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Enjoying friends and warm treats at the Orinda Library's Caffé Teatro on a recent chilly day are, from left: Kirstin Ricker, Cash Ricker, Callum Glynn, Grant Ricker, Duncan Glynn, Kendall Glynn, and Emery Glynn.

Photo Ohlen Alexander

Orinda Named the Second Friendliest Town in America by Forbes

Lamorindans using social media to foster neighborhood involvement

By Laurie Snyder

Orinda recently received a Mister Rogers-sized warm fuzzy from Forbes, the venerable publication which has been "Devoted to Doers and Doings" since its founding in 1917. When the business news outlet announced its rankings for "Friendliest Towns in America" on Dec. 19, Orinda was awarded the silver medal. Yes, you read that correctly. Orinda is the second friendliest city in the nation. "I wasn't surprised given our low crime rate and residents' high level of civic en-

gagement and generosity," said Mayor Amy Worth, who pointed to Orinda's annual Fourth of July Parade, festivals, and other civic activities as key reasons that the city is "a great place to live." Orinda City Manager Janet Keeter promptly fired off a press release while area coaches, realtors, non-profit groups, council members, and locals displayed their civic pride via email and Twitter. ... continued on page A10

Quote of the Week:

"She is family and that is what you do—you take care of family."
 Read *Happiness at One Hundred and Five*, page B5

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Rosy Financial Picture for City of Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson

"The City remains in very good financial health, with a projected General Fund balance of \$13.8 million at the end of the fiscal year – June 30, 2013," states the fiscal year 2012-2013 Final Municipal Budget prepared by City Manager Steven Falk and Administrative Services Manager Tracy Robinson.

In an ironic turn of events, the value of being fiscally conservative and having a substantial savings account became quite apparent when torrential rain coupled with debris caused roughly \$600,000 worth of damage to Mt. View Drive. "The reason why it's a good thing to keep your expenses below your revenues is that it allows you to build up a rainy day reserve fund. And we all know what *that* can be used for!" quipped Falk.

He credits Lafayette's successful restaurants, retailers and revitalized downtown for recent increases in sales tax figures. By the end of the fiscal year, city management estimates a \$140,000 increase in sales tax revenue, up for the first time since 2007. "Taxes from restaurants now com-

prise 25 percent of our overall sales tax revenue, which is nearly double the amount of any other sector (gas stations come in second at 14 percent)," Falk said. "Tracy Robinson, the City's chief budgeteer, loves the fact that Lafayette Restaurant Row, featuring Chow, Postino, El Charro, Pizza Antica, Metro and so many others, has become a regional draw."

There has been similar positive news for the grocery sector with the addition of Whole Foods which has "led to better quality and selection – and higher sales. It has, as they say, lifted all boats, with Lafayette residents being the big winners. Check out the outdoor produce market at Diablo Foods and you'll see what I mean," said Falk.

Other positive signs for the city include new stores like Venture, a men's clothing store, and the expansion of independent merchants like Lamorinda Music and Mighty Fine Guitars, that has tripled its space, and the new, more visible location of Douglass Designs.

Drivers in town will be happy to hear that even though Measure G, the Fix Our Roads campaign, didn't pass, the city council made good on its promise to devote \$3 million toward road repair, spread out over a few years. A sinking fund for Pavement Management Projects was created and \$1.1 million of General Fund reserve funds were used in fiscal year 2012-13, leaving a balance of \$1.9 million to be spent over the next couple of years.

As anticipated, contracted sheriff services, the city's biggest expense, was a bit more costly than the last fiscal year, up 3.7 percent to \$3.4 million. For the average citizen however, it seems like out of pocket costs are what really matter. From soup to nuts the municipal fee schedule has you covered. For example, it's a relative bargain to get your bingo license renewed – only \$10. The future looks a bit more expensive for those looking for a Thinking about a remodel? That doesn't come cheap – fees can start at \$3,800.

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Nick Marnell roams Lamorinda cafés to find out what readers think we should look at in 2013. Page B2



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Gaels Gear Up for WCC Play

Expectations are high for the men's basketball season. Michael Sakoda reports. Page C1



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Better living through gardening—Cynthia Brian looks forward to the new year! Page D1

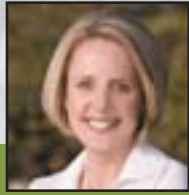


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Lafayette

Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Jan. 14, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

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

Design Review

Monday, Jan. 14, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Arts & Science Discovery Center,
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District
Wednesday, Jan. 16, 7:30 p.m.
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd., Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Jan. 9, 4:30 p.m.
Special Board Meeting
Tuesday, Jan. 15, 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:

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Phone: (925) 284-1968

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org

Mayor Mike Anderson Discusses Priorities for 2013

By Cathy Tyson



Mayor Mike Anderson speaks with reporters Dec. 21 when Mt. View Drive reopened. Photo Cathy Tyson

Longtime Lafayette resident Mike Anderson won re-election to the City Council back in November, and was sworn in as mayor in mid-December. This isn't his first rodeo, having served on the council since 2004 and taking another turn as mayor in 2008.

At the official city council reorganization meeting last month, Anderson outlined his priorities for the coming year. Most pressing is the closure of the Los Arabis Fire station, bringing the number of fire stations that serve Lafayette down to two from three. The station had been closed due to mold and pest infestation since late June; at that time, the firefighters stationed there moved down the street

to Station 15 on Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

In order to avoid, or at least blunt the impact of the closure, while responding to Fire Chief Daryl Louder's suggestion of "creative solutions" Anderson called for adjusting staffing from three to two firefighters at each of Lafayette's three fire stations. Louder and union officials did not support that idea.

"There will be more discussion in the coming weeks," said Anderson. He explained that the chief will be going to all of the cities where there's a station closure – Lafayette, Walnut Creek, Martinez and Clayton. Also responding to concern about slower response times, ambulance service

provider American Medical Response is working on finding a way to reposition its units to better serve areas with station closures.

Moving on to the ever increasing traffic congestion within the downtown area, Anderson wants to take a comprehensive look at the overall situation, hoping to identify trouble spots, and use the latest ideas and technology, possibly adjusting signal timing to make traffic flow "as efficient as we can." Additionally he'd like to have a discussion with school district management about the possibility of staggered start times at Lafayette schools to help reduce bottle necks.

Concerned about some of the public comment regarding potential school overcrowding that came up at hearings for the controversial but recently approved KB Home project downtown, Anderson wants to partner with area schools, so that when a project is approved there are no surprises about potential expansion of the number of students. "We should have that conversation; we want to give schools information so they can plan accordingly – no surprises."

Finally, he'd like to encourage local businesses and the Chamber of Commerce to work with the Youth Commission on internships and summer jobs. Over the years as a liaison with this group, Anderson is clearly very impressed with the talents of the many students involved and the only city

task force that actually makes money – on the annual haunted house.

On a personal level, juggling his full time job with the East Bay Regional Park District and the demands of being mayor can be challenging. "It's a little crazy sometimes," Anderson said. "My wife calls it a habit or minor addiction."

The couple also had a unique storm-related surprise, with the now-famous Lafayette sinkhole, right in their immediate neighborhood. The good news is the repairs continued 24/7 to get the job done as quickly as possible. The bad news is that repairs were 24/7 with heavy machinery and diesel generators humming throughout the night. He used earplugs and a blindfold in order to get some sleep. Several of his neighbors were conspicuously absent; chalk it up to an extended Christmas vacation, staying at a friend's home, or perhaps taking up the offer partially subsidized by the City of Lafayette with a generous discount by the Lafayette Park Hotel—rooms for \$50 per night.

Despite the noise and fumes, Anderson has nothing but compliments on how the process was handled, from quick-acting city staff that diligently worked on plans to obtain the necessary permits, to service providers. "It's amazing how responsive they've been – EBMUD, Central San, PG&E, and of course the C.C. Myers crew working through the night."

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LAFAYETTE POLICE		
Police Report		
Dec. 9-15, 2012		
Alcohol	12/12 drunk in public	2nd St. @ Golden Gate Way
Assault	12/14 deadly weapon	1000 block Oak Hill Rd (twice in 2 hours)
Auto	12/9 reckless driving	S Lucille Ln @ St Mary's Rd
	12/10 accident	Central Lafayette exit @ Hwy 24
	12/12 accident	Brook St @ Moraga Rd
	12/13 accident	1200 block Pleasant Hill Rd
	hit & run	3500 block Mt Diablo Blvd
	12/14 accident	3900 block Happy Valley Rd
	hit & run	100 block Lafayette Circle
	12/15 reckless driving	Moraga Rd @ Old Jonas Hill Rd
Burglary/Theft/Robbery	12/10 auto	100 block Aspen Ct (twice in 60 min)
	auto	3400 block Moraga Blvd (twice in 90 min)
	petty theft	900 block 1st St
	12/11 petty theft	1100 block Upper Happy Valley Rd
	12/12 residential burglary	1700 block Reliez Valley Rd
	armed robbery	El Nido Ranch Rd @ Sunnyhill Rd
	12/13 ID theft	1000 block Calallero Ln
	12/14 petty theft auto	300 block Shire Oaks Ct 3600 block Mosswood Dr
Disturbance	12/9 party	Huntleigh Dr @ Somerset Dr
	12/11 public nuisance	Blackberry Ct @ Silver Dell Dr
	public nuisance	500 block Arrowhead Dr
	12/12 public nuisance	Arrowhead Dr @ Indian Way
	12/14 public nuisance	1000 block Windsor Dr
	public nuisance	Old Tunnel Rd @ Windsor Dr
	drugs	El Nido Ranch Rd @ Pine Ln
	party	3200 block Vernon Ave
	loitering	Charles Ct @ Hidden Oaks Dr
	12/15 party	1100 block Oleander Dr
Vandalism	12/11	200 block Lafayette Circle
Traffic Stops		69

Lafayette officers were checking on Happy Valley School Dec. 20 at 4 a.m. when they noticed a couple driving in the neighborhood. After they were pulled over, police found a pry device and a large quantity of mail that did not belong to the pair who live in Concord. Armed with search warrants, detectives from Lafayette and Orinda found items taken from both cities. Police will continue investigating other thefts from the area that may be linked to the couple. Lafayette Police Chief Eric Christensen calls it, "A great job by our officers and detectives to try to bring some of these thefts to a stop."

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Anna Alvarado of Orinda tells her Living Lean story in her own words.

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"Terraces" Final Environmental Report is Available

Residents looking for some light reading to kick off the year may want to consider the Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the proposed 315-unit, multi-family Terraces of Lafayette project near Acalanes High School. The information in the three volume set provides a report summary, revisions to the Draft EIR, lots of exhibits that include everything from the 1976 Major Ridgeline Ordinance to appendices on geology and soils along with responses to comments received on the Draft EIR. There will be a public meeting of the Planning Commission to consider certification of the Final EIR on Jan. 7 at 7 p.m. in the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. The focus of this meeting is simply to determine if the Final EIR is in compliance with CEQA – the California Environmental Quality Act. Residents wishing to comment either for or against the proposed project can do so after the environmental review process is completed. The document is rather long, best to read it via the city website at www.ci.lafayette.ca.us, at the City Offices, 3675 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Suite 210, or at the Lafayette Library; or call for a CD copy, (925) 284-1968. C. Tyson.

Famous Sinkhole Fixed Before Christmas



Thanks to a focused team effort, construction crews from C.C. Myers finished repair of the Mt. View Drive sinkhole that closed this important roadway in Lafayette. As of noon on Dec. 21, residents could drive slowly across the new temporary roadway to get to Brook Street and beyond. Crews were returning after Jan. 1 to finish the job, with permanent fencing, a final coat of asphalt and more.



As Seen In Lafayette...



Mugging it up after the double rainbow sighting in Lafayette on Dec. 22, from left: Declan, Alyssa and Kaitlyn Tsuyuki.
Photo Caroline Tsuyuki

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Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Jan. 9, 7 p.m.
 Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
 1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

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

Design Review

Monday, Jan. 14, 7 p.m.
 Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

School Board Meeting

Moraga School District
 Tuesday, Jan. 8, 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

Delivery theft, 12/17/12 A Sullivan Drive resident reported the Sony noise-canceling headphones that he ordered were delivered to his front porch, but alas, they were swiped by an unknown suspect, definitely not Santa's little helper. UPS confirmed that the package made it to the residence. Estimated value \$30.

Same day, same crime, 12/17/12 A package had been delivered to a Carter Drive residence sometime between 1 and 3:15 p.m. which was stolen from the doorstep. The box contained \$202 worth of cosmetics.

And again, 12/17/12 This time on Del Rio Way, just around the corner from Carter—a package delivered between 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. was mysteriously taken from the door step. The box contained \$80 worth of camera cases.

And again, 12/17/12 Another Del Rio Way homeowner got home around 2:50 p.m. and noticed three boxes on her front porch. When she went to pick them up about 40 minutes later, the boxes had vanished. Perhaps more than a coincidence that there were a total of four porches pilfered in the same afternoon?

Irate customer, 12/17/12 Cops responded to a call at the Wells Fargo Bank on Moraga Way and contacted the subject who was delusional and uncooperative. The woman was deemed gravely disabled, unable to take care of herself and a threat to others, so she was taken to Contra Costa Regional Medical Center for a mental health hold.

Burglary, 12/16/12 A Paseo Del Campo resident reported that sometime between noon and 6:15 p.m. an unknown suspect entered the home through an unlocked door. Miscellaneous jewelry and electronics were taken. No leads at this time.

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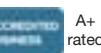
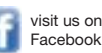
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Moraga's New Mayor Wants to Leave His Mark

By Sophie Braccini



Mayor Dave Trotter presents his goals for 2013. Photo Andy Scheck

There was no doubt in Dave Trotter's mind that he would be mayor of Moraga in 2013. It was not clear a year ago when Howard Harpham was elected vice mayor, breaking the Moraga tradition of rotating the top spot according to the number of votes received in the general election. But Harpham didn't run for re-election and Trotter believed that no one would stand in the way of tradition again in December. Following the election he worked with town staff to fine tune a list of seven objectives that define his vision for the town in 2013. The Town Council will debate and approve these goals, probably in mid-January during its traditional goal-setting session.

Trotter was elected to the council in 2006 and 2010 on a conservative and pro-open-space platform. His voting record is consistent; every time a development was proposed on a MOSO property he advocated for mini-

mal impact. This year, the General Plan is up for a partial review and Trotter wants to leave his mark in the tightening of the rules for development on slopes and ridgelines. "The result of Rancho Laguna 2 shows that the General Plan's wording is not strong enough to protect our open space and we need to give it more teeth," said Trotter. That development was approved by the council in 2011 and includes a home to be built on a minor ridgeline. It passed on a 2-1 vote, with Trotter opposed. "It is time to put this issue on the table, and it will require the vote of a majority of the council to pass," he added.

Trotter wants to go a step further and is proposing a moratorium on development until the General Plan is modified. "This is very typically done in a situation where you're undergoing a review of your General Plan; it is part of the toolbox," said Trotter. He added that the town did something

similar when it regulated the activity of medicinal marijuana.

Another of Trotter's objectives that will have an impact on how Moraga is transformed in the years to come is to encourage small wineries while protecting neighbors from impacts. "We already have two small scale wineries in Moraga," said Trotter, referring to Parkmon Vineyards and Captain Vineyards where two Moraga families harvest grapes, and produce and sell their own wines. Planning Director Shawna Brekke-Read is working on ways to regulate this activity in residential neighborhoods, and it is likely that defining what "small" is will be a central element. "We have to consider the setting and its impact on neighbors," said Trotter. "The first thing is to work on a zoning regulation."

Trotter does not know what this regulation should be, but has ideas on how to limit the impacts of winemaking. "It would be great to have a co-op processing facility in the Moraga Center, as has been proposed by others," said the new mayor.

Two other issues related to land use have been added to Trotter's list, addressing town-owned land use. He would like to start negotiations with Moraga Country Club regarding the rent of a large piece of property commonly referred to as the "Back Nine." The club currently rents it from the town at low cost, but these expensive terms will terminate at the end of 2013. Trotter would also like the council to look into annexing the land located north of Rancho Laguna Park that was developed without the town being able to weigh in because, although it's within the town's

"sphere of influence," it's not actually part of the town.

Trotter's list does not include new objectives related to the Moraga Center Specific Plan. He believes the plan that proposes for 700 housing units in downtown Moraga is adequate, and its implementation is beyond the control of the town since the area is privately owned. "The Specific Plan included language that indicated that the town wanted to discuss development agreements with the property owners," said Trotter. "We have received no indication that the property owners have any interest in doing so." The risk is that projects will get developed separately with little of the public benefits that were included in the plan, such as the creation of a real downtown around School Street, the connection of trails along the creek, or the renovation of the Moraga Shopping Center. "The lack of progress is frustrating," acknowledged Trotter. "It's when you have a development agreement that you can plan in a comprehensive way, rather than when it happens piecemeal. Then what you have to guide you is the text of the Specific Plan."

Trotter's other objectives are in line with what was achieved in previous years—a balanced budget; the implementation of a road repair plan after the passage of Measure K; continuation of improvements to the Hacienda de las Flores as it serves as a community center; and cooperation with the school district to improve recreational facilities in town.

Also not on Trotter's list: off-leash dogs at Rancho Laguna Park, an issue he would happily let rest for 2013, if it's just up to him.



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Parker Colvin Joins Moraga School Board

By Sophie Braccini



Parker Colvin Photo provided

It took less than an hour for the Moraga School District Governing Board to decide on Parker Colvin to fill the seat left empty by Dexter Louie's sudden resignation. The choice of Colvin over Dr. Irwin Tallarico, a longtime educator and former Moraga school staff member, is the triumph of youth over experience. None of the board members still has children enrolled in the district but Colvin does; the board also agreed that a fresh perspective was needed. The fact that Colvin sought a seat on the board in the November election, winning 3,206 votes, was an important de-

terminating factor as well.

In his opening statement at the Dec. 20 school board meeting, which was held for the purpose of selecting a provisional member, Colvin reminded the board of his financial experience as an investment-banking underwriter that he believes convinced many Moraga voters of his ability to participate in the administration of the schools. "I want to serve for the best interest of my children and their friends," said Colvin, who has one child enrolled in a local elementary school and two younger children.

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School math teacher Brett Lorie spoke in support of Colvin. "Our boys went to kindergarten together and Parker (Colvin) always showed a great interest in what I did and the school system in general," said Lorie.

Colvin's relative inexperience in the area of education was not seen as a problem for the existing board members, even in contrast to his opponent's vast knowledge. A current lecturer and instructor in local colleges, Tallarico worked in the Moraga School District as a vice principal and

principal; today it is his grandchildren who go to school in Moraga. Board vice president Kathy Ranstrom remembered Tallarico as the assistant principal at JMIS when she was in middle school.

After hearing the candidates' statements and asking them questions, the board made its decision within minutes. In nominating Colvin, board member Kym Leserman said, "I think that he will bring a fresh perspective." Colvin's campaign rival Shari Simon, who was elected to the board in November, praised his cooperative spirit.

"I'm very pleased that we had two highly qualified candidates for the job," said Ranstrom. "Dr. Tallarico has such a breadth of experience; I was taking notes of all his excellent ideas. But what is important to me is to bring balance to this board. None of us have kids in the school district anymore and Parker will bring that connection to the schools."

Colvin was sworn in by Superintendent Bruce Burns and will serve on the five-member body until the next scheduled school board election in November, 2014.

Creating a Master Plan for Moraga Commons Park

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga Commons Park may be at the center of town and of many people's recreational lives but there is still room for improvement according to Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram, who wants to maximize the potential of this town asset. He would like to create a Master Plan for the park, but his tight budget presents an obstacle to achieving that goal. So, Ingram is starting to work with Cal State East Bay professor Chris Chamberlain and his team of students. This partnership will allow the director to accomplish at least part the job for free, a very fashionable and functional adverb for a city that prizes minimum government—and budget.

"There are a number of issues regarding the park where we'd like to have residents' opinions," says Ingram. He believes that the acreage known as the "back forty," which is the north side of the park that's mostly undeveloped, is underutilized. In addition, "The bocce ball users want to add more courts, and the volleyball sand pit turns into a lake after a heavy rain," he explains.

The back forty is currently part of the disc golf course and the uneven ground makes it inappropriate for most other uses. Bocce ball

users have been growing in number but finding a new site that would not require grading, or impact other activities, is more challenging than expected. The sand volleyball court no longer gets a lot of use and Ingram believes that its central location could be put to better use—especially during big events such as the Pear and Wine Festival and Fourth of July celebration.

Ingram says he also gets requests from residents who want to use the park for new activities, and he needs a vision of how the space can be adapted to best respond to increasing demand. In order to plan for the future, he also needs to have accurate data on current participation rates for park activities and resources.

"I met with Professor Chris Chamberlain. These kinds of studies are ideal for students and he's already done this with many Bay Area cities," says Ingram. According to his biography, Chamberlain has been "creating community" in the recreation field since 1988 and has served on the faculty in the Department of Leadership in Hospitality and Leisure Services at Cal State since 2005.

The complete scope of work will be defined in cooperation

with the Park and Recreation Commission, and is likely to include public outreach, an assessment of current use pattern, and defining the path forward to maximizing the park's potential.

The commission will be asked in January to decide on the first phase, including the number of community meetings, polling questions, marquee displays, community park walks and other community outreach opportunities. "After a draft plan is approved, we'll hire a consultant to budget the different options," says Ingram.

He expects that the Town Council will make final decisions regarding Commons Park towards the end of 2013.

Lots of Mud

Construction of the new parking lot by the skate park has been delayed due to the heavy rains of the last several weeks—crews can't pave over mud. But the new fence, made of recycled rail material, has been erected and a bioswale and other drainage improvements have been added. The contractor will complete the grading and paving of the parking lot once the ground dries out, according to the town's website.

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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Jan. 15, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Jan. 8, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Finance Advisory Committee

Wednesday, Jan. 23, 6 p.m.
Community Room, City Hall,
22 Orinda Way

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District
Monday, Jan. 14, 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:

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The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org



Police Report

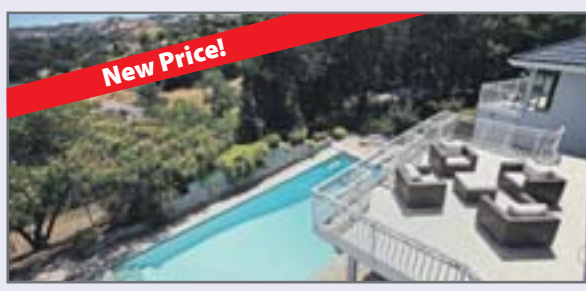
A bad influence, 12/15/12 A 35-year-old female driver Orinda police pulled over was found to be intoxicated. You probably know the symptoms by heart by now. Her blood alcohol count was over the 0.08 limit; she was taken to Orinda Police Department and transported from there to Martinez Detention Facility. Her vehicle was towed.

That's what (girl)friends are for? 12/17/12 A 32-year-old man stopped behind the wheel of his silver sports car admitted to having had "two beers." He took and failed a series of field sobriety tests, and refused a preliminary alcohol screening breath test. He was arrested and transported to Orinda Police Department, where a blood test was administered. He was later transported to Martinez Detention Facility. His girlfriend took possession of his car.

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Third Time a Charm for Orinda Mayor

By Laurie Snyder

A familiar face has taken over the helm of the Orinda City Council. Amy Worth, who was elected to her first term on the council in 1988, will serve a third turn as mayor. "Because we rotate the mayor's position each year, all the council members share this honor," said Worth. "It makes for a good team and working relationships."

Worth sat down recently with the Lamorinda Weekly to reflect on her many years of community service to the city and Bay Area. The conversation also gave a brief glimpse into the mayor's mindset as she readies for a State of the City speech expected to be delivered in February before the Orinda Rotary and Chamber of Commerce. "It is a great opportunity for the mayor to give community members both a reflection of where we are today and what we anticipate will be the issues in the coming year. I look forward to focusing both on local issues, as well as the regional issues that impact Orinda citizens. One exciting event during this coming year will be the opening of the new fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel," she said.

How has the city changed since your first term?

"Since Orinda incorporated in 1985, it has been managed by successive councils and a staff that have made prudent decisions, which have kept the city in a sound financial state while providing the services that our residents want," explained Worth. "Through our commissions, we have been able to tap citizens who are experts in their fields, whether it is in the arts, recreation, roads or planning, to contribute their talents and experience on a volunteer basis. Consequently, decisions are made in a public, open process which incorporates solid advice from Orinda citizens." Over the years, she has witnessed a move toward greater and greater transparency. Council members and staff, she said, work hard to ensure that Orinda's citizens are made aware, in advance, of all committee meetings.

"For the city council to make good decisions on issues, our ability to do that is dependent on getting the best information from our citizens and staff and then to deliberate those decisions in an open, public meeting. There are always different

perspectives on an issue, and I have come to believe that the open, transparent way we make decisions in local government is one of democracy's greatest strengths."

What are your top priorities for the coming year? What new ideas are bubbling?

"We have been working for a number of years to improve our roads and drains and with the passage of Measure L, we will have the opportunity to increase infrastructure funding and begin to implement our 10-year roads improvement plan. We began planning for a new affordable senior housing project over a decade ago and we will begin construction in January. While we operate the city on a limited budget, we have great park and recreation programs, along with the library, that provide services for our citizens of all ages. With the combination of more residents retiring as well as new families moving into Orinda, we have a wonderful opportunity to tailor our programs to evolving community needs."

Asked to identify Orinda's greatest strength, Worth did not hesitate. She pointed to the heart of the city – its citizens. "Whether it be in the schools, the city committees and commissions or the many community service organizations in Orinda, Orinda prospers because of that generous volunteer commitment to make our community the best place it can be."

Worth also highlighted, with great pride, Orinda's designation by Forbes Magazine as the second friendliest town in the U.S. (see article page A1).

"Orinda's volunteer spirit and generosity were a big part in achieving that wonderful honor," noted Worth. "Orinda residents have tremendous wisdom that has helped us steer a good course for our city this past quarter of a century."

Asked for her final thoughts Worth closed by saying, "I am honored to serve as mayor this year and look forward to working together with the Orinda School District and the Fire District to continue to make Orinda the wonderful community that it is. I am always available to talk with community members and can be reached at aworth@city-of-orinda.org."



Mayor Amy Worth (left) and Vice Mayor Sue Severson will lead the Orinda City Council for the coming year. Photos Ohlen Alexander



Mayor Amy Worth's Orinda City Council colleague, Victoria Smith, has dubbed her "the mother of the fourth bore." Worth is shown here in 2010, clarifying a point for U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA).



"I am always available to talk with community members," says Mayor Amy Worth. She is shown here at the Orinda Farmer's Market in April 2011, where she and her fellow civic leaders often spend time listening and responding to residents' concerns.

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Orinda City Council Announces 2013 Liaison and Committee Appointments

By Laurie Snyder

At its regularly scheduled meeting Dec. 18, 2012, the Orinda City Council approved its 2013 list of liaison and committee appointments for council members. Key appointments for the year include:

City Council Audit and Finance Committee

Steve Glazer, Amy Worth

City Council Library Facility Steering Committee

Amy Worth, Victoria Smith

City Council Public Safety Subcommittee

Steve Glazer, Amy Worth

City Council Roads Subcommittee

Steve Glazer, Sue Severson

City Council Senior Affordable Housing Subcommittee

Victoria Smith, Amy Worth

City Council Wilder Subcommittee

Dean Orr, Amy Worth

Art in Public Places Committee Liaison

Amy Worth

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission Liaison

Steve Glazer

Finance Advisory Committee Liaison

Sue Severson

Historic Landmarks Committee Liaison

Dean Orr

Mayoral Liaison (Orinda Mayor's Community Liaison Group, Lamorinda Mayors' Meeting, Contra Costa County Mayors' Conference)

Amy Worth

Parks and Recreation Commission Liaison

Dean Orr

Planning Commission Liaison

Dean Orr

Public Safety Committee Liaison

Steve Glazer

Traffic Safety Advisory Committee Liaison

Sue Severson

Acalanes Unified High School District Liaison

Sue Severson

Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)

Amy Worth

(serves as City of Orinda's voting delegate)

Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority Board

Steve Glazer, Victoria Smith

Chamber of Commerce Liaison

Victoria Smith

Contra Costa County Transit Authority

Amy Worth, Victoria Smith (alternate)

East Bay Municipal Water Utility District Liaison

Steve Glazer

East Bay Regional Park District Liaison

Dean Orr

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board Liaison

Victoria Smith, Sue Severson

Orinda Seniors Advisory Committee

Amy Worth

Orinda Teen Advisory Committee

Sue Severson

Orinda Union School District Liaison

Dean Orr

The complete listing of appointments with meeting times for each group and brief explanations of Council appointee responsibilities is available on the City of Orinda's web site.



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Community Service

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LCF Grant Presented to Mo Levich

Submitted by Dick Holt



Dick Holt and Mo Levich

Photo Andy Scheck

Lafayette Community Foundation (LCF) board member Dick Holt presented a \$2,500 LCF grant last month to Mo Levich, who, at the time, was leading the Dominant Seven jazz group that was helping to celebrate the 90th birthday of our beloved Ed Stokes at Diablo Foods. Members of the Dominant Seven include Ryan Kapoor, Isabell Tankka,

Evan Mickas, Andrew DeShong, and Nate Welcomer. Levich, one of the founding members of Generations in Jazz, has played a major role in the promotion of the outstanding music programs that we all enjoy throughout the Lafayette community. Generations in Jazz, a community music foundation, was formed by a coalition of music educators, musicians

and businessmen in Lafayette to better fund, administer, and expand several existing community music programs. Its mission is to support community activities through the language of jazz. Board member Tina Tankka advised Holt that the LCF grant "... will go to well-needed keyboards for our Summer Music Workshop."

Girl Scouts Wrap Gifts for Bay Area Rescue Mission

Submitted by Sherry Diestler



Members of Girl Scout Troop 31983 at the Willow Spring wrapping party.

Photo provided

For the past seven years Girl Scout Troop 31983 has participated in the Bay Area Rescue Mission's annual Christmas toy drive. This event quickly became a holiday tradition for the girls, complete with hot cocoa and lots and lots of gift-wrapping. This year, nearly 800 gifts were collected and wrapped Dec. 15 at the Willow Spring Church in Moraga, where the troop join forces with other members of the community to wrap the toys and assign each one to a specific gender and age group. The toys were handed out to children on Christmas Day.

Each year, the troop has become more involved and invested in the

event. "We have used the money we earn through cookie sales to go shopping at Toys R Us or Big Lots to purchase gifts to contribute to the drive," said troop leader Melanie VandenBerghe. "We have also worked to set out toy barrels around town, in parents' offices, sports clubs, or schools, and we've received massive contributions from the community this way. Our toy drive has been a way to bring not only our troop, but also our entire community together during the holidays to provide less fortunate kids with a special and memorable Christmas."

As graduating high school sen-

iors, this year was the last year that VandenBerghe's troop participated in the toy drive. Not wanting this special tradition to die out, they invited a fifth-grade Lafayette troop to join them this year, explained VandenBerghe.

"At the wrapping party at Willow Spring Church, each of us seniors took a younger girl under our wing as we showed them the ropes of sorting, wrapping, and labeling each present," VandenBerghe said. "Seeing the enthusiasm that these young girls had in helping out gave me faith that this Christmas tradition would continue long after my troop is gone."

Moraga Rotary Prepares Christmas Stockings for Children at Juvenile Hall

Submitted by Gary Irwin



Moraga Rotarians Debbie Roessler, Leslie Lynch, and Mary Elena Dochterman display Christmas stockings for kids at Juvenile Hall. Photos Gary Irwin

Rotary Club of Moraga filled approximately 350 Christmas stockings Dec. 17 which were given on Christmas Day to children incarcerated in county juvenile hall. Treats in the stockings included a deck of cards, a pair of socks, puzzle books, candies, shampoos, soaps, and cosmetics. This year, the cosmetic sets were arranged by Rotarian Bill Phelps, general manager of Aegis. Many Moraga Country Club residents donated their leftover Halloween candy. In addition, Joan Bruzzone donated funds to provide 100 dozen cookies as refreshments to the children while they received their gifts. These stockings are often the only Christmas gifts these children receive.

Rotary Club of Moraga has con-

ducted this Christmas stocking project for more than a decade. In recent years, the Interact Club at Campolindo High School and the Rotaract Club at Saint Mary's College have worked to stuff the gifts into the stockings, which were cut and sewn by Moraga Rotarians, spouses, and friends. Girls at the juvenile hall participated in the decorating of the stockings, so each stocking was unique. This year's project was led by Moraga Rotarians Barbara Bruner and Debbie Roessler.

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



Moraga Rotarian Vickie Devlin and friend Alex Tegenkamp display several boxes of Christmas stockings for kids at Juvenile Hall.



Moraga Rotarians Debbie Roessler, Leslie Lynch, and Mary Elena Dochterman display Christmas stockings for kids at Juvenile Hall. Photos Gary Irwin

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Public Forum JOIN IT

Emergency UnPreparedness in Lamorinda?

Here's a query for the new year. Given that our area is due for tectonic cataclysm such as we've seen recently in Haiti, New Zealand, Chile, China, Indonesia, Guatemala, Mexico, etc., should we expect local policy makers to be thinking ahead and taking measures that will ease our region's eventual suffering and loss of life? Alternatively, should we accept that their plates are quite full already with matters of more immediate concern and not ask them to make clear policy for emergency preparedness?

As everyone knows, in 1906 the Bay Area endured a huge temblor which caused a fair bit of damage, but that amount of destruction was dwarfed by what resulted from the sad fact that San Francisco policy makers had not theretofore seriously considered the consequences of fighting a post-earthquake fire after the city's water system had been shattered and quickly drained.

Likewise, it's commonly known that that the damage from the 1991 Oakland Firestorm expanded dramatically because local policy makers had not rationally considered the consequences of their hydrant fittings being different from those of most other agencies, nor the fact that when power lines went down there would be no backup power to pump water up to the reservoirs in the hills.

It's not possible to know exactly what the circumstances will be when the Hayward and/or Rodgers Creek faults slip next time. Will the Delta levees collapse causing a massive influx of brackish fluids into the water supply for much of Southern and Northern California? Will the aqueducts from the Sierras be ruptured? In other words, will there develop a state-wide water crisis and a possible months long interruption of water delivery in parts or all of Lamorinda?

On a local level, do local fire agencies train for such circumstances? Do they co-ordinate with EBMUD to hold water in area tanks and reservoirs for fire suppression purposes? If so, would the water in the tanks actually be available, or would earthquake safety valves prevent the filling of fire engines at the associated hydrants? Are local policy makers (Town/City Council members) paying any attention to these things?

Beyond water supply issues, do the local governments have relationships with local ranchers such that they would provide assistance in widespread public works emergencies such as when major roadways are blocked by landslides, downed trees and so forth? Are there inter-agency plans to quickly re-open roads for EMS traffic following a severe earthquake or prolonged torrential rains? Should area residents care if these and other such relationships with workers and suppliers do or do not exist?

Are policy makers considering other important matters such as working with Meals on Wheels to ensure that the many elderly and frail local residents who cannot easily fend for themselves are accounted for and assisted with food and other support services? What plans are there to help other vulnerable populations recover from a major event?

Maybe some residents are wondering what lessons can be learned by Lamorinda from the many disasters that have struck around the world in recent years? How can this information be gathered and assessed? How can we change the structure of the information from being overwhelming and poorly understood by local policy makers into an encapsulated assessment of the challenges Lamorinda will face along with a package of well reasoned suggestions?

Prior to offering an answer to that question, I should note that MOFD Fire Chief Randy Bradley has created a position of Emergency Preparedness Coordinator and the man hired to fill the slot has done a fine job of helping the Lamorinda city & town governments get some sense of how to get up and running in an emergency response format. However, when it comes to ways that citizens collaborate with local governments and other matters of policy, there is an overarching trend to simply use the bits and pieces of what already exists regardless of its potential efficacy. This is to say, there has been no overall assessment of the area's projected needs and, hence, there are only dribs and drabs of justification and understanding for existing policies. Put yet another way, this stuff has not yet been thought through clearly and everyone reading this text will eventually become a beneficiary of this neglect.

In order to develop a long term, encompassing response to the threat of tectonic calamity which Lamorinda is heir to, I would propose that the Town/City Councils direct their Town/City managers to follow a grand jury model and impanel a group of citizen volunteers (including a lawyer, an accountant, researchers, analysts, etc.) along with fire & police representatives to review not just predictions for post-earthquake Bay Area conditions and world-wide after action reports which deal with operational challenges, but also documents which discuss the challenges of the recovery process. After such reading--and deposing various state, ABAG (Association of Bay Area Counties), and county professionals in the disaster industry along with reps. from EBMUD, PG&E, Central San., etc.--they should be directed to submit a report which encapsulates the expected challenges and categorizes potential solutions. Following the submission of the report, that group should be dissolved and a second group formed to review the various options and make specific recommendations to the Town/City Managers and Councils.

This process would put local policy makers leaps and bounds ahead of their fellows in prior years and, indeed, of many or most of their contemporaries in other localities. Personally, I don't see why the three Councils shouldn't put their resources together to take on such a project. Whereas several years ago they jointly put up over \$30,000 for a report and Emergency Operations Plan which turned out to be wholly worthless, what's proposed here, if clearly and properly defined at the outset, could be done well and for negligible cost.

Again I ask you, should we expect from local policy makers study such as this which would conduce to well informed decision making, or should we just ignore the whole thing? If you agree with the sense of this proposal, please cut this letter out and send it to your incoming mayor along with your own comments. Let your local representatives know that you expect them do good work in this area on your behalf. Living in on the fringe of Lamorinda, I can view the overall picture. I just hope that I'm not the only one.

Respectfully,
Jonathan Goodwin
Canyon

(Jonathan Goodwin is an advocate for emergency preparedness and a member of CERT and the Canyon Fire Council)

Join our Public Forum

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

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Orinda Named the Second Friendliest Town in America by Forbes

... continued from page A1

According to the announcement by Morgan Brennan on Forbes.com, Forbes looked at "500 small metro areas with populations between 5,500 and 150,000." Towns were ranked based on their charitable giving, low crime rates, number of college graduates and percentage of owner-occupied homes. Orindans donate roughly five percent of their annual revenues to charity – a fairly significant source of support for non-profit organizations when you consider the community's median income level. The city also just happens to be the fifth safest in California (first for its size category, according to the FBI).

Education levels were assessed, said Brennan, because "research has found that college-educated folks typically display more civic engagement, with higher rates of voting and volunteering." Communities with higher percentages of owner-occupied homes were ranked higher because "studies have shown a direct correlation between homeownership and neighborhood stability."

Forbes partnered with Nextdoor.com to create its final list. "Since Nextdoor is connected to thousands of neighborhoods across the U.S. that use our service to create happier and friendlier places to call home," said Kelsey Grady, the company's Senior Communications Manager, "it made sense to help Forbes analyze the available data."

The San Francisco-based social media company describes its



mission as "[bringing] back a sense of community to the neighborhood." Nextdoor offers its users a variety of tools to create private social networks, customized to suit the unique character and needs of their respective neighborhoods. Sleepy Hollow residents are active on their site, said Grady, as are 19 other Orinda neighborhoods. "In Lafayette we have 18 neighborhoods on Nextdoor and in Moraga we have 10."

Chris Maher and his Campolindo neighbors use their site to send alerts regarding burglaries and other safety issues in Moraga, post minutes of board meetings and other documents, and also reach out about upcoming garage sales and for help with missing pets. "We've found lots of dogs,"

he said. Using the site is also proving to be an environmentally friendly alternative to the event flyers and lost puppy posters that often end up littering streets and fouling waterways in other areas. Now roughly half of Campo neighbors connect via email blasts and text messages through their private Nextdoor site.

While there were a few naysayers when Forbes named its friendliest towns, most comments in the Twitterverse were upbeat. Ryan, also known as @steezysee, wrote that it was a "Great day to be an Orindan."

And @Orindaproblems happily Tweeted the social media equivalent of a fist bump with the hashtag "#GoodForUs"? It really was a beautiful day in the neighborhood.

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ccare.stanford.edu/events/upcoming



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Rainy Day Dog Parade at Rheem

By Cathy Tyson



Tosca is a very energetic dog. Her owners borrowed that named from the famous opera because she's a diva. She was adopted from the Animal Rescue Foundation, her owners are unsure of her heritage but believe she is a Basque shepherd. Perhaps she knows if she sits nicely for the photographer there's a treat coming, she shares a knowing wink. Photos Cathy Tyson

Have leash, will travel. Pampered pooches in Moraga need not wait for the sun to come out to enjoy a walk. The relatively long covered promenade that skirts the Rheem Valley Shopping Center appears to be the place to go when it's raining and your canine companion needs a little recess. From Home Goods to the Rheem Theatre, with little parklets of grass, even a pet store near Nations for last minute treats, on any given rainy day a variety of dogs and their owners are happy to share a sniff and say hello.



Barney Miller, a half-papillon and half-maltese mix.

From a charming energetic and slightly damp bearded collie, to a half-papillon and half-maltese mix, the informal Moraga dog parade last week was the suburban version of the Westminster Dog Show.



Dawna Komorosky and sweet tri-pod beagle Carly.

One such pooch, Dawna Komorosky's good natured beagle Carly is a canine celebrity. Adopted just two years ago from the Beagle Rescue Society, one of her front legs was severely deformed, so it had to be amputated by the rescue group. The surgery hasn't slowed Carly down, now 12 years old, she raised over \$600 for the Valley Humane Society and appears in its 2013 calendar as April's poster dog. Komorosky says she loves to visit the Goodwill Store and Home Goods, the pair walks when it rains or if it's dark, "because of all the friendly people and dogs we meet."

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Q & A with
Mr. Rosario
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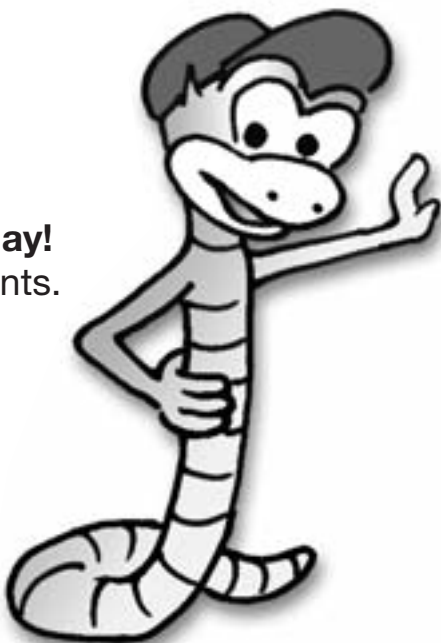
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“I Do Not Like Going to Walnut Creek!”

Lamorindans Share Their Concerns and Interests for 2013

By Nick Marnell



John, a 46-year Moraga resident, looks forward to our continued coverage of Lamorinda issues throughout 2013. Photo Andy Scheck

“It’s all about sports here,” said Jennifer, as her eyes burned through my blue baseball shirt. “How about a listing of current events for school-aged children, but non-sports related?”

Jennifer, a public service employee from Orinda and a parent of two, was the first to respond to my questions as I navigated the cafes of Lamorinda, asking residents about their concerns for 2013, and what topics they would like to see covered in Lamorinda Weekly.

The schools are no doubt one of our area’s greatest assets. Meredith,

mother of two young daughters, is downright worried for the future of Moraga schools. Her frustration was palpable. “Where do people think the funding for education is going to come from?” she asked. “Why didn’t Moraga pass the parcel tax (last spring)?”

Paul warned of a potential problem in education that may escalate throughout 2013. The Moraga teacher is concerned about the No Child Left Behind mandate, and the resulting regulations that may tie the hands of our schools. “Do we really need the government to interject itself to deter-

mine what is right for our district?” he cautioned.

As I organized my notes, Mark, a Moraga dad who was eating a salad at a nearby table, dropped his fork and walked over. “I have something I’d like you to write about,” he said. “Why isn’t there a single public park in Lafayette? And school lunches. They are totally void of nutritional value.”

Lauren, a Lafayette mom, loves to read about local Lamorinda businesses. “I love to shop locally,” she proudly stated. “I especially like to eat at new restaurants.” She concluded with a comment that should have our community erect a statue in her honor. “And I do not like going to Walnut Creek.”

There are always two sides to every story, however. Annette, an Orinda Downs mom, wishes that we’d provide more information like “reviews on restaurants, plays, and on big events in San Francisco and Walnut Creek.”

Linda pushed her sunglasses on top of her head and wasted no time in responding. “Speeding on Corliss! Constantly! People drive at freeway speeds on my street.” She’d like to see a campaign for reduced speeds on Moraga roads. How about this, Linda? Moraga residents would likely be thrilled to have the ticketing police cars reassigned from their streets to Corliss. For, say, the next 10

years.

A cancelled appointment by her physical therapy client gave Ann a chance to discuss her concerns for the elderly. “Let the public know what services are available,” she said. She’d like to see more stories on services like free transportation, depression counseling, and specifically, Caring Hands, the volunteer program of John Muir Health. Former Moraga resident Jane wants to see coverage of senior safety issues. “Especially the scams so prevalent on the seniors,” she said.

Kim and her husband moved to Lafayette a year ago from Ithaca, New York. They both work, have no children, and seem a bit overwhelmed by all of the family activities in the area. “How about features on activities for folks that have no kids,” she said.

As to overlooked sections of our community, how about this perspective, offered by Hope, who sat alone at a table in one cafe. She recently sold her company, the kids were gone, and she wondered what she was going to do in the next phase of her life. “Why don’t you do a feature on downsizing?” she suggested.

Nilou, who works for the EPA in San Francisco, hates the perception that Lamorinda is a “Republican enclave, full of venture capitalists. That’s not what we’re all about here.” Yet Shari of Lafayette says, “There needs to be a conservative viewpoint out there. I’m tired of the left.”

Nilou, Shari and Lafayette retiree, John, all agree that they like to read stories about the interesting people in the area. “What did Joe Blow do?”

Where did he travel?”

Another Lafayette mom, Merilee, would “like to find out what my neighbors’ kids are doing” via the newspaper. On a more conspiratorial note, Liz, from Moraga, has interest in a gossip column. “Like a Dear Nick?” she kidded. Mercy!

Adam, a Saint Mary’s student, wants to see the college covered in more depth than for only its sports achievements. And it’s nice to see our readership extend into the high schools. Bailey, a Campolindo student, is active in many sports, and wants everyone to know that “there are even (soon to be) diving classes at our school.” Andrew Morris, Acalanes Aquatics Director, confirmed that he hopes to begin those classes this spring.

A lack of development in our community was cause for concern. “Since the movie theater closed, there are very few activities for teenagers in Lafayette,” said Amy, who works for a San Francisco software company. Richelle, a Moraga scientist, bemoaned the vacancy rate in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center.

Long-time Moraga resident, John, simply said he enjoys reading about all the current events.

And, finally, there was Jennifer – a Moraga mom, who thought, and thought, and thought. But, try as she might, she could come to only this conclusion: “I can’t think of anything wrong with your paper. You cover it all!”

On that gracious note, here’s hoping that by the end of 2013 all of you feel exactly the same way.

Happy New Year everyone!

Submit stories and story ideas to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

When Elder Parents Resist Your Suggestions

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, LMFT, CMC

Have you experienced the following? You know that Mom or Dad is having problems, although he/she denies it, and won’t let you help. You suspect he or she is not getting groceries, not eating well, and not going to medical appointments. When you make suggestions about getting help, your mom or dad refuses and makes excuses. When you come for a visit, he/she “doesn’t want to bother you,” or says “maybe later” or “I’ll think about it.” You leave worried and frustrated.

Sometimes learning a different approach can make all the difference in achieving the results you would like for your parents. Success happens most often when families respect the elder’s right to make decisions and when all suggestions made are in line with the values of the elder. It is so easy for adult children to want something better for their parent or choose services or housing that appeals to their own likes without taking into account the parent’s value system or needs.

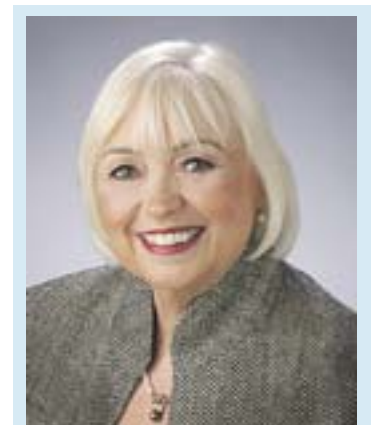
Here are some helpful tips:

- 1) Sometimes cost is the roadblock. You could pay the bill for the parent as a gift. All the siblings could chip in to pay for a driver or an emergency response system. It could be as low as \$30 a month, or even a no cost government entitlement.
- 2) Negotiate: Avoid put-down language and sarcasm. Say, “I love you, even though we disagree on this.”
- 3) Ask, “What is stopping you?” Often there is an unrealistic fear. Give factual answers without trying to “sell an idea.”
- 4) Explain that you are worried, so Mom or Dad can feel that this is being done for your peace of mind, not because help is needed. Use “I” messages in your communication, not “You should.”
- 5) Tell him/her: “Your family wants to spoil you.”
- 6) If home care is needed, start small and increase the hours of help as tolerated:

- Reassure your parent about protecting his/her privacy, fear of strangers, and fear of losing control.
- Let your parent choose the day of the week and the time of day for help to come.
- Hire a professional geriatric care manager to assist with the transition and supervise the quality of help.
- If the resistance appears to be from a cognitive deficit, dementia or mental health problem, talk it over with your parent’s doctor. It could indicate that you will need legal assistance to take over the decision making process for your parent. If you are seeing neglect and feel your parent’s health or well-being is at risk, you might need to call Adult Protective Services.

Loving a parent, respecting his or her dignity, finding the right combination of services to support quality of life and doing so without guidance and support, can be a journey of frustration.

For further information about professional geriatric care managers or to find a care manager in your local area, contact The National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers (NAPGCM) at: www.Care-Manager.org or visit www.Eldercare-Answers.com.



Linda Fodrini-Johnson is a licensed marriage, family and child counselor, a certified care manager, and is the executive director of Eldercare Services. She is an advisor on the new Lamorinda Village Task Force that will assist seniors to stay in their own neighborhoods and homes.

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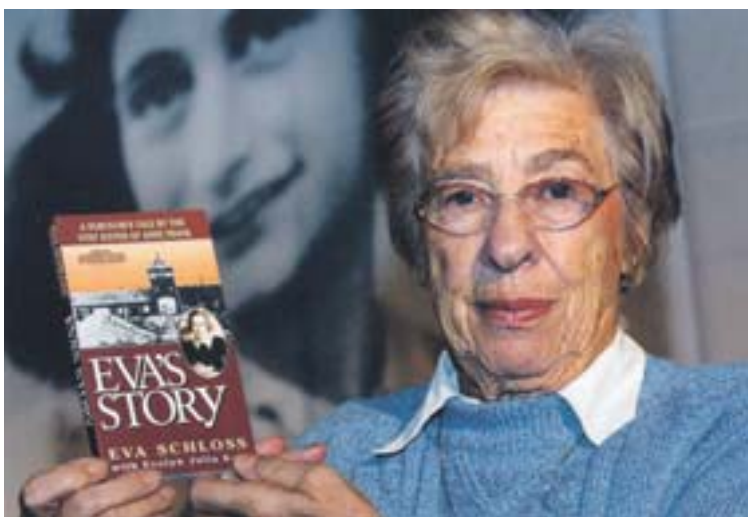
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Historic Evening with Anne Frank's Stepsister

Submitted by Rabbi D. Berkowitz



Eva Schloss

Photo provided

Families of all faiths are invited to hear a first-hand account from a woman whose life intersected with one of the most compelling figures in our history. Eva Geiringer Schloss, the childhood friend and stepsister of Anne Frank, will share her experiences including accounts of the publishing of Anne's famed diary at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 12 at the Orinda Theatre. The presentation is suitable for teenagers.

Schloss was born in Vienna, Austria, in 1929. She and her family immigrated to Belgium and eventually to Holland in 1938, shortly after Adolph Hitler annexed Austria.

In 1938, Germany invaded Austria, causing many Jewish families to flee the country to avoid persecution. Among the emigrants was 8-year-old Eva Geiringer, who with her mother, father, and brother moved first to Belgium and then to Holland, where one of her neighbors was a German Jewish girl of the same age.

The two girls became friends and playmates (though, as Schloss would say many years later, the girl was "much more grown-up and mature than me"). They passed the time by skipping, playing hopscotch and marbles, and drinking lemonade that the girl's mother prepared.

After the Germans invaded Holland in 1942, Schloss and her family went into hiding. Ultimately, both girls and their families were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp. Schloss and her mother were that family's only survivors. Anne Frank did not survive Auschwitz, but kept a diary that did.

After the war, Schloss' mother married Otto Frank, father of Anne Frank. Anne Frank's diary, her account of hiding from the Germans during the occupation of the Netherlands, was first published in 1950. Initially popularized through play and film adaptations, it is now one of the most widely read books in the world.

Since 1985, Schloss has devoted herself to holocaust education and global peace. She has recounted her wartime experiences in more than a thousand speaking engagements. She has written two books and has had a play written about her life. In 1999 Schloss signed the Anne Frank Peace Declaration along with United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan and the niece of Raul Wallenberg, a legendary figure who rescued thousands of Jews in Budapest.

Schloss joins many courageous individuals who work tirelessly to end the violence and bigotry that continue to plague our world. Schloss' story is sensational and difficult to imagine, yet her insightful message reminds us that life is precious and fragile, that the creative spirit is stronger than fear, that the power of good is immeasurable, and that love makes a difference.

Ticket are \$25 for the main theater and \$20 for loges. A VIP package featuring priority seating, a reception with Schloss and a complimentary copy of her book is also available. The evening is sponsored by Chabad of Contra Costa, a Walnut Creek-based Jewish community center of Jewish life. Tickets are available at: www.JewishContraCosta.com.

Shun Li and the Poet

By Sophie Braccini



Image provided

This month, the International Film Showcase presents a beautiful and serious film from Italy. Set mostly on a working-class island in the Venetian Laguna, it depicts the collision of two worlds in crisis: that of an illegal Chinese immigrant who has to work to regain her freedom, and that of an old fisherman whose world is changing too fast.

The internal beauty of the two main characters is mirrored by the nostalgic beauty of the island; they try to reach each other

through poetry to alleviate their suffering, but conflicting social groups interfere.

Shun Li and the Poet is the tale of the tender friendship between Shun Li, a Chinese immigrant who works as a waitress in a tavern to save enough money for her son to join her in Italy, and Bepi, called "the poet" by his friends, an aging Croatian fisherman who refuses to leave the place where he's lived for 30 years to go live with his son.

... continued on page B4

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Samira Says



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

How far is too far?

When it comes to your health driving a little further to the hospital of your choice doesn't seem like a big deal. Shouldn't the same apply when choosing your post-hospital rehabilitation care? If you are recovering from surgery, a debilitating illness or recent injury, choosing the right rehabilitation team is a critical important decision and can be overwhelming. Often times facilities are chosen based on location—close to home, work or friend and family. Although it is psychosocially fulfilling and important to be near friends and family, it is crucially important to have the opportunity to rehabilitate with a team that can get you to your highest

potential and with a facility that tracks their patients' outcomes. Choosing a facility based on convenience is not a good choice especially when it is the single most important decision for a successful recovery. ManorCare is focused on getting you back on your feet so that you can get back to your life. We encourage potential patients and families to tour facilities and ask questions. Choose a clinical team with a demonstrated track record for success and a proven commitment to clinical excellence. If this process is new to you we encourage you to ask some of the following questions:

- How do you measure the progress that patients make in rehabilitation?
- What evidence shows your team's success in helping patients improve their abilities to care for themselves?
- What evidence shows your team's success in helping patients improve their abilities to stand, walk or move from bed to chair?
- What evidence shows your team's success in helping patients and families prepare to confidently manage care at home?

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All the World's (still) a Stage for Laf-Frantics

By Cathy Dausman



Former Laf-Frantics members gather for their annual holiday brunch at Terzetto in Moraga.

Photo Chris Nelson

After 30 years in the limelight and an additional 26 consecutive years of cast reunions, Lafayette's own Laf-Frantics theater group is still getting together. Where once topics involved play deadlines and children, the talk now focuses on grandkids and travel. Recently, members responded to a *Lamorinda Weekly* request to list their New Year's resolutions for 2013, and proved they still have what it takes to keep 'em Laf-ing!

- "I'm giving up men." - Dian Overly
- "I need to run more." - Judy Lang
- "To make it through 2013." - Jean Smith
- "...me too!" - Dick Smith
- "To listen to my doctor!" - Charlotte Azklar
- "To keep on keeping on." - Jerry Compton
- "To finish LafFrantics binders for the Lafayette Historical Society." - Theron Nelson
- "To live more..." - EdQuenzel
- "To get back to photography." - Charles Jarrett
- "To get back to my ceramics, playing guitar and piano and weaving..." - Karen Jarrett
- "To stop procrastinating." - Amy Duling
- "To do more walking." - George Wasson
- "To feel better in 2013." - Marge Stalker
- "To do everything right." - Betsey Young
- "To try more activities." - Edy Compton
- "To see Betty a lot." - Chris Nelson



George C Tuck, founder of Atlas Heating Co. in 1908.

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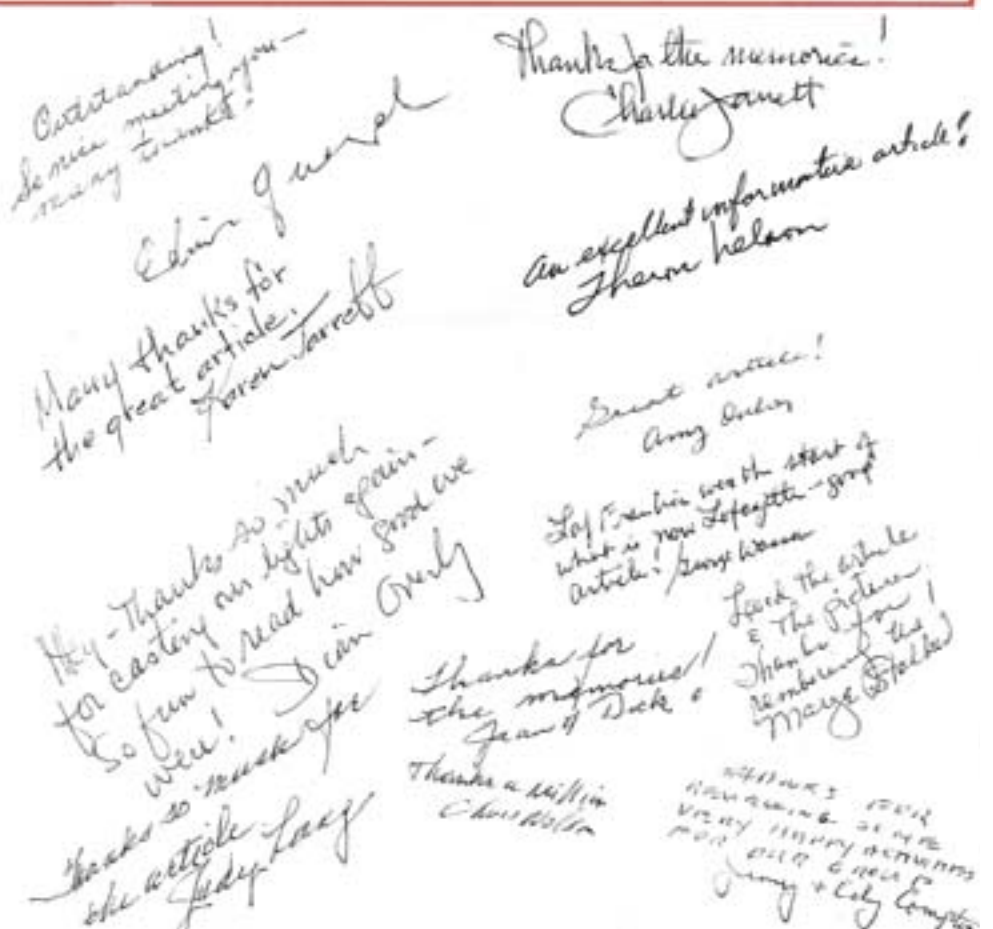
Reporter Cathy Dausman received a nice thank you card from the Laf-Frantics. We liked it so much we thought we'd share it with our readers.



Laf-Frantics actor/dancers Betsey Young (front) and Jeri Burnside (rear) in costume for an entre-act skit

Cathy ---

From some of the former cast and crew --- Thank You for your article about the Laf-Frantics in the November 7, 2012 issue of the LAMORINDA WEEKLY.



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Shun Li and the Poet

... continued from page B3

The movie shows how these two try to bridge their differences, understand each other, and share a little bit of humanity. "I wanted to present two things in this movie," explained Italian Director Andrea Segre for the Cannes Film Festival in 2010, "first translate realistically and metaphorically the relationship between people of different cultural background, and also speak of two places that are very important for me and very representative of today's Italy: the multi-ethnic suburbs of Rome and Venice, two Italian regions that recently became immigration regions be-

cause of economic growth."

The scenes in the little "osteria" where Shun Li works are realistic social depictions, the characters are picturesque. The way some scenes are filmed makes it vivid and life-like with no romanticism. Alternating with these are scenes of poetry and beauty.

The setting, on the island of Chioggia, gives Segre the opportunity to create images of serene beauty. Tao Zhao's face (Shun Li) fits perfectly with the calm and luminosity of the Venetian lagoon. Segre filmed her with the sunset's light on her face, revealing the porcelain beauty of this

fine actress. Also interlaced in the film is the recurrent and metaphorical image of water and the little lights that Shun Li floats for the Chinese poet Qu Yuan.

Of particular note, too, is the soundtrack. Very modern, creative and melodic, the music fits the narrative well and helps to convey the emotion of the film.

The movie is an aesthetic treat as well as a cultural lesson on a changing Europe.

Shun Li and the Poet will be playing at the Orinda Theatre through the month of January. For information, call (925) 254-9060.

Submit stories and story ideas to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

Happiness at One Hundred and Five

By Sophie Braccini



Lottie Doering's family, front row, from left: Sydney Peirce (great-granddaughter), Lottie Doering, Mallory Peirce (granddaughter); back row: Jim Peirce (grandson-in-law), Cade Peirce (great-grandson), Dick Wilcox (son-in-law), and Scott Peirce (great-grandson). Photos Sue Severson

Sitting in her bedroom without any back support, Lottie Doering looks like a normal senior – certainly not someone 105 years old. Vivacious, with a smiling face and shiny white hair, Doering has the plump cheeks of a healthy retiree and the smile of a fulfilled great-great-grandmother. All of her family was with her for Christmas, in her son-in-law's Moraga home, gathered around the woman who is the family's sunshine.

Doering came from Germany in 1928 at age 22. She was born the same year as Josephine Baker and John D. Rockefeller. The day she was born, Nov. 9, President Roosevelt was the first sitting president to make an official trip outside the country to inspect progress on the Panama Canal. Being over a century old does not seem to frazzle the charming lady; her only sorrows are having lost her husband in 1973 and her 82-year-old daughter last year.

Doering was the eldest of a family of four children, and her father was an engineer in Kaiser Wilhelm II's Germany. Her family joined the Mormon church when she was just a little girl. In the 1920s there were three congregations in Chemnitz, where Lottie grew up, with more than 600 members. "I grew up with my church," she says, "and stayed with it all my life." When she decided to immigrate to the United States, she was the first one of her family to do so. Two of her three sisters followed.

She met her husband through her church. He was German as well, had been a missionary in her hometown, and it was quite by chance that she met him again in the States. He was also an engineer, and they lived in different areas of the United States but never once returned to Germany.

Doering had one daughter, Hazel, who passed away from staphylococcus contracted during a hospital stay last year. Her daughter had three children and today Doering has 11 great-grandchildren, as well as two great-great-grandchildren.

"I know why my grandmother is as young and energetic today," says one of her granddaughters who came to visit for Christmas. "It's because she never stopped cleaning the house

and kept herself busy from dawn to dusk." The family has countless stories of Grandma Lottie moving all the furniture out of a house onto the lawn to do some very thorough cleaning. "You could eat off the floor where she lived," she adds. Her granddaughter does not think that this trait has rubbed off that much on the subsequent generations, although she acknowledges having bouts of cleaning frenzies.

For the great-grandchildren's generation, Grandma Lottie is a source of stories. Sydney Pierce, who lives in Lafayette with her parents, loves to spend time with Doering. One of her favorite stories takes place in a hospital where Doering took her first American job as a cleaning lady, an assignment she accepted until she learned English – she didn't know one word when she immigrated.

"There were nice men who were doing construction work in the building," Doering says. "I was interacting with them and learning my first words of English, by hearing and repeating." She would see the men greeting each other joyously slapping their backs and exchanging a few words. She liked these workers and their friendship and decided to imitate them, so one day as she met a friendly doctor in a corridor, she slapped him in the back saying, "How are you? You son of a b—"

"He just laughed," remembers Doering.

In the early 1990s, Doering decided to move from Utah and come live with her daughter. "She had a valid Utah driver's license at the time," remembers Dick Wilcox, Doering's son-in-law, "but she decided to give up driving." She continued to be quite active, being involved with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Moraga where she made new friends.

"I met her in the church," says Orinda Vice Mayor Sue Severson. "She was quite regular there until a few years ago." Severson worked with Doering to put together a family history book as part of a class she taught at the church.

"I was happy to see her this year when she came with her family to the

holiday party we held," says Severson. "She is so charming and outgoing; I think she must be the oldest Lamorinda resident."

Wilcox, who takes care of Doering in his home, says that while Doering's short-term memory has deteriorated quite a bit, his mother-in-law is in very good physical health. She still walks, goes up and down the stairs in the home, holding onto the rail, and "she wrings her washcloth so tight that there is not a drop of water left," he says.

Wilcox, at 81, plans to continue to take care of Doering by himself for as long as he can. "She is family and that is what you do," he says, "you take care of family."

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Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten?

Submitted by Theresa Mahoney

Kindergarten is an exciting time for kids, but it can fill parents with trepidation.

For Lafayette resident Katherine Tanner, the thought of sending her daughter, Madison, to kindergarten sends shivers down her spine. "I'm really nervous about whether Maddie is ready," Tanner says. "She has a lot of friends in her preschool, but only one of them is going to be at the new school." And while Tanner is certain the preschool Madison attends is a good one, she still isn't 100 percent sure her daughter is ready.

"Will she be able to handle the longer days? The school work?" Tanner wonders.

Karen Goodshaw, principal at St. Perpetua School in Lafayette, says kindergarten readiness means being prepared with the basic skills to ensure your child's success as a student. "These skills fall into four basic categories: academic development, motor skills, social readiness, and personal care," says Goodshaw. "It is important to realize that these

skills develop at different times and rates for all children. Also recognize that your child will continue to obtain skills after the initial application process. We encourage parents to understand that it is not necessary for a child to master all of the skills at the time of 'readiness testing,' which at St. Perpetua School is Feb. 9."

Goodshaw says there are a variety of ways to determine a child's individual readiness for the kindergarten classroom: a publisher-created kindergarten assessment, feedback from the preschool teacher, and information from parents regarding developmental milestones should all be weighted in that decision.

According to Goodshaw and St. Perpetua development director Natalie Deininger, there are several ways parents can help their children prepare for that first day of kindergarten:

"Give your child opportunities to interact with text and develop appropriate verbal skills to practice academic development like singing the

alphabet, or finding letters on a page or in a puzzle and see how they come together in the words of a favorite bedtime story," she says. "Improve your child's fine motor skills with Play-Doh, coloring, and experimenting with written expression."

"Encourage the development of gross motor skills, like balance and coordination, by playing ball games and spending time on play structures; Practice social readiness through play dates," adds Deininger. "And foster your child's independence by having them take care of basic personal needs, such as going to the bathroom and getting themselves dressed."

Giving a child these opportunities can not only prepare them for kindergarten, but can help reduce a parent's anxiety as well.

St. Perpetua School is hosting an annual open house on Jan. 27 following the regular 9:30 a.m. Children's Mass. For more information on any of these events, or to schedule a school tour, visit www.stperpetua.org or call (925) 284-1640.

Family Focus

Fair Fighting in Family Relationships

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

First off, I wish you all a Happy New Year, one that is filled with peace, happiness, fulfillment, and love. Recent tragic events make me especially appreciate our current teachers and school personnel who protect, nurture and give their very best to our children day after day. We all have heavier hearts after the Connecticut tragedy, and fortunately our schools and the media have provided guidance to help us support our children.

It seems more pressing than ever for us to be sure that we, and those around us, raise healthy families. One important component of this involves helping our children deal with their anger. How, if, and when we express our anger and frustration helps determine whether or not our family relationships can be positive and healthy.

Here are some signs that you or a family member may not be handling anger effectively within your family:

- Making mean comments or critical remarks in anger.
- Throwing things, slamming doors, and/or screaming.
- Touching someone in anger.
- Becoming defensive and lashing back at a family member who calmly and respectfully expresses dissatisfaction with you.
- Not expressing your anger and instead keeping it to yourself.

You may want to avoid conflict, or perhaps you don't feel comfortable or entitled to feel the way you do. Or you may not even realize that you are harboring anger. Over time the anger builds up to the point where you finally release it in exaggerated and sometimes harmful ways. Alternatively, you may not give voice to your anger at all. Internalizing your feelings may lead to depression, withdrawal, and low self-esteem.

Managing our anger effectively and fighting fairly involve some pre-planning. Conflicts are bound to arise from time to time in close relationships. As a matter of fact, it's an unhealthy sign if there isn't occasional conflict. That can signify a lack of caring, an avoidance of important issues, a fear of disagreement, or a build-up of unexpressed rage.

One mother and teen daughter I see have had a tumultuous relationship over the years. Both are headstrong, determined people who have used arguing with each other as a means of forging intimacy. They have difficulty communicating unless they are passionately disagreeing, shouting, and crying. Their behavior builds up to a crescendo that eventually results in remorse, greater understanding and temporary closeness. Some couples practice this unconscious dance as well.

This mother and daughter are learning alternatives to bickering and becoming defensive. A primary goal is to end the mutual name-calling, belittling, blaming, and attacking. They are working hard to undo years of damaging interaction.

Here are some basic communication tools I am encouraging them to use:

- Avoid using categorical terms such as "You always ..." or "You never ..." or for that matter, starting sentences in a blaming way by using the word, *you*. Of course we're going to get defensive when we feel accused. Nothing will get resolved if both parties feel unfairly treated.
- Using the word, "I" and then put-

ting a feeling afterwards is much easier to listen to: "I worry," "I'm frustrated," or "I'm sad" are some examples. For example, instead of saying, "I'm frustrated that you refuse to do dishes," you could say, "I'm frustrated that I have to do the dishes every night." The more you can stay with "I-messages" throughout your communication, the better.

• Think first before framing your message. It can be difficult to produce an effective message when we are upset. When we take the time to convert some of our feelings to more rational expressions, we will accomplish much more.

• Stay calm. The same principle of taking your time and thinking first applies when responding to an angry, accusatory child. Remember, the person who remains calm has the most control in the conversation. If you yell and scream at your child, he may experience a secret triumph that he is able to upset and frustrate you.

• Have rules and consequences in place to identify what verbal and physical behaviors you will not tolerate from your child. Then it is easier to detach from an angry child and calmly implement your plan. You have every right to *feel* angry, outraged, and/or frustrated. The challenge is to manage these feelings so that you don't react spontaneously and irrationally.

Some children and spouses shut down altogether rather than engage in arguments. Some want to avoid conflict, but others withhold as a way of having some control. Some teens become especially adept at withdrawing during a power struggle with a parent. And some parents show so much frustration with their teen's lack of response that they essentially lose the power struggle that they never even intended to have!

If a child refuses to communicate, you will need to get his commitment for a time when he is willing to talk. If he won't talk, you will need to take action: "If you are unwilling to discuss this, then I have no choice but to go ahead and take away your ... (fill in the blank) for two days." By having a plan, you can proceed in a calm, methodical manner.

If a spouse refuses to communicate, seek counseling – as a couple if possible, and individually if he or she refuses to participate. And if you, your child, or spouse is exhibiting anger that is out-of-control, or withdrawal or depression, it is important to get professional help as well.



Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a marriage and family therapist in Orinda and Walnut Creek. Contact her at 925-376-9323 or margierye@yahoo.com. She is the author of *Treat Your Partner Like a Dog: How to Breed a Better Relationship and Appetite for Life: Inspiring Stories of Recovery from Anorexia, Bulimia, and Compulsive Overeating*.

Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten Registration

Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda Union School Districts

For the 2013-14 school year, only children age 5 as of Oct. 1 will be allowed in kindergarten, while students whose fifth birthdays fall between Oct. 2 and Dec. 2 will be eligible for a transitional kindergarten program. Transitional kindergarten, according to the California Department of Education, is the first year of a two-year kindergarten program that uses a modified kindergarten curriculum that is age and developmentally appropriate. California school districts are required to provide a transitional kindergarten program so that children who will be affected by this change – those with birthdays between October and December – will have an opportunity to continue building their skills and abilities. Their time in transitional kindergarten will help them to succeed in kindergarten, become leaders in the classroom and confidently navigate the school day routine.

Lafayette School District

Registration for kindergarten and transitional kindergarten programs will take place at the district's four elementary schools Jan. 22-23 at the following times:

Burton Valley Elementary: 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m.

Happy Valley Elementary: 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Lafayette Elementary: 9 a.m. to noon

Springhill Elementary: 9 to 11 a.m.

Registration packets can be obtained from the schools prior to registration, beginning Jan. 7, however the earliest day completed packets will be accepted by the schools is Jan. 22, during registration times. It is not necessary to bring your child on registration day. The registration process may take from 30 minutes up to two hours, depending upon the number of registrations. For more information, visit www.lafsd.k12.ca.us.

Moraga School District

Kindergarten and transitional kindergarten registration for the 2013-2014 school year will be held on Feb. 7-8. For information, visit www.moraga.k12.ca.us/kindergarten.

Orinda Union School District

Registration for children entering Orinda public schools as kindergarteners and transitional kindergarteners in August 2013 will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at each of the elementary schools Feb. 4-7. For information, visit www.orindaschools.org.

TEEN SCENE

Reading Sets the Mind Free

By Youngjoo Ahn

Watching television was not part of my childhood experience. Some may think that I was a stereotypical Asian child with parents who forced education on me from an early age. Although my parents cancelled the television subscription, I was not deprived. I loved to read and my enjoyment for reading has continued through my teen years.

Books and educational toys can make a child smarter, but they also influence how the brain grows, according to new research by the Society for Neuroscience. Parents can help young children develop their cognitive skills by providing a stimulating environment and my parents did just that.

After a long day, reading is a wonderful way to unwind. Reading allows the mind to imagine settings and characters while entertaining our souls. Our brains thrive on imagination and creativity.

"My brain is always so exhausted after school and it's tempting to watch TV. I choose to read because it relaxes me no matter how tired I am," student Yurika Kazama said.

As a passive activity, when we watch television, our brains do not interact with characters or scenes. Educational stimulus is prevented as we watch scenes unfold without participating. Books on the other hand teach us about history, society, and the world we live in. The more we read, the better writers we become. Greek tragedies like *Antigone* or Steinbeck's *East of Eden* are as relevant today as they were when they were penned.

Human behavior has not changed much since Shakespeare was writing plays. The hero's journey, a popular theme in fiction, may have been first witnessed

in *The Odyssey* yet continues to form the plot lines of movies and novels today such as the *Star Wars* sagas and *The Hunger Games*.

Whether we read for entertainment or education, it's important to incorporate reading into our lives. Reading gives us a perspective into other people's existence, a view of the history of humanity, and a glimpse into a possible tomorrow.

My parents were wise in developing my addiction to books. Reading is the key to opening the door to a successful future. This New Year, make a resolution that will benefit you for a lifetime. Open the floodgates of imagination and read. Books set us free.

Youngjoo Ahn is a junior at Miramonte High School. She is the host of Express Yourself!™ Teen Radio, co-President of Miramonte's Club BTSYA, and enjoys volunteering, writing, and learning new things.



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Chicken Tortilla Soup for the Wicked

By Susie Iventosch

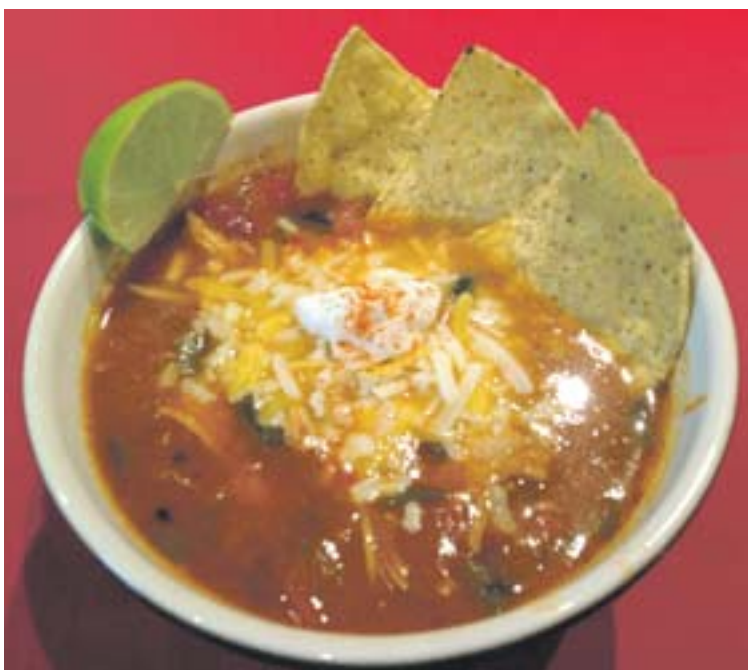


Photo Susie Iventosch

Usually this time of year, I receive an email or two requesting new recipes for the 3Bs—Bunco, Bridge and Book Club! I am so happy to be fully prepared this time with a dish I thought would make a wonderful 3B meal the second I tasted it. The circumstances of tasting this particular recipe when and where I did may be a bit suspect, but nevertheless, it is a fantastic dish for cold wintry parties!

Because my daughter is in the cast of Wicked the Musical, I travel to quite a few destinations in order to spend some time with my little road warrior. Since the tour was in Honolulu for an eight-week run that spanned both Thanksgiving and Christmas this year, I found myself in Hawaii doing a little early Christmas 'festivating'!

One night after the show, we

headed for Yard House on Waikiki, where the Chicken Tortilla Soup was beckoning us to order a bowl. I have never made this soup before, and truly, Hawaii is maybe the last place I would think of eating a hot and hearty spicy soup, but the trade winds were blowing like crazy that day, so it sounded like the perfect choice for a post-show meal.

We enjoyed this soup so much that we returned the next night for seconds! Although the restaurant would not give out the exact recipe, they offered up a few key ingredients and then I found one online that was said to be similar. After adding a few touches to arrive as close as possible to the Yard House recipe, I think this one is pretty darn similar!

Wicked arrives in San Francisco in January, so hopefully, we can introduce the cast to some delightful restaurants on our side of the bay!

Yard House-style Chicken Tortilla Soup

(Makes roughly 16 side dish cups of soup or 8-10 dinner sized bowls)

Ingredients

- 1 (46 ounce) can chicken broth
 - 1 (15 ounce) can tomato sauce
 - 1 (15 ounce) can diced tomatoes
 - Juice of 1 lime
 - 3 cups shredded cooked chicken
 - 2 Anaheim chilies, diced
 - 1-2 jalapeno peppers, diced
 - 1-2 Poblano peppers, diced (your choice, 1 or 2)
 - 1 yellow onion, diced
 - 3-4 large tomatoes, diced
 - 2 garlic cloves, minced
 - 2 tablespoons minced cilantro
 - 1 tablespoon chili powder
 - 2 teaspoons cumin powder
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 2 tablespoons corn masa flour
- Garnishes**
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
 - 1 cup plain low-fat yogurt or non-fat sour cream
 - 1-2 avocados, chopped
 - 1/4 cup cilantro leaves
 - 1 lime, cut into wedges
 - 2 cups crushed tortilla chips (or you can simply put 3 or so whole chips right into the soup!)

Directions

Sauté garlic and onions in 2 tablespoons olive oil, until translucent. Add diced peppers, chilies and sauté for another 4 to 5 minutes. Stir masa flour, spices and salt into veggies and mix with wooden spoon. Cook for a few minutes to lightly brown the flour. Slowly add lime juice, tomato sauce and canned diced tomatoes. Mix well with whisk. Add chicken broth, shredded chicken and fresh diced tomatoes and simmer for an hour or so over low heat, stirring occasionally. When ready to serve, place grated cheddar cheese in bottom of bowl or cup and pour hot soup over the top. Garnish with remaining toppings and serve with a happy smile.

Note, for the photo I put the grated cheese on top, and you can do that too, if you prefer.

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 susiventosch@gmail.com.

This 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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8:15 a.m. Traditions Worship Service
9:40 a.m. Education for all ages
10:45 a.m. Contemporary Worship Service
Coffee Fellowship at 9:15 and 11:45 a.m.
Childcare available for ages 5 and younger

Lamorinda Weekly

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

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◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆

ART

The Orinda Library Art Gallery's exhibit in January will feature the Caldecott Tunnel by the Orinda Historical Society. The Gallery is located adjacent to the library at 26 Orinda Way in Orinda. For more info, visit www.orindaartscouncil.org/community_library.

The Lafayette Gallery's new show "Tokens of Affection" will run Jan. 8 through March 9. There will be a free champagne and chocolates reception 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 1. The Gallery is located at 50 Lafayette Circle (across from Chow). For more information visit www.lafayettegallery.net or call the gallery at (925) 284-2788.

The exuberant creativity, color, and pageantry that is Carnival comes to the Saint Mary's College Museum of Art in a spectacular exhibition opening Saturday, Feb. 2. Costumes, beads, masks and headdresses are welcome opening day attire. There will be a documentary video and reception from 2 to 4 p.m. in the Art Studio 105. Three other new exhibitions are running concurrently - In Search of the Source: Paintings of the Nile and Beyond by Lockwood de Foresta, who, in 1875, traveled halfway around the world to explore the length of the Nile; Landscape Assembled by Ryan Reynolds, an urban landscape artist whose work evokes the elements of time and the presence of place; and William Keith's "The California Alps" featuring High Sierra paintings from the 1870s, '80s, and '90s.

MUSIC

WCSA Lafayette Songwriters' Competition. Come join the Lauras for the inaugural Lafayette WCSA Songwriters' Competition! You do not have to be a songwriter to attend this event. The meetings are at 7 p.m. the second Wednesday of each month at 81 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. Cost: \$5. For more info, contact Laura Zucker by email at zuckers@aol.com or visit www.westcoastsongwriters.org/become-a-member.

Houston Jones and special guest Stevie Coyle will perform a repertoire of amazing original folk, bluegrass, blues and gospel music at 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 5 at Lamorinda Music, 81 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. Cost: \$20. For reservations email Stevie@mightyfineguitars.com, or call (925) 268-8226. For more info about the artists visit www.houstonjones.com and www.steviecoyle.com.

Devil Mountain Coffee House presents Blame Sally from 8 to 11 p.m. Friday, Jan. 18 at Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek. Blame Sally combines folk, country, rock, Americana, and most importantly, heart into their gorgeous harmonies and powerful instrumental performances. Suggested donation: \$20. For more info, visit dmch.mduuc.org, call (925) 934-3135 or email housteam@mduuc.org.

THEATER

Company C Contemporary Ballet will open its 2013 season Friday, Jan. 18 at Leshler Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. For more info, visit www.companycballet.org or call (925) 708-0752.

Join host Tony La Russa and featured performers Mark Pitta and friends for a memorable start to 2013. Comedy Night is on Friday, Jan. 4 at the Leshler Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek. Tickets available at (925) 943-SHOW; all proceeds benefit ARF.

Berkeley Repertory Theatre Docent Lecture at the Moraga Library. Learn about the vibrant theatrical premiere of "Troublemaker, or The Freakin Kick-A-Adventures of Bradley Boatright" by hot young playwright Dan LeFranc at 2 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 16 at the Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Mary's Rd., Moraga. For more info, visit ccclib.org/locations/moraga.html or call (925) 376-6852.

Join County Librarian and film noir buff Barbara Flynn at the first of three free film noir screenings at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 23 at the Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. Force of Evil, the first of the series, was directed by Abraham Polonsky, later blacklisted and prevented from directing for several decades. The gritty, dark film has attained cult status and stars John Garfield in one of the most memorable roles of his career. The screening is free and open to the public. There will be time for discussion following the screening. Preregistration is not required. For info, visit www.ccclib.org or call (925) 254-2184, ext 15.

The Princess and The Pea, fairytale by Hans Christian Andersen. The Princess and The Pea is a much adored traditional fairy tale of honesty and love and will be presented at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 30 and at 4 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 31 at the LeFevre Theatre, Saint Mary's College, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. Cost: \$8. For more info, call (925) 631-4670 or visit www.brownpapertickets.com.

The Eugene O'Neill Foundation's Playwrights' Theatre will present a staged reading of "More Stately Mansions" at 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 12 and at 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 13 at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley. Eric Fraisher Hayes will direct. Admission: \$25. A post-show discussion will follow each performance. Tickets may be purchased online at eugeneoneill.org, by phone at (925) 820-1818, or at the door.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

Fairy Tales. Children ages 4-6 can have fun exploring the roles animals play in the classic fairy tales and fables and meet some of the live animals in these stories from 10 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Jan. 2 for at the Lindsay Wildlife Museum, 1931 First Ave., Walnut Creek. Teacher's helpers positions are available for ages 9-14. Cost: \$20; \$10 for members. For more info, call (925) 627-2930 or visit wildlife-museum.org/education/kids.

Circuit Cities. It's electrifying! Children ages 7-10 can enjoy this hands-on class, experiment with circuits, learn how electricity works and explore alternative forms of generating energy from 1 to 3 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 3 at the Lindsay Wildlife Museum, 1931 First Ave., Walnut Creek. Teacher's helpers positions are for ages 12-15. Cost: \$30; \$20 for members. For more info, call (925) 627-2930 or visit wildlife-museum.org/education/kids.

Creating a Peaceful School Conference. The Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center in Walnut Creek announces its Second Annual conference for anyone who works with young people in K - 12. The conference will be from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 2 at Seven Hills School, 975 North San Carlos Dr., Walnut Creek. Registration: \$35 (through Jan. 7); \$40 thereafter. For more info, call (925) 933-7850 or visit www.mtdpc.org.

Youth Ink 2013. The Orinda Junior Women's Club (Orinda Juniors) is pleased to announce details for Youth Ink 2013, the annual creative writing contest open to all sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students who live or attend school in Orinda. The Youth Ink 2013 prompt is "Future." This theme or prompt was chosen because it encourages young writers to personalize their piece and lends well to an open style choice. Students may write about anything they like: real or imaginary. Cash prizes of \$250, \$125 and \$75 will be awarded to the top three winners. Submissions must be post-marked by Friday, Feb. 15 and mailed to Orinda Junior Women's Club, Post

Office Box 40, Orinda, CA 94563 in order to be considered for an award. Submission forms can be found at OIS or at www.orindajuniors.org.

WORKSHOPS & LECTURES

Advanced Medical Technology and Your Health. In an era of globalization, regulation and health care reform is the timely topic of First Friday Forum at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 4 in the Sanctuary of the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Thomas Loarie, who has a career spanning 40 years as a life science executive, will address these issues and how they will impact health care in the years ahead. Refreshments will be served in Fellowship Hall at 1 p.m. For info, call (925) 283-8722 or visit lopc.org.

Jan Term Speaker Series. Changing the World 101. Jason Connell, the executive director of Ignited Leadership, a dynamic Washington, D.C.-based human service organization that is dedicated to building a better world, will speak at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 8 at the Saint Mary's College Soda Activity Center, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. Free. For more info, call (925) 631-4771 or visit www.stmarys-ca.edu.

DAR Orientation and Genealogy Workshop. A workshop and orientation will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 12 for women over 18 interested in joining the Daughters of the American Revolution and learning more about genealogy at the Montego Heights Lodge, 1400 Montego Way, Walnut Creek. Suggested donation: \$5. For more info, call Brenna Shafizadeh at (925) 287-0438.

Eva Schloss will share her experiences as the childhood friend and stepsister of Anne Frank, including accounts of the publishing of Anne's famed diary, at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 12 at the Orinda Theatre (see story page B3).

The Stroke Support Group of Contra Costa County will hold its meeting from 7 to 9 p.m. Monday, Jan. 14 in the Concord Room at John Muir Medical Center Concord Campus, 2540 East Ave., Concord. The speaker will be stroke survivor Carol Howard-Wooten MA, MFT, who will discuss her non-profit dedicated to helping reclaim meaningful lives after stroke. After the program, attendees will break up into three coping groups: stroke survivors without aphasia, stroke survivors with aphasia, and caregivers and families of stroke survivors; each group led by a trained professional. For more info, contact Ann Dzuna at (925) 376-6218. Free.

Jan Term Speaker Series. Soulful and Sacred: Celebrating the Black Catholic Experience. Father Edward Branch will speak about the distinctive experience and journey of Black Catholics in America from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 15 at the Saint Mary's College Soda Activity Center, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. Free. For more info, call (925) 631-4771 or visit www.stmarys-ca.edu.

The Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) will present an informative and timely program, Somewhere Else and Right in Our Own Backyards: A Look at Human Trafficking, Globally and Locally, from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 15, at Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga. Handicap accessible. Free parking.

The Moraga Garden Club will hold its monthly meeting at 10 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 17 at the Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. Social hour begins at 9:30. Speaker will be Brian Kemble from Ruth Bancroft Gardens in Walnut Creek on "A Succulent for every Garden." Those interested in attending should call president Linda Foley at (925) 376 2809.

... continued on next page

Submit stories to
storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

Not to be missed

WORKSHOPS & LECTURES... continued

The Lamorinda Democratic Club's Friday, Jan. 11 meeting will feature Emmerge California Executive Director Kimberly Ellis, who will talk about Emmerge California's successful efforts to help change the face of California politics by identifying, training and encouraging women to run for office, get elected and seek higher office. The club meeting begins at 7:15 p.m. at the Lafayette Library and Community Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette, followed by the presentation at 8 p.m., which will also include a panel discussion featuring Emmerge California graduates Carlyn Obringer, Katie Ricklefs and Monica Wilson. Admission: \$5; students free. For info, call (925) 567-3367 or visit www.lamorindademoclub.org.

Montelindo Garden Club. The club will meet at 9 a.m. Friday, Jan. 18 at the Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way. The speaker, Don Dillon, Jr. from Four Winds Growers, will discuss growing citrus in the Bay Area. For more info, call (925) 254-3906.

Jan Term Speaker Series. Unlikely Inspiration. Kaya Oakes, author of *Slanted and Enchanted: The Evolution of Indie Culture* will speak at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 22 and Lisa Kristine, an acclaimed humanitarian photographer who specializes in images of remote indigenous cultures in more than 100 countries on six continents, will speak about *Shining a Light on Modern-Day Slavery* at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 31 at the Saint Mary's College Soda Activity Center, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. Free. For more info, call (925) 631-4771 or visit www.stmarys-ca.edu.

Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center class "Building Healthy Soil" from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9 at the Lafayette Community Garden across from the Reservoir. These classes are interactive, informative and fun so come join us and prepare to get your hands dirty! It can be muddy and cold in the winter so dress appropriately. Classes are free although a \$5 donation is appreciated. To register, visit www.lafayettecommunitygarden.org, and click on classes.

OTHER

Hospice of the East Bay Support Group for Adults. The Pet Loss Support Group meets from noon to 1:30 p.m. the first Tuesday of the month 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.

Stars to the rescue presented by ARF. Adopt two kitten kindergarteners for the price of one, or a purr-fect cat two years or older for half-off the adoption fee! Standard adoption criteria apply. Please join Tony La Russa and ARF Saturday, Jan. 5 at the Leshner Center for the Arts, 2890 Mitchell Drive, Walnut Creek. For more info, call (925) 296-3153 or visit www.arf.net.

Hospice of the East Bay Support Groups for Adults. The Widow and Widowers' Support group meets on Thursdays from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. from Jan. 3 through Feb. 21 at the Pleasant Hill campus, 3470 Buskirk Ave., Pleasant Hill. Pre-registration is required. For more info, or to pre-register call (925) 887-5681 or visit www.hospiceeastbay.org.

Operation Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief. This program is organized by local teen volunteers of Club Be the Star You Are. The club needs monetary donations to ship books and resources to families on the East Coast who suffered the devastation of Hurricane Sandy. \$25 ships five new books; \$50 ships a dozen new books; \$100 ships a full case. Checks may be sent to Be the Star You Are!® 501c3, P.O. Box 376, Moraga, Ca. 94556 or make a contribution on line via Paypal. For more information please visit www.bethestaryouare.org/donate.htm and www.btsya.com/hurricane_sandy_relief.html.

SEED (Special Education Enrichment Development) Foundation of Lafayette is co-funding

a 12-week behavior management course for Lafayette parents. By teaching positive behavioral strategies, parents will gain tools and strategies to support their child in home and community settings. The class will be held on Wednesday nights, 6:30 to 9 p.m., Jan. 9 through March 27 in the Maggie Mae Lounge at Lafayette United Methodist Church, 955 Moraga Rd. For more information or to register please call (925) 788-0451 or email Robin Hauge at robinhaugelclinic@gmail.com.

Lamorinda Dogs is looking for your support. Lamorinda Dogs is building a pet recovery network in Lamorinda and helping pet owners document and prepare for disasters. Send donations to Lamorinda Dogs, 101 Alta Mesa Court, Moraga, CA 94556 or go to www.lamorindadogs.org.

Hospice of the East Bay Support Groups for Adults. The support group Adults Who Have Lost a Parent meets Mondays from 6 to 8 p.m. Jan. 28 through March 25 at the Pleasant Hill Campus, 3470 Buskirk Ave. Pre-registration is required. For more info, or to pre-register please call (925) 887-5681 or visit www.hospiceeastbay.org.

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 Cedar 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.

Stitchers Unite! Valley Stitchers and Fiber Arts Guild will meet Monday, Jan. 7, at the Faith Lutheran Church, 50 Woodsworth Ln., Pleasant Hill, to watch Robin Berry demonstrate her medieval embroidery and re-enactments. Arrive before 10 a.m. to go through our sales tables full of different arts. Guests are welcome! For info, call Sheila Rogstad at (925) 945-1338.

Nature Walk and Bird-Watching. Delight in the beauty that unfolds around each bend, all the while learning to identify a variety of birds every Wednesday from 9 to 11 a.m. beginning Jan. 16. Bring a water bottle; binoculars will be helpful if you have them. Please call Lafayette Senior Services at (925) 284-5050 to find out weekly meeting location.

Community Service Day: member volunteers of Lafayette United Methodist Church will be serving those in need and the public is invited to participate Saturday, Jan. 26. Service projects will be available for all ages and skill levels, benefiting the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, Bay Area Rescue Mission, Juvenile Hall - Hall Closet, Shelter, Inc., Monument Crisis Center and Toys for Tots. For more info, visit thelumc.org/service/changetheworld or call (925) 284-4765.

The Orinda Woman's Club announces acceptance of applicants for its major beneficiary awards in 2013. Appropriate applying agencies must meet the following basic criteria: non-profit 501c3; serving women and children in need; Alameda and/or Contra Costa County-based; receiving \$1 million and below as annual income stated on 2011-2012 tax returns. Application forms can be acquired from Orinda Woman's Club, P.O. Box 533, Orinda, 94563 or from Adeline McClatchie Beneficiary Chair at (925) 254-1162 or Adeline@mcclatchie.com. Two applicants will be selected by general club meeting. Deadline: 7 p.m. March 4. Beneficiary Chair must receive applications before this date for consideration.

POLITICAL GATHERINGS

Inauguration Celebration Breakfast and Watch Party. The breakfast, which will be held Monday, Jan. 21 from 8 to 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.

M O V I E R E V I E W

The Best of 2012

By Derek Zemrak

Time to ring in 2013 and review 2012! It was a great year for the Lamorinda Theatres with increased attendance of over 20 percent. This was the highest attendance at both Lamorinda theatres since 2003, which was before the Century Theater opened in Walnut Creek. To wrap up 2012, here are my picks for the year's best films:

- 1) Zero Dark Thirty (opens Jan. 11 at the Orinda Theatre)
- 2) Lincoln (now playing at the Rheem Theatre)
- 3) Bernie
- 4) Argo
- 5) Amour
- 6) Silver Linings Playbook
- 7) Les Miserables (now playing at the Orinda Theatre)
- 8) Beasts of the Southern Wild
- 9) Django Unchained (now playing at the Rheem Theatre)
- 10) Frankenweenie

Many of the films on my best of 2012 list are either currently screening at the Rheem and Orinda or will be returning in the upcoming months before the Oscars. All are worth a second viewing. Do not miss them on the big screen. There is nothing like seeing a quality movie in a classic movie house. We are lucky to have two beautiful movie palaces in our community.

We have many exciting changes in 2013 including new digital projectors and digital sound to be installed during the first quarter of 2013. The three projectors in Orinda will be installed at the end of January and hopefully the main projector at the Rheem will be installed in February. Many exciting events are already planned for the theatres in 2013 including:

Jan. 23 - The 70th Anniversary screening of *Casablanca* and *Q & A* with Rosario Tronolone, renowned expert on Ingrid Bergman.

Orinda Theatre was chosen as one of the few theaters across the country to show *Casablanca* in 35MM film on the 70th Anniversary of *Casablanca's* original release date of Jan. 23, 1943.

Feb. 24 - Oscar Party Gala Night at the Rheem Theatre

The evening includes red carpet photo op, live music, dancing, gift bags, souvenir wine glass, wine, champagne dinner provided by Shelby's Restaurant of Orinda, trivia and door prizes. The Rheem Theatre is the place to be on Oscar Night!

March 15-17 - East Bay Jewish Film Festival in Orinda

Sept. 22 - Orinda Classic Car "Speed on the Screen" at Orinda Theatre
Plus don't forget the Moraga Movers' Classic Movie at 4 p.m. the third Wednesday of each month at the Rheem Theatre and The CAIFF/Diablo Magazine Classic Movie Night at 7 p.m. the second Thursday of each month at the Orinda.

Nov. 7-10 - California Independent Film Festival at the Rheem and Orinda Theatres

Thank you all for your support to the Lamorinda Theatres during 2012. Happy New Year! See you at the movies!

Derek Zemrak is a Film Critic, Film Producer and Founder of the California Independent Film Festival. You can follow Derek on Twitter @zemrak for the latest Hollywood news.



Photo courtesy Touchstone Pictures



Amour Photo courtesy Sony Pictures Classics. All rights reserved.



Zero Dark Thirty Photo courtesy Columbia Pictures



Bernie Photo courtesy Millennium Entertainment

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Local Business: What to Expect in 2013

By Sophie Braccini

It's often said that "all politics is local," a phrase coined by former U.S. Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, but so is economics. Here, on the ground in Lamorinda, is where 2013 will hit the mark or flop. We asked local business owners for their thoughts. What we heard is that even though most are worried about the consequences of going over the fiscal cliff – which many economists predict could derail the U.S. recovery – they want to view 2013 with optimism.

Papillon, at Fiesta Square, is the favorite cafe of many and has been owned for the last 15 years by Lafayette residents Chanbopha Oum (Brenda) and Savuth Chea (Tom). "In 2012 business was a little better," said Brenda Oum. "We expect to have a good year in 2013." Papillon made some changes to its menu to satisfy Lamorinda's discriminating palate. This local focus has made the cafe a continuing success, despite the big-name coffee shops that abound nearby.

Even more unexpected in today's online world is the success of Canetti's Bookshop in Orinda. "We have a carefully curated selection of books, not only new ones, but most that are gently read in excellent condition," said owner Jeff Koren. "And if it's not in our collection we can special order. Our books are of high quality and quite affordable. It's definitely a place for people who love books." Like the owners of Papillon, Koren offers his clients an experience that's not formatted to please a larger audience, but rather something uniquely Lamorinda.

Next door to Canetti's, Morrison's Jewelers will celebrate its 90th anniversary this year. Morrison's also warded off the tough times that hit the jewelry business particularly hard. Fourth-generation owner David Berryhill is reasonably optimistic for this year. He described 2012 as a

roller coaster, but they finished the year on a very positive note. "This December, the average price of sales was much higher than what it was last year; this gives us some level of confidence about what lies ahead," he said.

Unpredictability in the level of activity, and all the complications that creates in terms of inventory and purchasing management for a business owner, was also reported in Moraga—in the completely different field of auto repair. "In 2012 business was fair," said Moraga Motor's owner Ron Schumaker. "The flow of work has become more unpredictable from one week to the next." But Schumaker is confident that 2013 will see improvement over the last three years.

Also in Moraga Chong Bo Kim, who has managed the Moraga Clean Express in the Moraga Center for 15 years while living in Orinda, says that 2012 marked a small improvement over the previous three hard years. "We remodeled the inside of the store, changed the counters," he said. "We want our customers to have a very pleasant experience." Kim owns a similar dry cleaning service in San Jose and he says that the two locations follow a similar business pattern. He hopes that the slow recovery he observed in 2012 will continue and strengthen in 2013.

Some Lamorinda newcomers are also expecting 2013 to be very successful. Itrim U.S.A. C.E.O. Jill Kinney, who opened the Swedish company's first American facility in Lafayette this summer, is one of the most optimistic businesspeople we talked to. "We are very pleased with our first results in Lafayette," said Kinney. "Our objective was 500 members by the end of the first year and we've reached 300 now, a little above our projections." 2013 will be a key year for Itrim. The Lafayette store should reach its objective of 500 members, and Kinney plans to add

eight new locations to the three current ones (after Lafayette, Itrim opened in San Ramon and San Francisco). "We should hire about 150 new people in 2013," she said.

Another indicator of recovery is the housing market. Village Associates broker Tara Rochlin has an optimistic perspective on Lamorinda real estate for 2013. "The inventory is low, which drove the prices up in 2012," she said. "I think that more homes will come to the market in 2013." While noting there are still economic uncertainties, she said, "I believe that the worst is behind us."

"People are very interested in becoming homeowners, and often at a higher price point than before," added Ben Olsen, who has observed that new families coming to Lamorinda are often buying their first homes at the \$1 million-plus level. "These are professionals with postgraduate degrees and often a dual-income. They come with young children and both parents are career-oriented."

Both real estate professionals think that 2013 will be a dynamic year, seeing upsizing and downsizing – new higher-density developments may offer opportunities for older residents, and sales of luxury homes such as those at Wilder could bring added benefit to the local economy.

Contractor Kari Grosz, of Lamorinda Construction, says her company has been busier than it has been in a long time. "The quality and size of the projects are increasing," she said. "This was the first December in years that we were inundated with work. We are very optimistic that 2013 will be the best year since the recession."

As confidence in our economic future grows, local businesses hope that everyone will remember to shop Lamorinda first.

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



Brenda (standing) chats with a customer at Papillon in Lafayette.

Photos Mina Lucacher



Clients exercise at Itrim under a trainer's supervision.



Leslie Hampton greets customers at Sweet Dreams at Orinda Theatre Square.

THE APP RAP

By Alex Pawlakos

App: Dropbox, by Dropbox Co.
For: All smartphones
Price: Free

Whether it's a laptop or a notebook, anything bigger than a smartphone is cumbersome for most people to carry or transport. But what if you need your laptop or notebook regularly because you have files on your computer that you must access? A really clever app that is simple to use is called Dropbox. Download Dropbox on any personal device, including smartphones, computers, or notepads and you have full control over your uploaded files anywhere, anytime. Save anything you may want to access at a later time to the Dropbox folder. For example, on your personal computer you can save documents, pictures, videos, and text files into the Dropbox folder. This "cloud" storage by the Dropbox Company saves your data safely and quickly. You can use your smartphone to access anything that you have saved in that folder. You can also save things from your smartphone to later access on your personal computer from the Dropbox

folder. If you are working on a project with others, it's helpful to create a password protected Dropbox folder that you all can share and access. It's especially handy with large files that cannot be sent via email. Dropbox has become a "must have" download for thousands of happy clients, and it's absolutely free!



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

business briefs

Servers at Si Si Cafe Collect Tips for Sandy Hook
910 Country Club Drive, Moraga
(925) 277-1908



Servers at Si Si surround Ally Weber (center, white sweater): Cynthia Corsi, Carlos Bermudez, Renee Gomer, Cara Freccero, Megan Verries and Alex Friedman.
Photo Mina Lucacher

A sign went up Dec. 18 at Si Si Café in Moraga informing customers that 100 percent of all tips received that day would go to Newtown, Conn., to provide services to families and the community following the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School. "It was Ally Weber's idea," said Si Si owner Cathy Corsi. "I just felt like doing something, and this was the least we could do," explained Weber, who is a local student heading for DVC while working part time at the café. "When some patrons saw the sign they left \$20 bills," said Corsi; together they raised more than \$350. According to United Way, the fund established at Newton Savings Bank had received \$3.5 million in donations as of Dec. 26. For more information, go to www.uwwesternct.org.

Moraga's Employee of the Month for December



From left: Frank Melon, Frank May, Keisha Iwayemi and Bill Phelps
Photo by Kevin Reneau

Keisha Iwayemi has been a care manager at Aegis of Moraga for the past three years. "Keisha (Iwayemi) is a tremendous employee and goes out of her way to make every resident and every visitor feel like they are part of

our family," said Bill Phelps, Executive Director of Aegis. "She just brightens everybody's day and all of our residents love her." Sponsors Moraga Rotary and Chamber of Commerce presented Iwayemi with the award, along with a \$50 Safeway gift card and a \$50 gift certificate to Chef Chao Restaurant, at the Moraga Rotary luncheon Dec. 18.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette Chamber

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Installation of the

2013 Chamber Board

of Directors Dinner

will be held Feb. 1.

Details coming

soon.

Moraga Chamber

The Chamber is

accepting nominations

for Business Person

of the Year. Names

can be emailed to

Kathe Nelson at

kathe@moragachamber.org. A

vote to select among

the nominees is

scheduled for

January and the

awards dinner

will be in February.

Orinda Chamber

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Heggie, first mayor

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Gaels Gear Up for WCC Play

By Michael Sakoda



Matthew Dellavedova has the most three-pointers in SMC history. Photos Tod Fierner

Over the past five seasons, Saint Mary's men's basketball has a record of 142-38 and only Kansas, Duke, North Carolina and Memphis have done better, so expectations are high for this team.

"There probably are (expectations)," Bennett said. "We don't like to talk about them... but I'd much rather be dealing with that, than dealing things teams deal with when they haven't been winning."

The Gaels began this season going 9-3, losing to Pacific, Georgia Tech and Northern Iowa. Bennett noted that the team needs to continue to improve.

"This team's not where we were at the end of last year," he explained. "We have a lot of room to improve."

"If we do things right... this team has a chance to be very good. We're not a finished product; we're not close to a finished product," he added.

Losing Rob Jones has left the Gaels with big shoes to fill in the front

court. "Beau Levesque and Mitch Young are playing that spot," Bennett said. "They're getting better and better, but... we miss Rob's leadership, his toughness, his defense... hopefully they can replace that."

Despite losing Jones, the Gaels have a leader in last year's WCC Player of the Year senior guard Matthew Dellavedova. This year Dellavedova is averaging 19.8 points and six assists. He was selected to the Basketball Times 4th-team preseason All-American and All-WCC teams and is showing no sign of slowing down.

"The great thing about Matt is he's gotten better every year," Bennett said. "Sometimes guys plateau; he hasn't. Sometimes guys get worse; he definitely hasn't done that."

On Dec. 30, Saint Mary's played the front end of a back-to-back, defeating Yale (4-9) before taking on Harvard on New Year's Eve.

Dellavedova logged 24 points

and six assists on his way to school history in the win. He hit four three-pointers (239 career), moving him to No. 1 on the school's all-time list, surpassing David Sivulich (238 career). The 24 points (1,620 career) also vaulted him past Diamon Simpson (1,603 career) to fourth on the Gael's all-time scoring list.

The first half saw back and forth scoring from both sides, and the crowd held its collective breath as junior guard Stephen Holt came up limping after a collision on a fast break.

Holt was sidelined by a knee injury at the end of last season, and sat out five games this year with a bone bruise.

"It was just a contact thing," Holt said after the game. "I just ran into the board, but it was nothing too serious. I'm thankful for that."

The Gaels headed into the break with a ten point lead, 30-40.

The Gaels surged out of the locker room in the second half with a 10-0 run, extending their lead to 20. "We had to keep them off the offensive boards," Dellavedova said about the first half effort. "They killed us on that... it was a matter of focus."

From there, Saint Mary's went on cruise-control, trading baskets with Yale, who couldn't seem to battle back in the second half. Saint Mary's cruised to a 78-62 win, recording their tenth win of the season.

"It was a gritty win for us," Holt commented. "I'm very proud of the guys."

Holt was selected to the preseason All-WCC team, and if Saint Mary's is going to have the sort of run they had last year, Holt's health will be a concern. "We need him. He's a key player for us," Bennett said.

Holt had nine points and two steals in the win.

Sophomore forward Brad Waldow, junior guard Jordan Page and Levesque added ten points each.

Saint Mary's finished its preseason on Dec. 31 against Harvard, who was fresh off a win at Cal. "It will be a tough game," Bennett said before the match-up. "We need to defend. We have to be tough on the boards, and we have to take care of the ball. It always comes down to those three things."

Conference play opens on Jan. 5 when the Gaels host Loyola Marymount. The Gaels will face a tough Gonzaga team on Jan. 10 in Spokane.



Lafayette's Beau Levesque is stepping up for the Gaels.



Stephen Holt scored nine points in his second game back from injury.

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LAMORINDA SPORTS 2012 Publisher's Pick

Thank you Lamorinda Weekly Photographers!

For every photo we print, dozens of great choices are left unused, mostly because they didn't match the related article content. Please enjoy some favorites from our archives.

Tod Fierner (TF)
Kevin Nguyen (KN)
Ohlen Alexander (OA)

Karen Drinkwater (KD)
Andy Scheck (AS)



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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 06 Issue 22 Wednesday, January 2, 2013



Digging Deep-Gardening with Cynthia Brian A New Leaf

By Cynthia Brian

*“The object of a new year is not that we should have a new year. It is that we should have a new soul.”
G. K. Chesterton*



Meyer lemons are ripe and juicy.

The world didn't end Dec. 21, 2012 as prophesied and there are new seeds sprouting as we birth the year of 2013. With a rosy pink zinnia, the cover of the January issue of Reader's Digest shouts, "Cheer Up! 17 Reasons It's a Great Time to Be Alive." This year will be a time of optimism, a time for channeling our inner gardener. In the

Chinese tradition, this will be the year of the water snake. I have renamed our next 365 days "A New Leaf" as we dig deeper to add beauty and wellness to our lives through gardening.

...continued on page D4



Cymbidium orchids start blooming outdoors and are great in or out.



Violas and pansies perk up a dreary landscape.

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would like to wish you good health, happiness and a prosperous New Year!

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	8	\$410,000	\$2,150,000
MORAGA	6	\$663,000	\$1,950,000
ORINDA	5	\$610,000	\$1,550,000

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

3272 Ameno Drive, \$1,095,000, 4 Bdrms, 2102 SqFt, 1960 YrBl, 11-21-12;

Previous Sale: \$1,190,000, 03-08-07

3349 Carlyle Terrace, \$630,000, 3 Bdrms, 1269 SqFt, 1955 YrBl, 11-30-12

222 Camelia Lane, \$2,150,000, 4 Bdrms, 4045 SqFt, 1989 YrBl, 11-20-12;

Previous Sale: \$1,290,000, 06-10-99

1668 Foothill Park Circle, \$832,500, 4 Bdrms, 2041 SqFt, 1957 YrBl, 11-21-12;

Previous Sale: \$676,000, 12-09-02

976 Hawthorne Drive, \$775,000, 3 Bdrms, 2020 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 11-21-12;

Previous Sale: \$272,000, 04-08-88

1440 Huston Road, \$410,000, 2 Bdrms, 1318 SqFt, 1946 YrBl, 11-29-12;

Previous Sale: \$530,000, 09-22-06

3274 La Canada, \$1,950,000, 3 Bdrms, 2754 SqFt, 1979 YrBl, 11-21-12;

Previous Sale: \$1,150,000, 12-28-06

611 Laird Lane, \$600,000, 3 Bdrms, 2599 SqFt, 1968 YrBl, 11-21-12;

Previous Sale: \$310,500, 03-22-95

MORAGA

353 Birchwood Drive, \$755,000, 4 Bdrms, 2072 SqFt, 1971 YrBl, 11-21-12

354 Birchwood Drive, \$910,000, 4 Bdrms, 2591 SqFt, 1970 YrBl, 11-21-12

899 Camino Ricardo, \$1,021,000, 4 Bdrms, 2256 SqFt, 1968 YrBl, 11-28-12;

Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 06-17-05

12 Kimberly Drive, \$1,950,000, 4 Bdrms, 4261 SqFt, 2003 YrBl, 11-28-12;

Previous Sale: \$2,215,000, 02-25-05

117 Natalie Drive, \$663,000, 3 Bdrms, 1942 SqFt, 1968 YrBl, 11-20-12

13 Teodora Court, \$1,240,000, 3 Bdrms, 2879 SqFt, 1988 YrBl, 11-27-12;

Previous Sale: \$1,125,000, 06-11-10

ORINDA

43 Canyon View Drive, \$1,445,000, 3 Bdrms, 1862 SqFt, 1971 YrBl, 11-30-12;

Previous Sale: \$1,349,000, 09-25-08

50 Las Cascadas Road, \$610,000, 2 Bdrms, 1480 SqFt, 1928 YrBl, 11-26-12;

Previous Sale: \$175,000

55 Via Floreado, \$1,329,000, 4 Bdrms, 2825 SqFt, 1958 YrBl, 11-21-12

1 Meadow Park Court, \$960,000, 4 Bdrms, 2549 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 11-29-12;

Previous Sale: \$192,000, 11-26-85

424 Ridge Gate Road, \$1,550,000, 3 Bdrms, 2584 SqFt, 1980 YrBl, 11-30-12;

Previous Sale: \$1,600,000, 10-11-07

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Happy New Year!
*Wishing you the joy of family,
the gift of friends, and the best
of everything in 2013*

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Digging Deep

...continued from page D1

As you look around, you'll notice that everyone is "wired" with smart phones, apps, texting, Skyping, and the latest gadgets that supposedly make our lives easier, faster, stress-free. But according to reports from the Garden Media Group, what people are really searching for is a connection with Mother Nature. People want to be happy and the joy of gardening offers satisfaction. Being in nature, whether it is walking the paths at the Lafayette Reservoir or digging a hole in your yard to plant your redbud offers a bliss that is not found on Facebook, Tumblr, or Twitter. Fashion and furnishing designers are taking their cues from nature with brighter, bolder colors and textures that trees, flowers, birds, bees, rocks, streams, and anything from the natural world uniquely provide. We have the opportunity to enhance our lives, increase our positivity, and boost our immune systems through our horticultural endeavors.

From eco-scaping to native plants, living green walls to houseplants, herbs to edibles, together we will energize our lifestyles, lower our blood pressures, and freshen our indoor and outdoor spaces. In casual conversations, people often tell me they want to know and not wonder where their food comes from. My response is if you want to know for certain, grow your own! You and only you know what is in your soil. By going organic and being a conscientious steward of our earth, we will not only be sustainable, we'll be healthier and subsequently happier.

...continued on page D6



Spider orchids are beautiful indoors in January.



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Digging Deep

...continued from page D4

Plant thornless and dwarf raspberries and beautiful blueberries as landscape shrubs for a double whammy of attractiveness and wellbeing. Want to give yourself the gift of super nutrients in a bush? Instead of paying high prices for the juices or dried fruit of goji berries, plant The Vitamin Berries™ Collection from Proven Winners. The company has introduced Sweet Lifeberry and Big Lifeberry which boast a plethora of purple flowers followed by juicy red berries gracing long branched shrubs. The bushes are showy, easy to grow with the fruit ripening in autumn. Fresh or frozen, this exotic super fruit will reap health benefits all season.

Herbs are the gateway drug of gardening. If you think you have a black thumb, plant rosemary, oregano, or Russian sage and you'll soon be singing the praises of green while enjoying the flavors of savory dishes. For cleaner indoor air, buy orchids, palms, and peace lilies to scrub away the toxins. Do you love the exotic flavors of Thai food? Plant a kaffir lime with hourglass-looking double leaves, or take a cutting of a green lemongrass stalk from an Asian grocer to root in water. Heirloom seeds including tomatoes, eggplants, and squash, Canterbury bells, delphinium, foxglove, and many other fruits and vegetables may be from old-fashioned gardens, but they are the future of gardens today. Check out www.rareseeds.com from Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company offering over 1,400 seed varieties from 70 countries.

Shatter the limits, blow up the barriers, and multiply the possibilities with soulful mindfulness. Hurray, it's a brand new year and we're planting a new leaf!



Swiss chard is an excellent green for winter sautes.



A pale pink amaryllis is an elegant choice to spruce up interiors.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for January

*"Here's to the bright new year,
and a fond farewell to the old;
here's to the things that are yet to come,
and to the memories that we hold..."*

Winston Churchill said, "The optimist sees opportunities in every danger, while the pessimist sees danger in every opportunity!" As gardeners we'll look at life from a positive perspective. Failure is fertilizer. If something doesn't grow, we pull it out and dump it in the compost pile to start a new garden. Winter rains water our yards but won't dampen our spirits. We may not be able to choose exactly what happens to us, but we can decide how we respond to any occurrence. We'll turn our lemons into lemonade to enrich our souls. Here's to a bright new year with plenty of cheer. Welcome to 2013.

- **RECYCLE** your Christmas tree. Make sure to remove all decorations, stands, lights, and tinsel. Check your local curbside service for pick up dates.
- **CONTINUE** composting. Yes, it's January, but composting is necessary every day in every way to suppress weeds and add active organic matter to the soil.
- **PACK** in the phytonutrients with a green winter soup. Pick fresh kale, spinach, parsley, Swiss chard, broccoli, and beet tops, saute with onions, garlic, vegetable stock, white wine, blend and enjoy. Yummy!
- **COZY** up your interiors with a magnificent, colorful amaryllis from South Africa or the Netherlands.
- **COOK** quince in a simple syrup and add rose hips for a healthy boost.
- **PRUNE** roses, geraniums, vines, and crepe myrtle trees heavily before the end of the month. This is the time to cut back wisteria and passion vines to discourage overgrowth and accumulation of decaying layers.
- **PICK** up all fallen camellia blooms to avoid disease.
- **ENHANCE** the longevity of your holiday plants like poinsettias and Christmas cactus by fertilizing every two weeks. You can keep them colorful and beautiful through May or longer.
- **WATER** indoor plants more frequently if you have central heat. Test soil moisture by plunging a pencil in the pot. If muddy when retracted, don't water. If pencil comes out dry, it's time for a drink.
- **MIST** plants when they seem droopy. Heaters zap moisture out of plants just like it dries your skin. Misting in the morning and evening provides relief.
- **PERUSE** seed catalogues in the dark dreary days: www.rareseeds.com, www.kitchengardenseeds.com, and www.bountifulgardens.org are a great start!
- **PLANT** Chinese cabbage, bok choy, asparagus, eggplant, dill, celery, borage, kohlrabi, lettuce, arugula, snow peas, and indoor flower seeds to germinate for spring sowing.
- **REDUCE** erosion with three inches of wood chips or other mulches.
- **BUY** your bare root roses locally for a better selection. Your nursery will be able to advise you on the latest best buys.
- **SOAK** bare-root fruit trees, roses, and vines in a bucket of water for a full day before planting. Anything in a cardboard box must be removed to spread out the roots. Cut off any damaged or broken roots.
- **WARM** someone you love all winter long with dream-inspiring spearmint tea from your herb planter.
- **PROVIDE** food for our feathered friends throughout winter to keep them happy living in your garden.
- **PICK** tangerines and Washington navel oranges at their sweetest in January and February.
- **TRANSPLANT** azaleas, camellias, and rhododendrons now as this is the safest time to move them without inhibiting growth.
- **PROTECT** your precious plants from Jack Frost by covering them with cloth or plastic at night or moving containers closer to the house or overhangs.
- **PLUCK** snails and slugs or trap with plates of beer to keep the damage at a minimum.

The leafless trees signal that winter is in full swing as we begin to prepare for the birth of spring. Admire the bare bark. What are we waiting for? Put a smile on your face and spring in your step. Happy New Year! Let's get growing!

Happy Gardening to You!

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WINTER TREE TIPS

Winter brings cold and rainy weather. "While many trees will be dormant in the winter, exposure to the tough conditions can cause them major stress," says Darren Edwards, Certified Arborist with Advance Tree Service. "Minimize that stress by helping your trees through the cold months. If you take care of your trees in the winter, you will be rewarded in the spring."

Winter can be a good time for pruning most trees, while they are dormant, and pines should only be pruned in the winter months. Removal of large, dead, broken, poorly positioned limbs and corrective pruning can minimize winter storm damage, and maximize optimal spring growth.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help you with your winter pruning.

Advance Tree Service

Your Authority on Trees and Landscape.



925-376-6528

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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.

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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

ORINDA



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

ORINDA



Pending

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

ORINDA



By Appointment Only

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

ORINDA



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

ORINDA



Coming Soon

121 La Espiral

Gated Mediterranean 4bd/3.5ba villa w/pano views features chef's kitchen/fam rm w/old world charm & opens to covered tiled verand. Hwd & marble tiled flrs, formal Lr & Dr, 2nd fam. rm, ofc & spacious mstr suite w/flpc.

Price Upon Request

LAFAYETTE



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

LAFAYETTE



By Appointment Only

3767 Happy Valley Rd.

Fabulous updated 4bd/3ba Happy Valley Traditional. Dream kitchen, spacious master suite. Hardwood floors, custom detail French doors open to private deck. Lush setting w/ level lawn. Top neighborhood, walk to town.

Offered at \$1,349,000

PLEASANT HILL



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

WALNUT CREEK



3706 Waterford Lane

Gorgeous Traditional 4bd/3.5ba Northgate home. Many upgrades! New carpet, paint, refinished hdwd flrs. Huge eat-in kit/FR. Formal dining & LR. Professionally landscaped back yard. Grand master w/adjoining den.

Offered at \$1,370,000

WALNUT CREEK



Coming Soon

Northgate Estate

Spectacular gated estate includes vineyard, saltwater pool, 8-person theater, 2-story living room, 1950's style diner, and a car lovers' garage just to name a few. Newer outdoor kitchen, excellent views. Over an acre with salt water pool and large guest house.

Offered at \$2,400,000

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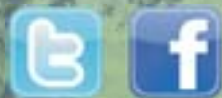
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