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Lafayette resident Karen Bottiani with her horse, Cupcake

Photo Cathy Dausman

Horse Culture in Lamorinda Changing Bit by Bit

By Cathy Dausman

Colorful local street names like Cattle Chute Road and Dead Horse Canyon Road only hint at Lamorinda's involvement with horses. In fact, the semi-rural area has a long history with all things equine, dating back to Pony Express rides through Lafayette in the early 1860s.

More recently, rider Linda Ostman said Lamorinda was once an area of backyard horse owners and that Contra Costa County was known to have one of the largest horse

populations in the state of California.

"We rode our horses all over the place," said Lafayette's Nancy Brown. Brown grew up in Moraga where over time she owned and rode three horses. "I kept my first horse in the Moraga Horseman's Association pasture behind Joaquin Moraga School," she said. "MHA was the equestrian club back in the day."

... continued on page A12

Quote of the Week:

"Could it be that our hospitality extends only to those who are as fortunate as us?"

Read Letters to the Editor, page A10

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Easy Access to Crime Information for Lamorinda

By Cathy Tyson

Who wouldn't want to know about crime in their neighborhood, especially if it's easy and free? CrimeReports.com allows users to input an address and a map pops up that displays all the crime in the immediate area, broken down by date, time and type. With the click of a mouse, it's easy to zoom in and out, to see crimes in Walnut Creek or Oakland.

When compared to Oakland, Lamorinda residents clearly have safer communities. When searching Lafayette, be sure to include California, lest that other Lafayette in Louisiana pops up. Moraga doesn't subscribe to this service, but oddly enough there was an error that placed several registered sex offenders, who have actual addresses in San Jose, in town.

Color coded boxes indicate if it's a

"T" for theft or "A" for assault or other logical abbreviation. Additional customization such as selecting a range of dates from three to seven to 30 days can be selected or narrowing down a search to incident layers, perhaps if someone only wanted to check out thefts from a vehicle can be chosen.

The company bills itself as the only near real-time source for both crime data and sex offender information. Because they contract with the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office, both Lafayette and Orinda crimes are posted on this website. Lafayette Police Chief Eric Christensen explains that CrimeReports.com is a private company that they subscribe to. "We feed the data that relates to Lafayette through the Sheriff's Office to the service provider." Information from over 700 participating law

enforcement agencies maps out the crime scene for all 50 states using cloud-based software.

For the past year, Moraga police have chosen Nixle for emergency messaging. Nixle uses phones and e-mail to deliver information to residents who have signed up for the free service. The idea started with a major road closure that led to a substantial traffic back-up. Moraga Chief Robert Priebe called it "a cost-effective solution" when it was introduced; there's no charge to the police department for the service. Nixle sends those that register notices on road closures, law enforcement activity, and emergency alerts. With a year of Nixle behind them, Priebe said, "We are very happy with it and have received several positive comments and appreciation from the community."



To sign up for Nixle, go to www.nixle.com or simply send a text message to 888777, and enter the appropriate information.

CrimeReports.com requires no sign up to look up addresses, however members can sign up to receive crime alerts if requested. There's also a free iPhone application.

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Life in Lamorinda

B1-B10

Theater Drama

ADA non-compliance leads to the closure of upstairs theaters at Rheem. Sophie Braccini has the details.



Sports

C1-C3

Girls Hoops

The lady Mats are dominating DFAL play. Simon Tryzna reports.



Our Homes

D1-D12

Counter Intelligence

Time to replace your kitchen counters? Cathy Dausman considers the options.



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Lafayette Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Jan. 28, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Jan. 28, 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.
Wednesday, Feb. 6, 7:30 p.m.
Board Room AUHSD Office
1212 Pleasant Hill Rd., Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Feb. 13, 7 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
Stanley Library
3477 School St., Lafayette
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements
City of Lafayette:
www.ci.lafayette.ca.us
Phone: (925) 284-1968
Chamber of Commerce:
www.lafayettechamber.org

No Love for the Terraces Project at Meeting

By Cathy Tyson



Sign taped in the window of a car parked at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center for "Terraces" meeting. Photo Cathy Tyson

Residents turned out in force to voice their opinions on the proposed 315-unit Terraces of Lafayette project at a recent Planning Commission meeting. Even after a brief introduction by Special Projects Manager Ann Merideth who explained that this is the first step in evaluating the proposed project and that the sole purpose of the meeting was to determine if the environmental impact report complies with the California Environmental Quality Act,

Planning Commission Chair Karen Maggio had to caution the standing room only crowd on a number of occasions to refrain from applause and encouraged public comment to stick to the matter at hand. Maggio reminded residents of the meeting's focus and said that comments on the merits of the project will be heard at a number of future meetings. It was apparent that concerned citizens clearly wanted to express their overwhelmingly negative opinions.

No decision was made, and the commission meeting was continued until Feb. 4 to allow for the city attorney, consultants and city staff to sort through hundreds of pages of comments prior to making a decision on the compliance of the environmental report.

The city attorney was asked to briefly define what compliance with CEQA requires. "Do you have all day?" he joked before summarizing that it's about "determining that the city's analytical conclusions are supported by substantial evidence" and added that "the city can rely on the judgment of its experts." According to the staff report Merideth prepared for the meeting, "The Final EIR identifies potentially significant impacts that would result from the Project and mitigation measures that would reduce the significance of these impacts." The staff report also points out, "There can be disagreements amongst experts or differing opinions about the information in the EIR. As long as they are disclosed through the environmental review process, these disagreements and opinions do not make an EIR inadequate or incon-

sistent with CEQA."

David Bowie, the applicant's attorney, touched on the appropriateness of relying on expert testimony and described the conclusions drawn in the Final EIR as "highly suspect." He offered as an example the location of the ridgeline that could be in one of four locations, according to the EIR, but that had actually "disappeared decades ago" with the construction of BART. Although frowned upon in a public hearing, the audience broke out in laughter.

Roughly 30 residents wished to comment on the project, with concerns ranging from visual impacts, the definition of a complete and accurate report, air quality, school crowding and of course traffic impacts for the already congested intersection of Deer Hill Road and Pleasant Hill Road. There's no shortage of remarks for the "Terraces" project; the comment portion of the Final EIR on the city's website has 12 sections of comments from organizations and four sections from individuals along with comments from state, regional and local agencies. To see the entire document, visit the city website at www.lovelafayette.org

Famous Horowitz Piano Coming to Lafayette

Budding virtuosos can tickle all 88 distinguished ivory keys

By Cathy Tyson

It's not every day a piano goes on a road trip, but already having travelled from New York to Russia to Japan, classical pianist and composer Vladimir Horowitz's personal piano is making a stop this weekend in Lafayette. Players of all ages are invited to play on this fantastic Stein-

way Concert Grand Piano in the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

Born in Kiev in 1903, now the capital of Ukraine, Horowitz later became a naturalized American citizen and after a long, illustrious career he passed away in 1989. For a younger

generation who may be unfamiliar with his celebrity, Time magazine described him as, "widely regarded as the greatest pianist of the 20th century - maybe of all time."

It's unclear if the abilities of Horowitz will rub off on the fingers of casual players, but it couldn't hurt.

... continued on next page



Police Report

Sting, 01/11/13 The Lafayette Police Department and the Contra Costa County District Attorney's Office conducted a joint undercover prostitution sting at the Gold Tub massage establishment on Mt. Diablo Blvd. During the operation, an undercover officer was solicited by an employee of the business. Xiu Bo Wang, 25, of Oakland was arrested for solicitation to engage in prostitution. She was issued a citation and released from the scene. During an inspection of the business, officers found numerous violations of the city's massage establishment ordinance. Gold Tub's certificate to operate in Lafayette was immediately revoked.

Dec. 23, 2012 to Jan. 5, 2013

Alcohol:		
1/1	drunk in public	3400 block Mt Diablo Bl
Animal control:		
12/24		Moraga Rd @ Sky Hy Dr.
Accident:		
12/24	major injuries	Pleasant Hill Rd @ Reliez Valley Rd
	property damage	Moraga Rd @ Sky Hy Dr
12/25	hit & run	3400 block Lana Ln
12/26	hit & run	3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
12/27	property damage	Mt Diablo Bl @ Pleasant Hill Rd
12/28	property damage	Condit Rd @ Pleasant Hill Rd
12/30	major injuries	Moraga Rd @ Tanglewood Dr
1/4	reckless driving	1200 block Pleasant Hill Rd
1/5	major injuries	800 block Reliez Station Rd
	major injuries	Moraga Rd @ Mt Diablo Bl
Assault:		
1/1	brandishing weapon	4100 block Hidden Valley Rd
1/4	battery	3200 block Mt Diablo Bl
1/5	battery	100 block Lafayette Cir

Burglary/Theft/Robbery:		
12/24	burglary	500 block St. Mary's Rd
	credit fraud	900 block Janet Ln
	petty theft	1200 block Medfield Rd
12/27	fraud	1000 block 2nd St
	auto burglary	3400 block Lana Ln
12/28	auto burglary	3200 block Burton Ct
	auto burglary	1000 block Hoedel Ct
12/29	petty theft	1300 block El Curtola Bl
	stolen vehicle	100 block Lafayette Cir
	forgery	3300 block Sweet Dr
	auto burglary	3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
	auto burglary	3400 block Woodview Dr
	shoplift	3500 block Mt. Diablo Bl
12/30	auto burglary	400 block Castello Rd
	auto burglary	900 block Paulson Ct
12/31	evading transit fare	900 block Hough Av
	grand theft	3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
	petty theft	3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
1/2	proowler seen	1800 block Del Rey St
	Grand theft	4000 block Mt Diablo Bl
	Burglary	3100 block Acalanes Av
1/4	petty theft	3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
	commercial burglary	3700 block Mt Diablo
1/5	burglary	900 block Leland Dr
	credit fraud	4000 block STilden Ln
	residential	3900 block S Peardale Dr
Disturbance:		
12/27	noise	1700 block Reliez Valley Rd
1/5	harassment	900 block Hough Av
Drugs:		
12/26		1000 block Vista Vella
Shooting:		
12/27		3300 block S Lucille Ln
12/31		3300 block S Lucille Ln
1/3		Moraga Rd @ Tanglewood Dr
Vandalism:		
12/23		3300 block Betty Lane (twice)
		3200 block Beechwood Dr
12/24		Lucas Dr @ Michael Ln
12/27		3300 block Beechwood Dr
1/5		900 block Dewing Av

Traffic Stops over the two week period: 138

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Last Call at Petar's

By Cathy Tyson



Moraga pals Sammy Cohen, now a student at University of Colorado, Boulder, and Jeremy Hauser, a student at UC Davis, enjoy a "Freddie" at Petar's closing night. Photo courtesy Jake Tyson

An overflow crowd came out to be a part of the closing night of Lafayette institution Petar's on Jan. 5. After a half century of hospitality, the legendary establishment closed its doors due to a decline in restaurant patronage and a significant rent increase from new property manager Main Street Properties.

Although Mediterranean fair replaced Petar's original continental cuisine a few years ago, the place was more known for its active bar scene than for dining. After purchasing the business from original owner Petar Jakovina 13 years ago, current owner Ned Kermaninejad said he'll be looking for other opportunities, and has no plans to retire.

It was a Saturday night to remember. A long line formed out front, complete with bouncers and a \$20 cover charge. Historically, Petar's was the preferred location for many Lamorinda college kids home on school breaks to enjoy an adult beverage. Closing night was no different, a festive atmosphere, music, and an easy cab ride home - if needed. The final farewell evening had college kids along with more mature folks ready to enjoy a libation or three and

popular singer, musician and DJ "Diamond Dave" Hosley.

Lots of audience participation marked the evening, including a rousing rendition from the packed house of Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline," and Van Morrison's unforgettable, "Brown-Eyed Girl." Perhaps it was the brisk sales of long-time bartender's namesake drink, the secret recipe \$6 "Freddie" shot, that lowered inhibitions.

Jeremy Hauser, a Campolindo class of 2009 graduate and now a senior at UC Davis, reflected on the Petar's experience. "Petar's was great for reconnecting with people you thought you would never see again. Something about a round of Freddies and a timeless Diamond Dave classic just brings people together." Hauser noticed some troubling changes over the years. "At the end it kind of lost its charm; exorbitant covers and overly dramatic bouncers seemed very un-Petar's. Over the last few breaks the Round Up definitely took its place as the 'go to' spot for bored Lamo kids. But I don't think any of us will soon forget the wild nights we had at Petar's, acting like kids again in a supposedly adult environment."

Famous Horowitz Piano Coming to Lafayette

... continued from page A2



Justin Levitt Photo provided

The legendary piano is available for the public to play on Jan. 19 from 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Jan. 20 from noon to 3 p.m. A \$5 donation to support the Library Foundation is requested. Because of its popularity, play time will be limited to 10 minutes for students up to age 12, and 20 minutes for those 13 and up.

Also on Jan. 20, from 4 to 5:30 p.m., pianists Justin Levitt and Susan Hammond will hold a lecture-recital with video clips of the master at work and performance of music by Schumann, Rachmaninoff and Scriabin. Residents may remember Levitt from his days at Acalanes or his recent concert at the library with David Glass back in October. Admission for the recital is \$10 and includes a glass of wine or coffee. To make a reservation, call (925) 253-6513 x101 or go to reserve@LLLCF.org.

Levitt credits Bob Athayde at Stanley Middle School and Brad Wells, choir teacher at Acalanes, for their "support and encouragement, they really believed in me," and in-

spired him to pursue music as a profession. He recalls as a student in Lafayette he worked all summer and saved up \$600 to buy an upright spinet piano from a woman in Ross-moor, "and never looked back." This self-taught musician and composer recently played at Carnegie Hall and won first place at the 2012 Music Teachers' Association of California for his original composition, "Sweet Contentment."

Impressed by the Horowitz piano, Levitt points out that this is the very same piano the prominent musician had in his home and that accompanied him to Russia for his stellar come-back performances in Moscow and Leningrad in 1986. For beginners to advanced players being able to play this piano and experience the music and rich warm tone is priceless. For those that can't make it this weekend, the Horowitz piano will be available for the public to play at Sherman Clay in Walnut Creek for approximately two weeks.



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Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Jan. 23, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

Design Review

Monday, Jan. 28, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

School Board Meeting

Moraga School District

Tuesday, Feb. 12, 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

Wrong way, 1/06/13 Perhaps it was driving on the wrong side of the street that was a heads up, but alert officers knew with a whiff that the driver and his friend had been smoking marijuana. The young men admitted to being in possession of less than one ounce of pot. The 17-year-old passenger was released to one of his parents at the scene and entered in the Juvenile Diversion Program. His pal the driver was 18 years old and was issued a citation for possession of pot.

Suspicious foggy windows, 1/06/13 Cops spotted an older blue BMW with foggy windows parked on Natalie Drive at 4:30 p.m. When the occupants rolled down the window, a blast of pot smoke exited the vehicle. The person in the driver's seat received a citation—due to a prior infraction he wasn't eligible for the juvenile diversion program, but his friend was eligible and was entered into the program.

Stolen car found, 1/06/13 At 4:30 a.m. officers spotted a brown Mercedes parked along the side of Canyon Road, about a mile north of Pinehurst Road, a rather unusual location to park. Turns out the car had been reported stolen the day before from Orinda. The car was towed after police were unable to contact the owner. Car thieves didn't get very far.

Loud party, 1/06/13 Loud noise and music greeted officers as they checked out a Moraga Road party after midnight. Cops informed the homeowner that there had been a complaint. The party was officially over at that point and the neighborhood returned to its usual quiet punctuated by the occasional owl.

Graffiti, 1/04/13 Staff from Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School called to report that an unknown suspect entered a storage room while it was unattended and used a black marking pen to write graffiti on the inside of the door and the cement floor.

Auto burglary, 1/03/13 Not the entire car, just the stuff in the car. An Ascot Drive resident reported she parked and locked her Honda Accord in the carport around 4 p.m. When she went out the next day around 10 a.m. all the doors were unlocked and she was missing a large amount of nursing equipment that she needed for work.



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Soliciting and Peddling to be Regulated in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



It has been a common belief that the Town of Moraga has a permit requirement policy for peddlers and solicitors. But Chief of Police Robert Priebe could not find such a policy in the Municipal Code or elsewhere. On Jan. 9, he presented to the Council a text that defines the conditions under which individuals can engage in busi-

ness transactions door-to-door. Priebe's proposal includes a background check and payment of a fee for a one-year permit. Political campaigning (freedom of expression) and solicitors under age 15 are exempt. The council is expected to give final approval of the new regulation in a few weeks.

"We continue to receive complaints from residents about aggressive and sometimes scary individuals who go door-to-door selling their products," said Priebe. "Usually the complaints are about people coming from out of town, sometimes out-of-state." The new regulation states that it is unlawful to peddle or solicit without a permit. The permit is granted, or refused, by the police department after review of the information provided by the applicant, including any criminal record.

"If someone does not want anybody to come to their front door to sell something, they can display a 'no soliciting' sign," added the chief. "Even

with a permit, solicitors will not be authorized to engage the owners of that house."

Council members asked the amount of the fee to get a permit, but Priebe said he didn't know yet. He added that anyone peddling or soliciting in Moraga would have to present the permit and an identity card to homeowners or police officers asking for it.

"What will happen if you catch someone without permit?" asked Council Member Roger Wykle. "We will issue a citation," replied Priebe. The penalty is \$100 per person, but according to the chief the most likely outcome is that they will simply not come back to Moraga.

The Return of the Battle of the Land

By Sophie Braccini

An unusually large number of people defied the frigid cold the morning of Jan. 12 and crowded the La Sala Pavilion at the Hacienda de las Flores to participate in the elaboration of the town's goals for 2013. What attracted most of them was an announcement by Mayor Dave Trotter expressing his personal desire to amend the land use rules of the town's General Plan and put a moratorium on existing projects until revisions have been incorporated.

This immediately revived what property owner Dave Bruzzone called a "very dividing battle," the confrontation between those who want to maximize open space and those who defend the legal rights of property owners. No decision was made at the goal-setting meeting other than to bring the issue of revising the General Plan back to the council for discussion.

Trotter believes that the relatively recent approval of the Ran-

cho Laguna II development along Rheem Boulevard demonstrates a weakness in the implementation rules of Moraga's open space ordinance (MOSO) that allows homes to be approved for development on a ridgeline on MOSO land.

About a half dozen people spoke in favor of revising the General Plan and supported the idea of a moratorium on existing projects. Almost as many speakers were opposed. Among them was Mark Armstrong, representing the developer of the Rancho Laguna II. "If that happens (a moratorium), we will have no other choice but to defend the approvals and our property rights in court," he said.

Other opposition came from Council Member Ken Chew, who said he believes staff has no time to spend revising the General Plan. At different times during the meeting it was clearly stated that the town, and particularly the Planning Department, is under-

staffed. Moraga, being a minimal government town, offers salary and retirement packages that are at the lowest level in the Bay Area according to Town Manager Jill Keimach.

Additionally, Moraga's staff-to-population ratio is also at the lowest level, even when full. At this time, the Planning Department is comprised of the director, Shawna Brekke-Read, and one administrative assistant. Brekke-Read indicated that the large number of new development projects coming to Moraga has forced her to stop working on other issues such as winery regulations, and that taking on a revision of the General Plan was not something she could envision with her current budget.

Since Trotter was supported by council members Roger Wykle and Phil Arth, Keimach said she would present the council with options for clarifying the implementation of land use—after she talks to the town's attor-

ney about what a moratorium could involve and what the risks would be for the town. The council can then decide how it wants to proceed. Trotter indicated he would like to see this happen soon.

The other objectives for 2013 were more consensual. Issues that emerged as priorities include an aggressive road improvement plan, a balanced budget and the recruitment of staff to replace vacant positions since burnout is a high risk.

A new objective was added to the list: the preservation of the Rheem Theatre (see article page B1). "This is the most important matter... it has to be a high priority," said Arth. It is unclear what shape support from the town could take, and Town Manager Jill Keimach said that she would like to conduct a large community outreach effort before formulating options. The theater will be on the council's agenda Jan. 23.

Council Plans for Measure K Oversight

By Sophie Braccini

As required under the ballot measure, the Moraga Town Council recently defined the attributes of the new Measure K Citizens' Oversight Committee that will make sure that the money the town receives from its newly passed sales tax will go toward road repairs for the next 20 years.

The committee will start its work in April when the 1 percent Moraga sales tax takes effect. The Council agreed that it should be a seven-member

body with a quorum of four. The committee will meet two to four times per year, the frequency being determined by either the committee itself or by the town council.

This group will review a yearly report provided by the Administrative Services Director presenting the status and performance of the programs and services funded wholly or partially with proceeds from the tax. It will also have access to the audited fi-

ancial statements for all of the town's financial activities where the auditor will include an accounting of the revenue received from the tax and the matching expenditures. In turn, the oversight committee will present a report to the council once a year.

The oversight committee is not to conduct outreach about their work or recommend any specific road repairs; its responsibility is just to make sure that the sales tax goes to the roads.

But, as Town Manager Jill Keimach pointed out, there are some gray areas. "Would a parking lot like the one we are constructing by the skatepark be a good Measure K project? How about storm drain and sidewalk repairs? Could ADA improvements or staff time be part of it?" she asked.

Council members did not want to leave these decision to the new committee and told the town manager that projects would be reviewed by the council and this type of political decision would be taken at the political level—by the council itself.

Resident Seth Freeman came to the council to make some suggestions as to the modus operandi of the committee and also to express an interest in being nominated. Keimach said that she had already received numerous inquiries from residents interested in overseeing the tax money usage.

The council decided to interview all of the potential committee members at a public meeting in February. The qualifications they deemed necessary included finance and accounting, pavement management, public sector capital project management, public affairs and communications. They decided that no council member will hold a seat on the oversight committee, although a member of the Audit and Finance Committee will join the group as a liaison without voting rights.

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The New Council: Good Guys and Good Troopers

By Sophie Braccini

The new Moraga Town Council finds itself without a female voice. At its first meeting the council set a tone of male camaraderie. Mayor Dave Trotter frequently addressed the group as “guys” and they seemed to fall behind his leadership without too much questioning.

For example, Trotter stated that the mayor had to sit on the Audit and Finance Committee. Council member, and last year’s mayor, Mike Metcalf asked why, but did not challenge further when Trotter justified his

statement by saying the reason was that he had done it before.

It will be interesting to see the alliances that are likely to form over the next few months. This council has two new members, Phil Arth and Roger Wykle, who will need to test the water and find their marks.

Only one slightly controversial issue arose at the Jan. 9 meeting—the question of who would join Trotter on the Audit and Finance Committee. Metcalf, Vice Mayor Ken Chew and Arth all expressed interest in the seat.

Chew immediately withdrew his name and offered his support to Arth, while Wykle supported Metcalf. “I would have liked a consensus on this,” pleaded Trotter. Arth then nominated Metcalf and was seconded by Chew. Trotter called Arth “a good trooper.”

There may be issues in the future that will divide these men but, for now, Moraga appears to have an orderly, disciplined and well-wishing council.

Dense Sophistication: SummerHill Responds to Planning Challenge

By Sophie Braccini

If the proposed SummerHill development off Camino Ricardo is any indicator, developers will face some challenges if they want to build a share of the 700 dwelling units approved in the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP). At a Jan. 7 meeting with the Moraga Planning Commission, SummerHill’s Denise Cunningham and her team presented a new version of their design that incorporated the commission’s previous remarks and requirements. Only half of the commissioners liked the improved plan and neighbors, objecting to having a park instead of homes abutting their back yards, raised new issues.

The new plan proposed by SummerHill for its 14.26-acre development was praised by members of the public and some of the commissioners for its focus on creating a custom-home feel. “We designed each of the 26 homes according to the topography,” explained the project’s architect. The result is that no two homes are alike and each has landscaping that will add to its uniqueness.

“We visited the Sonsara development across the street and noticed the attention to detail that made that development a success,” the architect added. “Sonsara has been well received in the town and many have expressed their desire that this be held as a standard for quality and design they would like to see in the MCSP,” confirmed Cunningham after the meeting.

Design changes included softening the straight road with curves, reducing the number of homes from 28 to 26 and adding a landscaped buffer between homes and Camino Ricardo.

Despite these changes, Commissioners Jim Kline and David Killam opposed the project. Kline cited density and compatibility with the existing neighborhood, and Killam believed that the distance between homes was not enough and that the street was too narrow.

Commission Chair Stacia Levenfeld and Commissioner Christine Kuckuk supported the plan. “We must remember that the whole project (MCSP) was created to imple-

ment denser housing,” said Levenfeld. “Here we’re getting something even better than what was envisioned in the MCSP.”

A neighbor raised a completely new issue during the meeting. A large portion of the property, located between two creeks, has been excluded from all development. SummerHill, following the lead of town staff, is proposing to turn that piece of land into a neighborhood park. Resident John Reed came to the January meeting to oppose that option. “This is a zoning violation,” he said. When he and his wife bought their home in 1977 on Crossbrook Court, they checked with the Planning Department to find out about the zoning of the undeveloped property that was backing theirs—it was for three dwelling units per acre. “Having another home on the other side of the fence is what should be, not a park,” he said.

No action was taken. SummerHill will return to the planning commission in a few months.

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Middle Row (l-r): Carol Stevenson, Anne Knight, Jaime Roder, Judy Schoenrock, Lynda Snell, Linda S. Friedman, Ashley Battersby, Terri Bates Walker, Shannon Conner, Molly Smith, Tara Rochlin, Margaret Zucker, Ann H. Ward, Joan Eggers, Marianne Greene, Christine Clark, Caitlin O’Laskey

Seated (l-r): Joan Cleveland, Joan Evans, Susan Zeh Layng, Patricia Battersby, Sue Olsen, Linda Ehrich, April Matthews, Karen Murphy

Not Pictured: Ann Sharf

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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Thursday, Jan. 24, 6 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Jan. 22, 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, Feb. 11, 6 p.m.
OUSD Office
25 Orinda Way, Suite 200
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org

Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org



Police Report

Antique appraisal? 1/2/13 A 65-year-old Orinda resident discovered ammunition in his basement, and called police to dispose of it. Responders found 250 rounds of WW II era, anti-tank shell ammunition. Just to be on the safe side, OPD called in the 'big guns' in the form of a Travis Air Force Base explosive ordinance team. The team removed the ammunition from the site. It was taken to the Orinda evidence locker for subsequent destruction.

Warrant arrest, 1/6/13 A 26-year-old woman was arrested on two counts of outstanding warrants from Hayward and Alameda.

Good thing they checked, 1/7/13 Police making a welfare check on a 64-year-old male found him to be under the influence of alcohol. That is in violation of his terms of probation, so the man was transported and booked into Martinez Detention Facility.



Maureen Wilbur



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Representing Orinda on Regional Issues

By Laurie Snyder

Public service, Orinda Mayor Amy Worth mused recently, is a wonderful way to help the community. The volunteer hours given so freely by so many make a genuinely positive difference for the citizens who live and work here.

Observing that she and her fellow Orinda City Council members are also volunteers, she added, "We on the City Council are honored to receive the trust of our community to serve." Council members attend regularly scheduled meetings twice monthly, as well as additional special meetings throughout the year to develop the budget and strategic plans, address legal and public safety matters, and respond to residents' concerns on a diverse range of issues. In addition, council members engage with residents at numerous community events and functions, and also serve as liaisons on their behalf to commissions and committees across the Bay Area.

"As one of 19 cities in Contra Costa County, Orinda is represented on a number of local and regional boards that make decisions on issues as broad as libraries, transportation, garbage and planning," said Worth.

"Because many of these issues cross city and county boundaries, over the decades regional agencies such as the Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority, the Association of Bay Area Governments, and the Contra Costa Transportation Authority have been established to enable cities and the county to work together to provide services to our citizens."

And because many key services such as the construction of the Caldecott Tunnel fourth bore, garbage and recycling programs, and the County Connection bus service are provided to residents via these regional agencies, "Council member participation and leadership on the boards of regional agencies ensures that Orinda residents have a strong voice in the decisions that are made," explained Worth.

Worth is also a voting delegate with the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). What exactly does a voting delegate do, and why is it important for the citizens of Orinda to have this link with ABAG?

The Association of Bay Area Governments "is a cooperative association of the Bay Area's one hundred and one cities and nine Bay Area

counties," explained Worth. Founded half a century ago, "it was established to provide a forum for cities and counties to come together to address issues such as transportation, housing and economic development that spanned beyond city and county boundaries and were of importance to local governments." In addition, "State of California legislation has delegated the responsibility for long range planning in housing (the Regional Housing Needs Allocation) to ABAG," she said.

Voting delegates like Worth are appointed by each city and county to serve on the General Assembly, which votes on the organization's budget, its officers and its organizational priorities. In addition, the Contra Costa Mayors' Conference selects two representatives to serve as its representatives on ABAG's Administrative Committee, which is responsible for carrying out the organization's work as established by the General Assembly.

What regional planning efforts might the Orinda City Council be expected to engage in this year?

Reflecting on several regional planning efforts that are currently un-

derway, Worth cited the review and adoption of the first Bay Area regional plan combining transportation, local land use and housing planning as a key area which will require the council's attention. "The coming months will represent the continuation of a public, two-year process to develop the regional plan which is required under state law." She noted that "Orinda will continue to provide its input on the plan, developed through public City Council meetings," and said that residents will be given additional opportunities this spring to learn about and comment on the plan through public hearings slated to be held in Contra Costa County.

"In addition, a number of Contra Costa efforts are under way such as the development of the County Transportation investment Plan and the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority new franchise agreement and service plan."

Orinda's council members provide "an Orinda voice," said Worth, "to ensure that those decisions and the resulting allocation of public resources and tax dollars reflect the priorities of our local community."

Orinda Facing Solid Waste Rate Increase

By Laurie Snyder

Orinda's current garbage and recycling services are delivered via a Joint Powers Authority (JPA), which franchises solid waste services on behalf of the cities of Danville, Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, and Wal-

nut Creek, as well as unincorporated portions of central Contra Costa County. The board of directors of that JPA, known as the Contra Costa County Solid Waste Authority (CCCSWA), is also responsible for

setting annual residential and commercial solid waste rates in those communities.

And it is those rates which are currently the subject of review by the Orinda City Council. On Dec. 18,

council members learned that the CCCSWA board is considering raising Orinda's solid waste rates by an average of 2.6 percent for year nine of its 10-year franchise agreement with the city. ... continued on page A9



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Deadline to Apply for Orinda City Commissions and Committees Coming Soon

The City of Orinda is recruiting citizens to fill critical commission and committee vacancies, including five openings on its new Public Safety Committee. Other bodies seeking volunteers include the Planning Commission, Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission, and Parks and Recreation Commission among many others.

Residents appointed to the Public Safety Committee will serve in an advisory capacity to the City Manager and Chief of Police. They will discuss the police budget, annual crime statistics, emergency preparedness plans, and citizen crime prevention efforts, but will not review personnel policies and procedures or allegations of misconduct. Meetings will be open to the public, and held twice annually. Committee members will typically serve for three years.

"Qualified applicants for City Commission and Committee appointments will be invited to interview before the full City Council on Saturday, February 23," said Orinda City Clerk Michele Olsen.

Committee descriptions and a full list of all open positions are available on the city's website. Candidate application materials must be submitted to the City Clerk's office by 5 p.m. on Feb. 8. L. Snyder

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Average Electric Usage (kWh) in 20 years	250	500	750	1,000	1,250	1,500	1,750	2,000	2,250	
Average Electric Bill in 20 years	\$119	\$306	\$599	\$910	\$1,221	\$1,532	\$1,843	\$2,154	\$2,465	
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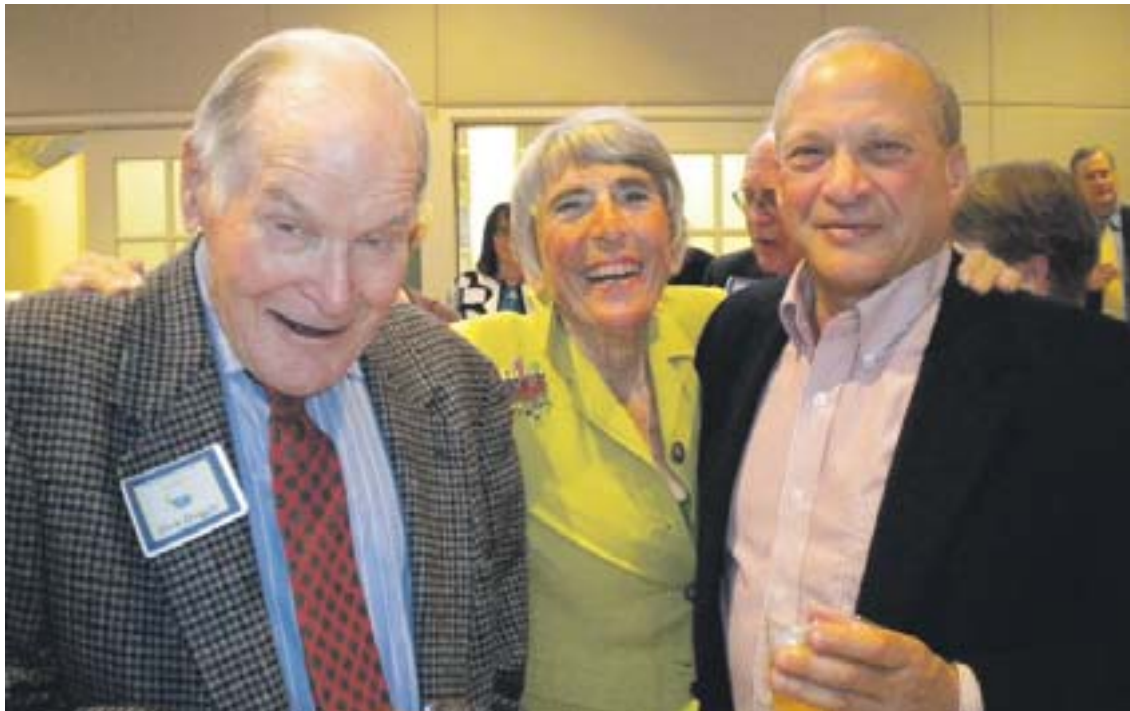
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Heggie Peace Symposium



From left: Dick Heggie, Bobbie Landers and Bill Cosden

Photo provided

The life of the city's first mayor, the late Dick Heggie, will be celebrated in cerebral style at 11:30 a.m. today at the Orinda Country Club when George Breslauer, University of California's Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, and professor of Slavic

Studies, discusses the sustainability of Russia's Putin regime at Orinda's first Dick Heggie Peace Symposium. The public event is being co-sponsored by Orinda Rotary and the Orinda Chamber of Commerce. A long-time Rotarian and co-founder of the Orinda-Tabor Sister City

Foundation, Heggie will be remembered for his deep commitment to the community, as well as his distinguished international relations career which included 19 years with the Asia Foundation and service as an executive director of the World Affairs Council. *L. Snyder*

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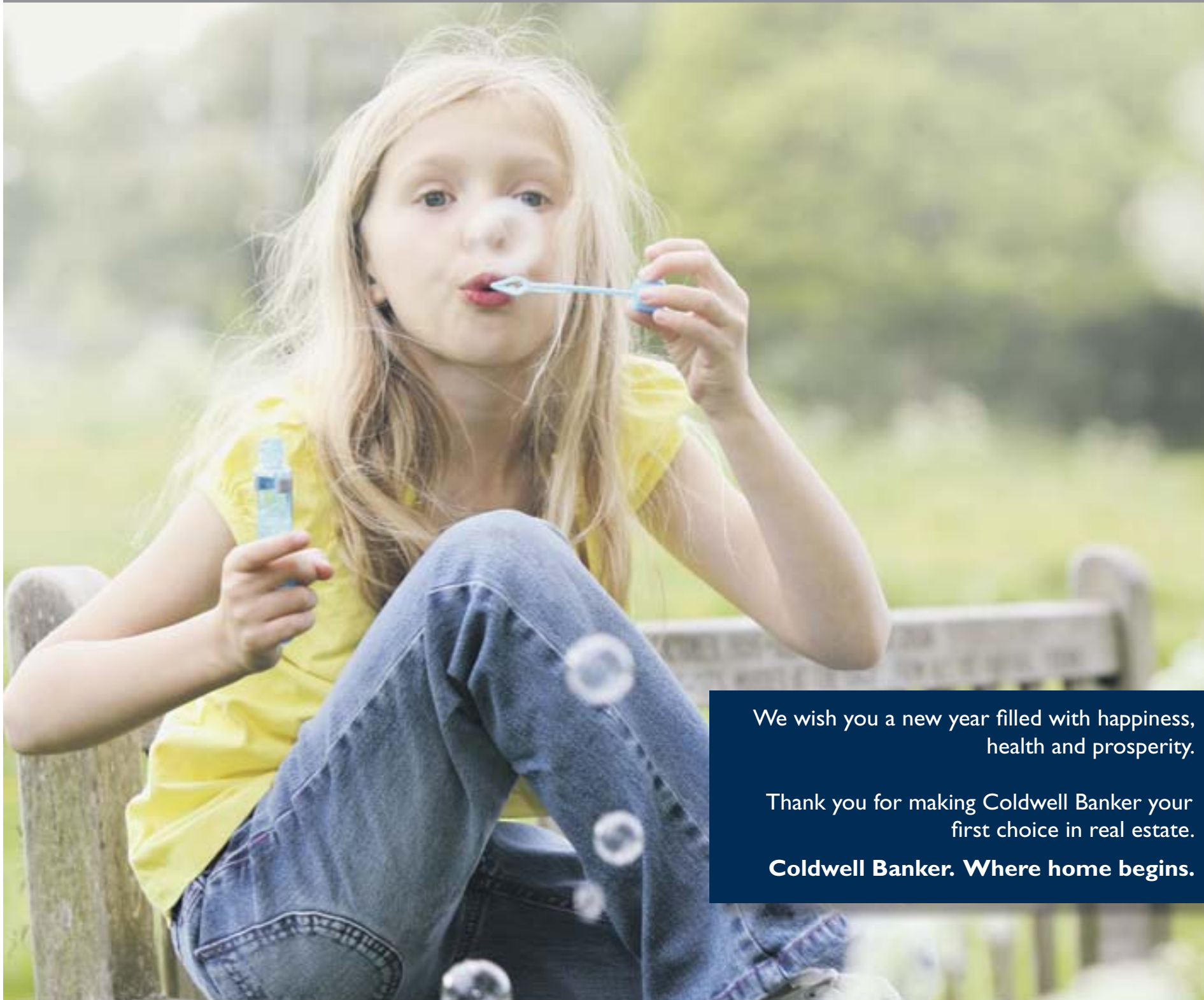


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Community Service

Over 700 Trees Planted by Local Suburban Farming Group

Organization helps community care for and harvest trees for charity



Lamorinda residents prepare to harvest pears during a family day. Photo Siamack Sioshansi

Three years ago, The Urban Farmers – the Lafayette suburban farming group – challenged the Lamorinda community to plant 1,000 fruit trees within five years. Since then, the group has succeeded in planting 720 trees around the county, the majority of which are in Lamorinda. As word of the organization's goal has spread, trees have been popping up in Danville, Alamo, Walnut Creek, and Concord as well.

The planting of fruit trees in local backyards is an important step on the path to hunger relief in the community. "If you plant an apple tree in your backyard, in a few years it will start producing fruit in large volume. An apple tree can put out 200 to 300 apples a year," says Siamack Sioshansi, executive director of The Urban Farmers. "After your family eats, cans, and gives away all that you want, in most cases you will still have fruit to donate."

To enable both novice and experienced residents to grow fresh, flavorful fruit, the organization provides free workshops on how to plant trees bought through their program. After teaching homeowners how to plant the trees, the organization services them on a communal basis, pruning and spraying to save busy homeowners from having to become tree experts. The organization also harvests the excess fruit to donate to local food banks – in a typical day, volunteers visit four to five homes and harvest between 500 and 1,000 pounds of fruit.

Still, for those who want to learn how to care for their own trees, The Urban Farmers also offers pruning classes and workshops. "A few people can learn enough at a workshop to get out there and prune their trees," says Sioshansi. "Most others, including the most confident gardeners, don't feel comfortable pruning a tree. One of my friends said pruning is like swimming: You can't learn by talking about it."

To raise that comfort level, the organization is in the final stages of planning two orchards – 125 trees in Danville and 27 trees in Lafayette – for training purposes. "This way, homeowners who want to learn can come out and make as many cuts, under supervision, as they need until they feel they can swim to the other end, at home," Sioshansi says. The orchards will be planted in early February; families and individuals are invited to participate.

The Urban Farmers' group fruit tree purchase is now open and will run through Feb. 6. Visit www.theurbanfarmers.org or www.facebook.com/theurbanfarmers.org for more information about upcoming events.

Saint Mary's College Museum of Art Honored with Arts Recognition Award

Submitted by Dyana Bhandari



Photo Andy Scheck

The Saint Mary's College Museum of Art was one of three honored with a 2012 Arts Recognition Award by the Arts and Culture Commission of Contra Costa County (AC5) and the County Board of Supervisors yesterday at the County Administration Building in Martinez. For the past 17 years the Arts Recognition Award has honored artists and arts organizations that have made significant contributions to the arts and culture of Contra Costa County over a sustained period of time.

"Saint Mary's College Museum of Art is a jewel in both Contra Costa County and the Bay Area for the vision, leadership, commitment and creativity in bringing visual culture to both the college and larger communities," said Darwin Marable, AC5 chair. "The Arts and Culture Commission and the Board of Supervisors are honored to recognize the Museum's many contributions to our community."

Museum director Carrie Brewster said she was thrilled by the latest honor for the institution.

"As a museum that has been accredited by the America Alliance of Museums for more than 25 years, we take pride in bringing a world of art to Saint Mary's College and the surrounding communities," said Brewster.

Brewster added that "the expansion of our exhibit space by 50 per cent in 2011 enables the Saint Mary's Museum of Art to present four exhibitions at once, offering with an even more diverse range of the visual arts to our region."

According to Marable, AC5, in conjunction with the Board of Supervisors, has granted 78 annual awards since 1996 to artists, art educators, arts organizations and many others who have made significant contributions to the arts.

"The Saint Mary's Art Museum was honored for its permanent collection, including its William Keith Collection, and noteworthy one-person exhibitions which bring local, national and international known artist to Moraga and Contra Costa County," Marable said.

The two other recipients were Michele Seville, arts and culture manager for the City of Richmond and Hershell West, artist, muralist and community organization leader. The Board of Supervisors presented a resolution honoring these county leaders at yesterday's event. Each honoree received a commemorative glass sculpture created by artist Randy Strong of the R. Strong Glass studio in Berkeley.

Civic News Orinda

Orinda Facing Solid Waste Rate Increase

... continued from page A6

According to reports presented to the council, the "JPA, formed in 1994 in order to provide better service and lower rates, resulted in Orinda ratepayers paying garbage and recycling rates lower than they had previously paid up until 2008."

CCCWSA's board contracts with HF&H, an independent consulting firm, "to audit the service providers' true cost of service for each jurisdiction. As a member of the CCCWSA, Orinda's revenue requirement is calculated based on the actual cost of the services." The franchise agreement also dictates that the costs of the equipment used to provide these services be amortized. If revenues are lacking in any rate year, "the shortfall will be made up during future rate setting processes" while any year-end surplus "is held in reserve to offset shortfalls in future years."

For year nine of the franchise agreement (March 1, 2013 to Feb. 28, 2014), CCCWSA projects that Orinda's revenue requirement will be \$3,704,704 with revenues estimated at \$3,854,871 – for a current reserve of \$66,591. The proposed 2.6 percent rate increase is needed, said CCCWSA representatives, "to cover the revenue requirement and increase Orinda's reserve" to \$316,985 because revenues are coming in lower than initially projected.

This is due to several factors. As consumers recycle more, solid waste decreases. Plus, the current rate structure is also motivating local businesses to have their solid waste picked up less frequently or via

smaller solid waste containers while residential users have also been switching to smaller containers, which decreases revenues available to cover fixed expenses.

For average Orindans, this means that the cost of 20 and 32-gallon containers would rise 2.9 percent – from \$27.41 and \$31.60, respectively, to \$28.20 and \$32.52. Increases for 64 and 96-gallon containers would be slightly smaller (two percent) – from \$61.28 and \$91.67 to \$62.51 and \$93.50, respectively. Commercial rates are anticipated to increase by roughly 2.6 percent.

In comparison, current monthly rates for 32-gallon containers in other cities include: Atherton (\$55), Danville (\$23.81), El Cerrito (\$38.10), Hillsborough (\$52.50), Lafayette (\$26.75), Moraga (\$24.46), Piedmont (\$50.67), and Walnut Creek (\$19.29).

"If rates are not increased as proposed and the Rate Year 9 revenue requirement is higher than the revenue and the existing reserves," according to city staff, Orinda "would be required to meet the revenue requirement from the city's general fund."

Council members Steve Glazer and Victoria Smith are serving as the city liaisons to the CCCWSA board, and are currently entertaining comments regarding the planned increase from residents. The CCCWSA board plans to provide final direction to HF&H regarding the proposed new rate structure by Jan. 18 before adopting the new rates Jan. 31.

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Letters to the Editor

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Editor:

My intent is not to dim the celebration of Orindans over the recent honor bestowed upon our community by Forbes as the Second Friendliest Town in America. However I do find it ironic that many Orinda residents vociferously opposed the proposal by our last City Manager to use the former library as a temporary winter shelter for homeless families. Could it be that our hospitality extends only to those who are as fortunate as us? Just a thought.

Willie Yee
Orinda

Editor:

Since the shooting and murder in Connecticut of 26 kids and staff there has been talk of stricter gun legislation and the possibility of outright gun confiscation. I am against this because in the 2nd Amendment--it states we have the right to bear arms. I would prefer guns in the hands of responsible people for the purposes of self-defense and personal means of entertainment such as target shooting and hunting game. I'd prefer that psychiatrists, physicians and social workers be required to input names into a database of people who pose a threat to themselves or others, and then those people would not be allowed a permit to purchase a firearm. Otherwise, we're removing guns from those who follow the law and leaving them in the hands of those who don't (people who obtain their guns illegally). This would not completely solve the problem but I believe it would make a great impact.

Alex (last name withheld at parent's request because the writer is a minor)
Moraga

Editor:

In the *Contra Costa Times*' "Eye on the East Bay.... irreverent look at the news" in Lafayette, your competitor has fallen victim to common misunderstandings about getting around in our small city. In other words, it looks easier than it is. "Eye on the East Bay" cites the speed with which the sinkhole on Mountain View Drive was returned to active service with the help of CC Meyer, Inc., and expresses a belief that only during such events as Taste of Lafayette and the Art and Wine Festival, which occupy the Mt. Diablo Boulevard tarmac, is a bypass to our downtown needed. As a long-term traffic commissioner, let me explain that on any given day of the week, long backups often accompany one's drive through Lafayette's downtown, regardless of the direction headed. The Mt. View Drive turnoff helps to avoid these long waits at each intersection and helps to de-load the street. To this end, too, Mt. View Drive south to Brook is a frequently used shortcut both to downtown schools and to destinations of others headed south of the freeway, including those who are headed to Moraga. Additionally, it needs to be understood that the single and multi-family residential, commercial and medical services area delineated by Moraga Road, Brook Street, Mt. View and Mt. Diablo Boulevard contains a concentration of uses with ingress/egress roads -- save the two arterials on the outskirts - that are no more than one narrow and irregular lane in each direction to serve those who travel these roads. In an emergency, the options for egress for those finding themselves within those perimeters would be severely limited. Options for ingress for emergency purposes would be similarly constrained. Closure of the 4th leg of that neighborhood for a longer length of time would not have been an intelligent option.

Sincerely,
Lynn Hiden
Lafayette

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MOFD Board Dispatches Task Force Report

Approves the hiring of six firefighters

By Nick Marnell

3The patience of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors appeared to be tested at a meeting in early January.

The Orinda Citizens Emergency Services Task Force, a group of residents investigating MOFD's management and fiscal policies, submitted a document titled "Report to the Community on the State of Emergency Services" to the Orinda City Council in September, 2012. That same month, the MOFD board directed its staff to provide an analysis of the report.

Fire Chief Randall Bradley addressed each of the report's observations and recommendations at the MOFD board meeting Jan. 9.

The report assailed the district's emergency response times. "Response times will always be an issue," Bradley said. "We will never meet national standards. We are a rural environment, and they are looking for us to maintain suburban service levels. It's not possible." The report recommended against replacing Station 43, but Bradley insisted that the station, which is over 60 years old and does not meet seismic, space, gender, or firefighter health and safety requirements, needs to be replaced. Bradley also decried what he described as the use of flawed methodology in the report, which stated that the district has close to a \$700 million pension liability.

"I read the entire 90-page report. Twice," said director Fred Weil, noting that, as an attorney, he has "great admiration for people who pull together arguments." But he declared the report to be "fundamentally flawed. It's a polemic." As to one of the report's basic premises, that Orinda is paying too much for its emergency services, he stated, "In fact, a lot more money has been spent in Orinda than in Moraga."

The report frustrated board president Frank Sperling, who said that the Task Force "continues to perpetrate a false picture to the community. I was hoping to hear new ideas, but there were none to be found." Director John Wyro put an end to the lengthy discussion. "It's time to move on," he said. "We've got work to do." No further action was taken.

Directors Alex Evans and Steve Anderson, both Orinda residents, maintained near silence throughout the Task Force report discussion.

Task Force member Steve Cohn said later, "After (the) dismissal of our concerns regarding service in Orinda, equitable funding by Orinda's taxpayers... and MOFD's long term finan-

cial stability, we are not sure what else there is for us to do."

There was indeed other work for the board to do. Despite the closure of Lafayette Fire Station 16, and the mutual aid agreement that MOFD has with the Contra Costa Fire Protection District, Bradley assured the board that the MOFD need change nothing operationally as a result, partly because Lafayette gave more aid to the MOFD than the other way around.

Vince Wells, president of Local 1230 representing firefighters, reminded the board, "You need good relationships with the other agencies. We all share the burden" of saving lives. And Dick Olsen, past MOFD board member, tried to assure the board that history has shown there will not be a problem with the two districts working together.

As a result of a December accident on Highway 24, and the consequent long-term disability of three firefighters, plus the retirement of three firefighters coming within the next few months, Bradley said that there is mounting pressure being felt by his staff. Firefighters receive "mandatory" overtime – they are required to work even when they turn down overtime – but, Bradley explained, mandatory overtime can have an impact on family life and also on the firefighters' health and safety. To partially ameliorate these issues, Bradley requested approval to hire six firefighter/paramedics. Once the new hires are made, the department will still have nine open positions.

No resistance to Bradley's request was offered. The board unanimously approved the hiring of the six firefighters. The hirings will be finalized on or about March 1.

The next scheduled meeting of the MOFD board is Jan. 16.



Moraga Orinda Fire District Board of Directors Meetings

Meetings of the MOFD Board of Directors are open to the public and take place on the third Wednesday of each month. Please note new meeting location: Orinda Community Center, Founders Auditorium, 28 Orinda Way

Next meeting:
Regular Board Meeting
Jan. 16, 2013, 7 p.m.

(go to www.mofd.org as the meeting date approaches for more information)

Congressman George Miller Visits Moraga



George Miller and Dave Trotter

Photo Andy Scheck

On a break from Washington, 11th District Congressman George Miller came to the Jan. 11 Liaison meeting to take Moraga's pulse.

Miller was updated about the local sales tax increase, resulting infrastructure work, service club fundraising as well as about the Moraga Education

Foundation, which is well on its way to raising more than \$2 million, and the passage of Prop. 30 and the little breathing room it will give to schools. Miller is new to Moraga because of redistricting but has served California for 20 years. "I like to go where people are and try to meet them on Main Street, and in small businesses to find out what works and what is not working," he said. "In Washington we have a lot to do, our budget has been devastated, but there is an upbeat feeling about California." Miller serves on the education committee where he hopes he will be able to work on some compromises he feels the nation needs. *S. Braccini*

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Consultant to Investigate Highway 24 Accident

MOFD Fire Chief Randall Bradley gave the board an update on the conditions of his three injured firefighters who were involved in an accident on Highway 24 in December, 2012.

"I can say that all three are in good spirits and we do expect all to have full recoveries and to return to work," he said. "I do not want to speculate on timeframes."

Kelly Morris sustained a fractured right foot, a fractured right leg and a left knee injury. She is at home recovering from her injuries. Steve Rogness required reconstructive surgery on his right foot and also injured his right knee, which may require surgery at a later date. Rogness is also recuperating at home. Mike Rattary continues to recover from the symptoms of a significant concussion.

Bradley hired a consulting firm, John Sharry and Associates in Discovery Bay, to investigate the accident. Sharry was the fire chief of Lawrence Livermore Laboratories in the early '90s. The consulting contract was signed the week of Jan. 7. The contract specifies a rate of \$125 per hour, up to an 80-hour maximum. Since the contract did not exceed Bradley's \$10,000 spending authority, no board approval was required for this action. *N. Marnell*

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Horse Culture in Lamorinda Changing Bit by Bit

... continued from page A1



Photo Cathy Dausman

"We used to ride our horses from Moraga to Lafayette because Taco Bell had a hitching post for us to tie up and eat lunch. The jogging trail was not paved and it was mainly used for horses and walkers," she said.

By her second horse, Brown boarded at the Moraga Barn where it was "much easier to find your horse," and she wrote her rent check to Mr. Bruzzone. She boarded her third – and final – horse at what is now Twin Canyons Girl Scout Camp. She blames the scarcity of public riding stables in

Lamorinda on liability insurance. "I could make more money giving horseback riding lessons than travel writing if I didn't have to carry the insurance," she said.

Karen Bottiani gets her riding insurance through membership in the American Endurance Ride Conference. The MHA member said "we try to be good managers" on the land MHA has leased from East Bay Municipal Utility District. A 20-year member of the MHA, Bottiani keeps her horses at the pasture, and attends most meetings and events.

Recently, Bottiani was feeding her horses Blue and Cupcake before a trail ride with Gary Fend on Frosty and Laura Stetson on Pearl. Bottiani has been riding originally bareback since she was two; riding isn't a hobby for her as much as it is a passion. "I ride every day, unless I'm sick," she said.

Still, the Lafayette resident remembers a time when more local

horses were kept in owners' back yards. She says nowadays riders belong to stables, board their horses and sign their children up for formal riding lessons. Bottiani used to ride along Pleasant Hill Road, but auto traffic today makes that too dangerous.

Shivani Rajan of Canyon echoed that sentiment: "I don't feel safe riding on [Lamorinda] roads now," said Rajan, who began as a MHA junior rider and has ridden for 20 years. She moved her horse with her to college in Santa Cruz, and then returned to the area, which she said was interesting from a riding point of view. She thinks the extracurricular activities high school students pursue for their college resume "leave less time for horses."

Trainer Kim Laursen said Henson's Arabian Center in Lafayette has been there for years. She estimates 30 people use the facilities, which include a riding arena. Twenty horses, many of them older, are boarded there full time.

Lynne Collins likes the center because of its nice covered arena and also because it is secluded, yet close to town. Collins hadn't planned to ride the day she spoke, but stopped in to visit her 13-year-old Morgan horses Katrina and Twist.

Keeping horses "is a lot harder than having a cat," laughed Collins. That is especially true at the feeding trough. Monthly horse boarding runs \$500 to \$800 per month, said Mari Parino, executive director of Orinda's Xenophon Therapeutic Riding Center.

Parino said "the sky-rocketing costs of hay and bedding" is partly to blame. She said boarding options have changed from private, smaller places to larger boarding ranches and that "designer barns" built in Castro Valley and Livermore have lured local trainers away from Lamorinda.

Moraga, Lafayette and Briones trail access has become more difficult because of busy roads and closed access points, Parino added.

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Rheem Closes Three Upstairs Theaters to be ADA Compliant

Partial closing reveals long-term challenge

By Sophie Braccini



Michael Paul and Tessa Cunha by the broken lift, which is adorned with colorful notes reflecting donations that have been made to the repair fund. Photo Andy Scheck

Cliff Dochterman just wanted to do his job as the recent Moraga appointee to the Contra Costa County Advisory Council on Aging when he reported in a letter to the Town Council that the Rheem Theatre was in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The second floor is not accessible to anyone unable to climb stairs, since the theater's lift is broken beyond repair.

His letter had immediate repercussions: Derek Zemrak, of the California Independent Film Festival Association which operates the theater, decided to close the three small upstairs theaters on Jan. 18.

Zemrak is working with the community to find a solution, but

it looks likely that the Rheem will function with just one theater for at least two months. This means much less revenue and that all other programs, such as the classic film series and Green Rheem film nights, will be canceled until the upper floor can be re-opened.

"I am not arguing with what was said (by Dochterman)," said Zemrak, "but we had to protect ourselves." Zemrak indicated that a lawsuit had been filed earlier against the theater due to an ADA violation, even before the lift broke. "These regulations are hard to follow in old buildings," he said. "We changed counter height, provided access in the theaters, and we have been working

with the state and the property owner to find solutions." The letter about the lift was the last straw.

This elevator had been a problem for a while and had already undergone repairs. "We spent \$10,000 to fix it last year, but when it failed again five weeks ago, the repair team said it was broken beyond repair," said Zemrak. Installing a new elevator will cost about \$30,000. "For this type of commercial building you need a custom-made elevator," he explained.

Mahesh Puri, owner of the building, said he was not ready to make that investment. "The rent from the theater does not even cover all my costs, such as the property tax," said Puri. "I cannot make this kind of investment." Compounding the problem for Zemrak is the term of the lease: there is only 14 months left, with no certainty with what the property owner will want to do next. "What we need is a long-term lease, at least seven or 10 years," he said.

The broken lift was just the one issue that brought the long-term survival of the Theatre to the public attention, when in fact town staff had already started working with Zemrak and Puri to find a solution.

"The independent theaters that continue to function, such as theaters in Larkspur and Modesto, are owned by the towns and are operated by a professional," said Zemrak. Moraga Town Manager Jill Keimach is familiar with the specificities of operating an independent movie theater; she was working with the city of El Cerrito when it purchased its theater in 2002 through a redevelopment agency.

... continued on page B2



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Orinda Historical Society Exhibit Offers Library Visitors Trip Down Memory Lane

By Laurie Snyder



The photographs were taken by Karl Nielson of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and John Huseby of Caltrans.

What do 1960s-era toys, a late 20th century architectural model of the Orinda Community Center, and a framed copy of a Caldecott Tunnel bond have to do with a black and white 1935 photograph of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe? They're all part of an exhibit being presented by the Orinda Historical Society (OHS) at the Orinda Library Art Gallery now through Jan. 28.

Each year, OHS displays selected items from its treasure trove of historic documents and memorabilia at special events as part of its education and outreach programming. OHS

volunteers also help residents to uncover new details about the histories of their neighborhoods, and inspire dozens of Orinda third graders, parents, and teachers to love local history via guided tours of the society's museum which is located on the ground floor of the Orinda Library complex. Armchair genealogists, serious historians, and news reporters have even been known to mine the society's files and newspaper archives for hints about the city's most noteworthy – and notorious – former residents.

The society has been charged with preserving Orinda's history by

protecting and displaying artifacts, documents and images in the OHS museum, and by educating its membership and the general public about the area's history in a manner which enhances the quality of life in and beyond the city. Members come from as far away as Santa Rosa for the society's annual holiday dinner and benefit from fellowship and frequent belly laughs while working on a diverse range of special projects throughout the year.

In addition to the Caldecott Tunnel bond currently on display, the January Library Gallery exhibit also

showcases clay renderings by local artist Dorothy P. Roos of Orinda's first school – known in 1882 as the Moraga School, the Miner Home (1880) and the Orinda Park Hotel (1885), the Santa Maria Chapel (1892), the Bryant Home (1875), and the Bryant Train Station (1893) – Orinda's own stop along the Califor-

nia Nevada Railroad. Roos, a graduate of the California College of Arts and Crafts, created the building models to help local children envision the founding days of their home town.

Future events planned by OHS volunteers include an exhibit of artifacts at the annual Orinda Car Show and a military display to honor the sacrifices made by local veterans for community and country. OHS is asking residents to loan or donate items and gear in support of the project. Uniforms from all service eras and branches are welcome, with Marine and Coast Guard uniforms most desired to diversify the items received to date.

Residents are also needed to assist with everything from data entry to helping organize and archive the museum's collections, and to staff the museum. In addition, a membership drive is currently underway. So, if you're a history buff or an avid genealogist, OHS would welcome your support. For more information, contact Lucy Hupp Williams: (650) 349-3382, or (925) 254-1353. Or swing by to meet the members of the OHS Board of Directors and other volunteers at a special Library Gallery reception for the current exhibits from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 27.

You might just enlighten a child – or help a neighbor to solve a mystery.



Selected images from "Tunnel Vision," an award-winning series of photographs capturing the construction of the new fourth bore for the Caldecott Tunnel, are also currently on display at the Orinda Library Art Gallery this month. Drivers felt a glimmer of hope for easier commutes late last year with the news that eastern and western tunneling operations had finally connected. The new \$402.1 million bore – "one of the largest recipients of Recovery Act funding in the nation," according to regional transportation officials – is expected to open to traffic by late 2013.

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Rheem Closes Three Upstairs Theaters to be ADA Compliant

... continued from page B1

"The town wants to help, and different options will be taken to Council in the next weeks," said Keimach. "We were also planning to start a conversation with the community, before the lift incident, and we intend to invite the residents to a meeting in February."

According to Zemrak, the Rheem's situation has improved, operating revenue covers costs but does not generate benefits. "In 2012 the box office increase in revenue from 2011 was over 7 percent; and the theater had a 16 percent increase in attendance, as well as a 23 percent increase in attendance at the November California Independent Film Festival," said Zemrak. "The theater has become a community resource, this partial closure comes at a very bad time."

In the short term, Zemrak believes that local fundraising efforts should allow the Rheem to solve the

lift crisis. "If we can raise \$10,000 we can order the elevator and negotiate with the state to keep the theater open," he said. Two fundraising events have already been planned: an Oscar Night gala on Feb. 24, and this Friday, Jan. 18, Shelby's restaurant in Orinda will give 15 percent of its proceeds to the theater.

"Different people have reached out to ask what they could do to help," said Zemrak, citing a phone call from new Orinda Chamber President Sylvia Jorgensen. Dochterman wants to help, too, and said he would lead a fundraising effort, if asked. "I think this is something we can solve as a community," he said.

The conversation started during the town's Goal Setting session Jan. 12. Mayor Dave Trotter took the lead saying that the council and the town needed to think outside the box to find long-term viability options for the theater.

“Changing the World 101”

Impassioned speaker challenges SMC students, community members into action

By Lou Fancher

Saint Mary's College launched Jan Term's 2013 "Inspired" Speaker Series on Jan. 8 with a dynamic, rousing call to action from Ignited Leadership founder Jason Connell.

The 26-year old seeker of social justice and world traveler would have every reason to sit down and take a rest, but instead, he paced like a caged cheetah across the Soda Center stage; unfurling tender, personal stories and hurling inspirational challenges to the approximately 100 member audience.

"One of the reasons I'm happy to be here is that despite the small size of SMC, you have more service hours per student than almost any other college in the country," he began.

Describing the 17-year-old Chinese mother he once saw digging food out of the trash to feed the baby she held wrapped in a blanket, Connell said, "That's not a kind of poverty we see in this country. I shifted from partying in every country I could visit to seeing what kind of difference I could make in the world."

Connell offered a two-sided invitation; stressing the importance of admitting that no one person can save the world while suggesting every single person could take steps to build a better community. Promising to accept private questions after the lecture, share his email address, and send digital copies of his lecture notes, Connell dove into the dark, evil world he is devoted to changing.

"The Virgin Cleanse Myth," he announced, describing a much-believed, clearly erroneous story Soweatans are led to believe will eradicate the HIV-AIDS virus. "(People with AIDS) are told, if they have sex with people who are assuredly virgins—two year olds, three year olds, who are kidnapped and raped—you will be cleansed," he said.

With an HIV-AIDS rate of 17.8

percent, meaning one in six South Africans are infected, lack of education and a desperate population leads to tragedy beyond imagination. "What would you do, if the cards had been dealt differently?" Connell asked, suggesting the very thought made his heart hurt and his head spin.

"These problems are not just in Soweto," he claimed, "they wrap themselves around the world."

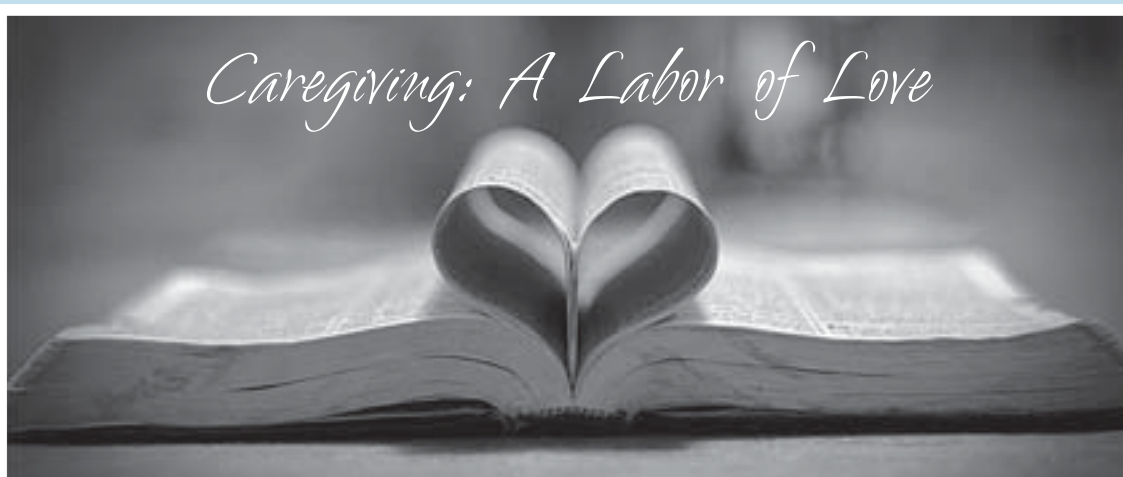
Embracing the enormity of poverty, genocide, global warming, water deprivations and other global concerns can make a person shut down, Connell said. "Completely powerless: that's how I have felt," he admitted. "But it's a false feeling."

To prove his point, Connell jumped off the dire bandwagon of world problems and planted his feet firmly in Global Camps Africa (GCA), an example of solutions. GCA takes kids in dire poverty and places them in the countryside at what is, essentially, a classic American summer camp. The camp has a dual purpose: to lift kids out of poverty and prevent the spread of HIV.

"Study after study shows the kids who attend have lower HIV rates," Connell said. "They commit fewer crimes, go to school more often, and they're happier. The way you change the world is working with small groups of individuals."

Perhaps sensing his message had strayed to abstraction, Connell moved to Uganda, recalling the personal drama of a young woman whose family was brutally murdered by the Lord's Resistance Army. The warring faction, whose phenomenal levels of violence are unimaginable to Americans (except, Connell noted, in video games he said cause gamers to mistake violence for entertainment), spared the young woman's life because she was pregnant and killing a woman bearing a child was one step beyond their moral code.

...continued on page B7



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Software Application Allows Riders to Track Buses Online

By Sophie Braccini



Bus tracker Chris Lohmann

Photo Sophie Braccini

Christoph Lohmann agrees with County Connection: the new Bus Tracker application is a really helpful tool. The online application lets users visualize where buses are on their route and calculates arrival times at whatever bus stop riders are interested in. Lohmann, who takes the bus about four times a week, likes to be able to plan trips with Bus Tracker, but he hopes that the smartphone app will be improved and made more user-friendly in future versions.

Contra Costa County Transportation Agency (CCCTA- County Connection) announced at the end of last year that all buses would be equipped with GPS devices that track their positions in real time. With the help of software called Bus Tracker, users can see where the buses are located on a Google map; the product can also calculate how long it will take a bus to reach a specific stop. Riders create a free account and can get personalized alerts, so they know when to leave their home/office to get to the stop on time.

"I tried this out this morning and it is a really good tool, especially when planning the trip home from the office (in San Francisco) on BART then taking the bus to Moraga," said Lohmann. "The desktop (full browser) version works really well

but I think the best value comes from being able to view arrival times when you are en route on BART."

Finding and using Bus Tracker is easy. First, visit www.cccta.org and click on "Bus Tracker"—on the upper right of the home page. Then choose "bus location map" and click on "find stop" - Lafayette/Moraga/Orinda is Route 6. The map displays where the bus is located on the route and is refreshed every 30 seconds. There is a smartphone version to plan on the go, but Lohmann notes, "I tried using this on my iPhone and it only works so-so."

"If they would develop an app optimized for smartphones to track the bus routes that is something I would use on a daily basis," he says. "The text version is okay and useful but not as user-friendly as the BART app, for example. I use their app every day and it has proven to be very useful. I hope that they go beyond the text version for mobile phones."

In an area like ours where buses are infrequent, this added feature will add peace of mind and more predictability. "I have to say that [Bus Tracker] is a great service and it would be great if [CCCTA] were to add a 9 p.m. bus to their regular daily schedule," concludes Lohmann.

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Complex Medical Technology and Health Care Reform Issues Discussed at LOPC

By Lou Fancher

At the Jan. 4 First Friday Forum lecture in the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church sanctuary, life science start-up expert and innovator Thomas Loarie paraded through the quagmire of advancing medical technology and health care reform.

Acknowledging the complexity of his subject, the Mercator MedSystems, Inc. executive chairman said he had a "gift" for working with young doctors to develop breakthrough tools.

Forty years of experience and 20 medical devices on the market lent credence to his claim. In an industry where only 80 percent of start-up companies survive and a high percentage of those are referred to as "the walking wounded," Thomas described his work as "a roller coaster ride."

New Products

Sparking interest in the approximately 100 people in attendance, Loarie introduced three products his companies are developing: an implantable catheter that delivers medicine directly to the site of disease; an e-system for tracking and managing timely consumption of medicine; and a "lab on a chip" that tests blood and sends the results to a doctor.

"We talk about the cost of healthcare, but little is discussed about the rewards and the benefits," he said, suggesting a more balanced dialogue is needed.

Driving Forces

One of the primary drivers increasing healthcare concerns is an aging population, not just in the United States, but globally. With 20 percent of our GDP invested in health care, our country tops the list and despite government's increasing investment over the last 40 years, trouble spots exist.

A graphic map of the U.S. showed California in a hot yellow shade; indicating a state where high costs result in people forgoing care.

Costs

"Chronic diseases are 70 percent of the health spending as of 2007. And oral health is the number one money grabber," Loarie declared, sounding amazed by his own statistics.

With congestive heart failure, diabetes, depression and a list of long-term illnesses filling out the top of his chart, Loarie said recent legislative action means cuts will be made by

hospitals. The money will not come out of doctors' pockets, he promised, but from reductions or changes in the medical products hospitals purchase.

"This has tremendous implications," he warned.

Off-Shoring

Loarie loaded responsibility for a congested product development pipeline and the flight of med tech companies to foreign countries squarely in the lap of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

"We have transferred a body of knowledge outside of the U.S. because of what is going on in Washington," he claimed.

By forcing drug testing clinical trial processes on an engineering-based industry, Loarie said FDA regulations pushed him to think, "If the US government wants to stop me, I can't do it here. But I have to do it somewhere."

Increasingly, "somewhere" means China, a country that has declared its intention to be the world leader in medicine by 2020, or India, where medical tourism is flourishing and product development is rapid and economical.

"China doesn't need the latest and greatest devices. Heart valves are now off patent and they'll be coming back to the U.S. with lower cost devices in just a few years. India has a hand held ultrasound device created using frugal innovation. These things will find their way into the health care market as good, less expensive solutions.

Back at Home

Hospital mergers, "value committees" instead of doctors or clinicians making decisions about care, concierge services and retail pharmacies expanding into health care clinics

Future First Friday Forum Lectures at LOPC

Dr. Ahmad Ghoreishi will speak about U.S./Iran relations – past, present, and future – at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 1 in the Sanctuary; refreshments begin at 1 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Additional monthly speakers include: Matt Walker, Secrets of the Sleeping Brain (March 1); Victor Gauthier, Update on the New Bay Bridge (April 5); Lynn Joiner, Changing China: A 35 Year Perspective (May 3); and Daniel Kammen, Green Energy = Money (June 7).

All lectures are free and open to the public.



Dr. Ahmad Ghoreishi
Photo provided

Celebrating the Caregivers

Submitted by Siv Ricketts

Like many folks in Lamorinda, Liz Mesenbring and her family are learning to juggle their typical life activities while providing extra care and support for loved ones with special needs. Parkinson's and Alzheimer's have affected two grandmothers who currently live with significant medical and daily life concerns.

While it's challenging, stressful, frustrating, and sometimes even depressing, the Lafayette resident says her family recently coordinated a special gift this past December – arranging Grandma Dori Murdoch's visit with her husband and the rest of her family to the home she had lived in for the past 25 years, but hadn't seen for the past four months since moving to an assisted-living facility in San Mateo.

"Both Grandpa Lex and Grandma Dori loved sitting in their kitchen and sharing a favorite home-cooked meal with their beloved family gathered around them. It took nearly five people to make this possible, making sure medicines were organized, transportation on time, even a neighbor cheering Grandpa on that he could do it!" Mesenbring says.

Since this successful get-together, the family has planned more outings, Mesenbring says. "An aid at the assisted-living facility where she now lives lovingly helps us dress and

ready our grandma for trips home. Since Christmas we've already succeeded with a second trip home."

To make all of this work, changes needed to be made. Despite cherished traditions, it's become Grandpa Lex's job to coordinate the details of the mini-reunions - from transportation and care at home, to menu planning, shopping, and cooking assignments for favorite meals. "All family members have specific responsibilities, in addition to coordinating homecare for a dependent Nana on another branch of the family tree," Mesenbring says.

"Photographs show hugs and smiling faces, yet our everyday experiences are teaching that caring for aging parents, a chronically ill spouse, or even special needs children is a complicated challenge," she adds. "Besides providing quality care, finding ways to enjoy time with each other, or to recharge one's own energy, can sadly be rather difficult, if not isolating."

But Mesenbring says it's not all bad. "We're now comfortable savoring pies that come in cardboard boxes and aren't baked by a grandma," she says. "We're learning to transport wheelchairs, listen and accept stories that are forgotten mid-way through. We toast dishes that sporadically arrive at the table, and we regularly realign our expectations. Time with

are on Loarie's what-to-expect list.

"Our world leadership will erode," he predicted. "Capital venture funds are depressed or have disappeared in the last four years. The 'FDA creep' means I have to spend six million dollars to get ready for an IPO. I could find a cure for cancer, market it, and no one would invest. Health reform is a wild card."

Questions and Answers

Expectedly, audience concerns centered on costs and mortality rates. With increasing costs and lower life expectancies running cross patterns on many of Loarie's graphics, several people asked for an explanation.

"What we spend on the first year and the last six months of life—we do heroic things and no other country does that, so there's a spike there," Loarie said.

Hospitals contribute to the problem, with specialization meaning little flexibility in approach and extreme measures taken where the chance of survival is low.

Chronic diseases, patients not taking medicine on time, and social problems like poverty and gang violence all push mortality rates—and medical bills—to astronomical levels. Litigation has not only increased costs, according to Loarie, but has stalled or eliminated product innovations.

"It's not just the lawsuit, it's the potential for litigation that limits a product," he said.

Ending his presentation, Loarie said closed systems, where doctors are not paid according to the number of procedures they do and services are centrally located, are the best hope for the future of health care delivery.

both grandmothers has become more meaningful than ever, thanks to the helping hands of a few angels in our community, folks who make it possible to carve out moments when we can simply enjoy being together."

Mesenbring says getting help as a caregiver isn't always easy, nor is it easy to admit when you need help. "We're lucky to have support from the folks at the care home, as well as friends who've been open about their own experiences," she says.

Caregivers or anyone else seeking answers to questions about financial and legal considerations, transitions of care, and spiritual and emotional care of the caregiver are invited to an upcoming workshop, Caregiving: A Labor of Love, a Workshop for those Caring for Family Member, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 2 at the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church at 10 Moraga Valley Lane. Keynote speaker, Dr. Karen Taylor, DDiv, wife/caretaker of a husband with early-onset Alzheimer's, and former Burton Valley music teacher, will share her journey to encourage and empower the caregiver from a biblical point of view. Lunch is included and registration is required.

To register, email MVPCCdeacons@gmail.com or for more information, visit www.mvpc.today.org or call (925) 376-4800.

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Orinda Resident Receives UC Berkeley's Top Honor

By Cathy Dausman



"I really don't think I deserved it," said long-time Orinda resident Barclay Simpson, of the Berkeley Medal he was awarded Dec. 13 during a ground-breaking celebration for the new Berkeley Art Museum. Yet among Simpson's many contributions to UC Berkeley was his chairmanship of the campaign to build that very museum.

According to the UC Berkeley website, the Berkeley Medal was established in 1981 as the university's top honor to be bestowed on individuals

"of exceptionally distinguished achievements."

Simpson admitted he was at first bewildered by the reception given in his honor, but added it was kind of fun to see the list of those who had received the medal before him, including what he wryly calls his "rather distinguished predecessors."

The owner and founder of Simpson Strong-Tie, who turns 92 in May, is as much known for his philanthropy as for his company.

"In everything he does, Barc has a positive effect on the lives around him," UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau said when presenting Simpson with the medal.

Friend Ellen Dale called Simpson's philanthropic work "legendary" and said both Simpson and his wife are "a local treasure." In addition to supporting the Berkeley Art Museum with print donations which included a work by Whistler, Simpson and his wife, Sharon, have a close involvement with the Cal library, the University Press, the Haas School of Business and the UC Foundation, where Simpson is still on its board of directors. The new

Simpson Student Athlete High Performance Center on the Berkeley campus is named after him.

Simpson spent a dozen years on the Bay Area Rapid Transit board of directors and raves about results from those mentored by Girls, Inc. in Oakland. Even the family trust name (Simpson PSB Fund) reflects his philosophy of "putting something back."

"Life is good," said Simpson. It's nice to know the faithful donor has gotten something back in return.

A list of previous Berkley Medal recipients can be found online at: http://awards.berkeley.edu/pdf/Berkeley_Medal.pdf.

Barclay Simpson, of Orinda, was the 45th recipient of the Berkeley Medal. His award was presented by UC Berkeley Chancellor Robert Birgeneau during the Dec.13 ground-breaking ceremony for the new Berkeley Art Museum. Photo Cathy Dausman

Three Communities, One Book

Curl up with, and then share, Dave Eggers' "A Hologram for the King"

By Laurie Snyder

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LAMORINDA READS

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Evening with Dave Eggers poster: <http://guides.ccclib.org/lamorindareads> Courtesy Contra Costa Library

Now entering its sixth year, Lamorinda Reads is already being described as one of the area's can't miss events this winter. Planners of the beloved Three Communities, One Book bonding fest have created a slate of special events designed to appeal to those who enjoy being left musing long after they have closed the covers of their well-worn tomes.

"A Hologram for the King" by Dave Eggers has been selected as the book for Lamorindans to read, share and debate with family, friends and neighbors. Copies are currently being given away free of charge through the Contra Costa Library's facilities in Orinda, Moraga, and Lafayette. Related special events will include a screening of short films, book discussion groups, a memoir writing workshop, and lectures.

Named by the New York Times as one of 2012's top ten books, Holo-

gram is sure to strike a chord with everyone from business professionals to well-traveled locals. Eggers draws readers in to his Saudi Arabian setting to explore the everyday life of a troubled businessman – illuminating the universal losses of love and livelihood, conflicts between cultures, and the human capacity for persistence in the face of failure.

In his New York Times commentary, fellow author Pico Iyer described this National Book Award finalist as "beautifully shaped" and "a clear, supremely readable parable of America in the global economy."

The culmination of the celebration – an evening with the author – will be held at Lafayette's Veterans Memorial Hall at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28. Get there early; this free program is likely to be standing room only. For more information, visit: <http://guides.ccclib.org/lamorindareads>.

Lamorinda Reads! 2013:

Wholpin Short Films Screening (adults 18+), Feb. 5, 6 p.m., Moraga Library.

"A Hologram for the King" Book Discussions: Feb. 7, 10 a.m. and Feb. 21, 7 p.m., Orinda Library; Feb. 21, 6 p.m., Moraga Library.

Lecture: 826 Valencia. Learn about the nationwide non-profit network helping students 6 to 18 improve their literacy and writing skills Feb. 7, 7 p.m., Lafayette Library.

Telling Your Story – Memoir Writing Workshop (adults, 18+): Feb. 19, 1 p.m., Orinda Library.

An Evening with Dave Eggers: Feb. 28, 7 p.m., Lafayette Veterans Memorial Hall.

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

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At the core, post-hospital or post-acute care is designed to improve your transition back to the community. As a post-acute patient, you no longer need the acute care setting of the hospital which includes around-the-clock physicians, surgery, emergency and ICU services, but still need a high level of clinical and rehabilitation care to hasten your recuperation. This may include skilled nursing, rehabilitation, dietary management, social services and discharge planning. All of your care is directed by your physician, and our team will be in regular contact with you, your family and your physician(s).

What you can expect are state-of-the art facilities with the most advanced clinical and therapeutic techniques. Our treatment plans are designed to maximize independent functioning and improve physical and psychological well being to help you transition back to your life. You can expect to be treated with respect and dignity, and to experience your recovery along side other patients with similar recovery needs.

Admission to a post-acute rehab center is coordinated between the hospital and the rehab center. Your insurance is verified, medications and treatments are ordered, and transportation is coordinated. I encourage patients and families to take the time to tour a few post-acute rehab centers prior to surgery or, in the case of an unexpected hospitalization, prior to discharge from the hospital. Once you visit our two Walnut Creek rehab centers, you'll see how we are different from the traditional "nursing home".

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Talented Teen Musicians Among Best in State



Acalanes High School junior Spenser Tejada and senior John Kirkland were the only two students from Lamorinda to be selected from over 1,700 applications to join this year's California All-State Honor Band. Tejada has been playing the French horn for eight years. Kirkland plays the clarinet. Director of Instrumental Music Norman Dea calls them both "outstanding musicians." There are also 15 Acalanes students who play for the Contra Costa County Honor Band. They are the largest group of students representing one school at this level. Interested band fans are welcome to attend the Contra Costa County Honor Band's free performance at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 2 in the Acalanes Theater. *C. Tyson*

Spenser Tejada and John Kirkland
Photo Cathy Tyson

TEEN SCENE

One Generation to Another

By Konnie Guo

Besides academics and sports, high school students often appear to be worry free. However, teens have views on important issues, and one of them is improving the care for the elderly. Once an older person succumbs to a disease like Alzheimer's or Parkinson's, he or she is dependent on others for care and medical treatment.

Lamorinda is fortunate to offer a variety of options accommodating the needs of senior citizens. The Orinda Senior Village, the Stratford at Countrywood in Lafayette, Aegis Living, and Moraga Royale in Moraga are all unique facilities providing excellent medical, emotional, and social care to their inhabitants. Other smaller services like the Lamorinda Adult Respite Center and Comforcare Senior Services in Orinda aid seniors preferring a more private lifestyle. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there were 10,582 residents in Lamorinda aged 65 and older, making up about 18 percent of the total population of 57,552.

Margot Mai is a member of the Orinda Juniorettes, a group of teenage girls who perform various acts of community service. Around Halloween, the Juniorettes delivered pumpkins to the elderly at Orinda Senior Village. Mai says, "They were really excited to see young people who cared, and were willing to connect with us by telling stories."

Orinda resident Marisa Chow is part of the student chapter in the Contra Costa Performing Arts Society. Along with other young musicians, Chow frequently performs at senior homes

around the Bay Area. "The audience claps enthusiastically when we perform. Their faces light up and many enjoy sharing music-related stories."

Madeleine Becker, a sophomore, has a personal reason to help elders. Her own grandfather worked at a senior home. "Just hearing all the different stories, histories, and accomplishments they have to share is such a rewarding experience."

Teens I know care a great deal about the elderly, whether these individuals are grandparents, a family friend, or strangers. Anyone can make a difference simply by visiting a local senior home. It is the responsibility of our generation to offer community care and friendly camaraderie to our golden seniors.

Konnie Guo is currently a sophomore at Miramonte High School in Orinda. She is an avid reader, and during her spare time, enjoys playing the piano and doing volunteer work.



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

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

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Andy's "Quarky" Apple Cake

By Susie Iventosch



Photo Susie Iventosch

As it turns out, our publisher, Andy Scheck, is quite a fantastic cook. He has taken to making his mom Anneliese's recipes, which come directly from their native Germany.

"Sometimes Andy makes apple cake for our staff meetings—served warm with fresh whipped cream if we've been really good," said Lamorinda Weekly editor Lee Borrowman. "The smell of warm apples and vanilla as you walk through the front door is simply heavenly!"

This cake is a favorite of the Lamorinda editorial team and is made with a somewhat unusual type of soft German cheese called "quark." This is a fresh, un-aged cheese, and is really more characteristic of yogurt or sour cream than the types of cheese we think of here in the U.S. According to Scheck it is not that easy to find here in the states, however I had a very easy time of it, since Andy pointed me in the direction of Whole Foods, which

carries it regularly in the dairy department!

In Germany, quark is often used in combination with fruit and the resulting dessert is called Fruchtequark (fruit quark), but is also used in dips and cheesecakes, or mixed with potatoes as filling for peirogi (or dumplings) in Poland. This cheese has a plethora of names, different in every country, from twarog in Poland to tophen in Austria and Gvina Levana in Israel.

Scheck's cake is a three-part cake with a pastry crust, a layer of freshly sliced apples, and a quark-custard filling, served with a dollop of freshly whipped cream. The recipe calls for Pink Lady or Jonathan apples, and I could not find either in the market, so I used four different apples—Granny Smith, Fuji, Jonagold and Gala. This was fun, arranging these slices so each piece had some of each! Andy uses Dr. Oetker's Organics vanilla pudding mix, also available at Whole Foods, but I used Jell-O brand, which did not work as well.

One mistake I made was to pat the crust just on the bottom of the spring form pan. Scheck says it should be not only on the bottom, but also pressed partway up the sides as well. My crust was a little bit too dry to form into a ball, and Scheck says that when he has that problem, he just cuts in a little bit more butter until the dough can be formed into a ball. We served it warm, but it can also be refrigerated and served chilled. Have it your way!

RECIPE

INGREDIENTS

Cake Crust

- 2 cups pastry flour
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- Pinch salt
- 1 stick butter, cut into small pieces (you may need an extra half stick of butter)
- 1 egg

Apples

- 3-4 Jonathan or Pink Lady apples, peeled, cored and sliced into thin wedges

Filling

- 2 eggs, separated
- 16 ounces Quark (available at Whole Foods)
- 2 (4-ounce each) vanilla pudding packets, the cook and serve variety, not instant
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup milk

DIRECTIONS

Cake Crust

Place flour in a large bowl with sugar and salt. Cut butter into flour using a pastry cutter or finger tips until crumbly. Make a well in the center of the flour mixture and place egg. Mix egg into dough with fork or hands until it forms a dough and then roll into a ball. Cover it and refrigerate for about 30 minutes.

Grease a spring form pan, and pat the dough out on the bottom and sides of pan to form a thin crust.

Arrange apple wedges over crust and set aside until filling is ready.

Filling

Separate egg yolks and egg whites and place into two different bowls. Using electric beaters, beat egg whites until stiff peaks form. Set aside. Next, beat egg yolks with sugar and add quark, pudding mix, sugar and milk. Stir well. Carefully fold in egg whites. Pour batter over apples. Bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes, or until filling is set and cake edges are just beginning to brown. Cover cake with foil and continue to bake if the filling is not quite done, once the top is browned. Serve warm, chilled or at room temperature with a dollop of whipped cream on each slice.



Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. **These recipe is available on our web site** www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at 925-377-0977.



Embrace Your Dark Side at the Moraga Library

By Sophie Braccini



Image provided

Not everyone knows that county librarian Barbara Flynn is a film buff and that she sometimes likes to share her passion with library patrons. On the afternoon of Wednesday, Jan. 23, she is inviting enthusiasts of memorable, stylish, crime dramas to view "Force of Evil," the first in a series of three free film noir at the Moraga Library.

"I'm a real fan of black and white movies," said Flynn. "This type of cinematography focuses the attention. Colors attract the eyes all over, while black and white, with its very careful use of dark, light and shadows, creates a tension that's particularly fit for the 'noir'

ambiance." Flynn, who's very knowledgeable about movies from the '40s and '50s, thinks that the period was a pinnacle for many American actors. "'In Force of Evil,' John Garfield is at his best. He is truly one of the best noir actors."

The 1948 Abraham Polonsky movie was well received by the critics at the time. Bosley Crowther, then film critic for The New York Times, wrote: "But for all its unpleasant nature, it must be said that this film is a dynamic crime-and-punishment drama, brilliantly and broadly realized. Out of material and ideas that have been worked over time after time, so that they've

long since become stale and hackneyed, it gathers suspense and dread, a genuine feeling of the bleakness of crime and a terrible sense of doom. And it catches in eloquent tatters of on-the-wing dialogue moving intimations of the pathos of hopeful lives gone wrong." Adding to the legend of the film was the fact that Polonsky was blacklisted in 1951 after refusing to testify before the House Un-American Activities Committee.

The screening starts at 2 p.m. and is free and open to the public. There will be time for discussion following the screening. The film series continues Wednesday, Feb. 6, with "On Dangerous Ground" and concludes Wednesday, Feb. 20, with "DOA."

"We chose Moraga because we think we can find an audience there," said Flynn. She added that she expects people to come from all over the county. "We've put flyers in all our branches," she said. "We'll see how these afternoon presentations go, and see if there is an interest, we'll add more in the evening." Pre-registration is not required for the "Embrace Your Dark Side" film series.

For more information, visit cclib.org or call (925) 376-6852, ext. 200. The Moraga Library is located at 1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga.

"Changing the World 101"

... continued from page B3

"If they came to Moraga, what would you do?" he asked. "You'd call the cops, the military, security forces." Without those protections, Connell said micro-lending was an instant, easy first step towards making a difference.

"In much of the developing world, 25 bucks is a lot of money. It's enough to start a business," he said.

Encouraging everyone to work with reputable, reliable agencies and organizations, especially when first embarking on global service, Connell said

Kiva.org was a well-run, flexible micro-lending organization.

Questions from the audience followed up on his advice to blend passion and business-savvy marketing into a clear, personal directive.

"We don't know what happens when we die," he said. "What we know is that we are here now. It's obvious: the thing to do is to lead your life with passion, with confidence. Go out and improve the quality of life on earth."

"Inspired" Speakers Series Continues Through January at SMC

Kaya Oakes, "Unlikely Inspiration"

Tuesday, Jan. 22 at 7 p.m., Soda Activity Center

Author of *Slanted and Enchanted: The Evolution of Indie Culture*, the poetry collection *Telegraph and Radical Reinvention: An Unlikely Return to the Catholic Church*, Oakes is also co-founder of *Kitchen Sink*, winner of the Utne Independent Press Award for Best New Magazine and teaches at the University of California, Berkeley.

Lisa Kristine, "Shining a Light on Modern-Day Slavery"

Thursday, Jan. 31 at 7 p.m., Soda Activity Center

Acclaimed humanitarian photographer, Kristine spent a year traveling the world to document modern-day slavery – into the heart of broiling brick kilns, down rickety mine shafts, and into the hidden lairs of sex slavery. Her recent book, *Slavery*, has received global attention. She will share the stories behind her images - and how she bore witness to horrible abuses and to astonishing glimpses of the indomitable human spirit. All programs are free and open to the public.

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ART

The Moraga Art Gallery announces a new show entitled "The Unbearable Lightness of Seeing," highlighting the photography of Dave E Dondero and Erik Wilson, featuring the unique combination of Dondero's hyper-realistic California landscapes and Wilson's thought-provoking and often ironic urban scenes. Moraga Art Gallery is a collective of 14 established, local artists and artisans and is open to the public from noon to 5 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center, 522 Center St, Moraga. For info, call (925) 376-5407.

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.orindaartsociety.org/community_library.

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

Saint Mary's College Museum of Art exhibitions - Carnival; In Search of the Source: the Nile and Beyond by Lockwood de Forest; Ryan Reynolds: Landscape Assembled; Keith and the California Alps: paintings from the 1870s, 80s, and 90s -- open Feb. 2 through April 14, Wednesday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Saint Mary's College, 1928 Saint Mary's Rd., Moraga. Cost: \$5 for adults; free for kids K-12. For more info, call (925) 631-4379 or visit www.stmarys-ca.edu/museum.

MUSIC

Class Act Big Band dance. Big Band is a 17-piece big band and the dance includes swing, waltz, and fox trot from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 17 at Saint Mary's College Soda Center, 1928 St. Mary's Rd., Moraga. For info, call (925) 631-8015 or visit cabigband.com.

Swing Thing, six-piece combo with two fantastic singers. This is an upcoming dance from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 23 at Saint Mary's College, St. Mary's Rd., Moraga. For info, call (925) 631-8015 or visit swingthingjazz.com.

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.

Big Band Ball Room Dance and show at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 8, The New Rheem Theatre, 350 Park Street, Moraga. Optional dance lessons, free with your ticket to the dance, start at 7 p.m. and the Rossmoor Big band begins playing at 8 p.m. The cocktail bar opens at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are just \$10 at the door or at the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. For reservations: (925) 284-7404.

Senior Services Piano Jazz concert at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 15 in the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Enjoy songs from the Great American Songbook with tunes from composers such as Gershwin, A. Jobim, Duke Ellington and Dave Brubeck, as interpreted by members of CCPAS. Refreshments provided by Aegis of Moraga Assisted Living and Memory Care, and Nightingale Home Care. Please call Lafayette Senior Services to reserve your spot at (925) 284-5050. Cost: \$3 members; \$5 non-members.

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.companyballet.org or call (925) 708-0752.

Join County Librarian and film noir buff Barbara Flynn for Force of Evil, 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. (see story page B7)

Come see the 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, a musical comedy about six young people in the throes of puberty vying for the spelling championship of a lifetime, from Jan. 25 through Feb. 10. There will be an opening night reception at 8 p.m. Jan. 25 at the DVC Theater, 321 Golf Club Rd., Pleasant Hill. For info, call (925) 685-1230 ext. 2337.

Petty Theft, the ultimate Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers tribute band makes a triumphant return to Lafayette's Town Hall Theatre in a benefit performance at 8 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 26. Doors open at 7 p.m. Ticket prices range from \$10 (kids) to \$30, and can be purchased at www.TownHallTheatre.com.

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.

LECTURE & LITERATURE

"A Hologram for the King" by Dave Eggers. Free copies of "Hologram for the King" will be available to the public at any Lamorinda library, which began Monday, Jan. 14. (See story page B5)

The Stanford Women's Club of the East Bay presents a booklover's dream ... the 38th Annual Books on Review, which features four distinguished Stanford-affiliated authors, showcasing the best of recent fiction and nonfiction from 9:15 a.m. to noon Thursday, Jan. 24 at the Shadelands Arts Center, 111 N. Wiget Ln., Walnut Creek. Tickets: \$35. For more info, call (510) 530-5859 or visit alumni.stanford.edu/goto/event10819.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

Catholic Schools Week Mass and Open House. St. Perpetua School will be celebrating Catholic Schools Week. This is a great opportunity to see what St. Perpetua has to offer and what its students have been learning! This event will begin with Mass and Open House at 9:30 a.m., or you can learn what it means to be a junior high student at noon Sunday, Jan. 27. Kindergarten parent information night is scheduled at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 30, and the junior high Science Fair is scheduled at 6 p.m. Jan. 31 at St. Perpetua School, 3445 Hamlin Rd., Lafayette. For more info, call (925) 284-1640.

Anxiety in School what parents and teachers should know. Dr. Michael Tompkins will describe the nature of anxiety in youth at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 30 at the Lafayette library, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. For more info, visit www.orindapois.org.

East Bay Eclipse Soccer Club Tryouts. Eclipse is holding tryouts for its U9-U11 teams Feb. 2-3 for its U12-U14 teams, Feb. 9-10, and U8 and U15+ tryouts will be March 2-3 at Campolindo High School, 300 Moraga Rd., Moraga. For more info, visit eastbayeclipse.com/home/tryouts.

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.

826 Valencia - Meet the CEO of 826 National. 826 National is a network of nonprofit organizations dedicated to helping students, ages 6-18, with their literacy and writing skills. This event will be at 7 p.m. on Feb. 7 at the Lafayette Library located on 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd in Lafayette. For more information please call (925) 385-2280 or visit <http://guides.ccclib.org>.

Unlocking Secrets to Winning Pinewood Derby Workshop. Boy Scout Troop 233 of Lamorinda has invited Coach Allen to conduct a workshop to share his secrets to winning Pinewood Derby competitions. The workshop is at 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9 at the Holy Shepherd Church, 433 Moraga Way, Orinda. Cub Scouts who build their cars prior to the workshop will be able to test them on a racetrack. For more information please call (925) 876-2477.

Youth Ink 2013. The Orinda Junior Women's Club (Orinda Juniors) annual creative writing contest open to all sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students who live or attend school in Orinda. Submissions must be post-marked by Friday, Feb. 15 in order to be considered for an award. Details at www.orindajuniors.org.

OTHER

Orinda Rotary will host its first ever community-wide "Dick Heggie Peace Symposium" in honor of Orinda's first mayor, Dick Heggie today. The luncheon features speaker George Breslauer, who will discuss "Is Putin's Authoritarian Regime Sustainable?" from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante, Orinda. Cost: \$25. For info or to register please call (925) 254-1321 or visit orindachamber.org/events.htm. (See story page A7)

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. See more information at 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 Wednesday nights, 6:30 to 9 p.m. through March 27 in the Maggie Mae Lounge at Lafayette United Methodist Church, 955 Moraga Rd. By teaching positive behavioral strategies, parents will gain tools and strategies to support their child in home and community settings. For info or to register please call (925) 788-0451 or email Robin Hauge at robinhaugclinic@gmail.com.

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.

Mardi Gras Party, 6 to 10 p.m. Friday, Feb. 1, Soda Center, St. Mary's College. Cost: \$40 per person and includes dinner and entertainment. Proceeds from the event benefit the financial aid scholarship program at Saint Mary's College. Make checks payable to Saint Mary's College Guild and mail to Jeffrey Lynn Dunne by Jan. 29 at 101 Quintas Lane, Moraga, CA 94556. For info, call Billie Jones at (925) 254-3645.

... continued on next page

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Not to be missed

OTHER ...continued

Tax-Aide and Earn It Keep It Save It. This is a free tax preparation service. The tax preparation service begins the first week in February and continues until April 15. Tax-Aide and EKS provide free tax preparation for individuals of all ages. For more info, call (505) 699-5506 or visit www.earnitkeepitsaveit.org.

Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church Taize' service at 7 p.m. on the last Thursday of the month. In the candle-lit Sanctuary, the quiet songs, silence, and scripture with no sermon invite you to be still. For info, call (925) 798-7107.

Gather at the Table: A Healing Discussion about Slavery, presented by Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center from 2 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 19 at the Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek. Suggested donation: \$12; \$10 members; \$5 for students. For more info, call (925) 933-7850 or visit www.mtdpc.org.

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.

Will Your Kids' Faith Stick? This event will be at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 24 at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church, 10 Moraga Valley Ln., Moraga. Registration is required. For info, visit www.mvpctoday.org.

Crab Feed and Dance from 6 to 11 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 2, Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga. Music provided by popular DJ so bring your appetites and dancing shoes. Dinner and Dance Tickets: \$40; Dance only, \$10. For non-crab lovers, you may order chicken in advance. For tickets and reservations call (925) 672-6799.

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.

McDonnell Nursery will present a free Winter Rose Pruning Workshop at 10 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 26 at 196 Moraga Way, Orinda. Rejuvenate your rose bushes and encourage beautiful new canes to produce the best blooms. The workshops are held in a covered outdoor area so dress warmly. Please call (925)254-3713 or email info@mcdonnellnursery.com to reserve a seat.

Meet top of the line vendors, architects and design firms at Lamorinda's Home Expo '13, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 27 at the Veterans Memorial Building, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. LamorindaWeb.com and TheHomeMag.com are partnering with one another for this year's event, which is for homeowners in every stage of the updating and/or remodeling process. Free. www.lamorindaweekly.com.

The Moraga Women's Society January meeting will feature Dec Vance and Cynthia Nolan, owners of Care-free Moves. They will discuss downsizing and using the 4 box method, what to keep/sell/donate/ or toss at 10 a.m. Monday, Jan. 28 at the Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St.,

Moraga. For more info, call Roberta Klapproth at (925) 376-0708.

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.

Caregiving: A Labor of Love, a Workshop for those Caring for Family Members, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Feb. 2 at the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church, 10 Moraga Valley Ln., Moraga. Lunch is included. For more info, visit www.mvpctoday.org.

Wholpin Short Films Screening at 6 p.m. on Feb. 5 at the Moraga Library located on 1500 St. Mary's Rd., Moraga. For more info, call (925) 376-6852 or visit <http://guides.cclib.org>.

Soroptimist International Annual Crab Feed and Silent Auction, 5:30 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 9, Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Tickets: \$45. For tickets and information contact Toni Pera (925) 283-2279, Terry Enns (925) 285-4693, or email siof24.680@gmail.com.

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.

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 jd-hall@mac.com.

CLUBS

The Moraga Garden Club will hold their 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.

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.

Montelindo Garden Club Meeting will discuss Gardens of Israel at 9 a.m. Friday, Feb. 15 at the Orinda Community Church, 10 Irwin Way, Orinda. For more info, call (925) 254-3906.

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

MOVIE REVIEW

'Zero Dark Thirty'

By Derek Zemrak



Photo courtesy Columbia Pictures

"Zero Dark Thirty" is one of the most controversial and highly anticipated films from San Carlos native Kathryn Bigelow, who is the first female to win an Oscar for best director ("The Hurt Locker"). "Zero Dark Thirty" stars Oscar-nominated actress Jessica Chastain ("The Help") as CIA agent, Maya, assigned to track down America's most wanted individual, Osama Bin Laden. The film chronicles a decade-long hunt for the al-Qaeda leader after the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on the United States. It is controversial be-

cause of the classified information detailed in the movie. How did Oscar winner, producer and writer Mark Boal ("The Hurt Locker") and Bigelow receive so much classified information? They will probably be addressing the United States Congress on this issue.

"Zero Dark Thirty" is an amazing film that will keep you on the edge of your seat. The movie is graphic, but as with "The Hurt Locker," the scenes are displayed on the screen with realism, superior editing and excellent cinematography. This movie is not for younger view-

ers! It is rated R for several reasons including torture scenes, violence, and strong language.

"Zero Dark Thirty" was nominated for five Oscars including Best Picture, Best Screenplay, Best Sound Editing, Best Editing and Best Actress - Chastain. It is astonishing that Bigelow did not receive a Best Director nomination. Will "Zero Dark Thirty" win the Oscar for best picture? No. Should it? Yes! The film is long with a total running time of 2 hours and 37 minutes.

Three historical movies are nominated this year for Best Picture at the Oscars - "Zero Dark Thirty," "Lincoln" and "Argo." I hope this is not how Americans are receiving their history lessons.

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.

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Bursting With Ideas and Creativity, Here Comes The New Art Room

By Sophie Braccini

The talented artist who took over The Art Room at 50 Lafayette Circle (across from Chow), Carrie Klein, has the desire and creative energy to offer an array of art classes and collaborative working opportunities using a wide variety of media for all ages and avenues of life.

"When Gigi (Voris) had to sell The Art Room to move north and proposed it to me, I hesitated," remembers Klein. "I have been an art teacher, an artist, but never a business

person. But then I thought about all I could do with it."

Klein has a real passion for teaching. She wants her students to enjoy expressing their inner voice, whatever their ability level and learning style. She says that art is about the process. "Art has its own language," she says, "and I feel that when a child or an adult is able to be enriched by that process, if they want to stretch it further and be more technical, then they will seek that. But it is important to

let them be experimental and exploring."

She thinks that sometimes in classes students are afraid to make mistakes, but if they are allowed to go with the process and not worry about making a perfect scene and really enjoy what's happening, then they start taking risks. "I can come up and give an example, but I try to give only a small one and then stop, so they create their own voice."

Klein honors her students' way of developing. "You have to read where the students are, let them try different approaches, so they find what will allow them to progress," she says.

As an artist, Klein was trained at the California College of the Arts in Oakland where she studied photography, sculpture, welding and glass. She incorporated glass into sculpture, weaving and mixing it with metal. She has been teaching for 15 years.

Students at The Art Studio range in age from 4 to 80. Klein wants to take what already exists in different directions. She'd like to add "messy art" for preschoolers, for example. The teen studio is very successful, and there is an adult studio offered on Wednesday nights. But Klein would like to add more evening adult classes, such as visiting artist workshops.

"People love hands-on classes with resident artists," she says. Klein wants to incorporate digital photogra-



Carrie Klein and Gigi Voris

Photo Andy Schreck

phy as art, using it as mixed media; she also wants to add 'claymation' (an animation process using clay figures) and classes for short movies, "something the teens are asking for," she says.

Another of Klein's projects is to start a class for special needs children. "My brother John works with special needs kids in San Francisco; we are collaborating on designing that project together," she says. She wants to be able to seek grants or financial aid so she can offer classes to people without much money, and would also like to develop opportunities for local artists.

"Since I've taken over, many artists have come in wanting to know

where the other artists are on this side of the tunnel because they all want to be together." Her dream is to add an annex or studio to The Art Room for glass and the steel works, and maybe large ceramics, creating a place for collaborative work. "We are creating an avenue for art here, also with music (Lamorinda Music is close by)," she says. "It exists in San Francisco and the other side of the tunnel, but not as much here."

Visit The Art Room website at www.theart-room.com to find new class listings or to sign up for updates.

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

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business briefs

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Eileen Alford motivates a group of clients on a frosty Moraga morning next to Si Si Caffè. Photo Sophie Braccini

Eileen Alford opened a new personal training studio Jan. 14 in Moraga, near Si Si Caffè on Country Club Drive. The Moraga mother of three is a certified trainer who's worked many years in that field, for other clubs and for individual clients, and decided it was time to have her own place. "There was a niche for this kind of place in Moraga," she says, "something centrally located, convenient and friendly, where people can come for individual training or group classes and that does not require a membership." Alford teaches personal training and some of the classes; she is also partnering with other professionals for specific classes such as yoga. Her highlight classes are Tabata, high-impact interval training that involves 20 seconds of quick intense movements followed by 10 seconds of rest – an excellent way to improve cardio and strength, according to Alford – Body Sculpt that blends pilates and barre work, a boot camp, and a TRX/cycle combination class. Classes start at 5:30 a.m. for those who want to train before work, the last group classes start at 6 p.m., and the gym closes at 8 p.m. Her clients range in age from 30 to over 70.

Barbacoa Adds Standard Fare to Menu

2 Theatre Square, #30, Orinda
(925) 254-1183

barbacoaorinda.com

Barbacoa, the new Mexican restaurant that opened at Theatre Square last year, started with a very innovative menu for Lamorinda. Centered around authentic Mexican cuisine and techniques, it did not offer what many Californians equate with Mexican food. Recently, restaurant owners Michael and Victor Ivry decided to add standard "Mexican" fare like quesadillas, burritos, enchiladas and fajitas to the menu. Patrons can still find Barbacoa's authentic food on the menu under "Mexican Specialties." The duo also introduced Littles and Middles menus for kids and teens.

Buckley Joins Coldwell Banker's Orinda Office

5 Moraga Way, Orinda
(925) 253-4600

Kirsten Buckley has joined Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage as a sales associate in its Orinda office. "Kirsten is bright, energetic and works tremendously hard to meet and exceed the expectations of homebuyers and sellers," said Valerie Cook-Watkins, manager of the company's Orinda office. Prior to joining Coldwell Banker, Buckley worked as a marketing coordinator for the Elena Hood Real Estate Group. Buckley is an active member of the Moraga community and has served on many boards, including Moraga Education Foundation, Camino Pablo PTA and the Campolindo High School Sports Boosters. Buckley may be reached directly at (510) 612-6173 and via e-mail at Kirsten@Orinda.com.

Home Expo

The second annual Home Expo is scheduled for Sunday, Jan. 27 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Veterans Memorial Building, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. The event is free and open to the public. For information, visit www.lamorindaweekly.com/homeexpo.com.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

During the holiday season the Chamber and the Try Lafayette First committee encouraged residents to shop locally and take a chance at winning cash prizes. "Many of our neighbors participated by spending at least \$150 at three different kinds of businesses," said Chamber's Executive Director Jay Lifson. "They turned in their receipts that came from over 175 different local merchants. Congratulations to our winners!" Kathy Korpell was the winner and received a \$500 visa card to be used in Lafayette. Over the holiday season, Korpell shopped at Open Sesame, McCaulou's, Clocks Etc., Tulip, Bedazzled, Wine Thieves, Sharp Bicycle, Hank and Frank Bicycles, Papillon, Storyteller, Way Side Inn Thrift Shop, Trader Joe's, Elmwood Stationers, Artisan Bistro, Pizza Antica, Amarin Thai, Postino and Chow. Lea Mason won second prize and a \$250 card, Rebecca Ayverdi took third place and left with a \$100 card. "Shopping local supports the culture of a vibrant downtown filled with a wide variety of unique businesses and boutiques," added Lifson. "It creates local jobs, keeps our tax-base strong by circulating money in our town versus sending it elsewhere, supports businesses that generously donate to local schools and non-profits, and reduces the carbon footprint."

Moraga

Congratulations to Bill Snider, owner of Moraga Hardware and Lumber, the newly-elected Business Person of the Year. A celebratory dinner will be held in February.

General membership meeting at the Hacienda at 7:30 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 26, starting with breakfast in the Mosaic Room. Meeting starts at 8 a.m. and will feature Assemblyperson Joan Buchanan. Buchanan will also meet with interested residents at 10 a.m. that day at Terzetto, by reservation only. For reservations, contact Assemblymember.Buchanan@assembly.ca.gov.

Orinda

Orinda In-Home Business Owners Reception
The first Orinda In-Home Business Owners Reception will be held from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Feb. 5 at Citibank, 37 Orinda Way in Orinda. "This is the first time we are focusing on business people who work from their home," said Sue Breedlove, former Chamber president. "It is a new year and we want to involve different kinds of people, getting to know them, understand what they need and hear their ideas about moving businesses forward in Orinda." The Chamber is partnering with Rotary for outreach and with Citibank to host the meeting. Breedlove said the hardest part was identifying the business owners; a license is not required in Orinda, but the Chamber managed to put together an invitation list of 75 people. Anyone who fits the category of in-home business owner is invited to join this free meeting. "I hope everyone will get the opportunity to introduce themselves and give their 'elevator speech,'" said Breedlove. "There will be nibbles and drinks. We will have a good time."

The Orinda Chamber elected a new president, Sylvia Jorgensen, Financial Advisor with the Hurd Jorgensen Group/Merrill Lynch Wealth Management.

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

LAMORINDA SPORTS

SMC Clutch in Final Seconds; Beat the Zags Gaels undefeated in WCC

By Simon Tryzna



Junior guard Jackie Nared led the Gaels with 17 points and nine rebounds in the win. Photos Tod Fierner

After navigating a difficult non-conference slate and earning a 9-3 record, the Gaels opened up conference play with two huge road victories over Loyola Marymount and San Francisco to improve to 11-3 on the season. Their reward for two tough road matchups was a home date with rival Gonzaga (12-5), who entered the game undefeated in conference play.

The Gaels stepped up to the challenge and continued their winning ways, improving to 3-0 in conference play. Junior forward Danielle Mauldin hit the game-tying and go-ahead free throws with 18.8 seconds remaining and junior guard Jackie Nared put the game away with two late free-throws to give Saint Mary's a 54-51 win.

"I am so happy we pulled it off," said Mauldin. "I just did not want to lose to Gonzaga. I was going to do anything to pull off the game."

Mauldin and Nared led the way with a combined 29 points and 28 rebounds.

"It was a battle," said Nared. "We worked hard. We talked about how we wanted to come out with a lot of energy."

The Gaels used that energy to build a 29-24 lead at halftime.

But the energy seemed to disappear as the second half opened and the Zags used a 10-0 run to give themselves a five point lead. A three pointer with 8:01 left gave the visitors their largest lead of the game at 46-38. Then the Gaels' energy returned.

"We started to pick it up when we had work to do," said Nared.

Senior guard Kate Gaze hit a three and Mauldin made a pair of free throws to cut the lead to within three. After both teams traded buckets, sophomore forward Carli Rosenthal hit a pair of free throws to make it a one point game, 47-48.

With the Gaels down 48-51, Gaze hit a jump shot to trim the deficit to one. Saint Mary's had two looks to score the go-ahead basket, but missed both shots.

However, with 18.8 seconds left, Mauldin was fouled after grabbing a key offensive rebound. To the delight of the home crowd, she made both of her free throws to give the Gaels a 52-51 lead.

"We constantly work on free throws," said head coach Paul Thomas after the game. "We shoot pressure free throws every single day and it has paid off in the last couple of

days."

With time left remaining, Gonzaga was able to draw up a play and got a good look at a go-ahead basket. They missed the shot and Nared got the rebound. She was immediately fouled and proceeded to make her two free throws to give the Gaels the win.

"It was obviously very exciting to get the win," said Thomas. "I think our kids feel really, really good about it."

The Gaels host USD (2-2 in WCC) on Jan. 17 at 7 p.m. and Pepperdine (1-2 in WCC) on Jan. 19 at 2 p.m.



Junior forward Danielle Mauldin tied a career-high, notching 17 rebounds.

Miramonte and Acalanes Hit the Mat

Submitted by Kristen Corell



Sophomore Sam Field works to pin his Acalanes opponent. Photo Kristen Corell
Miramonte wrestling traveled to take on local rival Acalanes on Jan. 10. Miramonte came away with a 42-30 win in the dual-meet.

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Lady Mats Dominate DFAL Play

By Simon Tryzna



Carly Gill #13

After posting a 31-2 record last season and advancing to the state championship game, the Miramonte Matadors have reloaded and are once again proving themselves the team to beat. The Mats are 14-1 overall and 3-0 in DFAL play.

In preseason play, the Mats were the runner-up in the Nike Tournament of Champions in Phoenix and took

home the championship at the Bay Area's West Coast Jamboree. They were named fifth best team by Cal-Hi Sports.

"There are a lot of good teams ahead of us, and a lot of good teams behind us," said Miramonte's head coach Kelly Sopak on the ranking.

With the high ranking come high expectations and the Mats did not dis-

appoint as they dismantled the visiting Knights of Las Lomas 90-20 in their league opener Jan. 7. Two days later, the Mats traveled to Acalanes and had no problem with the host Dons, winning 81-20.

Led by senior point guard Carly Gill, Miramonte used a barrage of three pointers and stifling defense to race out to a 20-0 lead that would extend to 50-8 at half-time.

Knowing that any team can be upset any night, and keeping in mind that No. 25 in the country Cardonnet was upset by Monte Vista just the night before, Sopak wanted to make a statement.

"This is a league game," said Sopak. "The kids just come in and they know it's one game at a time and they do a really good job of that. It doesn't mean anything if you are a favorite. It's high school basketball."

After a competitive third quarter, Miramonte outscored Acalanes 15-2 to take home the 81-20 win.

The Dons are missing Molly Martin, a player who coach Chris Russell described as a "walking double-double." Martin is out for the season with a knee injury.

"We've had some injury issues as well as some self-inflicted things that have kept us from not quite playing

our best basketball during the preseason," said Russell. "I thought we played a really soft schedule and should have won a minimum of ten games heading into league instead of being 7-7."

Despite the blowout loss, Russell found this to be a good lesson for his team. "This game is just to make us tougher and better for games that we should win," he explained. "I think we should challenge everyone else just fine."

Miramonte took on Campolindo Jan. 11. The Cougars played a tough preseason schedule as well and provided the toughest competition the Mats have faced in league play this season. While the Mats used their stifling full-court press to cause Campo turnovers, they were plagued by poor shooting, which allowed Campolindo to hang in the game.

However, whenever the Cougars got a basket and some momentum, the Mats quickly pushed the ball up court and scored a basket of their own. Freshman guard Keanna Delos Santos led the way for the Mats, who led 42-21 at the half and wound up winning the game, 79-48.

Despite the loss, Campolindo coach Elgin Leslie was proud of the way his team played and strongly be-



Keanna Delos Santos #11

lieves his team has what it takes to finish close to the top of the league standings.

"We have the goal of improving with each game, and I think we have done that," said Leslie. "Every game presents a tough challenge, so we must keep improving to keep pace with the teams in our league."

The next rivalry game is on Jan. 22 when Campolindo hosts Acalanes at 7 p.m.

Cougars Remain Undefeated

By Marissa Harnett



Julia Reshke #23 had a hat trick in the 5-1 win over Acalanes. Photo Andy Scheck

The New Year marks the midway point in the high school soccer season. January also brings Lamorinda rivals back to the turf for the second round of games. The Acalanes girls hosted undefeated Campolindo on Jan. 11. Miramonte takes on Campo Jan. 18 and then hosts Acalanes on Jan. 25.

Current standings place Campo at the top with a 6-0-1 league record and 8-0-2 overall. Acalanes sits at the bot-

tom of DFAL with 1-5-1, but overall the Lady Dons boast a 6-6-2 record. Miramonte is in the middle with 2-4-1 and 3-5-1 overall.

However, records are often not a true reflection of the level of play. "We have had some tough matches where we have played well and created more opportunities than our opponent, but suffered a close loss or tie," Acalanes head coach Tom Ginocchio commented.

Despite Acalanes and Campo occupying opposite ends of the standings, Friday night's re-match promised to be competitive. In their first face-off in December, Acalanes handed Campo their only league tie this season. Both coaches recognize that the competition is strong and games hinge on converting scoring opportunities into actual results. "On any given day, anyone can give you a battle...every game has the possibility of not going your way," Campolindo's head coach Ernesto Silva explained.

The Cougars came out of the gate strong on Friday. Just one minute into the game, Campo had an early break-away to score with a low shot to the right corner. Ten minutes later, junior Julia Reshke duplicated the first goal as part of her eventual hat trick for the night.

Acalanes had some good chances to score, but they could not penetrate the Cougar defense.

Toward the end of the half Campo's goalkeeper, senior Sophie Leksan, left her net to take a free kick at goal in an attempt to notch one more for the Cougars. The attempt was blocked, giving Acalanes a chance at an empty net, but Campo raced back to defend. The half ended with Campo up, 3-0.

After the break, the girls came

back fighting to create an opening to score. Half way through, Acalanes' patience paid off. Senior Becca Bostwick snuck the ball along the right side of the net to cut the lead 1-3. However, Campo came back and scored two more to end the game 5-1.

Ginocchio was disappointed with the loss. "It was a tough result, giving up that early goal really was not the tone I wanted to start the game," he said.

Still, Ginocchio believes in his players. "We have a solid group of girls...we have the ability to be very good, just have to keep working."

Silva credits Campo's success to how quickly the players have come together. "This team is one of the most cohesive teams I've had in the 11-12 years I've been coaching," he said. "The talent is high and we have many great players."

On Jan. 18, Miramonte will have a chance to break Campo's six-game winning streak. Coach Mohamed Mohamed, back after a two-year hiatus, will attempt to lead the Lady Mats to victory. Miramonte held Campo to a tight 2-0 result in their first match, but will need to play at a high level to stop the Cougars.



Annie Loose #6

Miramonte Splits Rivalry Series

By Michael Sakoda



Kiran Shastri #21 Photo Kevin Nguyen



Matt McCue #45 Photo Andy Scheck

Boys' basketball DFAL play began last week with two rivalry games for the Lamorinda schools. Acalanes (6-10) played host to Miramonte (8-8) on Jan. 9 and then on Friday, Jan. 11, Miramonte traveled to take on Campo (11-4).

The Mats split the rivalry series. They earned the 61-47 win against the Dons, but dropped their match-up against the Cougars, 54-66.

Prior to the matchup, Acalanes head coach Darrell Hirashima said his team has struggled this year. "The guys are still learning how to execute under pressure," he commented. "We need to be able to run our offense, play hard-nosed defense, and that hasn't always happened."

Another factor in the Dons' struggle is that junior center Buster Souza has been the focus of most defenses throughout the preseason. "He's always going against two, sometimes three guys," Hirashima explained.

The match-up against Miramonte was no exception.

"Acalanes has a really nice center in Buster Souza, and we played a team defense against him," Miramonte head coach Drew McDonald noted after the game.

"This was a big win for us," said McDonald. "...we had good performances from a number of our guys...across the board we had a nice team effort."

Miramonte traveled to take on Campo just two days later.

The Mats controlled through much of the first half, scoring six unanswered points to start the game, and led 17-10 after the first quarter. Through the second quarter, the teams traded baskets, getting 10 points each from Campo's sophomore guard Matt O'Reilly (18 total), and Mats' senior forward Kiran Shastri (19 total).

With just under a minute to play in the half, Cougar senior Matt McCue drew a charge forcing Shastri to the bench with his third foul. A few plays later, McCue scored off a Jack Evans steal, cutting the Miramonte lead to two.

At the half, the Cougars trailed 30-26. "We didn't give up our composure, and we stayed with what we do," said Campolindo head coach Matt Watson.

Campo opened the second half on a 13-0 run. Miramonte's subsequent 6-0 run was silenced by a three from O'Reilly.

The Cougars led 47-39 heading into the fourth. Miramonte returned to their first half execution about midway through the quarter, and cut the Campo lead to six with under a minute to play, but the Cougars held on, beating the Mats 66-54.

"This group has struggled with patience all year," McDonald said of Campo's second half burst. "(Campo) picked up their pace...our shot selection got worse, and the tempo got away from us."

"We needed to be fundamentally sound," said Watson after the game. "I gave them an earful at halftime, and they responded."

With 10 games to go in the season, all three

teams are looking good. Acalanes notched its sixth win Friday against Dougherty Valley, Campo's tough preseason seems to be paying dividends, and Miramonte is working Kiran Shastri back into the rotation. He missed the last month with tendonitis in his knee.

Rivalry games resume on Jan. 22 when Acalanes faces Campolindo at 5:30 p.m.



Buster Souza #1 Photo Kevin Nguyen

Lamorinda Rugby Celebrates 32 years

Submitted by Doug Pearson



Photo Karen Drinkwater

Lamorinda Rugby celebrated its 32nd year by holding its Opening Club Day at Wilder Park on Jan. 6.

Around 250 players from six years old to 18 years old participated in the event. As part of the Club Day

tradition, the athletes practiced together, took team and club photos, watched an exhibition match played by their coaches, enjoyed BBQ hot dogs and earned prizes in the rugby carnival. Lamorinda's youth season starts Jan. 13 in Pleasanton.

Lamorinda U11s Finish Second in State Cup

Submitted by Matt Hansen



Back row, from left: Shane Nelson, Kyle Jasper, Kai DiGrande, Vincent Bianchina, Jack Muren, Nicolas Bamont, Coach Roberto Zambrano; middle row: Jack Daugherty, Kellen Clancy; front row: Mark McCurdy, Brett Donat, Erik Voss, Sean Donovan, Owen Hansen, Luke Miles
Photo Matt Hansen

The Lamorinda U11 boys' soccer team concluded a strong season this month. Coached by Roberto Zambrano, the team compiled a 9-1 record en route to a first place finish in the U11 Boys NorCal Premier league Gold Division. By playing their possession-style soccer, Lamorinda outscored their opponents 39-15 in league play. In State Cup

play, the boys earned a 5-0-1 record before defeating a Stockton soccer club 5-0 in the quarterfinals. In the semifinals, Lamorinda prevailed 3-1 over Burlingame. In the Championship, Lamorinda fought hard but eventually fell 2-0 to Folsom on Dec. 16. The Lamorinda boys ended the season with an impressive 22-7-1 overall record.

Bentley Girls Basketball

Submitted by Clay Kallam



Freshman Sydney Adams is averaging 13.8 ppg. Photo Gary Jung

While the Bentley boys' basketball team has gotten a lot of attention, even that 15-0 start can't overshadow the progress of the girls' basketball team.

With only two seniors and one junior on its roster, the young team is laying a foundation this season.

At 7-8, the girls have already surpassed last year's win total. Bentley capped their preseason with a second-place finish in the Garnet Division of the West Coast Jamboree (WCJ).

Senior Jane Baffi and freshman Sydney Adams, both all-tourney at the WCJ, lead Bentley in scoring. Baffi averages 14.0 ppg and Adams adds 13.8 ppg.

Tina Chapman adds on the defensive end, averaging 8.6 rebounds per game, while blocking on average 2.5 shots per game.

The competition in the Bay Counties League-East will test them the rest of the way, but the improvement in this year's team is clear.

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Q4

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 06 Issue 23 Wednesday, January 16, 2013

The Real Estate Year in Review

...read on page D10

Counter Intelligence: Kitchen Surface Choices Abound

By Cathy Dausman



Moraga resident Suzanne Bare chose black "Galaxy" granite to emphasize her black and white kitchen remodel. "I love how the light reflects," she said.

Photo Cathy Dausman

Kitchen countertops may have disappeared under decorations and piles of dishes as families gathered to celebrate the holidays, but wiping the crumbs away and scrubbing the surfaces clean may have left you pining for a newer surface.

Take your pick!

Durability, heat-resistance, crack resistance, cost, looks and availability all figure into choosing a surface with which to clad your countertops. Original kitchen counters in older Lamorinda houses were likely made of laminate or tile. An inexpensive material, laminate has such a low heat resistance that even a hot beverage could discolor or crack the surface.

Laminate is still available today in ready-made lengths at home improvement stores. Orindan Robin Bradley's kitchen is "vintage 1958," and still has the eight-inch white tiles to prove it. She says it still looks pretty good. "It's basic, durable, and you can scrub it," Bradley says. The downfall with a tile surface is the grout, which over time becomes stained or deteriorates.

... continued on page D4



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Home prices are going up, rents are going up and mortgage rates are at historic lows.

The market has arrived at a rare occasion where sellers and buyers are both happy. Sellers can finally find eager buyers and buyers can take advantage of historically low interest rates.

But what does the future hold? Will demand stay strong? Will prices continue to go up? Will interest rates stay low? I'm just a phone call away if you are interested in more information.

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	13	\$441,000	\$1,482,500
MORAGA	13	\$128,000	\$1,200,000
ORINDA	9	\$740,000	\$1,150,000

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

- 850 Acalanes Road, \$585,000, 2 Bdrms, 2081 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 12-3-12;
Previous Sale: \$26,000, 07-07-70
- 14 Burnt Oak Circle, \$1,482,500, 4 Bdrms, 2869 SqFt, 2008 YrBlt, 12-3-12;
Previous Sale: \$729,000, 09-18-02
- 211 Contessa Court, \$1,070,000, 4 Bdrms, 1952 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 12-11-12;
Previous Sale: \$700,000, 06-12-02
- 3411 Echo Springs Road, \$1,803,000, 4 Bdrms, 3302 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-12-12;
Previous Sale: \$475,000, 03-27-98
- 1650 Foothill Park Circle, \$697,000, 4 Bdrms, 2041 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 12-7-12;
Previous Sale: \$340,000, 06-24-94
- 464 Helen Avenue, \$441,000, 3 Bdrms, 1651 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-3-12;
Previous Sale: \$510,000, 12-08-00
- 8 Moss Lane, \$560,000, 2 Bdrms, 1559 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 12-7-12;
Previous Sale: \$530,000, 02-24-04
- 837 Reliez Station Road, \$670,000, 5 Bdrms, 2481 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 12-3-12;
Previous Sale: \$188,500, 03-20-89
- 357 Shire Oaks Court, \$760,000, 3 Bdrms, 1380 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-14-12;
Previous Sale: \$865,000, 06-06-08
- 590 Silverado Drive, \$950,000, 3 Bdrms, 2012 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 12-3-12;
Previous Sale: \$190,000, 02-18-82
- 15 Surmont Court, \$999,000, 3 Bdrms, 2898 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 12-11-12
- 3278 Sweet Drive, \$995,000, 4 Bdrms, 1798 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-14-12;
Previous Sale: \$515,000, 12-27-01
- 3926 Woodside Court, \$1,350,000, 6 Bdrms, 4082 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 12-10-12;
Previous Sale: \$1,409,000, 02-22-07

MORAGA

- 107 Alta Mesa Court, \$865,000, 3 Bdrms, 1954 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 12-4-12;
Previous Sale: \$343,000, 03-17-95
- 122 Ascot Court #A, \$128,000, 1 Bdrms, 858 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-4-12
- 831 Augusta Drive, \$759,000, 2 Bdrms, 2142 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 12-13-12;
Previous Sale: \$750,000, 08-03-04
- 109 Brookline Street, \$775,000, 2 Bdrms, 1887 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 12-7-12;
Previous Sale: \$410,000, 06-27-97
- 767 Camino Ricardo, \$950,000, 5 Bdrms, 2199 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-11-12;
Previous Sale: \$888,500, 05-01-12

... continued on page D11

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

MORAGA

Ascot Court #2, 94556, Federal Home Loan Mortgage, 12-10-12, \$401,785, 945 sf, 2 bd

LAFAYETTE

Gloria Terrace, 94549, US Bank, 12-03-12, \$1,179,210, 2848 sf, 4 bd



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What to expect in 2013

By Andi Peterson Brown

The 2012 Lamorinda real estate market came in like a lamb and out like a lion, with sales volume up almost 25% and the median sales price up 4.5% as compared to 2011. As the market emerges from its winter hibernation and we gear up for the 2013 spring season, we expect to see this momentum continue. In addition, we can expect:

- **Buyers.** There are buyers. Lots of buyers. Economic uncertainty has created years of pent up demand, and buyers are increasingly coming back into the marketplace.
- **Competition.** There is a high likelihood that buyers will find themselves in multiple offer situations. With low inventory, it is vital for buyers to have all their ducks in a row and write strong, clean offers with preapproval letters attached.
- **Low Interest Rates.** Rates are expected to remain at historical lows, making 2013 a very attractive year to buy. There are new regulations in the 2014 pipeline for jumbo loan qualifications that might make it tougher to qualify. The loan documentation/underwriting process will remain rigorous.
- **Quick Sales.** Sellers of properly priced and marketed homes should expect to see their homes sell quickly. See the three bullet points above!

In addition, I'm happy to talk in more detail about the market if you have further questions.



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Counter Intelligence: Kitchen Surface Choices Abound



"Before" shot of a 1970s era fused acrylic solid surface counter.

Photos Cathy Dausman



The "after" photo of the acrylic fused counter tops



Counter Intelligence: Kitchen Surface Choices Abound

... continued from page D1

When asked to select a new countertop material, Bradley replied "I'd probably choose a new synthetic recycled material." Some homeowners replaced their laminate counters in the 1970s with a fused acrylic solid surface, but realtor Diane Reilly says that even that look is no longer popular. And she adds: "I don't know of anybody doing tile." Granite, says Reilly, has become an affordable go-to material.

Designer Suzanne Warrick agrees because granite is one of the most heat-tolerant counter top materials. Granite is naturally formed under extraordinarily high temperatures combined with very high pressure. A hot pan directly from the oven can be placed on a granite counter without fear of leaving marks or stains. You can't often do that with other natural stones. Marble, soapstone, slate and limestone are all only moderately resistant to heat. Granite costs range from \$15 to \$85 per square foot, depending on availability.

When Suzanne and Lance Bare of Moraga remodeled their kitchen recently, they chose a black and white color scheme and went with black granite counter tops flecked with white. They love how the light reflects off a surface simultaneously dark and light.

Lamorinda Weekly writer Cathy Tyson chose black quartz for her home's shiny new kitchen counters: "We specifically wanted something neutral, since we chose a jazzy illuminated glass backsplash." While Tyson says she likes the new countertops, "they really do show every darn fingerprint and drip."

Marble's polished surface can be etched from citrus or perfume, so clean up spilled lemon juice quickly, and keep the Channel No. 5 off the counter! And if your New Year's Eve champagne landed atop someone's marble counter, you'd better hope the surface had a honed, matte finish rather than a polished high-gloss finish – you're less likely to see nicks, scratches or imperfections with a honed finish.

Recycled glass products, while as durable as granite for counters, offer less heat tolerance. Those who select recycled glass get a sustainable, eco-friendly countertop and the knowledge they are keeping materials out of landfills. The heat resistance of recycled glass largely depends on the types of glass that are used.

Poured concrete countertops are highly heat resistant, and can be custom colored, but concrete, Warrick warns, is guaranteed to crack. It is also a relatively porous material. She says colored concrete was used for countertops in many of the Craftsman houses in Oakland's Rockridge area.

Residential countertops can also be made of stainless steel or copper. Stainless steel is regularly used in commercial kitchens because it cleans well, but its surface scratches fairly easily. Additionally, heat may cause metal counters to discolor, but stains can usually be minimized using special solutions or mild abrasives. Be careful not to allow cold foods to come in contact with warm metal countertops during meal preparation, because metal retains heat so well it could easily promote the growth of harmful bacteria. Butcher block countertops have the same problem, as the wood surfaces can trap and transfer bacteria from raw meat or poultry.

So before investing remodel dollars on a countertop upgrade, do your homework. Talk to contractors, ask your neighbors and friends and decide what's most important in your meal-prep area: durability, heat-resistance, crack resistance, cost, looks and availability. You can't have it all, and once it's installed, you can't take it with you!

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welcomes

Angie Evans Traxinger

as a sales associate

Village Associates is pleased to announce that Angie Traxinger has joined our firm. A licensed Realtor® since 2007, Angie has been working as an assistant to her mother, Joan Evans, for the past 5 years. A lifetime resident of Contra Costa County, born and raised in Moraga, and a teacher in the Lafayette School District for 11 years, Angie has intimate knowledge of the area and brings a wealth of information about its schools and neighborhoods. If you, or someone you know, are thinking of buying or selling a home in the East Bay, you can count on Angie Traxinger's knowledge, experience and commitment to achieve your real estate goals.



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2000 - 2012
93 Moraga Way #103
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Counter Intelligence: Kitchen Surface Choices Abound



Stevenson Construction and Kathleen Burke Interior Design, both in Lafayette, created this black and white kitchen in a Happy Valley home with a designated space for baking, preparing bread and making sandwiches. Areas were delineated using white marble for the island and a section below the window on the back counter. By lowering the marble a quarter inch below the rest of the countertop, the window baking station allows for easy clean-up of crumbs and baking flour.

Photo Stevenson Construction





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The Home Designer Staged For Success

By Brandon Neff



*Beautiful decor, clean surfaces and flowers go a long way toward getting you top dollar for your home.
Photo courtesy Brandon Neff Design*

Once upon a time, there was a magical housing market that lived in a beautiful bubble when all homes sold quickly, and for over asking price. That bubble burst. Now homeowners have to sell the old fashioned way – with effort. Knowing a few "tricks of the trade" can help you stand out from the rest, and capture better offers. Think all you have to do is find a great realtor, check the comps and schedule the open house? Not by a long shot.

According to the Association of Realtors, most buyers decide whether, or not, they're going to put an offer on a listing within the first 30 seconds of seeing the home. Thirty seconds, people! Never has a first impression meant more to your bottom line. Have you done everything you can to ensure a successful sale? Do you know what sets your listing apart from your competition? Do you know enough not to paint all the walls beige? Pay attention.

Long before I became an interior designer, I built a clientele of homeowners who hired me to style their luxury listings for maximum profit. Coaxing buyers to overlook the assets of a particular listing and to overlook its drawbacks was my job. Today, buyers are more discerning than ever, and have the advantage of previewing a larger pool of comparable listings before making a decision. So, before you schedule that open house, read on.

Clean Up Your Act. Nothing turns off a buyer more than a dirty home. When selling a house your job is to make your particular piece of the world stand out and demand attention – in a good way. To that end, starting with the home's curb appeal, take careful note. Sweep the walkway to the front door, replace that old tattered entrance mat, place flowers (real, never fake) in containers by the front entrance, wipe the cobwebs under the eaves, prune those low hanging branches, power wash the chimney brick and stucco, and be sure to wash all the windows – inside and out. Nothing's worse than directing potential buyers to regard the expensive view through dirty windows.

Inside, pay particular attention to the kitchen and bathrooms. Replace that moldy shower curtain, refresh the kitchen sponges and dust everything! And, yes, buyers will look through your drawers and closets, so put away whatever you don't want strangers to see. Lastly, create space in your closets by storing unused clothing elsewhere to give the illusion of abundant storage space. It may sound silly, but it works.

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Don't Take It Personally. When I was a home stager the number one thing I needed to drive into my client's heads was the notion that once you decide to put your house on the market it ceases to be your home – it is now a commodity. And, as such, it becomes a place your buyers must see as their potential new home, and not the place you still live in. So, put away those ancestral photos lining the hallway leading to the bathroom, take down all the pet snapshots and daily affirmations littering the refrigerator door, and banish that black and white family portrait taken at the beach holding court above the fireplace. Buyers don't want to see reminders of another family living in their new home.

Your space should be a welcoming blank slate for buyers to imagine building their new memories, and not living in the shadows of someone else's. Enough said.

Carefully go through your house with a critical eye, and see what needs attention. Trust me, a fresh coat of paint, updated appliances and new bathroom tile go a long way toward getting you top dollar. Don't leave deferred maintenance to chance – fix the small things, so there's no room for your buyer to chip away at your asking price.

Oh, before I forget – skip that beige paint, also known as Swiss Coffee, and choose a pure white in flat finish for all walls and in high gloss for the trims. Beige

puts people to sleep, and you want your buyers wide awake. Finally, please, whatever you do, just say no to those scented candles on the day of your open house – pumpkin spice and everything nice never got the job done.

Brandon Neff is a Bay Area based Interior Designer.

*He can be reached at
BrandonNeffDesign.com or at
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2855 San Benito Dr., Walnut Creek \$610,000 Represented Seller
18 Wandel Drive, Moraga \$688,000 Represented Seller
903 Augusta Drive, Moraga \$765,000 Represented Seller
44 La Salle Drive, Moraga \$790,000 Represented Buyer
34 Campolindo Court, Moraga \$805,000 Represented Seller
740 Upper Pond Court, Lafayette \$875,000 Represented Seller

373 Donald Drive, Moraga \$965,000 Represented Seller
379 Calle La Montana, Moraga \$1,039,000 Represented Seller
1653 Del Monte Way, Moraga \$1,114,000 Represented Buyer
100 Via Copla, Alamo \$1,215,000 Represented Buyer
3969 South Peardale Dr., Lafayette \$1,230,000 Represented Seller
231 La Serena, Alamo \$1,249,000 Represented Buyer

Let us help you with your real estate resolutions in 2013.



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The Real Estate Year in Review

By Conrad Bassett

2012 was another interesting year for residential real estate in Lamorinda, as sales volume and the average sale price was up significantly in Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda.

Homes stayed on the market for a little less time than a year ago and prices rose as supply remained quite low throughout the year.

Also, the Lamorinda communities saw fewer short sales and REOs (bank owned properties). These properties continue to negatively influence other nearby communities on a much larger scale.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported for closings Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2012, 302 single family homes closed in Lafayette versus 245 single-family homes in 2011, 250 in 2010 and 198 in 2009. There were nine sales where the sales prices were not reported to the MLS. For the 293 reported closings, sales prices ranged from \$275,000 to \$2.95 million and the average time on market was 32 days, down from 49 days in 2011, and 53 in 2010. The average sale price was \$1,042,921 versus \$1,040,014 in 2011, \$1,097,749 in 2010 and \$1,045,217 in 2009. The average sales price was 98.6 percent of the final list price in 2012. Of the nine unreported sales prices; all were listed above \$1.39 million and several were above \$2 million so the actual average price in Lafayette would be somewhat higher. All nine of these sold in less than 66 days on the market suggesting sale prices at or near the list price.

In Moraga there were 150 single family closings in 2012 up significantly from the 124 in 2011, 102 in 2010 and 59 in 2009. Prices ranged from \$540,000 to \$3.5 million. The average sale price was \$991,469 up significantly from 2011's \$894,768, the \$927,948 in 2010 and \$961,872 in 2009. The number of days on market in 2012 was 30, down from 40 in 2011 and 44 days in 2010 and the average home sold for 99 percent of its last list price. Seventy-nine of the sales were sold at or above their listing price.

In Orinda the number of single-family closings was 219, a huge jump from the 164 in 2011. In 2010 the figure was 179 while 162 closed in 2009. There were three properties where the sale price was not reported to the MLS. The reported sales

ranged in price from \$320,000 to \$2.74 million with an average price of \$1,068,303, an increase from \$1,021,751 in 2011. In 2010 the average was \$1,060,798. In 2009, it was \$1,029,915. The average market time was 44 days, down from 50 days in 2011 and 62 days in 2010. The average sales price was 96.4 percent of the final list price for the 216 reported sales.

On an average price per square foot basis for reported sales in 2012, Lafayette homes sold for \$431.45, Moraga homes for \$398.99, and Orinda for \$422.68, a modest change from the 2011 figures of \$402.15 per square foot in Lafayette, \$381.61 in Moraga, and \$423.17 in Orinda. In 2010, Lafayette homes sold for \$432 per square foot, Moraga homes for \$385 per square foot and in Orinda it was \$408. In 2009, Lafayette homes sold at \$434 per square foot, Moraga homes sold for \$408 and Orinda was at \$426.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had 14 closings, up from six closings in 2011, nine closings in 2010, and six closings in 2009. Sales in 2012 ranged from \$331,000 to \$600,000; Moraga had 65, down slightly from 67 a year ago and the same as the 65 in 2010. Sales ranged from \$110,000 to \$865,000. This includes attached homes in Moraga Country Club. Orinda had nine, down from the 12 in 2011 but higher than the three each in 2009 and 2010. They sold from \$195,300 to \$790,000. The lowest four were in the complexes on Brookwood Road and the higher ones in Orindawoods.

It should always be noted that there are also a few direct sales that do not go through the MLS and they are not reported here. These include some foreclosures that were sold at the courthouse as well as some sales between private individuals.

As of Dec. 31, there were 52 dwellings under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined, with asking prices of \$269,000 to \$2.75 million. It should be pointed out that there are 17 "Potential Short Sales" that are currently pending. In each case, the anticipated closing date may be several months into the future as the sellers await approval of their particular lender or lenders.

... continued on next page



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A comparison of year-end inventory in the three communities combined versus a year ago shows a phenomenal statistic: there were only 36 properties listed in the three communities combined, less than half of what was available at the end of 2011 when there were 78 available properties. On Dec. 31, 2010 there were 133 that were available. Typically the biggest inventory is in the spring and early summer, however this current number may point to a very interesting year with the combination of qualified buyers vying for such a limited supply. There were only 15 homes on the market in Lafayette at year end while 12 months ago there were 34. On Dec. 31, 2010 there were 55. The current asking prices range from \$490,000 to \$7.75 million. In Moraga, buyers had a year-end selection of only five homes and condos versus 11 at the end of 2011 and 39 at the end of 2010. List prices ranged between \$189,000 and \$3.1 million. In Orinda there were 15, down from 24 a year ago and from 40 in December 2010. Asking prices as of Dec. 31 ranged from \$675,000 to nearly \$5 million.

As has been the recent story, the most active price range is in the more "affordable" price ranges. However, 2012 showed 28 homes sold above \$2 million in Lamorinda, up from 17 that sold above this amount in 2011. In 2010 this number was 42. This compares with 23 that closed in Lamorinda in 2009, 30 in 2008 and 50 in 2007 at \$2 million or above.

Interest rates continue to remain at near historic lows and are attractive to those with down payments of at least 20 percent. Corporations continue to expand and contract and also to relocate families—families who find the Lamorinda area attractive because of outstanding public schools, BART, and the close distance to San Francisco. The minimal amount of new construction helped keep supply and demand within a better balance than a lot of other neighboring communities. That may change somewhat in 2013 as Orinda Grove and Wilder come further online as new construction alternatives in Orinda and condominium and townhome developments are built in Lafayette.

The trend that began in 2011 and continues today is that there were several situations in the three communities where the seller received multiple offers and homes sold for above the list price. This, when coupled with an extremely low supply and a willingness by sellers to be realistic in their pricing, should continue to fuel a very strong market.



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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

...continued from Page D2

MORAGA...continued

802 Crossbrook Drive, \$970,000, 4 Bdrms, 2225 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 12-4-12

190 Cypress Point Way, \$699,000, 2 Bdrms, 1444 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 12-11-12

52 Hardie Drive, \$899,000, 6 Bdrms, 2646 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-14-12; Previous Sale: \$467,500, 08-27-93

4 Miramonte Drive, \$331,000, 3 Bdrms, 1152 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-7-12; Previous Sale: \$425,000, 07-14-06

46 Sarah Lane, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2506 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-10-12

3767 Via Granada, \$875,000, 5 Bdrms, 2848 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 12-10-12; Previous Sale: \$1,249,000, 08-03-06

108 Walford Drive, \$870,000, 4 Bdrms, 1632 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 12-4-12; Previous Sale: \$727,000, 02-07-03

131 Walford Drive, \$1,135,000, 3 Bdrms, 2387 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-12-12; Previous Sale: \$398,000, 08-27-97

ORINDA

26 Camino Don Miguel, \$800,000, 4 Bdrms, 3347 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-10-12

11 Casa Vieja, \$1,075,000, 5 Bdrms, 3490 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 12-11-12

22 Charles Hill Road, \$1,150,000, 3 Bdrms, 2046 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 12-12-12; Previous Sale: \$560,000, 08-23-11

73 La Espiral, \$953,500, 3 Bdrms, 2825 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 12-11-12; Previous Sale: \$580,000, 04-24-98

22 Snowberry Lane, \$910,000, 3 Bdrms, 1943 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-14-12; Previous Sale: \$750,000, 03-13-09

29 Southwaite Court, \$740,000, 4 Bdrms, 2442 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 12-14-12

209 Village Gate Road, \$780,000, 3 Bdrms, 2130 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 12-13-12; Previous Sale: \$325,000, 07-01-88

10 Westover Court, \$911,000, 3 Bdrms, 1933 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-6-12; Previous Sale: \$1,075,000, 10-17-06

2 Whitehall Drive, \$750,000, 3 Bdrms, 1908 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-13-12

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50 Camino Don Miguel

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ORINDA



1 Snowberry Lane

Beautiful updated mid-century 4bd/3.5ba, 3439 sf, on .75 ac park-like setting in premium Sleepy Hollow location. New eat-in kit.w/stainless Viking appliances, granite counters & new hwd flrs; porcelain tile in entry & dining & much more!

Offered at \$1,365,000

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.

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ORINDA



121 La Espiral

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

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MORAGA



3 Peralta Court

Absolutely beautiful single-level home in Sanders Ranch. Eat-in kit. w/ double ovens, gas range, island w/ counter seating & more. Hwd flrs, spacious bedrooms, indoor laundry room & great storage. Level yard w/ slate patio. Cul-de-sac location.

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1690 Reliez Valley Rd.

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LAFAYETTE



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.

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LAFAYETTE



11 Leslyn Lane

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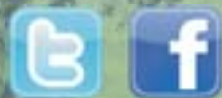
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