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HOW COULD YOU ACCUSE ME OF FORGETTING VALENTINE'S DAY? WHY I EVEN BOUGHT YOU A CARD.



B. Hummer ©

Where's the Love, Lamorinda?

By Nick Marnell

It was an easy assignment: Find out how Lamorinda feels about Valentine's Day. After all, who doesn't like Valentine's Day? As I found out, at least on my excursion to local cafés, candy shops and drug store greeting card aisles last week, not too many.

Charlie, a patron at Geppeto's Caffe in Orinda, was

the first to comment. "It's too commercial," said the 70-year-old retiree from Lafayette. "And it's geared more toward the younger set. Businesses are taking too much advantage of us."

As soon as Jenny, 46, stopped texting, I hustled to her table. "Too cliché," she said, as she awaited her lunch.

"Valentine's Day is about the kids. It isn't so much about my husband." Ouch.

Steve, a late-50s Moragan, said that the day had no special meaning to him or his girlfriend, "other than the fact that our first date was on Valentine's Day." Heavens.

... continued on page A12

Quote of the Week:

"As a Chinese person, I'm willing to work hard, not give up. The American side is more romantic: to dream."

Read *Orinda Student Named Finalist in Science Talent Search*, page B9.

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Glazer Announces Run for State Legislature

By Laurie Snyder



Steve Glazer

Photo Ohlen Alexander

Former two-term mayor Steve Glazer surprised area residents Jan. 29 when he declared his intent to run for the California State Assembly. Recently re-elected to another four-year stint

on the Orinda City Council and scheduled to become the city's mayor again in 2015, Glazer announced that he will actively campaign for the seat now held by Assembly Member Joan Buchanan (D-16th District) who will be leaving office in 2014 due to term limits.

The key advisor to Governor Jerry Brown said he is running "to be a voice for fiscal responsibility and a champion for public education." Appointed by Brown in 2011 to serve on the California State University Board of Trustees, Glazer recently helped to enact a policy change limiting trustee power to approve hefty salary increases for CSU execs. Locally, he co-chaired two parcel tax campaigns for area school districts.

"Orinda is in excellent financial shape. We have a balanced budget and prudent reserves. We do not have any pension or post-retirement healthcare obligations, and it is reflective of the council's fidelity to conservative fiscal management." In contrast, he noted that the state of California has wrestled with unbalanced budgets, continued borrowing, and other challenging fiscal issues over the years. "Under the leadership of Governor Brown, stronger fiscal management is in place. I want to continue that - helping to move the state forward in a financially responsible way."

Glazer has also advocated for improved foster care and domestic violence prevention programs.

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Life in Lamorinda B1-B12

Injured Firefighter on the Rebound

Nick Marnell talks to MOFD's Kelly Morris about the December accident on Highway 24.



Sports C1-C3

Lady Mats Dominate Rivals

Bragging rights go to Miramonte as the girls prepare for the playoffs. Hunter Hewitt has the story.



Our Homes D1-D12

Glenside Drive Home Goes From Fixer to Farm Fresh

Cathy Dausman spotted this major remodel and decided to check it out.



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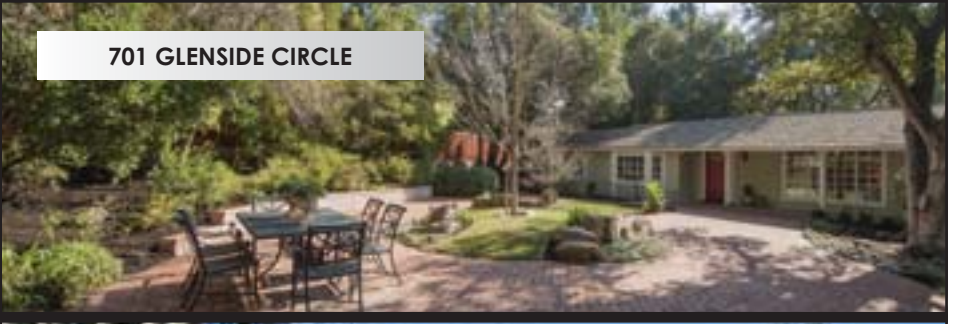
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Lafayette
Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Feb. 25, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 19, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Feb. 25, 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. 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.
Wednesday, March 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



Mayor Gives State of the City Address



Mayor Mike Anderson gives the State of the City address.

Photo Andy Scheck

Lafayette Mayor Mike Anderson gave a brief speech about the state of the city to a room full of Chamber of Commerce members gathered with family and friends at the Lafayette Park Hotel recently. This tradition is always part of the Business Person of the Year annual dinner.

"Things have changed over time," reflected Anderson, referring to his last trip to the podium when he was mayor five years ago. "The city has not been idle." He went on to highlight some of the many differences in the past handful of years: the approval of the controversial new Downtown Strategic Plan, the current construction boom up and down Mt. Diablo Boulevard, along with traffic congestion and the closure of Fire Station 16 on Los Arabis Road.

Summarizing that "we are in a very good position," Anderson thanked the entire business community for playing a very important role in keeping Lafayette thriving. *C. Tyson*

Lafayette Eden Housing Project Takes Shape



Photo Cathy Tyson

Although it took a while to get the financing together, the affordable senior housing project on Mt. Diablo Boulevard is rapidly making progress. The

construction site is humming with activity as crews from L & D Construction build 45 units, on a 0.8-acre lot that stretches back to the Post Office annex.

It takes more than a village to be able to support this low-income housing project. Funding is provided by the State of California Department of Housing and Com-

munity Development, Contra Costa County Department of Conservation & Development, Bank of America, Union Bank of California and the former Lafayette Redevelopment Agency.

"The project is right on schedule," said Woody Karp, Senior Project Developer of the non-profit Eden Housing; he estimates that it will be complete Dec. 16. "It'll be a very desirable place to live - extremely affordable." He recommends that prospective seniors call the main number at Eden Housing, (510) 582-1460, and ask to be placed on an interest list. With a substantial number of people on the list already, Karp said there will be a lottery for qualified applicants to determine who will get an apartment.

Just down the block, crews are working on the foundation of the mixed-use Merrill Gardens market-rate senior apartments that will feature retail shops on the ground level. *C. Tyson*

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community.

Send a letter to the editor: letters@lamorindaweekly.com



Police Report

Jan. 20-Feb. 2

Animal:

1/29 Olympic Bl @ Reliez Station Rd

Auto:

1/21 reckless driving Moraga Rd @ Mt Diablo Bl
stolen vehicle 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
reckless driving Condit Rd @ Kelley Ct
1/22 hit & run Acalanes @ El Nido Ranch Rd
reckless driving Moraga Rd @ Moraga Bl
stolen vehicle 3200 block Mt Diablo Bl
1/23 reckless driving Moraga Rd @ Mt Diablo Bl
accident/property damage Moraga Rd @
Old Jonas Hill Rd
accident/property damage Moraga Rd @
OConnor Dr
1/24 accident/property damage 3100 block Lucas Dr
1/25 accident/property damage 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
DUI Moraga Rd @ Mt Diablo Bl
1/28 accident/property damage Deer Hill @ Orchard Rd
1/29 accident/property damage Acalanes Av @
Pleasant Hill Cr
hit & run 2nd St @ Mt Diablo Bl
hit & run El Curtola Bl @ Ruth Ct
1/30 accident/property damage Happy Valley Rd @
Upper Happy Val

1/31 reckless driving Lafayette Cr @ Mt Diablo Bl
Assault:
1/27 deadly weapon unknown location
1/28 battery Franklin Ln @ Happy Valley Rd
Burglary/Theft/Robbery/Forgery:
1/20 commercial 200 block Lafayette Cr
1/21 commercial 3400 block Golden Gate Wy
petty theft 3600 block Walnut St
1/22 petty theft 900 block Risa Rd
auto burglary 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
1/23 auto burglary 900 block Janet Ln
auto burglary 1000 block Carol Ln
shoplifting 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
1/24 petty theft 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
auto burglary Lafayette Cr @ Mt Diablo Bl
1/25 auto burglary 3300 block Mt Diablo Bl
auto burglary 100 block Lafayette Cir
auto burglary Chow's
1/26 grand theft Happy Valley Rd @ Mt Diablo Bl
1/27 auto burglary 3100 block Somerset Dr
auto burglary 3100 block Somerset Dr
stolen vehicle 3500 block Moraga Bl
petty theft 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
1/28 petty theft 3600 block Nordstrom Ln
1/29 shoplifting 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
auto burglary 900 block Moraga Rd
1/29 auto burglary Mosswood Dr @ Village Ctr
grand theft 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
petty theft 1200 block Pleasant Hill Rd

1/31 shoplifting 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
auto burglary 3400 block Golden Gate Way
2/1 petty theft 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
ID theft 3600 block Mt Diablo Bl
petty theft 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
2/2 residential burglary 100 block Knox Dr
ID theft 1300 block Martino Rd
petty theft 1100 block Martino Rd
Drugs:
1/22 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
1/25 Arroyo Ct @ Glenside Dr
1/29 Golden Gate Wy @ Mt Diablo Bl
Miscellaneous:
1/25 missing adult 900 block Dewing Av
2/1 juvenile runaway 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
2/2 prowler heard 100 block Del Rey Ct
missing juvenile 3500 block Mt Diablo Bl

Shooting:
1/28 promiscuous shooting 1300 block Pleasant Hill Rd
1/31 into occupied dwelling 1000 block Carol Ln

Vandalism:
1/20 El Nido Ranch Rd @ Upper Happy Val
1/25 3300 block Mt Diablo Bl
400 block Castello Rd
1/26 3300 block Springhill Rd
1/31 600 block Huntleigh Dr
2/1 1000 block Sierra Vista Wy
1000 block 2nd St

Traffic Stops over the two week period: 184

Colleen McCormick Named Business Person of the Year

By Cathy Tyson



Colleen and Emily McCormick

Photos Andy Scheck

Lafayette's business community turned out to honor Colleen McCormick, the 2013 Marquis Business Person of the Year and founder of Lamorinda Music, at an honorary dinner held at the Lafayette Park Hotel.

McCormick opened the doors of Lamorinda Music in 2009 and through her hard work and dedication recently expanded the business to more than double its original size – surprising news in a sketchy economy.

Her uncle, Stevie Coyle of Mighty Fine Guitars, calls the first location “Dickensian – rather like the old curiosity shoppe,” crammed full from top to bottom with equipment. The new and improved store on Lafayette Circle boasts 10 studios and room to breathe; Mighty Fine Guitars is tucked into a corner of the building, along with the Lamorinda Theatre Academy upstairs.

Daughter Emily McCormick celebrated her mom's accomplishments, sharing that “Mom was right” about

a number of things, including “a music store is exactly what this town needed.” Apparently the elder McCormick had considered a soda shop or a business as an interior decorator. After being out all day, and finally returning with husband John McCormick towing a trailer full of music equipment, daughter Emily decided that she and brother Scotty should take mom seriously. “I couldn't be more proud,” she beamed to the crowd gathered at the annual Business Person of the Year dinner. “Thank you for your stellar mother-ship.”

“She does all the work, she's the CEO and CFO,” said her supportive husband. “Her persistence has served her well,” bringing her vision to fruition. After complimentary send-ups from family and friends, even a video sent in by Bob Athayde, music director at Stanley Middle School, recipient Colleen McCormick couldn't have been more gracious in her thanks for all the support from the community.



Chief Eric Christensen (left) stages a mock arrest during the skit portion of the event that included Joe Barton (Lamorinda Music), Colleen McCormick and Maurice Levich.

More Lafayette Civic News on Page A8

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Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Feb. 13, 7 p.m.
 Wednesday, Feb. 27, 7 p.m.
 Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
 1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 19, 7 p.m.
 Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

Design Review

Monday, Feb. 25, 7 p.m.
 Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

School Board Meeting

Moraga School District
 Tuesday, March 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

Residential burglary, 2/04/13 A Calle la Mesa resident left the house for only an hour in the middle of the afternoon, returning at 2:45 p.m., to find the front door unlocked and the side garage door kicked in. The suspect(s) took several possessions. A white sedan with a rear spoiler was seen in the victim's driveway during the time of the burglary. Police ask that citizens remain alert and report anything suspicious to Moraga P.D. – Officer Jeff Price (925) 260-2143.

Audible alarm, 2/04/12 Turns out the cleaning lady did it. Police responded to a Tharp Drive home and found that the housekeeper accidentally set off the alarm, no harm done.

Undocumented solicitor, 2/04/13 A solicitor was in the Laird Drive area and was checked for a solicitor's permit. Alas, no permit, so he was asked to refrain from making door to door sales calls until one was acquired.

Another residential burglary, 2/04/13 A Larch Drive homeowner was away for a short time in the morning when the front door was forced open. Many items were missing including jewelry, bank information, and a passport. Fingerprints were collected and the case is currently under investigation.

Trouble at Campo, 2/01/13 A non-student teenager came on campus without a legitimate purpose and was belligerent toward students and school staff. He was removed from campus. School staff was able to identify the young man and the associate principal advised him that if he returned to the school he would be charged with trespassing.

Drunk in public, 2/01/13 Eight teenagers were in front of Home Goods a bit after 9 p.m. on a Friday night, it was clear they had been drinking alcoholic beverages. During the investigation, one of the teens attempted to flee, but was restrained. This kid was arrested for being drunk in public, and being in possession of an undisclosed alcoholic beverage and resisting arrest – he was taken to the hospital, then placed in the care of Contra Costa County Child Protective Services. The seven other teens were released to their parents.



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A Promise Kept: Town Staff Moves Out of Hacienda

By Sophie Braccini



Yuliya Elbo (standing) and Beth Cowley were among the last staff members to leave the Hacienda de las Flores for 329 Rheem. Photos Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council and staff made a promise to residents in 2009 – all town departments except Parks and Recreation would vacate the Hacienda de las Flores within a few years so it could be returned to its intended usage as a recreation/community center. It took longer than predicted, but on Feb. 1 the last staff member left the historical building for the now fully re-organized Town Hall at 329 Rheem. It was done “Moraga-style,” with a budget that shrunk from an initial \$1.4 million to \$200,000—a few improvements got dropped along the way.

“We’ve done it on a dime, and it looks pretty good,” commented Town Clerk Marty McInturf. The Planning Department is on the ground floor to the left as you enter the building and the police are still to the right. Taking the stairs, or riding up in the new ADA-compliant elevator, to the second floor, residents will find Public Works to the right of the landing, and to the left the Town Clerk, a part-time assistant, the Town Manager and the Administrative Services Department. Only the three-person strong Parks and Recreation Department remains

at the Hacienda. “When I took my job at the end of 2010 I was made aware of the emotional charge for many residents regarding the issue of retrofitting 329 Rheem and moving staff out of the Hacienda,” remembers Town Manager Jill Keimach. “The goal-setting session of 2011 set the time of the move to the end of 2011.” Keimach came back with a plan and was asked to add a Council Chamber to the building. “My original plan’s cost was around \$1.4 million,” she said. “The council rejected the plan and we started to scale back.”

The Council Chamber was taken out of the picture – a modest meeting room will open at 331 Rheem instead – parking improvements were canceled, and solar panels removed from the plan. The biggest cost element that got slashed was a seismic retrofit. “The hill behind the building is unstable anyway,” said Keimach. “It would not make sense to spend millions retrofitting a building under these circumstances.”

“Once we took the seismic retrofit out of the picture we started rethinking the inside layout to minimize

work,” said Keimach.

“I like it a lot,” said Administrative Services Technician Beth Cowley a few days after the move. Accountant Yuliya Elbo added that she thought she would miss the Hacienda but has not, yet. “It’s nice to have al-

most everybody in one place,” said Keimach. “The decision of the council to have it done for less was the right one. We do what we can with what we have, and we’re not competing with other cities with our buildings.”

What Happens Next?



Kim Burrowes

The second and third floor of the Hacienda de las Flores are now empty of people, although not of archives and documents of all sorts. “The Hacienda was purchased in 1973 to become a park and community center,” recalled George Fisher of the Moraga Movers. “Our group considers the Hacienda as their home, and we urge the council to return it to its original designation.”

Fisher is delighted that staff left, and he will participate in a celebration organized by Ellen Beans and the Moraga Citizens Network to thank staff on Valentine’s Day.

The Hacienda Foundation was created to enhance, promote and preserve the building and grounds. “We are happy about this move,” said foundation president Steve Woehleke. “This gives us the opportunity to pursue a strategic plan for the Hacienda.”

But what to do with all the space that is not ADA compliant? Nobody seems to have a plan right now for what can be done upstairs, even once an elevator is installed. The first floor is far from being saturated with recreation activities, and the upstairs used to be the living quarters of the Rheem family; it has plenty of charm and a great view, but century-old amenities.

“We could turn it into bridal suites,” speculated Kim Burrowes of the Parks and Recreation Department. “People who rent the place for weddings ask about living quarters, and there is nothing in Moraga.” The Hacienda Foundation plans to present its vision to the town at the end of 2013 or early in 2014. *S.Braccini*

Oversight Committee Seeks Applicants

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council recently adopted the final resolution creating the Citizens’ Oversight Committee that will review and report annually on the receipt of revenue and expenditure of funds from the town’s new 1 percent sales tax. Now the town is looking for volunteers inter-


ested in serving on the new committee.

The committee will be comprised of seven members serving two-year terms, meeting between two and four times per year or as reasonably determined by themselves or the council. It will review the status and performance of the programs

and services funded wholly or partially with proceeds from the tax, and will prepare an independent annual report for the council. The committee will not review or recommend road repair projects.

Residents with expertise in finance and accounting (preferably public sector finance); pavement

management and engineering; capital project management; and public affairs and communications are encouraged to apply. The deadline to apply has been extended until noon Feb. 20. Applications can be found online at www.moraga.ca.us and must be submitted to the town clerk at 329 Rheem Blvd.



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*Based on 6.7% inflation from the utility company.
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₂Combination of Utility Company and PPA

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Elevator Update

Rheem Theatre on its way to a new elevator

By Sophie Braccini

Long time Lamorinda resident Joan Bruzzone recently contributed \$5,000 to the Rheem Theatre's elevator/lift fund. She also gave the Lamorinda Theatre Foundation, through the California Independent Film Festival Association, a loan of \$25,000—giving it the ability to place the order for a new lift at the theater.

Bruzzone said she pitched in to encourage other people to support the theater and that she wants the upstairs theaters to re-open as soon as possible. "Loving my Saturday night movies and Larry Swindell's marvelously exciting adventures recalling our wonderful classic movies and a delightful journey back in time for so many of us, I can't tell you how very much I look forward to sharing both my donation and loan to enjoy with my Moraga friends and fellows," said Bruzzone. "Go, Moraga...see you all at the New Rheem, long may she live!"

The loan will need to be repaid so efforts to raise funds for the lift continue. "The purchase

of tickets to the upcoming Oscar Party on Feb. 24 is a great way to participate in this effort," said Rheem Theatre's Derek Zemrak.

Instead of just replacing the old lift that was attached to the stair rail and could carry one person at a time, management decided to install an outside elevator. "We learned from elevator operators that the lift concept was prone to failing and that it would not cost more to build an elevator," explained Zemrak.

The installation might take some time. CAIFFA needs the approval of the property owner, who is out of reach for a few weeks. It also needs to get final plans from the elevator manufacturer so it can submit an application to the town. The town's approval process will include the Design Review Board. Planning Director Shawna Brekke-Reed said Feb. 6 that she had not received the application yet, but was on the lookout for it. The approval process could take about two months.

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Make a Smart Move



School District Strategic Plan Involves the Whole Community

By Sophie Braccini

Great schools are one of the top reasons families move to Moraga—so when the school district writes a new strategic plan, the whole town pays attention. The new plan, two years in the making, will be released this year.

The process involved a larger number of stakeholders than for previous iterations; parents, teachers, staff, students and the greater community have been asked to contribute their vision. On March 12 the school board will decide on its strategic priorities for the next 3-5 years; in April the implementation steps will be defined; and in May the elements to monitor and measure success will be determined.

"We created a large, 27-member community committee that met twice, for four hours, to debate ideas," said Burns. The committee included members of local service groups, the town council, former students, current parents and staff. "This group was very inclusive of the whole community and very dedicated," said Babs Kavanaugh, the consultant who supported the district in the effort.

Burns decided to include students as well, from grades 4-8. "We met with students by age groups and sites and they took the process very seriously," he said. "Their input was important to us. It was generally in line with what other population groups asked for, but also specific to their point of reference." For example, Burns said that the students asked for strict teachers who nonetheless know how to add some fun to the teaching experience, and they want to be more active participants in the learning process. "The students realized the importance of learning math and English language arts, but also want to learn more practical skills they can apply to a profession, including economics and general business concepts," added Burns.

Multiple meetings were organized at the school sites so parents could offer their input. An online survey was also designed for those who could not attend. One third of district families completed the survey. Classroom teacher assistants, technology instruction and foreign languages in grades K-5 were the three topics

ranked as most important by parents for current and future programs.

The few areas where parents registered discontent with the district's performance were the individualization of instruction, the arts program, and the number of challenging opportunities for students. Bullying continues to be a problem, but parents indicated that children mostly feel safe at school.

All of the input is now being analyzed and collated by Burns and his team to take the form of priorities, and will be reviewed by the board in March. "We want to select a smaller number of priorities (than in previous plans), so the goals can be reached without adding strain on staff," said Burns.

The new strategic plan comes as the district prepares to implement the new national Common Core State Standards next year, which will change what is taught and how it is taught. "Our strategic plan will support that significant transition and support our overarching objective to maximize student potential and achievement," concluded Burns.

More Moraga Civic News on Page A12

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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Feb. 19, 6 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

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

Finance Advisory Committee

Wednesday, Feb. 27, 6 p.m.
Community Room, City Hall,
22 Orinda Way

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District

Monday, March 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

Outstanding warrant arrest, 1/30/13

Police arrested a 19-year-old woman on an outstanding warrant for forgery and breaking and entering. She was booked into Martinez Detention Facility where she was being held on \$40,000 bail.

Drunk in public, 2/1/13

A 57-year-old woman was picked up by police on Brookwood Road, where she was charged with being drunk in public. She was already on probation, and was transported to Martinez Detention Facility.

Booming business, 2/3/13

A 24-year-old El Sobrante man was seriously injured making hash oil (a concentrated substance derived from marijuana) in a shed behind an Orinda Orchard Road residence. The shed exploded during the manufacturing process; the victim suffered extensive burns to his face, hands and body and was airlifted for treatment to the U. C. Davis burn center. The homeowner admitted cultivating marijuana and making the hash oil but told police he had authorization to do so. He could not back his claim in writing. Several marijuana plant samples were seized at the site, along with three PVC pipes, two pipe caps, and a CD ROM containing over 50 photos. The owner was released at the scene.

Old enough to know better, 2/5/13

Moraga Orinda Fire District personnel encountered a 75-year-old man near Miner Road and Camino Pablo. When Orinda police were called to the scene, they determined the subject's red, watery eyes, slurred speech, and difficulty standing unassisted pointed to a charge of drunk in public. A preliminary alcohol screening showed a 0.15 level of intoxication. His car was towed and he was arrested and transported to the police station where he was released to the custody of his wife. Bet this Valentine's Day celebration will be a tad frosty...



Maureen Wilbur

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Orinda No-Gaters Prevail

Knickerbocker-Stein Way gate to be a distant memory

By Laurie Snyder

“We are not a city of gates,” said Orinda City Council Member Dean Orr prior to the council’s decision to remove a long-simmering source of neighborhood animosity – an Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA) gate between Knickerbocker Lane and Stein Way. Allegedly vandalized over the years by anti-gate locals, the barrier became a glowing coal of frustration for staff each time pro-gaters requested repairs.

The most recent skirmish began with the Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, ended at a third hearing of the matter before the council and spawned—during the 14 months in between—lengthy analyses by dueling consultants, fire and police safety assessments, a California Environmental Quality Act evaluation, and the threat of a lawsuit by Keith D. Yandell, the pro-gaters’ San Francisco-based attorney.

Terming the potential removal “unlawful and unjust” in letters to City Attorney Osa L. Wolff, Yandell stated that his clients had “paid hundreds of thousands of dollars in assessments to fully construct and service Stein Way.” They “bought their homes and paid these assessments with the understanding that the EVA Gate would remain, and fear the increased traffic associated with removal ... will decrease their property values and endanger their children.”

Yandell accused the city of violating Proposition 218 and told Wolff they would sue, saying the city “induced residents to pay for the assessment with the understanding that it would fund the gate.” Acknowledging opposing neighbors’ public safety fears, Yandell proposed a compromise that could have required the city to expend additional funds to “replace the existing EVA Gate with

a new type of traffic flow device that would limit ‘normal’ traffic, but wouldn’t hinder or slow emergency vehicle access.”

No-gater Michael Low called council concerns about legal action shortsighted, and warned that “allowing the threat of litigation to subvert the democratic process” would only encourage other disgruntled residents to sue over different matters. He also asserted that the council was given a mandate to take down the gate when Orinda voters chose to re-elect two of its sitting members in November.

Wolff advised that although defending a lawsuit based on the arguments raised by Yandell would be costly for the city, she believes that the city should ultimately prevail. “Assessment District 1-94, which was approved prior to the effective date of Proposition 218, is exempt from Proposition 218 because the proceeds are used exclusively to

repay bonded indebtedness and because it funded certain specified improvements. Additionally ... there is no right to prevent improvements funded by assessments from being changed in the public interest. It is also relevant that the original, stated purpose for extending Stein Way and providing a gate was to provide emergency access, not to ensure Stein Way would forever remain a little-traveled, dead-end street akin to a cul-de-sac,” stated Wolff.

In authorizing the gate’s elimination on a 3-1 vote Feb. 5 – with Mayor Amy Worth out of town and Council Member Steve Glazer opposed—the council declared that the removal would not impact the environment, and said the de-gating promotes emergency access and roadway system efficiency consistent with the General Plan.

The estimated cost is \$1,200 and includes gate removal, signage, and road striping.

Glazer Announces Run for State Legislature

... continued from page A1

“The test for a compassionate community,” he observed, “is how we take care of our most vulnerable.”

Asked what prompted his decision to run now, he cited three things – Orindans’ recent approval, after several failed attempts, of a road repair initiative (November 2012’s Measure L), the substantial progress made by the city council in achieving key goals, and recent successes by the governor in achieving critical goals

for California.

“As a council member, I have sought to build stronger city partnerships with our local schools; improve our planning and design review process; expanded citizen participation in community matters with enhanced transparency; promote public safety improvements; and secure new resources for critical road and drain repair. The passage of the local measure tax for improving our roads was

an especially important milestone for the city, and an accomplishment we can all be proud of.”

Praising the wonderful leadership of colleagues on the city council, numerous citizen volunteers, and an exceptional staff, Glazer said he believes Orinda has “come a long way in addressing each of these concerns. We may take for granted the fact that Orinda is one of the best run and financially sound cities in all of Cali-

fornia, but our sense of civic pride, undoubtedly was bolstered recently when Forbes Magazine rated Orinda as the ‘friendliest town’ in all of America.”

Should Glazer win his Assembly campaign, the city would have two options for addressing the resulting vacancy on Orinda’s city council. The council could appoint someone to serve out the remaining two years of his term, or could call a special election.

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Orinda's Balanced Budget Hanging in There

By Laurie Snyder

The Orinda City Council learned Feb. 5 that the city is still able to sustain a balanced budget with no additional appropriations, according to city staff painting the financial picture. Leading the mid-year budget update, Finance Director Susan Mahoney explained the reasons for shortfalls and the ways in which city departments are compensating.

Despite sluggish holiday sales that sunk sales tax returns, "Revenues are estimated to be \$491,913 over original budget projections," thanks to an ongoing revenue boost by increased building inspection fees, project reimbursement revenues, and significantly increased property transfer tax income.

General Fund expenses, though, will likely exceed initial projections "due mostly to costs associated with the December storms, staff changes, and insur-

ance costs." Mahoney's evening report followed an announcement earlier in the day by City Manager Janet Keeter that costs for the Tarabrook sinkhole repair are now estimated at \$700,000. The area, rechristened by residents as "Tara Lake" during the immediate flooding crisis, remains under a state of emergency.

Parks and Recreation went over budget by \$66,998 as the unknowns of water, electricity, insurance, and facility maintenance associated with the new Wilder playfields became clearer. The department expects that the now constantly busy fields will easily recoup the money. The Police Department is expected to actually be under budget by \$66,857—primarily due to a savings in benefit costs.

Mahoney projects that combined city management costs (City Council, City Manager,

City Clerk, Information Technology) will be over by \$10,864 due to consulting services and the cash-out of leave balances for two employees that left city employment. Another cash-out plus additional consulting services were cited for the \$16,572 combined Finance, General Services, and Human Resources overage.

The Planning Department's \$64,983 hole was also attributed largely to cashed-out leave balances, but is expected to be offset by \$95,000 in revenue increases, while increased Public Works revenues will offset all but \$80,000 of that department's \$123,194 loss caused primarily by storm-related expenses.

The rebalanced mid-year budget now projects a slim General Fund surplus of only \$23,509 with \$253,100 in one-time revenues augmenting the unrestricted funds.

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Civic News Lafayette

Reservoir Parking Lot Update Mostly Complete

By Cathy Tyson



Photo Cathy Tyson

Blame it on the rain. While the new and improved parking lot at the Lafayette Reservoir is almost complete, there have been some delays due to inclement weather. The East Bay Municipal Utility District is upgrading the main parking lot to help improve traffic flow and provide more short-term parking spaces. The old parking meters are still there, though noticeably wobbly—the new updated solar-powered meters slated to be installed will accept plastic as well as quarters for payment. A parallel row of additional short term parking is awaiting striping. Included in the workplan is construction of new ADA-compliant sidewalks, guardrails, curbs and benches.

Pedestrians may not notice the new bio-retention system that will filter parking lot storm water runoff before it's discharged into the reservoir.

There's still a bit of work to be done that is temperature-dependent, said EBMUD spokesperson Nora Harlow referring to stamping the asphalt and a slurry seal that requires a minimum temperature to cure. She estimates it should all be complete in the next month or so.

Bring some extra quarters, starting in January of this year the hourly rate has gone up from \$1 to \$1.50, the hourly fee was last increased in 2002. In addition, there has been an increase in the price of an annual pass from \$100 to \$120. Seniors can get a discounted annual pass for \$80.

On a recent gray day the lack of spring-like weather didn't deter a substantial number of young moms with strollers or happy dog walkers, and folks just looking for a good workout. The Lafayette Reservoir is as busy as ever – just mind the orange cones.

New Eatery at Old Petar's Location

By Cathy Tyson

Goodbye Petar's, hello The Cooperage – an American bar and grill, in Petar's former location on Lafayette Circle. With Andrew McCormick at the helm, the son of Bill McCormick of seafood restaurant chain McCormick and Schmick's fame, expectations are high for the new restaurant tentatively slated to open in the late summer. The chain now has more than 80 restaurants nationwide, from Oregon to Rhode Island, with their closest location right in Berkeley – Spenger's Fresh Fish Grotto. Lafayette resident McCormick used to run the City Tavern on bustling Fillmore Street in San Francisco's Marina district for more than a dozen years.

Petar's former patrons can look forward to a welcoming bar with flat screen televisions, along with a family friendly, but upscale

casual menu with mainstream favorites including steak, seafood, chicken and pork coming from the open kitchen with large rotisserie grill. But before the oysters Rockefeller hits tables, a substantial remodel will be in the works.

What's a Cooperage? It's the bar where McCormick's parents first met, according to Diablo Magazine. Although the word was new to this reporter, cooperage also refers to the facility in which a "cooper" – someone who makes wooden staved vessels such as casks, barrels and the always handy butter churn—works. Surely head chef Eric Hopfinger, who has had stints at Jake's on Market, Circa, and Long Bar and as a contestant on "Top Chef" will be putting his culinary chops to work grilling the perfect steak and not barrel-making.

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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. 20, 2013, 7 p.m.

16+43=46

MOFD board approves negotiations with ConFire
By Nick Marnell

The tale of two fire districts may not be of Dickensian proportion, but it's not without plot twists of its own. The board of directors of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District recently authorized Fire Chief Randall Bradley to begin formal negotiations with ConFire for the consolidation of MOFD Station 43 in Orinda with ConFire Station 16 in Lafayette.

Bradley presented his plan for the consolidation to the MOFD board Feb. 6.

ConFire Station 16 was shut down in 2012 due to mold and rodent infestation, and was closed permanently on Jan. 15 after the failure of a Lafayette parcel tax ballot initiative in November. Concurrently, the renovation of its Fire Station 43 has been a top priority for the MOFD. In January, ConFire Chief Daryl Louder approached the MOFD to determine if there was an interest in pursuing a partnership to combine the two stations.

Using the example of a new station 46 on El Nido Ranch Road, Bradley outlined that the proposed consolidation would have only minimal impact on overall response times, call volume would still be low compared to other MOFD and ConFire stations, and the potential operational savings to the MOFD would be nearly \$1 million annually. "This is something that I would definitely consider," he said. "It makes sense."

A member of the Acalanes Valley Homeowners Association responded. "We're going to our board of supervisors with this," he said. "We want this (consolidation) to happen." District resident Keith Jacobsen offered his pragmatic viewpoint. "If response times are almost a wash, a million bucks is a million bucks," he said. "I urge the board to accept this."

A couple of Lafayette residents spoke in favor of a total merger between Lafayette and MOFD – one dubbed the suggested new entity "Lamorinda Fire."

But former MOFD director Brooke Mancinelli warned that "Contra Costa is after our tax revenue to fund their county. This could harm the citizens of Moraga and Orinda."

Dick Olsen, also a past MOFD

director, was skeptical of the response times presented, suggesting that they be road tested. He also wanted to be certain that any new station in Lafayette would be an MOFD fire station.

Director John Wyro tried to put any concern about the size of the MOFD to rest. "We will remain a five-station district," he stated.

Director Alex Evans asked Olsen and Mancinelli how they would vote on this issue. "If I were on the board, I would vote against continuing these discussions," said Olsen. Mancinelli agreed. "I would shut this idea down immediately," he said.

Following public comment, the board took up its discussion. "How does Louder think he can come up with the money to do this?" asked Frank Sperling, board president. Director Fred Weil insisted that any contract be a long-term contract, and that he preferred that the deal be made with the city of Lafayette rather than with Contra Costa County. "We must be protected from the political problems of the county," he said.

Wyro recommended that Bradley pursue the consolidation idea with Louder. "We have a fiduciary responsibility to study this," he said. Sperling was also in favor of continuing the discussion.

But Evans held up his confirmation until he was assured of one final requirement.

"The only way to get me to agree is to get more information," he said. "We need a lot more public input. We need a plan to get it." Wyro agreed that the community had to be more engaged. "And we need to be sure that there is dialogue with the city of Lafayette," he said.

The final motion, which read, "To continue to evaluate service level impacts, financial impacts, community concerns and station relocation options while beginning formal discussions with the Contra Costa Consolidated Fire District, and the city of Lafayette, to develop a Fire Station 43 and 16 proposal for the board's consideration," passed unanimously, 4-0; director Steve Anderson was absent.

Despite Cost-Saving Measures, ConFire Financial Situation Still Very Iffy

By David Killam

When voters rejected Measure Q to financially rescue the Contra Costa Fire District, the district had to take cost-cutting measures in order to balance the books. The district decided to close three fire stations and reduce service at another. In addition, some people were laid off and vacant positions went unfilled. The district also claimed to have cut costs by 10 percent, although the Contra Costa Taxpayer's Association argues on its website that: "There was a 5 percent pay cut and two 2.5 percent raises that were not granted. Most people do not consider canceled pay raises equal to a pay cut."

The taxpayers association also criticized the district for annual budget planning of \$11 million for overtime. District officials responded that the overtime was necessary to insure that emergency facilities met minimum staffing requirements at all times.

The economic downturn caused the district's portfolio assets to decline in value by 30 percent. In addition, when the retirement board decided in 2005 to "de-pool" county pension assets—that is, separate the pensions of county agencies into different funds—the district lost some of its ability to

cost-share with other agencies.

In order to help pay for the current retirement program the district had to issue pension liability bonds, the current value of which is \$106 million. These bonds will reach maturity in 2022. Combine this with the current \$137,737,000 of the district unfunded liability and you have got a serious amount of money. And we're not even talking about what kind of trouble the rest of the county pension fund could be in.

There is a bright spot on the horizon. According to a newsletter put out by Richard Cabral of the Retirement Board: Investment returns for 2012 will be "in excess of 10 percent." It remains to be seen if this kind of investment can pull the county's and the district's chestnuts out of the fire. Other agencies have had to reconfigure their entire retirement program to pay for their retirement system. Can this work in California where the "California rule" guarantees workers' rights to retire with the retirement system they were hired with?

By the end of February the county will issue its 2012 County Comprehensive Annual Financial Report. That may give us a clearer idea of where we stand.

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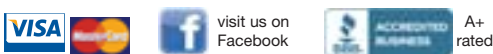
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Community Service

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

From Parking Lot to Garden Plot

Submitted by Janet Thomas



Community Garden on Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Photo Andy Scheck

Less than a year old, the Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center, located across from the Lafayette Reservoir entrance, has become an attractive, thriving space. From April to November 2012, 50 inaugural member families, along with Boy and Girl Scouts, a church group and other volunteers, enjoyed a sense of camaraderie as they built a greenhouse, shed and garden beds from a variety of recycled materials.

A number of different crops were grown and shared during the season. A series of educational workshops, open to the public, was successful in bringing information about gardening and natural history of the area to those who attended. The Earth Day Open House and Fall Harvest Festival were both fun community events.

A special aspect of the garden and learning center site is that it sits along the Lafayette Creek and is graced by a number of native riparian plants. These plants are highlighted in a natural riparian oak garden and along a short nature trail, which will be accessible dur-

ing open hours beginning in March. Also, in 2013, garden members hope to grow enough food to be able to share excess with local agencies that serve the needy.

The garden is sustained on a day to day basis by a cooperative community of members who work under the direction of a garden

manager and committee leaders. Beginning this March, the garden will expand its membership from 50 to 70 families. Membership application forms can be downloaded from the garden website at www.lafayettecommunitygarden.org and are due at the address listed on the application by Feb. 28.

Upcoming Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center Activities

Community members are encouraged to visit the garden site and participate in community activities. During February, the garden is open each Saturday from 9 to 11 a.m. and starting in March, will be open most days. The open hours are listed on the bulletin board outside of the garden entrance.

During the 2013 season, monthly workshops and intergenerational activities will be held at the garden's outdoor learning center including:

- Feb. 9 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. – Building Healthy Soil
- March 9 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. – Doing Your Own Plant Propagation
- April 13 from 10 to 11:30 p.m. – Irrigation and New Norms for California Landscape
- May 11 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. – Creating and Enjoying a Butterfly Garden

To register for these classes, visit: www.lafayettecommunitygarden.org. If you have any questions about the garden, you can call Janet at (925) 946-0563.

Scouts Spearhead Trash Collection

Submitted by Julie Cimino



Photo Julie Cimino

A few fourth-grade Cub Scouts from Pack 220 at Lafayette Elementary School (and a Girl Scout) spent the afternoon doing "A Good Turn" for

their school by learning to whittle trash spears and picking up trash all around the school just in time for families to celebrate Lafayette School's Annual International

Night Jan. 31. Scouts from left: Callan Cimino, Henry Rogers, Laura Bea, Ryan Bea and Declan Tsuyuki.

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Submit stories and story ideas to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

Lafayette Start-Up Wants to End Wrong-Site Surgery

By Sophie Braccini



Dr. Arne Brock-Utne (center) and his team.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Wrong-site surgery, when a surgeon operates on the wrong side of the patient's body, is a nightmare that is more than anecdotal. According to the Joint Commission Center for Transforming Healthcare, although reporting of wrong-site surgery is not mandatory in most states some estimates put the national incidence rate as high as 40 per week. A young doctor and entrepreneur in Lafayette has set out to change that by creating a system called Issio Solutions that prevents wrong site surgery. The system is being implemented at the Aspen Surgery Center in Walnut Creek where, according to Issio Solutions, Inc., the quality of operations has skyrocketed.

"Issio has caught approximately one incorrectly scheduled surgery per week," says Issio's Erin Smrz. "Zero incidents at the surgery center in the four months that Aspen has been using the application designed by Dr. Arne Brock-Utne—they are the safest clinic in America."

The American Academy of Or-

thopaedic Surgeons says that wrong-site surgery is a devastating problem that affects both the patient and surgeon, and results from poor preoperative planning, lack of institutional controls, failure of the surgeon to exercise due care, or a simple mistake in communication between the patient and the surgeon.

"Communication is key to eliminating the problem," says Brock-Utne. "In hospitals today doctors are working under great stress with a large volume of patients. And surgery is a team effort, everyone needs to be on the same page at the same time, manipulating a large amount of information that most of the time is in one paper file that everyone needs to be reading at the same time."

Brock-Utne says that the problem is that hospital and surgical centers have made great efforts to computerize the business side of hospitals, but not the clinical side. His solution is a cloud-based system that is accessed by all the different stakeholders in an operation, including the patient, and

updated in real time as the patient moves through the system from admission to the operating table. As the information is updated, those who need it can access and control it.

"When they arrive at the clinic, patients answer a series of questions regarding the procedure they are having that day," explains Brock-Utne. "They are offered different choices, and if they do not see the operation they are scheduled to have, they can indicate so." The response triggers an alert, and that is how the first mistake was caught at Aspen—a patient had been scheduled for the wrong surgery.

At each step that precedes the surgery, staff inputs what is done and at what time. "This is also a way to improve infections in hospitals," says Brock-Utne. Patients must receive a dose of an antibiotic one hour before an operation. But sometimes the surgeon is late and starts after the window of efficiency of the product. With Issio in place, monitors in the operating room will automatically signal the problem. "We also added

systems to make sure that no step is skipped during the pre-op preparations."

Since September of last year Aspen Surgery Center has agreed to be the beta site for Issio. Staff first worked double-charting until Feb. 4 when they started relying only on Issio. Now Brock-Utne's team has been demonstrating the application to ambulatory surgical centers. For a clinic, the cost is both hardware to equip the facility with the flat screen televisions, and mobile devices for personnel and patients to input information; and Issio charges the clinic a fee per patient. The return on investment comes from eliminating paperwork and all the costs associated with

errors.

So far Brock-Utne has financed the company he started in November of 2011 with the support of family and friends. He was helped along the way by a next door neighbor who is a software engineer; another one is in finance; and his wife, who is maintaining her practice as a pediatrician. He has already hired 11 people and one intern and put his anesthesiology career on hold with no regret—he feels this business is his life's calling.

For more information, visit www.issio.com.

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

Absolute Celebrates 10th Anniversary
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Absolute Center in Lafayette (across from Trader Joe's) will host a week of "Stress Less" events March 4-9 including nutrition, chiropractic, yoga and meditation to celebrate 10 years of success. "We are inviting speakers from the community and the events will be public," says Absolute's Louise Eby (previously known as Louise McMenamin). "Some of our clients were saying how nice it is to see a small business survive during the past economic downturn, and that we should be proud of ourselves for being able to hunker down." For more information, call (925) 299-9642 or visit the Absolute Center website.

Trunk Show at Zahra
3578 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
Zahra Boutique Salon is presenting a Trunk Show from 9 to 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28. The store will feature local women's creations: Doray from Orinda will bring her hair accessories; Devera will show her jewelry. Shila, Zahra's daughter, says she likes to feature local creators in the store. There will be free hors d'oeuvres and drinks at the event.

4th Annual Comedy Night at the Orinda Theatre
Laugh-lovers will have the opportunity to enjoy a champagne-filled night of comedy at the landmark Orinda Theatre Friday, March 8 when the Orinda Chamber of Commerce, in collaboration with Tommy T's Comedy Clubs, presents "Live at the Orinda IV." The evening will start at 7 p.m. and feature no host bars in the lobby and theater. Champagne, wine and mixed drinks can also be purchased during the performances, starting at 8 p.m. with a mid-show intermission. Master of Ceremonies Wayne Coy, 92.1 KKDV radio personality, will open the show and introduce the comedians. This year's slate features Kabezy, David Van Avermaete, Arthur Gaus and headliner Will Durst, who The New York Times calls "possibly the best political comic in the country," returning fresh from a recent tour with all new material. Advance discounted and VIP tickets may be reserved until March 7 using credit cards at the Chamber website - www.OrindaChamber.org - or at First Republic Bank, 224 Brookwood Road. Tickets at the door (if available) will be \$40 per person. A portion of profits from this event will benefit local non-profit organizations as well as the on-going community work of the Chamber of Commerce.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette
The Entrepreneur's Club speaker Del Blaylock will discuss "Business Casual is Too Casual" at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 21 in the Chamber Conference Room.

Business Issues/Government Affairs Meeting at 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 22 in the Chamber Conference Room.

Ribbon Cutting at Urban Suburban at 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 28 at 3328 Mt. Diablo Blvd. The business is changing its name to The Mechanic of Lafayette, foreign and domestic auto repair.

Moraga
Dinner for Business Person of the Year Bill Snider, owner of Moraga Hardware & Lumber since 2000 and Across the Way since 2002. Snider is originally from Iowa and completed his undergraduate degree in business at Saint Mary's College. Snider moved to Moraga in 1990 with his wife Vel to raise their children and become part of the community. He currently serves on the board of directors of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, he is active in and was one of the original founders of the Shop Moraga First campaign. He has been a frequent volunteer at his children's schools, and supports many charities and service organizations. Always ready with a joke, Snider's sense of humor often brings smiles to customers' faces.

Orinda
The Chamber's Downtown Parking Committee has been working on a plan to ease parking in the downtown area by creating special permits for employees in adjacent streets. The chamber also envisions longer-term solutions by encouraging partnerships with city government, BART, churches with parking lots, County Connection, and other potential agencies. The city of Orinda will consider the chamber committee parking plan for the first time at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19. The committee encourages everyone interested in this issue to attend the meeting or to contact one of the committee members through Candy Kattenburg at the chamber, (925) 254-3909 or info@orindachamber.org. Come to the meeting to see what the city proposes as next steps.

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

Correction, issue date Jan. 30, 2013, An Inspiring Tale of Food Intolerance and Granola: The co-founder of Thoughtful Food, Marie Banis, was not mentioned in the article. Banis left Thoughtful Food in May 2012, but still holds a partial stake in the company. To view the corrected article online, visit <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0624/An-Inspiring-Tale-of-Food-Intolerance-and-Granola.html>.

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Civic News Moraga

Beware of Coyotes

By Sophie Braccini

Ever get the feeling someone's following you? Maura Richards and Ellen Gunderson did while running on the hill trail off Rancho Laguna Park in Moraga the morning of Jan. 31— a pack of 10 coyotes started hunting them, or their dogs. Coyotes rarely attack humans, but given an opportunity they will go after pets.

"We were running the Canyon Loop Trail with our two dogs when we started hearing the yelps and barks of coyotes on the hunt," recalled Richards. "It sounded like they were following us. When we reached the crossing where the dilapidated buildings stand, we saw them. A pack of 10, coming at us." Richards said that the band came within 30 feet of them. Their dogs immediately took off. Richards armed herself with a large stick and the two women ran back to the park. "Once we passed the cow fence they stopped," she said, adding that she had the scare of her life even though she thinks it is more likely that the wild animals were after the dogs than the people.

Coyotes are opportunistic, versatile carnivores with a dietary adaptability that has made them very successful, growing in number since human encroachment began. A 2004 study by Robert M. Timm, et al, for San Diego County showed an increase in the number of coyote attacks in California, especially in the southern suburban-wildlife interface. "Our observations indicate that in the absence of harassment by residents, coyotes can lose their fear of people and come to associate humans with this safe, resource-rich

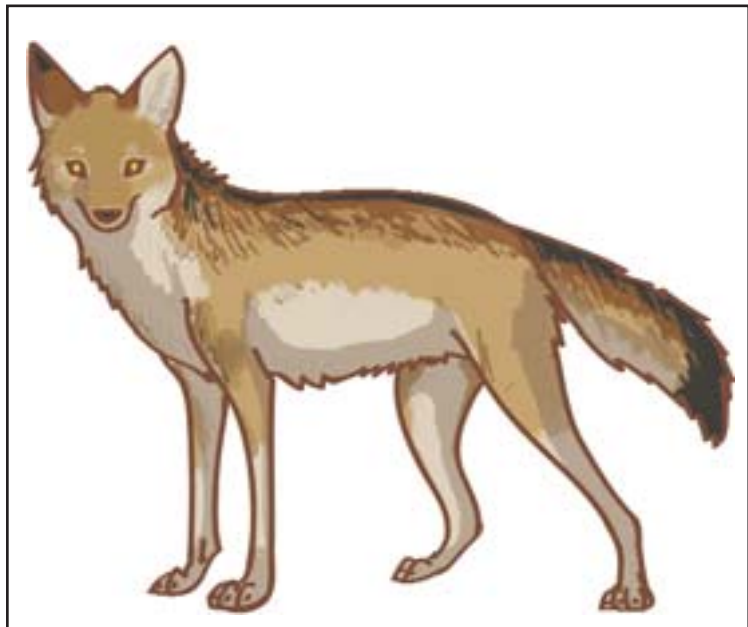


Illustration Jaya Griggs

environment," they wrote. "In such situations, some coyotes have begun to act aggressively toward humans, chasing joggers and bicyclists, confronting people walking their dogs, and stalking small children." In northern California only one attack on a human was recorded.

UC Davis Integrated Pest Management Online concurs that the problem worsens when coyotes lose their fear of humans and that they need to be removed when that happens. Matt Slattengren at the Contra Costa Agriculture Department indicated that if an incident were reported to them, they would contact the state trapper who is in charge of removing coyotes.

The Department of Fish and Game recommends that if a coyote approaches you should try to frighten it away by shouting in a

deep voice, waving your arms, throwing things at it, and looking it directly in the eyes; then retreat from the situation by walking slowly backward so as not to turn your back on the coyote. The agency also recommends stashing food and trash that attract coyotes and never leaving pets and small children unattended outside.

Moraga Police Chief Robert Priebe indicated that the best number to call in a dangerous situation is either 911 or the county police dispatch line, (925) 284-5010; the call will be directed to the correct agency.

Nicole Kozicki, the Fish and Game warden for Moraga, said she had not heard about the incident but she would check to if there has been a pattern of attacks in Moraga, at which point the state trapper would be activated.

From Front Page

Where's the Love, Lamorinda?

... continued from page A1

What more meaning than that can it possibly have? And when Shawn, an Orinda mom on her way to do food

shopping, brushed me off with, "We're going to the Cal-UCLA basketball game that night," it was time to change tactics.

Where better than the greeting card display at a drug store to find a real Valentine's fan, right? Except Tenaya's first word in response to my question blew up that theory. "Honestly?" she asked. "It's a Hallmark holiday. It's superficial. I don't like it when they're telling you that you have to celebrate. I'm just looking [at valentines] for my kids."

I walked away in despair from the 20-something Lafayette mom.

The candy store! Surely there'd be a romantic, ordering a special treat for Valentine's Day, wouldn't there? Laura, 40s, an Orinda IT manager, set that straight. "I avoid it because of the hype," she said. "You can show affection in other ways. I'm jaded. And my brother

even owns a flower shop!"

Just as I was about to beg off of this depressing story, Rebecca appeared, as she shopped along Mt. Diablo Boulevard. "Oh, I love Valentine's Day," she said. Flashing the biggest smile and brightest eyes of the day, the 50-ish vice president of a garden club continued: "I go out in my backyard and cut wreaths from my olive trees. I bring out all of the Valentine's cards that I've received since I was a little girl, and place them around the house. My friends and I will have a tea that day, and we'll talk about famous lover couples. And then my husband and I are going to dinner and then spend the night at the Lafayette Park Hotel."

Finally! There's the love, Lamorinda. Rebecca, you are an inspiration to us all.

Happy Valentines' Day everybody!

Correction, issue date Jan. 30, 2013, Team Toaster Almost Ready to Roll:

The contact information we included in this article was incorrect.

To reach Team Toaster please email David Gerson, david@loavesfishescc.org. For more information about Loaves and Fishes, go to www.loavesfishescc.org.



Resident Falls for Mini Filly

By Cathy Tyson



DuBose Forrest with Swanee and sons Gordon (white shirt) and Kip (blue shirt).

Photo provided



DuBose Forrest with Flambeau and Swanee

Photo Cathy Tyson

DuBose Forrest loves animals. As the first person who responded to our inquiry about peculiar pets, she was happy to share the story of her beloved miniature horse Swanee and slightly shy miniature donkey Flambeau. Flambeau was named after Forrest's favorite zydeco band, and Swanee is one of their tunes. The filly and jenny are the same age and arrived within a day of each other; together with a few dogs they share their spacious two and a half acre parcel in Lafayette.

Forrest had a normal sized horse, Silver, with some behavior problems; apparently he was lonely. After deciding to follow her passion for animals, she went in search of some company for the full-sized equine. Eventually locating Swanee on a ranch in Livermore – she was immediately attracted to the filly, who perked right up when Forrest approached. She was “just adorable, and so intelligent,” said Forrest. It was love at first sight. Silver was much happier with his two new pals.

Swanee is well-socialized,

friendly and comfortable around their neighborhood; she's even made visits to a nearby preschool. She can carry up to 70 pounds, just right when the grandchildren come by.

Forrest calls her, “a true party girl, she even sticks her head into photo booth shots,” and she clearly enjoys affection from the family. She's occasionally allowed in the one story ranch house – and has never had an accident. Swanee and Flambeau share a generous corral and have a barn for inclement weather, and enjoy playing with the larger dogs.

As a little girl growing up in Washington D.C., the homeowner had more traditional pets, cats and dogs over the years, but she was charmed by the pony rides her parents took her to, eventually taking riding lessons.

“I always wanted a big family,” said Forrest. Together with husband, Mike, they have four grown children, three boys and one girl who they raised in their spacious home of over 25 years that borders the creek. Mike Forrest is very patient with his wife's

animal friends. The energetic grandma is completely responsible for them, and in her free time enjoys swing dance, and after much cajoling her husband now participates, too.



Photo provided

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“Don't miss it”

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Firefighter on the Rebound

By Nick Marnell

Kelly Morris heard the train zoom by near the Orinda BART station and she had a premonition: "I hope there's not going to be a train derailment today, or something," she thought.

"Or something" was less than a mile away.

The 36-year-old MOFD firefighter-paramedic responded with her partner Steve Gehling in Medic 45 shortly after 9 a.m. Dec. 2 to an emergency call – a four-car non-injury pileup on Highway 24. Exiting on Wilder Road, the paramedics turned around and navigated eastbound on the freeway 1,600 feet to the accident scene, parking the ambulance by Engine 43, the first MOFD emergency vehicle to arrive.

The rain was so fierce, with the water and the mud nearly 4 inches deep, Morris said the people involved in the accident were ushered to safety into the back of the ambulance. "I've never seen it come down that hard, and I've lived here my whole life," she said.

Caltrans set up flares outside the east end of the Caldecott Tunnel, yet Morris watched vehicles continue to fly out of the tunnel. Two cars sped by the scene, fishtailing, barely missing Engine 43. The next car didn't miss. A Toyota struck the engine, skidded to a stop next to the ambulance, and the rattled driver jumped out of the car and ran toward Morris. He indicated he was all right, likely saved by his airbag.

Gehling moved Medic 45 farther east on Highway 24, away from the fire engine and the Toyota. Morris and the Toyota driver stood near the shoulder. A Chevrolet Tahoe spun out of control along the freeway, and Morris and the Toyota driver scrambled out of its path. But the Tahoe clipped the parked Toyota, and the Tahoe flipped and rolled over, along an alternate route. "I looked back, and I could see the vehicle bearing down on me," she said. "It was like in slow, slow motion. Just like the movies."

Morris knows what it feels like to be injured. During a Campolindo High School basketball game against San Ramon Valley, Morris played through a spiral fracture of her right hand. At Saint Mary's College, she soaked her sprained ankle at halftime and returned to the court for the second half. But this was different; she was struck by a moving vehicle, and tossed into the lane of traffic. And she couldn't move.

The impact knocked the wind out of her. She fell backward, onto her tailbone. Afraid she had internal injuries, but more concerned about being hit again, Morris scooted along the road, on her elbows, until an MOFD engineer, John Whittington, and a bystander pulled her by the arms to the side of the road.

Morris lay immobile next to the Toyota driver, who appeared to her to be unconscious. A nurse, another of the growing group of bystanders, offered to help her. "I'm fine," Morris



Kelly Morris

Photo Andy Scheck

said, and she motioned toward the man beside her. "Help him."

The cars continued to whiz by, until Highway 24 was closed down. Morris was strapped onto a gurney and helped into the ambulance – the same ambulance in which she arrived at the scene – and she was transported to John Muir Hospital in Walnut Creek.

She remained at John Muir for two days. She suffered a broken right fibula – sliced clean through – three fractures in her right foot, a left knee fracture, and possibly (she's not yet scheduled for an MRI) right knee ACL/MCL/meniscus damage.

She went home to begin the tor-

turous rehab – and to prepare for the birth of her baby, due in July.

Former Campolindo Cougars' coach Scott Espinosa-Brown described Morris as "an absolute warrior, with a tremendous work ethic."

MOFD Fire Chief Randall Bradley echoed the praise, and he stressed the compassion and dignity with which Morris treats her patients. "She always has a positive, upbeat attitude and is a valued member of our organization," he said.

Kelly Graves, her Saint Mary's basketball coach, summed up the character of his star competitor. "If anybody will make it through this," he said, "it will be Kelly."

Lamorinda Reads – "A Hologram for the King"

By Sophie Braccini



From left: Jeanine, Susan, Dick, Beth Girshman and Paula came to share their opinions of "A Hologram for The King"

Photo Sophie Braccini

When asked why the three Lamorinda librarians chose Dave Eggers's book, "A Hologram for the King," for this year's Lamorinda Reads program, Orinda librarian Beth Girshman explained that they were looking for a newly released book by a local author that would be relevant to residents and would trigger wide discussions.

At the Feb. 7 Lamorinda Reads discussion group at the Orinda Library, everyone agreed that "A Hologram for the King" fit the bill. The events continue through the month of February, culminating in an evening with Eggers on Feb. 28.

"A Hologram for the King" is a quick read and the latest production by Eggers, who also wrote very well received books such as "What Is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng" and "Zeitoun." Editors of The New York Times Book Review named "A Hologram for the King" in its 10 Best Books of 2012 list, "after we chose it for our program," said Girshman.

Lamorinda's three libraries obtained 750 hard cover books that were given to the first who came in and asked for them. "Everything was gone within a week," said Girshman, "but we have other books in regular circulation that people are borrowing and circulating." She added that the three Friends of the Library organizations contributed generously for this purchase, and that they were able to buy the books at a good price.

At the Feb. 7 book discussion or-

ganized at the Orinda Library, readers had a lot to say about the book. Susan noted that the book reminded her of two previous reads, Samuel Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" and Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman."

"The book evokes those themes, the whole issue of 'is God dead?'" she said. She added that in this book the 'God' they're waiting for is a King who will finally end up with the Chinese, "which is what is happening to us now, and God is not choosing America anymore," she said with a smile.

All the readers around the table agreed that the book is a very good allegory to what is happening to this country. "What is interesting, too, is that the main character is not even selling reality or objects anymore but a hologram," said Paula.

"This is such a lampooning of Dubai," added Dick. "There is nothing tangible, and the main character (Alan Clay) gets so many signals that this is going to fail, but he does not do anything; he is such a loser."

Others did not agree with him. Patsy thought that Clay simply lacked any form of faith. "He had no foundation throughout his life to base his decision on," she said. "He is always looking for approval from others; he has no inner strength or code."

"This is what our modern world values; you are as good as what you can sell," added Susan.

Two of the readers, Dick and Paula, had experience in the Middle East where the book takes place.

They both commented on the accuracy of the depiction of that society.

"My husband went to another middle-eastern country in the '90s with a group of Berkeley professors to evaluate the programs of a newly constructed university," Paula said. "While there, they realized that they could not deliver any comment of substance; that they had been asked there just for show." Paula brought a picture of the group of scientists and local officials in front of the building; it looked just like one of the sites in the book.

Although there is no trace of redemption at the novel's end, all of these participants enjoyed reading the book and they are looking forward to the discussion with the author at 7 p.m. Feb. 28 at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building. "There are no reservations, seating will be available on a first-come basis," said Girshman.

Other upcoming Lamorinda Reads events include Telling Your Story: A Memoir Writing Workshop from 1 to 4 p.m. Feb. 19 at the Orinda Library. "We organized this event because Eggers and educator Ninive Clements Calegari co-founded 826 Valencia, a nonprofit writing and tutoring center for kids ages 6-18 in San Francisco in 2002," said Girshman.

Two more book discussions are scheduled at 7 p.m. Feb. 21 at the Orinda Library and at 6 p.m. the same night at the Moraga Library. For more information, visit: guides.ccclib.org/lamorindareads.

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— Marian Nichols, Moraga

“Tokens of Affection” Exhibit Features Artwork from the Heart

By Lian Walden



Photos David VanderJagt

The Lafayette Gallery is a unique artist co-op comprised of 23 local artists. They rotate jobs for each exhibit: one person might curate an exhibit in the fall and then organize an opening night reception in the spring. All proceeds from the artwork go towards maintaining the gallery. Some of the artists have been part of the co-op for over a decade, while others joined as recently as this year.

Founded in 2000, the gallery is a local hotspot as well as a tourist destination. “People like to pop in after dining at Fiesta Square,” said Dalia Alekna, one of the oldest members of the co-op. The gallery likes to keep their membership to about 25 artists, but there is often turnover. New artists are juried into the co-op after they’ve been reviewed by the members. When an artist applies, the committee assesses their current membership to determine what art form might be underrepresented.

The co-op seeks to sustain a balance of artists working in different mediums. All of their shows feature a variety of visual art: sculpture, jewelry, painting, pottery, glasswork, and photography.

The current “Tokens of Affection” exhibit is no exception. The theme was conceived in celebration of Valentine’s Day. Most of the publicity surrounding the exhibit features jewelry since, “That’s what people tend to associate with—and thus purchase on—Valentine’s Day,” said Alekna. However, true to the gallery’s mission, the theme is explored through various mediums.

“This exhibit inspired us to create work that captures what we love,” explained artist David VanderJagt. The artists create original new work for each exhibit. With a new exhibit every six to eight weeks, the gallery compels the artists to be quite prolific.

The theme of love is quite broad, and this is reflected in the artists’

work. The artwork features a variety of subjects: pets, landscapes, loved ones, wine glasses. Some pieces are more literal, such as Judy Miller’s ceramic hearts, whereas others are more abstract, such as Alekna’s delicate jewelry. The breadth of images keeps the viewer consistently engaged and invites him to contemplate the myriad expressions and manifestations of love in contemporary art.

“All of the work reflects our deep affection for art, for what we do,” continued VanderJagt, whose earthy clay pots suggest a love of nature. VanderJagt chose to highlight the pots’ organic quality while also underscoring the Valentine’s Day theme by exhibiting his pots with flowers inside of them. The sweet smell of lavender and roses adds a sensorial experience to the visual feast.

The gallery hosts a reception open to the public to kick off each new exhibit. They usually serve wine and cheese, but at the “Tokens of Affection” reception they served champagne and chocolate, which they felt was more apropos.

The theme of the next exhibit is “Inside Outside,” which opens in March. The gallery will open its sculpture garden over the summer. Visit their website for more information: www.lafayettegallery.net.



Democratic Club Gathers to Watch Inauguration

Submitted by Carlyn Obringer and Susan JunFish



Photo provided

The Lamorinda Democratic Club members and guests, festively arrayed in Obama buttons, hats, and shirts, celebrated President Obama’s second inauguration Jan. 21 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. The Lamorinda Democratic Club features monthly guest speakers at 7:15 p.m. the second Thursday of each month at LLLC. The club’s Feb. 14 meeting will feature a conversation about

Marriage Equality in California and the Nation with Chris Riley, northern California field director for Equality California. In March, the LDC will be hosting Andrew Gunther, Ph.D., executive coordinator of the Bay Area Ecosystems Climate Change Consortium and the executive director of the Center for Ecosystem Management and Restoration. For more info, visit: www.lamorindademoclub.org.

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The Farnsworth Invention

By Sophie Braccini



From left: David Sarnoff (Jeff Draper) and Philo Farnsworth (Michael Doppe) Photo Stu Selland

Joel Roster is a tremendous fan of screenwriter and playwright Aaron Sorkin ("A Few Good Men," "The West Wing," "The Social Network"). He heard about Sorkin's play, "The Farnsworth Invention," when it opened on Broadway in 2007, read it and gave it to Town Hall Theatre Artistic Director Clive Worsley last year. "Clive read it in two days and wanted it for Town Hall," recalls Roster. "We checked around and found out it would be a Bay Area premiere. Clive gave me the go-ahead to direct it."

Roster has been Town Hall Theatre's education program director for a few years. He is an actor—he was a great Picasso in THT's production of Picasso at the Lapin Agile—and has directed plays in other Bay Area venues; "The Farnsworth Invention" marks his THT directing debut.

The play opened Feb. 9 and runs through March 2. It is a non-fiction play, or, to be more accurate, a romanticized non-fiction play. It tells the story of the invention of television and the battle to patent it between two amazing men, RCA President David Sarnoff and inventor Philo Farnsworth.

The play is constructed as a narration alternating between the two protagonists. It covers a large span of American life from 1921 to the 1940s and jumps from the East Coast where RCA was born and flourished to San Francisco, the home of the lab in which Farnsworth invented the television.

The two men are different, but both are endearing. They are visionaries, idealists; they both dream larger than life. You wish they'd meet and set out on life's adventures together. But one is a radio man and the other wants to create television. Sarnoff immediately sees the threat and is bound to try to license television through his own engineering team, and not let a self-taught genius reap the benefits of the discovery. To those who tell him that television is a gadget for the rich and ask where people would put such a big device in their homes, he answers, "Where their radio is."

The quality of the casting makes this THT production one of its best vintage. Jeffrey Draper as Sarnoff has a very strong presence and gives a confident representation of a man who was both a humanist and a businessman. Michael Doppe as Philo Farnsworth is instantly believable as the young genius, passionate and visionary.

"Jeff (Draper) came to a reading of the play, but he had a previous engagement and could not play the role," remembers Roster. "Even though we auditioned others, I kept calling him about it because I thought he was the best. Then his schedule opened up and he was able to do it."

Roster says that he thought at first that Michael Doppe was a little young to play Farnsworth. "But Michael is, in real life, a realistic intellectual like Farnsworth; something he brings naturally to the stage."

With the play set in many different times and places the director had to find a way to cue the audience. "We built a large, vintage-looking TV set for the stage that's fed by a laptop," says Roster, "it felt appropriate." The rest of the set is very simple, which is hardly noticeable since the play is packed with action. There are 16 actors performing, many of them playing more than one role.

It takes a few minutes at the beginning of the play to get oriented, and sometimes the science can lose the less physics-savvy among the audience. But quickly spectators 'get it' and the story captivates. Many references are made to the marking events of the time, like the Great Depression and Prohibition, adding to the feeling of being spirited away in a great adventure.

Roster says that a woman came to him after a preview and said that every high school student should see it. "It is non-fiction, but Aaron Sorkin made it clear that it is romanticized," says the director. "Most of the events are true, but there are discrepancies." This does not affect the theatrical experience.

"The Farnsworth Invention" is rated PG13 for adult language. For more information and tickets, visit www.TownHallTheatre.com.

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Lion Dance Welcomes in Chinese New Year!



Rumbling drums chased bad spirits far, far away as Leung's White Crane dancers jumped and twirled at the Orinda Library Feb. 9 to welcome in the Chinese New Year. Their lion's yellow and gold hues represented good luck and fortune - the drums, the strong beat's of his heart, said drummers Brandon Lok and Calvin Zhes. With eyes batting, the fearsome, furry one further delighted children and adults as leaf after lettuce leaf appeared magically from his flapping jaw, promising a prosperous Year of the Snake. Gung Hay Fat Choy! L. Snyder

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Music Activity for Seniors with Dementia

It's more than entertainment

By Sophie Braccini



Michael Kistner plays the guitar at Moraga Retreat Care Home and Anne sings along. Photos Sophie Braccini

When Michael Kistner starts playing “Embraceable You” on his guitar in the Moraga Retreat Care Home where he comes twice a week, Jack, one of the six residents, never fails to sing the lyrics. His voice is clear, he is in tune and he remembers all the words. A remarkable thing, considering Jack suffers from memory loss.

Many facilities that cater to the aging population use music as a vehicle to calm, heighten moods and trigger memories. Different from music therapy – the clinical and evidence-based use of music interventions to accomplish goals established by a credentialed professional – the facilities offer therapeutic music sessions performed by licensed professionals in that field to improve the lives of impacted seniors, as well as that of their caregivers.

Those who work with adults suffering from memory loss state that musical activities provide temporary well-being, improve mood, promote socialization and relaxation.

“Music brings out the personality that’s hidden behind the dementia,” agrees Elizabeth Lucasz, the activity director at the Moraga Convalescent Hospital, which provides a musical activity twice a week to its residents and offers access to music in residents’ rooms.

James Ritz, who plays regularly at the hospital and other local elder care centers, noticed a difference between the Alzheimer’s patients who prefer to sing along and to participate, and people with other forms of memory loss who prefer to listen, as music loosens their emotions.

“At first I thought I was providing entertainment, but now I know that what I do is act as a can-opener for people’s memories,” says Ritz. “I can’t predict what will be the trigger for each person, but there is usually something for everyone.”

At Aegis there are 15 residents in the memory care unit and according to Activity Director Kay Wong, “Music is very important for them and we do a lot of it. The music gives them happiness, even if they cannot communicate.”



James Ritz, pictured with Elizabeth Lucasz at Moraga Convalescent Hospital, plays for seniors in care facilities.

When Kistner starts playing his guitar in the Moraga Retreat Care Home and Jack starts to sing along, his wife Joan, who is also a resident and who does not sing, shivers in her wheelchair and her gaze turns to her husband with intensity.

When the guitar player comes, they never miss him.

Her assistant, Jessie Craig, who has a master’s in art therapy says, “We do not have a music therapist, but we definitely have a music program,” adding that it has an impact and that residents recover some of their vibrancy.

“Music can still reach residents who are in a stage where most of the understanding is gone,” observes Wong. “Memories that are musical and not verbal are processed differently; patients who are not verbal anymore can still sing the words,” adds Craig.

The two women are more reserved when asked if music can improve the stage of a resident’s memory loss. “Our goal here is to keep them at a plateau,” says Wong, “and you can do that with a lot of stimulation.”

Even at the Lafayette Care Center, where there is no established music program, Activity Director Marvie Unidad uses music with patients. “When someone starts wandering around as their dementia kicks in, we take them to the activity room where music will calm them and help them to find themselves again and be able to get engaged into other activities,” she says.

Professor Oliver Sacks in his book, “Musicophilia,” states that “even with advanced dementia, music therapy is possible because musical perception, musical sensibility, musical emotion, and musical memory can survive long after other forms of memory have disappeared. Music of the right kind can serve to orient and anchor a patient when almost nothing else can.”

Ana Blaj, who directs the two Moraga Retreat Care Homes, went to classes by dementia expert Teepa Snow at the John Muir Senior Outreach center. “She explained that researchers did functional MRIs with people with memory loss and they noticed that certain parts of the brain re-activated with the use of music,” says Blaj. “We use music to help residents go to sleep, in the morning to help them out of bed in a good mood. The goal is to keep them happy and reduce the amount of medication. It can be the trigger for a lot of positive emotions.”

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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

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Nina Kalani

SMC Students' Jan Term Visit to Cambodia Educates and Illuminates

Submitted by Omer Malik



Saint Mary's Jan Term students in Cambodia.

Photo Provided

“Clean, fresh water! We all took it for granted until we travelled to Cambodia on our service trip,” said Saint Mary's College student Omer Malik.

As part of a Jan Term course offered at the college, Malik and 15 other Saint Mary's undergraduate students embarked on a water and education mission to Cambodia for more than two weeks last month. “Our effort has received a tremendous amount of support, raising over \$2,600, funds for 35 water wells, and 1,000 pounds of vitamins,” he said.

The group partnered with Friends of the Cambodian Child's Dream Organization – a small non-profit organization that works closely with students from around the Bay Area in hopes of inspiring awareness and giving opportunities for sharing and learning through service, benefiting rural communities and, in particular, children.

“It was a unique opportunity to not only serve the underprivileged people of Cambodia, but also to ex-

perience their culture and travel to some of the most breathtaking and historic locations in the world—the famed temples of Angkor Wat,” Malik said. The group spent nearly half of their trip volunteering in two rural schools.

“We spent many hours teaching English to children ages six to 20 years old. I count myself lucky enough to have been part of this enriching experience, which was led by inspiring professors Ksenija Olmer and Alexandra Rollo.” With their guidance, the SMC students maximized their presence in and out of the villages.

“We developed what I would like to coin ‘active travel,’ or the act of traveling with a motive of truly engaging with those often less fortunate than ourselves, and not only teaching and aiding them, but learning from them. In a sense, the course's scope was not just to leave some of ourselves behind but to bring Cambodia home with us, giving a voice to a country and its people, which is

lacked on the global stage.”

Indeed, this was an endeavor that cannot be replicated in a lecture, book, video, or even conversation, explained Malik. “I never realized how much one learns about oneself by teaching others. In the villages we witnessed genuine gratitude, happiness, and perseverance. From teaching at the schools we developed an ever greater appreciation for the power of education and realized the advantages of being a native English speaker,” he said. “At the temples we discovered spirituality, a kind that does not discriminate by religion. And finally, we felt a deep sense of grief and loss at the infamous Khmer Rouge Killing Fields. We learned of technological simplicity as we helped build one of the wells with our bare hands and only a few simple tools.”

The group's social networking outlets continued to grow, even several days after returning from the trip on Jan. 26. “Our Facebook page, originally created to keep close friends and family in the loop, has transformed into a traffic hotspot averaging nearly 1,250 new views a week. We all agreed that this trip was an essential experience that every student should partake in for a complete college education. Thus we inspire to change lives—others, but also ours!”

There will be an informational meeting at 7 p.m. Feb. 27 in Saint Mary's Galileo Hall, room 201, for the community and interested students. For more information about Cambodian Child's Dream Organization, visit www.friendsofcd.org. To view the Jan Term Facebook page, visit <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Saint-Marys-College-of-CA-in-Cambodia-Jan-13/426282020777990>.

It is Spelling Bee Season!

Can you spell W-I-N-N-E-R-S?

Submitted by Shirley K. DeFrancisci



Daisy Cho



Emma Connor



Lucia Pirone



Leo Naylor

Moraga Schools held their spelling bees over the last two weeks and four students have been named as the top spellers. Each winner is moving on to participate in the 37th Annual Contra Costa County Spelling Bee, which will be held March 23 in Walnut Creek.

Each school held preliminary written tests to qualify finalists for their respective, school-wide oral spelling bees. Students made it through several grueling rounds of challenging words before the final winners were determined.

At Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, the winning word “delinquency” was spelled by Daisy (Eunji) Cho, an eighth-grader who competed against 25 other finalists. At Camino Pablo Elementary School, fourth-grader Emma Connor spelled her school's winning word “mosque” in the fifth round without needing clarification such as a definition or language of origin.

Los Perales Elementary School students experienced “déjà vu” as they cheered on their peer, Lucia Pirone, a fourth-grader who won the school's spelling bee for the second year in a row. Rheem Elementary School fifth-grader Leo Naylor took the school's top spelling honor as his peers watched and applauded; Naylor also received a certificate and a coveted “Super Speller” pencil to use as he studies for the next round.

The county-level spelling bee was in jeopardy of being cancelled this year due to lack of a local sponsor. Thankfully, the Contra Costa Times stepped in at the 11th hour to sponsor it again. The champion of the Contra Costa County Spelling Bee will receive an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., courtesy of the California Lottery to compete in the 2013 Scripps National Spelling Bee in May.

Best of luck to our local spelling champs!

The Common Application: Change Remains the Same

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

When a high school student starts to apply to college, the first application he or she will probably encounter is called the “Common Application,” produced by a nonprofit organization called “Common Application” (www.commonapp.org) that serves members and students nationwide by providing a single application to streamline the college admission process. Students may submit this ‘common’ application to any of the organization's nearly 500 member colleges.

At the annual meeting of the National Association for College Admission Counseling last October, Common Application announced that the fourth-generation Common Application would be launched this summer and the new version would incorporate several important changes. Since the announcement, a multitude of voices weighed in on the proposed modifications, but the one change that caused the most discussion was the fact that the original six essay questions were going to be totally revised. No one knew what the new prompts would be and concerns were raised by both college counselors and admission staff since both sides are well aware of the importance of the college essay.

The prior version of the application required a short response describing one activity in which the student is involved. In addition, the student was asked to write a longer personal essay that responded to one of six possible prompts. One of the six was ‘topic of your choice’ which Common Application decided to remove as an option. This change alone prompted much discussion in the college admission world and thousands upon thousands of words flew back and forth on the pros and cons of excluding this alternative. Another flurry of pens accompanied the word limit to be placed on the essay.

Now the wait is over—the 2013-14 essay prompts debuted Feb. 5. The short-response question

about one activity has been deleted entirely, and the previous prompts have been replaced by five brand new ones. They are:

1. Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?
3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
4. Describe a place or environment where you are perfectly content. What do you do or experience there and why is it meaningful to you?
5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

The minimum word count is still 250 words, and the maximum count has been increased to 650 words; that limit will be strictly enforced. Although it is true that the new set of questions do not include the open option, the first prompt is quite broad and easily gives students enough flexibility to write about virtually any topic of their choice. The remaining four prompts offer ample opportunity for students to distinguish themselves. Take for example prompt two: a discussion that ends your participation in sports for a season, a poor grade that lowers your overall grade in a class you struggled in, a debate lost. Later as you move past the disappointment, you can reflect on how you coped and lessons learned.

Young people challenge ideas, take risks, regret actions taken or opportunities missed to act. With luck, each of us has a place where we are at peace and feel contentment. For many that place is concrete, like your room or atop a

childhood tree house, and for some it could be a transcendent state of mind, that when reached brings calm to the soul. In each family and many cultures, events mark adulthood, whether formal like a bat mitzvah or quite informal, as when a young man's father accepts his son's revelation, even though he disagrees.

With these thoughts in mind, and as much for fun, as to allay undue concern about new questions, I went back to each and every essay my senior clients wrote for the Common Application during the last two admission cycles. That represented nearly 100 unique essays. I found that each student's essay could be used to respond fully and well to one (or more) of the new questions. Despite all the discussions about how the changes in the Common Application could harm the application process or diminish opportunities to develop a personal, creative essay, my conviction is that relatively little has changed. The essay remains the place on the application where the student can respond using his or her own voice in a personal, unique and insightful way.



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

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NEWSPAPER

Café Movers at the Hacienda

By Sophie Braccini



Taking a coffee break at Moraga's Hacienda de las Flores on a cold morning.

Every weekday from 9 to 11:30 a.m. the Hacienda de las Flores in Moraga is welcoming anyone in need of a cup of coffee and cookies. Next to the large Fireside room a petite buffet table is set up by Parks and Recreation Assistant Kim Burrowes; the supplies are paid for by the Moraga Movers, a group of active seniors.

"We were discussing ways of getting more people to come and appreciate the beautiful Hacienda de las Flores as a community and gathering place," said Movers' President Bob Foxall, "and the Parks and Recreation Director suggested this open and

free coffee."

One recent morning, a conversation group of gentlemen who've been meeting every Thursday morning for the last 10 years to debate all topics of life was seeking refuge from the cold morning in the Fireside room. Lounging on the leather sofas or peering through the windows at the majestic and frozen grounds, they were enjoying the warm building and each other's company.

Groups, walkers, moms on their way to the park with their kids, or anyone who just wants to sit and enjoy the venue—are all welcome. "This is open to

everyone of any age, and we do not discriminate against the people of Lafayette and Orinda," added Foxall with a smile. "It will go on as long as we have people coming."

The Hacienda de las Flores is a Spanish-style historic estate and former mansion of the Rheem family who built it in 1929; it is now a town property operating as a community center and is located at 2100 Donald Drive, off Moraga Road.

Photo Sophie Braccini

"Chronicle of My Mother" in Orinda

By Sophie Braccini



Photo provided

A man believes he was abandoned by his mother; this belief has made him the man he is today – a self-centered successful writer, full of resentment. His mother, in her late 70s, suffers from dementia. As her brain deteriorates, glimpses of the past emerge that give the writer a completely different perspective of what happened in his youth.

Set in post-war Japan, from 1959 to 1973, director Masato Harada's film, "Chronicle of My Mother," is a slow and beautiful voyage into the past. The characters evolve as truth is slowly revealed in a society where emotions are understated and traditions still hold significance.

There are many interesting facets addressed in this movie: how the family takes charge of an elderly parent that's struggling with dementia; how the father who is raising three daughters learns to let them go and find their own way; and how long hidden pain can release its grip once truth is discovered.

The movie is based on the 1975 autobiographical novel by Yasushi Inoue with the same title. It is set in the Izu peninsula, southwest of Tokyo and in Tokyo. The cinematography is particularly beautiful. The scenes shot in Izu are set in an atmosphere of serene beauty. The actors all play with restraint,

letting the emotions rise to the surface without ostentation. Harada constructed his film to give the spectator just enough to feel real emotions. Sometimes without a word being said – a glance, a tear – one understands the internal shift that's happened in the heart of the character.

Kirin Kiki who plays the mother is extremely touching; her performance is unsettling in its truthfulness. Director Harada sensitively explores family relationships – the tension, the love, and the need to sacrifice for one another. The father's favorite sentence, "Love is to serve, to serve is to love," does not always connect with the younger generation. As the main character evolves, he becomes a better father, brother, husband and son.

The poetry carried within the movie will touch all viewers. There is no violence, no obscenity, just the slow unfolding of life and how secrets hidden and unearthed change people. It is an optimistic movie, one of compassion, narrated with subtlety.

"Chronicle of My Mother" was the winner of the Special Jury Grand Prix at the 2011 Montreal World Film Festival. It will play at the Orinda Theatre for one week, beginning Feb. 22. For more information, visit www.lamorindatheatre.com.

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Campolindo High School is County's 2013 Academic Decathlon Champion

Submitted by Jonathan Lance



Campolindo High School's Red Team

History truly repeated itself when the top three 2013 Contra Costa County High School Academic Decathlon finishing teams were a carbon copy of last year's results. At the Feb. 4 Academic Decathlon Awards Reception, Campolindo High School's Red Team once again finished in first place, and will go on to represent Contra Costa County in the California State Academic Decathlon competi-

tion in Sacramento, March 14-17. Also in repeating rolls, Campolindo's Blue Team took second place, and Acalanes High School finished in third.

During the awards ceremony, many individual awards were also given out. This year's Top Overall Academic Decathlon Individual Award went to Zach Scherer of Campolindo High School.

Directed by the Contra Costa

County Office of Education and with the assistance of community volunteers, the county's Academic Decathlon provides an opportunity for high school students to compete as individuals and teams in a series of 10 academic tests and demonstrations. The curriculum includes art, economics, language and literature, mathematics, music, science, essay, interview, speech (prepared and impromptu), and the Super Quiz.

Approximately, 170 participating high school students studied and prepared for this event with their coaches since September. This year's Academic Decathlon theme was Russia, and the Super Quiz focused on the areas the participating students had been preparing for with the comprehension portion of Academic Decathlon.

High school teams are made up of nine students, grades 9-12, with a maximum of three students in each of the following divisions: Honors (3.75-4.00 GPA), Scholastic (3.00-3.74 GPA) and Varsity (2.99 GPA and below).

To view all Academic Decathlon statistics, visit <http://www.cccoe.k12.ca.us/supe/events/decathlon.htm>.

Photo Diane Morrell, CCCOE

TEEN SCENE

Technology and Teens

By Caie Kelley

These days, one does not have to go far to register a growing concern about teenagers' addiction to technology. "Text, text, text, all you ever do is text," says my mom. "The Internet is turning high-schoolers into useless, unsociable blobs," a substitute teacher once declared. Even strangers at Safeway chime in on the complaints: "A computer is a distraction. I see no reason why somebody needs access to Facebook and Twitter all the time, much less a kid."

In many people's eyes, technology undermines teens' productivity and decreases social interaction. If the Internet truly does limit our meaningful conversations, what is the appeal of popular social networking sites for Lamorinda teens?

One student, a freshman at Miramonte, said, "Well, Facebook is nice to stay updated with your friends and an easy form of communication. Many clubs at school have Facebook groups, so I know when the meetings are, classes have groups so that we can ask each other about homework, and school events are posted here, so it does help me stay connected to school. I know usage can be excessive, but it's helpful!"

Another sophomore chimed in, "Blogging sites like Pinterest and Tumblr serve as inspiration and a distraction, and distractions aren't always negative. High school, sports, and all the extracurriculars can be overwhelming. My Tumblr's dashboard has funny quotes and awesome places from all parts of the world, so I can momentarily escape the boring day-to-day with images of all the places I'd like to go and all

the beautiful parts of this world. It reminds me of the potential for beauty in life, even when I'm swamped with a million tests and I don't have time to dream about what could be."

A Miramonte senior summed it up: "Look. Technology is here to stay, and I think people who continue to talk about limiting it for young people or that kids these days are way too addicted are getting the wrong idea. It's key that we learn to use it to our benefit when we are young, because it does serve an important purpose."

Overall, the message was clear: there is certainly still value in face-to-face interaction, but the Internet can be a welcome distraction and a means of quick communication. Moving forward, the trick will be to find a way to balance technology with the old-fashioned methods, for teenagers and adults alike.



Caie Kelley is an officer of Club *Be the Star You Are!*® at Miramonte, co-host and *What's Poppin'* reporter on *Express Yourself!*™ Teen Radio as well as a piano teacher and swim coach.

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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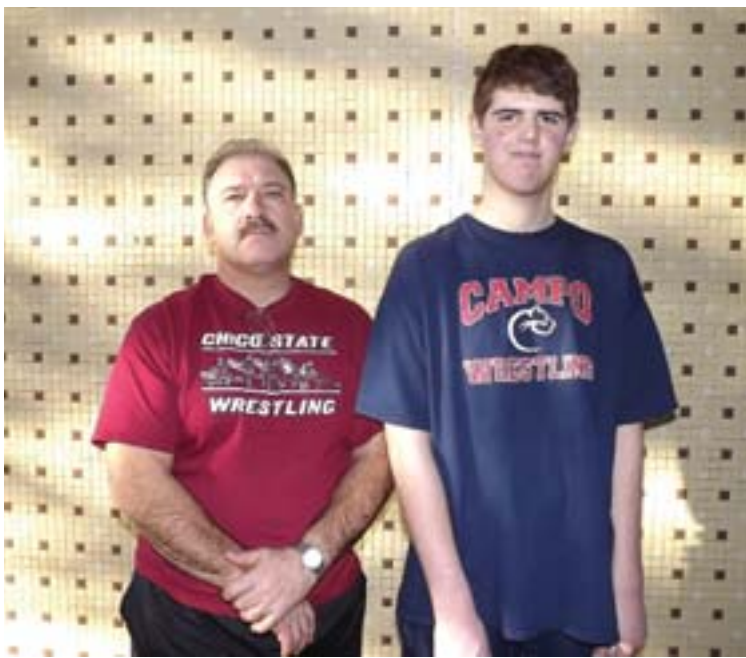
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Campo Wrestler Happy with Losses and Wins

By Cathy Dausman



Campolindo High School wrestler Jeremy Dunbar (right) with his coach Bob McLaughlin. Photo Cathy Dausman

Campolindo High School student Jeremy Dunbar stands over 6 feet tall, but nowadays there is less of him to see. The CHS junior has lost nearly 50 pounds recently “to be more helpful” to his wrestling team.

A former track and field participant, Dunbar has wrestled since his freshman year; going the entire season without a single win. Last year Dunbar wrestled in the 285 weight class on the junior varsity team and had only one win to his credit. Thanks to self-discipline, exercise, and eating on the healthier side – less sugar and fewer carbohydrates, he says – Dunbar, who plans to attend culinary school after graduation now wrestles as a 195-pounder.

Perhaps he was inspired by his coach, who lost a similar amount within the last year, but Dunbar has

earned himself a slot on the varsity team. “He’s just flowered [this year],” said Coach Bob McLaughlin, whose admiration for the young man comes through loud and clear. McLaughlin recounts a recent cross-town rivalry meet, an away game for Campolindo wrestlers: “Jeremy had to move up to heavy weight class (over 220 pounds). His opponent was 268 pounds. Jeremy gets taken down. Slowly he gets a reversal. Then he throws a half, turns the guy and pins him. The stands go crazy. Some 20 alumni standing behind our bench start chanting ‘Jer-e-my! Jer-e-my!’ Think about being that guy and having every stud in your high school standing and chanting your name because you are the victor; you are in the arena and you are still standing.”

Dunbar calls that his “deciding match,” but said there are a few things he still struggles with – patience and confidence, for example. Wrestling, he said, is a muscle memory sport, and so he continues to improve.

The student who McLaughlin said runs every mile and does every pushup during practice vows to keep working hard – for his teammates, his parents and his older sister.

“Jeremy comes into practice every day with a great attitude, wanting to get better. He has improved day by day, working hard and never giving up,” said Campolindo Athletic Director Tom Renno.

“I have coached state champions and high school all-Americans for 19 years – been there, done that,” McLaughlin concluded. “Never been so proud!”

Orinda Student Named Finalist in Science Talent Search

By Lou Fancher



Orinda resident Kelly Zhang at the University of the Pacific lab. Photos provided

Orinda’s Kelly Zhang, a 17-year-old senior at Oakland’s College Preparatory School, shined an eerie, green light into a petri dish, earning an elite position as one of 40 finalists in the 2013 Intel Science Talent Search.

Since 1942, the Intel STS has brought the nation’s brightest high school seniors to Washington, D.C. to present their innovative research projects to recognized, professional scientists in a national forum and competition.

Struck by the real world tragedy of a vigilant cancer that returned to take the life of a friend’s father after surgery, Zhang embarked on a nearly three year mission to help surgeons see cancer cells.

“Right now, there’s no imaging system to allow them to see,” she said. “Surgeons use their hands to feel a tumor. When you open someone up, it’s not all laid out like the textbooks show. It’s messy, fleshy.”

Cancer cells left behind, grow, proliferate, and often result in death, she added.

Outraged, but characteristically rational, Zhang began to read. “I started with simple articles. Each article linked to another paper and I kept finding out new information,” she recalled.

Eventually, she pooled her thoughts. Most of the research suggested injecting metals, or synthetic polymers into cancer cells. Nanotechnology – a scientific field involving the manipulation of molecular-scale systems or elements – focused on delivering drugs to tumors.



Kelly Zhang

Zhang knew she couldn’t make medicine: her “ah-ha!” moment came when she stumbled upon an article about dyes.

“I had all the articles open, when I realized, I can make a nano and I can add dye to a nano,” she said.

Using albumin, a natural blood protein, Zhang made a nanoparticle a thousand times smaller than the width of one human hair.

“I made it in a lab at the University of the Pacific, where Professor Bhaskara Jasti had put me under the oversight of a graduate student. But making a nano isn’t the new part,” she said, impatient to finish her narrative, “after making it, I added a common fluorescent dye they had in the lab.”

Incubated with cancer and normal cells, Zhang’s nanoparticles proved to be tumor receptive. Cancer cell lines glowed green, when viewed through a florescent sensitive camera; normal cells did not. Injected into a cancer patient, an imaging system could significantly improve a surgeon’s ability to detect and extract all of a patient’s tumor.

Jubilant, Zhang shared her results with her parents, Michelle Sun, a primary care physician, and father Tony Zhang, whose work involves advising small medication formation businesses.

“This is a very exciting project, but don’t expect to win any prizes,” her father cautioned.

“I am so happy for you, because you initiated this project on your own,” her mother told Zhang, hiding her worry that without support, the findings would be a personal, but never a public, victory.

But Zhang, whose interest in science has blossomed during her high school years, demonstrated the stick-to-itiveness of many a scientist and sent her application to the program run by the Society for Science & the Public. Hers was one of 1,712 entries this year.

When the call came in that she had been selected, she was skiing in Bear Valley.

“The call dropped a number of times, but when the lady told me, I was shocked,” Zhang said.

“It’s a good lesson for both of us,” her mother added, “a lesson to never give up.”

In March, Zhang will accept the \$7,500 award given to 30 finalists, or be selected for one of the larger prizes awarded to 10 of the young scientists. Regardless, she’s thrilled to have the opportunity to “talk with other brilliant kids” and to meet top-notch scientists from all over the world.

Zhang says she is privileged to live in Orinda and is a hybrid, made up of her Chinese and American heritage. “As a Chinese person, I’m willing to work hard, not give up. The American side is more romantic: to dream.”

Her dreams are guided by the impact of her church, where an outreach travel/work program opened her eyes to living conditions in other countries. And by activities like running, swimming, playing guitar, and developing her website, www.biolabscope.com, where kids without access to labs can learn about science by watching videos.

“I want to be able to be a part of a bigger project,” she said. “A medical project that can affect people’s lives.”

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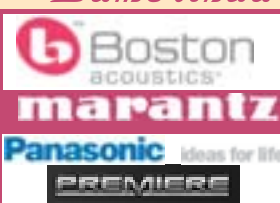
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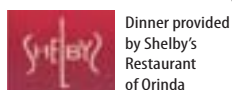
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NEWSPAPER

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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 exhibit runs through March 23.

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.

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 - 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.

The Lafayette Gallery's new show "Tokens of Affection" will run through March 9 at 50 Lafayette Circle (across from Chow). For more info, visit www.lafayettegallery.net or call the gallery at (925) 284-2788. (see story page B3)

Valley Art Gallery in Walnut Creek is pleased to have Linda Yoshizawa as its first "featured artist" in 2013. Her elegant, subtle compositions invite thoughtful contemplation. Over time Linda has developed a technique that balances serendipity and design, and a personal aesthetic that reflects the layers of her Japanese-American identity. Her work can be seen through March 5 at Valley Art Gallery, 1661 Botelho Drive, Suite 110, Walnut Creek. For more info, visit www.valleyart-gallery.org or call (925) 935-4311.

The Oakland Camera Club is hosting a public exposition of their "year's best" 3D photography from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 18 at the Lafayette Veteran's Memorial Building, 3780 Mount Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette. For 58 years, the historic Oakland Camera Club has chaired a renowned international 3D photography competition and brought together photographers who practice the marvelous craft of making pictures with depth. A question and answer session follows the presentation. Free. Polarized glasses are provided. The Oakland Camera Club is a non-profit organization, and donations are appreciated.

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.

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. The pianists will be performing music from The Great Amer-

ican Song Book such as Gershwin, A. Jobim, Duke Ellington and Dave Brubeck, as interpreted by members of CCPAS. Refreshments provided by Aegis of Moraga Assisted Living and Memory Care, and Nightingale Home Care. Please call Lafayette Senior Services to reserve your spot at (925) 284-5050. Cost: \$3 members; \$5 non-members.

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 Orchestra, under the direction of Maestro Johnny Johnson, with special guest Mariya Borozina, will be performing the Mozart Sinfonia 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.

Classical music by members of the Contra Costa Performing Arts Association. This free morning concert showcases duo pianos. The Amaryliss Piano Trio opens the concert with a Schumann piano trio that includes violin and cello. The Keller Piano Duo plays a Poulenc piano sonata and Eileen Klatsky and Nancy Rude conclude the concert playing music for duo pianos by Jan Novak at 10:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 22 at Grace Presbyterian Church, 2100 Tice Creek Blvd. Free. For more info, visit www.ccpas.org.

Come join Sherman Clay and friends at 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 23 for a very special free "Concert & Celebration" as Steinway & Sons welcomes Omega recording artist Dennis Edwards. Dennis will be playing his own arrangements of well known music from the popular American Songbook, as well as his own original compositions. Seating is limited and this concert will fill up quickly, so please RSVP Sherman Clay at (925) 932-0100 to get good seats.

The Campolindo Winter Band Concert with special guest artist Diane Maltester playing the concertino for Clarinet and Band by Frank Beniccutto 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.

University of California Alumni Chorus presents Handel's Oratorio, Samson in celebration of the 150th Anniversary of its West Coast Premiere at 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 1, Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley campus. Tickets: \$20 - \$15 - \$6. To purchase tickets, call (510) 642-3880 (phone sales end at 12:30 pm Friday for weekend performances) or go online to tickets.berkeley.edu, or at http://www.ucac.net.

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.

Gold Coast Concerts: at 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 1 at Orinda Library Auditorium, 22 Orinda Way in Orinda; and at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, March 2 at the Community Hall at the Lafayette Library 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Grand Sesteto Sinfonia Concertante (arranged for sextet) Franz Joseph Haydn: Sinfonia Concertante (arranged for sextet) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: Viola Quintet, K. 174. Tickets: \$35 general; \$30 senior; \$10 student. Purchase tickets online at www.gcplayers.org or by phone: (925) 283-3728.

THEATER

4th Annual "Live at the Orinda" Champagne Comedy Event returns with Will Durst headlining the evening at 7 p.m. March 8 at the Orinda Theatre. Advance discounted and VIP tickets may be reserved until March 7 using credit cards at the Chamber website - www.OrindaChamber.org - or at First Republic Bank, 224 Brookwood Road. Tickets at the door (if available) will be \$40 per person. A portion of profits from this event will benefit local non-profit organizations as well as the on-going community work of the Chamber. Advanced reservations are recommended, so attendees should reserve early.

Aaron Sorkin's "The Farnsworth Inventor" opened at Town Hall Theatre Feb. 9 and will run through March 2. Directed by Shellie Award winner Joel Roster, Farnsworth tells the story of the battle between inventor Philo Farnsworth and CEO David Sarnoff as the race for electronic television heats up in the 1920s. For tickets or more information, visit www.TownHallTheatre.com. (See article page B4)

LECTURE & LITERATURE

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.

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

SMC's Year of the Great(est) Conversation(s) Series. Noted author, philosopher and Harvard University Professor of Government Michael Sandel will be a featured guest lecturer in the college's free sesquicentennial series "The Year of the Great(est) Conversation(s)" at 7 p.m. Feb. 25 in the Saint Mary's College Soda Center. Free. Professor Sandel will offer a discussion-oriented address on the topic of "Liberal Arts and the Common Good: Justice and Citizenship." Sandel's most recent book "What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets" was a finalist for The Financial Times/Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year Award. Foreign Policy magazine recently named Sandel one of the Top 100 Global Thinkers.

Lamorinda Reads: Programs celebrating "A Hologram for the King" 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. (See article page B2)

... continued on next page

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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, call (925) 788-0451 or email Robin Hauge at robinhaugedclinic@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 is 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.

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@stmaries-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 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.

Widowed Persons Support Group: grief support sessions are informal discussions for those in need of emo-

tional 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.

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.

Where's My 23%? The next monthly meeting of the Orinda-Moraga-Lafayette Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) will feature Delaine Eastin, former California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, as she discusses "Why Educated Women Are Not Earning More." In a lively and spirited interactive presentation, she will explore why women with college degrees earn just 77 percent of what men with the same education earn from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19 at Holy Trinity Church Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga. Handicap Accessible. Free Parking. For info, visit www.aauwoml.org.

Rockler Woodworking and Hardware has partnered with internationally renowned, Robert Sorby Tools of England, to present a unique demonstration on woodturning. Woodturning differs from most other forms of woodworking in that the wood is moving while a stationary tool is used to cut and shape it. The demonstration is a great event for all skill levels. There will be no charge to attend. Demonstrations will be from 1 to 4 p.m. and 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 19 at Rockler Woodworking and Hardware, 541 Contra Costa Blvd, Pleasant Hill. Contact Matt Graham, manager at (925) 521-1800 for more info.

Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church, working with American Red Cross, is sponsoring a blood drive from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 2 at MVPC, 10 Moraga Valley Lane, Moraga. Everyone is welcome. Drop by, and bring your friends! Sign up online at www.redcrossblood.org (enter the Sponsor Code: Moraga925). Walk-ins are welcome! For more info, call Les Deane at (925) 283-5648.

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

Red Cross Blood Drive for the Lafayette Community will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, March 8 at Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Boulevard, Lafayette. Sponsored by the Lafayette Chamber and Titan Real Estate Investments with juices and snacks donated by Whole Foods. For all donors, a raffled gift will be given after the Blood Drive. Remember: The need for blood is constant. The gratification is instant.

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.

Free Tax Preparation for the 2013 tax season is available from AARP's Tax-Aide and United Way's EKS programs. Both programs serve taxpayers of all ages with a focus on those with low to moderate incomes. For more information or to make an appointment, call Tax-Aide (925) 726-3199 or EKS 2-1-1.

English Tutors needed - volunteer with the Diablo Valley Literacy Council. English need not be your first language-no teaching experience is required-we will teach you to be a tutor! You must attend three workshops on March 9, March 12 and March 16 and there is a nominal fee to cover the training & material costs. For more information visit our website at dvlc.tripod.com. To register call our hotline and leave a message at (925) 685-3881 or e-mail us at DVLC4ESL@gmail.com.

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.

Lamorinda Republican Women Federated welcomes speaker Heather Gass regarding "The Dark Side of Sustainable Development" at noon Feb. 21 at the Orinda Country Club. All part of Agenda 21, the 21st Century plan for a "New World Order" through global governance. For luncheon information and reservations contact Elsie Euing at (925) 254-8617 no later than Feb. 15. Cost: \$25. Men are always welcome to participate.

CLUBS

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.

Marion Brenner, a renowned San Francisco photographer, will address the Moraga Garden Club at 10 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 21 at Holy Trinity Cultural Center in Moraga. A life-long photographer with a focus on natural landscapes and landscape design, she will display slides of her work and talk about her experiences working on Landscapes of San Francisco by Patrick McGrew which she illustrated. Interested parties may call president Linda Foley at (925) 376 2809 if they wish to attend.

GARDEN

A composting workshop for those interested in learning about organic gardening, good soil, environmentally responsible ways to control pests, conserving water in the garden and using native and drought-tolerant plants will be held from 10:30 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Feb. 26 at the Orchard Nursery in Lafayette. Visit the CCCSWA website at www.wastediversion.org for additional dates and times scheduled throughout the year. Call for reservations at (925) 906-1801, ext. 306 or visit the CCCSWA website to register online.

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

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 postmarked 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.

Bring the whole family to OMCA to welcome the Year of the Snake. Enjoy a day of performances, demonstrations, and hands-on activities for all ages from noon to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 17 at Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak Street, Oakland. Free with Museum admission. For more info, visit www.museumca.org or call (510) 318-8400.

The Glorietta Online Auction is now live and will run until Thursday, Feb. 21. Help Glorietta raise money for critical educational programs including: Class sizes of 20 or less from kindergarten through third grade; instructional assistants; computer lab; PE; science; librarian; classroom libraries; and recess equipment. Items are added every day. For more info, visit https://www.bidding-forgood.com/gloriettaonline.

Find out about camps, day care, preschool, family vacations, sports, scouts, enrichment, performing arts, and more at the Contra Costa Camp Fair from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 24 at Acalanes High School, 1200 Pleasant Hill Rd., Lafayette. Free. Bring the entire family. For more info, visit www.ContraCostaCampFair.com.

Bentley School is proud to host its first Julia Robinson Mathematics Festival from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, March 2, at Bentley's Upper School campus in Lafayette. The Festival will feature dozens of activities designed to encourage collaboration and creative problem solving and will appeal to a range of students - from fourth grade on up. Snacks and raffle prizes will be available to all participants. For more info or to register, please contact cta@bentleyschool.net.

Join us at the Hacienda de las Flores for a sneak preview of the best summer camps in Moraga. Meet the counselors; participate in sports and activities, enjoy a free hot dog lunch. Summer Camp Expo: 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 2 at 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga. For more info, call Kim at (925) 888-7036 or visit the town's website at www.moraga.ca.us.

MOVIE REVIEW

"Safe Haven"

By Derek Zemrak



Julianne Hough and Josh Duhamel star in Relativity Media's "Safe Haven." © 2012 Safe Haven Productions. All Rights Reserved. Photo James Bridges

"Safe Haven" is Nicholas Sparks' best romantic film since "The Notebook" that was released in 2004, and is Sparks' first attempt at producing a film under his new production company Nicholas Sparks Productions.

He truly understands this genre of so called "chick flicks." Safe Haven is based on Sparks'

bestselling novel of the same title, starring Julianne Hough ("Dancing with the Stars," "Rock of Ages") as Katie, a mysterious young lady on the run who shows up in the small coastal town of Southport, N.C. Katie's behavior is on the nervous side, which is most evident when the local police officers show up at the diner where she is working. The use of flashback quickly tells the audience that Katie was in a very abusive relationship.

As with all Sparks' novels and films, Katie falls in love with Alex (Josh Duhamel, "Transformers" and "Win a Date with Tad Hamilton!"), the widowed heartthrob who operates the local grocery store. As their relationship grows, it is torn apart by the discovery of Katie's past. The power of love once again must overcome.

Fans of the novel will truly enjoy the film, as it moves along at a good pace, just under two hours with a total running time of 115 minutes. Also, individuals who have not read the book will be pleasantly surprised with a twist in the script that caught me off guard.

"Safe Haven" is directed by three-time Oscar nominee Lasse Hallstrom ("The Cider House Rules," "My Life as a Dog"). As romantic dramas go, this is one worth the price of admission.

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.

Turkish Meatballs, Courtesy of Kabab-Burger

By Susie Iventosch



Michaela and Avi Ben-Ari of Kabab-Burger in Lafayette

Photo Susie Iventosch

It seems the perfect recipe for landing a job as a restaurant owner is a love of cooking and a husband who has always dreamed of owning a dining establishment. This is how Michaela and Avi Ben-Ari came to own Kabab-Burger in Lafayette.

"I have always loved to cook and entertain for large groups," said Michaela Ben-Ari, "and owning a restaurant was always one of Avi's dreams, so we finally opened our own restaurant."

After 30 years in the printing business, Ben-Ari now realizes his dream comes with a lot of work! Though the hours are long, the Ben-Aris are very satisfied with what they are building in their community.

"I really enjoy the social aspect, and it is very rewarding to receive great feedback from our customers," Michaela said. "I absolutely love being in the kitchen ... my adrenaline kicks in when I have a stack of orders waiting to be filled!"

This might make some people nervous, but for this chef, trained at the Tadmor Culinary School in Herzlia, Israel, the more bustling the kitchen, the better!

Aside from the pita bread and the pistachio baklava, which they have delivered from specialty vendors, everything is made from scratch, right from soaking the dried garbanzo beans for their hummus, to the tahini (sesame seed paste) and the babaganoush (roasted eggplant with olive oil, garlic, tahini and spices).

Ben-Ari, who thoroughly enjoyed his mother's cooking as a boy, and ate a lot of it, does not have much time to really get in the kitchen, but says he helped create the recipes for the meats they serve, especially the kababs and shawarma. The Turkish meatballs featured in this food column come from his

mother's recipe collection, and they are incredibly delicious!

Speaking of meat recipes, I finally had the opportunity to learn about the differences between Greek gyros, Turkishdoner kebab and Israeli and Arabic shawarma from the Ben-Aris, something that has always piqued my curiosity. Although they are all cooked on a vertical spit of sorts, the gyros and doner kebab are made of ground meat and spices, while the shawarma is made from whole pieces of meat. Kabab-Burger makes their shawarma with dark meat to keep it very moist.

There wasn't time on this visit, but one of these days, I hope to observe how they make their shawarma!

Michaela has special dietary needs due to a recent onset of Celiac disease, so she offers gluten-free items on the menu. In fact, she keeps the menu as healthy as possible, because so many clients are concerned about health and fitness. They also offer family meals to go, and cater to groups as large as 300 people. And, if all you need is an appetizer for your next gathering, they are happy to prepare that for you, too.

This summer, Kabab-Burger will offer a fast "sandwich-to-go" option, for people wanting to pick up a quick lunch. The falafel and shawarma sandwiches will be available on this menu. There is also a regular kids' menu, featuring schnitzel made of real chicken breast, in addition to other kid-friendly dishes.

For more information visit: www.kabab-burger.com or call (925) 297-6343. Hours are Monday through Saturday 11:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., Sundays from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Kabab-Burger 3647 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

Turkish style meatballs in tomato sauce



Photo Susie Iventosch

INGREDIENTS

For the meatballs:

- 1 1/2 lbs. fine ground beef or lamb
- 1 crushed garlic clove
- 1 small onion, finely grated
- 2 thick slices of stale white bread
- 1 medium egg
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley
- Salt to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- White flour for coating
- 1/4 cup oil
- Some water

For tomato sauce:

- 1 1/2 cups chopped, peeled tomatoes
- 1/2 cup finely chopped bell pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- Salt to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup water
- 1 can finely diced tomatoes in puree (14 ounces ... this is my addition to extend the sauce)

1. In a mixing bowl combine meat with garlic and onion. Soak bread in cold water, squeeze dry and crumble into bowl. Add egg, cumin, parsley, salt and pepper to taste. Blend thoroughly to a smooth paste.
2. With moistened hands shape tablespoons of the meat mixture into oval, sausage-like shapes. Coat lightly with flour.
3. Heat butter in a deep pan and fry meatballs until lightly browned on all sides. Remove to a plate when browned.
4. Add tomatoes and chopped pepper to pan and stir over medium heat for 5 minutes. Add sugar, salt and pepper to taste, and then stir in water. Bring to a boil and return meatballs to pan. Bring to a slow simmer.
5. Cover and simmer gently for 1 hour, until meatballs are tender and sauce is thick. Serve with rice pilaf.

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.



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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Gaels Down Cougars for Second Place in WCC

By Simon Tryzna



Kate Gaze #10 hit critical baskets late in the game to help secure the win.

Saint Mary's women's basketball fought for a huge win against BYU to secure second place in the WCC standings. The Gaels beat the visiting Cougars 64-52 on Feb. 9, setting up a big rematch at Gonzaga on Feb. 14 for a chance to share the top spot in the standings.

"Our team was motivated," said head coach Paul Thomas. "When our team is motivated, we can play very well. I felt that our team came out with a tremendous amount of energy, especially for a Saturday afternoon game."

After losing 66-58 in Provo on Jan. 31, the Gaels came back to Morgaga with a focus on defense, and it played a huge part in the 58-53 win over Portland on Thursday. The same defensive intensity carried over to Saturday, as an improved effort in the second half allowed Saint Mary's to breakaway late and secure the much needed victory.

"When we played them last time, we were flat footed," said senior guard Kate Gaze. "To come out with the focus on defense put us in a great mindset offensively. We got a few

shots and that gave us more flow on offense."

The great defense was shown in the first nine minutes of the game as Saint Mary's raced out to a 16-8 lead. However, behind a barrage of three pointers and strong defense of their own, the Cougars quickly responded with a 17-2 run and took a 30-28 to halftime.

"BYU is a very, very tough defensive team, and they made us struggle," said Thomas.

After Stephanie Seaborn gave the Cougars a 36-31 lead with 17-minutes remaining in the game, the Gaels raised their intensity and their shots began to fall. After a pair of baskets by her teammates, Gaze hit her first shot of the game to give Saint Mary's a 37-36 lead. BYU and Saint Mary's would trade baskets from there on out, with BYU tying the game at 45-45 with seven minutes remaining.

Following a Jackie Nared basket, Gaze hit a big three from the corner to push the lead to five. A few possessions later, with the lead still at five, Gaze hit another three from the same place, this time with the shot clock

running out and a hand in her face.

Despite starting the game 0-6 shooting, the Aussie guard hit her last three shots, with the last two propelling a 19-7 Gaels run to finish the game.

"I've been struggling a little bit, but my teammates are going to get me the ball and that's the main thing," said Gaze. "When those opportunities do arise down the stretch, you have to take them with confidence."

Gaze had 10 points in the effort. Junior forward Danielle Mauldin had 12 points and 10 rebounds off the bench. Senior guard Nared had nine points and nine rebounds.

Saint Mary's next travels to Spokane, kicking off a three game road trip for the Gaels. Following a showdown with the rival Zags on Thursday, the Gaels travel to Portland on Saturday before going to San Diego on Feb. 21.

"This is a tough stretch," said Thomas on the upcoming games. "We will see how tough this team is. We are going to have to play like we did today [vs. BYU] on the road."

Photos Tod Fierner



Jackie Nared had ten points.



Danielle Mauldin scored 12 points.



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Miramonte Earns Lamorinda Bragging Rights, Prepares for Playoffs

By Hunter Hewitt



Junior forward Breanna Alford had 27 points and 12 rebounds against the Dons. Photo Ohlen Alexander

With the postseason approaching, Miramonte (24-1, 11-0) continued its stellar season by defeating its Lamorinda rivals for the second time and remaining undefeated in DFAL play.

The Matadors hosted Acalanes (11-13, 4-6) on Feb. 1, and the result was a near replica of the previous matchup between the two teams.

The Dons, who hoped to avenge their 81-20 loss to Miramonte in January, struggled again with the relentless full-court pressure of the Matadors.

Miramonte came out aggressively from the start, scoring the first 15 points and building a 52-12 lead at halftime. The second half wasn't much different.

Behind nine points, eight assists and five steals from senior guard Carly Gill and 27 points and 12 rebounds from junior forward Breanna Alford, Miramonte cruised to an 86-23 victory over Acalanes. Senior guard Jamie Jacobs led the Dons with eight points.

"Overall, we played hard and didn't quit," Acalanes head coach Chris Russell said. "Miramonte is a great team, but our execution on finishing shots really hurt us."

Fortunately for the Dons, they were able to bounce back from the loss with key victories over Dougherty Valley and Alhambra on Feb. 4 and Feb. 6, respectively.

Miramonte hosted Campolindo (20-4, 8-2), its other rival, on Feb. 4. The Cougars, who en-



Jamie Jacobs #33 Photo Kevin Nguyen

tered the game with the second-best record in the DFAL, were looking to hand the Matadors their first loss in league play.

Following another quick start by the Matadors, Campolindo was able to narrow the margin to seven points in the second quarter, but it was all Miramonte from there. Senior forward Laura Hickey led the Cougars with 12 points.

Junior guard Megan Reid, a dual-sport star who missed the Acalanes game because of a soccer match, helped lead Miramonte to an 80-43 win. She finished with 18 points and five steals.

"That's a great team," Campolindo head coach Elgin Leslie said of the Matadors. "We have to play our best and hope they have an off night to beat them, and neither of those happened tonight."

After defeating both Acalanes and Campolindo twice this season, Miramonte now holds the unofficial Lamorinda crown. Although the bragging rights are enjoyable for the Matadors, greater hopes have emerged as playoffs near.

Last season, Miramonte entered the postseason undefeated, but fell to the eventual state champions Bishop O'Dowd twice — once in the North Coast Section (NCS) finals and again in the Northern California regional finals. With both schools playing extremely well again this season, a rematch in the playoffs is almost inevitable.

Matadors' head coach Kelly Sopak continues to repeat a "one game at a time" mantra to his players, but a common goal is surely present amongst them.

"We want to take every opponent seriously, but our goal is to win the last game of the season," he said. "We want another shot at O'Dowd."

Gill echoed the sentiment. "We're taking it one game at a time, but I think we're further ahead than last year," she said. "We have so many threats, it's incomparable to any team I've ever been on."

When asked about a possible rematch with Bishop O'Dowd, Gill admitted that the thought of revenge had surfaced, and that her team will embrace the challenge if given the opportunity.

"We are definitely ready for that one," she said.

The NCS playoffs begin on Tuesday, Feb. 19.

Home Court Advantage

Miramonte Defeats Rivals in Homestand

By Michael Sakoda



Drew Anderson #2 goes for a shot against Buster Souza #1.

Photos Ohlen Alexander

Miramonte (15-10) went 2-0 on its home floor against Lamorinda rivals Acalanes (9-16) and Campolindo (17-7).

On Feb. 1, the Mats routed the Dons, 56-41. The game was decided in the first quarter where Miramonte's defense forced seven Acalanes turnovers. Mats senior guard and co-captain, Derek Lin, set the tone for his team, picking up three steals in the first half.

"They played very aggressively on defense, and that forced our guys out of their fundamentals," said Dons head coach Darrell Hirashima after the game. "We needed to calm down and do things simply. If we had come out with a little more composure instead of trying to regain it, we would have had a much better shot."

Acalanes found themselves down nine in the first quarter, but they did their best to battle back, getting 13 points and six blocks from junior center Buster Souza. Still, it wasn't enough to overcome Miramonte's stifling defense.

"We only allowed 41 points," said Miramonte senior forward Kiran Shastri after the game. "That was one of our goals, to keep the score down. Everything went our way."

The Mats got 19 from their bench, led by 13 points, three steals from junior forward Drew Anderson on their way to a 15-point victory, 56-41.

On Feb. 4, Miramonte saw its second home game against a Lamorinda rival as they hosted Campolindo in a game that came down to the final buzzer. Again, the Mats opened the game with tough defense, forcing six Campo turnovers in the first quarter.

Miramonte junior guard Joey Goodreault scored eight first quarter points giving the Mats a 18-14 edge after the first.

Campo out rebounded Miramonte 26-10 in the first half, getting several second chance points from sophomore center Chris Hansen (10 points, seven rebounds), and junior forward Justin Dunn (16 points, 10 rebounds).

At the end of the first half, Campo

trailed 27-24.

Campo captured the lead in the third quarter by limiting their number of turnovers and riding the offensive onslaught of sophomore guard Matt O'Reilly, who scored 11 of his game high 22 in the third quarter.

"We wanted to come out with a lot of intensity in the second half," O'Reilly said after the game. "We wanted to make a run."

The Cougars had a 51-45 lead heading into the fourth quarter.

The fourth saw back and forth play from both teams, and after a pair of back-to-back threes from O'Reilly that gave Campo a 56-63 lead with 2:13 left to play, the game seemed all but over.

With under a minute to play, Shastri scored two of his 12 fourth quarter points on a put back. Goodreault picked off the subsequent Campo inbounds pass and scored, cutting the deficit to 66-67. Campo then turned the ball over in the front court with 28.9 seconds left to play.

Goodreault caught the inbounds pass for the Mats with 14.5 seconds on the clock. Cougar guard Andrew Zolitakis (11 points, six rebounds, seven assists) went for the steal, but Goodreault drove to the basket.

He scored the biggest bucket of his team high 17 points with 4.8 seconds left on the clock. "We drew up a play," said Miramonte head coach Drew McDonald about the waning seconds of the game. "When it fell apart, Joey drove to the basket."

Miramonte held on to win 68-67.

"You're never going to win a game when you turn the ball over that many times," said Campolindo head coach Matt Watson. "We did a better job in the second half, but we didn't take care of it in the last thirty seconds of the game, and that killed us."

Acalanes hosted Campolindo Feb. 12 for the final rivalry game of the season. Postseason play begins on Feb. 19.



Chris Hansen #44 had 10 points, seven rebounds in the loss to the Mats.



Joey Goodreault #24 had a team-high 17 points, including the game-winner for the Mats.



Senior forward Laura Hickey #32 led the Cougars with 12 points against the Mats.

Photo Ohlen Alexander

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Saint Mary's Rugby Opens Season with Wins

Submitted by Tony Samaniego



Kyle Peterson against Stanford

Photos Mike Geib

Saint Mary's took on the Aggies of UC Davis for the first league match of the collegiate rugby season on Feb. 2. The Gaels defense proved to be too much for the Aggies as SMC shut them out for an 81-0 victory in the A side match and an 85-17 victory in the B side match.

SMC followed up with a strong showing on Feb. 6 at Stanford. The first half was high-

lighted by the fact that six different players from the Gaels found the try zone and freshmen Dylan Auslie made five of his six conversion kicks to give the Gael's a 40-5 lead. Saint Mary's continued its strong defensive play in the second half, extending the lead to 75-5. The SMC B side also had a great outing, winning 58-0.

The Gaels now look forward to their next league game at Sacramento State.



Nick Schlobohm against Stanford

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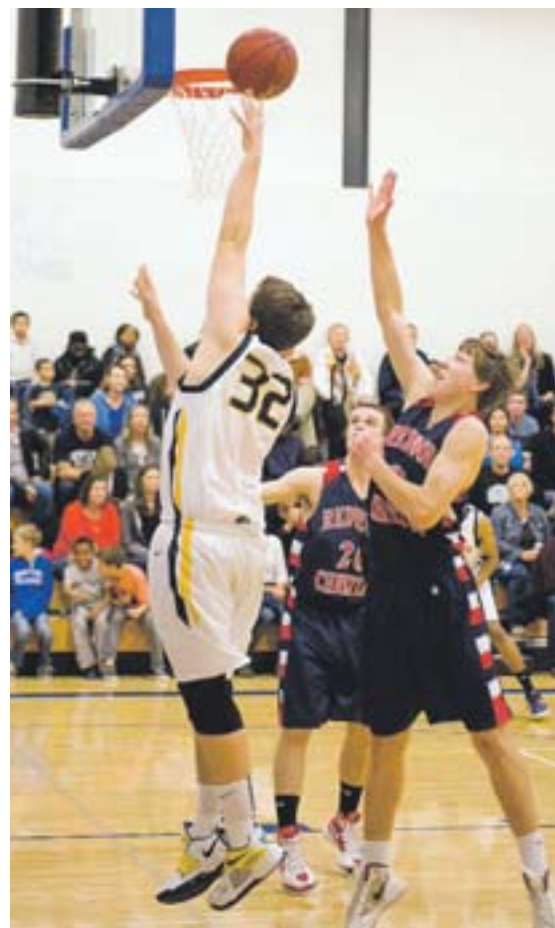
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Phoenix Poised for League Title

Submitted by Clay Kallam



Ian Kirby is one of seven Bentley players averaging more than six points per game. Photo Vincent Jurgens

With a 21-2 record, the Bentley men's basketball team breaks new ground with every victory.

The Phoenix, who advanced to the Division V NorCal playoffs last year, will go for their first-ever Bay Counties League-East tournament title Feb. 14 and 16 at Athenian in Danville.

Senior Nate Ellis, MVP of the BCL-East as a junior, leads the team, averaging 16 points, nine rebounds, four assists and four steals. Sophomore Blake Kami is averaging 10.2 ppg.

"Other than those two," says second-year coach and athletic director Rob Rafah, "five guys average between six and eight points a game."

That admirable balance also comes from a young team, as there are only two seniors in the rotation and freshman Mateen Hirbod, an excellent defender, gets a good deal of time.

The Phoenix looks to go even farther in the post-season this year.

St. P's Boys Win Championship

Submitted by Hector Chao



Back row, from left: Brady Burman, Will Stryker, Aidan Mahaney, Marco Chao. Front row: Harry Llewellyn, Joe McCauley, James Frye, Jack Wood, Luke Souza, Mike Kostolansky.

Photo Jamie Frye

St. Perpetua's third grade boys' basketball team capped a successful season by winning the American Division in the West Diablo CYO league championships. The team qualified for the tournament by finishing first in league play with an 8-2 record. They also won the Turkey Shootout in November.

Campo Swim Team Features World-Ranked Athletes

Submitted by M. Woodard



From left: Orinda Aquatics coach Don Heidary, Sven Campbell, Steven Stumph and OA coach Ron Heidary

With great anticipation, the local high school swim season began last week and the Campolindo Cougars are excited to defend their 2012 NCS title.

The Cougars will be aided by two Orinda Aquatics swimmers who have been distinguished by world rankings.

In January, International Swimming released its "18 and Under Top 40 World Rankings." Seniors Steven Stumph (100 breast, 200 breast, 200 IM, 400 IM) and Sven Campbell (50 free, 100 back, 200 back) combined for seven rankings.

At last year's NCS, Campbell set three individual NCS records in the 50 free, 100 free, 100 back and was part of four first place record breaking swims. Campbell has committed to swim for the reigning national champions, UC Berkeley.

Last year, Stumph was just shy of the national high school record and was ranked as the No. 1 high school swimmer in the nation in the 100 breast and 200 IM. He was recently chosen to join and train with the National Junior team. In the fall, Stumph will head to USC to train under Dave Salo, the 2012 Olympic swim coach.

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Lamorinda Weekly Volume 06 Issue 25 Wednesday, February 13, 2013



The Home Designer with Brandon Neff

...read on page D8

From “Fixer” to Farm Fresh

By Cathy Dausman

What’s old is new again, thanks to an extensive tear-down remodel and upgrade for one Lafayette trail home. The home, at 663 Glen-side Drive, was purchased last April by Lafayette residents Beth Soto and her business partner Bob McClain. Although the asking price for the spec home has not yet been determined, both say it will be on the market this spring.

Architect James Wallace of Orinda drew the plans; La Pointe Company is framing the house. Soto and McClain are its general contractors. McClain said the house was originally built as a single story home in 1949. A recent Zillow website listing shows a four bedroom, two bath, 2,162-square-foot home on 0.48 acres at the same address.

McClain said a second story was added later and the most recent expansion was in the 1990s. Current construction will add 1,300 square feet of living space plus an oversized garage. With a total of nearly 3,600 square feet of living space, the five bedroom, three and a half bath home will feature high-end fixtures and lighting, an oversized laundry and crafts room and hardwood floors in common areas.



...continued on page D4

Beth Soto and Bob McClain at the job site.

Photo Cathy Dausman





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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	13	\$330,000	\$1,950,000
MORAGA	1	\$850,000	\$850,000
ORINDA	1	\$742,000	\$742,000

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

LAFAYETTE

3073 Camino Diablo, \$330,000, 2 Bdrms, 1253 SqFt, 1979 YrBl, 1-11-13;

Previous Sale: \$231,500, 10-28-97

3344 Las Huertas Road, \$1,950,000, 5 Bdrms, 3120 SqFt, 1936 YrBl, 12-31-12

673 Jennie Court, \$640,000, 5 Bdrms, 2392 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 1-14-13;

Previous Sale: \$650,000, 07-18-00

4027 Mario Way, \$1,380,000, 5 Bdrms, 4572 SqFt, 1966 YrBl, 1-10-13;

Previous Sale: \$1,090,000, 12-14-05

615 Murray Lane, \$1,372,000, 4 Bdrms, 3851 SqFt, 1989 YrBl, 1-10-13;

Previous Sale: \$1,250,000, 05-24-02

633 Murray Lane, \$1,125,000, 4 Bdrms, 2813 SqFt, 1990 YrBl, 12-31-12;

Previous Sale: \$900,000, 06-21-01

1619 Pleasant Hill Road, \$490,000, 2 Bdrms, 1110 SqFt, 1949 YrBl, 1-3-13

1634 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 2770 SqFt, 1977 YrBl, 1-2-13

3441 Solana Court, \$1,049,000, 4 Bdrms, 3292 SqFt, 1956 YrBl, 1-14-13;

Previous Sale: \$1,049,000, 07-16-12

3332 Stage Coach Drive, \$1,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 3127 SqFt, 1984 YrBl, 1-4-13;

Previous Sale: \$585,000, 11-21-90

3149 Stanley Boulevard, \$640,000, 4 Bdrms, 1657 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 1-10-13

3101 Withers Avenue, \$625,000, 3 Bdrms, 2744 SqFt, 1947 YrBl, 1-8-13

1086 Via Media, \$1,616,000, 5 Bdrms, 3594 SqFt, 1966 YrBl, 1-4-13

MORAGA

328 Constance Place, \$850,000, 3 Bdrms, 2202 SqFt, 1971 YrBl, 1-9-13;

Previous Sale: \$84,500, 08-25-75

ORINDA

108 Via Floreado, \$742,000, 3 Bdrms, 1964 SqFt, 1962 YrBl, 1-11-13;

Previous Sale: \$1,100,000, 09-07-05

Lamorinda Foreclosures recorded

LAFAYETTE

Carol Lane, 94549, Bank of America, 01-09-13, \$808,981, 1187 sf, 3 bd

Dyer Drive, 94549, Morgan Stanley, 01-07-13, \$825,000, 2748 sf, 5 bd

ORINDA

Moraga Way, 94563, HMI Properties, 12-11-12, \$454,900, 1367 sf, 2 bd

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Times They have A - Changed

By Andi Peterson Brown

The Bay Area is in the midst of a housing shortage, and Lamorinda is no exception. At the end of 2012, our inventory was down about 50% year over year and we sold about 30% more homes. In other words, lots of buyers bought and lots of potential sellers stayed put. As a result, we are quickly working through our available inventory, and we need to replenish it.

Right now the Lamorinda market currently has just over one month of inventory. That means that if no new listings came on the market, at our current pace of sales we would run out of homes in about one month. Conventional wisdom says that a healthy housing market has anywhere from 5-6 months of inventory, with anything less deemed a seller's market, and anything more deemed a buyer's market.

So with a paltry one month of inventory available, there's no question that we have a seller's market on our hands. We are seeing homes that are well priced, well staged, and well marketed sell within a matter of days, oftentimes over asking price, and usually with multiple offers.

Moral of the story? It's a fantastic time to sell right now. In fact, we need you. Price and market your home correctly and you too can seize this incredible opportunity.



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From "Fixer" to Farm Fresh

...continued from page D1

Soto said its covered front porch and barn-like shutters on the second story facing the street should give the finished product a modern farmhouse feel.

"It's really gonna be quite beautiful," she said, promising a light and airy home large enough for a family to live comfortably, yet not out of place for Lamorinda.

The level lot adjacent the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail contains fruit trees and rose bushes. Four of the five bedrooms, including the master, are on the ground floor. A fifth bedroom over the kitchen and dining areas has its own full bath with a sitting room across the hall. The area could easily be used as a second master suite, an au pair unit or in-law living quarters.

The pre-existing wood burning fireplace in the great room will be resurfaced. Soto said the home's "top of the line" kitchen overlooks the back yard and will feature a butler's pantry, a five-foot-wide refrigerator/freezer, honed Carrera marble countertops, gas range, double ovens and what she calls a "computer command center" – the house will be pre-wired for computer network access.

A mudroom with half bath leads out to a covered

breezeway and the new detached garage on the lot's west side. The old garage space has been re-imagined as a dining room. The new garage is 540 square feet with two 9-foot-wide doors and one deep bay to accommodate a large SUV.

The house is being built with dual zone furnaces, water heaters and air conditioning systems and has been seismically updated. The entire lot will be fenced, with a gate leading directly to the bike trail, near where Soto plans to install an outdoor children's water fountain.

This is not the first house either owner has rebuilt, but it is their first project together. Soto said she completed a remodel near San Anselmo. McClain said his civil engineering and construction background helped him remodel two homes in the Rockridge area.

He called his first project "the worst house in the neighborhood." Both McClain and Soto find whole house residential remodeling simultaneously fun and challenging, and Soto credits local builder Tim Mcnamara for helping them understand the construction process.

...continued on page D6



663 Glenside Drive, Lafayette

Photo Cathy Dausman



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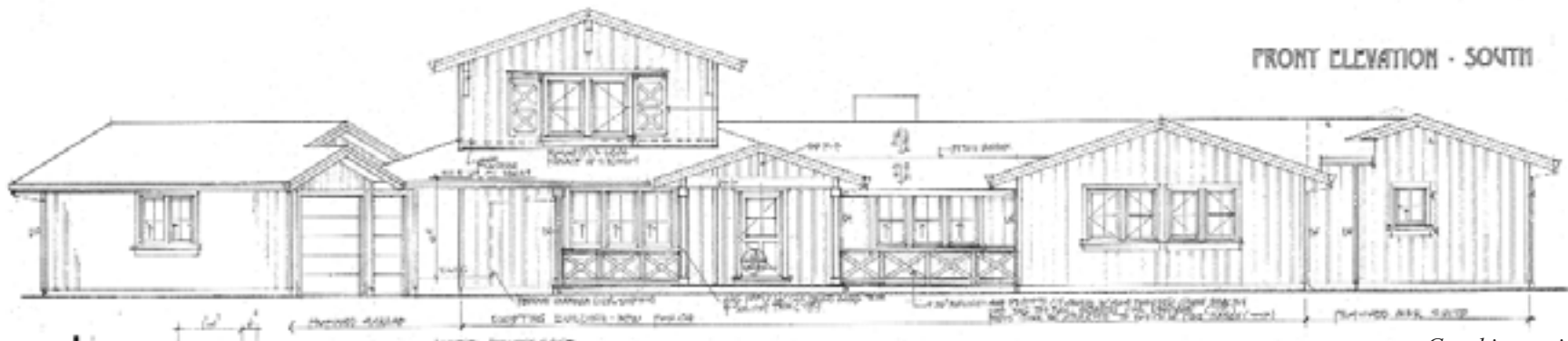
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- Beautifully landscaped grounds
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*Per public records



From “Fixer” to Farm Fresh

...continued from page D4



Graphic provided

For Soto, who loves decorating, the fun comes as she restores “a bit of history” in an area where farm houses and orchards once were common.

One challenge the two faced was complying with setback requirements, since the house sits at an angle on the property. Expanding the footprint was a trial and error process McClain referred to as “a Gordian knot.”

In the end Soto and McClain claimed a five-by-five foot bump-out in the kitchen for a seating nook and expanded the house 11 feet along the front. Amid

the challenges, McClain said he enjoys the “new house smells” of lumber, carpet and paint.

The two plan a second local joint remodel in 2014, although Soto and McClain say “finding the next property” is its own challenge. Soto confided, “This is my dream house.”

“Every house we fix is your dream house!” McClain said quickly.

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Before you start hacking away at your yard, you may want to call in a professional Arborist from Advance Tree Service to give you their advice on what should be done, the proper handling during pruning is essential to ensure a healthy future for your trees and shrubs.

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The Home Designer

What's Love Got To Do With It?

By Brandon Neff

Believe me, holiday themed articles peppered with witty, cutesy turns-of-phrase and double entendre are not my style. You'll never read my "Deck The Halls With Boughs Of Velvet," or my "Jack-O-Lantern Decorating Extravaganza" in this column. In fact, I would say that I go to great lengths to avoid any type of contrived prose or display altogether. However, how can I ignore that Valentine's Day is upon us, and begging to be recognized? I'm no cynic (well, maybe a little). So, in honor of the occasion I will do my best to thread the needle of incorporating something resembling romance into this week's feature without dissolving into saccharine rhetoric. Don't expect any "love nest" or "super-sexy boudoir" recommendations from me here, but rather, I offer you a more esoteric take on the occasion – glamour.

Glamour is sexy. Glamour stirs emotion. Glamour heightens every moment. Glamour, dare I say, is romantic.

In my work, clients are mostly interested in function. They want spaces that serve a specific need - this usually includes a TV and a place to sit while watching said TV. People, there's more to living well than a comfortable place to sit while tuning out your partner – am I right? Don't answer that!

While I'm all for creating a functional room, I'm a firm believer that your space can, and should inspire you to live at a higher level. A sanctuary, if you will, where you're operating at your best – free from all the chaos of the world outside your doorstep. Your home can be aspirational, and is definitely an extension of your personality. Whether you want to believe it, or not, your home represents to all who visit just who you are at your heart evidenced by what things you surround yourself with, and what you're presenting to every guest. If, as we're being sold every day, our personal "brand" is being shaped by our work, our time "online" and by our actions, shouldn't your brand begin at home? So, to this end, I propose adding a touch of glamour to your brand.

What is glamour? For me, it's seeing things through a curated lens - making the most out of everything you add to your life. Glamour sparks an emotion, or creates a dramatic pause. Historically, glamour was seen as something for the rich - an affect ripe with pretense and largely unattainable. Trust me, glamour isn't about money. Far from it. Things, in themselves, do not create glamour, but how you put them together does.

...continued on page D10



A curvy custom sofa and plush pillows add comfort and glamour. Photo courtesy Brandon Neff Design

A couple of "before and after" photos illustrate my point. I was asked by my clients to create something "glamorous and inviting" in their living room. They entertain quite often, but this room felt sad and uninspiring – hardly a room for festive and lively gatherings. Even more upsetting, the existing furnishings and trimmings had cost them a fortune – again, without guidance they had spent a ransom on pieces that neither worked, nor accomplished their goal. There was no gracious layout, no flattering lighting, nothing personal or interesting that indicated who they were at their best.

When I first saw the room, I envisioned it becoming a light-filled space with generous seating, dramatic windows, sumptuous details and a show-stopping moment or two – my clients are fun and interesting people, but the room betrayed their personality.

... continued on page D10



Drab walls, outdated shutters and poor layout hide this room's enormous potential.

Photos courtesy Brandon Neff Design

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24 Corte Mateo, Moraga

Stunning single-story on cul-de-sac updated with high-end finishes. Three bedrooms plus office, 2 baths. Gourmet kitchen opens to family room & private level yard with pool & views. Formal dining and living rooms. Spacious master retreat. Hardwood floors, Anderson windows, 2 fireplaces.

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The Home Designer

...continued from page D8



Dramatic linen draperies, pale walls and beautiful textures make the room a chic gathering space.

They wanted a place for cocktails and conversation – a place to enhance their lifestyle and heighten moments with friends and family. And they wanted a little romance.

What I created for them was a room that feels twice as large and 10 times more glamorous. And don't let the chic furniture and fabrics fool you – everything is durable, functional and washable, fashionable and practical in perfect harmony. Soft lighting keeps you looking your best, jewel tone upholstery surprises you, and sensuous shapes and textures stimulate all of your senses. Let's face it, if we didn't care about our surroundings we'd all still be living in caves. We evolved and discovered a life less ordinary.

Simple tips. I removed the dated shutters on the windows and hung full length drapes mounted just below the crown molding for exceptional drama. It takes the eye up and makes the room feel grand. In lieu of a clunky coffee table, I placed two smaller "tea height" tables in the room to catch cocktails and canapés – they're easy to move around as needed and add great sculpture. A pair of matching chairs replaced the love seat, creating more personal space for guests – no one wants to share a love seat unless they're lovers, and even then just for a short period of time! Creating sexy lighting was key – always mix overhead lighting with more flattering task and accent lighting at eye level. So important. Lastly, for added glamour, mix in a few unexpected elements like that chandelier fashioned after a sea urchin – with so many choices out there why would one want something ordinary? It's whimsical and unique – just like my clients.

Remember, interior design is personal, intimate and revealing at the same time. You have the choice to live your life in a space that speaks to you, makes you smile and lifts your spirit when you open the door – something akin to love, right?

For this Valentine's Day surround yourself with what you treasure; choose wisely. If all else fails, choose dark chocolates!



Brandon Neff is a Bay Area based Interior Designer.

He can be reached at BrandonNeffDesign.com or at brandonneffdesign@yahoo.com.

Ask Cynthia Brian-Cymbidiums Reader's Request

Hi Cynthia:

I noticed that you include orchids as one of your favorite plants in your articles. They are beautiful but I know they are hard to grow. Any suggestions? Thanks for the great advice always.

Maggie in Moraga

Hi Maggie:

You are absolutely right that **I LOVE** any type of orchid. Contrary to popular belief, they are incredibly easy to grow and fairly maintenance free. Yes, I do remember the days when the media touted orchids as rare and risky, but the reality couldn't be further from the truth. Orchids are actually one of the largest flowering plants on the planets with an estimated 26,000 species!

Although native to the subtropical highlands of Southeast Asia, for Lamorinda gardeners, the Cymbidium is an easy and excellent choice for both indoors and outdoors. Cymbidiums need bright light and like to be dry before re-watering. I usually water my indoor specimens once every two to three weeks throughout the year and my outdoor ones are watered when the soil is dry. They blossom January through late spring preferring temperatures in the 50-70 degree range when blooming, making them the perfect indoor plant for late winter. When all stems have completed their blooming cycle, cut the spent flower at the base. Because I like the look of the spiky leaves, I use my plants in design details throughout the year.

If you want Cymbidiums to re-bloom (and who doesn't), it's best to put them outside in the fall in bright sunlight in a north facing space as they need cool night temperatures to set new flowers. By the way, I always keep mine in a pot and never plant them directly in the ground. As they outgrow a container, I repot. My Mom, who taught me almost everything I know about being a gardener, has over 50 potted Cymbidiums outside in her patio that re-bloom every season with four to twelve spikes. She moves them from place to place to add color and texture to her garden rooms. A girlfriend of mine keeps six to eight pots of orchids behind a retaining wall on the north side of her house. She doesn't like the look of the plant, but she adores the blooms. She cuts the long flower stems to make gorgeous arrangements and her plants give her an abundance of orchids annually without any fuss or muss. Although care instructions will tell you to fertilize orchids every other week with a half dose of 20-20-20, I have not found this to be necessary.

Throughout February, you can find displays of beautiful Cymbidiums in full glory at your local nursery, home center, and even the grocery store for under \$20. What do you have to lose? So what if it only lasts a season in your home? You'll still have two to four months of beautiful flowers gracing your décor- a much less expensive choice than buying weekly cut bouquets! Now this is a gift that keeps on giving.

Cynthia

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Cynthia Brian

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New Listing

32 Dos Posos

Lovely Orinda Country Club traditional overlooking Lake Cascade. 4bd/3.5ba including stunning kitchen w/ adjacent family room, formal dining, new deck with spa. Lawns and gardening areas. Great family living and entertaining areas inside & out! **Offered at \$1,699,000**

ORINDA



251 Monte Vista Ridge Rd.

Stunning 5bd/4ba gated custom estate home w/panoramic views of Briones. Outdoor living at its best w/expansive terrace featuring fabulous kitchen. Romantic master retreat w/spa bath.

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ORINDA



65 La Espiral

Updated 4bd/4ba with beautiful custom features & amenities. Very well maintained. Majestic setting, lovely gardens, new pool + views/privacy, fully fenced. Tuscany ambiance, European flair.

Offered at \$2,195,000

MORAGA



New Listing

128 Miramonte Drive

Pristine Miramonte Gardens home. End-unit w/ many upgrades; African hardware, recessed lighting, charming private patio. Move-in Ready! 3 bedroom + office + great storage.

Offered at \$499,000

MORAGA



New Price

3 Peralta Court

Absolutely beautiful single-level home in Sanders Ranch. Eat-in kit. w/double ovens, gas range, built in refr., island w/counter seating & more. Hdwd flrs, spacious bdr., indoor laundry rm & great storage. Lvl yd w/slate patio. Cul-de-sac location.

Offered at \$1,089,000

MORAGA



New Listing

26 Williams Drive

Located in popular Moraga Place close to schools, shops. Home has large entertaining kitchen/family room combo. Large master suite opens to entertainer's yard of sparkling pool, lawn, play. Formal living & dining rooms.

Offered at \$1,100,000

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3645 Boyer Circle

Fabulous 3500+ sf custom hm w/lovely views on .76 ac. Walk to town. 4bd/3.5ba, vaulted ceilings, formal din, FR adj. to kit. In/outdr access from almost every rm. 2nd common play area opens to kids beds is currently an ofc. Expansive decks/lvl play areas.

Offered at \$1,249,000

LAFAYETTE



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

ALAMO



New Listing

72 Chancellor Court

Beautifully remodeled and updated home in prestigious/ gated Stonegate. Fabulous kitchen, hardwood floors, crown moldings, plantation shutters. Private court with great yard and attractive gardens.

Offered at 1,095,000

EL CERRITO



New Listing

1332 Navellier Street

One of a kind opportunity! California Historical Interest designated home built in 1898 on 1.86 acres. Gorgeous views of the Bay. Needs restoration but livable. Probate sale!

Offered at \$649,000

WALNUT CREEK



New Listing

2431 Mallard Drive

Remodeled & updated Larkey Park rancher w/ kitchen opening to large family room, separate living room & dining area. Great, private yard with patio & grass play area!

Offered at \$675,000

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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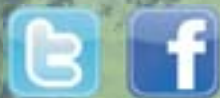
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