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Team Toaster members Mike Morse on roof, David Gerson behind the wheel and Phil Gaffney ready with a fire extinguisher as they pose with their sleek race car. Photo Andy Scheck

Team Toaster Almost Ready to Roll

24 Hours of LeMons race brings out the best in beater cars

By Cathy Tyson

"It's the Burning Man of road racing," said David Gerson, proud Team Toaster member about the annual 24 Hours of LeMons endurance race presented by Car & Driver Magazine at locations across the U.S. Team Toaster will be suiting up for the "Sears Pointless" event

at the Sonoma Raceway March 23-24. The beauty of this race is that it's limited to junkers with a maximum value of \$500 – hence the name, spoofing the more high-brow 24 Hours of LeMans in France.

Gerson, the executive director of Loaves and Fishes

and Lafayette school board member has partnered with four fellow Lafayette dads to form Team Toaster, a group of friends that came together when their kids were at Springhill Elementary School.

... continued on page A14

Quote of the Week:

"I rode back to Buckeye at the end of the day, galloping bareback through the vast pear orchards along the way." Read Letters to the Editor, page A8

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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MOFD Chief Has an Iron in the Fire

Station 43 + Station 16—Bradley will ask MOFD board to approve negotiations with ConFire

By Nick Marnell

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Randall Bradley is in the early stages of pursuing a joint venture with the Contra Costa Fire Protection District to combine MOFD Fire Station 43 with the recently closed ConFire Station 16 on Los Arabis Drive in Lafayette. Bradley is hoping to receive approval to begin formal negotiations from the MOFD board of directors Feb. 6.

"We approached ConFire three years ago," said Bradley, "but they showed no interest in negotiating. Now,

with the closure of their Station 16, it could happen."

MOFD's station 43 was set to undergo major renovations in the near future, but the bidding process has been put on hold while the proposed partnership is explored.

The two stations sit less than two miles apart. Bradley asserted that one station could be built between the two current fire stations. He is evaluating three possible locations—two in Lafayette and one in Orinda.

... continued on page A14

2013 Year of the Snake

Gung Hay Fat Choy! The Year of the Snake arrives in February. The Snake is the sixth sign of the Chinese Zodiac and marks the beginning of the Fire cycle. Representing wealth and wisdom, the Snake is a keen observer and an action-taker. According to the Chinese horoscope, this year's snake is a water snake, reputed to be lucky with all things financial. This could be a year of opportunity for those who stay focused, pay attention to detail, and perform their due diligence.

In Vietnam, the snake is considered to be a symbol of luck and many believe the 2013 Year of the Snake will be a year of peace and prosperity.



Life in Lamorinda B1-B12

School Safety

Are we keeping our kids out of harm's way? Laurie Snyder investigates.



Sports C1-C3

Hoops and More Hoops

From Lamorinda's high schools to SMC, basketball season heats up!



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Lafayette Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Feb. 4, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Arts & Science Discovery Center,
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District
Wednesday, Feb. 6, 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 20, 7:30 p.m.
Del Valle Education Center, 1963
Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek.
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



Land Swap for New EBMUD Pumping Plant

By Cathy Tyson



Proposed pumping plant at the corner of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Mt. Diablo Court

Image provided

The vintage Diablo Vista pumping plant dating from 1954 that serves almost all of Lafayette, pumping approximately 12 million gallons of water per day, is rapidly nearing the end of its lifespan. EBMUD and the City of Lafayette have been working on plans to do a land swap that trades the parcel with the existing aging plant—which, when demolished can eventually become a city-owned parking lot—for a larger vacant parcel on which a new plant can be built. The wrinkle in this equation is the parcels aren't of equal value, although both parties,

wanted to make it an even exchange. The swap is a good deal for both parties. The vacant city-owned right-of-way parcel in front of Blodgett's at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Mt. Diablo Court makes sense for a new plant: it's near existing underground pipes and is easily accessible for construction. The unremarkable shed-like old pumping plant lot, next to the Ace Hardware store also on Mt. Diablo Boulevard is strategically located to help relieve congested parking in the area.

The city and EBMUD had both parcels professionally appraised and agree with their current valuations: the larger site near Blodgett's coming in at \$394,200 while the smaller site has a fair market value of \$226,500. The goal of the land swap is a non-cash exchange, so the price difference called for other items to even out the trade.

Because the parcel the city wants to buy is smaller and worth less, the city will be contracting with EBMUD for additional work, such as relocating a substantial storm drain along with over \$100,000 worth of paving, light-

ing, and landscaping. The bottom line is that both entities pay each other the same amount, making the transaction equivalent.

Design Review Commissioners recently approved plans for the new 1,935 square foot pumping plant that is set back from the corner in front of Blodgett's. Looking a bit like a nondescript garage, it was a challenge to find a balance that seems slightly residential but also utilitarian on a lot with a cemetery next door. A sidewalk will be installed, along with landscaping, a meandering path, an architectural fence, louvers on the windows and gated access for service vehicles.

At the Jan. 14 city council meeting where the land swap agreement was finalized, the biggest concerns were about the construction phase, with both Larry Blodgett and the owner of Minute Man press worried about access for their customers, along with carpet and paper deliveries during the project. They were assured that there will be a lane available in either direction on Mt. Diablo Boulevard during the entire process, and work hours will run from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. to expedite the job.

Proposed Subdivision in Happy Valley

By Cathy Tyson

A rare vacant parcel in Happy Valley is in the preliminary stages of being subdivided into five lots for generous single-family homes while retaining the existing open hillside easement. On the very edge of Lafayette city limits, bordering Orinda, is the 19.2 acre parcel on Happy Valley Road near Sundown Terrace owned by Robin and Chris Leamy.

Back in 2008 there was a settlement agreement entered into that divided the property into three lots, aptly named A, B and C. The Leamys are asking for approval of a subdivision on the 13.7-acre lot B.

The Design Review Commission took a look at the proposed subdivi-

sion earlier this month, and made a motion to recommend approval, however it was concerned about a few issues including tree removal, privacy from the existing neighbors and more.

While it looks like the subdivision will be approved, a final decision is expected at the Feb. 19 Planning Commission meeting; all of the proposed homes will need to go through the Design Review process. In the preliminary conceptual version prepared to make a determination for the subdivision, Alan Page of the Talon Design Group prepared rough footprints to give an idea of the proposed homes. He used a range of home sizes from 4,000 to 6,000 square feet with traditional architecture. Page has in

mind homes similar to the style that he designed for Branagh Development at Hidden Oaks.

Currently there are story poles with orange webbing on the site. Attorney David Bowie came before the Planning Commission Jan. 22 to re-

view the history of the proposed subdivision that dates back to the 1970s starting with a scenic conservation easement along with access improvements a decade later. He joked that his now silver hair was brown when this process started.

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Police Report

Jan. 6 to 19, 2013

Alcohol:

- 1/7 drunk in public 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/9 DUI 100 block Fiesta Ln
- 1/13 DUI Deer Hill @ Pleasant Hill Rd
- Animal:**
- 1/18 cruelty 100 block Lafayette Cir
- Accident:**
- 1/7 hit & run 1200 block El Curtola
- 1/8 fire & amb 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/9 fire & amb 900 block Dewing
- 1/10 prop damage Pleasant Hill Rd @ Rancho View Dr
- prop damage 3300 block Deer Hill Rd
- hit & run 3400 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/11 hit & run 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
- hit & run Brook St @ Moraga Rd
- prop damage Beechwood Dr @ Reliez Station Rd
- hit & run Brook St @ Moraga Rd
- 1/12 hit & run Hwy 24 @ Central Lafayette exit
- 1/13 reckless driv HW 24 @ Pleasant Hill Rd
- 1/14 prop damage Pleasant Hill @ Reliez Valley Rd
- 1/15 hit & run 1st St @ Moraga Bl
- reckless driv Happy Valley Rd @ Rose Ln
- reckless driv Hw 24 @ Oak Hill
- 1/16 hit & run 3300 block Deer Hill Rd

- reckless driv Reliez Valley Rd @ Withers Av
- 1/17 hit & run 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
- prop damage Happy Valley Rd @ Mt Diablo Bl
- minor injuries Florence Dr @ St Mary's Rd
- 1/18 reckless driv Deer Hill @ Pleasant Hill Rd
- Assault:**
- 1/11 battery Moraga Rd @ Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/13 false imprisonment undisclosed location
- Burglary/Theft/Robbery/Forgery:**
- 1/6 auto burglary El Nido Ranch @ Upper Happy Valley
- auto burglary 1000 block Upper Happy Valley Rd
- petty theft 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/7 grand theft 3300 block Mt Diablo Bl
- residential 800 block Acalanes Rd
- petty theft 800 block Avalon Av
- 1/8 stolen veh 3200 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/9 identity 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/10 commercial 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
- forgery 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
- petty theft 100 block Lafayette Cr
- petty theft 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/11 auto burglary 3200 block Mt Diablo Bl
- auto burglary 3200 block Mt Diablo Bl
- identity 3600 block Crescent Dr
- 1/12 prowler 3200 block Burton Ct
- 1/13 identity 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/14 auto 900 block Moraga Rd
- auto 900 block Moraga Rd
- 1/15 fraud 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
- petty theft 1100 block Martino Rd

- shoplifting 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/16 forgery 3300 block Reliez Highland Rd
- 1/17 forgery 1700 block Springbrook Rd
- burglary 100 block Via Magdalena
- 1/17 auto burglary 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
- prowler 200 block Happy Hollow Ct
- identity 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/18 forgery 1000 block Dyer Dr
- petty theft 3300 block Carlyle Ter
- Disturbance:**
- 1/6 fight 100 block Lafayette Cr
- reckless driving Moraga Rd @ Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/8 public nuisance Lucas Dr @ Michael Ln
- harassment 1000 block Oak Hill Rd
- threats 500 block Silverado Dr
- juvenile 1100 block Pleasant Hill Cr
- harassment 3700 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/11 threats 3500 block Moraga Bl
- 1/14 harassment 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/15 harassment 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 1/18 threats 3000 block Camino Diablo
- Missing:**
- 1/15 missing adult 900 block Dewing Ave
- 1/18 missing juvenile 900 block Moraga Rd
- Vandalism:**
- 1/6 3500 block Golden Gate Way
- 1/7 3100 block Sandalwood Ct
- 1/14 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
- 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl

Traffic Stops over the two week period: 147

ConFire Meets Unhappy Lafayette Residents

Station 16 remains closed

By David Killam

In a packed public meeting held Jan. 15 at the Veterans Memorial Building, Contra Costa Fire Protection District Chief Daryl Louder explained to residents and officials why it was necessary to close Fire Station 16 on Los Arabis Drive in Lafayette.

Chief Louder listed several reasons why the station had to close. Among them were: a \$32 million decline in county property tax receipts, which fund the fire district; and the low-volume nature of the station without "community threats," such as pipelines or manufacturing facilities. The ability of other nearby stations to absorb the station's workload and available "good transportation corridors" were two other reasons for the station's closure.

Reaction in the meeting was mixed. One resident wondered if the station could be saved if community volunteers rebuilt it—Louder explained that almost 90 percent of the cost of operating the fire station was in salary and benefits for firefighters.

Another resident wondered about reimbursement for ambulance transport of medical emergencies. Currently the district pays for the cost of ambulance transport and will study ways in which to acquire reimbursement, according to Louder.

One resident wondered if it would be cost effective for Lafayette to merge with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. Lou Ann Teixeira, who sits on the board of directors of the Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCO), responded that the process of doing so would be expensive and time-consuming. LAFCO was established by the California legislature to oversee municipal annexations and special district formations.

Another Lafayette citizen wondered if switching to eight hour shifts for firefighters instead of the current

24-hours-on and 48-hours-off would save any money—

Louder explained that that type of configuration would actually be more expensive.

Louder answered some residents' concerns by explaining that firefighters would be temporarily deployed in densely wooded areas during "red flag" days – which usually happen at the end of summer when conditions are very dry.

Defined benefit compensation for active and retired firefighters has proven to be unaffordable to some communities. ConFire, with approximately 230 employees and 30 retirees, has an unfunded liability of a whopping \$130,737,000 for pensions and health care coverage. New hires since January of this year contribute to their own pension, with a 9 percent contribution from the district. Louder feels that the amount of the liability may decrease when the economy improves and better returns are received on county investments.

"We need to continue to find ways to reduce our personnel costs, which take up close to 90 percent of our budget," said County Supervisor Candace Andersen, who attended the meeting. "Although the pensions of existing firefighters are vested and cannot be modified, that is not the case for new hires. The governor's pension reform has helped, but there is more we will need to do to lower the employee expenses. I would also like to see us expanding our use of volunteers or 'Reserves' to supplement firefighters. Our Deputy Sheriff Reserve program is very successful in this county with volunteer reserves working side by side with professionals to keep our community safe. I'd like to see our Fire Reserves program grow using a similar model."

... continued on page A10



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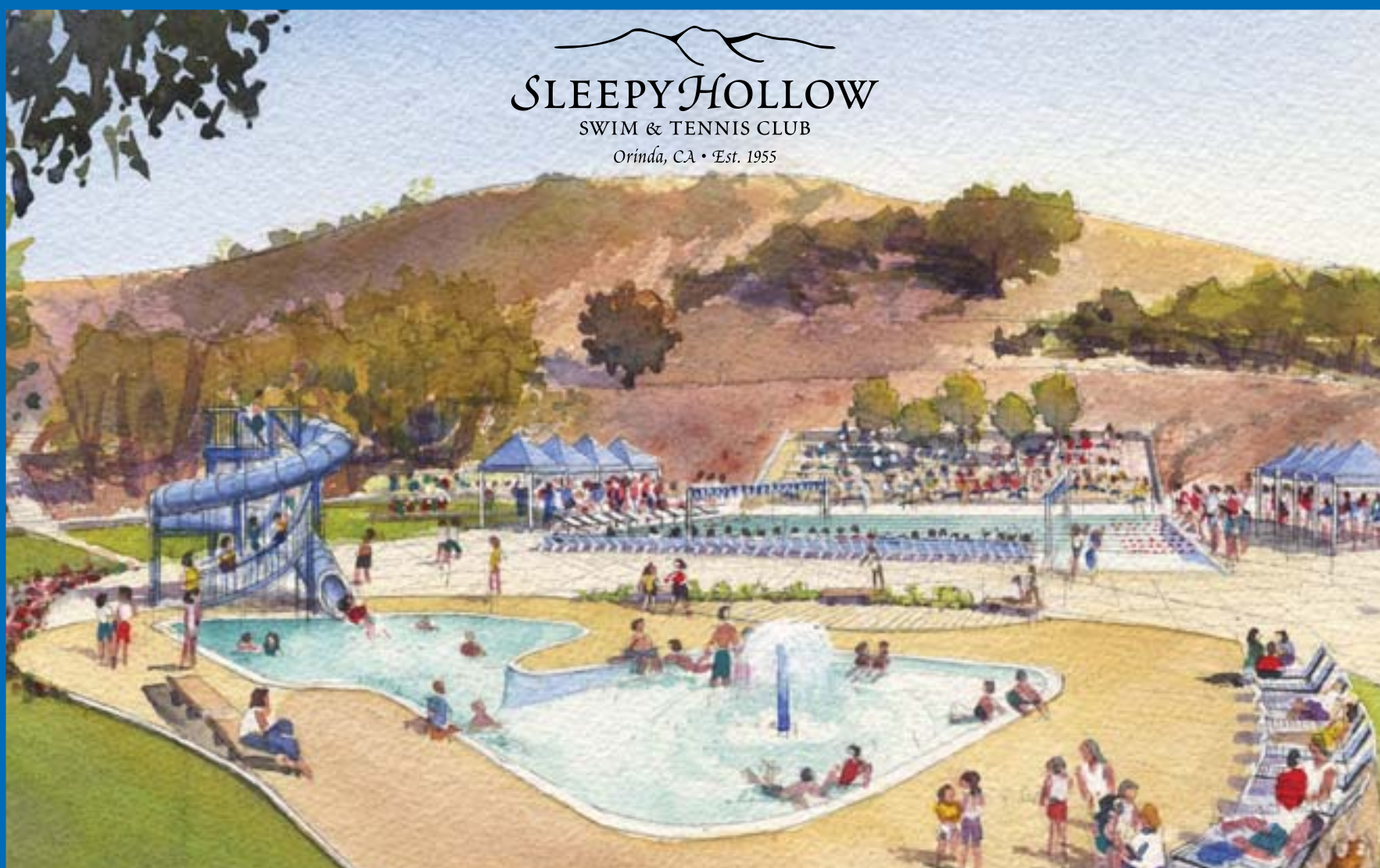
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Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Feb. 13, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, Feb. 4, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

Design Review

Monday, Feb. 11, 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

Pitching in to find victim, 1/21/13 Officers were dispatched to assist Contra Costa County Sheriff's deputies with a dead body lying on one of the hiking trails off of Ridge Crest Road near Canyon. Fire personnel confirmed the person was deceased; the cause of death did not appear to be foul play and will be determined by the coroner.

Car paint scratched, 1/21/13 A Jeep Compass was parked on Ascot Drive around 9 p.m. When the owner went out to the car three days later, he found scratches in the driver's side doors. Estimated damage about \$1,100.

Abandoned car, 1/21/13 An anonymous person reported that there had been a car left unattended for the past six weeks near the intersection of Alta Mesa and Moraga Road. Cops placed a 72-hour notice on the car, no word yet if the owner finally moved it.

Beer boy, 1/21/13 Perhaps celebrating Martin Luther King Day or the school holiday, shortly after midnight, cops came upon a young person under the age of 21 holding a carton filled with beer near an apartment complex on Moraga Road – the mystery youth received a citation.

Loud party complaint, 1/21/13 Cops saw college-age subjects standing in front of the very same apartment on Moraga Road where loud music and voices could be heard. As the police approached the front door – the students ducked inside. Oddly enough, when the police knocked, no one answered, so they mailed the tenant a Town of Moraga loud party ordinance violation citation.

Halloween gear, 1/20/13 Police received a call about what appeared to be a body wrapped in duct tape with hiking boots exposed in the back of a Dodge pick-up truck on Moraga Way. Although the truck left in an unknown direction the reporting person wisely jotted down the license plate number. A check with the DMV found the vehicle registered to a home in Orinda. The homeowner told cops they are big fans of Halloween and the body had been a prop – they also have a fake casket.

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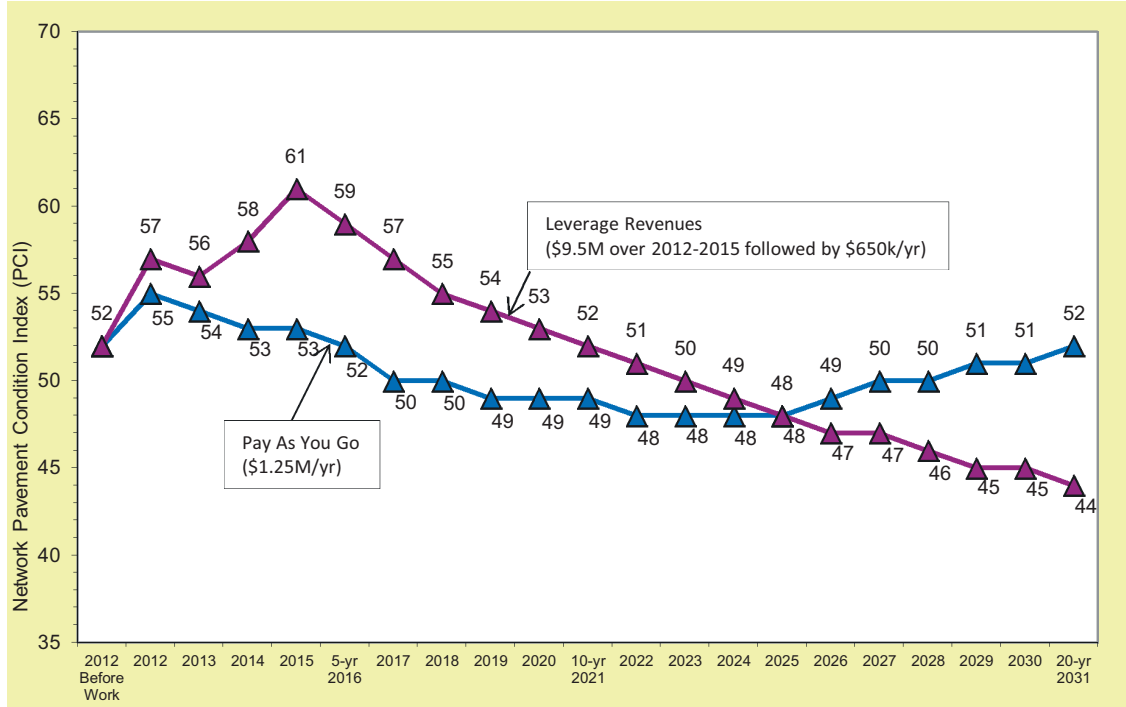
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\$7 Million Plan for Moraga's Roads

By Sophie Braccini



PCI Comparisons of Network (Residential, Collector and Arterials)

Graph provided

The Moraga Town Council plans to launch a significant pavement rehabilitation program for neighborhood streets. To that end, the council decided Jan. 23 to leverage about 50 percent of the revenue stream from the town's new 1 percent sales tax in order to raise \$7 million for the project.

This option was chosen over using the money as it trickles in, a pay-as-you-go alternative that would not have incurred any financial charges for the town but would have only been enough to maintain the roads at current levels without any visible improvements.

From the get-go staff said that the sales tax would be a way to start addressing the road problem, but that more money would be needed in the future. "We said that the sales tax would stop the bleeding, but not solve the problem," said Town Manager Jill Keimach. "By leveraging some of the money, we will show the community

that we can improve the roads dramatically. Once we've proven to residents that we can make a difference, in five to six years, we'll look at other revenue measures or other financing opportunities."

Last fall the maintenance backlog was estimated at \$24 million and Moraga's roads were rated at the bottom of the scale.

There was some initial skepticism on the council about the leveraging mechanism. Vice Mayor Ken Chew asked about the cost of borrowing, and he was given a figure of roughly \$3 million, including an upfront envelope of \$200,000. Chew first indicated that, being financially conservative, he would favor a pay-as-you-go plan, especially since an initial large influx of money did not seem to have a positive impact on the long term.

Council Members Phil Arth and Mike Metcalf disagreed, stating that inflation was bound to come back and

that the dollars to pay the debt would be much less valuable than dollars today. Additionally, Metcalf said that it was not a good idea to disappoint the public by just maintaining the roads at the level they are now. "Pay-as-you-go would not show any improvement over what we have now," he said. "Residents would be disappointed. We need to make some improvement so that people will say, 'that's pretty damn good.'"

Metcalf also said that he believes the City of Orinda, which also passed a sales tax measure in November, was leaning toward a pay-as-you-go plan. Orinda City Council Member Victoria Smith said recently that the city is still in the planning phase, and that the council is likely to take a fairly conservative approach.

Eileen Gallagher, of municipal finance underwriter Stone & Youngberg, explained that California law does not allow municipalities to pledge general funds for borrowing—

instead, the town will use a lease structure.

Gallagher indicated that diverse factors will impact the rate the town receives. Under current conditions Moraga could get a rate of approximately 3.04 percent for a \$7 million loan over 20 years. This would cost \$500,000 per year, which is roughly half of what the tax is estimated to produce.

The sales tax will take effect in April and revenues should reach Moraga in July, so Gallagher estimated that the financing could be done over the summer.

Metcalf asked Public Works Director Edric Kwan what effects residents would see on the roads within three years. "Currently 30 percent of our roads are in good condition, 20 percent are fair, 40 percent are poor and 10 percent are very poor," answered Kwan. "After the 3-year plan we anticipate that 48 percent of the roads will be good, the number of fair roads will stay stable, the number of poor roads will decrease to 13 percent, and the very poor ones will increase to 21 percent." Council members were surprised to hear the latter figure, and Kwan explained that it makes more sense to maintain the better roads because failed ones cost so much more to reconstruct. He added that some of the very poor roads would still be addressed.

Finally, Metcalf and Wykle challenged the assumption that if roads are improved in the short term, they will degrade below current conditions within 20 years if no new funding source is found. "There are ways to maintain roads that are in good condition very inexpensively," said Metcalf. "Our philosophy was to stop the bleeding, make improvements and sustain it as long as we can."

Orinda reporter Laurie Snyder contributed to this article.

No Mid-Year Adjustment for Balanced Budget

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council accepted the mid-year budget report at its Jan. 23 meeting. Administrative Director Stephanie Hom said revenues and expenditures at year-end should meet expectations and keep Moraga in the positive. She did not recommend any adjustments at this time. However, since the most recent report indicates sales tax receipts are running lower than expected, staff will continue to monitor the situation.

Hom estimates that the revenue from property tax, estimated at \$1,646,273, should reach that target

based on actual receipts and mid-December Contra Costa County preliminary property tax settlement data. Her projection shows a \$20,000 shortfall in sales tax. Mayor Dave Trotter asked for additional information on this topic.

"The receipts are consistent with last year's receipts at this time," said Hom. "Staff did not propose any budget adjustments at mid-year but we will monitor the revenue receipts and if we end the year lower than budgeted expectations, I am aware that we can make up the difference with the refund

we received from the county for prior year over-charges in administrative fees."

Sales tax revenue will be even more closely monitored in Moraga this year because the size and stability of this source of revenue will impact Moraga's ability to borrow money against future sales tax revenue.

Other sources of revenue include fees from the Parks and Recreation Department and Planning Department. Due in large part to exceptionally high activity in the Planning Department and a new fee

structure adopted last year, those revenues are at an all time high.

As for expenses, the results are lower than expected and mostly due to staff vacancies. Personnel expense represents 63 percent of the budget; mid-year expense is at 46 percent instead of 50 percent, even with additional costs of overtime for police officers and the hiring of consultants in Public Works and Planning. The hiring of new staff in the second part of the budget cycle should offset the savings. Other expenditures are also on track.

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community. **Send a letter to the editor:** letters@lamorindaweekly.com

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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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¹Based on 6.7% inflation from the utility company. ²Includes all necessary expenses ³Combination of Utility Company and PPA

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Why Doesn't Anyone Want to Work Here?

Town of Moraga plagued by staff shortage

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga's Planning Department is reduced to the director and one assistant, the Town Engineer has no staff, and 15 percent of the Police Department is departing. Town staff is leaner than ever and service levels are being impacted. Is it just a series of unpleasant coincidences or an endemic problem? What are the consequences for those who stay and for resi-

dents? Is it time to lay to rest the old discourse on Moraga's minimum government?

Among the Town Council's top three goals for the year is a review of the General Plan's land use regulation. At the Jan. 23 Town Council meeting, Council Member Phil Arth asked that this be postponed for six months on the grounds that the

planning director does not have the staff to take on another project of this magnitude. Vice Mayor Ken Chew, who offered the same reason for opposing this goal in January, and Council Member Mike Metcalf, who was not a great supporter of revising the plan, concurred.

... continued on page A10

Town Council Recognizes Elite Athletes



Aidan Goltra (middle)

Photos Andy Scheck

Mayor Dave Trotter and the Moraga Town Council recently presented high school athletes with proclamations in recognition of their outstanding performances.

The honorees were Aidan Goltra, a junior on the 2012 Campolindo

High School boys' varsity cross country team and winner of the 2012 North Coast Section Division III Individual Championship; and the Campolindo girls' varsity volleyball team that competed in the CIF Division III State Championship game—



Girls varsity volleyball team

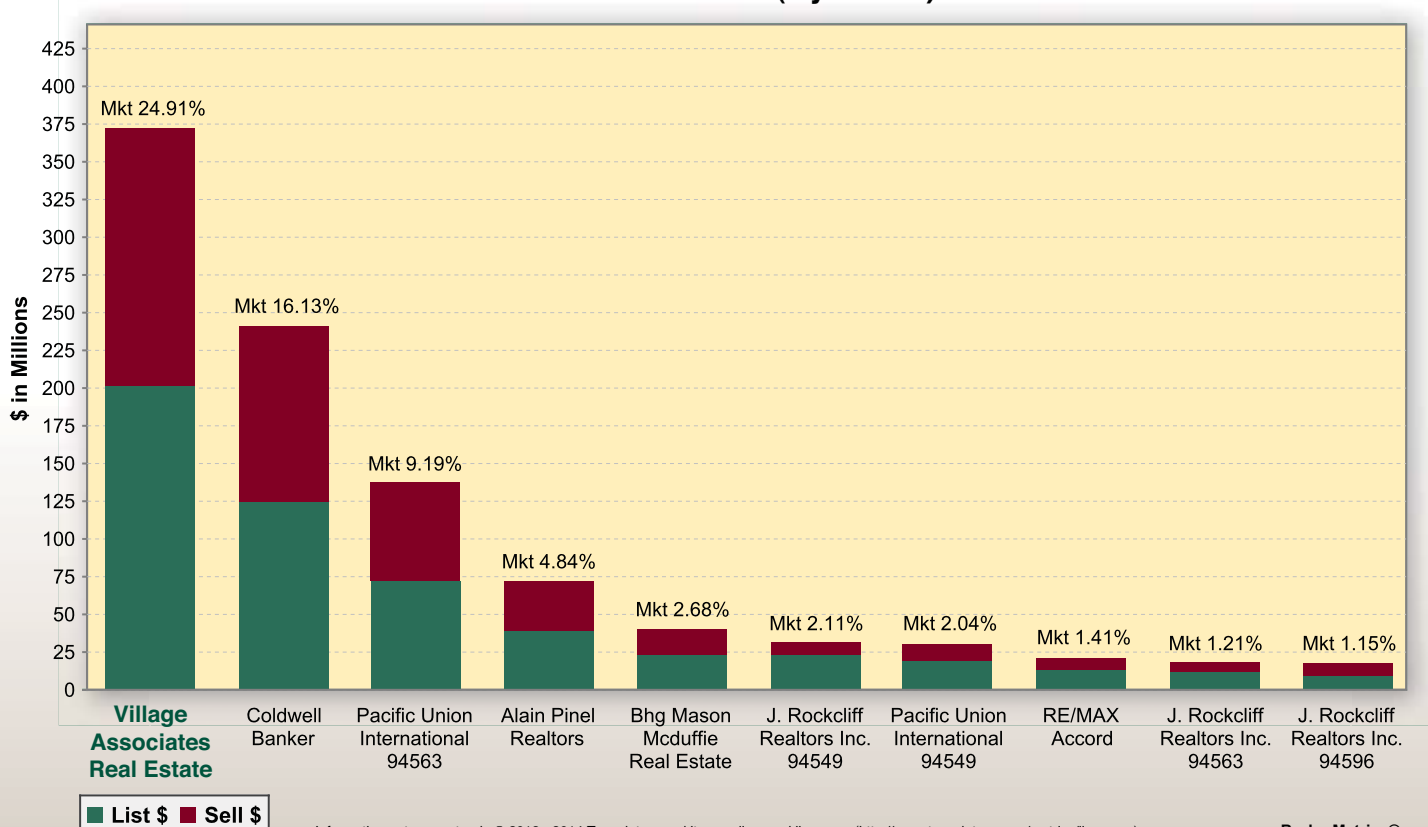
Cassidy Abel, Sophie Seiberth, Healey, Emily Larrick, Natalie Julia Partlow, Kenzie Brown, and Annie Shurtz, Rachel Hua, Maddie Meniktas, Annie Doyle, Kelley Kaylyn Murray, Browning, Lauren Gaskin, Abby Wirth, Kirsten Sibley, Gaby Gryko, S.Braccini

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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Feb. 5, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 26, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, Feb. 13, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
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

Twice buzzed 1/21/13

Having coffee and a smoke sounds like an innocent way to pass the time. Except that in this case, the coffee was stolen from an Orinda grocery store and the smoke was crack cocaine. A 33-year-old man was reported to have stolen packets of coffee worth over \$250 from Safeway. When confronted by a clerk, he dropped one package of coffee and fled on bike. Police found the man with a backpack full of coffee. He admitted stealing it and admitted smoking the illegal substance. He was transported to Martinez Detention Facility where he was booked for commission of commercial burglary and possession of drug paraphernalia.

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Politicians Sling Mud for a Good Cause

Orinda breaks ground on new affordable senior housing program

By Laurie Snyder

Smiling as she looked out at faces “who have worked so hard for so many years” to bring additional affordable housing to the city of Orinda, Mayor Amy Worth kicked off the Orinda Senior Apartments’ ground-breaking Jan. 25. Sixty-seven units will be built on the old library site at 2 Irwin Way by the non-profit Eden Housing, Inc. Once finished, Eden will then manage the facility.

An impressive slate of dignitaries shared memories of milestones achieved, thanking others who made the day possible, including Orindans Woody Karp and Linda Mandolini, Eden’s senior project manager and president.

“I don’t believe there has been anyone more dedicated” to the project, Worth said of fellow Orinda City Council colleague Victoria Smith. “She has the incredible talent of seeing both every detail ... and the big picture.” Beamed Smith, “This journey began 11 years ago today.” She sparked hearty laughter with her recollections, including of Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu’s remarks that



From left: Jonathan Klein, Eartha Newsong, Linda Mandolini, Congressman George Miller, Mayor Amy Worth, Woody Karp, California Assembly Member Joan Buchanan, Council Member Victoria Smith, Steve Dexter, Malcolm Brudigam, Kathleen Hamm.

the site “was too nice to be used for City Hall.” She also thanked resident Eartha Newsong, calling her “the face of senior housing in Orinda.”

“This really is a celebration about

community,” said Congressman George Miller who termed the apartments “a positive asset for this community” and the decision-making “the best of America.” A long time af-

fordable housing champion, Miller talked “fiscal cliff” before advocating for affordable homes, which remain in short supply across the U.S.

... continued on page A10

Orinda Averts Sinkhole Calamity

Complete Tarabrook repair will take time and money

By Laurie Snyder

The holiday season in Orinda became even more bustling than usual for residents when Mother Nature dumped heavy rains in early December, motivating an aging 24-inch corrugated metal pipe (CMP) to give up the ghost at the same time that a Contra Costa Sanitary District (CCCS) sewer line failed on Tarabrook Drive near Evergreen Drive. The end result was an eye-popping sinkhole that prompted the Orinda City Council to declare a State of Emergency.

According to the series of related city staff reports, council members “directed staff to continue pumping storm water flows around the blocked pipe and to proceed with retaining a consulting engineer to design a permanent repair.... This option will protect public health and safety as well as public and private property by allowing storm water to drain safely and efficiently through temporary facilities in the short term while allow-

ing the City the necessary time to design and construct an appropriate long-term solution.”

Chuck Swanson, the city’s director of public works, explained that Orinda’s sinkhole is actually worse than its more famous cousin in Lafayette.

The use of \$45,000 in Urgent Road Repair funds was approved by the council Dec. 7 to cover a temporary fix. Additional tweaks were needed to better manage storm flows and there are now several pumps to convey drainage around the blocked pipe. The city is responsible for operating the pumps, which are set to turn on automatically.

The permanent fix will require much more. A design engineer will be engaged “to evaluate the situation, develop a conceptual plan, prepare hydraulic analyses, make recommendations for replacement/repair, and prepare engineering designs and specifications for construction,”

according to the staff report. On Jan. 15, staff asked the council to approve an additional \$100,000 to cover pumping expenses, including the related equipment rental until June 2013. Those supplementary funds will be drawn from Urgent Road Repair funds and General Fund unrestricted reserves. In addition, council was asked to approve two staff-recommended contracts with firms which will carry out the permanent repairs.

Harrison Engineering Inc. of Pleasant Hill was proposed as the designer of the Tarabrook Drive Stormwater Improvements Project after staff solicited proposals from 10 local engineering firms. Only one other firm – Nichols Consulting Engineers – opted to compete for the project. Harrison was chosen based on the firm’s experience, planned approach to the problem, and ability to perform the services requested.

Lamphier-Gregory, the only firm

to respond after another 10-engineering firm approach by staff for a separate contract, will manage environmental services.

City leaders project that Harrison’s consulting fees will cost \$99,000 plus \$11,880 for oversight and administration by city staff – versus the rejected Nichols’ estimate of \$221,362.15. Lamphier-Gregory’s fees are projected at \$43,813 with a 10 percent contingency fee plus \$4,381 for city oversight. All expenditures will be drawn from the General Fund balance.

Council praised city staff for its handling of the situation, thanking area residents for their kindness with deliveries of hot coffee and food to workers who were subject to miserably cold and wet conditions. Council members also expressed their desire to have repairs completed by fall 2013 before unanimously approving the contracts and funding outlays.

Orinda City Finances Given Clean Bill of Health

Auditors cite Orinda’s desirable location and real estate market stability as strengths

By Laurie Snyder

At the Jan. 15 Orinda City Council meeting, locals learned that independent auditors found “no material weaknesses” with their city government’s internal financial controls. The auditors also noted that the city has “complied with all laws regarding separate funds and all revenue restrictions” in the report prepared by the Cropper Accountancy Corporation at the conclusion of the city’s most recent fiscal year (FY12) which ended June 30, 2012.

Council Member Steve Glazer termed city leaders “pleased about the clean bill of health that we’re getting from our auditors,” explaining that he and Council Member Victoria Smith had spent many hours reviewing the statements with their fellow Audit Review Committee members. The committee also included Cropper staff, Orinda resident Susan Vandergrift, and city personnel.

Smith added that city staff had made a concerted effort to present the

budget document in an easier-to-understand format, and specifically singled out city Finance Director Susan Mahoney for praise.

The auditors, according to the city staff report prepared for the council meeting, expressed the opinion “that the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities, each major fund, and the aggregate remaining fund information of the City of Orinda.”

The report goes on to say that the city “ended the fiscal year with a balanced budget and a healthy General Fund reserve and fund balance.... At the end of the fiscal year, the unassigned fund balance for the General Fund was \$6,338,067.” The General Fund ended the year with a surplus of \$218,384 while city personnel “held expenditures below budget resulting in a favorable variance of \$182,927.”

Major additions to the city’s FY12 capital assets included

\$1,338,285 in upgrades to Moraga Way and the delivery of the Wilder playfields maintenance facility valued at \$397,683, as well as \$964,078 in road paving projects and \$317,281 in drainage facility improvements.

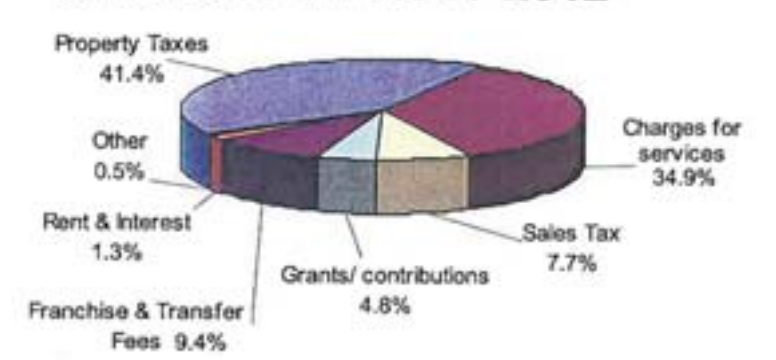
Of further interest, the auditors stated that Orinda’s “desirable location and relatively stable real estate market make it less vulnerable to the effects of an economic downturn. Although the City has had a slight de-

cline in property tax revenue, it has not suffered the significant declines faced by many other cities in Contra Costa County.

“The City’s sales tax revenue increased by 3.7 percent over the prior year which is consistent with the overall increase in sales tax across Contra Costa County and reflects the increased consumer confidence seen throughout the state.”

... continued on next page

Revenues FY 2011-2012



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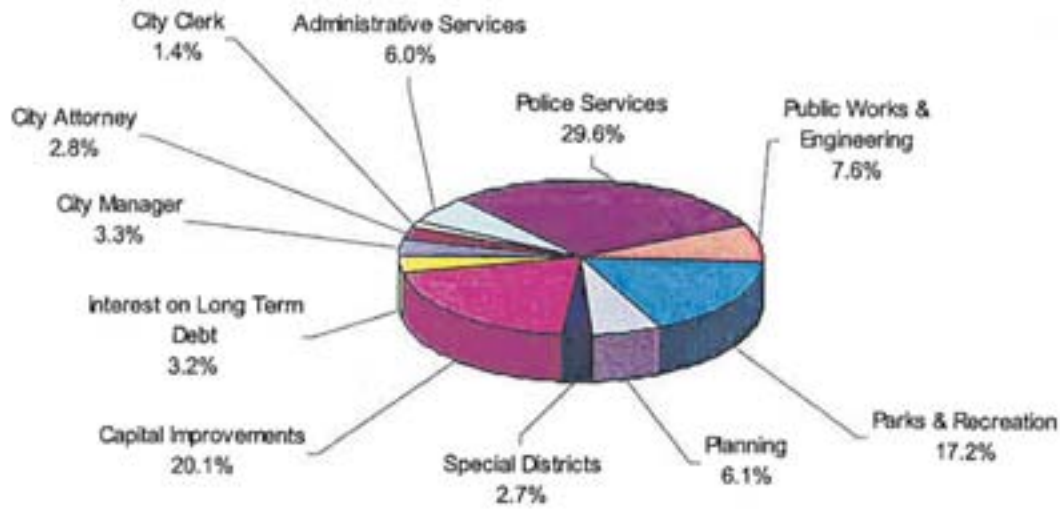


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Orinda City Finances Given Clean Bill of Health

... continued from page A6

Expenditures FY 2011-2012



Citywide Governmental Revenues and Expenditures, Fiscal Year 2011-2012, City of Orinda Annual Financial Statement Report. Courtesy Cropper Accountancy Corporation

While sales taxes play an important role in keeping things humming, property tax assessments continue to be the largest revenue source for the city – even though Orinda only receives approximately 7 percent of property taxes paid by residents, according to the report.

Major expenditures included those for police services, engineering and public works, and parks and recreation, which incorporates facilities maintenance.

The auditors did find one glitch – an issue with the prior fiscal year’s fund balance (for the year ending June

30, 2011), pointing out that “one of the funds did not agree to the auditor’s final reference trial balance at year end.” They also noted, however, that this problem has since been corrected.

Council members unanimously accepted and approved the results of the audit.

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Intero Real Estate Services	4.5%
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Sotheby's International Realty	1.8%
Lyon Real Estate	1.7%

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Company	Market Share
Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage	22.5%
Alain Pinel Realtors	15.1%
Pacific Union International	5.1%
Intero Real Estate Services	4.8%
Sotheby's International Realty	4.7%
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In Memory

William "Bill" Miller

Bill Miller passed away on December 4th after losing a second battle with cancer. He was born on June 28, 1924 in Oakland, CA to Alice Redewill Miller and Edgar Cruger Miller. He was the younger brother of the late Alice Barker Young. Bill spent his childhood splitting time between Berkeley, California and Anthony, Kansas, where his father was President of the Citizens National Bank. Bill graduated from Anthony High School and went on to Kansas State where his studies were interrupted by WW II. He began his service stateside in a clerical position due to his ability to type, and as an accomplished trombonist played with the band that entertained the officers. His service continued overseas in the Engineering Corps, The Black Cats, under General Patton's 3rd Armored Division.

Upon returning from duty, Bill enrolled at University California Berkeley, graduating with an engineering degree, and completed his studies at Hastings College of the law.

His career was in insurance, and he later formed his own adjusting business, Miller & Gilbert, in San Francisco. For the past twenty-seven years he made his home in Tiburon, California with his wife Karen Erickson Miller. He is also survived by his children, Ed Miller of Antioch, Constance Clayburn of Moraga, Alex Miller of Orinda; as well as their spouses, seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren. While living in Orinda, Bill was active in the St. Stephens Choir, and served a term as Scoutmaster of Troop 237. In Marin, he was a past Commodore of The Richardson Bay Yacht Club, and a current member of the Corinthian Yacht Club.

A memorial service is planned for February 10th at 2 pm at the Corinthian Yacht Club in Tiburon, California and friends are welcome to attend.

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Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis.

email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Editor:

As a patron of the Rheem Theater and a volunteer driver for the Spirit Van, I understand both the needs of the aging and disabled, and the theater operator. Here are some thoughts on the current debate about the Rheem theater stair lift.

The ADA is not a black and white regulation and this situation is certainly a grey one. The disabled do have access to the theater, just not to the second floor. And for the wheel chair bound, a stair lift will not provide second floor access. In the ADA case Clint Eastwood took to court and won, it was demonstrated that the disabled did have limited access to the business.

The Rheem Theater stair lift makes no sense from either a safety or business perspective.

From a safety perspective, the second floor of the Rheem Theater is not a place for the disabled. In the case of an emergency (fire, earthquake or something else) on the second floor they are not only at greater risk for themselves, but also for everybody else. For example on airplanes, limited ability passengers are prohibited from sitting in emergency exit rows.

From a business perspective we know that neither the operator nor the building owner can afford a lift. If the business is not economically viable, an investment in a stair lift is like giving a heart transplant to the terminally ill. And, consider the liability. What happens if there is an emergency immediately following the installation of the lift and disabled folks are killed or injured - because they are on the second floor? Is the owner or operator immune from lawsuits because they are complying with the ADA? That will certainly be no defense when they know they are ignoring well understood risks.

There is a safer alternative to the lift that could provide more disabled access to other movies. The operator could rotate movies between the upstairs and downstairs screens say on one or more days of the week/month.

Since the operator is currently being bullied by a State agency I suggest he call our local congressman. The ADA was not passed to increase the risk of harm to our aging and disabled population or to drive small businesses out of business and cost people jobs.

Dave Cummins
Moraga

Editor:

It was sad to read this week about the east bay teenager who received serious brain damage when he fell from his skateboard and wasn't wearing a helmet. I decided to check and see if compliance with the rules at the Moraga skate board facility had improved. Unfortunately it hasn't. The rules say helmets are required and less than half the participants were wearing helmets. I hope participants, parents, and Town officials won't wait until we have a local accident to begin enforcing the rules. The police assure me they do give tickets but apparently not often enough or the fines aren't high enough to encourage compliance and the participants often run when police arrive. Any ideas anyone?

Pete Williams
Moraga

Editor:

I just bought a house a moved to Orinda, to find out there is no physical way to drop my daughter off at school which starts at 8am and get a parking spot at Bart to go into San Francisco where I work 5 days a week. I am number 944 on the waiting list for monthly parking and there is no non-monthly parking available after 7:15am on weekdays, and no parking available within a mile walking to the station. How is a working mom supposed to live if she can't get to work every weekday?

This is ridiculous and there should be resident only parking made available at Bart stations for working folks that live in the town where they pay taxes which support public transit. Or there should be a shuttle from a parking garage provided. I am not saying any of this has to be free.

If there are a 1,000 people on the Orinda Bart station monthly pass waiting list and the pass is \$60 per month, that is \$60,000 per month or over \$720,000 per year of potential Bart parking revenue that could pay for a parking garage or a shuttle. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure this out but apparently Bart management and Orinda politicians can't seem to figure this out and solve the parking issue at Orinda Bart station.

Maybe I should quit my job and buy some land that is zoned parking and shuttle folks to Bart because the politicians can't seem to figure out what makes fiscal sense as well as solve real issues for those living in their community.

Signed a shocked Orinda new resident,
Sheri Scott

Join our Public Forum

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

Editor:

I very much enjoyed your cover story regarding horses in Lamorinda. I, too, was part of the "horsy set" as a young girl. I grew up in Orinda in the 1950s and I had a passion for horses beginning at the age of 3 when my father took me to ride the ponies in Tilden Park. Later, I rode rental horses at Buckeye Ranch, located at the end of Springhill Road in Lafayette, for many years. Finally, my father surprised me one Sunday afternoon by suggesting we go look at a horse to buy. I was so elated!

By this time I was an accomplished rider so we picked a 5 year old Blue Roan quarter horse gelding named Blue Boy. He was a former cattle horse which had been brought from New Mexico to the Preston Dyer Stables in San Ramon. My father bought him and asked Bob Keeney, owner of Buckeye Ranch, to trailer him to Buckeye for boarding. I kept him there, alternately, in the pasture, paddock, and barn and have so many happy memories of my time there. I was a member of a group of young people called the Buckeye Wranglers. We met in a small little building which was the former home of Bob Keeney and his first wife, Nancy. It was a home he built himself when he first came there. The Buckeye Wranglers rode in the Walnut Festival parade every year and that was a big event back then. One of the other members of our group was George Bruns for whom the Shakespeare Theater is named.

I remember riding down Pleasant Hill Road and the various side roads all the way to Alamo and to the top of Laverna Road to meet a friend at Johnston Stables where she kept her horse. On one of my visits, a group from Johnston and I rode to the top of Mt. Diablo and camped out overnight with our horses. What fun! Routinely, I rode back to Buckeye at the end of the day, galloping bareback through the vast pear orchards along the way. The freeway had not been built yet.

The last place I boarded my horse was in Rheem, where Campolindo High School and the adjacent housing development, Carol Ranch, is now. I rode my horse over that vacant land and the adjoining vacant land, some of which is now 24 Hour Fitness, Round Table Pizza and Chef Chao. Over time, there were fewer and fewer places to ride. I was growing up and getting ready to go to college and the demands on my time precluded my ability to devote to riding. One of the saddest days for me was saying goodbye to Blue Boy as his new owner was loading him into a horse trailer in Rheem which would take him to his new home in Castro Valley. He and I had shared so many wonderful rides...

Betty Kendall
Moraga

Editor:

I read with interest the letter from a young citizen named Alex on the subject of gun violence, rights, and control. As a psychiatrist I believe that relying upon mental health practitioners to keep our communities safe from the gun violence is destined to fail. No one can argue with restricting access to weapons to those who have histories of major mental illness and aggression. However, the vast majority of people who utilize the mental health system are not violent. Furthermore, of the approximate 100,000 shootings each year in our country, few are the act of someone in psychiatric care considered dangerous.

For those who cry out regarding their Second Amendment rights, there must also be a balance with the rights of all Americans to live in a safe society. The rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights have limits. The right to free speech doesn't allow one to incite hate crimes. The pursuit of happiness is balanced by one's actions as they impact upon others. The right to assembly doesn't allow rioting. With our rights come obligations as well.

As a physician who has worked in emergency rooms, treated gunshot wound victims, and dealt with the stress and horror for victims and their families, I support measures that can be expected to reduce gun violence. This includes background checks and waiting periods for gun purchases. It also includes gun registration, as we do with cars. Limiting magazines to 10 rounds as proposed by Senator Feinstein makes sense. I remain unconvinced that private citizens need assault rifles for self-defense. There is no need for armor piercing ammunition accessible to the public. Kevlar protection is for police and the military. Gas masks and tear gas should not be available through the Internet. If there is a War on Terror we should not be assisting domestic terrorists.

In my practice I see the police and firefighters who risk their lives for us. We should be on their side. Our public safety officers are often in undue jeopardy as our society has made it easy for weapons of war to be obtained by those who don't need and shouldn't have them. I have no interest in preventing lawful use of guns for hunting, protection and competition. Yet our nation needs to address this major public health issue.

As a suggestion to Alex who mentions an interest in amendments to our Constitution, let me suggest that that younger generation work to secure ratification by three more states of the Equal Rights Amendment in their lifetime. It is long overdue and will make us secure in a different though important way. Thank you for your consideration,
Dr. Bob Larsen
Orinda

Civic News Lafayette

Renovated Offices for Acalanes High School District

By Cathy Tyson



Conceptual exterior sketch

Image provided

The Acalanes Union High School District (AUHSD) did its homework before setting out to renovate and modernize the 60-year-old building that houses the administration and operations for the district, covering Miramonte, Acalanes, Campolindo, Las Lomas and the Acalanes Center for Independent Study.

The \$3 million project, expected to take seven months to complete, is funded by Measure E funds, the facilities improvement bond measure passed in 2008. Temporary offices for the district can be found in the classrooms at the Del Valle Education Center, near Rossmoor, at 1963 Tice Valley Boulevard in Walnut Creek.

"We're excited," said Chris Learned, Associate Superintendent of Business Services, who explained the building was antiquated, the air condition and heating systems didn't work properly

- too hot and too cold depending on the office - along with everything else from electrical systems to sewer issues. He adds that contractor S.W. Allen Construction is "doing a terrific job, on schedule so far."

Measure E, passed with 63 percent of the vote, raised \$93 million of local funds to pay for significant projects throughout the district. With all AUHSD facilities built between 1940 and 1962, they needed upgrades to accommodate current technological demands along with a range of infrastructure improvements including modernizing the electrical systems to allow for additional computers and fixing leaky roofs. A portion of the bond funds was used to create a dedicated 10-year technology fund to keep classroom computers and technology well maintained and up to date.

Orinda Listings By Laura Abrams

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Civic News Lafayette

ConFire Meets Unhappy Lafayette Residents

... continued from page A3

"There is a way that could work," said Louder. "People visualize volunteers working in a small community with low-volume stations. The standard now for firefighters is much more demanding. The volunteer firefighters will have to have the same training as career firefighters do. They still have to go through physical exams and background checks. I just don't want people to think that all you do is put out an announcement, people show up and the next day they're riding a rig."

One resident suggested that Measure Q, which was on the ballot to provide funds for the fire district and failed, be placed again on the ballot. He suggested that the publicity for the measure had been poor and the measure was confusing.

In the meantime, the district has enacted 10 percent pay cuts, has laid off a few people and has kept a few vacancies open.

In addition to Station 16, ConFire will close fire stations in Walnut Creek and Martinez, and reduce service at the Clayton station.

Civic News Moraga

Why Doesn't Anyone Want to Work Here?

... continued from page A5

"There are consequences to not having staff available," said Planning Director Shawna Brekke-Read during a discussion on the topic of staff vacancies.

Last year, when Senior Planner Rich Chamberlain retired, the workload was not excessive and it was decided to save money by not replacing him. Then the assistant planner left unexpectedly for family reasons. Brekke-Read recruited a replacement, but she didn't last more than a few weeks. "The workload and long night meetings were too much for her," Brekke-Read said. "We had told her, but experiencing it was a different thing." For a while a planner laid off by Orinda worked in Moraga, but she received an offer from another agency that she found more attractive.

The consequence for the town is that some projects are not addressed and service to residents takes longer. A permit that could be obtained in one day will take three, a permitted use for a new business can take up to two months, and long-term planning is on hold—this includes issues such as the sign ordinance, winery regulation, and rezoning the Moraga Country Club. "And there are lost opportunities, such as a Caltrans grant that's open for application, but we have no time to apply," Brekke-Read lamented.

"The difficulty comes from the salaries and benefits we can offer, as well as the long hours," said Town Manager Jill Keimach. "All the department heads took salary cuts when they came to work for Moraga."

At January's town goal-setting session Frank Melon, general manager of Moraga Country Club, offered his advice to the council. "I know how difficult it is to recruit staff in Moraga," he said. "In order to retain people I need to be the employer of choice. You need to look at your compensation level to keep them."

Mayor Dave Trotter does not be-

lieve that salaries and benefits can be raised. "We live in a time of budget constraints," he said. "In the '70s the town was formed with a philosophy of minimum government and as a result of this choice—and of Prop. 13 that froze the percentage of property taxes cities get—we are under-funded compared to most other municipalities." According to Trotter, Moraga has no choice but to stay a minimal government town, even if many residents want more than minimum services.

There are dedicated employees who stick with Moraga. "Bob Priebe (Chief of Police) has been here for a very long time; Lori Salamack (Brekke-Read's predecessor) stayed for more than 10 years, and many others," Trotter said. He is aware that a lot is asked of staff due to their small number. "As a council, have to adjust our expectations and make sure that we retain our valued staff," he added.

Keimach and Brekke-Read are confident that they will be able to recruit and retain qualified employees to fill the vacancies. "There are many positive aspects to working in Moraga," Brekke-Read said. "We form a real team, the communication is excellent and the town offers a very large variety of tasks and growth opportunity." Keimach added that she believes that the community understands that staff works very hard and is appreciative.

The council prioritized Keimach's need for staff recruitment, with the constraint of finding ways other than financial to retain her employees. "We will be negotiating employee agreements this year," she said. "I will ask our creative staff what things could make their lives easier and appeal to them." She cited an El Cerrito policy that allows people to work 9-hour days and have every other Friday off. "That would allow us to keep up with our family lives," she noted.

Civic News Orinda

Politicians Sling Mud for a Good Cause

... continued from page A6

Citing Orinda's recent designation by Forbes as America's second friendliest city, Union Bank senior vice president Jonathan Klein lauded Orinda as "a special place" for its level of civic engagement and opening of doors as he talked about his firm's trust in Eden's leadership. But the sweetest icing on the cake came with the announcement that the Orinda-based Ernest and Lola Poll Trust, working in conjunction with the Orinda Community Foundation, has pledged to donate \$60,000 to fund transportation services to help residents at the new apartments remain active, contributing members of the community.

"It's a wonderful time to be in the city of Orinda," said California Assembly Member Joan Buchanan,

who observed that "great cities not only take care of their young," they look after their seniors. She praised Orindans for their persistence in "putting more than a decade of heart and soul" into bringing the project to fruition.

Additional presenters included Steve Dexter, Contra Costa County Supervisor Candace Anderson's chief of staff; Lawrence Shepp who represented the Orinda Community Church; Malcolm Brudigam, the district representative for California Senator Mark DeSaulnier's office; and Kathleen Hamm, treasurer of Eden's Board of Directors.

"My mother always said, 'Take time to pause and celebrate the victories,'" said Worth.

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Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board Shaken by Closure of Lafayette Station 16

Addresses district's unfunded liabilities in review of Long-Range Financial Plan

By Nick Marnell

Steve Anderson attended an emotional meeting hosted by the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, in which ConFire Chief Daryl Louder talked to Lafayette residents about the reasons why Fire Station 16 will remain closed, in part due to the failure of Measure Q, a \$75 parcel tax measure defeated by voters last fall. Anderson, one of two newly appointed Moraga-Orinda Fire District directors, made an impassioned plea of his own to the MOFD board and staff at a Jan. 16 meeting. "The supervisors and the leadership of ConFire failed their community," he said. "We must never allow that to happen to us."

Fire Chief Randall Bradley recently unveiled his Long-Range Financial Plan, which aims to prevent a similar situation from occurring in the MOFD.

Bradley, who also attended the Lafayette meeting, empathized with Louder. "I never want to have to face our community and make an announcement like that," he said, referring to the station closure. Bradley then presented the financial plan to the board for review and discussion.

The financial plan offers a forecast through the 2027-28 fiscal year and projects that the district will be able to maintain or improve service

levels, address its unfunded liabilities, adequately fund its capital needs, and continue to keep 10 percent of its annual operating costs in reserve. Bradley based his model on the Contra Costa County Employees Retirement Association earning 7.75 percent on its investments, that district expenditures will stay below revenue growth rates, and that property values will grow at 2 to 4 percent over the length of the plan.

In opening the topic for discussion, Board President Frank Sperling asked that comments be limited to only the structure of the document, and to the assumptions used in arriving at the figures. The structure of the document was roundly praised by the board; discussion on the assumptions used gave insight into the thinking of some of the board members.

"Is history the guiding force of those assumptions, or is discretion used?" asked director Alex Evans. "Should we rely on professionals, or should we trust our own wisdom?"

"What about a five-year rolling average for the CCCERA percentage assumption?" asked Anderson, clearly favoring a reliance on historical data. "That's too simplistic," responded Sperling. "Looking back five years to forecast 15 is wrong." Sperling wanted to base the assumptions

on the opinions of the experts and the professionals.

"And just what is the correct cycle to use?" asked director Fred Weil, who earlier was given a commendation for his service as the 2012 board president. In his calm, deliberate style, he continued. "Is it 20 years for the stock market? If that's what the actuaries are using, so should we. How about real estate? Does it have a cycle? And what if the mortgage deduction is disallowed? That could kill California real estate - especially in Moraga and Orinda."

Evans wondered why the district carries such a large unfunded liability, yet shows a very highly funded bank account. Sperling suggested that maybe the district should finance some of its capital expenditures.

A recommendation from Orinda resident Vince Maiorana was that the district consider the further cutting of expenses. Mark McWeese, MOFD union representative, was disappointed to see employee health care costs frozen. And a Moraga resident expressed alarm over the plan's use of the fire flow tax to temporarily cover unfunded liabilities.

Bradley was tasked with revising the forecast for further discussion at the board's Feb. 20 meeting.



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:** Hacienda de las Flores, Mosaic Room 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga, CA 94556

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

Next meeting:
Regular Board Meeting
Feb. 6, 2013, 7 p.m.

Moody's Report a Hot Topic

The MOFD pension plan is managed by the Contra Costa County Employees Retirement Association. CCCERA has come under criticism for assuming a 7.75 percent rate of return on its pension assets, which to many, like the concerned residents of the Orinda Citizens Emergency Services Task Force, is unrealistic and unachievable.

John Dickerson, an independent public sector pension analyst, issued an online report in January that explained the pension situation in vivid detail.

On his website, YourPublicMoney.Com, Dickerson analyzes the data adjustments proposed by Moody's Investor Service to the public pension sector, and how these adjustments will affect CCCERA.

Moody's proposed adjustments include:

- Lowering the assumed rate on pension return from 7.75 percent to 5.50 percent
- Requiring municipalities to reduce their unfunded liabilities to zero in 17 years, not in 20 to 30 years
- Full amortization of the pension payments, not the "percent of payroll" method which can result in early negative amortization

A result of these proposed adjustments could mean that more tax revenue will be devoured by the pension debt, possibly resulting in cuts to local services.

MOFD director Steve Anderson, the only board member to respond to a request for comment, read Dickerson's article. "I can assure you that I am very much cognizant of the pitfalls of CCCERA's calculations/machinations," he said.

Anderson feels driven to even tighter MOFD fiscal controls, as he never wants to have to cut services for the district. "If we are ever in that position it means I personally have failed in the primary reason I joined the board," he said, referring to his goal of frugal tax dollar management.

N.Marnell

Sign Here, Please

Investigation into accident that injured MOFD firefighters delayed

By Nick Marnell

Three firefighters from the Moraga-Orinda Fire District were seriously injured in an accident on Highway 24 in December. All three firefighters continue to recover at home from their injuries.

At the Dec. 13 MOFD board meeting, Fire Chief Randall Bradley issued a statement that "a comprehensive incident review by an independent consultant...is in progress and that report will be issued within sixty days." On Jan. 9, when asked about the progress of the investigation, Bradley said it was not yet under way but would begin as soon as a contract was signed with John Sharry and Associates, a Discovery Bay consulting firm. Bradley indicated that the terms would be worked out that week. He said that Sharry's rate to review and analyze all aspects of the accident was \$125 per hour, with an 80-hour maximum.

John Sharry and Randall Bradley worked together at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. "That is very well known throughout the fire service," offered Bradley. "He was a mentor and I trust him deeply...I called John and he reluctantly agreed to do (the investigation) for a reduced rate because it involved firefighter safety. And I asked him for a favor."

MOFD board president Frank Sperling saw no potential conflict with the level of friendship between the fire chief and a consultant. "The only relevant acceptability criteria are that the person hired by the chief is a well qualified consultant and that the cost is appropriate for the services provided," he said. "It doesn't surprise me that the chief would have connections and/or be professionally associated with most of the qualified post-event investigators/consultants."

Nearly two months from the date of the accident, the contract with Sharry and Associates was still unsigned. Sharry responded to a phone call in search of the reason for the delay. "You'll have to ask Bradley that," he said. "I have agreed in principle to the terms of the contract."

When asked, Bradley replied that he has yet to send the final version of the contract to Sharry. "I want to get this done," he stressed. "As soon as Sharry signs, I will sign, and update the board at the Feb. 6 meeting."

Sperling made it clear that the investigation of this accident is the "absolute right thing to do." He added that "this sort of action not only identifies potential holes in our procedures...it also ensures continual quality improvement."



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Community Service

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

New Troop 57 Eagle Scouts

Submitted by Marta L. Wallace



Top row, from left: Colin Friese, Cameron Hoyh, and Trevor Wallace. Bottom row, Daniel Buettner-Fourie and Brent Glowatch. Photo Provided

Troop 57, chartered by St. Marks United Methodist Church in Orinda, celebrated five new Eagle Scouts Jan. 13. This year's scouts, all of whom are current or former Miramonte High School students, include Daniel J. Buettner-Fourie, Colin Anthony Friese, Brent James Glowatch, Cameron A. Hoyh, and Trevor R. Wallace. Each Eagle Scout must earn a minimum of 21 merit badges, including 12 Eagle-required badges, demonstrate leadership and scout spirit, and perform a service project for the community.

For his Eagle Scout project, Daniel Buettner-Fourie landscaped four plots behind Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church. This included

clearing out debris, replacing the old soil, planting 23 new plants, installing a timed drip system, and laying down ground covering, and took a month to complete.

Colin Friese built a sandbox for Del Rey School's after school program, Dolphin Club. Colin supervised a team as they cleared an overgrown area, anchored and built the sandbox, and hauled and sifted 81 cubic yards of sand. By reclaiming the old sand, he saved the school district over \$1,200. The popular sandbox draws many children, allowing easy supervision by the staff.

Brent Glowatch solved a persistent drainage problem at Holy Shepherd Church. Water was collecting on the east side of the property due to

drainage from a retaining wall, a large hillside, and the roof. By installing a drainage system with underground piping, surface drains and a catch basin, he was able to collect and route the water to existing underground storm drains. This project eliminated very wet conditions and enabled church members to expand the church with a new extension currently under construction.

Cameron Hoyh cultivated an organic garden at Miramonte High School of herbs and vegetables and protected the planter boxes with PVC and chicken wire from pests, such as deer and raccoons. He also created a grapevine structure since there was no place for the existing grapevines to grow. This part of the project required relocating the grape plants to avoid running water lines, manhole covers and electrical lines, laying new irrigation lines for watering and marking the electrical lines.

Trevor Wallace recorded himself, his brother and his friends reading children's books aloud. For most of the stories, each participant read the voice of a particular character while Trevor took the part of narrator. Ms. Pat Sokalski, former librarian at Del Rey School and Orinda Intermediate School, graciously donated three hours of her time to read an entire chapter book for the project. Trevor donated the recordings to Children's Hospital Oakland so that sick children could hear stories on the hospital's iPads.

Soccer Club Collects Warm Coats for Charity

Submitted by Linda Sosa



Photo Greg Davis

The California Magic Soccer Club, a competitive soccer club in Orinda, had a wonderful evening playing pick-up soccer or "Pelada" for charity Jan. 20. More than 60 parents, players, and kids arrived at the new Wilder Fields with coats in hand to share in an evening of fun, food, and entertainment, and to volunteer and

collect coats for the "One Warm Coat" foundation. Playing "Pelada" under the lights, the Club was able to collect 117 warm coats for the needy and donated them to the Concord Burlington Coat Factory to be distributed throughout the county. "They were quite surprised as we kept bringing bag after bag after bag in through

the front door," said volunteer Lori Smith. "It's just nice that the Magic does these types of community outreach programs to enlighten the kids." The "Warm Coats, Warm Hearts" campaign is a nationwide effort to collect and donate one million coats. For more information about the organization, visit onewarmcoat.org.

Coach Carney Goes Shoeless for a Cause

Information provided by Shane Carney



Photo provided

To raise awareness of the need for shoes throughout the world, Campolindo High School boys varsity soccer coach Shane Carney coached his team barefoot in the 40-degree weather against rival Miramonte Jan. 18. Carney is working with the nonprofit organization Soles4Souls, which provides donated shoes to those in

need across the globe. Monetary donations are also turned into shoes at a rate of one pair of shoes for every \$1 donated. Carney is collecting new and used shoes and donations toward shoes. For more information, visit www.soles4soulsfundraising.org/shanecarney or email shanecarney@gmail.com.

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Community Service

Girl Scout Silver Award Recipients

Submitted by Molly Wendt



From left, Troop members Kelcey Higgins, Marie Whitmore, Kelsey Wendt, Erica Goodman, Elise Berg, Brittany Stoddard, and Cienna King. (Asha Singh not pictured.) Photo provided

The girls of Girl Scout Troop 30245 completed their Silver Award last fall after more than 40 hours of hard work planning and creating a butterfly garden at Stanley Middle School. The girls met with Stanley seventh-grade science teachers who outlined how they hoped to use the garden in their teaching of life science to middle school students. They then met with a specialist at Orchard Nursery who taught them the plants needed to attract and feed butterflies in all stages of life from pupae to adult. The Scouts spent hours raising funds through selling mistletoe, baked goods, and candy canes. With additional financial help from their family and friends, they were able to

raise more than \$2,000 to fund their project. In spring they spent more time researching various plants, building garden boxes, and making cement stepping stones. Planting day finally arrived in May when the troop spent eight straight hours hauling soil, gravel, and planting over 100 plants to create a beautiful butterfly garden. The school installed a bench at the site last summer, and the project was completed this fall when the girls returned to weed, prune, and clean up the garden in preparation for winter. The girls worked together beautifully and had a lot of fun in the process. Stop by Stanley Middle School to see what a beautiful butterfly garden they created!

Unlocking Secrets to Winning Pinewood Derby

Submitted by Maggie Wu



Local Cub Scouts are laden with trophies and smiles at a recent Blackhawk 500. Photo provided

Local Cub Scouts curious about how to win the Pinewood Derby race this spring can attend a special workshop in Orinda Feb. 9 sponsored by Boy Scout Troop 233 and facilitated by Coach Allen, who successfully coached his son to win the 2010 Blackhawk 500 Grand Prize.

Starting with a block of wood made of pine, four plastic wheels and four nails, a Cub Scout's finished car must use all nine pieces, but must not exceed a certain weight, a certain length, and must fit on the track used by that particular Scout pack. Scouts are judged on speed and creative design.

Hard work and a little luck seem to improve the odds of winning. Asghar Riahi, a Troop 233 parent, was certain things could be invented and tested to enhance the outcome of Pinewood Derby competition, and met liked-minded thinker, Coach

Allen, who happily shared his design tricks and speed enhancement strategies with Riahi's boys, Razmin and Ryan, who won sixth and seventh place respectively in the prestigious Blackhawk 500 competition in 2008.

Allen was concerned with health hazards associated with using graphite as a lubricant for Pinewood Derby cars, and invented a dry lube to help make cars race much faster and greener. With the help of the secret lube, Allen's son Alex won the 2010 Blackhawk 500 Grand Final Trophy with a time of 12.3240 minutes – a record that remains unbroken.

The workshop, Secrets to Winning Pinewood Derby, will be held from noon to 4 p.m. Feb. 9 at Holy Shepherd Church, 433 Moraga Way in Orinda. Scouts who build their cars ahead of the workshop will be able to test them on a racetrack.



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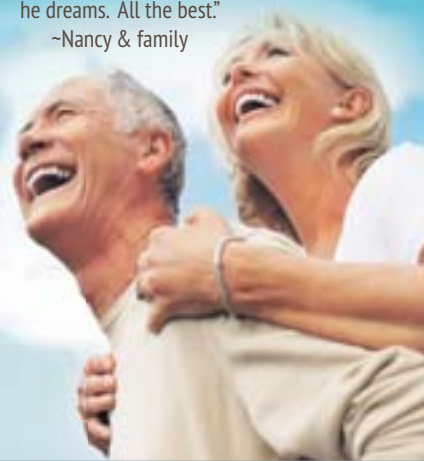
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Team Toaster Almost Ready to Roll

... continued from page A1



From left, David Gerson, Mike Bishopp, Mike Morse and Phil Gaffney

Photo Larry Zulch

They could be playing golf, or in a band, but these gentlemen just enjoy hanging out together, working on cars, plus, of course, the exhilaration of driving a race car – even if it's a customized lemon.

Preparing for the festive and irreverent race that runs for 16 hours over two days takes time, so Team Toaster is already hard at work getting their boxy stripped-out 2005 Scion XB ready to rumble.

While it doesn't look that sexy – it has a wide stance, rather like a go-cart with oversized brakes that make it a serious competitor, along with a required professional full roll cage and mandatory five point harness. Thankfully, safety equipment does not count toward the \$500 total. The silver beauty, which survived a front and rear end collision, sports welded-on burnt toast coming out of the roof. Handy team members thought of everything – including smoke to accompany the toast. On race days, the goal is simply "trying to stay alive," said Gerson.

This year they are further modifying the Scion with a heavy-duty head gasket to replace the blown one from last year, and installing a supercharger for a bit more speed, along with an engine found on Craigslist.

While getting the car together is a team effort, Gerson calls local attorney Mike Morse the "MacGyver" of the group. Not just another pretty face, this attorney by day is a serious hobbyist with a natural curiosity interested in taking bikes, cars, and

boats apart to see how they work.

Morse took over the former space of the rock shop, Fumble Fingers, and now has the official team headquarters/working garage where the Toaster and their newest addition, a bright red 1971 Datsun 240 Z is stored. Morse calls the Scion "woefully underpowered" and is looking forward to driving the lighter, lower "Z" that boasts twice the horsepower of the Scion.

When asked what brought the team together, he replied, "guys that like to drive fast. Really, it comes down to that." Rounding out Team Toaster are speeders Larry Zulch, Mike Bishopp and Phil Gaffney.

"It's so much fun," says Gerson reminiscing about the feeling of going 85 to 90 miles per hour, while other cars are a mere six inches away, all jockeying for position going into the turns. Gerson describes himself initially as a reluctant driver; on the mean streets of Lamorinda he's not that aggressive, but behind the wheel of the Toaster – watch out.

In case the Toaster is toast, the "Z" is planned as a fall-back car, but it also needs work. A 280 Z engine found on Craigslist is waiting to be installed, and the fellows have plans to customize this car with orange paint and

call it "Bondo" rant in homage to the legendary Bob Bondurant and his famous orange Datsun 240 Z, but their version will have lettering on the back that reads, "caution student driver."

After completing some work on the Toaster last year, the boys took it for a very brief spin on Brown Avenue to see if it was working properly. Unfortunately the car isn't exactly street legal, with no headlights or registration; a Lafayette police officer just happened to be in the neighborhood and pulled it over. They received a warning.

This year, the team will be accepting donations similar to a walk-a-thon, based on the number of laps completed, to support the charitable work of Loaves and Fishes, a non-profit organization that feeds the hungry of Contra Costa County via five dining rooms throughout the county along with meal services at their partner sites. Gerson estimates the maximum number of laps should be approximately 200 to 225, if their car finishes the race.

For more information, contact David@loavesandfishesc.org. To learn more about the race, visit www.24hoursoflemons.com, and for a complete description of the charity visit www.loavesandfishesc.org.



From left, David Gerson, Mike Morse (under car) and Phil Gaffney

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From Front Page

MOFD Chief Has an Iron in the Fire

... continued from page A1

Bradley figures that \$2 million will initially be saved by shutting down Station 43, selling the property, and splitting the \$4 million cost of a new fire station with ConFire—MOFD has already budgeted \$3 million for the retrofit of Station 43. Bradley also projects operational savings under the potential new arrangement.

"The bottom line is that the MOFD could save \$1 million a year," concluded Bradley. "And even if this isn't going to be my fire station, it's the right thing to do."

MOFD Board President Frank Sperling confirmed that a discussion of options and recommendations resulting from the Station 16 closure will be an agenda item at the Feb. 6 MOFD board meeting. "A joint venture may very well be one of the chief's recommendations as I know that Chief Bradley and (ConFire) Chief Louder have been chatting."

The Feb. 6 meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in the Mosaic Room, Hacienda de las Flores, 2100 Donald Dr., Moraga.

Carnaval! at SMC's Museum of Art

By Andrea A. Firth



Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago

Carnaval! – the upcoming exhibit at the Saint Mary's College Museum of Art – promises to be more like going to a fun party held in a museum than viewing a traditional art show. With flat screen televisions displaying the sights and sounds of Carnaval celebrations and parades, exhibit goers will feel like dancing from room to room like festive revelers partying in the streets.

The opening of the exhibit this Saturday, Feb. 2 coincides perfectly with Carnaval's rich tradition of partying before Lent's 40 days of penance, and visitors are encouraged to join in the fun and wear costumes, masks, and medallions. The opening day festivities will also include the

screening of a video documentary by Robert Jerome, which shows how Carnaval is celebrated around the world.

Made possible by the National Endowment for the Humanities, this touring exhibit features the pageantry, theater, and history of Carnaval from seven different countries and Mardi Gras in the United States. Elaborate costumes, head-dresses, masks, musical instruments, and photographs that portray the diversity of this celebration from New Orleans, Mexico, Bolivia, Brazil, Trinidad, Venice, Spain, and Switzerland will be on view through April 14.

Showing alongside the Car-

naval! exhibit and not to be missed in the museum's three other galleries will be the works of painters Lockwood de Forest, Ryan Reynolds, and William Keith. Viewers will be able to take a vicarious trip down the Nile viewing a selection of sketches and paintings by the atmospheric painter de Forest based on his travel to the region in the late 1800s. Urban landscapes of the hills and bay lands of contemporary painter Reynolds, an assistant professor of art at Santa Clara University, will be exhibited in the Studio Gallery. And a selection of the best of the big High Sierra oil paintings by William Keith, part of the museum's permanent collection, will also be on display.



Yosemite Valley with Bridal Veil Falls

1880 William Keith

School Safety in a Seeming Age of Rage

By Laurie Snyder

Following news of the Dec. 14 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in affluent Newtown, Conn. – a town demographically similar to Lamorinda – many area parents began paying more attention to the design of buildings, pondering security issues as they queued for frenetic holiday concert drop offs and after school pickups.

Sandy Hook had solid security protocols in place – a veritable fortress, some thought, because it was locked down for the school day every morning by 9:30 a.m. – yet a gunman was still able to enter. Lamorinda schools might be even less secure, it's reasoned, because many local buildings employ the open campus design so common across California.

Last week's incident involving at least two female students at Freedom High School in Oakley serves as a reminder that it's not always intruders who pose a threat to student safety. In the Freedom case, a girl was hospitalized Jan. 24 with a concussion resulting from a fight with another student (or students). The victim and her alleged assailant reportedly bumped into each other in a hallway the day before. One of the girls then used social media to express anger over the incident, sparking an online battle. Rather than tempers cooling overnight, the flames appear to have fanned by way of Instagram.

Keeping Kids Safe

The Superintendent of the Orinda Union School District, Dr. Joe Jacquette, said that he and his OUSD staff think constantly about protecting the children in their charge. "We actually started a review of our safety plans and our school site safety a few months before the Connecticut tragedy."

John Nickerson, Ed.D., superintendent of the Acalanes Union High School District, reported that AUHSD also "started a major revision last June to incorporate our new bullying policies into the comprehensive safety plan" with enhanced staff training. This assessment will also analyze intruder response. "Each school practices procedures every year through drills. It is my understanding that all local districts collaborate with public safety agencies in their planning and drills, as we do."

With open campuses, said Nickerson, "we depend on staff diligence and student reports to monitor for outsiders on campus. Additionally, each campus has a campus supervisor who effectively monitors the campus for 'strangers.'"

Jacquette brought in "experts who could walk our sites and give us their opinion." By the time Newtown happened, the Orinda Police had already analyzed three schools with two more to go, their report slated for delivery in January. Post-Newtown, OUSD assessed "specifically for that aspect of safety related to intruders." Police re-

trained the administration team and principals; staff drilled on intruder response Jan. 28.

... continued on page B2

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Organized for the End

Orinda couple annually updates last wishes

By Cathy Dausman

While Patti and Roger Witalis' children each have families of their own, the Orinda couple continues to discuss "the subject" with them — the subject of their last wishes.

Each year at a family meeting, minus spouses and children, the active retirees prepare their three daughters for the eventuality of handling their final affairs, and distribute the newest financial, medical, military and legal information to each daughter, keeping the originals in a red binder.

The couple understands the importance of planning ahead. Witalis' mother-in-law passed away without leaving instructions, a "horrible expe-

rience," she recalled. And when Witalis' father was executor for her mother and four aunts, she said each estate had a dozen bank accounts needing to be straightened out.

Many times, Witalis' father attempted to broach the subject about his final wishes with her, but she said, "I couldn't bear [to discuss] it. I denied him the comfort of lifting this burden off his shoulders because of my own childhood fears." Then one day I just let him talk, Witalis said. "It was a gift I gave him."

As their children grew to adulthood, Witalis decided to ensure that her family knew the couple's final wishes well in advance.



Patti and Roger Witalis discuss what goes into their "red binder" full of end-of-life instructions for their three daughters. The family meets annually to receive updates, discuss changes and answer questions. Patti Witalis calls the binder "a living document." Photo Cathy Dausman

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— Marian Nichols, Moraga

"What I've learned is that it is important to do the talking before you're afraid of losing your parents," she said. True, just getting started can be emotionally difficult.

"The first [family] meeting was the toughest, and ended in lots of crying," recalled daughter Kara. "It's not easy to think about, let alone talk about your parents getting sick or dying. We all ended up blubbering. But we got through it and are now far more productive."

Her sister Kenna said she was "all for the bonding opportunity" those family meetings afforded. Their sister Katie said, "My dad, having no siblings, was able to make [estate] decisions entirely on this own, which I'm sure was a heavy weight to bear. But having siblings does not always make the process easier."

Over time, the meetings became a bit more festive, giving Witalis a chance to prepare each child's favorite food or to celebrate a birthday.

Dad plans each agenda and prepares material for inclusion in the binder.

"My dad is the meeting facilitator, as he is in real life," Kara said, "so we get a dose of his flip-chart mentality."

Each daughter is assigned a role, based on her strengths, so that responsibilities are shared. One is recording secretary; another is responsible for carrying out her parents' medical advanced directives. One has been put in charge of finances; another will manage household affairs.

The binder includes contact information for a realtor, professional associations and close family friends, birth certificates, wedding certificates, updated medical and surgical information, legal documents, bank account information and email passwords. Witalis even includes obituary information and church and religious preferences. "My uncle Joe was not buried from his parish and the priest,

who didn't know Joe, called him John through the service," she recalled sadly.

Both army veterans, copies of the Witalis' military service records, known as DD 214s, are in the binder as well. "I'm beginning to list things [including jewelry] I've promised or want to pass on to each girl and to each grandchild," she added.

Daughter Kara said she loves the excuse for the family to get together around the table like old times. "It's so nice to sit around and talk, laugh, cry. We're a funny bunch."

Asked if she plans to do the same thing in the future with her children, Kenna replied with a resounding "absolutely!"

The siblings walk away stronger as a family and tighter as sisters after each meeting, Katie said, concluding, "We three have the confidence of knowing that we will support each other in the years to come ... 'cause it's in the binder!"

How to Get the Conversation Started

Authors, financial advisors, mortuaries, health care, elder care and religious organizations all offer suggestions on starting "the talk." The following is a list of books, workbooks and websites that might be helpful:

Books and workbooks:

"Caring is Not Enough," Terry Ann Black

"My Last Wishes ... A Journal of Life, Love, Laughs & a Few Final Notes," Joy Meredith

"Get It Together: Organize Your Records So Your Family Won't Have To," Melanie Cullen

"Grant Me My Final Wish: A Personal Journal to Simplify Life's Inevitable Journey," Renata Vestevich

"When I'm Gone: Practical Notes for Those You Leave Behind," Kathleen Fraser

"What if... Workbook," Gwen W. Morgan

"You Only Die Once," Margie Jenkins

Websites:

www.caregiverslibrary.org/caregivers-resources/grp-checklists-forms.aspx

www.stfrancisgoldsboro.org/documents/onlinedocs/eol/100~Your%20Last%20Best%20Gift/Your%20Last%20Best%20Gift.pdf

www.wscpa.org/Content/files/downloads/endoflife.pdf

School Safety in a Seeming Age of Rage

... continued from page B1

One key difference is already known. While school visitors often must wear badges after signing in at Lamorinda school offices, many buildings lock down only when a threat is perceived. "If an intruder or stranger is reported ... or if there is reason to believe that a dangerous person could be on campus (i.e., an armed robbery in a nearby neighborhood)," said Nickerson, "a lockdown is called ... (students/staff inside, doors locked, window coverings drawn, lights out, silence)." Redundant systems enable staff "to communicate status during the lockdown."

Additionally, multiple buildings have outside-locking classroom doors; many will switch to locks that can be secured from the inside. OUSD is moving quickly but there is "an expense and time element," said Jaconette. AUSHD is "evaluating options" with a decision "made in the coming months." Lafayette hopes it will take less than \$60,000 to upgrade all four elementary buildings plus one middle school.

Orinda, Moraga, and Lafayette districts are also collaborating with the Contra Costa County Child Abuse

Prevention Council to fund a "child safety coordinator" to teach students how to prevent bullying, child abuse, and sexual harassment.

In contrast, Orinda's private Holden High School is different, serving a student body of just 40, said Admissions Director Kristin Lamoureux. "We're kind of a special case because we're so tiny; we reside in the basement of a church. We're not a big school that needs to have metal detectors or a security guard." They do have strict anti-bullying protocols. "Kids will tell you it's a very safe school," she said. "We put a lot of emphasis on how to treat people and respectful communication."

OUSD, AUHSD, and Holden all offer counseling services. "We are fortunate," said Nickerson, "to maintain counselors at under 350 to 1. Each school also has a school psychologist and an intervention specialist, who provide support for students with emotional disturbances or mental health challenges." OUSD employs psychologists and cooperates when parents need outside help. Holden gives all students 30 minutes of adult mentoring each week to talk

about anything on their minds.

Each child needs a "go-to person that he can trust," Lamoureux said. Kids rely too often on peers when what they really need is "a sounding board," someone who has seen enough of life to be able to offer perspective. But taking on this role can be difficult — especially for parents of teens. When kids are feeling badly, she said, they just need to let it out — with someone who won't judge them. Studies show that it's often a single connection that makes the difference.

A trained therapist and mom herself, Lamoureux also urges parents to monitor their kids' social media accounts — and to talk regularly with teachers to find out what they see happening in class. (See also: www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0605/Managing-Your-Childs-Reputation-in-the-Digital-Age.html)

All three also reminded readers that school shootings, while distressing, are rare. "Obviously when they happen, they capture our deepest fears and sympathies," said Jaconette. "We go about living our daily lives knowing that there is a degree of vulnerability, but it's rare."

Help Keep Kids and Communities Safe

Several workshops on school safety and bullying are being offered in the coming month. For information, see our "Not to be Missed" section on pages B10-11. Additional informative websites include:

Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence: www.bradycampaign.org

California Safe Schools Coalition: www.casafeschools.org

Protect Children Not Guns, Children's Defense Fund: www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/protect-children-not-guns-2010-report.pdf

Stopybullying.gov: www.stopbullying.gov

Warm and Fuzzy Therapy for Lamorindans

By Cathy Dausman



Front from left, Barbara Brady-Smith and her therapy dog Julie visit with Carmen Turre. Back: Lois Valcalda, Piper, Adele Stack and Carl Raaka.

It was cocktail hour at Moraga Royale, and Julie and Piper wore matching vests. The pair joined residents Virginia DeRoia, Lois Valcalda, Adele Stack, Carl Raaka and Carmen Turre for some down time in a common room. "Down," in fact, was the operative word for Piper at least, who may be forgiven a bit of youthful exuberance. After all, Piper is only 18 months old – and she's a miniature Australian labradoodle. Her friend Julie is a 2-year-old golden retriever.

The dogs visit retirement communities, hospitals and schools in their work as therapy pets under the auspices of the Animal Rescue Foundation and the East Bay Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Therapy dogs are used in a variety of capacities, such as when they were used to console victims after the Newtown, Conn., shootings. The dogs, with their chauffeur/owners in tow, simply give and receive unconditional love.

Owners Jan Monteyne and Barbara Brady-Smith both sought purebred dogs from reputable breeders specifically to use as therapy dogs. "It's really neat to 'give back,' and be with your dog," said Monteyne. She and Piper have been making their rounds since last June, but the Lafayette woman has kept dogs for years.

She has taken her charges into the show ring and along the dogsled trail; all have been obedience trained. Brady-Smith of Moraga is equally dedicated. "I have always had pets," she said. Her current charges include Julie, and Julie's littermate Jack, who still needs to earn his Canine Good Citizen certification.

In addition to senior communities, Brady-Smith and Julie visit troubled children, assist as a hospice grief intervention team, visit colleges to provide stress relief during finals and listen to elementary school children practice reading. Brady-Smith, a professional pet photographer, also vol-

unteers her time to photograph shelter animals ready for adoption.

Both women say Julie is already an "old soul" – as gentle with seniors as she is with 17-month-old June Williams, who delightedly discovered the group while visiting her great-grandmother.

"Every dog has its forte," said Monteyne, although not all are suited as therapy dogs, as Moraga Royale VP/Director Dianne Wilson can tell you. Her dog Ranger used to visit residents, but Wilson stopped the practice when the dog focused more on protecting its "herd" rather than greeting strangers.

Julie and Piper are certified Canine Good Citizens; each has completed a 10-step American Kennel Club program. East Bay SPCA requires further training. The dogs can't mouth, shouldn't jump, and have been well-socialized. "We sat for hours outside Peet's Coffee asking people to say hello," said Brady-Smith. "And T. J. Maxx," added Monteyne. While Piper's size makes her a good lap dog, Monteyne says Julie is a good "flop dog," meaning the golden retriever size allows her to endure the full force of a child flopping onto her back.

Moraga Royal residents clearly enjoyed the visit. Turre, who over time had a Labrador retriever, a Weimaraner, and a mixed-breed dog, said Piper's and Julie's visit "reminds me of home." Raaka kept a beagle, cocker spaniel and a smaller, whiter dog, like Piper. Both Julie and DeRoia clearly enjoyed bonding over a good ear scratch. "My son's dog loves this, too," DeRoia said.

The end result was a win-win situation – the dogs received plenty of love and attention, and at least a few treats for good behavior, and the seniors walked away with smiles – plus a few dog hairs.

For information on getting a dog Canine Good Citizen certified, visit www.akc.org/events/cgc/program.cf

m. East Bay SPCA PALS pet therapy information is available online at <https://www.eastbayspca.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=386>.



Therapy dogs Piper and Julie

Got a Peculiar Pet?

Perhaps a parrot, miniature pony or potbellied pig? If so, we are looking to profile unusual house pets and the people who own them. While it's not hard to find a golden retriever or calico cat, we figured there are families in Lamorinda who think their unique pet is the 'cat's meow.' If you would like to share your critter story, contact cathy@lamorindaweekly.com.

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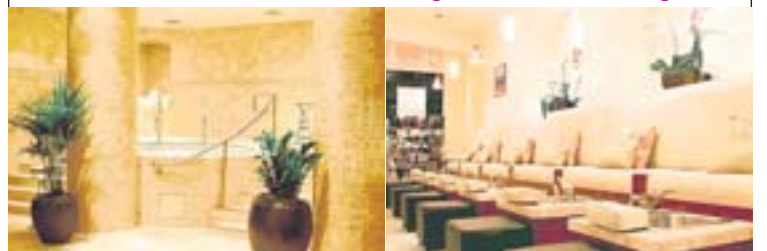
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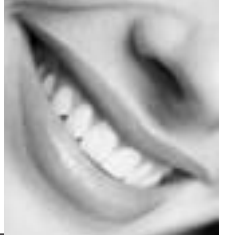
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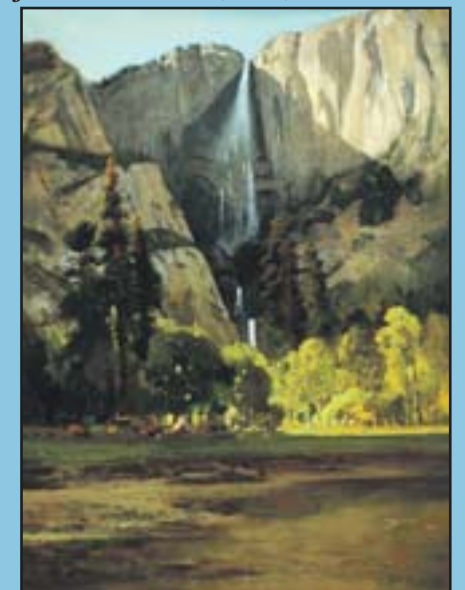


Carnaval



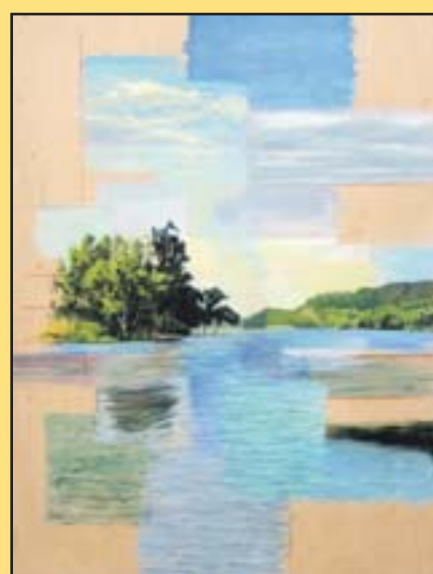
Masqueraders in Venice photo by Robert Jerome

The California Alps: Paintings from the 1870s, 80s, and 90s



Yosemite Falls 1870

Ryan Reynolds: Landscape Assembled



A Few Weeks oil on board

In Search of the Source: The Nile and Beyond by Lockwood de Forest



Lockwood de Forest Lone Falucca on the Nile 1876, oil on canvas courtesy Sullivan Goss Gallery, Santa Barbara

Opening Saturday, Feb. 2, at the Saint Mary's Museum of Art

Closed April 29, May 1, 2 for Easter vacation. For more information on the exhibitions, artists' biographies and events: stmarys-ca.edu/museum. 925-631-4379
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Classic Tale Transformed in SMC's Original Stage Adaptation

'The Princess and the Pea' promises to delight young and old

By Lian Walden



SMC student performers at recent dress rehearsal for "Princess and the Pea." Green, round, and hopefully organic, an inconspicuous pea leads to royal matrimony in Hans Christian Anderson's classic tale "The Princess and the Pea," presented by the Saint Mary's College (SMC) Performing Arts Department. In this delightful stage adaptation written and directed by Michael Cook, the actors perform in the aisles as well as on

stage to keep the audience engaged. Cook transformed the original one-page story into a 45 minute stage spectacle, with original music written for the show by his wife, professional actress and singer Jeffra Cook. The production is entirely student produced. It is the culmination of Cook's four-week Children's Theater class, one of the most popular courses offered during SMC's Jan Term. A unique program at SMC, Jan Term is a shortened term during which students are encouraged to branch out from their familiar course load and expose themselves to new areas of learning. As a result, the cast and crew of "The Princess and the Pea" hail from a variety of academic backgrounds. The course is divided into two sections, performers and stage crew, however the production is a highly collaborative endeavor, with both singers and stagehands joining forces to build and paint the set outside of rehearsals.



Music composer Jeffra Cook

Over 3,000 people are expected to attend the performance over the course of its four-day run. Local schools such as Camino Pablo, Rheem, Los Perales, Glorietta, Diablo Valley Montesorri, and the Pied Piper Preschool, among others, have arranged to bring their students. Tickets are sold out for most of the performances, but can still be reserved for tonight, Jan. 30 at 7 p.m. and tomorrow, Jan. 31 at 4 p.m. by calling (925) 631-4670. Tickets are \$8.

Kindergarten Registration:

Registration for kindergarten and transitional kindergarten for the 2013-2014 school year will be held in Orinda and Moraga in early February. Parents should go to the school their child will attend.

Orinda: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Feb. 4-7.
Moraga: Feb. 7-8 (check with school district for specific times)

A child must be at least five years of age on or before October 1st, 2013 to be eligible for enrollment in kindergarten. A child is eligible for transitional kindergarten if his/her fifth birthday is between October 2nd and December 2nd, 2013. Contact your school district office for more information.

THE APP RAP

By Alex Pawlakos

App: Evernote, by Evernote Corporation
For: All smartphones
Price: Free

Evernote is a very useful note-taking app that lets the user organize and access everything they want to remember. There are many occasions where you might want to jot down a little note to yourself, or make a to-do list, make travel plans, store a web page for future reading or even store a picture or a photo. For most of us, the problem is accessing the notes at a later date to quickly find a specific item. The beauty of Evernote is that it enables you to search all your notes by keyword or phrase. It even searches text within images, and will list any notes or images you have previously saved that contain that

keyword or phrase. For example, if you took a picture of the label on a bottle of chardonnay and saved it in Evernote, you could search the word "chardonnay," and retrieve that picture, along with any pictures or notes with the word "chardonnay." This app also allows you to create tabs for blocks of notes that can be organized into notebooks for easy recall. It makes it simple to have individual notebooks dedicated to travel, business or school, contacts, to-do lists, recipes, photos, family, and more. As an added bonus, this app lets you synch all your notes with all your devices, including your smartphone and



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

‘Dark Energy’ Lecture at LLLC Illuminates World of Cosmology

By Lou Fancher

At a Jan. 22 Science Café in the Lafayette Library and Learning Center’s Community Hall, 130 people lined up to see one of cosmology’s stars. University of California, Berkeley, Astronomy Professor Alex Filippenko packed the house, drawing a novice-to-expert audience for his “Dark Energy and the Runaway Universe” presentation.

As a member of not one, but two, Nobel Prize-winning teams credited with discovering the accelerating expansion of the universe, Filippenko has heft in the field. His nine-time position as “Best Professor” and multiple “Best Course” recognitions from students on the Cal campus adds the younger set’s stamp of approval. Tack on his hundreds of public lectures, newscast and contributions to publications and television documentaries and you have the human equivalent of a supernova.

Or maybe, a superstar, which would please the pun-loving Filippenko, who began his lecture discussing a recent attempt to vomit.

Invited to fly with the Bay Area’s Blue Angels, Filippenko recalled the experience. “Most people ask me, ‘Did I throw up?’ I tried to. Twice. I figured, if I throw up in a controlled way, then I won’t throw up suddenly, unexpectedly,” he laughed.

Shifting to more serious matters, Filippenko explained why his name was not on the 2007 and 2011 Nobel Prizes. “Only three people can share the prizes,” he said. “There were 51 people on the two teams.”

To counter what he said is a misperception—that science is an asocial activity—he told the audience how the three winners spent much of their prize money to fly all of the team to attend Nobel Week 2011. “Science is one of the most interactive things I know of. It’s a wonderful exchange of ideas that allows progress to be made much more quickly than when you pursue it alone,” he said.

Cosmology, he emphasized, is the study of the structure and evolution of the universe as a whole—and not to be confused with another, nearly identically-named field.

“Among the general public, there’s confusion between cosmology and cosmetology, the study of hairdos and facials,” he joked, displaying an image of an ad promoting hair and skin care education at an erroneously copy-written “cosmology” class.

Seeking to answer questions such as, Is the universe infinite? What is its age? and What are its fundamental building blocks? Filippenko rattled through an initial list of facts.

“It began 13.7 billion years ago,” he said. “It’s built out of enormous galaxies, and not just a few of them. There’s something like 100 billion galaxies ... and that’s just in the parts we can see.”

Showing images taken by the Hubble Space Telescope after it “stared” at one spot in the sky for ten days and nights, the thousands of galaxies drew gasps and raised eyebrows from some in the audience. “They pay us to sit around and count galaxies,” Filippenko joked. “Pretty cushy job, huh?”

Any impression of astronomers free-floating was quickly dispelled as he described Edwin Hubble’s methodology for measuring distances between galaxies and research leading to the confirmation of “redshift” in beams of light. “(The discoveries) meant nearby galaxies are moving away at some speed, but the more distant galaxies are moving away at even faster rates,” Filippenko said. “Anything that’s not tied down, stretches. Space is actually getting bigger.”

Science Café presenters often have one foot in a vaudevillian, entertaining land of miracles, and the other, in a densely-informative, scientific maze. Filippenko spread his subject across both as he riffed on Cal-Stanford rivalry one moment, then spoke at length on the deep physics of the universe. Audience questions focused on boundaries: alternate universes; forces known and unknown. Did the universe begin with a bang? What will happen if it re-collapses?

Filippenko said it’s up to the young people to find those answers. Top among their studies should be defining the “dark energy” scientists now believe constitutes 73 percent of the universe. “We really don’t know what (it) is. What we thought was empty space is dark energy.”

A century after Albert Einstein came up with – and ultimately abandoned – his idea that an anti-gravitational force kept the universe from expanding at an infinitely accelerating rate, and without it would either explode in a hot, cataclysmic event or collapse into a cold, black void, Filippenko left much to be discovered by future generations.

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Samira Says

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

“My surgeon says I’ll need physical and occupational therapy. I’m retired—why do I need occupational therapy?” David, 73

Met David during pre-surgery tours of ManorCare Walnut Creek and Tice Valley. He was finally having a knee replacement after years of discomfort and increasing pain. David’s question isn’t uncommon, most patients new to rehab have questions about the different therapy disciplines they’ll be working with at ManorCare. Orthopedic patients like David will participate in an intensive rehab program including both physical and occupational therapy (PT and OT, respectively).

Your PT program has four main components: Pain management and reduction, neurological rehabilitation, range of motion, and increased strength and endurance. Your PT is trained in multiple modalities of pain management, including electrical stimulation therapy, or E-stim. E-stim is one way to enhance your recovery and decrease pain associated with injury, surgery or nerve damage. You will work on walking, transfers (getting out of bed!), stairs and exercises specific to your recovery needs.

Like the PT program, your OT sessions will be based on comprehensive evaluations of your prior level of function, current level of function, and ultimate goals for “graduating” and going home. As I explained to David and others with similar questions, the “occupational” in OT refers to the tasks required for living, not for a specific job. Your Occupational Therapist will work with you to adapt your environment should you need to (i.e. utilizing a shower chair or a reacher). You’ll learn how to safely perform Activities of Daily Living (things like bathing, dressing, managing a kitchen, homemaking) both during your recovery and after you have gone home so that you can get back to your life safely and successfully.

While David doesn’t need Speech Therapy, this discipline is part of some treatment programs. A Speech Language Pathologist focuses on diseases of communication and speech. Depending on your needs, a SLP will work on cognitive exercises, swallowing techniques, or determining helpful communication techniques both for you and for those communicating with you.

David’s individual treatment program included both PT and OT. His PT helped him learn how to navigate stairs and long distances without injuring his new joint. His OT taught him how to safely get dressed, take a shower and live as independently as possible in his home. I called David at home to check in, and he tells me that he is strong and independent! The best thing he told me: “I couldn’t have done it without Joe and Maria”. Joe was his PT and Maria his OT. This is the best part of my job: hearing how great people are doing after they graduate and go back to their lives.

For more information please visit www.manorcare.com.
For a short video visit us on YouTube: www.youtube.com/hcmanorcare



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ManorCare Tice Valley
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ticevalley@manorcare.com

Upcoming Lectures at LLLC

Alta Bates Summit Medical Center – What Has Happened to My Good Night’s Sleep?

Tuesday, Feb. 5, 6:30 to 8 p.m., Community Hall
Neurologist and sleep medicine specialist Joanna Cooper, MD, will explain why sleep is so important, how sleep patterns change over time, what disorders might be affecting your sleep and how to get the help you need to maximize your chances of a good night’s sleep. Free. To reserve your space, call (510) 869-6737.

“The Race for Space: International Law and Protocol in the Final Frontier”

Wednesday, Feb. 6, 7 to 8 p.m., Community Hall
SETI Institute Senior Research Scientist Dr. Margaret Race will discuss how international policies for planetary protection and responsible exploration have guided activities in outer space since the earliest years of the Space Age. She’ll also share her perspective and involvement in current international efforts to update protocols for future space activities, including those applicable to commercial ventures and long term human outposts. Cost: \$8 members, \$10 non-members, students free. For reservations visit the World Affairs Council of the East Bay website at www.ItsYourWorld.org or call (415) 293-4600.

Science Café – Plants, Perfumes and Poisons

Tuesday, Feb. 19, 7 to 8 p.m., Community Hall
Dr. Margareta (Gret) Sequin, author, plant enthusiast and lecturer emerita at San Francisco State University, comes to the LLLC to share her vast knowledge of California native flora and their pleasing and poisonous properties. On a virtual walk, Sequin will lead the group to look at plants that contain defensive substances and examine their molecular structures, and explore the connections with human uses of these plant substances, such as commercial fragrances or medicines. Admission: \$5/person. For info, call (925) 283-6513, ext. 101 or email reserve@LLLCF.org.

For information about additional events, visit www.lafayettelib.org.

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ZELL'S SUCCESS STORY

Zell Nathanson of Orinda tells
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own words,

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10 to a size 6 in 2 1/2
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to do. Its not a diet but a
"way of eating" and the
workouts are fun, but
hard work of course.

I really feel proud of
myself for what I have
accomplished in a short
time. I love the way I look
and feel. I never thought I
could lose so much weight
and get so fit at this age.
It just shows, its never too
late to get in shape.

I am so glad I found
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Reunion Hootenanny Celebrates Stanley Choral Director Brian McKibben

Former Stanley Middle School students gather for '70s
sing-a-long

By Jennifer Wake



1973 Stanley Yearbook

Photo provided

In 1974, while some choral groups
were singing pieces from
"Oliver," and folk songs like "How
Sad Flow the Streams" at the First
Annual Intermediate Choral Festival,
the Stanley Middle School Chorus di-
rected by Brian McKibben was belt-
ing out the Everly Brothers song, "All
I Have to Do Is Dream," and "We
Can Work it Out" by John Lennon
and Paul McCartney.

At a Lafayette home Jan. 12, the
walls reverberated with these songs
and more as former Stanley students
gathered to honor McKibben at what
was dubbed the "Brian McKibben
Stanley Chorus Reunion Hootenanny."
The beloved McKibben taught at Stan-

ley from 1969 to the mid-1980s.

"Brian was the most kind-
hearted, influential, special, cool
teacher I've ever had!" said former
student Jayne Schonach.

"He made Chorus unique by the
songs we sang. They were the songs
of our time," added former student
Carol Duncan. "I never had another
teacher throughout the rest of my for-
mal education that ever made an im-
pact on me like Brian did."

Heidi Rahlmann Plumb coordi-
nated the event with Adele Gronner-
Connor, both former chorus
members, and current mothers of
Stanley Middle School students.

... continued on page B9

LYNN'S TOP FIVE

Medicare Planning at Retirement – It's Not for Sissies!

By Lynn Ballou, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™

Like a good mystery novel, plan-
ning for Medicare at retirement
is a process full of many twists of plot,
some odd characters and often a
shocker ending. Unraveling the inte-
gration of Medicare into your new re-
tirement lifestyle and budget can send
you to the hair salon for a color treat-
ment faster than most any other aspect
of retirement planning. I sat down
with my business partner, Marilyn
Plum, CFP® who is our in-house "go
to" person for Medicare planning, and
asked her for five often misunder-
stood or forgotten planning issues on
this topic. First, some definitions, as
provided by the U.S. Social Security
Administration website:

**Medicare Part A - Hospital In-
surance:** Part A is paid for by a por-
tion of Social Security tax. It helps
pay for inpatient hospital care, limited
skilled nursing care, hospice and other
services.

**Medicare Part B – Medical In-
surance:** Part B is paid for by the
monthly premiums of people enrolled
and by general funds from the U.S.
Treasury. It helps pay for doctors'
fees, outpatient hospital visits and
other medical services and supplies
that are not covered by Part A.

**Medicare Part C – Medicare
Advantage:** Plans allow you to
choose to receive all your health care
services through a provider organiza-
tion. These plans may help lower
your costs of receiving medical serv-
ices, or you may get extra benefits for
an additional monthly fee. You must
have both Parts A and B to enroll in
Part C.

**Medicare Part D – Prescription
Drug Coverage:** Is voluntary and the
costs are paid for by the monthly pre-
miums of enrollees and Medicare.

So, moving on, here's what Mar-
ilyn recommended I share with you:
**1) Sign up before you turn 65
years of age:** If you are approaching
age 65, be on high alert and start mak-
ing your Medicare coverage decisions
early. You need to sign up for
Medicare within a seven month win-
dow that is calculated as starting three
months before the month that you
turn 65, the month you turn 65, and
ending three months after the month

you turn 65. If you or your spouse
are still working at age 65, contact
your benefits department to learn
about how your coverage works with
Medicare and if you need to sign up.
**2) There are expensive and life-
long Medicare penalties if you
don't sign up in time:** Paying atten-
tion to these enrollment periods is so
critical because if you miss deadlines,
permanent penalties will apply to
your premiums for as long as you
have Medicare coverage. For exam-
ple, if you are on a COBRA or in a re-
tiree health plan when you turn 65,
you are not considered covered by
medical insurance based on current
employment. You must, therefore,
sign up for Medicare when you are
first eligible at the age of 65 (see time
window above) or face penalties. For
example, your Part B monthly pre-
mium can have an add-on penalty of
10 percent for each full year that you
should have been enrolled and were
not.

**3) What if you started receiving
Social Security income before age
65:** If this is the case, you will be au-
tomatically signed up for Part A and
Part B starting on the first day of the
month you turn 65. You then need to
add on a Part C Advantage Plan or a
Medigap plan (if you want it) and/or
Part D coverage on your own.

4) Think about a Medigap Plan:
According to the Medicare website
(see reference below), Medigap insur-
ance is sold by private companies and
can help pay some of the health care
costs that Parts A and B don't cover
such as copayments and deductibles.
You pay a private insurance company
for this coverage in addition to your
Part B premiums, and each policy can
only cover one person (husband and
wife must each have their own pol-
icy). The Medicare website points out
that Medigap insurance is different
from Part C Medicare Advantage
plans because Medigap policies only
supplement your original Medicare
benefits. Also note: Medigap plans
sold after January 2006 cannot cover
prescriptions.

5) Join a Part D Plan: Even if you
don't need it now, you should seri-
ously consider electing to join a Part

D plan, even with the lowest amount
of coverage, so you are at least en-
rolled in a plan. Again, it's about
leaving your options open and avoid-
ing penalties later on. Penalties apply
if you do not sign up for a Part D plan
when you are first eligible, or if you
go for 63 days or more in a row with-
out this coverage. The late enrollment
penalty is expensive – 1 percent of the
"national base beneficiary premium"
(\$31.17 in 2013) per uncovered
month!

To say the least, this is just a tiny
piece of the whole Medicare picture.
In addition to your own valued family
health insurance agent and specialist,
there are other great independent re-
sources for further guidance. We, and
our clients, have found the following
particularly helpful:

- **Health Insurance Counseling
and Advocacy Program (HICAP)
for Contra Costa County (and
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HICAP offers free local group pre-
sentation and individual counseling on
Medicare and supplement plans. They
are independent and do not represent
any insurance company.
- **Medicare:** www.medicare.gov
- **The Henry J. Kaiser Family
Foundation:** http://www.kff.org



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Miller Visit Canceled Due to Staph Concerns at Acalanes

Submitted by Jason Bezis



Empty cafeteria

Photos provided

Community members hoping
to hear 11th District Con-
gressman George Miller speak
about local issues at a Town Meet-
ing last Saturday were met with an
empty Acalanes High School cafete-
ria and cancellation signs due to
concerns over two confirmed cases
of Staph Infection at the school.
According to a Jan. 25 letter from

Acalanes Principal Aida Gimme,
school staff were taking precau-
tions as advised by the local health
agencies, and to prevent further
spreading of the infection, closed
down the small gym, weight room
and locker rooms last Friday.
These facilities were profession-
ally cleaned before being reopened
over the weekend.

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Rheem Theatre: The Community Mobilizes

By Sophie Braccini



Two Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School students baked for two days to raise money for the theater. Photo provided

Thanks to strong community support, as of last week the Rheem Theatre was well on its way to raising the money necessary to order the lift it needs to re-open the upper floor theaters and be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, according to Derek Zemrak of the California Independent Film Festival Association which operates the theater.

Support for this unique recreation venue was swift. In the span of two weeks, individuals, businesses and organizations have raised thousands of dollars.

"Individuals have been writing big checks," said Zemrak. Neighborhood Computer gave \$1,000, the Zemrak family gave \$2,500 and Moraga resident Cliff Dochterman, who is the town's representative to the County Council on Aging, gave \$1,000. "You can't ask people to donate if you do not do it yourself," he said.

Dochterman started a campaign he calls "Let's Give Moraga a Lift" and is soliciting residents, businesses and service clubs, such as the Rotary. "The theater is a major recreation facility for Moraga," added Dochter-

man. It was a letter by Dochterman pinpointing the lack of access to the upper floor that led Zemrak to close the non-accessible floors. Dochterman wants to be part of the solution because he believes this kind of effort underscores the unique quality of the Moraga community.

An example of this was a bake sale organized by two Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School students, Kellen Kvech and Ally Scarpitti, who baked for two days and set up a table at the corner of Arroyo and Sullivan Drive Jan. 20 to raise money for the lift.

"Ally and I went into the theater to get my mom some popcorn and found out all the upstairs theaters were closed due to the elevator lift," said Kvech. "We saw the donation box and how much money people were donating and I decided it would be a good idea to have a bake sale. It's so nice to have a place locally where kids can be with their friends. Some of my favorite memories are with my cousins and I watching movies in the theater and waking my Grandma up during the movie."

"I have been going there since I

was little and don't want to see it close down again," added Scarpitti. The two friends baked soft pretzels and cup cakes and raised \$170 the first weekend. They plan another sale next weekend.

On Jan. 18 Shelby's restaurant in Orinda gave 15 percent of the night's revenue to the theater. "We were immediately supportive of the Rheem when we heard about the issue," said Carlos Rangel, owner of Shelby's. "As small business owners we know the challenge that ADA compliance can pose and we wanted to show solidarity."

Patrons from both Moraga and Orinda crowded the Theatre Square restaurant that night, resulting in a check for \$1,000 made to the theater. Shelby's is also supporting the 'Oscar Night' at the Rheem by supplying dinner for the Feb. 24 event.

A fundraising shred event is scheduled at the 5A Rent-A-Space parking lot at Moraga Road from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Feb 16. "We are partnering with Peggy Hall of Hall of Taxes and Grant Stubblefield of Neighborhood Computers who will also be volunteering," said 5A manager Brad Noggle. "Donations are \$5 per bankers' box for paper shredding and additional donations are welcome." Noggle hopes to raise between \$2,000 and \$5,000 on the day of the event.

And the Moraga Art Gallery asked artist members to create unique six-by-six inch pieces that will be raffled. Raffle tickets are \$20 for five, and all the proceeds

will go to the theater.

Zemrak continues to focus on the long-term future of the Rheem. There are additional needs coming up for the theater: one bathroom needs to be brought to ADA compliance, and two more digital projectors have to be purchased.

"If we have the right attitude and hold the vision, we will do it," said Edy Schwartz, Chamber of Commerce liaison to the Lamorinda The-

atres. Zemrak is also engaged in negotiations with property owner Mike Puri because, although the lease does not end for another year, he wants to have a long-term contract to plan for the future.

"The Orinda Theatre is doing very well and so did the Rheem until we had to close the upstairs, better than they had done in more than 10 years," said Zemrak. "I'm reasonably optimistic for the future."



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Orinda Community Church to Host World Renowned Theologian and Author

By Laurie Snyder

"I, the fiery life of divine wisdom, I ignite the beauty of the plains, I sparkle the waters, I burn in the sun, and the moon, and the stars." – Hildegard of Bingen

"Has there ever been a time in human history or the history of the planet when illumination, light, and wisdom, were needed more than now? Can anyone be better equipped to lead us than the neglected one, St. Hildegard, who in fact defines the ultimate act of illumination as compassion?" asks Matthew Fox in his book, "Illuminations of Hildegard of Bingen."

A beloved theologian and internationally recognized expert on Christian mysticism, Fox will bring his acclaimed abilities to illumine and inspire to Lamorinda when he teaches at the Orinda Community Church Sunday, Feb. 10 in events that are sure to attract participants from across the Bay Area.

Fox is revered by many for igniting the embers that sparked their spiritual journeys through writings such as "One River, Many Wells: Wisdom Springing from Global Faiths," "Meditations with Meister Eckhart," and "Hildegard of Bingen's Book of Divine Works with Letters and Songs."

His most recent book, "Hildegard of Bingen, A Saint for Our Times: Unleashing Her Power in the 21st Century," has been released to mark the canonization of this Benedictine abbess. During her lifetime (1098-1179), Hildegard rose above the patriarchal culture to become a healer, scientist and composer, as well as a much sought after counselor by the highest ranking of male church leaders. She likened herself to the David who brought down Goliath.

Fox is a modern day version of David himself. A former Dominican priest and summa cum laude graduate of the Institut Catholique de Paris with a doctorate in the History and Theology of Spirituality, he once took on Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger (now Pope Benedict XVI) in an attempt to stop the dissolution of the Creation Spirituality Institute at Oakland's Holy Names College. He continues to spar with the current pope and other spiritual leaders across the globe, challenging them with his thinking, activism, and writing. Books such as his "Christian Mystics: 365 Readings and Meditations" have become popular with many of diverse faiths who engage in meditation and other forms of contemplative practice.

OCC event attendees will reflect on the theme, "In what language will our children and grandchildren pray?" Fox will lead the liturgical service and dance, which will begin at 10 a.m. in the main sanctuary. Lunch will then be served in OCC's Fellowship Hall prior to the workshop with Fox from noon to 2 p.m. Church leaders are asking each workshop participant for a \$20 donation (\$30 for families or \$5 for students) to help defray expenses; however, no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

It is anticipated that seating will fill up quickly. To reserve your space, call (925) 254-4906. For more information about Matthew Fox, visit his web site: www.matthewfox.org.

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TEEN SCENE

Prom Planning: Is it too Early?

Two Miramonte teens express their opposing opinions about preparing for prom night.

By Youngjoo Ahn and Caie Kelley

Yes, early prom preparation is necessary.

Before I was actually a high school student, I thought high school would be the most glamorous time of my life. In my imagination, I would be eating lunch off campus, driving to school, decorating my own locker with tons and tons of photos, but most importantly I would be going to prom. As I walked in on the first day of high school, I soon found that Miramonte prevented off campus activities with a security camera and that the locker I would be having for the next four years was not poster friendly. No one told me about the stress of tests, homework, or finals either. However, one dream still remains in my fantasy high school life: prom.

In the childhood movies I watched about high school, prom night was the biggest event ever. In freshman and sophomore year, my friends and I were already thinking about our dresses because we all wanted that perfect night. Even if prom isn't the memory of a lifetime when else do teenage girls have the chance to try on tens or maybe even hundreds of different dresses in search for "perfect"?

As I was nonchalantly skimming Facebook recently, I was added to a new group called "Junior Prom dresses!" At Miramonte High School, prom takes place on March 23 and it seemed a bit silly that a group came together with over 157 members in early January to encourage positive feedback and helpful suggestions. Initially I was shocked, however, after thinking about it, I began to realize how smart it is to plan ahead. Just as studying for finals isn't achieved in an hour or a day, dress shopping takes time, patience, and endless searching.

I ordered my dress after being motivated by the Facebook page. After hearing that I already ordered my dress, a friend said, "I'm not even going to think about buying a dress until at least February. Why start the dress stress now?" However, by buying a dress early, I no longer have the burden that procrastinators carry. Dress shopping only becomes more stressful as prom night approaches. Stores often run out of sizes and dress design websites post "out of stock" messages. "Beggars can't be choosers and why be the beggar?" another friend remarked when she too ordered her dress online. I'm sure Caie will agree that having to wear a last choice dress because of last minute shopping is no way to celebrate this special occasion.

In the midst of stressful high school lives, reducing even one source of pressure counts. It's never too early to buy a prom dress and it's never too early to organize your life.

No, early prom preparation is not necessary.

Don't get me wrong, I am like most teenage girls. I have been hearing about this glorious night called "prom" for a very long time, either through television shows, movies, or the subtly titled Disney film, "Prom." I look forward to it with excitement – and a little bit of fear. At the beginning of January, a new Facebook group popped up on my newsfeed: "Junior Prom dresses!"

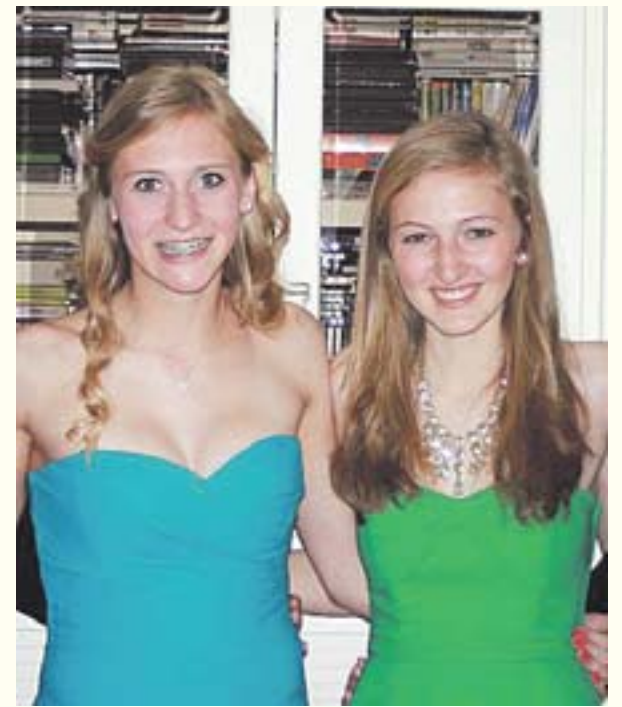
It was a place for us to post what we were wearing, so that we could receive other's opinions, encouragement, and prevent any awkward "twin dress" situations, with two girls in the same outfit on that night. Within a couple hours, more than 15 of my peers had published their prom plans, and I will admit I began to worry, searching online for a dress of my own. After all, early planning is smart, especially during a stressful junior year. But we had just returned from winter break, and prom was a quarter of a year away. Is it necessary to prepare for prom this early? Youngjoo will disagree with me, but I vote no.

Prom is at the end of March. Most of us are so busy with school, sports, and other extracurricular activities that finding a "perfect dress" and making sure everything is ready months before the date actually approaches can be a source of stress. More importantly, there is still plenty of time to prepare, and energy is better spent focusing on the day-to-day rather than on a distant dance.

Furthermore, the hype that builds up around prom already makes it so that the night has some serious standards to live up to. As one friend explained, "I know I shouldn't, but I want prom to be that magical night we've watched on TV since we were kids. The right dress, the right hair, the makeup – how often do we get to go all out like this in high school?" She has a point, but there is still no use in worrying and dreaming about a day that is so far away.

As one of my classmates exclaimed when she saw the Facebook group, "I'm having an anxiety attack just thinking about this – we still have finals! How can I worry about a dance?" For many high school girls, planning early is important. But for the sake of those who are not quite as on top of it, maybe we should hold off on the Facebook groups and discussions until at least February?

Active and involved Miramonte juniors, Caie Kelley and Youngjoo Ahn are officers of Club Be the Star You Are!® as well as co-hosts/reporters on Express Yourself!™ Teen Radio. ?



Margot Odell (left) and Caroline Colwell (right) found the perfect prom dresses for last year's big night.



Caie Kelley and Matt Coupin check out the corsage and boutonniere
Photos provided

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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Lost Pets

Lost Bird (Cockatiel)

My beloved Gray and white cockatiel got out Thursday 01/24/13 afternoon around 3 PM. He has a bright yellow head with orange circles on his cheeks. If he landed on you or near you, you might hear him whistle, "pop goes the weasil", "The Addams Family", "Charge", the wolf whistle, "Dixie" or he might just be screeching because he is frightened. My heart is broken, please let me know if you see him!!! My name is Jesse and my cell phone # is 914-844-8904.

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Nothing Says Love Like Crab Bisque

By Susie Iventosch

Crab bisque is definitely a labor of love ... love of crab and love for those you are serving, because it is quite a bit of work! First, you really need to have the shells to make a proper broth, so you must spend the time to remove the crab meat from those crazy crustaceans. I use both Dungeness and King crab, because the flavor of Dungeness is so sweet and the meat of the King crab is so nice and so much easier to remove from the shell.

This recipe really has two main parts: the broth and the vegetable sauté/puree. If you make extra broth, which I did, you can freeze it for another batch and you will have saved an entire step of the process!



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. **This recipe can be found on our website:** 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.

Crab Bisque

(Makes 6-8 servings)

INGREDIENTS

- 2 Dungeness crabs, approximately 2 pounds each, cleaned, meat removed and saved; reserve shells
- 2 King crab legs, meat removed (and saved) and shells reserved
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped (for puree)
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped or sliced (for broth)
- 1 carrot, cut into large chunks (for broth)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 stalks celery, finely chopped (for puree)
- 1 stalk celery cut into large pieces (for broth)
- 2 large tomatoes, chopped
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning (or substitute-see below)
- 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 cup dry sherry
- 1 bottle clam juice (8 ounce)
- Juice of ½ of a lemon
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 3-4 cups crab broth

DIRECTIONS

Crab Broth

Remove crab meat from shells and reserve in a container until ready to use. Meanwhile, place empty shells (pieces and all) on a baking sheet and bake at 450° for approximately 15 minutes, or until shells begin to brown. Transfer from oven to a very large soup pot, breaking down any very large pieces of shell. Add 1 coarsely chopped onion, the carrot and the celery chunks. Cover with approximately 10 to 12 cups of water, or to where the water is about 1 inch above the shells. Bring just to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer over medium-low heat for an hour, or so. Do not stir the broth, but do skim off any foam that accumulates on top. Cool and strain. Set aside broth and discard shells at this point. *Broth will be slightly reduced in volume from simmering and it will have a slightly opaque appearance.

Veggie Sauté /Puree

Melt butter in large pot. Add onion, celery and garlic and cook over medium heat until tender, but not browned. Stir in salt, white pepper and Old Bay Seasoning (or your own spice blend). Add chopped tomatoes and continue to cook for a few more minutes. Stir in flour and cook for another minute. Whisk in tomato paste, sherry, clam juice and lemon juice and stir until well-integrated. Remove from heat and mix in about 8 ounces of the reserved crab meat. Cool. When cool enough to handle, puree mixture until as smooth as possible and return to same pot. *It will not be completely smooth due to the crab meat, but it will be much smoother than before. Add 3-4 cups of crab broth to puree and stir well. Mix in 1 cup heavy cream (can use Half & Half if you prefer) and cook over low heat until slightly reduced and slightly thickened, approximately 30 minutes to one hour, stirring occasionally. (The flavor of the bisque will intensify during this final heating.) Just before serving, add remaining crab meat to pot and cook just a few minutes longer, enough just to heat the crab meat. Serve with blue cheesy bread.

Blue Cheesy Bread

1 loaf of your favorite artisan bread, sliced into ½-inch thick slices
 ½ cup extra virgin olive oil
 ¾ cup blue cheese, crumbled
 Spread olive oil on tops of bread slices with a pastry brush. Sprinkle blue cheese over top and bake at 400° for approximately 10-15 minutes, or until bread is crunchy and blue cheese is melted and beginning to brown on top.

Old Bay Seasoning Mix

This is a spice blend used in many seafood dishes and marketed by McCormick & Company. It includes: dry mustard powder, paprika, celery seed and celery salt, bay leaf, black and red pepper, cinnamon, cloves, allspice, mace, nutmeg, cardamom, salt and ginger. Since this is quite a few ingredients, and the bisque calls for salt and pepper anyway, I limited my "old bay seasoning" to the cardamom, paprika, nutmeg, ginger, allspice and the red pepper flakes, and I used just about ¼ teaspoon of each.



Photo Susie Iventosch

Business Service Directory

Reunion Hootenanny Celebrates Stanley Choral Director Brian McKibben

... continued from page B6

Lyrics were projected on the wall as approximately 30 former chorus students – accompanied by fellow alums on tambourines, a keyboard, acoustic guitars, and McKibben himself on his own guitar – sang tunes from the past: “Hotel California” (Eagles), “Country Comfort” (Elton John), and many more.

“Teachers don’t often get to know the impacts they have made, especially 30-plus years after the fact,” said Rahlmann Plumb. “To be able to thank Brian and share with him how meaningful an experience it was to be in his class was really a gift.”

The former chorus students came from as far as the Pacific Northwest to join in the sing-along and reminisce with their choral director.

Anita Orne, who now teaches music in Washington, and also plays in a trio said, “While Brian taught chorus, which implies singing, he scooped me up – a fledgling guitarist with not much of a voice, and showed me the path to non-classical music (not a path too many schools offer), and the glories of playing back-up, which I still follow and teach today.”

Others also went on to pursue musical careers: David Sasse was cast in the recent Lamplighter’s Musical Theater production of “Princess Ida,” and Paul Rustigan has a Bay Area band called Swoop Unit.

Plans for the event started last November, and were coordinated on Facebook where a group of more than 70 members followed the preparations and rekindled friendships. Posts following the event underscored the respect, love and admiration students had, and continue to have, for McKibben and how his class changed who they were.

“Brian introduced me to the music of the time,” said Martha De Carbonel Patterson. “Before Little Chorus, I didn’t have a lot of confidence in myself, or felt I had much to offer. Like others have said, he made everyone feel unique and valued.”

Lynn Barakos explained how rare and wonderful the sing-along experience is: “Most of us in western ‘civilized’ society rarely get the chance to sit together with a group of friends making music, being silly, singing our guts out. . . Brian basically started my addiction to this kind of communal expression of musical joy!”

“If there’s anything I want from this life, it’s to have a chance to use music to bring people together in the cause of peace,” McKibben said. “I’ve been more than extremely fortunate to have had that chance, over and over. I’m not done yet.”

Plans for another Hootenanny are already being discussed.

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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 Arts Council is pleased to announce its 10th Annual Visual Arts Competition, Exhibit and Reception open to all high school students residing in or attending schools in Orinda, Lafayette, or Moraga. Cash awards and "Best in Show" viewer's choice award. Online Registration opens Feb. 1 and closes Feb. 19 at midnight. Artists and Awards Reception from 4 to 6 p.m. March 6; Exhibit March 1-27, Orinda Library Art Gallery. For more info and to register visit www.OrindaArtsCouncil.org.

The Allison McCrady Fine Arts Gallery will have an exhibit by renowned artist Micah Crandall-Bear, starting Feb. 4. The work of Micah Crandall-Bear is the culmination of years of practice, sacrifice and patience. Knowing from a young age he wanted to pursue a career as an artist, he dedicated himself to his craft, and took the path of the starving artist. His bio, exhibit history and photos are available upon request. A reception will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9.

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—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. (see story page B1)

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.

The Orinda Library Gallery's February exhibit will feature Jade Fon Painters and will include a retrospective tribute acknowledging his influence, teaching and guidance. It will include some of his paintings, sketches, art materials, quotes and personal mementos. A reception will be held from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 10 at the Orinda Library Gallery, 124 Orinda Way, Orinda. Free.

THEATER

The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee is a musical comedy about six young people in the throes of puberty vying for the spelling championship of a lifetime. This musical is running through Feb. 10 at the DVC Theater, 321 Golf Club Road in Pleasant Hill. For more info, call (925) 685-1230 ext. 2337.

Josh Groban Live: All That Echoes. This intimate one-night event will feature Groban as he performs hits from his 12-year career at 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 4 at Walnut Creek 14 with XD, 1201 Locust St., and Pleasant Hill Downtown 16 with XD, 125 Crescent Dr. in Pleasant Hill. For more info, visit www.FathomEvents.com.

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

CLUBS

Girls Night Out Networking -come for the people, the food, the networking opportunity! Join Robin Cartier of Salon Cartier for fun, prizes, and a chance to make new friends from 5:30 to 8 p.m., Tuesday, Feb. 12 at Salon Cartier (2400 Olympic Blvd. Ste. 5, Walnut Creek). Cost: \$10 members, \$15 non-members. For reservations, email gnoners@gmail.com by Feb. 8 or visit www.gnontrivalley.com.

Celebrate Valentine's Day with the Lafayette Garden Club. Garth Jacober, owner of Mt. Diablo Nursery in Lafayette, will share his knowledge and expertise about some of our favorite flowers—camellias, azaleas and rhododendrons - at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 14, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. Garth is a master gardener and a renowned camellia expert. For info, contact sa613and@aol.com.

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.

KIDS, TEENS & PARENTS

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. The tryouts will be at Campolindo High School located on 300 Moraga Road in Moraga. For more information please visit <http://eastbayeclipsesoccer.com/home/tryouts>.

A girls basketball club out of the East Bay will have 2013 Spring Tryout dates for East Bay teams Feb. 10 and Feb. 17 at Seven Hills School, 975 North San Carlos Dr., Walnut Creek. Different age groups try out at different times - please contact Coach Diaz at coachsdiaz@gmail.com for the details.

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 info, visit www.orindapoise.org.

Second Annual Creating a Peaceful School Conference from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 2 will focus on how to immediately and effectively defuse violence and cultivate peace in schools sessions they will address cyber bullying, school safety, teaching of non-violence, mindfulness/meditation, teaching on issues of peace and ethics, brain function and behavior, yoga for the classroom, conflict resolution, and peer mediation. For info, email margli@mtidpc.org or call (925) 933-7850.

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. Thursday, Feb. 7 at the Lafayette Library, 3491 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. For more info, call (925) 385-2280 or visit 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.

The Orinda Junior Women's Club (Orinda Juniors) is pleased to announce Youth Ink 2013, the 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 and mailed to Orinda Junior Women's Club, Post Office Box 40, Orinda, CA 94563 in order to be considered for an award.

Submission forms can be found at OIS or at www.orindajuniors.org.

LITERATURE/LECTURES

Lisa Kristine, an acclaimed humanitarian photographer who specializes in images of remote indigenous cultures in more than 100 countries on six continents, will speak 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.

Book signing events at Orinda Books: Tom Scovel will discuss and sign copies of "The Year China Changed: Memories of Remarkable Events and Extraordinary People" at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 13; Ed Kaune will discuss and sign copies of his novel "The Spiral Code", a fantasy adventure growing out of the author's experiences in the Korean War at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 20 at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square, Orinda. For info, call (925) 254-7606 or email orindabooks@thegrid.net.

Lamorinda Reads: free copies of "A Hologram for the King" are currently available to the public at any Lamorinda library. Programs celebrating the book will be held through the month of February. There will be a free book reading with the author at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28 at the Veterans Memorial building, 3780 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. There will also be discussions held at each local library, check website for details. For more info, call (925) 385-2280 or visit guides.ccclib.org.

Book Sale at the Moraga Library from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 2. Mass paperbacks 25 cents each, or five for \$1; large paperbacks \$1.50 each or two for \$2; hardbacks \$2 each or two for \$3; coffee table/oversized books \$3 or as marked.

Telling the Story of Your Life: Memoir Writing Workshop. Author and writing instructor, Margaret Lucke leads a three-hour free workshop from 1 to 4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19 at the Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda. Pre-registration is required. For more information please call (925) 254-2184 or visit guides.ccclib.org/lamorindareads.

MUSIC

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

The Campolindo High School Orchestra, under the direction of Maestro Johnny Johnson, with special guest Mariya Borozina, will be performing the Mozart Sinonia Concertante at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 21 in the Campolindo Performing Arts Center, 300 Moraga Road, Moraga. Also featured are student chamber groups and Haydn's Symphony No. 82 in C Major. Their Winter Concert is free.

The Campolindo Winter Band Concert with special guest artist Diane Maltester playing the concertino for Clarinet and Band by Frank Beniciscutto as well as a full program by the Concert and Symphonic Bands will be held at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28, in the Campolindo Performing Arts Center, 300 Moraga Road, Moraga. Free.

Big Band Ball Room Dance and show at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 8 at 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: \$10 at the door or at the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. For reservations: (925) 284-7404.

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◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆

MUSIC ... continued

The Performing Arts Society Tuesday evening concert for February will open with a piano quintet by Shostakovich, followed by Soprano Diane Barton Brown singing songs by Faure and Ernest Chausson, accompanied by pianist Nancy Rude at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 12 at Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek. Barton Brown will also sing *Airs and Fancies* by American opera composer Seymour Barab accompanied by violin, cello and piano. This concert concludes with Beethoven's String Quartet in C Major which features violins, viola and cello. Free. For more info, visit www.ccpas.org.

A jazz piano concert by members of the Contra Costa Performing Arts Society will take place at 1:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 15 in the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Please call Lafayette Senior Services to reserve your spot at (925) 284-5050. Cost: \$3 members; \$5 non-members. The pianists will be performing music from *The Great American Song Book*.

Members of the Performing Arts Society Piano Recitalists will perform solo piano music by Beethoven, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Prokofiev, Poulenc and others at 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 17 at Grace Presbyterian Church, 2100 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek. Free. For info, visit www.ccpas.org.

The Campolindo High School Music Program is hosting its annual Jazz Dinner Dance from 6:30 to 10 p.m. Saturday, March 2 at Temple Isaiah, 3800 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. There will be a sit-down dinner with salad, main entrée, dessert and beverages. The Campolindo Jazz Bands will play throughout the night for guests to enjoy during dinner or to dance along to afterward. Tickets: \$40 for students. All proceeds benefit the Campolindo Music Program. For more information, contact Donia Gousios at doniagousios@yahoo.com.

OTHER

SEED (Special Education Enrichment Development) Foundation of Lafayette is co-funding a 12-week behavior management course for Lafayette parents Wednesday nights from 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 robinhaugelinic@gmail.com.

The Orinda Woman's Club announces acceptance of applicants for its major beneficiary awards in 2013. Application forms and criteria 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. Deadline: 7 p.m. March 4.

Lamorinda Adult Respite Center (LARC) is looking for caring, fun, enthusiastic volunteers to assist once or twice a month. Activities include: games, crafts, daily live musical entertainment, lunch and exercise. Come join the fun and help enhance the lives of our local seniors. For more information, or to schedule a visit, please call Beth Montgomery at (925)254-3465.

The Friends of the Orinda Creeks present "Climate Change" – it's not just our future anymore." How fast is the weather changing? What's next? Can we adapt in time? Rebecca Verity, Senior Scientist at URS Corporation will discuss these questions starting at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 13 at the Orinda Library. For more info, visit www.orindacreeks.org.

Volunteer Docents sought for John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez. Come share your passion for history, nature, and education with our visitors! For details about the program, contact Joanne Jarvis at Joanne_Jarvis@nps.gov or (925) 228-8860, ext. 6321.

Bridal Fair from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, March 3 at the Lafayette Park Hotel. Admission: \$15 advance; \$20 at the door. To purchase tickets and for more info, visit www.UR-LocalBride.com.

The West Coast Conference Colleges are collecting new and gently used t-shirts at local drop off points. The Saint Mary's local drop off point is 5A Rent-A-Space, 455 Moraga Rd., Suite F in the front office lobby from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday. The drive ends Feb. 28. For more info about Clothes 4 Souls™ visit www.clothes4souls.org, telephone Erin at (208) 340-8235 or contact Gilbert at ggm4@stmarys-ca.edu.

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

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

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

How to Raise Your Own Chickens. Papa John Kiefer will offer workshops on How to Raise Your Own Chickens, including information about raising young chicks, laying hen maintenance, and sustainable coop construction from 1 to 3:30 p.m. on Sundays during February and March. Reservations required. For more info, email jhkiefer@comcast.net.

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.

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

Creating a Peaceful School Conference presented by Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 2 at Seven Hills School, 975 North San Carlos Dr., Walnut Creek. You will develop the skills you need to make your school a safer and more peaceful place. Cost: \$35. For more info, call (925) 933-7850.

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.

Widowed Persons Support Group: grief support sessions are informal discussions for those in need of emotional support after the loss of a loved one. Sessions are presented from 10 a.m. to noon each Saturday, Feb. 2 to March 9 in the Oak Room-back of parking lot at St. Stephens Episcopal Church. Anyone may attend all six or as many as you can, no reservation or fee. For additional info, call (925) 376-0321.

Stitchers Unite! Valley Stitchers and Fiber Arts Guild will meet Monday, Feb. 4 at the Faith Lutheran Church, 50 Woodsworth Ln., Pleasant Hill, to watch Jane Belitti present the History of Ballet through costumes. Please arrive before 10 a.m. to go through our sales tables full of different arts. Guests are most welcome! For questions, please call Sheila Rogstad at (925) 945-1338.

Wholpin Short Films Screening at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 5 at the Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd., Moraga. For more info, call (925) 376-6852 or visit guides.ccclib.org.

"What Has Happened to my Good Night's Sleep?" is a free informative program with Neurologist and sleep medicine specialist Joanna Cooper, MD of Alta Bates Summit Medical Center, who will discuss why sleep is so important and the various disorders that could be affecting a good night's sleep, along with how to get help to resolve middle of the night wakefulness, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 5 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center's Community Hall. Free. Call (510) 869-6737 to reserve your space.

Soroptimist International Annual Crab Feed and Silent Auction at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9 at the Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Cost: \$45. Tickets must be purchased in advance. For tickets or more information please contact Toni Pera at (925) 283-2279.

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.

Renowned Theologian and Author Matthew Fox will discuss "In What Language Will Our Children and Grandchildren Pray?" from noon to 2 p.m. Feb. 10 at Orinda Community Church. (see story page Bx)

The Stroke Support Group of Contra Costa County will meet from 7 to 9 p.m. Monday, Feb. 11 in the Ball Auditorium at John Muir Medical Center- Walnut Creek Campus (1601 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek). Meetings are free and open to the public. For further information about the Stroke Support Group, contact Ann Dzuna at (925) 376-6218.

Moraga Kiwanis will be hosting a charity crab feed, silent auction, raffle, cash crab pot at 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 16 in the Soda Activity Center, Saint Mary's College, Moraga. Proceeds benefit local charities and schools. Dinner starts at 7 p.m. and will include music and dancing. Tickets: \$50. For info, contact Steve Kinsey (925) 376-2225 or Dave Shapiro (925) 631-9293.

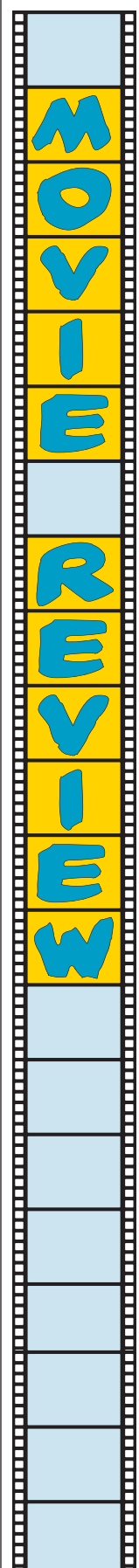
The Northern California Welsh Community invites you to join them at their musical celebration of St. David's Day for traditional hymn singing from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, March 3 at the Lafayette United Methodist Church, 955 Moraga Road. A Te Bach (little tea) will follow in the church social hall. Coffee and tea will be provided. Donations of Welsh cakes and finger food would be appreciated. For further information, contact Idris Evans at (925) 283-0912 or email loriteassociates@comcast.net.

The Lafayette School District invites parents and community members to hear Michael Josephson, Ethicist and Founder of Character Counts® speak about his life experience and the development of The Six Pillars of Character from 7 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, March 12 at Acalanes High School Performing Arts Center, 1200 Pleasant Hill Rd., Lafayette. Tickets: \$10 for one; \$15 for two. Tickets can be purchased at: michaeljosephson.eventbrite.com. Please bring your receipt with you.

POLITICAL GATHERINGS

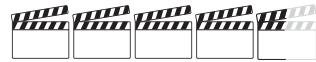
The Lamorinda Democratic Club's meeting will feature a conversation about Marriage Equality in California and the Nation with Chris Riley at 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 14 at Lafayette Library and Community Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette. Club meeting begins at 7:15 p.m. Cost: \$5; students free. For info, call (925) 567-3367 or visit www.lamorindademoclub.org.

Please submit:
Events: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com
Stories: storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com
Letters: letters@lamorindaweekly.com
Opinion: letters@lamorindaweekly.com



"Silver Linings Playbook"

By Derek Zemrak



Best Actor Oscar nominee Bradley Cooper as Pat Solitano. Photo courtesy The Weinstein Company

If you live long enough you begin to realize that life is always a bed of roses – thorny. "Silver Linings Playbook" addresses real life issues and that is why the movie hits home to so many people. It is an outstanding independent film, which had its world premier at the 2012 Toronto International Film Festival. "Silver Linings Playbook" is not coated with Hollywood sugar. I use "Argo" as an example: a true story and a great film but did the police really chase the plane on the tarmac? That scene is Hollywood sugar coating.

"Silver Linings Playbook" deals with real life issues as Pat (played by Bradley Cooper, "The Hangover," "Limitless") is released from a mental institution and is dealing with his bipolar disorder. Upon his release Pat finds out his wife, Nikki (played by newcomer Brea Bee) has moved out and filed a restraining order against him. He is assigned to the care of his parents, Pat Sr. portrayed by two-time Oscar-winner Robert DeNiro ("Raging Bull," "The Godfather Part II") and Dolores, Oscar-nominated actress Jacki Weaver ("Animal Kingdom"). Pat Sr. has his own problems as he recently lost his job and is relying on sports gambling to earn money in order to fulfill his dream of opening a restaurant. Pat Jr. is his father's "lucky charm" as they attend

a Philadelphia Eagles' football game, but it all falls apart like a fumble on the one-yard line. Pat is determined to reconcile with Nikki, but then he meets Tiffany (Jennifer Lawrence, "Winter's Bone," "Hunger Games") who is a recovering sex addict. They all come together like a confused "Madden" chalkboard session – or do they? Remember this is real life!

"Silver Linings Playbook" is written and directed by Oscar nominee David O. Russell ("The Fighter"). It is nominated for eight Academy Awards that include Best Picture, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Editing, plus is nominated for all four acting Oscars: Best Actor in a Leading Role, Bradley Cooper; Best Actress in a Supporting Role, Jennifer Lawrence; Best Actor in a Supporting Role, Robert De Niro; and Best Actress in a Supporting Role, Jacki Weaver. This is the first time since "Reds" in 1981 that a film received Oscar nominations in all four acting categories. "Silver Linings Playbook" could beat the Vegas odds and win this year's Best Picture.

"Silver Linings Playbook" is rated R with a total running time of 2 hours and 2 minutes.

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.

An Inspiring Tale of Food Intolerance and Granola

By Sophie Braccini



Bielawski and her children with the Giddy Up & Go granola she created for them.

Photo Todd Bielawski

In her Lafayette office off Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Jennifer Bielawski juggles tons of organic oats, organic corn flakes, agave nectar and seeds of all kinds. She sets up appointments with decision makers in the retail food industry and keeps an eye on her granola factory near Sacramento. The mother of two

young children has become a granola diva and successful CEO in the span of two short years. What was born from the suffering of her family has become a very successful endeavor, and it is only the beginning.

It all started when Bielawski's two children became ill, with no diagnosis or treatment in sight. "Kyle

had a sinus infection that lasted for a year; he was on antibiotics and prednisone every other month. He was very prone to pneumonia and frequently ended up in the hospital as a result," remembers Bielawski. In the meantime Kyle's older sister started developing sensory issues and was becoming more and more withdrawn and lethargic. There were still no answers after seeing many different specialists until Bielawski herself got sick and was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis. She researched her symptoms and the causes and found the link with her children's condition: multiple food intolerance.

Acupuncturist Michael Shpak explained to her how food intolerances created a vicious cycle that culminated with all the symptoms. The family changed its diet dramatically, eliminating all grain, starch, lactose and sucrose. "I opened my pantry and there was nothing there I could

use anymore," she remembers. "I called my friends and asked them to take everything away."

Then Bielawski started cooking, because she could not find anything already made in stores that could feed her family. "Very quickly I wanted to produce commercial food for those who are lactose and gluten intolerant," she says, "and I started with granola." She created Thoughtful Food, the company that produces Giddy Up & Go Granola.

One of the first difficulties was finding an organic gluten free oat producer. "To be certified gluten free, the oat has to be processed with equipment that never touches something containing gluten." She struggled to find a producer that was also organic. She finally found one in Montana; he was harvesting his first crop that year and she was one of his first customers.

At first Bielawski rented a professional kitchen and did everything herself, including the packaging and applying labels to her bags. With a background in sales, she started presenting her products to local grocers. "Connie Collier at Diablo Foods was one of the first ones to buy my product and put it on her shelves exactly two years ago," she says. Then came Lunardi's and Whole Foods.

"Then in May I got an order from Sysco Food – the distributor – for a whole pallet of granola, 50 cases. It took me five days with my mom who had come to help, to bake it and bag it. At that point I knew we needed a professional facility and we hired some people from the food industry," she said. She and her husband invested their own money in the project, they found well-off friends who were interested and wanted to invest, and they raised \$1 million.

"What made a really big difference for us is the contract with Safeway," she says. The company is developing its organic offering in select stores and chose her granola. She sold 65,000 pounds of granola in 2012 and expects to sell 10 times that amount in 2013. "There is no competition for what we do," she says. "We keep our margin very low so the product stays affordable. And since people love it, retailers order more."

Along the way Bielawski enrolled her sister, who has an MBA, to be the CFO and her nephew manages the production. She has learned everything about certification, both organic and allergen free. "We do not process any peanut at any time," she says. "We are very close to our product and everything is numbered and recorded. If you show me one bag, with its number I can immediately trace where each of its components comes from." Bielawski understands food intolerance and its negative effects; she stresses that she will stay on top of what she gives to others.

Today her children are free of symptoms, stick to the non-dairy, non-gluten diet and live a happy, full life. Bielawski is thinking about expanding her food line, maybe with pizza rolls, chicken pot pies, stuffing, or fauxghetti (spaghetti). "I think everything happens for a reason," she says. "I feel there is a higher calling for what I am doing."

For more information on food intolerance Bielawski recommends Elaine Gottschall's book, "Breaking the Vicious Cycle." Giddy Up & Go Granola can be found in most local grocery stores. For more information, visit www.thoughtfulfood.net.

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

New Senior Discount Card Supported by Nearly Three Dozen Merchants
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Al and Annie Hyman of Orinda recently used their senior discount card at Table 24. Photo Victor Ivry

More than 3,000 free 2013-14 Lamorinda Senior Discount Cards from Senior Helpers of Contra Costa are being distributed to seniors through local senior centers, senior organizations and senior living facilities, and will be available at all participating merchants. The cards entitle local seniors to discounts of 10-20 percent at 35 select restaurants, hair salons, auto repair shops and other Lamorinda and Walnut Creek businesses, including Elite Hair & Skin, Minuteman Press, Back to the Table Cooking School, The Nut Factory, New Delhi Bistro, Michael's Ristorante Italiano, Moraga Jewelers, Mountain Mike's Pizza, Table 24, Shelby's Restaurant, Orinda Motors Inc., and Hilton House. The cards are also available at the Senior Helpers offices at 1550 Viader Drive in Moraga. For more information, contact Kevin Reneau at (925) 376-9900. The card is sponsored by Senior Helpers, an in-home care provider for seniors which allows the elderly to remain independent and safe in their homes.

January Employee of the Month



From left: Frank May, Grant Shoef, Brandy Ford, Frank Melon Photo Kevin Reneau

Brandy Ford, a customer service officer for Mechanics Bank for the past six years, has been named the January Moraga Employee of the Month, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Moraga and the Chamber of Commerce. Ford has developed a large group of dedicated clients who enjoy her bright smile and positive attitude. She also manages the

branch tellers and serves as the office operations manager when manager Grant Shoef is away. In addition to her work duties, she volunteers with the Moraga Park Foundation, the Hacienda Foundation and is a member of the Moraga Kiwanis. The Rotary and Chamber awarded Ford a \$50 gift card to Safeway as well as a \$50 gift certificate to Terzetto Cuisine in Moraga.

New Addition to CM Commercial
3575 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite 212, Lafayette
(925) 235-1140

CM Commercial Real Estate announced the newest addition to the CM Commercial Team, Arabella Ablaza, who specializes in leasing office property exclusively on behalf of institutional, corporations and private owners in the East Bay market. Prior to CM Commercial, Ablaza held a position as a leasing agent for a commercial property management company.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

Dinner for the 2013 Business Person of the Year, Colleen McCormick of Lamorinda Music, and State of the City Address & Celebration at 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 1, Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Reservations required.

Joint February Mixer with the Moraga Chamber of Commerce from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 13 at Itrim, 975 Moraga Rd., Lafayette.

Moraga

Dinner for the 2013 Business Person of the Year Bill Snider of Moraga Hardware and Across the Way at 7 p.m. Feb. 26 at the Moraga Country Club. The dinner is sponsored by Union Bank.

Orinda

This year's Orinda's Small Business Winner is Flying A Gasoline. Winners are chosen with three points of distinction: A successful small business not part of a large chain; a good emissary from the business community to the community at large; and one that displays a positive attitude toward and engages with the Chamber of Commerce.

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. More information can be found on the chamber website: www.orindachamber.org.

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

LAMORINDA SPORTS

Cougars Rout Rivals, Miramonte Continues to Win

By Conrad Bassett

Last week the Campolindo Cougars continued their dominant season, defeating rival Acalanes. Campo (16-3, 4-1), who has not lost to the Dons (8-11, 1-4) since 2008, notched a convincing 66-26 win Jan. 22.

"I think we continue to play hard and we don't quit regardless of the situation, but the DFAL is not a 'learning league' where you begin to work on improving for your season, as all the teams are way past that point and hungry when league starts," Dons' head coach Chris Russell explained after the game.

The game started with back-and-forth scoring early before Campolindo went on an 11-2 run to end the first quarter. Campo senior forward Laura Hickey started the scoring and the Dons quickly answered when freshman Julie Anne Martin hit a three pointer to give the Dons the 3-2 lead. Campo junior Ashley Ewing made a layup, the first points of her game-high 23 and Campo took back the lead. Martin hit two free throws with 6:15 to go and Acalanes had their last lead of the game at 5-4.

The second period was no different as the Cougars followed a three-pointer from Dons' senior Jamie Jacobs with a 10-0 run.

At halftime, Campo led 37-15.

In the second half, Campolindo senior guard Courtney Seyranian's outside shooting helped the Cougars pull away.

"Courtney has been solid for us all season, her outside shooting makes it tough for teams to focus only on Ashley and Laura, or just sitting back in a zone," said head coach Elgin Leslie.

In addition to her 23 points, Ewing had seven rebounds and seven steals. Seyranian finished with 15 points and Hickey added 11.

Martin led the Lady Dons with ten points, going five-for-five from the line.

Russell had to adjust his lineup when senior leader Molly Martin went down with a knee injury. Her younger sister, Julie Ann, has stepped up as the Dons' leading scorer.

"She has a good feel for the game, and plays with an aggressive style," he noted, "She has all the physical tools to be a really good player."



Laura Hickey #32 had 11 in the win.

Photos Kevin Nguyen

Campolindo continued its winning ways with a 74-24 crushing of Las Lomas on Friday and the next morning they came back from a 12-point deficit to beat Castro Valley 60-46.

"I'm proud of the way we responded after we fell behind and how we battled back and played tough defense to close the gap," said Leslie.

Acalanes edged Alhambra 41-39 for their first DFAL win Friday.

Miramonte completed two strong weeks raising their record to 19-1 (6-0 DFAL) handing Clovis West their only loss in their last 12 games, 70-54, and on Saturday, coming from behind to defeat defending CIF Division II state champion Archbishop Mitty (San Jose) 69-55 at the Campolindo/Bentley Shootout in Lafayette.

The Lady Mats were led by three freshmen, Sabrina Ionescu, Keanna De los Santos, and Uriah Howard who scored 24, 17, and eight, respectively.



Uriah Howard #12



Ashley Ewing #13



Jamie Jacobs #33



Julie Anne Martin #13



Sabrina Ionescu #20



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	2/10/13	Sunday	1:30-3pm	BENTLEY HIGH SCHOOL
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	1/31/13	Thursday	4pm-6pm	Wilder #2
	2/5/13	Tuesday	4pm-6pm	Wilder #2
U13 Girls	1/30/13	Wednesday	4pm-6pm	Wilder #2
	2/4/13	Monday	4pm-6pm	Wilder #2
U14 Girls	1/30/13	Wednesday	4pm-6pm	Wilder #2
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Campolindo Dominates Dons

Cougars record third straight win

By Michael Sakoda



Chris Hansen #44 scored first for Campo on his way to a 15-point effort.

Defeating Miramonte in the second game of the season, Campolindo (14-5, 4-1) looked to defeat its other Lamorinda rival, Acalanes (6-12, 2-3), last week.

On Jan. 22, Campolindo dominated the Dons, recording an 81-49 win.

The Cougars opened the game on a 7-0 run, getting back-to-back baskets from sophomore center Chris Hansen and a three from junior guard Andrew Zolitakis.

Acalanes went inside early to junior center Buster Souza, but Campo was ready, sending two or three defenders at him on every possession. The Cougars' team defense on Souza forced four Dons turnovers in the first eight minutes of play.

"We were trying to make sure Buster didn't get the ball," said Campolindo head coach Matt Watson after the game. "We know they've struggled shooting outside...we felt we could get away with putting a little more pressure on (Souza), and it backfired."

Indeed, Acalanes shot the lights out from distance, getting three-threes apiece from junior guard Matt Thomas and senior guard Craig Anderson.

Even so, Campo stuck to its strategy. Looking to wear out Souza on both ends of the floor, they fed Hansen on offense. "If you can put Buster in any kind of foul trouble it's to your advantage," said Watson. Hansen was effective, scoring nine points in the first half.

The Cougars' effort to draw fouls early was very successful, as they

them off the glass and slow down their transition," said Dons head coach Darrell Hirashima. "We were able to do that in spurts but not consistently enough to cut it to single digits at any point."

The Dons also kept Campo off the line, allowing only four second half free throw attempts. "They didn't shoot as many free throws," Hirashima said, "but we faltered on other parts of our defense."

With seconds left in the third, Cougars senior forward John Schmitz scored a driving bucket, giving Campo a 15 point edge. Schmitz hit a three to open the final period, and from there, Campo's depth was on display.

The Cougars half court trap started forcing Dons turnovers, led by four steals from senior guard Matt McCue. "If we give enough ball pressure, it's very difficult for a team to make good passes," said Watson.

Campolindo's bench chipped in offensively too, led by nine from Schmitz and eight from junior guard Andrew Cassidy. "Other teams go six or seven deep," Watson commented. "We go 12 deep, so we're able to get a lot of energy off the bench."

Sophomore guard Matt O'Reilly led Campo's four double-digit scorers with 16, helped out by 15 from Hansen, 11 from junior forward Justin Dunn, and 10 from McCue. The Dons leading scorers, Thomas (14) and Souza (10), were simply over run, as Campo posted an 81-49 victory.

In Orinda, Miramonte (11-9) notched their fourth win with Kiran Shastri back in the lineup, beating Dougherty Valley 71-37 on January 25. Rivalry play resumes Feb. 1, when the Mats host Acalanes.



Buster Souza #1 notched 10 points in the loss.

Lamorinda Soccer Rivals Meet Again

By Marissa Harnett



Cougar senior Kian Maghsoodnia logged Campo's second goal in the 2-0 win over Miramonte. Photo David Lee

As the high school soccer season winds down and heads toward the NCS playoffs, the DFAL title is still up for grabs.

Except for their two league ties, both against their Lamorinda rivals, Acalanes has a perfect record, 7-0-2 (16-0-3 overall). Campolindo stands in second place with a 6-2-1 record (14-5-2 overall). Miramonte trails with 2-5-1 in league (4-7-2 overall).

The season's second round of rivalry action wrapped up Jan. 25. Campo logged the only win, defeating Miramonte 2-0. The other two match-ups, Acalanes against Campo and Acalanes against Miramonte, resulted in 0-0 ties.

On Jan. 11, Campo handed the undefeated Dons their first tie this season. Each team battled to score, but neither team could net the ball.

"(It) was a very close and exciting match and either team could have won. The result was very fair based on how both teams performed," said Acalanes head coach Paul Curtis.

On Jan. 18, Miramonte hosted Campo in their second meeting of the season.

Competitive and physical from the start, it took 30 minutes for an opportunity to score. Campo fired off the shot, but Miramonte goalkeeper Michael Akay bumped the ball up and over the crossbar to log a crucial save. Two corners followed with no goal scored.

With just three minutes left in the half, the first goal was netted by Campo sophomore Preston Kilwien.

According to Campo head coach Shane Carney, the first goal was critical. "Getting that first goal was important to give us a lead and take some pressure off heading into half-

time," he said.

The second half brought more difficulty scoring. Like in the first half, with just minutes left on the clock Cougar senior Kian Maghsoodnia found the opening low into the right corner to log the second goal.

In a final attempt to get on the scoreboard, Miramonte senior Oliver Chew came close to slipping one in, but Campo's pressure was too strong. The game ended, 2-0.

"We played well defensively, but our offense was struggling tremendously - in part due to the way Miramonte was packing their players in the middle and in part due to a lot of our guys having off nights," Carney said.

Miramonte head coach Javier Ayala-Hil said his team is used to close matches. "Results have not been in our favor this year but almost every game has come close to the wire," he explained. "If we minimize our own mistakes this team can be very successful in the way we play."

On Jan. 25, Miramonte traveled to Acalanes and also held the Dons to a 0-0 tie.

Ayala-Hil was pleased with this result. "We possessed the ball the way we wanted in the first half which created a very exciting 40 minutes. In the second half, we stayed very organized and kept our mistakes to a minimum."

Curtis agreed that the game was an exciting battle between the rivals and noted Miramonte's improvement. "The Mats played very well and have definitely improved," he said.

League action wraps up Feb. 8 and NCS tournament play begins Feb. 13.

Saint Mary's Rugby Earns Win in Preseason

Submitted by Tony Samaniego



Saint Mary's has received huge efforts from De La Salle alumni. From left: Jordan Bouey, Matt Ramirez, Tim Maupin, Dino Waldren and Captain Michael Haley. Photo Mike Gieb

Last weekend, the Saint Mary's rugby team took on the Olympic Club of San Francisco in the last warm-up match before the start of league play. The Gaels found themselves down 0-3 off of a penalty kick by the OC two minutes into the first half but SMC came back five minutes later with a

great score by Captain Michael Haley, which was the first of his four tries. SMC ultimately pulled off a 53-11 victory. Former De La Salle football player Tim Maupin had a hat trick in the win. Saint Mary's begins regular season play at 1 p.m., Saturday, Feb. 2, at home.



Captain Mike Haley



Tim Maupin

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Magic Wins Again

Submitted by Greg Davis



Back row, from left: Coach Haris Obic, Kate Minden, Lauren van Stralen, Samantha Devecchi, Holland McDonald, Emily Smith, Molly Davis, Vanessa Vaisnor, Mia Grillo, Anya Li; front row: Kaitlin DeVries, Kierra Krawec, Keely Murphy, Molly Ikeya, Jackie Nichols, Annie Midthun
Photo provided

The California Magic U13 girls brought home a championship trophy from the Mustang Winter Turf tournament Jan. 12-13 in Danville. It was their second straight and third in four tournaments. This annual tournament invites the best teams in an effort to prepare for the end-of-season State Cup. "When you are out there on the soccer field playing, nothing else matters. It's like the whole world disappears, and you and your teammates are all that matters," said Holland McDonald.

The Magic U13 girls outscored their opponents 11-2. On the way to the championship, the girls overcame Premier level teams Mission Valley United 3-0, FC Sporting Zoom 3-1, Mustang Blaze 3-0, and Walnut Creek Storm 2-1. After the tournament, Magic coach Haris Obic reflected, "At Cal Magic we believe that the talent is in the effort...Most importantly, the kids, as usual, are simply happy playing soccer - win, lose or draw."

LAX Camp Director Honored

Submitted by Lorne Smith



Photo provided

Lorne Smith, of Orinda, was inducted into the Greater Baltimore Chapter of the US Lacrosse Class of 2013 Hall of Fame on Jan. 19 in Phoenix, Md.

Smith graduated from Gilman School (Baltimore) in 1995 where he led his team to two Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association Championships. He was a two-time All-American and honored as Baltimore Player of the Year in 1995.

He was a three time All-American midfielder and attackman on Princeton's three

NCAA National Championship teams.

After graduation in 1999, Smith moved to San Francisco where he began coaching, creating Warrior's Players Club Experience camp program where he served as National Director from 2003-2006. In 2006 and 2007 he played professional lacrosse for Major League Lacrosse's LA Riptide.

In 2007, Smith established Lorne Smith Lacrosse where he directs youth camps and clinics.

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

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Advertising: 925-377-0977
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Circulation: 26,600 printed copies; delivered to homes & businesses in Lamorinda.

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Photos: Tod Fiermer, Ohlen Alexander, Kevin Nguyen
Layout/Graphics: Andy Scheck, Jaya Griggs.
Printed in CA.
Lamorinda Weekly,
P.O. Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570-6133
Phone: 925-377-0977; Fax: 1-800-690-8136;
email: info@lamorindaweekly.com
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Saint Mary's Basketball Second in WCC

Fan-favorite Paul McCoy makes SMC debut

By Simon Tryzna



Beau Levesque #15 had 20 points against USD and added 19 against Pepperdine.

Photos Tod Fiermer

When the West Coast Conference pre-season coaches' poll came out, it might have been surprising to see the defending champion Gaels predicted to finish third. Midway through the season, the 6-1 Gaels are in second place behind Gonzaga and ahead of BYU.

After dismantling LMU in its WCC opener 74-61, the Gaels traveled to Spokane Jan. 10. Despite being down by 20 points, the Gaels managed to climb back into the game, and had a chance to tie it late, but ultimately lost by five, 83-78. After a slow start at BYU six days later, the Gaels tied the game late. BYU went up 69-67 with 2.5 second left in the game, but senior point guard Matthew Dellavedova silenced the home crowd with a forty-foot buzzer beater to give Saint Mary's the 70-69 win.

The Gaels played hardnosed defense the last thirty minutes of the BYU game, which allowed them to come back and win.

"We have been working on that for a while, and we weren't making much progress," said head coach Randy Bennett. "Sometimes it takes a little while for it to transfer into games."

The improvement in defense allowed the Gaels to blow out Portland, 60-38, on the road Jan. 19. The win marked Portland native, senior guard Paul McCoy's first Saint Mary's game. He transferred to SMC prior to the 2010-2011 season, after injuring his knee at Southern Methodist University. Following a mandatory redshirt year, McCoy suffered a second ACL tear and missed all of last season as well.

"I've been here three years with him and it's so great to finally see a guy who worked so hard to get into a game," said sophomore

center Brad Waldow.

While in previous years Saint Mary's had trouble with San Diego, such was not the case Jan. 24. Led by junior forward Beau Levesque and a strong defensive effort, the Gaels built up a 42-19 lead and never looked back, winning 81-48. With chants of "We want Paul!" ringing in McKeon Pavilion, McCoy finally made his home debut, logging 10 minutes.

"Paul is a high level competitor, tremendous athlete" said Bennett. "He hasn't gotten a chance to show it and now we all get to see him play. People will love him because of how hard he plays."

Two days after dominating USD, the Gaels were challenged by visiting Pepperdine. The Waves were able to keep pace with the Gaels throughout the majority of the first half until Saint Mary's made a late push and took a nine point lead into halftime, before pulling out an 84-72 win.

Levesque was once more the center piece of the offense, scoring 19 in the game. After the game he deflected all the praise to Dellavedova, who had a remarkable 21 assists with zero turnovers in the two home games.

"It's all because of #4 [Dellavedova] creating plays," said Levesque. "It starts with him and we just try to help him out. It's great to play with such a great leader and a great point guard."

The Gaels travel across the Bay to San Francisco Jan. 30 before hosting Portland Feb. 2. After two road games against Santa Clara and San Diego, Saint Mary's hosts Gonzaga in a Valentine's Day match-up that will likely be one of the biggest home games of the year.



Paul McCoy #2 logged 10 minutes against USD in his home debut. He had two steals, two points, and three rebounds.

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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 06 Issue 24 Wednesday, January 30, 2013



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

...read on page D8

Wild Kingdom Close to Home

By Cathy Dausman



Displays create a museum-like atmosphere in expansive Lamorinda trophy room.



Photos Cathy Dausman

John Doe's is the house that big game built, whose trophies once walked the earth. In fact Doe designed his house several years ago specifically to accommodate what he calls his "passion" for wild game hunting.

Doe is not his real name – he is sensitive that animal activists might take offense. But the Lamorinda man who shared his story, and his very photogenic trophy room, speaks like a naturalist with a reverence for animals both living and dead.

A tour of Doe's trophy room reveals the depth of his passion. A moose head, nicknamed "Morris," and "Jeffrey," the 8-foot-tall giraffe head, dominate one wall. The remaining animals are preserved whole and seemingly poised to take flight momentarily.

An impala, bush buck, stein buck

and klipspringer sniff the air for predators. A jackal jumps and claws at a small game bird, while a tahr (Himalayan mountain goat) and a pair of Dall sheep literally climb the walls.

A menacing Cape buffalo – "a dangerous animal," said Doe – locks eyes with visitors. Doe said there are actually more "closet hunters" in the East Bay than one would think. Just how did a local city boy raised in Oakland, whose father "never hunted a day in his life" become the globe-trotting hunter of today?

"I think it's genetic," he said simply. Doe's fascination began "out of the blue" watching Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom as a boy. He started fishing with his best friend, whose mother took them on trips. He learned fire arm safety and target shooting with .22 rifles as a Boy Scout. ...continued on page D4

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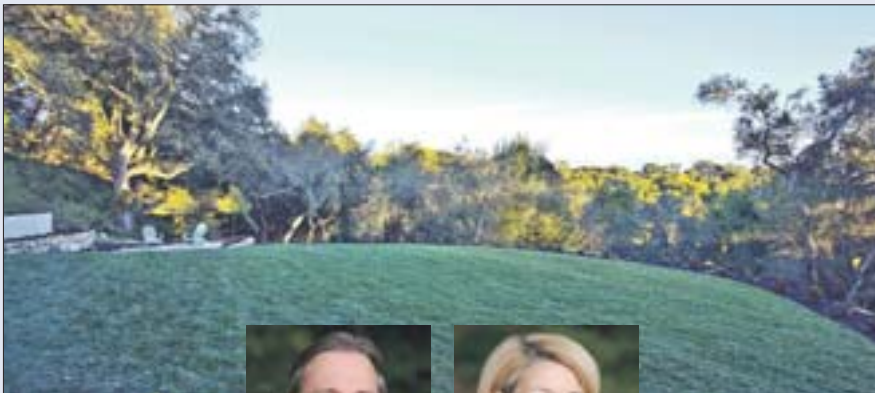
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A perfect blend of sophistication, impeccable craftsmanship and an abundance of amenities for modern day living come together in one of Orinda's most exclusive neighborhoods. No detail was overlooked in this newly constructed five bedroom, five and half bathroom home set on nearly an acre of lush property adjacent to more than five acres of dedicated open space that offers superb privacy and stunning views.

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	9	\$515,000	\$2,950,000
MORAGA	3	\$800,000	\$1,155,000
ORINDA	8	\$195,500	\$1,357,500

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

3934 Canyon Road, \$1,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 2505 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-28-12;

Previous Sale: \$570,000, 08-02-94

2436 Cherry Hills Drive, \$680,000, 4 Bdrms, 2043 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-19-12;

Previous Sale: \$500,000, 11-29-00

1061 Glen Court, \$1,100,000, 3 Bdrms, 2032 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 12-28-12

3230 Gloria Terrace, \$515,000, 1 Bdrms, 752 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 12-28-12;

Previous Sale: \$167,000, 09-08-98

670 Moraga Road, \$1,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 4111 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 12-27-12;

Previous Sale: \$520,000, 05-18-95

3687 Nordstrom Lane, \$2,950,000, 5 Bdrms, 4381 SqFt, 2009 YrBlt, 12-21-12;

Previous Sale: \$1,390,000, 12-11-08

1364 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,218,000, 4 Bdrms, 2522 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 12-19-12

747 Solana Drive, \$640,000, 4 Bdrms, 1861 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-28-12

1702 Toyon Road, \$585,000, 4 Bdrms, 2811 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 12-19-12

MORAGA

8 Berkshire Street, \$800,000, 2 Bdrms, 1696 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 12-20-12;

Previous Sale: \$625,000, 08-12-04

905 Camino Ricardo, \$995,000, 5 Bdrms, 2026 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 12-21-12;

Previous Sale: \$1,010,000, 08-09-07

1894 School Street, \$1,155,000, 5 Bdrms, 3164 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-20-12

ORINDA

67 Brookwood Road #18, \$195,500, 1 Bdrms, 764 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-18-12

71 Camino Don Miguel, \$1,285,000, 3 Bdrms, 2116 SqFt, 1937 YrBlt, 12-27-12;

Previous Sale: \$952,000, 02-04-04

116 Coral Drive, \$805,000, 6 Bdrms, 3041 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-27-12;

Previous Sale: \$590,000, 05-12-94

34 Daryl Drive, \$915,000, 3 Bdrms, 1471 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 12-18-12;

Previous Sale: \$859,000, 07-01-04

6 Easton Court, \$728,000, 3 Bdrms, 1895 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 12-18-12

23 La Fond Lane, \$1,357,500, 5 Bdrms, 4267 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 12-18-12;

Previous Sale: \$525,000, 12-02-94

23 North Lane, \$525,000, 3 Bdrms, 1597 SqFt, 1930 YrBlt, 12-20-12

12 Spring Road, \$520,000, 3 Bdrms, 1181 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-18-12;

Previous Sale: \$593,500, 08-27-04

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815 LAS TRAMPAS ROAD, LAFAYETTE

Originally constructed in 1948 and lovingly maintained by the Moulthrop family for the past 53 years, this stately ranch-style home has **three bedrooms** (plus a large study) and **three full baths** with a fabulous **3388± sq. ft.** single level floor plan. There is also a large 912± sq. ft. guest quarters offering excellent spaces.

If you are looking for land, **815 Las Trampas Road** is a rare property indeed. The **1.37± acre** lot actually feels larger as the property is adjacent to the Las Trampas creek which creates a greenbelt with its native trees and natural setting. The front and back yards are simply gorgeous with a long list of flowering plants, mature trees and lush green lawns. The rear yard is an entertainer's delight offering a sparkling pool and two covered patios all looking out to stunning grounds... a great setting to gather with friends!

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KURT PIPER GROUP

Kurt Piper, Broker Associate
Christine Gallegos | Leslie Piper
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Wild Kingdom Close to Home

...continued from page D1

"I had to wait until I was old enough to do it [hunting] myself," he said, "then [came] this passion."

An Eagle Scout as well as the father of Eagle Scouts, Doe has imparted the importance and culture of hunting to his sons. Hunters like Doe seek only mature male animals, those which can no longer breed and would likely die of natural causes within a year. "You don't kill anything you are going to waste," he said, which means the meat is always consumed.

One look at his collection shows that Doe has sampled zebra, giraffe, Cape buffalo, and sheep.

Why taxidermy the animal? "Why let its carcass rot?" he replied.

In 40 years Doe's passion has taken him on trips as far away as New Zealand, Siberia, Alaska, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and across the country to Texas, Montana and Arizona. He buys lottery permits to hunt out of state. "I keep supporting fish and game," he said.

He explained the lack of available game compared with the number of hunters in California makes this state "no place to hunt."

"I've been out four times [in California] duck hunting, and three times I didn't even shoot," Doe said. "Same thing with deer."

African safaris appeal to Doe because of the availability of multiple species to hunt, and puts its cost on par with a paid trip to someplace as close as Montana. A hunting broker handles the required game permits abroad. His overseas party always includes a guide or "professional" hunter, two trackers, and a government official. A portion of the hunting fees go to prevent poaching.



Cape buffalo

Photo Cathy Dausman

Although the house is relatively new, Doe's trophy room is already full, and the display has spilled into the family room, where a zebra and three pronghorn antelope heads peer from the wall.

"My [taxidermied] deer are downstairs," Doe said. "My Cape buffalo would look great – at least to me – up high on the fireplace," Doe said, "but I'll have to ask my wife."

From Wild Game to Wall Mount

A taxidermist explains the process

Taking an animal from habitat to wall mount is nothing if not time consuming. Taxidermist Forrest Farnsworth of Sebastopol's International Big Game Studio has prepared many of John Doe's collection – a job part art, part science.

It takes three months just to prepare the hide, something Farnsworth jobs out to a tannery in Modesto. After the hide is shaved and salted, and it returns to the taxidermist, it can still take up to eight more months to build what he calls an "anatomically correct" model.

Farnsworth said thanks to quantum improvements in wildlife photography, animal taxidermy has also improved greatly, down to how head and neck veins stand out. Animal forms come pre-positioned looking left or right, and in various sizes.

Once a full body animal is mounted over its mannequin, the musculature is enhanced with clay, and a seam is sewn down its backbone. Glass eyes are hand painted and set in modeling clay by Farnsworth's work partner, daughter Laura Stinson.

Stinson completes the animal makeup around the eyes and nose, even air-brush painting the inside of the ears. She also constructs a small habitat to surround free-standing animals.

Where older taxidermy forms were made of plaster, today's are made of foam and polystyrene – materials similar to those found in furniture. Sunlight, moisture and smoke can affect the look and condition of taxidermy animals. Every five years or so, each animal needs to be dusted and wiped down using a mild cleaning agent and conditioner. That can be done as a house call.

Doe's giraffe is not the only one Farnsworth has prepared, but Farnsworth said because Doe has hunted on other continents, his collection represents "some unusual stuff." *C. Dausman*



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LISA SHAFFER PRESENTS...

7 Carr Drive, Moraga | \$800,000



Located in one of the most desirable neighborhoods of Moraga, this beautifully maintained 1624 square foot Ranch home features four bedrooms, two full baths, hardwood floors, dual paned windows and patio doors. It has a functional floor plan with open and illuminated living spaces.



Lisa Shaffer

DRE 00996886

cell: 925-528-9278

Lisa@LisaShaffer.com

A quiet street provides the idyllic location for this homes flat .18 acre lot. The immaculate landscaping that adorns the homes front yard invites you in. The rear yard includes a spacious patio and lawn area that provides ample space for entertaining. Ideally located near downtown Moraga, shopping and dining options abound. It offers the opportunity to attend 12 years of Moraga's top rated schools.

For additional photos, please go to www.7carr.com.



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11 El Verano, Orinda

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24 Corte Mateo, Moraga

Single-story on cul-de-sac. High-end updates throughout. 3 bedrooms + office, 2 baths, amazing kitchen open to family room. Hardwood flooring, dual-paned windows, top-of-the-line appliances, huge master retreat. Private yard with pool, patio, built-in BBQ and views.

Offered at \$1,075,000



3980 Paseo Grande, Moraga

Four bedrooms, 2.5 baths, single-story home. Granite kitchen, large living, dining and family rooms. Hardwood flooring, dual-paned windows, updated baths. Yard with garden and patio.

Offered at \$939,000



343 Calle La Mesa, Moraga

Pristinely maintained rancher. Kitchen open to family room and dinette. Gracious living and formal dining rooms. Hardwood flooring, dual-paned windows. Private yard with patio, lawn and hillside.

Offered at \$875,000



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Alamo ~ Gorgeous, private-gated, Westside Alamo. 4 bdrms, 3.5 baths, 4000 sf home on 1.27 acres. Featuring an Italian-style gourmet kitchen, wine cellar, cul-de-sac & fantastic Alamo Schools. Potential Short Sale. **\$1,389,000**

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Land in Briones & Alhambra Valley ~ Parcels available from 56 to 100 acres. Beautiful views, multiple building sites, some parcels are sub-dividable. Less than 20 minutes from Lafayette and Orinda. Some not on MLS. Call for Appointment to view. **\$750,000 ~2,000,000**

The Pereira Team



Lafayette ~ This charming home near the Lafayette Reservoir boasts a recently updated spacious kitchen, updated baths and refinished hardwood floors throughout. An unfinished bonus room provides an area for a workshop, office, or play area. The spacious level yard provides room for your garden ideas to evolve. **\$749,000**

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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Love Potions for the Garden

By Cynthia Brian

"Where there's love and inspiration, I don't think you can go wrong." Ella Fitzgerald

Thank goodness Valentine's Day is celebrated in February otherwise these could be considered the most miserable 28 days of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. Statistically in our area, the month of February is cold, wet, grey, damp, and dreary, sporadically warmed by welcome surprise eruptions of fragrant narcissus and cautious crocus. Of course if we had no winter, spring would not be so delicious. With optimism as our guide this annum, I've mixed a love potion of ideas to inspire and fan the flames of your February fatigue.

Planning a landscape demands patience yet the wait is worth the struggle. With a cup of hot cocoa in hand, push your pencil from your project, unplug the tech toys, and let your dreams design. Create flowerbeds with a diverse cast of edibles, fragrance, bouquets, creepers, and climbers. Cast offs become playful art, trash turns into treasure, and simple embellishments develop into eye candy for the garden. If you are ready for a romp with romance and an infusion of fab from drab, adopt or adapt any of the Baker's dozen-plus one of Cupid potions.

1. Have your kids flown the coop yet the swing set sways rusting in the side yard? Turn it into a hanging basket arbor with your favorite fragrant flowers.

2. Is that claw foot tub you pulled out of the remodel taking up space in the garage? Paint it a vibrant hue and fill with your favorite annuals or perennials for a splash of color.

...continued on next page



Claw foot tub becomes a container garden.

Photo Cynthia Brian

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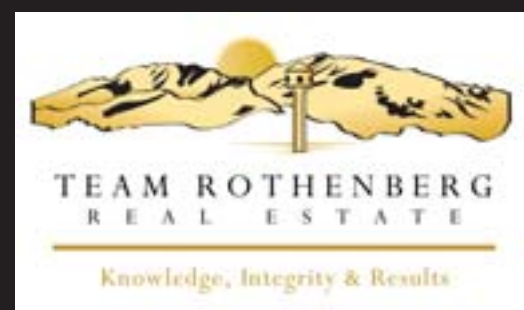
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3. Do you only have a patio or balcony and want to plant edibles? A decorative container or even a wine box is enough to get you started. When it comes to food gardening, national trends indicate a growing public interest up from 58 percent in 2011 to 61 percent in 2012. People want to know what they are eating and are finding that fresh is feasible and family friendly.

4. Are your water bills sky high yet your lawn looks dry and brown? Maybe it's time to pull out the grass, spread the gravel, plant succulents, and install eye-catching wine barrels as rain gutter saving devices! Raise your glass to ingenuity!

5. Frigidaire will be happy to know that there is life after oven demise. That 1950s Leave it to Beaver stove/oven combo is reborn as a plant tool shed and potting stand. If only the washtub could talk!

6. Time has run out on the meter and a quarter isn't enough to get the wine press working again. These unique items add a charm and conversation starter to any home exterior. The raccoon hiding behind the spider plants agree.

7. Instead of installing a gate to enter into another garden room, what about using an old door? The creeping ivy adds to the mystery behind the portals.

... continued on page D10



A flat of red cyclamen sparks a flame in every garden.



Smile and the world smiles with you...even trees.

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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

...continued from page D8



Wine barrel is converted to save rain run off.

Photos Cynthia Brian

8. Gazing balls evoke images of magic, séances, and the supernatural. Reflecting the wardrobe of blooming azaleas, the garden sparkles in the dappled sunshine. He loves me, he loves me not ... he loves me.

9. When someone special has died, creating a memory garden to commemorate the life of your loved one helps with the healing. When my beloved Daddy died, I planted a garden with seedlings from the farm he had so carefully tended and added statuary that reflected his journey on this earth.

10. Looking for architecture that serves flying architects? Birdhouses beckon new life to our sanctuaries. Search for unique perches to provide our feathered friends with a love nest worth inhabiting. Our gardens will reap the benefits many times over from their nesting.

11. Small spaces come alive with fun, fanciful furniture. A vintage iron monkey chair shares the stage in an apart-

ment yard with the screen lovers, Gnomeo and Juliet, mooning under a birdbath.

12. What is a garden without a water feature? The sound of a babbling brook or gurgling fountain relaxes and soothes souls overdosed on technology.

13. Put a smile on the faces of your visitors when they encounter your happy tree!

14. If you want to play it safe with fresh Valentine colors that will ignite bright light in your February, pick up a flat of heart-shaped ruby red cyclamen at your favorite nursery or garden center. Pair the red plants with white and you'll have a vibrant display with staying power.

A dull lackluster winter garden turns into second chances and new romances with a little imagination, ingenuity, and a shovel of soil. Lift your spirits and steep your landscape with love potion frivolity. Happy Valentine's Day!



Add a splash of white to brighten the night skies.



A water feature is a must for every romantic interlude.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for February

"Should you shield the canyons from the windstorms, you would not see the beauty of their carvings." Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

January blessed us with several days of sunny weather that piqued our garden instincts reminding us that we must endure the rain if we want to witness the rainbow. My readers in Norway and Alaska write me that they envy our mild Lamorinda winters and wonder why we whine so much over so little. Yes, we are spoiled and I am grateful to live amidst our rolling hills in an area where just about everything grows and the sun shines often. As dreary as February may seem, there is work-a-plenty in the garden. Grab a warm hat, put on your gloves and mud boots, and get outside for energizing exercise. Look on the bright side ... at least we are not shoveling snow!

- **DAYDREAM** about spring by perusing seed catalogs circling your favorite edibles and ornamentals.
- **PLAN** your garden by pinning on Pinterest. Find the newest gerbera, begonia, or celosia to share with friends.
- **ENROLL** in a gardening class at our local community centers.
- **ADD** passion to your parlor with a bouquet of radiant roses from your local florist.
- **PLANT** mophead hydrangeas in moist, well-drained soil in a shady location. Add soil sulfur to make soil more acidic to produce blue flowers, add lime (alkaline) if you want pink flowers.
- **BUY** amaryllis bulbs on sale now. Arrange three in a large container for a spectacular display next year.
- **KEEP** Valentine bouquets fresher longer by removing all lower leaves from stems and adding a drop of bleach to the water.
- **SPARK** your children's interest in gardening by giving them seed packets of radishes, peas, and beans to start indoors. Get your school on board too!
- **LAST** chance to prune roses, crepe myrtle, butterfly bush, wisteria, and fruit trees before buds break.
- **GET** your blueberry bushes planted in February for bushels of antioxidant fruit next year.
- **WASH** the leaves of your houseplants with a damp cloth. For fuzzy leaves like African violets, stroke the top with a soft hairbrush to remove dust and grime.
- **SOW** hardy color spots of pansies, cyclamen, and primroses to liven up the scene. Contrary to popular belief, these plants are perennials in our area so do not pull them out after blooming. Cut back and plant around them to be rewarded with blooms next winter.
- **START** sweet peas indoors to get a head start on fragrance and beauty.
- **ORGANIZE** your garden shed, shelf, or garage this month in anticipation of a busy season to come.
- **SHARPEN** and clean your tools now. Make any repairs or replacements before spring springs.
- **DIVIDE** bulbs such as snowdrops and plant in other desired areas.
- **CUT** back deciduous grasses.
- **FILL** your bird feeders and bird baths weekly to keep our feathered friends in your garden during the cold season.
- **READ** your garden journal from last February and make note of any changes. Make sure to continue taking photographs.
- **COVER** birds of paradise and other frost tender plants with sheets or blankets.
- **COOK** a hearty winter soup with your harvest of cabbage, kale, Swiss chard, and spinach.
- **PERFUME** your outdoor spaces by including the skyrocketing popularity of fragrant specimens such as dianthus, gardenia, nicotiana, phlox, hyacinth, lilac, iris, and of course, roses.

Be optimistic. There is no failure in the garden. Everything is fertilizer. Love is in the air. Spring is around the bend. Enjoy a warm, heartfelt Valentine's Day.

Happy gardening to you!

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Cynthia is available as a speaker and consultant.





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

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ORINDA



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ORINDA



50 Camino Don Miguel

Special Country Club location amidst expensive homes. Lush setting with building site knoll and towering oaks, filtered views & total privacy.

Offered at \$545,000

ORINDA



40 Dos Osos

Incredible Orinda, San Pablo Dam, Mt. Diablo views + abundance of nature surrounds this supersized parcel bordering EBMUD land. Exceptional beauty. Once in a lifetime opportunity raw land sale.

Offered at \$545,000

ORINDA



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



New Listing

121 La Espiral

Gated Mediterranean 4bd/3.5ba villa w/pano views features chef's kitchen/fam rm w/old world charm; covered tiled veranda; hwd & marble tiled flrs; formal Lr & Dr; 2nd fam. rm; office & spacious master suite w/fplc; AC; custom details & amenities.

Offered at \$1,595,000

ORINDA



New Price

251 Monte Vista Ridge Rd.

Incredible 5000 sq ft gated estate home on gorgeous 1 acre view knoll on exclusive cul-de-sac. Fabulous expansive terraces, amazing out door kitchen. Stunning romantic master with views of Briones from private terraces.

Offered at \$1,939,000

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 ambience, European flair.

Offered at \$2,195,000

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. Hdwd flrs, spacious bedrooms, indoor laundry room & great storage. Level yard w/ slate patio. Cul-de-sac location.

Offered at \$1,125,000

LAFAYETTE



1690 Reliez Valley Rd.

Fab 1+ acre ridgeline property w/ spectacular views of Mt. Diablo etc. Paved driveway to building site w/utilities & sewer at property. Includes preliminary plans for 4900+ sq ft home.

Offered at \$650,000

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

810 Acalanes Road

Exquisite 5271 sf, 6Br/4Ba custom trad. blt in 2008 on 1.13 ac view lot features exceptional workmanship & quality; Lr & Dr; grmt kit w/granite, stainless & hwd flrs open to Fam Rm; lrg bedrooms; mast w/ lux bath; media rm; 2 fam rms, lvl play yd & 3-car gar.

Offered at \$2,595,000

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

11 Leslyn Lane

Spectacular 4bd/5.5ba on apx. 4.37 acres. High ceilings, two family rooms, master with fireplace, spa tub, heated floors and private deck. Wine room, office, media center, organic garden with raised beds, salt water pool and cozy cabana.

Offered at \$2,650,000

WALNUT CREEK



3706 Waterford Lane

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

Offered at \$1,370,000

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Ashley Battersby
Patricia Battersby
Joan Cleveland
Shannon Conner

Joan Eggers

Linda Ehrich

Joan Evans

Linda S Friedman

Marianne Greene

Dexter Honens II

Anne Knight

Susan Zeh Layng

Art Lehman

Charles Levine

April Matthews

Karen Murphy

Ben Olsen

Sue Olsen

Tara Rochlin

Jaime Roder

Altie Schmitt

Judy Schoenrock

Ann Sharf

Molly Smith

Jeff Snell

Lynda Snell

Clark Thompson

Angie Evans Traxinger

Ignacio Vega

Terri Bates Walker

Ann Ward

Dan Weil

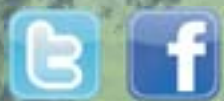
Margaret Zucker

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