are considering lowering the amount of deductible income to \$17,000. Thus, instead of deducting \$58,000, the homeowner might only be able to deduct \$17,000 and would owe \$41,000 in additional federal taxes.

If the home were sold, the buyer might not want to pay as much as the seller wants. The buyer, citing an increased tax liability, might demand a lower price for the home because the buyer would have to pay higher taxes.

California now has the nation's highest annual average for deductions for people who itemize (The Wall Street Journal, Nov. 19). That average is \$33,901. Indiana has the lowest number: \$20,111.

The big question is: Will homes in Lamorinda plummet in value if Congress limits tax deductions for high-income individuals who itemize their federal tax returns?

Richard S. Colman
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.

MOFD Firefighters, Driver Injured on Highway 24



Michael Rattary Kelly Morris Stephen Rogness

Three Moraga Orinda Fire District firefighters and a male driver, who was not identified as of our press deadline, were injured the wet and windy morning of Dec. 2 after MOFD responded to an accident on Highway 24 east of the Wilder exit.

According to MOFD Fire Chief

Randy Bradley, while firefighters were investigating the non-injury accident their fire engine was struck by a car that failed to stop due to extensive rain, resulting in minor damage to both vehicles but no injuries. The firefighters were standing off the shoulder of the highway interviewing the driver when another vehicle lost

control, struck the side of the fire engine and rolled into the three firefighters and the driver of the first vehicle.

Bradley would not release the name of driver who was being interviewed but said that he was transported to John Muir Hospital with critical injuries.

MOFD Captain Michael Rattary, firefighter paramedic Kelly Morris, and firefighter Stephen Rogness were transported to John Muir Hospital in Walnut Creek with serious but non-life threatening injuries. Morris and Rogness sustained leg fractures requiring surgery.

Bradley said the driver of the car that rolled, who was also unidentified, refused treatment for minor injuries. The California Highway Patrol is investigating the accident.

L. Borrowman



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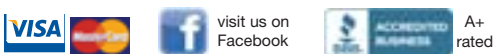
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Civic News Lafayette

After Long Delay, Woodbury Condos Coming to Lafayette

... continued from page A2

Thomsen said he enjoys working with Branagh Development. "They are the perfect client; they respect good design and always strive to create the best product possible. When I first sat down with them to look at this project, they came up with an innovative and much needed housing concept to fill a niche in the area."

Together they focused on creating a project that has all the advantages of single family residences, but none of the disadvantages. "We have developed large single story units that share no walls with other condominiums and have windows on three sides," said Thomsen. "We strove to make the units feel private and separate with some breathing room between neighbors; to that end we incorporated individual garages,

large private outdoor terraces and even included personal foyers off the elevators. We believe all this attention to detail will create a truly unique project."

He's leaving his imprint on the city's west end—Thompson is the brains behind the skinny Fresh Connection building just down Mt. Diablo Boulevard and the soon to be constructed Eco Vive West office building that will occupy the corner of Risa Road and Mt. Diablo.

Design Review commissioners commented on the evolution of the project, praising its livability and scale. Commissioner and architect Ken Hertel noted the "fantastic rebirth and salvation of this project" adding, "it will certainly dress up a hillside that has been lacking for some time."

KB Home Condo Project Gets Green Light

...continued from page A3

He explained that the KB Home project will be similar in scale to the existing apartments with an enhanced design, and that it was never the intention for that parcel to remain a gravel parking lot forever – it will either be an office or residential building.

One of the partial owners of the land, Ivan Glover testified that he bought the property when he was 56, now having just turned 76, "I really do believe it's time."

In describing how he came to his decision, Anduri noted that although some residents claim to have just recently heard about it, the public has been on notice of a project at this site, "at least for the last 16 years – since I have been on the Planning Commission and City Council." He continued, "Part of the reason we are here is that we

didn't want an office building on this site – there was unanimous consensus that we want housing here." Scolding the developer for last minute adjustments he said, "I'm very unhappy with the applicant and the way they've gone about this." Despite KB's timeliness he summarized that this is a perfect location for high density housing, close to BART and freeway access - a strong beneficial project for Lafayette.

The majority of public comment on the proposed 72-unit building has been negative, citing traffic, school crowding, loss of views and more, but fans of smart growth added their voices to the fray pointing out the need for housing and advocating for a pedestrian-friendly complex that will accommodate the inevitable growth in the area.

Civic News Moraga

Runaway Librarian Settles in Moraga

... continued from page A5

In Placer County, McDonnell went from a position in a branch to a headquarter management position. "I was in charge of personnel, purchasing, budget and facilities," she says. In that position she acted as a project manager for the construction of new libraries in Meadow Vista and Rocklin. "It was very interesting and diverse, but I was missing the branch work and relationship with the public," she says.

In Moraga she plans to work behind the counter as often as possible and not spend too much time at her desk in the back office. She wants to get to know the collections and the vast network that allows patrons to get books from any of the branches in the county system. McDonnell also expects to spend a lot of time planning activities in partnership with the Friends of the Library. "This group has such a great reputation throughout Contra Costa," she says. "I'm looking forward to working with them."

She is interested in both the adult and children programs. "The children's programs are of great impor-

tance to me, supporting early literacy is very rewarding," says McDonnell. She remembers the first time she participated in a 'Paws to Read' program in Placer County. "It brought tears to my eyes," she admits.

"My personal interests are very diverse, from contemporary folk music to travel all over the world," she says, "but before planning programs I want to get to know the community." She has ideas about computer classes, literary presentations with authors and culinary/recipe swap meets; but will first get a feel for Moraga's needs.

McDonnell looks over her new domain with the critical eye of a project manager. "It looks like the building is well maintained and that renovations have been made to preserve its charming character," she says. She enjoys the wildlife that roams by her window, up the hill behind the library. "Here it's just deer, the occasional cow and a few turkeys; we don't have to worry about bears," says the librarian, who's obviously used to dealing with all kinds of situations.

A Parking Lot in the Making



The Town of Moraga is building a new 29-space parking lot for the skate park. The parking area will be separated from the road by a planted border. The cities of Orinda and Lafayette are sharing in the cost of the project. The skate park remains open during construction.

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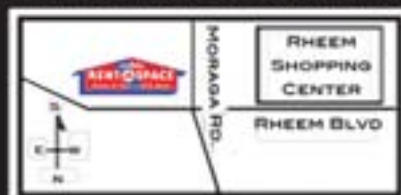
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Community Service

We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions can be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

Moraga Rotary Collects and Disposes of 16 Tons of E-Waste

Submitted by Gary Irwin



From left, Rotarians Mary Elena Dochterman, Debbie Roessler, Rich Render, Lad Lynch, and Kevin Reneau stand next to a box of small e-waste items to be recycled. Photo provided

Since the e-waste collection project began in September 2009, Rotary Club of Moraga has collected more than 16 tons of electronic waste, disposing of it according to California law. They also provide a document shredding service. Held semi-annually at the Moraga Shopping Center courtesy of the Bruzzone family, each of the seven events collected an average of 2.3 tons, although the mix of waste is changing – not as many large screen TVs as in previous years, and more boxes to be shredded now.

phones, printers, copiers, DVD players, fax machines, VCRs, stereos, ink jet cartridges, and video games were dropped off. Many items were taken at no charge, but there was a small charge for some items.

Citizens dropped off their e-waste at the Moraga Shopping Center where the Sunday Farmers' Market is held. Televisions, monitors, laptop computers, flat screens, cell phones, CPUs, cell and wired

Workers at the Sept. 8 event included Moraga Rotary members Tony Schoemehl, Kevin Reneau, Lad Lynch, Frank May, Cliff and Mary Elena Dochterman, Grant Shoaf, Herb Wehmeyer, and Lou and Debbie Roessler, and Chairman Rich Render. They were reminded of the old song, "Sixteen Tons," and were humming it to help meet this goal.

Rotary Club of Moraga is a local service club within Rotary International that meets most Tuesdays at noon at Saint Mary's College. For information, please call President Frank May at (925) 376-8195.

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Three New Eagle Scouts Honored

Submitted by Kit Bittner



From left: Lukas Bittner, Bryant Chow and Matt Henry. Photo provided

Three new Eagle Scouts have joined the Troop 233 Eagle family: Lukas Bittner, Bryant Chow and Matt Henry. They were recognized at Troop 233's Eagle Court of Honor Nov. 11 at the Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church in Orinda. Scoutmaster Don Larwood presented the Eagle awards, the highest rank in Boy Scouting. For his Eagle Scout project, Bittner – a Miramonte High School junior – installed a brick walkway at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area in Orinda. This walkway is in the garden area and will allow kids and staff to tend to the raised garden

beds relatively mud-free. Chow, a senior at Miramonte High School, constructed and installed a six foot by three foot cross at the Main Hall for the Contra Costa Gospel Church in Walnut Creek. He also built three wooden benches for the church to enhance outdoor activities. And Miramonte High School senior Henry developed a project protecting the native bay oak from being overcrowded by invasive non-native weeds and trampled by cows. He protected 50 oaks that were deemed by the Brioner ranger to be weak with wraparound chicken wire enclosures.



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Civic News Moraga

Moraga Tree Lighting



Photo Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Community Chorus braved the rain and cold Dec. 1 to sing at the town's tree-lighting ceremony at the Moraga Commons Park. It is a Moraga tradition to invite local children to visit with Santa, take pictures and give the big man their wish lists, while the volunteers of the Moraga Youth Involvement Committee offer hot cocoa. The rain didn't stop a sizeable crowd from participating in the annual festivities. *S.Braccini*

Civic News Orinda

It's Not Just a Library, It's a Destination

... continued from page A7

Compared with other book-lending institutions across the area, that's a fairly impressive figure. In 2011 alone, the total circulation of the Orinda Library reached nearly a quarter of a million.

But those numbers can't come close to painting the Picasso of one of Orinda's most beloved institutions. Part of a complex that includes the Orinda Community Center, adjoining parks and tennis courts, Orinda's Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, and Caffè Teatro, the library is patronized not only by well-read residents and parents helping their children hone their research and study skills, but by non-Orindans dropping in after dance workouts and OCC classes, friends meeting for lunch, and life-long learners arriving for will and trust workshops, computer training, and even toddler yoga. Art on display in the Library Gallery can be enjoyed by all.

One only need sit outside the facility on any given day or evening to witness the synergy taking place. "It's a very fun atmosphere," says Beth Girshman, senior community library manager. "I think that ideally the Library is the fifth place — a gathering place open, free, safe. You see your friends, your neighbors ... people with children ... people working on their novels."

Adult and Teen Services Librarian Ruth Boyer concurs. "We know that people are saying, 'Let's meet at the Library.'" If something isn't happening at one facility, they often find it at another.

Seats at the ground floor coffee shop and cafe are hard to come by most mornings and afternoons — as are spaces at library computers upstairs at peak times. Even parking lots at restaurants across the street are often packed. "Anything that can generate the ability of so many people to come to a destination for 65 hours a week, seven days a week ... any destination that's

open that much can't help but bring people into an area," says Girshman of the library's contribution to this vitality.

The latest infusion of energy is likely to come via the Winter Music Series. Modeled on the library's well attended summer series, Boyer hopes the new winter concerts will motivate locals to venture forth on dark, chilly nights. The events kick off Dec. 5 with mellow guitar music, followed by Jazz in January, and the romantic strains of violin just in time for Valentine's Day — all enhanced by the glow and warmth of the library's fireplace. Because Orinda's library is generally such a "peaceful, contemplative environment," says Girshman, "it's a little unexpected to have music ... but it works."

The library also boasts a Mystery Book Club, which meets the third Friday of every month. Boyer describes the club as "very vibrant." New members are always welcome, as are diverse opinions. "You don't have to love a book," she says. When a debate ensues, it "brings conversation to the table."

The music series and many other programs are underwritten by the Friends of the Orinda Library (FOL), which raises a significant amount of money each year through operation of a book store, a membership program, monthly book sales, and other initiatives. FOL's efforts also support additions to Orinda's holdings over and above those provided by the Contra Costa library system — a system recently awarded the prestigious National Medal of Honor by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. FOL will host a special holiday book sale Dec. 8 before kicking off a major membership drive this January.

And as always, says Girshman, "The best way that people can support the library is to use it."

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CAPA Nutcracker – Lots of Work for a Great Show

... continued from page A1



Photo Mina Lucacher

Since it reached the United States in San Francisco on New Year's Eve in 1944, *The Nutcracker* has been one of the most popular and most-often staged ballets by local ballet companies. A.J. Brown, daughter of the company's founders, Joan Robinson Borchers and Doyle Borchers, says that the CAPA Nutcracker is the biggest in the East Bay, second only to the Oakland Ballet's production.

CAPA's requirements for the girls to participate are quite strict. "In order to join in the annual show, the girls have to dance in the ballet company and the performing ensemble, and take additional tech-

nique and choreography classes that are geared to the performance," says Brown. This means that the little ones, 6 to 9 years old, come at least three times a week, and girls ages 9 and up average eight to 10 hours a week.

"Then there are eight mandatory rehearsals on Sundays and dress rehearsals," says Brown.

Each age group is in charge of a particular role, like the sugar angels, the party children or the mice, and they work on their parts during their weekly classes. By the time they reach high school, the ballerinas have performed the ballet about eight times, but it is never the same.

"It changes every year," says Maddy Weinberg, a freshman at Campolindo who's been dancing at CAPA for 10 years and in *The Nutcracker* for nine, "and every year you look forward to the next level."

others when they audition and how they feel, and if they get a role you wanted, then you support them."

"There is competition but there is no negativity," adds Weinberg. Even if there are tears, mean spirit- edness is not a part of it. "The girls are extremely supportive of each other," says Brown. "This year 69 girls auditioned for the main parts and each of them got a role in one of the four casts – maybe not the exact one they wanted, but each they got something."

For some of the girls, dancing becomes a passion that they wish to pursue their entire lives.

Molly Longchamps is a seventh grader at Stanley Middle School who will be playing one of the Clara parts in this year's *Nutcracker*; she comes to CAPA from Walnut Creek three times a week and participates in classes at another studio the rest of the week.

"It means a lot of sore feet," she says, "because Clara has a lot of pointe work."

Longchamps is beginning to compete at the national level (Youth Grand Prix of America) and hopes to dance all her life.

"She started at Contra Costa Ballet and in the beginning she didn't like it much," says Longchamps' mother, Robin, "but especially here, Rachel (Chew) brought out the artistic expression in Molly. Now she says, 'Pointe shoes are my life.'"

Molly's mother shares in her daughter's commitment. "I live in my car," she says with a smile.

All of the CAPA parents make huge commitments to the success of the show, the first being financial. "It's on par with club sports," says Lynn Davis, whose daughter Lindsay dances four roles in the upcoming show.

Then some parents also give their time behind the scenes, or even in the production itself. Two fathers who play Dr. Silberhaus in separate casts, love sharing time with their daughters, and being part of the show and the CAPA family.

"This is a fun thing to share with my daughter, Zoe," says Scott Heidesbach, who comes every Sunday for two and a half hours of rehearsal. Mark Weinberg started performing three years ago when his daughter played Clara. "It was wonderful to dance with my daughter," he says.

Performances can sell out. Public presentations are scheduled for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 7, 8 and 9 in the Campolindo High School Theater. For show times and tickets, visit www.showtix4u.com.



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"It is a lot of work, but it taught me discipline," adds Weinberg. Brown agrees that their commitment to their art teaches the girls discipline and time management, and that the girls are often also at the top of their academic classes. Each year, the ballerinas also compete for one of the 17 individual roles in the ballet. There are four casts, so there are plenty of roles; still, the competition is fierce to get the favorites.

"This is intense," says Rachel Chew, CAPA ballet mistress. "The girls work very hard for these auditions; many take private lessons. They have to come to the audition knowing their role perfectly."

"We care for each other," says Mary Noal, who's also been a ballerina at CAPA for 10 years. "We know what goes on in the heads of

Grandparent Scam Taking Advantage of Trusting Seniors

... continued from page A1

He adds that these crimes are difficult to solve, criminals use a voice over IP internet phone connection that is difficult to track, and in the Lima case, in this bustling city of over nine million people, there are more than a few Western Union offices. The Diplomatic Security Service is investigating, but the chief points out, "If it didn't do it, they (criminals) wouldn't do it." Another scam making the rounds locally is an email from a

couple allegedly robbed in Balears, Spain who needs to raise money to fly back home.

In an effort to prevent further crimes, the Lafayette police department distributed Crime Bulletin flyers to banks and Western Union operations to alert staff to be aware of the Grandparent Scam and pass those flyers on to folks possibly being swindled. Bottom line: when in doubt, call police at (925) 284-5010.

DUI: A Sobering Experience

By Cathy Dausman



Moraga Police Officer Krista Koppinger performs a field sobriety test.

Photos Andy Scheck



Officer Krista Koppinger

It was an uneventful morning – mild, dry and sunny – until the cruiser lights flashed in my rear view mirror. We pulled over behind Moraga’s Rheem Theatre, and Officer Krista Koppinger came to the driver’s window.

“Good morning,” Koppinger began politely. “Do you know why I pulled you over?”

I knew.

I was being tested on suspicion of DUI – driving under the influence. Fortunately, it was only a test. I was sober but enduring a scenario pre-arranged with the blessing of Moraga Police Chief Robert Priebe under the guidance of Detective Will Davis.

At holiday time especially, when making merry might mean over-indulgence, I learned drinking and driving mean more than a pit stop at the police station. It’s also inconvenient, embarrassing, time consuming and a considerable financial strain.

The field sobriety tests Koppinger administered took only minutes. She’s good at it. Koppinger estimates she pulls over “two to three” suspected DUI drivers a week in Moraga, predominantly on weekends.

I was asked to remove my sunglasses. I was asked what time it was, what day it was, whether I had any pre-existing medical conditions, whether I took prescription medication, when I’d last slept, eaten, and what I’d had to drink.

For test purposes, my answer was “two glasses of wine.” Being naturally klutzy, I’m pretty sure I failed the balance tests, even sober! Next Koppinger administered a preliminary alcohol screening (PAS) test. Since

1990 California has defined adults with a blood alcohol content of 0.08 percent or more as being DUI impaired. For minors (those under 21) as little as 0.01 percent blood alcohol content will result in license suspension.

Based on my test “failure,” my license was confiscated; I was handcuffed and placed in the cruiser’s back seat – abandoning my car and helpless now even to buckle my own belt.

“This is where the tears start to flow,” Davis said.

There followed a period of observation at Moraga Police Department. I sat chained to a chair in a holding room, a toilet available but lacking even a semblance of privacy. I awaited the administration of a second breath test or blood draw, being fingerprinted and photographed. I could also have been transported to

Martinez and jailed for two days before being released on probation.

Lawyer Amanda Bevins, a partner at Gagen, McCoy, McMahon, Koss, Markowitz and Raines, has among her clients those accused of driving under the influence. She has worked with a variety of clients, including lawyers and police officers.

Bevins said 99.9 percent of DUI charges in Contra Costa County result in an arrest. Those arrested face a court appearance which could be six months to a year out. In addition to criminal charges, a DUI triggers administrative action from the Department of Motor Vehicles. The DMV allows just 10 calendar days for the subject to contact their offices and fight an immediate Administrative Per Se four month license suspension.

Those 10 days can easily lapse, Davis said, because minds befuddled by booze are often forgetful. “I’ve had several people call Monday asking me to repeat what I told them Saturday night,” he said.

Bevins said there is no chance you’ll keep your license if you don’t call DMV on time. The wait for your DMV hearing can easily be two to three months. Additional license suspension time or revocation can follow conviction in court. After Jan. 1, the Walnut Creek court is closed to all but traffic cases, and you’ll need to get to Martinez.

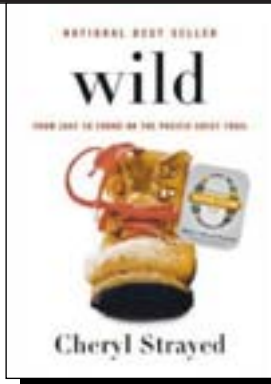
And those are just the time and paperwork headaches.

... continued on page B3



A second breath test is performed at the Moraga Police Department.

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Samira Davi is a Nurse Liaison for ManorCare Health Services in Walnut Creek. Samira has over 10 years of experience working in health care in Contra Costa County, which has gained her a wide view of what is important to the health care consumer. She will be posting common questions and comments in each issue of the Lamorinda Weekly. You are welcome to contact Samira directly at 925.270.8766

It's All About Who You Know

Navigating the healthcare system is no easy task, especially when you are in a medical crisis. Post-acute rehab centers can be a maze, and it's important to know who your "inside advocates" are—the people on staff who can help you figure out how things work. Being familiar with the people and processes in the facility will help reduce any anxiety you may feel and ease you through your stay.

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Pearl Harbor Survivor Left His Heart on USS San Francisco

By Cathy Dausman



From left, California State Senator Leland Yee with "Chief Johnson" during the 2001 USS San Francisco memorial service. Photo provided

Richard "Johnny" Johnson, until recently a Lafayette resident, turns 90 Dec. 6 but you wouldn't know it. The retired Navy chief still has a full head of hair and an unlined face. He was just a boy at 17, a self-professed high school dropout, when he enlisted with his mother's permission on his birthday in 1940.

"Join the Navy and See the World" – that was the poster which inspired the Minnesota farm boy and his older brother to enlist. "Chief Johnny" passed the physical, his brother did not.

In April, 1941, Seaman Third Class Johnson boarded the USS San Francisco in Pearl Harbor. He worked in the galley throughout his entire enlistment preparing meals for the crew, and never left the "Frisco."

Johnson recalled how Pearl Harbor was awash in young sailors as the Navy built its forces for the war they feared was coming. "Saturday nights in Honolulu were [so] packed with servicemen; you had to walk in the streets," he said.

The Frisco should have been in dry dock, positioned differently within Pearl Harbor. Instead, Johnson said, his ship was being repainted; half its food and all its ammunition was unloaded. The USS New Orleans was in dry dock in its place.

The morning of Dec. 7, 1941, Johnson was drinking coffee on the ship's fantail, preparing for a day on Waikiki Beach. He noticed planes flying overhead.

He waved, not realizing they were the Japanese fleet.

When the bombing started, the Frisco was overlooked, likely because it was unarmed. As for the response to the attack, Johnson said, "We were just young, dumb kids." They couldn't quite believe what was happening. The

rest of the country was angry, mad and frightened to death, he added.

Repair crews "flocked like bees to get the San Francisco ready," Johnson said.

For Johnson, the big picture was not as important as the personal battles he and his fellow servicemen fought to win the war: His buddy, Charlie, who survived naval fights aboard the USS Chicago and the ill-fated USS Arizona; a corpsman whose job it was to identify close to 200 dead and injured soldiers and sailors, most of whom were without dog tags; and another sailor who survived the sinking of the USS West Virginia.

Equally important to Johnson's Pearl Harbor experience was his involvement aboard the Frisco during the battle of Guadalcanal. Yet Johnson saves most of his reminiscing for military reunions, explaining Pearl survivors don't tell their kids about their experiences because "they wouldn't really understand."

Johnson founded the nonprofit USS San Francisco Memorial Foundation (www.ussanfrancisco.org) which conducts an annual memorial ceremony at Lands' End in San Francisco to honor the 107 sailors and Marines killed in the action there Nov. 12-13, 1942.

Speaking as foundation president, Johnson said, "It is essential that this history is remembered for future generations."

To that end, Johnson keeps the flame alive, giving interviews, attending presentations and memorial services. Johnson has since returned to Pearl Harbor – his daughter lives in Hawaii – and calls the Japanese "really wonderful people" who first experienced liberty, freedom and democracy at the war's end.



Richard Johnson

Photo Cathy Dausman

Submit stories and story ideas to
storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

It's a Wonderful Life at Town Hall Theatre

By Sophie Braccini



George Bailey (Dan Saski) and Clarence Odbody (Tom Flynn) Photos Stu Selland

While *Scrooge* was a Town Hall Theatre favorite of holidays past, the stage adaptation of Frank Capra's classic film *It's a Wonderful Life* which opened Nov. 29 promises a production as successful and popular as the Dickens' classic.

Almost everyone knows the story of resilience and faith, based on the short story "The Greatest Gift," written by Philip Van Doren Stern, that became a winter staple long after its initial release in 1946. A drama more than a comedy, *It's a Wonderful Life* does not hesitate to dwell in the darkest corners of the human soul; it talks of greed, selfishness and treason. The story also explores how to deal with life when big dreams must be scaled down. But its charm comes from showing the difference one decent human being can make, and that the good you do can one day come back to you.

In spite of all the hype in our culture around material success, the appeal of the story about what it means to be truly happy, have a sense of purpose in one's life, and be part of a community, has endured for more than 60 years.

The stage version is true to the movie and Lisa Anne Porter, who directs this production, found ways to capture the audience within the limits of community theater. Porter decided to make it obvious to the audience that actors are putting on a show – the actors are present on stage, sitting in chairs, their backs to the audience, before turning around and jumping into the action. At first it seems a bit odd and artificial, but in the end it works beautifully.

The cast includes 15 talented ac-

tors, ages 9 to 70, many of whom play more than one role. "We auditioned many actors and did a lot of callbacks. We auditioned people individually and in groups; we had to get the right dynamic," says Porter, who has directed for Town Hall Theatre Company before (*Picasso at the Lapin Agile* and as co-director of *Proof*). She knows local actors well, yet many in the cast are new to her.

"We auditioned Dan Saski to play George Bailey among others, and kept calling him back, each time saying 'He is George!'" says Porter. Saski is indeed a very good cast for the main character. He even has the Jimmy Stewart look, something sweet in the face, a mixed feeling of strength and vulnerability. Lauren Rosi is a very lively and charming Mary, second class angel Clarence Odbody is nicely captured by Tom Flynn, and Randy Anger is villain enough to be a despicable Mr. Potter.

"My first memory of the movie was on a Christmas Eve when I was 12 and found myself alone in my aunt's house," remembers Porter. "I turned on the TV and was captivated by the movie I had never seen before. I thought I had discovered something special and was surprised that everyone already knew it. I've always remembered the magic of that first time." Porter brings this magic to the stage, and audience members are sure to leave Town Hall Theatre with happy hearts, filled with optimism and joy.

Performances continue through Dec. 16. For more information and tickets, visit www.townhalltheatre.com.



Mary Bailey (Lauren Rosi) and George Bailey (Dan Saski)

DUI: A Sobering Experience

... continued from page B1



From left: Will Davis, Cathy Dausman and Krista Koppinger

Financial costs might include lost wages, up to \$2,500 in court fines and fees, additional fees if your car was likely impounded and towed, and \$1,500 to \$5,000 in legal fees. Court mandated DUI classes may cost \$500 and an auto ignition interlock – one possible probation scenario – isn't free.

Your auto insurance rates will increase or the company can drop you outright as a policy holder. Bevins es-

timates "soup to nuts" expenses for a first time 0.08 percent DUI conviction run \$5,000 to \$10,000. According to the DMV website a second or subsequent offense within 10 years will result in a one-year suspension.

Cole Porter once wrote, "Mere alcohol doesn't thrill me at all." I'd say that is something to consider lest your world narrows to the confines of the back seat of a police cruiser. I'll drink a non-alcoholic beverage to that!

Sherrie and Billy want to wish all of our friends and neighbors a safe, healthy and joyous Holiday Season and a Happy New Year.



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Texture, Variety Abound at Orinda Art Show

By Cathy Dausman



Alex Meckes' origami display at Orinda Library runs through January
Photos Cathy Dausman

Travel, humor, whimsy and texture abound in the latest special art exhibit showing through Jan. 2 at the Orinda Library. The diverse display features four local artists, ages 10 through 89, and includes origami, giclee paintings, hooked rugs and line drawings.

One of the four exhibitors, fourth-grader Alex Meckes, got hooked on the Japanese art of folding paper when he was 5. "I really like geometry," he said, explaining that it's "just you and the paper," pointing to a hand-folded flower tower which incorporated a fractal design. He transformed a simple square of solid colored paper – "prints make it hard to find the crease" – into a crane in just minutes, and enthusiastically discussed his inspiration from Bay Area Rapid Folders and the East Bay Origami Convention. Alex's house is covered with origami; he expects to present about 30 pieces of his work.

Fellow exhibitor George Wahbeh, after 26 years in Orinda, will have his first local showing of giclee paintings – artwork reproduced from his original oil paintings. His subject matter is Jerusalem, where he was born and lived for 19 years, before studying art in Sweden. Wahbeh feels his paintings are especially suitable for the holidays, and finds the holy land's ancient architecture and old stones fascinating.

Roland Nunn makes about four rugs a year, using his own dyed and slit wool cloth, and will show about 18 of the 65 pieces he has completed to date. He said he never paid atten-

tion to rug making, despite his mother's love of the craft in the 1950s, until deciding he needed a "sit-down hobby" for his retirement. He's been "hooking" now for 22 years. Although he started using commercially available patterns of geometric shapes, Nunn now designs his own landscape scenes. Nunn says designing hooked rugs has given him a better understanding of color.

And Alexander Walchek, 89, who began drawing people, animals, detailed local landscapes, trains, cars, and fantasy inventions at age 3, calls himself an artist, not a cartoonist. His line drawings are a showcase for his wit and appreciation for humanity. Except for the occasional adult course from area art institutions, Walchek is self-taught.

When asked to advise his nearly 80-year-younger co-exhibitor Meckes, Walchek suggested: "Have fun with your art. Be flexible: [be] open to other media, knowing you can stray and then come back to your art and bring something different to it each time."

Self-portrait by Alexander Walchek



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Moraga Garden Club Carnivorous Plants Lecture

Submitted by Marcia Fishkeller



From left, Moraga Garden Club president Linda Foley and photographer Damon Collingsworth display carnivorous plants at a recent presentation.
Photo Ute Kelley

The man-eating plant of *Little Shop of Horrors* was just one playwright's take on what would happen if carnivorous plants should – just possibly – get out of control and develop an appetite for larger meals, like us! At the Moraga Garden Club's Nov. 15 meeting, photographer Damon Collingsworth visited from the California Carnivores nursery in Sebastopol to introduce members to the wondrous world of these intriguing plants, and to presented images of the wide variety of "meat-eating" plants featured in the book, *The Savage Garden* by Peter D'Amato. This

vegetation, like many others of the kingdom, has developed fascinating methods and appearances to survive and reproduce in certain environments. Even Charles Darwin claimed to be more captivated by the sundew *Drosera* that gobbled up insects with relish, than the origin of any other specie in the world. The unique adaptations and methods utilized by the plants are being studied by scientists from universities worldwide. For information about future Moraga Garden Club activities, visit http://moragacitizensnetwork.org/images/service_orgs/mcgc.pdf.

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Improving Downtown Parking in Orinda

By Sophie Braccini



Downtown Orinda parking can prove difficult on busy Friday nights.

Photo Ohlen Alexander



Rick Kattenburg in front of his car, parked in the back of his office on Moraga Way. Photo Sophie Braccini

Parking around Orinda's Theatre Square has become more and more congested. Local patrons and employees drive in circles in the downtown area trying to find a place to park that won't end in a ticket, and BART riders who have searched for illusive spaces in the Orinda BART parking lot often venture back downtown for a spot.

"Our patients really don't have any place to park and they have to drive around the block several times in order to find a spot," says Cathy

McGee, business manager for Dr. Jerry Gelbart at 11 Moraga Way in Orinda. Jerry Flank, who used to work across the street from Gelbart remembers how he used to get parking tickets, even when parking in the four-hour zone. "It is hard for employees, too," he says. "You need to keep an eye on the clock or pay expensive rates to park in the Theatre Square parking lot."

Fortunately, parking is Rick Kattenburg's baby. The Orinda architect does not see the issue from an esthetic perspective, but from a very practical point of view as Chamber of Commerce president. Kattenburg, along with fellow Chamber members Victor Ivry and Richard Westin, formed a task force to delve into the problem and to suggest solutions; they are now actively lobbying the city to get their plan on the Orinda City Council's agenda.

"We have divided the problem into three categories: freeing space in the underground structure at Theatre Square; finding ways for employees to park away from storefronts and without risking tickets; and solving the congestion due

to BART and the rideshare/casual carpool," says Kattenburg.

The group studied why the underground parking structure was often so full. "We learned that one third of the parking, about 130 cars, was used by people who neither shop nor work in Orinda. They rent spaces at \$10 a day and use them for rideshare or BART parking," said Kattenburg. "We asked the management of the parking garage to raise the rates of the spaces and to change their policy to rent space only to people who lease in Theatre Square." Kattenburg reported that 60 spaces were freed as a result of their negotiation. "The garage stopped overflowing at lunchtime; it's been a great success," he adds.

Employee parking is where the Chamber committee needs the city's approval. "We have researched what other municipalities do and we've come up with a plan that will help everyone," says the architect. "Employers would buy monthly permits for their employees so they can park in streets such as Bates and Davis, Northwood or Southwood free for eight hours."

... continued on page B10

Lafayette's College Admissions Advisor Is Resistance Futile? – Avoiding Three Misconceptions in the College Application Process

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

Widespread misconceptions flourish in the college admissions world, providing advantages to colleges but often hurting applicants and their families. You can resist falling prey to these preventable and often expensive mistakes by becoming more well-informed.

#1. Standardized test scores are not that important.

Colleges today increasingly rely on test scores when making admissions decisions because more kids are applying to more colleges each year. This due in part to intensive marketing by colleges – they purchase mailing lists from the testing industry and woo students by writing personal messages and offering "priority" applications with fee waivers – it is also due to growing anxiety students feel about getting into a good college, so they hedge their bets and apply to more schools.

Schools respond by using test scores to cut through large applicant pools. Of course, no college is actually going to admit this. They talk about holistic reviews and how they read every application. This is largely true, but only after they make the first cut. Colleges work hard to acquire huge applicant pools. In contemporary college admissions, colleges want to reject more applicants so their admit rates fall, making them appear more selective. More rejections lead to higher rankings.

How to resist: Students should prepare carefully for standardized tests, and see where you land. Then prep and test again if you think you can do better. Then, review the numbers realistically and resist the temptation to apply to schools where you are unlikely to be admitted. Nearly every college publishes the range of SAT scores that applicants in the last entering class achieved. These are often reported as a range of scores from the 25th to 75th percentile. So 50 percent of last year's entering class scored within this range. If the range is 1180 to 1340 (for SAT Critical Reading and Math), a 1250 score

might look good, but in reality, the lower end of these scores are reserved for students with qualities that cater to the school's special interests with regard to athletics, minority recruitment, and donations. The more 'average' student should have scores at the upper end or above the range.

#2. Applying for Financial Aid Won't Affect the Admissions Decision.

When a college says it is "need blind" it probably is – to a point. Need blind means that admission decisions are made without knowledge of a family's application for need-based aid. But the number of colleges that remain need-blind is shrinking and those who claim to be may resort to other ways to find applicants who can afford full tuition. They may admit more students, construct long waitlists, and then take need into account when pulling from these lists. If there is a choice between two virtually-identical applicants, the admit letter goes to the student who can pay full tuition.

How to resist: At the end of the day if you need or want financial aid you must apply for it. In that case the best strategy is to pick schools where the student would land in the top 25 percent of the incoming freshman class. If you want more money, apply to schools that find the student attractive. Regardless of what admissions representatives or stylish brochures say, the student with the higher test scores and GPA will get more money. Colleges like to attract higher achieving students ... remember, it's all about the rankings.

#3. It's a Level Playing Field

One of the most frequent misconceptions is that colleges are looking for a well-rounded student. In fact they are generally looking for a **well-rounded class**. They want some real scholars to shine in academics, superb athletes, some wealthy applicants whose parents can build a library wing and legacy students to keep alumni happy. For this reason the applicant who is not special in any one

category has a tougher time 'getting into' highly selective schools.

How to resist: This one is easy. Your kids are special to you and that's what really counts. Since students naturally gravitate to activities they love, parents should not force them to intensively focus on extra academics, sports and many outside activities because it 'looks good on the college application.' Instead, encourage students to explore activities that are meaningful to them without making it a chore or tying it to 'getting in.'

Resistance Is Possible

There are **right-fit** colleges for every student. There are usually quite a few. But the right school will be hard to find if you focus on the most selective schools. This can be a costly mistake. The average student takes 5.6 years to graduate. So if your child attends a \$50,000/year college and takes an extra year and a half to graduate, that's an extra \$75,000. If they don't graduate at all, it's a bigger mistake.

Instead of relying on popular rankings which reflect the subjectivity of editors and statistics that can be manipulated by colleges, students and their families should engage early in smarter research. It takes more time and effort, but it's worth it.



Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. is a Lafayette college advisor. Dr. LaScala draws on 22 years of higher education experience to help guide and support the college admissions process for students and their families. Dr. LaScala is a member of NACAC, WACAC and HECA. She can be contacted at (925) 891-4491 or elizabeth@doingcollege.com. Visit www.doingcollege.com for more information about her services.

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Sustainable Giving

By Sophie Braccini



Nanette Heffernan and her children making candles. Photo provided

There are different ways to be planet-conscious when shopping for the holidays – making your gifts yourself, buying things that last and are well made, or buying pre-used items or giving others the things you don't need anymore.

Nanette Heffernan, a Lafayette mother of two, makes gifts with her children, organizes a free gift-cycle with gently used toys, and only makes or purchases gifts that will be useful to their recipients.

“Every year with the kids we create gifts for their grandparents, aunt and uncles, and baby sitters,” says Heffernan. “The most popular are the tea-lights that are fabulous and super easy to do.” Heffernan bought silicon molds to make the candles because they are very easy and pop right out when they're done. She has star, flower, and shamrock molds. The kids melt paraffin (found in craft stores) and pour a little bit into each mold, put in a candle wick, then add

sprinkles of old crayons that have been smashed into small pieces. The crayons melt into the hot paraffin and add color and texture to the candles.

“We also make hand soaps using the same molds, and the kids add tiny flowers on top for decoration,” she says.

When it comes to wrapping the gifts, the Heffernans get creative. “We mostly use recycled tissue paper that we save,” she says. “Sometimes the kids take a used food container, like a cream cheese container, and découpage it by ripping little pieces of tissue paper, painting the container with a layer of watered down glue and sticking the colorful pieces on it.”

Making their own gifts or giving what they no longer use can be a great way to increase kids' mindfulness of waste. “We gather all of the toys we do not use any more, as if we were going to do a garage sale. We take pictures of every piece. Then I send an email to everybody I know locally before Christmas and say, first come first serve, just come and take it,” explains Heffernan. She also asks for what she needs, like this year, a tabletop art easel with a drawer for her daughter.

And reusing items doesn't have to be just between friends.

... continued on page B7

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THE APP RAP

By Alex Pawlakos

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CamScanner's ability to turn your smartphone into a portable scanner is not only technologically impressive, it is also unbelievably handy. Using the camera in your phone, you simply take a picture of any paper document, typed or hand-written, and it is quickly scanned and downloaded into your phone. CamScanner automatically crops and enhances the image for easy reading. These documents are also stored in your phone with the ability to organize them for ease of accessing at a future time. With the touch of a button you convert the picture of the document to a PDF file which then can be sent to your email, faxed, or uploaded to the

cloud. The real beauty of this app is the seemingly endless number of situations in which it can be used. For example, you could scan a menu in a restaurant, business cards at a conference, receipts for high priced purchases in case you lose them, or scan an article or recipe you read in a magazine while waiting at the dentist's office. Scanning notes on a whiteboard might be very useful. You could even scan your medical documents and, if you are ever in the Emergency Room, email the documents right to the ER from your phone. The ability to send these scans as PDF files to any email address makes CamScanner a true 'must have' app.



Alex Pawlakos enjoys biking, weightlifting, and tutoring in his spare time. He is a reporter on Express Yourself!™ Teen Radio.

TEEN SCENE

Stepping Out During the Holidays

By Linda Lan Phung

Findings of good cheer fill the air as the holidays approach. Stores are piled high with decorations, houses decked with lights and ornamentation, and people filled with generosity.

Salvation Army Santas ring their famous bells outside of shopping centers in anticipation of donations for the poor. As important as giving dollars is to help charities help others. This year, why not experience how it feels to give back by volunteering your time?

Whether it's sorting food for the hungry, collecting books, or coaching kids, a plethora of opportunities await for you to get involved. With volunteering, when you help someone, you're "teaching them to fish" so that they can pass it forward to help others in the future.

Miramonte junior Guy Raber volunteers with non-profit organizations because he believes it to be a great way to give back to the community. He states, "My favorite volunteering moment was two years ago when I was an instructor for beginning sailors. One of my beginners told me that I was his idol. Hearing him say that gratified me because it showed I was making a difference by volunteering – even if it was only as a sailing instructor."

Campolindo senior Megan Chen chose to volunteer because she enjoys assisting people.

Chen says, "I'm so lucky to be where I am here in Lamorinda, living the way that I do. Helping the less fortunate makes me happy because I'm helping someone in need." With volunteering, Chen sees firsthand how she affects the person. She adds, "The best feeling happened when I served food at Glide Memorial Church for the hungry people and saw how grateful they were, smiling and thanking me."

Volunteering benefits both sides. It definitely impacts lives in a profound way, as Raber's and Chen's

experiences illustrate. It is also fun because volunteers derive pleasure from their efforts.

Whether you are a seasoned volunteer or volunteering for the first time, the holiday season is a great time to donate your talents, time, and dollars to help others who are less fortunate. Volunteers are needed in every organization year round. Besides helping out at your local church, school, or club, you can find an organization that suits your interests by visiting the Volunteer Center of the East Bay at www.helpnow.org or Volunteer Match at www.VolunteerMatch.org.

As Raber says, "There are always people who are down on their luck, so the best way to be helpful is to volunteer for the rest of the year as well as the holidays." Everyone experiences that feel-good euphoria when doing something positive and meaningful for others. This season, step out and give back to your community!

Linda Lan Phung, a Miramonte High School junior who volunteers throughout the East Bay, is an officer with Club Be the Star You Are!®, and strives for 17-second miracles, inspired by author Jason Wright. Be the Star You Are!® is spearheading Operation Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief to help families on the East Coast. http://btsya.com/hurricane_sandy_relief.html.



Teen Scene is YOUR voice. If you have something to say or have writing skills and want to be part of our Teen Scene team, email our Teen Coach, Cynthia Brian, Cynthia@CynthiaBrian.com.

The opinions expressed in Teen Scene are those of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly.

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Work Progresses on the Old Yellow House

By Cathy Dausman



Photos Cathy Dausman

“Everybody says that it’s never gonna happen,” James Wright says of the whole house remodel slowly taking shaping at 209 Moraga Way, the site known locally as the Old Yellow House.

Although perhaps not evident from the street, construction work continues on a daily basis, with Wright shouldering a big portion of the load. “I’m doing the work myself,” he says, “if everybody could just be patient.”

The interior has been power washed and the original exterior siding will be reinstalled after cleaning. Radiant barrier plywood was installed on the second floor, new sheer walls in the basement and steel and engineered lumber beams now rest between the basement and first floor. PVT (photovoltaic/thermal) integrated skylights line the length of the western face of the roof.

Wright even sought an acoustical engineer’s advice on noise abatement.

He says the house windows are essentially triple-paned now, with new hinged dual-glaze storm windows hung inside, and the original single-pane windows hung outside to preserve the familiar façade.

Wright hopes to have the exterior work substantially completed and painted by Christmas, when he can remove the scaffolding and concentrate on the inside. The exterior house will be painted “railroad yellow” with a moss green trim.

The first floor kitchen space will retain its early 1900s look, with an old stove, washboard sink and farm table, while other areas of the home will be outfitted with modern touches.

The new first floor bathroom cantilevered off the back of the house will boast a “distinctly different” wood exterior, Wright says, in order to visually mark it as a new addition. Even that room will retain a certain character thanks to the exposure of original horizontal bead boarding along a portion of one wall.

The arts and crafts style bathroom vanity (a Habitat

for Humanity find) coupled with a blue-green blown glass vessel sink give the room an Art Nouveau flavor, he says.

Both the geothermal air exchange and evaporative cooling systems will be housed in Wright’s basement “energy lab,” which will also include a kitchen and bath. The basement floor will be tiled with inch-thick laminated glass and much of the original below-grade stone walls will be visible from behind glass.

Wright continues to consult and involve his neighbor and early home occupant Ezra Nelson, and speaks highly of the cooperation he’s received from the Orinda Planning Department. “The city’s been unbelievable,” Wright says.

Old Yellow House construction progress is being documented online at <http://www.facebook.com/NetZeroHomes>.



“Triple” thick windows -- dual hung interior windows (new) and a replacement of the original single pane glass outside will give the equivalent of triple hung windows for sound abatement and temperature control.

Sustainable Giving

... continued from page B6

There are also a lot of great local thrift and consignment stores where gently used treasures can be found, without breaking the bank.

Hilton House in Orinda displays an impressive array of Christmas objects and collectibles, including a great collection of carolers. Wayside Inn Thrift Shop in Lafayette has bargain-priced Christmas attire and also offers a selection of seasonal collectibles.

For holiday clothing, Rosie’s Upscale Consignments is worth seeking out on Brown Avenue next to Fast Frame in Lafayette, and in Orinda, Cheryl’s Closet on Orinda

Way, next to Hilton House, is a good bet. Also worth checking in Lafayette: Chameleon Consignment, They Grow So Fast (for children), Nifty Thrift, and Hen House.

“All I’ve sold for the last few weeks are Christmas items,” says Hen House owner Elizabeth Kirkpatrick. In her store, patrons can find vintage ornaments, village scenes, or even full trees.

“It makes me chuckle! Last week a woman came for a gift exchange for her book club,” she says. “I recommended a delicate pink tea cup with its saucer, coupled with some good tea.”



Beth and Betty at Wayside Inn Thrift Shop in Lafayette. Photo Sophie Braccini

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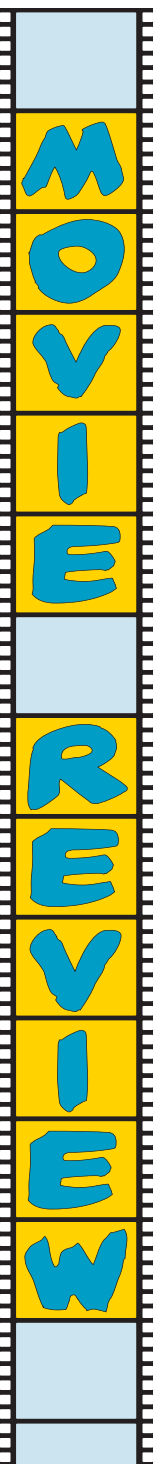
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Lincoln

By Leonard Pirkle



Steven Spielberg has once again directed a film that draws the viewer into each and every detail on the screen, much like a painting by one of the Masters. *Lincoln* is a film that should be seen in a grand old cinema such as the Orinda Theatre.

Set in 1865 during the final year of the American Civil War, the film deals with a very select matter of the 13th Amendment to the Constitution, which outlaws slavery and involuntary servitude, and its passage through Congress. The dilemma facing our 16th president was whether to end the war and save thousands of lives or push through the amendment and set a moral compass to be followed for generations to come. Of course we know the decision he made, but that does not diminish the drama that unfolds and the behind-the-scenes shenanigans that ensue by his minions.

The main cast of Daniel Day-Lewis as Lincoln, Sally Field as Mary Todd Lincoln and Tommy Lee Jones as Thaddeus Stevens, has a combined five Oscars to their credits along with Spielberg's three, establishing the bone fides for an instant classic. The remaining cast is well selected with each member delivering a screen presence that demonstrates a high proficiency at their art.

The 2.5-hour masterpiece is almost entirely dialog driven, the script by Tony Kushner is bound to be nominated for an Oscar; its brilliance is that each character brings something of utmost importance to each scene. *Lincoln* was historically known for being a "story teller," the home-spun humor and his ability to bridge difficult issues and challenges through parable is evident in this film and a testament to the depth of this screenplay.

The film is rated PG-13 for intense scenes



Photo Touchstone Pictures

from the horrors of war, not quite on the level of those shown in the opening moments of *Saving Private Ryan*, but Spielberg did obviously want to establish the basis of the dilemma facing President Lincoln in delaying the end of the bloodiest war in our history. Taking children to this film should be an informed decision; younger kids won't last the 150 minutes and will be impacted by the scenes of carnage.

I highly recommend that you see this film on the big screen and see it soon.

Leonard Pirkle is the executive director of the California Independent Film Festival and can be seen each Tuesday at 6 p.m. on the Real to Reel Show, www.TRadioV.com.

15th Annual California Independent Film Festival a Blockbuster

Submitted by Stephanie Kusinski

Wrapping up the 15th Annual California Independent Film Festival, CAIFF president and founder Derek Zemrak reported a tremendous increase in attendance. Ticket sales were up 23 percent from the last festival, and sponsorships and program ads were up 129 percent, setting a record for this annual festival which is dedicated to bringing independent films to the East Bay and providing a venue for local filmmakers. While the festival faced several changes, such as moving from its usual February date to November and being shortened from seven days to four, audiences were not short-changed by the number of films CAIFF presented. All of the feature



films were well attended – in particular the Oscar-buzzing international film *Lore*. The kid's program saw a huge increase in attendance, and the local filmmaker showcase was also a big hit, highlighting the burgeoning filmmakers and the film industry as a whole for the Bay Area. "CAIFF is on the right track to being a major player in the film festival arena," said CAIFF Program Director Joanne Foy.



'Tis the Season of Giving

Blanket & Bedding Drive for Shelter Inc. The following bedding items are needed for Shelter Inc.'s winter program: new or gently used blankets (twin, full, queen); new twin-size bedding (mattress pads, bedspreads, pillows, pillow cases). Donations can be dropped off at the bin in the lobby of Coldwell Banker, 5 Moraga Way until Dec. 5. For info, contact Rick Booth (925) 212-8869 or email Rick@BoothHomes.com.

"Warm Up Winter" Campaign. Throughout December, DoGood Vines will pour complimentary wine tastings for customers at local retail shops serving as drop-off locations for warm clothing donations to benefit Central County Homeless Outreach in Martinez. Donors will receive a two-for-one voucher from Town Hall Theatre (THT) to see its production of *It's A Wonderful Life* at all donation sites. Venture Men's Goods in Lafayette will remain a drop-off site through December and THT, also a drop-off site for warm clothing donations, will serve complimentary DoGood Vines wine from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m., before the 8 p.m. show, Thursday, Dec. 6 and will host a reception for all the retailers and supporters on Dec. 13 from 6:30 to 7:45 p.m. to recognize the community's success in coming together to contribute to a very important cause. Please call (925) 283-1557 for more information.

Toy drive for the Bay Area Rescue Mission. The Christian Club of Campolindo High School is hosting three toy bins to benefit the 5,000 homeless and needy children served each year at the Bay Area Rescue Mission. The bins are located outside of the counseling offices and other locations around campus from now until Dec. 14 at 300 Moraga Road, Moraga. For more info, email [Claire DeWolf](mailto:claire@deWolf.com) at dewolfs4@yahoo.com.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District and the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program. The mission of the U. S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program is to collect new, unwrapped toys during December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in Contra Costa County. Please join us in donating to the Toys for Tots Program at your local Moraga, Orinda or nearest fire station. This program will be running through Dec. 21.

Roughing It Day Camp - Collecting Donations for One Warm Coat, Toys for Tots, and Food Drive. Please donate coats of any size, new/unwrapped toys and non-perishable food items Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Dec. 27 to Roughing It Camp Office, 1010 Oak Hill Road, Lafayette.



Photo Amanda Griggs

Stuffed Animal Collection. The Moraga Police Officers Association along with S.A.F.E. (Stuffed Animals For Emergencies) is collecting new or gently used stuffed animals to help children through traumatic experiences. The stuffed animals are given to local police and fire departments to distribute to children they encounter who have been affected by traumatic events. S.A.F.E also facilitates the distribution of donated stuffed animals for a variety of charitable purposes to help children. This year's annual holiday collection drive ends Dec. 28. New or gently used stuffed animals can be dropped off at the collection area located in the lobby of the Moraga Police Department, 329 Rheem Blvd. Thank you for your support!

Need Donations?

Season of Giving announcements will continue through Dec.19. Submissions can be sent to calendar@lamorindaweekly.com.

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Looking Good in Lamorinda

Holiday Fashion Sparkles!

By Moya Stone

The holidays are officially here and this is a good time to spice it up and have some fun with our fashion, not just for parties but also for work, luncheons, shopping, anytime ... heck, all the time.

The big news for holiday 2012 is Bejeweled. Simple sheath dresses adorned at the neck with sequins, cut beads, or chunky brooch-like pieces are festive and an easy no-fuss way to sparkle on a dark winter's night.

Congratulations to Glamorous Boutique in Lafayette which celebrated one year in November and was recently highlighted on Good Day Sacramento. Earlier this season I spotted a nice selection of Bejeweled dresses at Glamorous Boutique.

Owner Eliza Jamkochian is right on trend offering an array of colors including always appropriate black and racy red.

But hey, sparkle isn't just for evening. Add a bit of bling to a daytime ensemble with a statement necklace or brooch. I recommend vintage jewelry for this look and Collector's Choice Antiques in Lafayette has the best

selection of rhinestone jewelry from the 1950s and 1960s. If sparkle isn't you, consider adding color with Bakelite jewelry.

Bakelite is a type of plastic made in the '20s through the '40s and it comes in deep autumnal colors such as green, red, and orange. Often Bakelite bangles are carved and the brooches come in fanciful shapes like cherries and various animals. Dealers Linda Adams and Kathy Himmelman have a wide selection of Bakelite jewelry on display at Collector's Choice. Pop in, take a look and ask questions. The Bakelite Babes, as they are called, love to chat about their favorite plastic.

Go vintage:

Speaking of Collector's Choice Antiques, owners Karl and Kathy Himmelman have been slowly adding vintage fashions to their stock with plans to devote the entire upstairs to clothing. Right now they have an excellent selection of 1980s sequin dresses, perfect for a holiday gathering and New Year's Eve. By the way, stay tuned for news on their next fabulous fashion show coming up in February.

I encourage vintage in fashion because adding a vintage piece, from hat to handbag, provides style and individuality to any outfit. Cuesta Company Antiques in Lafayette is my favorite local shop to find impeccable vintage accessories. Owners Sarah and Lawrence Siegel stock their tiny store with hand-selected vintage luggage, handbags, and wallets as well as California artwork and small decorative items. The luggage and handbags date from the 1930s to the 1960s and are in excellent condition. No need to feel badly about the exotic skins like shark or crocodile, remember they're vintage. Cuesta is a local treasure chest of elegant accessories guaranteed to make one-of-a-kind gifts for that special someone.

Shop local:



Photo Venture

I recently stopped by Lafayette's newest menswear shop, Venture Men's Goods. Owner Tom Stenzel has done such a nice job with the ambiance of the store which is modern and simple, yet brimming with well-presented merchandise. Stenzel is aiming to bring style to our local casual look by offering dark wash jeans by Taylor Stitch, classic wool pullover sweaters and work shirts, and jackets by Patagonia, everything suitable for all ages. The shop also stocks messenger bags, knit caps, and gift items such as wood pens handcrafted by Walnut Creek resident Tim Elliott. Ladies don't despair, Venture has a small selection of casual wear for women including those ever-popular puffer jackets and vests.

Give the gift of reading:

An array of fashion books have been published this year which means I've been doing a lot of reading. I was most impressed with *Fashion: The Definitive History of Style & Costume* (DK Publishing, 2012). Covering 3,000 years of fashion history, this rather thick book is loaded with photos and illustrations. Well researched and presented by editor and historian Susan Brown, this is a must-have for any fashion book collection.



Another standout is *The Truth About Style* by Stacy London (Viking Adult, 2012), co-host of the popular television show *What Not to Wear*. Part memoir, part fashion how-to, this book profiles nine women of various ages. Stacy restyles these lovely ladies and weaves into their stories her own tales of life as a stylist and a middle-aged single woman. With plenty of photos, the book offers answers to many fashion challenges such as weight, age-appropriateness, figure proportion, lifestyle, and more. A fun, informative read.

It's always fashionable to support our local shops and Orinda Books is happy to take special orders with delivery usually in just a few days.

Go forth and enjoy the holidays in style.

Moya Stone is a local fashion writer and blogger at www.overdressedforlife.com.

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Blooms By You

Flower Arrangement School Gets Ready for the Holidays

By Sophie Braccini



Chris Stoneberg in her Orinda home-studio

Photo Yoni Mayer

Holiday homes would not be the same without a wreath adorning the front door. Making your own unique creation is easy thanks to Chris Stoneberg and Blooms By You, a flower arrangement school she opened in her Orinda home-studio. Wreaths are not the only decorative pieces Stoneberg teaches how to make; an educated flower arranger

and gilding artist, she also offers rose arrangement, egg and pumpkin gilding, succulent classes and more.

An Orinda resident for 18 years, Stoneberg says she always loved flowers and had them continuously around the house. A few years ago, she decided to become more proficient at designing flower arrangements for her home, but couldn't find

a solid week-long class locally that produced the look she wanted. She discovered the New York Flower School, and after taking many classes, she decided to pass along what she was learning. The flower arrangement classes she offers in her Orinda home-studio teach everything from selecting the flowers, creating a color palette, conditioning the flowers for longevity, to building a floral design.

"I took 'pave' (round compact bouquet), wreath, rose arranging and succulent classes with Chris," says Sheryl Tyne who is one of Stoneberg's ardent fans. "She is a fabulous teacher, from choosing and caring for the flowers, to color and texture coordination, how to go to the market and pick them out, wreath and wire wrapping, and design." She adds that the studio space in Stoneberg's garage created for the classes is meticulously arranged.

"I would live in her garage," adds Nadean Lindberg who also loves the classes. "Chris is so inviting. For the morning classes she prepares scones

and coffee and in the afternoon offers a glass of wine and treats. She creates a very relaxing and supportive atmosphere."

Lindberg has known Stoneberg for years through her charitable work in Orinda and she's noticed how the former elementary school teacher in Stoneberg comes out when she teaches her classes. "She is patient, encouraging and very articulate," says Lindberg, who has taken a gilded eggs and arrangement class, pumpkin gilding class and pave arrangements.

"I learned gilding some years ago, you can do a lot of fun things with metal, pumpkins, gourds and other festive decorative items," says Stoneberg, who is currently part of the flower committee at the deYoung Museum in San Francisco.

Stoneberg also facilitated a private birthday party celebration for Lindberg. "Her classes are perfect for a multi-generational gathering, a girls' party, or to be offered as a gift," says Lindberg.

Both students note that taking the classes has changed the way they now use flowers in their homes. "Not only do you go home with a beautiful flower arrangement, but you start to create your own at home," says Lindberg. "It has made me more confident in making arrangements when friends come over, taking the time to plan and prepare."

"I'm trying to do one (flower arrangement) a week," says Tyne. "I can do things that look very expensive from flowers I buy locally." Tyne adds that making bouquets is her way to get in the moment. "It is so relaxing and meditative," she says.

Stoneberg will be teaching a holiday wreath class at 10 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 6 and Saturday, Dec. 8. Classes change seasonally and are listed on her website, www.blooms-byyou.com.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

business briefs

Santa Loves Lamorinda Businesses!



Photo Sophie Braccini

In Lafayette, Santa's message is simple: "Stay Home for the Holidays!" And support your local merchants, adds the Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber and the Try Lafayette First (TLF) group have planned a city-wide party Saturday, Dec. 8 in downtown Lafayette with stage entertainment, local events and refreshments – and with the "big guy" himself. Santa's next stop that day will be in Moraga at the Rheem Valley Shopping Center from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. where he will be available for pictures (bring your camera to capture the moment). If you miss him this weekend, Santa will return to Moraga Saturday, Dec. 15 for free pictures and letter writing at 5A Rent A Space from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Everyone knows that Santa is ubiquitous – how else could he deliver toys to everyone on the "nice list" in one night? – so he'll also be at Orinda Theatre Square every Friday from 2 to 7 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. until Dec. 23. The Square's management asks that you bring an ornament for Santa's tree or an unwrapped, new toy to donate to Toys for Tots through Dec. 17.

Orinda Tire Store opens at 76 Gas Station

67 Moraga Way, Orinda
(925) 253-7799

www.orindatires.com

J.J. Abraham believes he has the best rate in the area for tires and service. "There is no hidden cost here," he said. "It's just the cost of the tires and my labor." The owner says he has all major 2012 American-made tires in stock and can give advice on the best tires for your specific car. He also offers free tire rotation with every purchase. A former aviation industry worker, this is Abraham's first business located in Orinda.

Mediation Expert Joins Lafayette Chamber

(925) 788-7198

dudley_braun@hotmail.com.

Mediation expert Dudley Braun recently joined the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. A former product marketing manager in the high tech software industry, Braun mediates civil conflicts, before or after law suits. "It is a very satisfying job; in general people come to me when they are very unhappy and when they leave they're very happy," says Braun, who recently worked on a case involving two companies, one providing services to the other. "One was dissatisfied by the service received and refused to pay; the other one threatened to sue." Braun met with the president of one firm and the vice-president of the other together and got them to resolve the issue. "It is a very private and confidential process," says Braun. "Sometimes emotions run very high, but most of the time it is very effective." Braun is approved in the Contra Costa court system, he volunteers for the small claims court in Walnut Creek.

Moraga's Employee of the Month for November



From left, Moraga Rotary President Frank May, Robert Martin, UPS Store owner Doug Meyer, and Moraga Chamber of Commerce President Frank Melon.

Photo Kevin Reneau

Robert Martin has been named November's Moraga Employee of the Month, an award sponsored by the Rotary Club of Moraga and the Chamber of Commerce. A familiar face in Moraga, Martin works as a Senior Associate at The UPS Store, and is an accredited Notary for the business. "Robert is just a great people person and he has a knack with connecting with our customers," said UPS Store owner Doug Meyer. "He is cheerful and energetic and makes everybody's day just a little bit brighter." Martin will receive a \$50 Safeway gift card and a \$50 gift certificate to Pennini's Restaurant in Moraga, which will be presented at the Moraga Rotary luncheon on Dec. 4.

Cloud 9 Organic Salon Re-Opens

1 Orinda Way, #3, Orinda (behind the Shell Station)
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www.cloud9organictherapy.com

Some call it the best mani/pedi in the area. Cloud 9 prides itself on being one of a kind; it promises to not only make your hands and feet beautiful, but that you'll leave the place relaxed and revived. The owner, Cindy Nguyen, guarantees the use of only organic products such as polishes and lotions. The salon also provides hair styling and waxing services.

CM Commercial Real Estate Named 2012 Fastest Growing Business

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(925) 283-6076

CM Commercial Real Estate of Lafayette was named one of 2012's fast growing businesses by the San Francisco Business Times. They want to acknowledge their friends and clients who have made this possible.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

Annual Holiday Mixer from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12 at Wells Fargo Bank, 3630 Mt. Diablo Blvd. \$10 admission or free with three canned food items.

Ribbon cutting at 5 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6 for Lan's Skin Care, 3416 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Moraga

The Chamber is accepting nominations for Business Person of the Year. Names can be emailed to Kathe Nelson at kathe@moragachamber.org. Votes to select among the nominees is scheduled in January and the awards dinner will be in February.

Orinda

Holiday Mixer from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 6 hosted by Mechanics Bank, 77 Moraga Way, Orinda. After the mixer, hop to Hilton House from 5:30 to 9 p.m. to enjoy food, music, fun and a special sale as part of the 11th Anniversary Holiday Party organized by Cindy Hilton and her staff. For more information visit, www.HiltonHouseDesigns.com.

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

Improving Downtown Parking in Orinda

... continued from page B5

The monthly cost would be minimal and would cover the cost to the city.

"It would encourage employees to park somewhere other than in front of the stores and would give them peace of mind," he adds.

Kattenburg says he presented his plan to city staff in July and was still waiting to get a City Council hearing date. According to the group's calculation, approximately 75 permits would be needed per year.

The last and most difficult issue is BART and the rideshare zone. "It's a real problem for our communities," says Moraga resident Anita Wood. "If I arrive at BART after 7:40 (a.m.) it's likely that there won't be parking avail-

able." Wood, who works in San Francisco, often drives to the Oakland West BART station to find parking. "By the time I arrive, there is no parking there either," she says, "but across the street there's a paying lot where I can leave my car."

Kattenburg says his group has talked to council member Amy Worth who is knowledgeable on these issues and also talked to BART. "We were told by BART that they refused to add parking space to Orinda and Lafayette because it would attract drivers from more eastern municipalities to park there." Kattenburg adds that the group will not give up talking to BART and may propose 'local drivers' zones, so Orindans and

Moragans can find a space after 8 a.m.

According to Kattenburg, the rideshare/casual carpool should be moved to another place with close parking. "We've been working with Orinda Planning Intern Shama Khan who initiated contacts with the churches that have large parking lots on Moraga Way," says Kattenburg. "The idea would be to use these spaces during the week for meeting points for the ride-share, or even run a BART shuttle from there to the station." Kattenburg says the discussions are preliminary, but he's hopeful it will come to fruition.

"All we are doing," says Kattenburg, "is trying to keep pressure out of the downtown area."

Lamorinda Weekly

is an independent publication, produced by and for the residents of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, CA

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One Sweet Little Word: Cake

By Susie Iventosch

If you love cake, like I love cake, you may have noticed that a new bakery opened in Lafayette's Fiesta Square in September. It is simply called Cake, however owner and chef, Andrea Quinn, creates more than just heavenly cakes in her bakery. She also serves pies, tarts, cupcakes, breads, brownies and cookies, including some pretty darn fabulous macaroons—my personal favorite! Cake also brews Sight-glass organic coffees and a variety of teas from around the world, in addition to the Bay Area's own Devil's

Canyon root beer. This shop will more than satisfy any self-respecting sweet tooth!

Cake offers special occasion cakes, including wedding cakes, birthday cakes and cakes for every festivity, and though they do not sell the fresh apple cake with caramel glaze featured in this column, Quinn was happy to share her family recipe with us for the holidays.

I made this apple cake, and so did my father-in-law, so we know it is delicious and reasonably easy to make. The caramel glaze is wonder-

ful! But, still, Quinn says her all-time favorite cake is the bakery's Perfect Chocolate Cake, made with a moist chocolate chiffon-style cake, filled and frosted with chocolate ganache. We'll have to stop by Cake for that one!

For more information, or to order your favorite cake for the holidays, please visit <http://cake-lafayette.com/>.

Cake
35 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette
(925) 385-0202
info@cakelafayette.com

Fresh Apple Cake with Caramel Glaze

(Makes one large bundt cake, serves 12 to 16 people)

*Note: Andrea Quinn likes to use a mix of apple varieties in this cake. Try to pick apples that will keep their shape when baked.

CAKE INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups unbleached flour
- 1 tablespoon baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ¾ cup (165 g) dark brown sugar
- ¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) melted unsalted butter
- ½ cup buttermilk
- 4 large eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1½ lbs. (3 to 4 medium sized) apples, peeled, cored and cut into ½-inch chunks
- ½ cup (75 g) crystallized ginger, cut to ¼ inch pieces



Photo Susie Iventosch

CARAMEL GLAZE INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup heavy cream
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon mild honey
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- One cinnamon stick
- 1/8 teaspoon sea salt

DIRECTIONS for CAKE AND GLAZE

Preheat the oven to 350°F and generously coat a bundt pan with butter. Put the pan on a rimmed baking sheet to make it easier to take in and out of the oven. Place the flour, baking soda, spices and salt in medium mixing bowl and whisk to combine evenly. Place the sugars, butter, buttermilk, eggs and vanilla extract in another bowl. Mix together until combined. Add the dry ingredients, a third at a time, mixing the batter until just combined before adding the next amount. Add the apples and ginger and mix to distribute evenly. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, evenly distributing the apple chunks throughout the pan. Smooth the batter out and bake for 55 to 60 minutes or until the sides of the cake have turned dark golden brown and a toothpick or skewer inserted in the middle comes out clean. Because there are chunks of apple in the cake, you may want to insert the toothpick in a few places. Let the cake cool in the pan for about 30 minutes. While the cake is cooling, make the glaze by placing all the ingredients in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, stirring frequently and watching it carefully so it doesn't boil over, for about 12 to 15 minutes or until it has thickened. Let it cool for 10 or 15 minutes until the cake is no longer hot but just warm. Turn it out onto the serving platter. Spoon the cooled glaze over the warm cake, making sure some of the glaze drizzles down the sides. Let cool completely before serving.

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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 suziventosch@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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ART

The Orinda Library Art Gallery Exhibit. The exhibit for December will include George Wabbeh's oil paintings, Roland Nunn's hooked rugs, Alexander Walcheck's drawings, and Alex Meckes' Origami. The Gallery is located adjacent to the library at 26

Orinda Way in Orinda. For more info, visit www.orindaartscouncil.org/community_library. See article page B4.

Irresistible – The Gift of Art is the new exhibit at the Lafayette Gallery. You'll find a winter wonderland of sparkling jewelry, hand-crafted ornaments, elegant ceramics and a wide array of

prints, paintings and sculpture through Dec. 29 at the Lafayette Gallery, 50 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. There will be a free reception from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Friday, Nov. 30 with wine, hors d'oeuvres and live music! For more info, call (925) 284-2788 or visit www.lafayettegallery.net.

Saint Mary's College Museum of Art Celebrating SMC's 150th Anniversary. The Art of the Cross; Nyame Brown: John Henry's Adventures in a Post-Black World; Missions of Will Sparks, and the William Keith collection exhibits will be on view through mid-December, 1928 Saint Mary's Road, Moraga. Regular admission: \$5; youth, military free. Regular hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For more info, call (925) 631-4069. (Photo, Caption: Georges Rouault, Le Christ en Cross, 1936.)

Flora and Fauna. This art show will highlight artwork of the painter Leslie Swarts' expressionist paintings of trees from around the world and jeweler Laura Paige's fine beadwork created with stone beads through Saturday, Jan. 11 at Moraga Art Gallery, 522 Center Street, Moraga. For more info, call (925) 376-5407 or visit www.moragaartgallery.com.

MUSIC

Fingerstyle Guitar with Ace. The Orinda Library kicks off its inaugural Winter Music Series with the acoustic guitar artistry of Ace Batacan at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 5. Groove to the jazz and popular strains of Ace's holiday favorites while warming your bones in front of the Library's cozy fireplace. For more info, contact Ruth Boyer at the Orinda Library: (925) 254-2184.

Holiday Musical North Pole Revue presented by Center Stage of Diablo Valley Dec. 7 - 15. The classic holiday show takes place at the North Pole, and features elves Jack and Dolly as they prepare for the holiday season. The show will be playing at the Leshner Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. Tickets: \$15. For more info, call (925) 943-7469 or visit www.lesher-ARTScenter.org.

Annual Holiday Concert and Sing-Along with the Rossmoor and Moraga Community Chorus, presented by Lafayette Senior Services from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7 at the Live Oak Room of the Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road. All ages are welcome at this rousing sing-along with delicious appetizers, holiday treats and a raffle. Cost: \$3 for members; \$5 for non-members.

Contra Costa Children's Chorus Winter Concerts. Gaudete! Family Concert featuring all choirs singing Christmas carol favorites at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7 at Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church; upper level ensembles at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 14 at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church. Tickets: Adults \$15; students \$5. For tickets, email programs@childrenschorus.org or www.brownpapertickets.com. For more info, visit www.childrenschorus.org.

Annual Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church Christmas Concert at 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8 and 9 in the Sanctuary at LOPC, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Tickets are free but required for God's Promise – In the Night; visit www.lopc.org and click on "Music." A variety of choral texts will be presented, including the Renaissance motet Resonant in Laudibus and Vivaldi's Magnificat; also highlighted will be new pieces by the Youth Choir and the Festival Choir along with traditional Christmas carols.

Handle with Care – Sing-It-Yourself Messiah. St. Stephen's Episcopal Church will host a sing-it-yourself performance of Handel's "Messiah" at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 7 at 766 St. Stephens Drive, Orinda. Directed by Minister of Music Robert Train Adams, participants are welcome to sing along with – or just listen to and be inspired by the Festival Choir, soloists and chamber orchestra. An offering will be taken at this free event in support of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties. For info, contact the church office at (925) 254-3370, ext. 10.

A Festive Mix of holiday music from singing and ringing choirs at Our Saviors Lutheran Church Christmas Concert from 4 to 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 9, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. "The Song of the Angels: Gloria in Excelsis Deo," A glittering reception will follow in the fellowship hall.

The Performing Art Society's evening concert will feature 19th century solo piano compositions at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11 at Grace Presbyterian Church, 2100 Tice Valley Blvd. Free. For more info, visit www.ccpas.org.

Norm Dea and the Acalanes Music Department present their Winter Concert Series Dec. 11 - 13 at the Acalanes High School Theater, 1200 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette. The Dec. 11 concert will feature the Concert Band, Symphonic Band and Symphonic Wind Ensemble. The Dec. 12 concert will include the String Orchestra and Symphonic Wind Ensemble. Dec. 13 is the Winter Jazz Concert with the Jazz Ensemble and guest groups from Albany, El Cerrito and Homestead High School. All concerts start at 7 p.m. Admission is free but there is a suggested donation of five dollars per person. Everyone is encouraged to come and listen to our community's fine musicians.

WomenSing holiday concert, Sing an Endless 'Ave,' from 8 to 10 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12 at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Hear the unexpected combination of steel drum and the vibrant and beautifully blended sounds of WomenSing. Cost: \$30 premium seats; \$25 general admission; \$20 seniors; \$10 students/youth 18 and under. For more info, visit www.womensing.org or call (925) 974-9169 or email info@womensing.org.

Voices of Musica Sacra sings the "Glory of Christmas," featuring Rutter's Gloria, and other carols and songs of the season with organ, brass, and percussion. Our program includes a carol sing-along. This event will be at 8 p.m. Friday Dec. 14 in Walnut Creek at the United Methodist Church, 1543 Sunnyvale Ave., and at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 16 at St. Stephen Catholic Church, 1101 Keaveny Ct., Walnut Creek. For more info, visit www.vmschorus.org.

The Acalanes Music Department presents the 2012 Winter Choral Concerts; "Old and New" on Dec. 18 and 20 at 7 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center, 1200 Pleasant Hill Rd. These two programs will feature Chorale, Concert Choir, Bella Voce, Chamber Singers, Contemporary A Cappella Project, The Innuendos, Women's Octet and on the 18th, special guests, the Chanticleer LAB 7 Choir. Please join us for one or both concerts that will showcase older repertoire, newer takes on old repertoire and completely new songs. Suggested Donation: \$5 for adults; \$3 for seniors; students 18 and under free.

Nicki Bluhm and The Gramblers make their return to Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School St., Lafayette this holiday season at 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 20. For info,

visit www.townhalltheatre.com/music-comedy-series. Tickets available through TicketMaster.

THEATER

It's a Wonderful Life opened Dec. 1 at the Town Hall Theatre, 3535 School St., Lafayette. George Bailey, his life and finances in ruin, decides the world would be better off without him – until he is paid an unexpected visit. For tickets or more info, call (925) 284-5050 or visit www.townhalltheatre.com/mainstage-performances/its-a-wonderful-life. See article page B3.

DVC Drama 2012 - 2013 Season. The Exonerated by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen will be showing through Dec. 9, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2:30 p.m. at DVC, 321 Golf Club Road, Pleasant Hill. Tickets: \$20 general admission; \$15 for faculty, staff, and seniors; \$10 for students. For more info, call (925) 687-4445.

CAPA Nutcracker. Snow falls onstage and the Christmas tree magically grows to great heights in the beloved annual California Academy of Performing Arts presentation of The Nutcracker. The performances will be on Friday Dec. 7 at 7 p.m., Saturday Dec. 8 at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 9 at 2 p.m. at the Campolindo Performing Arts Center, 300 Moraga Rd., Moraga. Tickets: \$20 and can be purchased at www.ShowTix4U.com. For more info, email lynnkdavis@comcast.net or visit www.capadance.net. See article page A1.

Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer Christmas Show. The show will feature Christmas music and entertainment that adults and kids will love and is sure to put everyone in a "reindeer" frame of mind Saturday, Dec. 8 at Mighty Fine Guitars, 85 Lafayette Cir., Lafayette. The doors will open at 7:30 p.m.; the show begins at 8 p.m. Suggested donation: \$25; \$12 for kids under 12. For more info, call (415) 893-9818 or visit www.drelmo.com.

Orinda Ballet Academy's "A Sweet Dream Nutcracker." Get those sugar plums dancing in your children's heads with the Orinda Ballet Academy's two-act holiday performance of "A Sweet Dream Nutcracker" at the Orinda Library Theater, 26 Orinda Way, Friday and Saturday, Dec. 7-9. Tickets: \$18. For performance dates and times, visit www.orindaballetacademy.com.

OTHER

Republic of Cake in Orinda Theatre Square is turning 3. Come celebrate on Saturday, Dec. 8, from 2 to 4 p.m. There will be a bouncy house for the kids, live music by Tara Linda, and face painting. Free.

Positive Living Forum, Happiness Club. Brighten your day and take part in this interactive gathering which features speakers on a wide range of topics that encourage and guide participants towards a more ideal and positive life experience from 10:30 a.m. to noon Thursday, Dec. 13 in the Sequoia Room, Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette. Cost: \$1 for members; \$3 for non-members. For more info, call (925) 284-5050.

... continued on next page

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

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Not to be missed

OTHER ... continued

Come Play MahJongg! MahJongg is a game of skill, strategy, and certain degree of chance. Bring your card, a mahjongg set and a snack to share (optional) every Tuesday from 1 to 3:30 p.m. in the Sequoia Room, Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette. Cost: \$1 for members; \$3 for non-members. For more info, call (925)284-5050.

Lamorinda Dance Social. Enjoy afternoon dancing every Wednesday and learn some great new dance moves from 12:30 to 3 p.m. in the Live Oak Room at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road, Lafayette. Cost: \$2 for members; \$4 for non-members. For more info, call (925) 284-5050.

Annual Holiday Home Tour. Showcasing six delightfully decorated homes in the Alamo, Danville and Walnut Creek area, this year's tour from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and Saturday, Dec. 7 and 8 has something to please everyone; from trees decked-out entirely in Poland Glass ornaments, to rooms devoted entirely to model trains. Tickets: \$30 for adults; \$25 for seniors. For more info, call (925) 876-8862 or visit www.aauw-daw.org/hhtour/hht12.html.

Hospice of the East Bay Support Groups for Adults. Drop-In Bereavement Support Group meets from 4:30 to 6p.m. at the Pleasant Hill Campus located at 3470 Buskirk Avenue. These meetings are on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month. For more information please call (925) 887-5681 or visit www.hospiceeastbay.org.

Hospice of the East Bay Support Group for Adults. The Pet Loss Support Group meets on the 1st Tuesdays of the month from noon to 1:30 p.m. at the Tony LaRussa's Animal Rescue Foundation, 2890 Mitchell Drive, Walnut Creek. Pre-registration is required. For more information or to pre-register please call (925) 887-5681 or visit www.hospiceeastbay.org.

Hospice of the East Bay invites the public to participate in its 26th annual Tree of Lights ceremony for residents of Moraga and Lafayette at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 9 at the Moraga Country Club, 1600 St. Andrews Dr., Moraga. The event includes music, poetry, remembrances by family members and friends of Hospice,

and the special moment when the tree lights up. Lights can be dedicated for a minimum gift of \$25. For more info, call (925) 887-5678 or visit www.hospiceeastbay.org.

The Stroke Support Group of Contra Costa County will hold its December meeting in the Ball Auditorium at John Muir Medical Center at the Walnut Creek Campus, 1601 Ygnacio Valley Road. They will be having their annual holiday celebration with fun and frolic. Free. For more info, call Ann Dzuna at (925) 376-6218.

KIDS, PARENTS AND TEENS

Walter the Giant Storyteller. For kids of all ages, the Friends of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center present an evening of massive storytelling from 7 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 13 at the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Headliner Walter M. Mayes is also known as Walter the Giant Storyteller, at six-foot-seven inches, he's not exactly petite. Brace yourselves for "Giant book of Giant stories" and find out what happens when he survives being shipwrecked on a Lilliputian-like island. Free.

Photo with Santa. Take a photo with Santa at the Rheem Shopping Center in Moraga on Saturday, Dec. 8, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bring your own camera. Free with your Rheem Valley Shopping Center receipts totaling \$25 or more.

Snow in Berkeley? Bring boots and mittens to play in the snow from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 9, at 1673 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. Snow queen, pony rides, craft projects, and holiday vendors. For info, visit www.AnotherBullwinkelShow.com.

Santa Day at 5A Rent A Space. Get a free picture with Santa and enjoy letter writing from 11 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 15. Also at 5A, free gift-wrapping from Nov. 26 through Dec. 25. For more info, call (925) 631-7000.

Holiday Tot Hop. Bring your little ones on over to boogie to holiday tunes before simmering down with seasonal story favorites at the Orinda Library Tuesday or Wednesday, Dec. 18 or 19. Events begin at 10 a.m., and are open to parents and their children ages 0-5.

A Free Throw Competition sponsored by the 41st annual Walnut Creek Elks will take place Sunday, Dec. 9 from 8:30 to 11 a.m. at De La Salle High School in Concord. All boys and girls ages 8-

13 are invited to participate. (Contestant's age group will be determined by their age as of April 1, 2013). Certificates and prizes will be awarded to all participants and beautiful trophies will be awarded to the top three finishers in each boy and girl category. Free. For info, contact Mike Rittenhouse, tournament director at coach_ritt@yahoo.com or (925) 360-2900.

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Dinner. The Dec. 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii will be remembered at the annual dinner event Friday, Dec. 7. The dinner will be at Zio Fraedo's Restaurant, 611 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. Cost: \$35 per person. For more info, call Jeanne Sharkey at (925) 228-1375.

Community Christmas Celebration. During the candlelight celebration, hear the Christmas story anew and songs of the season at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 20 at the Refuge Community Church, 155 Moraga Road, Moraga. Free. For more info, call (925) 942-1000 or visit www.refugecommunity.org.

The annual HO Scale model train exhibition, featuring a unique, modular display of model trains traveling through an "Old World" countryside, will be open at the Blackhawk Museum through Jan. 6. Exhibition is included with regular museum admission: \$10 for adults; \$7 for students and seniors; and free for children under 6 (must be accompanied by a paid adult). Open Wednesday to Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., and special holiday hours on Monday, Dec. 24 and 31. For more info, visit blackhawkmuseum.org or call (925) 736-2277.

POLITICAL GATHERINGS

Inauguration Celebration Breakfast and Watch Party. The breakfast, which will be held Monday, Jan. 21 from 8-8:45 a.m. at the Lafayette Library's Community Room, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., will be hosted by The Lamorinda Democratic Club to honor President Barack Obama as he is inaugurated for his second term in office. You must RSVP to guarantee a seat by contacting John Hall at jdhall@mac.com.

Holiday Open House. State Senator Mark Desaulnier cordially invites you to attend the Holiday Open House from 4 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 13, 1350 Treat Blvd., Suite 240, Walnut Creek. For more info, visit <http://www.trivalleydems.com/Calendar.htm>.

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calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

Thinking of Adopting a Cat? Adoption Fees Lowered for Certain Breeds

Submitted by Billie Cummings



Dougie, a foster kitten, is thankful for his home.

Photo Billie Cummings

Community Concern for Cats (CC4C) adoption locations. Studies have shown that people often don't "see" black cats at adoption sites. Black as a color recedes while the lighter colors advance, so in a line-up, people often only "see" the lighter colored tabbies and white ones. The black cats' chances at adoption simply aren't as good.

The adoption fee of \$50 for kittens under a year; \$35 for cats over one year old includes spay/neuter, feline leukemia testing, all shots, worming meds, and flea treatment.

Billie Cummings, a CC4C foster parent, said, "Over the past year I fostered 12 cats and fell in love with four of them—all black: Boots, Bradley, Bella and Figaro. They were so loving and had great personalities. But weeks went by and still they weren't adopted. I finally resorted to taking them out of their cages at the adoption site and putting them in people's arms as they came by. Once they held them, they were hooked!"

Black or black tuxedo cats will be available at Petco Walnut Creek, and Pet Food Express Pleasant Hill, Saturdays and Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m. and from 12 to 3 p.m. at Pet Food Express in Lafayette.

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

SMC Volleyball Advances to Second Round of NCAA Tournament

By Michael Sakoda



Lauren Corp



Dallas Dodd

Photos Tod Fierner

Saint Mary's College's volleyball team wrapped up a strong season, earning an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament, the team's sixth tournament berth. The Gaels finished with a 17-10 record, including a 12-4 conference record, good for third place in the WCC.

Head coach Rob Browning said their performance was impressive. He also noted that the success came after a conscious effort. "Right after we started conference, the girls decided to fight harder and be tougher," he explained. "We won some close good matches against really good opponents, and that might have been the difference in those matches."

The Gaels faced San Diego State in the first round of the NCAA tournament, and prior to the Nov. 29 game against the Aztecs, Browning said that his team was looking forward to the match. "SDSU is really good. We'll have our hands full with them to say the least," he explained. "I don't see anything that is blatantly a weakness for them that we can exploit...they get after it, and we're

ready to get after it too."

Browning's assessment was accurate and the game was a battle. After dropping the first two sets 17-25 and 23-25, Saint Mary's rallied. The Gaels won three straight sets 25-23, 25-22 and 15-12 to earn the win and a trip to the second round.

Junior Kristina Graven finished with a season-high 23 kills and a team-high 17 digs, and redshirt freshman Dallas Dodd chipped in 28 assists to help lead the Gaels to victory.

The highs of the first round comeback were short lived, though. The Gaels were eliminated from the tournament on Nov. 30 by No. 4 USC in straight sets, bringing an end to an outstanding year for volleyball program.

Still, there is much for the Gaels to be proud of this season, including strong performances from multiple players.

"We're a very talented team, very highly skilled," Browning said. Four players—seniors Gabby Jolly and Lauren Corp, along with Graven

and Dodd—earned All-WCC honors.

Graven, who led the Gaels with 310 kills (3.37 per set) and Jolly, the Gaels all-time and single-season record holder in attack percentage (.323/.370), were named to the All-WCC First team. Corp, third in all-time kills at SMC with 1,254 and MVP of the Sacramento State Tournament, was selected to the honorable mention team, her fourth time on the WCC All-Conference Team.

"All totally deserving... [but] we've got a few other players that could, would, should be on that list...there are just so many good players in our conference," said Browning. "But we're happy. Those players have been really great."

Dodd, who has a team-leading 31 aces on the season, including six in the match against Morgan State, which tied the school's single match record, earned a spot on the WCC All-Freshman team.

The Gaels graduate four seniors, but return a strong core for next season.

From Novice to Champion

Hard work pays off for Rower of the Year

By Rebecca Eckland



Alia Shafi Photo provided

Imagine pursuing a sport six days a week, at least 2.5 hours a day in order to be the best athlete you can. Acalanes senior Alia Shafi did just that and her hard work was rewarded. She was named Junior Rower of the Year by USRowing and row2k Media-- the sponsoring bodies of pre-collegiate rowing.

Shafi's rowing career began two years ago. Already athletic-- track and soccer were her other pursuits-- a friend persuaded Shafi to do something "different." So, Shafi traded land for water, joining Oakland Strokes Crew, a club team with members from Lamorinda, Oakland and Piedmont.

At first, Shafi says she wasn't very good. Yet, that is what kept her attending practice after practice. "I don't like quitting because I'm not good," she explained. "I just wanted to stick with crew to see where it would take me."

She knew that if she continued to practice, she would improve. "It's like running-- it's physically demanding. And if you work hard, you'll get bet-

ter at it," she said.

Her determination paid off. Shafi was second at the junior lightweight 8+ at the youth national championships as a sophomore.

Last year, as a junior, she was voted the "most inspirational" by her team and coaches.

Though she'd be the last to admit it, Shafi's no longer a mere inspiration--she's become a star.

This year, Shafi led Oakland Strokes to 17 victories in 19 races, including gold medals at the San Diego Crew Classic, the 2012 USRowing Youth National Championships, the USRowing Southwest Junior Regional Championships and at the Royal Canadian Henley Regatta.

For Shafi part of the appeal of crew is that it is both an individual and team sport. "Practices are like competitions," she said. "You have to compete with your teammates to win your spot in the Varsity boat." But when

competition days arrive, the atmosphere changes: "it's very 'teamy'-- when we're in a race, we move like we're one rower."

In fact, it was the team coach who would nominate Alia Shafi for the national distinction of "Junior Rower of the Year." Shafi was pitted against many others, and 33,000 votes in total were cast to determine a winner. Among thousands of candidates, Shafi was the clear winner, a distinction hard-won from her work ethic of "you get what you give."

Shafi has signed with Brown University and will continue her rowing career as a collegiate athlete in the fall.

When asked where rowing might take her in the future, Shafi was modest. "I hope it takes me somewhere awesome," she speculated. "I'm pretty small for a rower, but..."

If Shafi's record says anything, size is nothing compared to hard work.



Women's Youth 8 at Charles Regatta in Boston/Cambridge on October 21. From front: Coxswain: Amanda Rutherford; Stroke: Alia Shafi Sr. Acalanes; Indigo Catton Jr. Campolindo; Camille Triebisch Sr. Campolindo; Ellen Pate Sr. Miramonte; Katie Hubert; Zabe Elmgren; Lizzie Pate Sr. Miramonte; bow: Laura Rosas, Sr. Miramonte Photo provided

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Campolindo Volleyball Wins NorCal, Plays in State Finals

By Simon Trynza



Sophie Seiberth (12), Kelley Wirth (9) and Kirsten Sibley (11) block Cathedral's hitter, Tatiana Durr, who had 18 kills in the match. Photos Cindy Kitahara

One of the banners hanging in Campolindo's gym commemorates the 2010 girls' volleyball team, who won the state championship, defeating the Cathedral Catholic Dons. To those who follow the sport, it was no surprise that the Dons made it back for the 2012 title game—it was their fifth in a row. It may have been a surprise that the Cougars were back so soon, hoping for their second title in

three years.

"They exceeded my and many people's expectations," said head coach John Vuong. "They inspired many young athletes and represented our program and school well."

The journey back began with the team winning the NCS and earning the No. 1 spot in the NorCal bracket of the state tournament. The top seed meant home court advantage, and the

crowd did not disappoint, showing strong support in each round.

"Playing in front of our home crowd played a huge role of our success in the post-season tournaments," said Vuong.

In the first round, the Cougars hosted No. 8 Shasta High School. Behind a strong defensive effort, they swept the Wolves in three sets, 25-19, 25-12, 25-19. Stellar performances by senior captains Annie Shurtz, Sophie Seiberth, and Cassidy Abel pushed the Cougars into a second round match with No. 5 Sacred Heart Cathedral.

"Our seniors did a great job of leading our young players," said Vuong. "The captains did an excellent job of motivating and keeping the team together as one unit."

The Cougars came out strong in the first set against the Fighting Irish, winning 25-19 after a kill by Abbey Healey. Despite dropping the second set, Campolindo was able to jump out to an early 7-3 lead in the third set, winning the pivotal set, 25-20.

Shurtz showed the crowd why

she was crowned DFAL MVP when her timely kills propelled a 5-1 run that saw Campolindo pull away from the Irish in the fourth set.

However, Sacred Heart stormed back to tie the match at 15. Each team traded points, until a net violation gave the Cougars a 23-10 set lead. A Shurtz kill gave the Cougars match point at 24-21. Campolindo won the match as a Sacred Heart kill attempt landed wide in the stands.

Standing in between the Cougars and a berth in the State final were the Valley Christian Warriors. Although the gym was packed with a fired-up crowd, the Cougars got off to a slow start, dropping seven of the last nine points to lose the first set, 25-20.

The slow start carried over as the Cougars quickly fell behind 5-1, but behind strong blocking by freshman Kirsten Sibley, Campolindo was able to take a 22-14 lead, holding on for a 25-22 win.

With the match tied at one set apiece, the Cougars fell behind 16-11, but multiple errors by the Warriors allowed the Cougars to hang on to take the third set, 25-23.

Valley Christian fought hard in the fourth and with Campolindo trailing for the majority of the set, it took a beautiful block by Gaby Gryko to tie the set at 21. The Cougars earned the 27-25 set win, sent the crowd into a frenzy, and punched the Cougars ticket to Irvine to participate in the state title game.

"We just wanted it so badly - we knew we could do it and we went out and did what we've done all season," said senior hitter Shurtz.

Starting outside hitter Sibley was very excited about how the team has come together. "I've absolutely loved playing with the older girls," she said. "It's been a great experience. Going to State is just icing on the cake!"

Playing away from Moraga at Concordia University in Irvine, the

Cougars fell behind early. However, they were never behind by more than a few and were able to tie it up at 19. After two consecutive points by the Dons, the Cougars won six of the last eight points, to take the set.

The Dons evened the set count with a 25-21 win in the second set.

The Cougars were looking to pull away in the third, and were leading 19-16, but the Dons went on a run of their own to go up 22-20. Cathedral Catholic hung on for a 25-23 win.

In full desperation mode, the Cougars were given an opportunity when a Dons' service error evened the match at 18. However, Campolindo was overmatched and lost the next seven of ten points to give Cathedral Catholic the set and the State title, 23-25, 25-21, 25-23, 25-21.

"Winning NorCal was unbelievable," echoed Vuong. "We went through tough teams and had to fight back for most of the sets played. Being at state representing NorCal was a dream for us."

Publisher's note: Special thanks to Campo grad Cindy Kitahara (née Wake) for taking photos for us.



Kelley Wirth #9

Miramonte Boys' XC at State Finals

Submitted by Alison Zamanian



From left: Jimmy McFeely, Dennis Finger, Mark Tamminga, Charlie Zamanian, Dillon Reed, Tyler Hanson and Miles McCaulou Photo provided

Miramonte's varsity boys' cross country placed eighth overall at the State Championships. Hanson led the effort with a fourth place finish and a personal best of 15:32. His finish marks the highest finish for Miramonte in 26 years. Dennis Finger earned the most improved honor, shaving off 30 seconds from his best finish last month.

- Tyler Hanson SR NCS 15:32
- Mark Tamminga SR NCS 16:26
- Charlie Zamanian JR NCS 16:40
- Jimmy McFeely SR NCS 16:41
- Dennis Finger SO NCS 17:13
- Miles McCaulou JR NCS 17:24
- Dillon Reed SR NCS 17:51

Acalanes girls, led by Amy Hollshwandner (33rd), finished eighth overall. Campolindo girls, led by Brigid Leach (13th), finished ninth overall.

Campolindo boys, led by Aidan Goltra (1st) finished sixth overall. Acalanes, led by Keenan Byrne (30th) finished 19th overall.



From left, back row: Coach John Vuong, coach Dave Chen, JV coach Devon Farrell, Rachel Hua, Abbey Healey, Annie Shurtz, Emily Larrick, Kenzie Brown, Kaylyn Murray, Julia Partlow, Kirsten Sibley, Kelley Wirth, Gaby Gryko; front row: Maddie Browning, Annie Doyle, Natalie Meniktas, Cassidy Abel, Sophie Seiberth, Lauren Gaskin

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SMC XC Runner Earns All-Region Honors

Submitted by Marty Kinsey



Rajpaul Pannu (right)

Photo provided

At the WCC Championships, Saint Mary's cross country runner Rajpaul Pannu slipped in the second mile of the race. Despite the slip-up, Pannu finished eighth overall with a time of 24 minutes, 10 seconds.

The performance earned him All-WCC first-team honors. He is the first Gael to receive the designation since 2008. Competing in the NCAA All-West Regionals, Pannu finished 19th. He earned All-Region honors, the first SMC men's runner to earn the award. His perseverance has paid off all year long, as he has had one of the more successful individual seasons in recent memory. "I get to see him every day, his attitude towards training and everything he brings to the team brings an advantage," said associate head coach Mark Carberry.

Oakland Strokes Fall Season Recap

Submitted by Melissa Coupin



Photo provided

The Oakland Strokes Rowing Club completed its Fall Regatta season in mid-November at the annual Head of the Lagoon regatta in Foster City. It was the last of five fall head races in which the Oakland Strokes boats competed.

Oakland Strokes lightweight varsity men's 8+ and men's varsity open 8+ finished one second apart, winning first and second place. The lightweight 8+ brought home the Grand Sequoia Cup. Both men's varsity crews posted the two fastest times on the water in all events and classes all day, beating collegiate boats.

In addition, Oakland Strokes boats won the men's heavyweight junior 4+, the women's novice 8+, and in the men's junior lightweight 4+ Oakland Strokes boats finished first and second. Oakland Strokes varsity women's 8+ took second and third.

Lamorinda participants:
Varsity Men's Lightweight 8+: Acalanes—Bryan Wharton; Campolindo— Ben Peterson; Miramonte— Erik Johnson, Mathison Young (coxswain)
Varsity Men's 8+: Bentley— Kevin Chang and Cubby Parker; Miramonte— Karmi Chan (coxswain) Matt Coupin, Will Lake and Aubert Marcu
Varsity Women's 8+: Acalanes— Alia Shafi; Campolindo— Indigo Catton, Camille Triebisch; Miramonte— Ellen Pate, Lizzie Pate and Laura Rosas
Varsity Women's 4+: Acalanes— Tara Bozzini and Katie Ware; Miramonte— Marie Johnson and Hannah Stenovec
Varsity Men's 8+: Acalanes— Bryan Wharton; Bentley— Kevin Chang, Cubby Parker; Miramonte— Karmi Chan (coxswain) and Erik Johnson

Lamorinda G-17 Makes Its Mark

Submitted by Corinna Bekiers-Sassano and Nancy Wilson



Back row, from left: Mali Tehaney, Lauren Petite, Regan Gong, Jordan Rowley, Caroline Runco, Jane Fessenden, Rachel Lindenauer, Lindsay Wilson, Megan Reid, coach Pedro Osorio; front row: Emily Orwig, Marina Arcaya, Katherine Tottle, Julia Reshke, Stephanie Munoz, Courtney Attard, Annie Loose, Sarah Mills; not pictured: Carly Moran, Kristen Chan Photo provided

Lamorinda Soccer Club G-17 team started the 2012 season strong. Over summer they traveled to Sweden to compete in the Gothia Cup.

They have competed in several tournaments this season finishing each as semi-finalists or

finalists. In the GotSoccer Rankings, they are currently fourth in NorCal for their age group and first in the nation for their age group in goals scored. As this season comes to end, they are currently second place in NorCal Academy League.

Acalanes Soccer off to a Strong Start

Submitted by Barry Lee



Photo provided

Acalanes boys' varsity soccer team opened its Winter Classic with a fine 2-0 win over Heritage. With senior goalie Eric Rogstad sidelined with a broken hand, sophomore goalie Eric Sirott had a good evening

helping shut out Heritage with five saves. With so many varsity players absent due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the younger players gained valuable experience in the process. Acalanes advanced to take on Freedom, defeating them 4-1 on Nov. 26 before taking on Ygnacio Valley on Nov. 28. They won 1-0. They defeated Campolindo in the finals 2-0. The Dons (4-0) open DFAL play today, Dec. 5 at home against Campolindo (4-1) at 6:15 p.m.

Fall Girls' DFAL All-League Honors

Cross Country	Miramonte	Second Team	Ariel Thomas
	Acalanes	First Team	Annie Marggraff
			Kelly Collins
		Second Team	Amy Hollswander
	Campolindo	First Team	Brighie Leach
			Rachel Johnson
			Haley Shipway
		Second Team	Hana Sun
Golf	Miramonte	First Team	Tori Hoff
		Second Team	Arielle Caronna
	Acalanes	Most Valuable Player	Elizabeth Schultz
		First Team	Lauren Kim
		Second Team	Adrienne Lee
	Campolindo	Second Team	Samantha Chan
Tennis	Miramonte	First Team	Taylor James
			Holly C Bohuslav/Merrick Goodman
		Second Team	Jennifer D Stanten
			Cecelia Andrews/Kady Richardson
		Honorable Mention	Leah See
	Acalanes	First Team	Isabella Von Ebbe
			Tessa Karagocev
		Honorable Mention	Ida Barabi
	Campolindo	First Team	Sydney H Stone
		Second Team	Mette A Huberts
			Claire Faulkner
			Miranda C Hill
			Tori Perella/Amanda Lemelin
			Molly K Pines/Tori Kallerud
		Honorable Mention	Hannah E Ross
Volleyball	Miramonte	First Team	Beryl Slezak
		Second Team	Maddie Goodreault
		Honorable Mention	Lauren Foster
	Acalanes	First Team	Amanda Jarquin
			Brooke Aiello
			Lisa Carrington
		Second Team	Rachel Cox
		Honorable Mention	Joanna Harnish
	Campolindo	Most Valuable Player	Annie Shurtz
		First Team	Cassidy Abel
			Sophie Seiberth
		Second Team	Kelley Wirth
			Abbey Healey
		Honorable Mention	Kirsten Sibley
Water Polo	Miramonte	First Team	Kristen Hong
			Lauri Simon
		Second Team	Emily Byrne
			Katie Caron
			Domnique Clark
		Honorable Mention	Kathryn Lloyd
	Acalanes	Outstanding Goalie	Katie Ramm
		First Team	Megan Dietrich
			Ellyn Stewart
		Second Team	Chase Lanier
			Nora Vance
		Honorable Mention	Maggie Chan
	Campolindo	Most Valuable Player	Annika Jensen
		First Team	Sam Flower
			Natalie Seidemann
			Maddie Tagg
		Second Team	Hannah Buck
			Christy Faoro
			Brooke Presten
		Honorable Mention	Allison Stevens

MOL Football Champions

Submitted by Brenda Mossotti



Front row, from left: Callan Hoskins, Evan Gabrielson, Brett Smith, Travis Armistead, Paul Gannett; back row: coach Gary Mossotti, Vincent Mossotti, Justin Pratt, Hayden Hunt, Jacob Westphal, Matt Burns, Will Bishop and coach Marcus Bishop; not pictured: Tyler Zwahlen, Carter Whiting and Ben Delange Photo Brenda Mossotti

It has been a long journey for the MOL Flag Football AFC Division Texas. These boys worked hard throughout the fall season and finished first out of 14 teams in the seventh-eighth grade AFC Division. They proceeded to win in the playoffs and ultimately won the Super Bowl game to finish the season.

St. Monica's Wins Three in a Row

Submitted by Michelle Clancy



From left, back row: Coach Jason Fritch, Ryan Fritch, CJ Rago, Ryan Lenahan, Jake Crumbaugh, Peter O'Donnell, Coach Michael Lenahan; front row: Grant Harper, Rex Curtiss, Kellen Clancy, Mark McCurdy Photo provided

The St. Monica's boys' fifth grade American basketball team won its division in the MVP Flight 12th Annual CYO Turkey Shootout over Thanksgiving weekend. The team won three games in a row, beating St. Perpetua 29-26, St. Mary's 31-30, and then St. John Vianney 36-31 in the final.

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- Campolindo Volleyball Takes NorCal Title
- Thumbs Up for 50+ Units of Housing
- Campolindo Volleyball Wins NCS
- Creating Community through Conversations in French and Italian
- The Home Designer Bathroom Remodeling - Keep It Smart ... And Save
- Campolindo Girls Win Water Polo Title
- City Works to Respond to Housing Requirements
- A Transportation GEM: Going Electric in Lamorinda

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 06 Issue 20 Wednesday, December 5, 2012



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

...read on page D5

From Inexpensive to Extravagant Holiday Décor

By Ann McDonald



Photos Couture Chateau

It's that time of year again. Holiday decorations are everywhere and the pressure is on. From glittered pinecones at OSH Hardware in Moraga to finery at Nieman Marcus in Walnut Creek, how is a savvy Lamorinda resident supposed to make sense of it all? Decorate your own home? Hire it out? Spend lavishly or scour the discount stores for last year's bargains?

Moraga resident Margaret Bang starts with inexpensive, but elegant décor. "Each year I start with a base of fresh greenery, faux garland and add layers of white," she says. "I particularly like to use a mix of textured white candles because they burn non-toxic, go with every color and they always look elegant."

Stores like Costco offer 25 feet of fresh garland for approximately \$15, which can be supplemented with low cut branches from evergreen trees, boxwood or scavenged items from the backyard. Well-made pre-lit, pre-decorated garland can be found for as little as \$60 and can adorn banisters, entries, and even be added to Christmas trees for a fuller dimension.

Local homeowners create vignettes in foyers or on porches using ribbons, holiday collections, or other unique items to add an emotional element to their holiday décor. Orinda homeowner Catherine Soso's turquoise dining room opens to her living room where she flanks her fireplace with not one, but two Christmas trees.



... continued on page D4

Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	11	\$750,000	\$2,000,000
MORAGA	6	\$250,000	\$925,000
ORINDA	11	\$750,000	\$2,740,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California REsource. Neither Cal REsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

LAFAYETTE

- 1157 Bacon Way, \$750,000, 3 Bdrms, 1466 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 11-1-12;
Previous Sale: \$420,000, 09-29-00
- 3231 Camino Colorados, \$785,000, 3 Bdrms, 1527 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 10-19-12
8 Crest Road, \$1,250,000, 3 Bdrms, 2271 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 11-5-12;
Previous Sale: \$740,000, 04-21-00
- 667 Glorietta Boulevard, \$1,205,000, 3 Bdrms, 2135 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 10-19-12;
Previous Sale: \$1,057,500, 05-15-09
- 3812 Happy Valley Road #B, \$850,000, 2 Bdrms, 1448 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 11-2-12;
Previous Sale: \$1,025,000, 09-17-04
- 1901 Hunsaker Canyon Road, \$2,000,000, 10-24-12;
Previous Sale: \$1,500,000, 08-15-06
- 3372 McGraw Lane, \$1,974,500, 4 Bdrms, 3127 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 10-24-12;
Previous Sale: \$650,000, 12-04-98
- 1483 Shulgin Road, \$875,000, 1905 SqFt, 1937 YrBlt, 10-22-12
- 591 Silverado Drive, \$957,500, 3 Bdrms, 1910 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 10-23-12;
Previous Sale: \$383,000, 05-10-89
- 3936 South Peardale Drive, \$1,783,000, 3 Bdrms, 2594 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 11-5-12;
Previous Sale: \$1,796,000, 08-12-11
- 1141 Upper Happy Valley Road, \$1,550,000, 5 Bdrms, 4558 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 10-24-12

MORAGA

- 1997 Ascot Drive #2, \$250,000, 2 Bdrms, 1124 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 11-2-12;
Previous Sale: \$189,000, 11-10-99
- 2 Berkshire Street, \$699,000, 2 Bdrms, 1552 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 10-31-12;
Previous Sale: \$785,000, 10-17-06
- 1499 Camino Peral, \$461,000, 3 Bdrms, 1697 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-19-12;
Previous Sale: \$655,000, 04-04-07
- 28 Lance Court, \$840,000, 4 Bdrms, 2722 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-19-12;
Previous Sale: \$295,000, 07-05-96
- 268 Rheem Boulevard, \$849,000, 2 Bdrms, 1873 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 11-2-12;
Previous Sale: \$187,000, 06-11-84
- 243 Sandringham Drive #N, \$925,000, 4 Bdrms, 2353 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 10-23-12;
Previous Sale: \$339,000, 08-12-87

ORINDA

- 63 Barbara Road, \$796,000, 4 Bdrms, 2052 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 11-2-12;
Previous Sale: \$414,000, 05-20-98
- 30 El Verano, \$781,500, 2 Bdrms, 1640 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 10-19-12;
Previous Sale: \$439,000, 05-15-98
- 11 La Fond Lane, \$1,260,000, 4 Bdrms, 2875 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 10-17-12;
Previous Sale: \$1,395,000, 03-29-05
- 67 Loma Vista Drive, \$855,000, 4 Bdrms, 2266 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-19-12
- 255 Manzanita Drive, \$750,000, 4 Bdrms, 2376 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 10-23-12
- 1 Madera Lane, \$803,000, 3 Bdrms, 2023 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 11-2-12
- 6 Rabble Road, \$2,740,000, 6 Bdrms, 5988 SqFt, 11-2-12
- 412 Ridge Gate Road, \$1,390,000, 3 Bdrms, 2950 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 10-18-12;
Previous Sale: \$725,000, 06-08-00
- 241 Village Gate Road, \$750,000, 3 Bdrms, 2075 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 10-17-12;
Previous Sale: \$425,000, 12-01-97
- 11 Westover Court, \$850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1874 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 10-24-12
- 118 Zander Drive, \$1,110,000, 3 Bdrms, 2285 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 10-24-12;
Previous Sale: \$1,350,000, 07-14-05

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

ORINDA

- Hall Drive, 94563, LXS Trust Fund, 10-22-12, \$748,350, 1898 sf, 4 bd



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Storm damage is usually, but not always, related to structural problems that could have been addressed with proper structural training when the tree was young. Co dominant (two trunks with a narrow angle of attachment) trunks account for many trees failures. The hazard of wind damage is higher on the regrowth of trees that have been "topped".

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From Inexpensive to Extravagant Holiday Décor

... continued from page D1



Photo Couture Chateau

She says she is always on the lookout for what might work. “Sometimes it’s that ‘thing’ that finds you. It’s almost never in your budget but it’s a must have item that is true to how you envision your holiday home,” Soso says. “It becomes a treasure and delight from year to year. You use it and embrace it. But you have to be open to seeing it.”

Lamorindans wanting a more extravagant look adorn the base of Christmas trees with silk taffeta tree skirts or fabricated multi-use gift boxes. Others get ideas from department store displays, in magazine spreads – or in one of the many gift catalogues clogging mailboxes this time of year.

So what is this year’s hottest holiday trend?

“Custom trees are all the rage with the high-end,” says Daniel Coxon, assistant project manager at Couture Chateau in Orinda. The firm recently spent more than two weeks custom dipping and painting a faux tree to create a striped look and created custom ornaments for a unique yellow-themed Christmas tree. “We just waited for the inspiration to hit and once it did ... well, wow!”

Whether choosing the inexpensive or extravagant, Lamorinda homes are sure to be beautifully dressed for the season. For more holiday décor ideas, visit www.couturechateau.wordpress.com.

Ann McDonald is the Founder/CEO of Couture Chateau, a luxury interior design firm in Orinda.

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Patty and Gene live in Lafayette with their three Shelties and have been actively involved in the community, especially the schools where Patty was a high school teacher and varsity tennis coach in the San Ramon School District. Gene was past president and CEO of CSE Insurance Group in San Francisco prior to joining the real estate industry.

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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Hoe, Hoe, Hoe-A Berry Merry Holiday!

By Cynthia Brian

"Families are like fudge - mostly sweet with a few nuts." Author Unknown



Fuju persimmons and tangerines are December treats. Fujus can be eaten like apples. Eggplants are still growing in the garden. Photos Cynthia Brian

Coming from a large Italian family and having harvested walnuts for most of my life, I know a thing or two about nuts. At Christmas one of the annual homemade packages we gave to friends and relatives included a beautiful display of candied and savory walnuts. Conveyor belts would take the nuts up to the top of the dehydrator barn in November and by early December, our personal supply became the focus of my mother's culinary expertise. We'd cook up batches of rocky road fudge, persimmon pudding, and Italian fruitcakes, all boasting the ubiquitous walnuts, plus apricots, peaches, and pears we had dried during the summer. Perhaps because I had spent one too many summers in the boiling hot cutting fruit shed, or culled one too many green-hulled walnuts, for years I could never eat any of our creations. In fact, I often wondered why everyone raved about our labor intensive, nature-born gifts. "Why don't we just buy people presents from the Sears & Roebuck catalogue like everyone does?" was my constant lament. (The Sears & Roebuck catalogue was the haute retail source in our rural environment.)

In today's cyber speed world, the travails of a farmer seem far removed from living in the big city buzz. It's so easy to go online and with the click of a button, order anything from anywhere at any price and have it delivered speedily. Yet, today more than ever, homegrown, hand-made, and personally crafted gifts are greatly appreciated for the personal attention that goes into each. Not only are from-the-heart offerings gaining celebrity status, decorating with nature in mind has gained rocket speed momentum. ... continued on page D6

OUR CONTINUOUS QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE

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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Hoe, Hoe, Hoe-A Berry Merry Holiday!

... continued from page D5



From my Farm Family to yours, Happy Holidays

As soon as the last of the Thanksgiving leftovers are devoured, most of us concentrate our attention on the December holidays. We climb into attics, scour garages, and check the back of our closets digging out ornaments and lights from last year's merriment. In the midst of our decorating fury, spending time in the garden is probably not at the top of most priority lists, yet devoting a few hours at the beginning of the month to hoe, hoe, hoe will add stockings full of joy to your ho, ho, ho.

One of your first tasks is to walk around your yard to identify what needs to be done to tuck your garden in for its long winter's nap. If you have citrus in containers, you'll want to move the pots to protection, either closer to the house, a solarium, or put them in an unheated garage. For frost tender bushes and plants in the ground, cover them with crop blankets in case of a sudden freeze. Since the rains, weeds are already

sprouting. While the ground is soft but not muddy, it's a perfect time to clean out the pesky plants and cover with mulch to deter further growth and prevent erosion from the downpours. Plant the last of the spring bulbs (many are on sale now), and then take inventory of the natural décor your garden offers to jazz up the holiday festivities.

If you grow persimmons, pomegranates, nuts, tangerines, and other citrus, consider boxing them up as gifts for friends or family who aren't gardeners. Bouquets of fragrant narcissus or a bunch of fresh herbs such as rosemary, sage, chives, oregano, and mint tied with a festive ribbon make useful hostess gifts. Cut branches from pines, firs, juniper, and other conifers to swag staircases and doors with fresh garlands. Whether you have hot cider on the stove, gingerbread cookies baking in the oven, chestnuts roasting over the fire, or dried orange slices hanging on the tree, the aro-

mas of the holiday are heaven scents.

Be a style setter by bringing in the berries—cottonaster, pyracantha, pistache, and holly. If you have not been deadheading your rosebushes, cut the rose hips to add to your mantel arrangement along with your collection of old, vintage, or handmade ornaments, magnolia cones, and leaves.

No matter how pretty your front entrance is year round, December is the month to spice it up with lush interruptions of seasonal greens and sparkle. If you have gourds or pumpkins left over from the fall, spray paint them silver, gold, or bronze. Embellish your winter wonderland with decorative birds, nests, angels, or jewels. Layer baskets with earthy moss and real mushrooms to create a mini woodland scene. Welcome visitors with trees glittering with lights and unbreakable ornaments that exhibit your personality.

Celebrate the season of wonder and magic with botanical themes that echo your love of nature. Bake a batch of fudge with nuts as well as a couple of fruitcakes using produce from your garden. Be thankful for the love and charm of family, nuts, and all.

Season's Greenings!



Bromeliads bring a bit of the tropics to the holiday season.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for December

"Christmas waves a magic wand over this world, and behold, everything is softer and more beautiful." Norman Vincent Peale

Every December my entire family looks forward to gathering on our ranch where my mom, brother, and nephew decorate over an acre of land with thousands of twinkling lights, and every imaginable Christmas scene. Since I was a little girl, this was the wonder my parents weaved to ensure that Santa and his reindeer would find their way to our remote wilderness hideaway. The holidays are special because of family traditions and imagination on overload. It's been a year of exploring, experimenting, and experiencing. According to the Mayan calendar, the world as we know it is going to end on Dec. 21. Are we prepared? Let's pamper ourselves, our families, and our guests with a dazzling, sparkling season of light, love, and laughter by greening our spirit. This is your passport to outdoor pleasure, purpose, and passion.

- RAKE leaves from lawns to keep them from matting. Keep mower at a higher cutting level.
- WINTERIZE your shrubs and bushes with a dormant feeding, the last one of the season.
- DEADHEAD roses for a final flush of blooms throughout the holidays. Next month will be the heavy pruning.
- REPAIR damaged cells by eating berries. Berries are nature's brain food. Polyphenols give berries their deep colors-red, blue, black, activating proteins that break down and recycle the toxic chemicals. Blueberries are high in antioxidants, acai berries contain high levels of omega -6 and omega -9 fatty acids to help the heart, and strawberries are loaded with vitamin C.
- FASHION wreaths from boughs of redwood, pine, fir, and grapevines.
- FORAGE for fresh watercress to add to winter salads in nearby creeks or wetlands. Make sure to thoroughly wash the greens before eating.
- PROTECT tender plants from frost and freeze by moving potted plants inside or close to the house.
- WATER plants when dry as they will suffer less damage from the cold when they are well watered.
- BUY camellias now in the colors to suit your landscape décor while they are stocked as blooming specimens in nurseries.
- BAKE a personalized garden fruitcake this holiday using real fruits-fresh, frozen, or dried from your own earth. Grapes, peaches, apricots, figs, and pears are magnificent choices for a different type of holiday treat.
- DON'T eat mushrooms from your garden unless you are 100 percent certain that they are edible. Numerous look-alike champignons are toxic and even deadly.
- CUT back chrysanthemums to six inches.
- REMOVE dead foliage from shrubs and bushes and add to compost bin.
- PLANT peony, calendula, oriental poppy, and lily of the valley for spring blooms. Bare root offerings to plant now include asparagus, artichoke, rhubarb, grapes, and berries.
- USE no more than three strands of lights plugged into one cord or outlet to prevent fire.
- DECORATE with bromeliads and antheriums for a hint of the tropics.
- BE original in customizing your holiday decorating with non-traditional items from succulents to roses with lantern accents.
- ADD luster to potted noble firs by adding sprigs of amaryllis and hydrangeas to the arrangement.
- SAVOR families and friends this holiday season and every moment of the year. Growing people is the greatest gift of all.

Happy Holidays from my noble garden to yours! Ring in the New Year with a gardener's glee.

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The Goddess Gardener
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www.GoddessGardener.com
925-377-7827

I am available as a speaker, designer, and consultant.



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55 Oak Road
Build your dream home on this gorgeous oak studded lot with views of the hills. Terrific neighborhood of impressive homes close to town. Utilities/sewer at street.
Offered at \$219,000



40 Dos Osos
Incredible Orinda, San Pablo Dam, Mt. Diablo views + abundance of nature surrounds this supersized parcel bordering EBMUD land. Exceptional beauty. Once in a lifetime opportunity raw land sale.
Offered at \$545,000



50 Camino Don Miguel
Special Country Club location amidst expensive homes. Lush setting with building site knoll and towering oaks, filtered views & total privacy.
Offered at \$545,000



270 Camino Sobrante
Chic, mid-century modern in best OCC location. Beautifully remodeled 3bd/2ba features vaulted ceilings, gourmet kit. w/built in ofc level out to private patio & play area; spacious flat yard w/terraced flower beds & view deck.
Offered at \$999,000



81 Van Ripper Lane
Great 4bd/ 3.5ba rancher on one of the best Orinda streets. Great price too - move right in or remodel.
Offered at \$1,250,000



71 Camino Don Miguel
Beautifully renovated trad. charmer on priv. lane in heart of OCC. Custom detail throughout - fabulous redone kitchen, gorgeous mstr ste, formal LR & inviting FR. Lovely lvl garden w/ expansive brick patio + outdoor fireplace.
Offered at \$1,285,000



1 Snowberry Lane
Beautifully updated mid-century 4bd/3.5ba, 3439 sf, on .75 ac park-like setting in premium Sleepy Hollow location. New eat-in kit. w/stainless Viking appliances, granite counters & hwd flrs; porcelain tile in entry & dining & much more!
Offered at \$1,365,000



251 Monte Vista Ridge Rd.
Stunning gated 5bd/4ba custom estate! Panoramic views of Briones! Outdoor living at its best with expansive terrace featuring fabulous kitchen. Romantic master retreat with spa bath.
Offered at \$1,995,000



65 La Espiral
Updated 4bd/4ba w/beautiful custom features & amenities. Very well maintained. Majestic setting, lovely gardens, new pool + views/ privacy, fully fenced. Tuscany ambiance, European flair
Offered at \$2,195,000



60 Coachwood Terrace
An Estate in prime location. 5bd/4.5ba, pool/spa, apx. 6000 sq ft on apx. 6.54 acres. Fabulous stone walled gardens, many fruit trees. Reflects Orinda living at its best.
Offered at \$2,495,000



1690 Reliez Valley Rd.
Fab 1+ acre ridgeline property w/ spectacular views of Mt. Diablo etc. Paved driveway to building site w/utilities & sewer at property. Includes preliminary plans for 4900+ sq ft home.
Offered at \$650,000

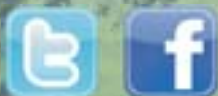


220 Gregory Lane
2bd/1ba major fixer on .21 acre lot that needs lots of TLC but real possibilities. Bring your contractor and investor. Good floor plan and hardwood floors. Price includes separate .23 acre lot.
Offered at \$475,000

THE VILLAGE ASSOCIATES:

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