

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Swim, Baby, Swim!

By Cathy Dausman

Water babies. Steve Sherman sees them almost daily. Toddlers who splash and laugh in the pool, but who are also learning independence and life-long water safety skills. Sherman, of Lafayette's Sherman Swim School, figures his

staff has helped a few thousand children in the last 30 to 40 years get comfortable in the water when they're young. "We give them a head start," he said, explaining that built-in reflexes help when a young child is exposed to a water environment. A child between 9 months and 1 year – the age at which his school accepts

students "with a clean bill of health" – normally has enough neck strength to start the class, Sherman said, noting they have few fears and little stranger anxiety then.

Other Lamorinda pools offer swim lessons for children between ages 3 and 5. ... continued on page A10

June Day, 2 years and 10 months old, relaxes in the hands of instructor Briana Nicholson during her swim class at Sherman Swim School.

Photo Cathy Dausman

Quote of the Week:

"We are of many nationalities and languages, work and life experiences, mental and physical abilities. This challenging diversity of residents live together, mostly happily, and often help and care for one another." Read Letters to the Editor, page A10.

Advertising

	<p>SOLD</p> <p>51 Knickerbocker Lane, Orinda Sold at \$1,234,000 with multiple offers www.51knickerbocker.com</p>	<p>SOLD</p> <p>4 Kenmore Ct, Orinda Sold at \$901,000 with multiple offers www.4KenmoreCourt.com</p>	<p>OPEN SUNDAY 1-4</p> <p>372 Dalewood Dr, Orinda Offered at \$1,595,000. www.372Dalewood.com</p>	<p>Orinda Downs Gem</p> <p>This custom private home is over 3500 sq ft on .67 acre. It has 3 large BR, 2.5 BA, a 600 sq ft game room, a lot of storage, and 3 car garage. The stunning living room has a wall of glass with a breathtaking view of redwoods.</p>
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Certificates of Participation to Fund Road Repairs

By Sophie Braccini

The recent rise in interest rates is not good news for Moraga's roads; it means the town will raise less money for its road repair program, but not enough less for the Moraga Town Council to reverse its decision to borrow money against the revenue stream generated by the 1 percent local sales tax that went into effect this spring.

After considering the legal and financial factors of the transaction, the Moraga Town Council voted July 10 to issue Certificates of Participation (COPs), a lease-leaseback transaction commonly used by municipalities, to leverage \$600,000 of yearly revenue from the sales tax. Stifel, Nicolaus & Company was hired by the town as the underwriter of an operation that will produce approximately \$7.5 million, depending on the interest rate at the time of the transaction.

"It is estimated that the 1 percent sales tax

revenue passed last November by Moraga voters will bring about \$1 million to the town per year," said Eileen Gallagher of Stifel, Nicolaus & Company during her presentation to the Town Council. "We believe it's prudent to leverage no more than \$600,000 of that revenue; that will give you a security cushion and leave funds available for pay-as-you-go projects."

The lease-leaseback mechanism used to leverage the revenue stream consists of leasing town assets to ABAG (Association of Bay Area Governments) for a nominal amount; then the town rents the assets back from ABAG with value amortized over time. ABAG will assign its rights to lease payments to a trustee, Wilmington Trust, that will actively negotiate the COPs; investors will purchase the COPs.

Gallagher indicated that COPs are seen by

investors as providing weaker security. To balance that effect, she recommended that the town choose some of its most important assets as collateral for the lease; Moraga's AA+ rating would also be seen as a favorable element.

"A Town Hall is perceived as a stronger asset than a park or a gymnasium," said Gallagher. The town has to produce \$10 million in assets to guarantee the revenue stream – the choice was to use the Hacienda de las Flores, valued at \$8.25 million, the Town Hall at 329 Rheem Boulevard, valued at \$2.5 million but already leveraged, 331 Rheem (the town's corporation yard) and the library if needed.

Gallagher recommended that the town proceed quickly because of the present volatility of the interest rates. "The 10-year Treasury rate rose from a 2013 low of 1.66 percent to 2.68 percent today," she said. ... continued on page A5

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Life in Lamorinda B1-B10

Slow Food in Moraga

Sophie Braccini visits an herb garden that will soon be the venue for Lamorinda's first Slow Food event - page B1.



Sports C1-C3

Homegrown Hoops at SMC

Hunter Hewitt catches up with Lafayette native Beau Levesque - page C2.



Our Homes D1-D16

Are You on Candid Camera?

Cathy Dausman investigates the benefits of home security cameras - page D1.





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**Lafayette
Civic News**

Public Meetings

City Council

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

Planning Commission

Monday, Aug. 5, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, July 22, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Arts & Science Discovery Center,
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

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

Back to the Drawing Board

Planning Commission has concerns over two houses on Happy Valley Road

By Cathy Tyson



Orange netting and story poles give a sense of the size of the home slated for Happy Valley Road. Photo C. Tyson

Although the project by Melcor
Homes on a steep, subdivided
parcel on Happy Valley Road was be-

fore the Planning Commission back
in December of 2012, at which it re-
ceived comments about downsizing
the proposed pair of homes, it came
back to the Planning Commission at
a July 1 meeting and received more
of the same.

General feedback from planning
commissioners was that the two
homes, conveniently named the west
house and east house, are moving in
the right direction, but are still too
big for the highly constrained site.
Coming in at 7,200 square feet for
the west home, down from the origi-
nal 9,100, and roughly 6,000 square

feet for the east house, down from
7,200, the newest iterations are now
located further from the street and
have a lower profile, but are still sub-
stantial.

On paper the over 12-acre site,
near the intersection of Upper Happy
Valley Road, seems generous enough
to accommodate two large homes on
the parcel that will be sliced roughly
down the middle, but the steep upslo-
pe of the hill makes it a challenge.

The project's architect, Steven
Kubitchek, discussed the homes' new
increased setbacks, now 60 feet from
the street, and the newly designed

single-story elements along the face
of the properties that will "meld into
the streetscape of Happy Valley
Road."

Concerned neighbors brought up
the size of the homes, on-site parking
and flooding that's happened in the
past. "I'm really shocked," said
across the street neighbor Chris
Peatross, "these homes loom over
Happy Valley Road." He also
touched on the shared driveway that
is, in his opinion, "extremely danger-
ous." Fellow neighbor Gil Berkeley
commented that the two lots came as
a surprise; he and others always pre-
sumed there was only room for one
house on the parcel.

Greg Wolff, the city's senior
planner, explained that as part of the
planning review the city engineer ap-
proved the drainage plan that routes
storm water run-off to the southwest
corner of the lot into a storm drain,
and noted the homes exceed the city's
requirement for parking, having more
than two off-street spaces for each
residence.

Planning commissioners were
still conflicted about the size and
mass of the homes, despite the
changes presented, and encouraged
the developer to present more com-
pact plans and to work with the
neighbors about their concerns. They
decided to issue a continuance until
Aug. 5 to give the applicant time to
respond to comments.

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




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**Lafayette Police
Department
Crime Statistics**

June 23-July 6

Alarm responses (80)

Traffic Stops (215)

DUI
1st/Hwy 24
Pleasant Hill/Quandt

Intoxication
Pleasant Hill Rd

Animal Control
Pleasant Hill/Reliez Station
Castle Ct
Mt Diablo (2)

Battery
Orchard Rd

Auto Burglary
Quandt Rd
School St (3)
Rohrer Dr
Mt Diablo/S. Thompson

Stolen Vehicle
Pleasant Hill Rd
Mt Diablo Bl

Commercial Burglary
2nd St
Moraga Rd

Residential Burglary
Pidgeon Ct
Hidden Valley Rd
Rancho View Dr
Camino Ct

Embezzlement
Mt Diablo Bl

Fireworks
Bacon Way
Mt Diablo Bl
S Lucille Ln
Read Dr/Rohrer Dr
Florence Dr/Lucille Ln
St Mary's Rd (2)
S Lucille/St Mary's Rd
Merriewood Dr
Springhill Rd

Hit & Run
Lafayette Cr (2)
Golden Gate Way

Promiscuous Shooting
Florence Dr/Helen Ln

Prowler
Moraga Bl

Reckless Driving
Happy Valley/Mt Diablo
Hamlin Rd

Armed Robbery
Golden Gate Wy

Petty Theft
Rancho View Dr
Mt Diablo Bl (3)
School St (2)
2nd St

Grand Theft
St Francis Dr
Walnut St

Vandalism
Upper Happy Valley Rd (2)
Panorama Dr
Pleasant Hill Rd
Moraga Rd



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New Rules on Smoking

By Cathy Tyson

Taking a stand for public health, the Lafayette City Council strengthened and clarified existing smoking restrictions for the city. Lafayette joins several other cities in Contra Costa County and beyond that have expanded regulations governing smoking. The city is responding to evidence that shows there is no safe level of second-hand smoke.

and for events like the Farmers' Market now ban smoking.

Acknowledging that smoking is a legal activity, but it may be a nuisance, Councilmember Brandt Andersson noted, "If it's too restrictive, this might encourage people to quit."

The more challenging issues related to multi-family housing, specifically new and existing buildings. As some apartment dwellers know, smoke can travel through electrical outlets, ventilation systems, and from the balcony of one unit to another in a complex. The new rules, when adopted, will ban smoking in common areas like hallways, doorways, balconies and car ports in existing buildings. In addition all newly constructed multi-family buildings, including buildings currently under construction, will be smoke free once the new regulations are adopted. When a new tenant moves into existing multi-family housing, the unit will become smoke free.

A chart of 10 restriction options was presented to the City Council outlining distinct choices. Some items on the menu, like banning smoking at outdoor dining establishments, were an easy "yes" vote. Ditto the new rule that creates a buffer zone for smokers of 20 feet away from doors, window and vents. Overall the council showed some restraint, voting no on a ban throughout downtown Lafayette and not restricting smoking on public sidewalks. Existing rules already ban smoking inside of downtown businesses and on city-owned property. Public outdoor spaces, like the Plaza

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All the City News Delivered to Your Inbox

By Cathy Tyson

From the Lafayette City Council to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee meetings and everything in between, residents wanting to be on the pulse of the city can easily do so by logging on and signing up for automatic notifications of civic meetings or to receive the always-informative City Manager's Friday Summary and more, simply and easily on the computer. Meeting notifications include an agenda and staff reports that describe the background of an issue and the city staff's recommendation.

have information and notices delivered to your inbox. It's easy to follow one entity or many, but interested parties need to enroll. Because the city has a new website provider as of July 1, existing subscribers need to re-subscribe to carry over preferences; new subscribers can simply sign up. Go to www.lovelafayette.org/E-Notification or just go to the city homepage at www.lovelafayette.org, click on the City Hall tab and then choose E-Notification. You can unsubscribe at any time. In addition, for those who prefer to listen rather than read, streaming live audio for many meetings is also available via the city website.

The service is free of charge and it only takes a few clicks to

Repair or Replace?

That is the question



Dated sign at the base of the Highway 24 off-ramp at the Acalanes Road exit. Photo Cathy Tyson

This is one of three aging signs that welcome drivers to Lafayette. Stakeholders, especially in the Acalanes area on the west edge of the city who originally brought up the need for repairs, are concerned that their idea has morphed into the replacement of all three city welcome signs. The directors and landscape committee of the Acalanes

Valley Homeowners Association have not liked any of the proposed contemporary designs put forth by the city, describing them as "stark" and "cold." The group and the city are meeting to discuss the matter – whatever direction that takes, a proposal for new signs would have to go through the Planning Commission. C. Tyson

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Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Aug. 28, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, Aug. 5, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

Design Review

Monday, July 22, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 Saint Marys Rd.

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

Phone scam, 7/8/13 A Greenbriar Drive resident got a phone call informing her that she had won a \$3.7 million dollar lottery and she had to pay \$2,000 to release her winnings. The subject followed instructions and sent a \$2,000 check to Washington. Oddly enough, there was another call asking for a \$32,000 payment to cover federal taxes, so she sent another check, then called her bank, which informed her she had been involved in a scam.

Yelling and walking in the street, 7/08/13 In the middle of the afternoon a woman was yelling and walking into oncoming traffic at Moraga Road near Ascot. Cops made contact and determined that she was a danger to herself and noted her prior history of mental instability. She was transported by ambulance to a hospital for a 72-hour psychiatric hold.

Unlicensed driver, 7/7/13 An 18-year-old male was driving a 2003 Yamaha off-road dirt bike on Moraga Road at Buckingham Drive. Perhaps he wasn't aware of the meaning of "off-road?" The fellow was cited for not having a motorcycle license endorsement, proof of insurance, and registration. The bike was towed from the scene.

Illegal fireworks, 7/05/13 An anonymous caller alerted police about illegal fireworks occurring near the intersection of Paseo Del Rio and Campolindo Drive around 1:30 a.m. When the police arrived they were unable to locate anyone using illegal fireworks.

Up in smoke, 7/04/13 Moraga Country Club security staff informed police that they suspected approximately 50 underage people were drinking and smoking marijuana on the second fairway during the fireworks show. Police were unable to corral the alleged suspects before the event ended.

Juveniles drinking, 7/4/13 At 11:30 p.m., long after the fireworks show had ended, police were dispatched to Augusta Drive on a report of 20 to 50 juveniles drinking alcohol. When the cops arrived they were unable to locate the involved parties. What are the odds they figured the party's over?



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Moraga Will Clarify Setback Rules in Older Neighborhoods

By Sophie Braccini

Many Moraga residents wanting to remodel their older homes have had to struggle with what rules to apply to the setbacks of their homes. In an effort to simplify the process and make the rules fair for everyone, the Planning Department recently initiated a review of different sections of the town's municipal code.

A rule that clarifies where the setback should be measured from was easy enough – going forward setbacks will be measured from the basement – but other rules addressing the discrepancy between the old county zoning rules and Moraga's current code will require more meetings, including a Town Council hearing in the fall. According to town staff this could impact about 3,000 properties.

"When the town incorporated in 1974 it took existing neighborhoods and changed the zoning," said resident and property owner Dave Bruzone during a Planning Commission meeting July 1. "The lots were already there, the homes were already

there, and neighborhoods that were R10 under the county's rule became 3DUA under town regulations."

R10 means lots that are a minimum of 10,000 square feet, and 3DUA means three homes per acre. The sizes are fairly similar; but county setbacks were very different than those established by the town. In addition, the county was lenient in the interpretation of its own rules – some homes were built encroaching on county setbacks.

The O'Donnells have lived on Hodges Drive for 47 years. When they decided to remodel their 50-year-old home they found out that they were encroaching the setback by a few inches. They have been working with staff since March trying to find a way to add a new bathroom to their home. Jim Schmidt, who lives on Camino Ricardo, wants to remodel his home that was built under the county setback of 10 feet. "This is exactly what the whole neighborhood looks like," he said. The town currently requires that the property have a 20-foot setback. "We are

stuck in the mud," he commented.

"We are recommending that the code be amended and clarified," said Pierce Macdonald Powell, the town's senior planner. Staff proposed four different options: Option A would allow residential additions to follow the old county zoning setback standards; option B would allow residential additions to extend and follow existing building lines provided the addition does not further encroach into the town-established setback (this approach would require a variance and Design Review Board approval for additions which encroach further into town setbacks than the existing building walls); option C would authorize only those remodels that would not increase the home floor area; and option D would extend county setback standards to all properties in a zoning district regardless of the date of construction.

"When we went from county (rules) to town (rules) it was because we wanted to look different," said commissioner Tom Marnane. "I don't like a system where people will

'play' to beat the code. I'd want to stick as much as we can to the Moraga code. If that was locked in a little bit better, we might see more innovation and creativity in additions (remodels) to meet the code, rather than to find ways to beat the code." Commissioner Jim Kline favored Option D. Commission chair Frank Compelli described Option D as going too far, adding that he could support A or B and allow homes to be remodeled under the rules they were built, unless a second story or more than 50 feet of wall are added. He also said that homes that were not compliant with the rule of the time should undergo an appropriate review. A majority of planning commissioners indicated they could support A or B. The Planning Commission held a second hearing July 15, after our press deadline, to decide what recommendation to make to the Town Council.

The Town Council meetings scheduled for July 24 and Aug. 7 have been canceled. The next meeting will be held Aug. 28.

Kids' Day for Special Olympics a Big Success

By Celia Magidson



Buki the Clown was a favorite for face and body art. Photo Celia Magidson

The weather was sunny during Kids' Day at the New Rheem Theatre in Moraga last Saturday. The Moraga Police Officer's Association, in collaboration with the theater, organized the event to raise money for the Special Olympics of Northern California, a non-profit that provides athletic opportunities to children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

As a part of their commitment to community service, the Moraga Police Officer's Association, in conjunction with other service organizations, helped carry the Special Olympics torch across different parts of the state during the Northern California Law Enforcement Torch Run. Sergeant Brian South of the Moraga Police Department and president of the Moraga Police Officers Association said, "That is how we got in-

involved. We did a movie night last year and this year, a Kids' Day. We're really excited to support Special Olympics and to do a community event."

After a special matinee showing of the movie "Despicable Me," children ages 3 to 10 were able to enjoy all sorts of fun activities such as balloon animals, face painting with Buki the Clown, carnival games with prizes, finger-printing and, of course, food. The event was entirely staffed by Moraga police officers. One mother, Christina Polk, commented on the nice crowd; and Max, a young participant, said: "I had fun at the frog throwing."

Rheem Theatre manager Lindsey Pirkle said they sold 155 tickets, three times more than last year; all proceeds benefitted Special Olympics of Northern California.

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Moraga Police Apprehend Home Burglar

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga police have been on the lookout for suspicious behavior because the town has been hit by a large number of home burglaries in recent weeks. Officer Randy Pacheco was on patrol July 11 when he spotted an individual sitting in a car parked on Larch Avenue.

The man told Pacheco he was waiting for his girlfriend after finishing a painting job nearby. The officer inquired as to his identity and found out he was on parole. He asked to search the car and discovered bags full of jewelry; the suspect confessed to having taken it from the home he was painting.

Pacheco returned the jewelry to the homeowner, who told him she hired the painter to refinish a deck and that she left a door open so he could use the bathroom when she had to leave the house. She was unaware of the theft.

“We are also on the trail of a local juvenile who’s also a drug user and we believe he may be connected to some of the thefts, entering homes through doors or windows left open,” said Moraga Police Chief Bob Priebe, who added that his department is collaborating with other local police departments to close in on another painter-turned-burglar operating in the area.

Certificates of Participation to Fund Road Repairs

... continued from page A1

The Federal Reserve’s announcement to start tapering its active market intervention is increasing the volatility of the markets. She anticipates that the range of the net funds the town should receive will be between \$7.1 and \$7.7 million.

What’s the timeline? The Town Council approved the issuance of COPs on July 10; ABAG should approve its participation July 22; so the pricing and marketing of the COPs should be done in late July, for a closing in mid-August.

Please submit Letters and Opinions:
 letters@lamorindaweekly.com

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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Community Room, City Hall
Tuesday, Aug. 6, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, July 23, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Historical Landmark Committee

Tuesday, July 23, 3 p.m.
Gallery Room, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

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

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org



Orinda Police Department Crime Statistics

June 1-30

Calls for Service:

False Residential Alarms (139)

Stolen Vehicle

Camino Pablo/Hwy 24 offramp
Wilder Rd

Auto Burglary

Camino Pablo
Commercial Burglary
Camino Sobrante

Misc Burglary

Ardilla Rd

Residential Burglary

Bates Bl
Gardiner Ct
Bates Bl
Diablo View Dr (2)
Queensbrook Pl
Brookside Rd
Martha Rd
Tahos Rd
La Cuesta
Bobolink Rd

Grand Theft

Risa Ct

Petty Theft

La Vuelta
Warford Terr
Valley View Dr

Vandalism

Heather Ln/Valley Dr
El Toyonal

Vehicle Accident/Injuries

Camino Pablo
Moraga Wy

Hit & Run

Lucille Wy

Accident w/ Prop Damage

Moraga Wy/Woodland Rd
Greystone Terr
Glorietta Bl
Canon Dr
Camino Pablo/Manzanita Dr
Camino Pablo/Hwy 24 offramp

Arrests:

Stolen Vehicle

Camino Pablo/Hwy 24 offramp

Other (Misdemeanor)

Camino Pablo

Warrant Arrest

Camino Pablo/Via Corte
Theatre Square
Camino Sobrante

DUI

Bryant Wy/Moraga Wy
Hall Dr/Queensbrook Pl
Hwy 24 offramp/Orinda

Orinda BART Reports/Arrests:

Grand Theft
Petty Theft

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Orinda City Council Approves Lists of Residential Roads for Repair

By Laurie Snyder

Robert Duvall's character may have loved the smell of napalm during his "Apocalypse Now" mornings, but in Orinda, it's the smell of asphalt in the summer that gets the hearts of locals pumping. In very short order, that pungent aroma of progress is about to begin wafting in earnest thanks to recent decisions by the Orinda City Council and Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission (CIOC) specifying which roads will be the first to receive attention under two programs – the Fiscal Year 2014 Measure L Pavement Reconstruction Project and the FY2014 Pavement Reconstruction Project.

The latter of the two – the city's ongoing pavement maintenance program – is funded through Measure J Return to Source and Gas Tax monies. According to the staff report, the plan for this program "consists of performing as much preventive maintenance as possible, using appropriate types of base failure repairs and reconstructing selected roads based on

available funding sources." The list of streets covered, which was initially approved by the CIOC in November, has since been modified to account for the possibility of grant funding to support the paving of Ivy Drive (north) from Ardith Drive to Moraga Way, and to also provide for roughly \$200,000 in paving on other roads.

CIOC members expressed their belief that the city may be able to expend additional dollars because contractors have recently been submitting repair bids at as much as 30 percent less than in prior years. However, they did caution that this favorable bidding environment could change.

Two of the areas expected to receive the largest amount of help under this project are Orindawoods Drive from Kite Hill to Altarinda Road and Tara Road from Nonie to Overhill Road. Orindawoods would see its Pavement Condition Index (PCI) rise from 49 to 100 after the work has been completed; the PCI needle on Tara Road would move from 51 to

100.

Other residential streets under consideration for repair via this program could include sections of El Nido Ranch Road, El Toyonal, Glorietta, Rheem Boulevard, and possibly St. Stephens Drive from El Nido to Hidden Valley Road.

"It's really important that we get asphalt on the ground," said Mayor Amy Worth.

How About the Measure L Funds?

The first improvements to occur with the funds expected to come in from the sales tax hike approved by Orinda voters in November will likely be to Charles Hill Road from Honey Hill to Soule Road – and to at least two segments of Lost Valley Road leading away from the PG&E station. They are two of the four residential roads with the highest traffic volume for which the city has been able to obtain actual traffic counts, and are also two which have sparked frequent commentary by locals who have reg-

ularly advocated for their revitalization at council meetings.

"The primary consideration of the CIOC was that improvements benefit the maximum number of residents and that the roads selected be among the worst residential roads," reads the staff report.

Dennis Fay, CIOC chair, observed that commission members have been refining their criteria for street selection, and will continue to do so as the CIOC develops longer-term recommendations. It is vital for the city to get started on paving as soon as possible not only to take advantage of the current favorable weather, he explained, but to show voters that progress is being made with the Measure L funds they approved.

Both of these lists, which delineate the residential roads most likely to receive attention, are available on the city's website.

Opera in the Park Concert to Bring Orinda's Hills to Life

By Laurie Snyder

Is there a better way to spend a Sunday afternoon than communing with nature while thrilling to the music of Puccini, Bizet, Verdi, and Mozart? Based on the success of past Opera in the Park events in Orinda, the answer would be a resounding no.

Now in its fifth year, the popular Orinda Rotary-sponsored event will

be held July 28 from 4 to 6 p.m. at the Orinda Community Center Park, 28 Orinda Way – near ample free parking and within walking distance of the Orinda BART station. The venue is not only beautiful, it's accessible for individuals with disabilities.

The free concert, which also receives support from the Orinda Parks

and Recreation Foundation and the Orinda Community Center Auxiliary, is expected to attract music lovers of all ages, ranging from families with young children to the most in-the-know of San Francisco Bay Area opera buffs. Principal artists from Opera San Jose will join graduates of the San Francisco Opera's apprentice-

ship program and members of the San Francisco Opera Chorus in performing a program of favorite arias and musical theater classics.

Food and beverages will be available, making the event a can't-miss feast for the senses.

Correction, issue date July 3, "Housing Element Nearing Approval"

The lovely Santa Maria church on Santa Maria Way is open and active. The site that could potentially be used to satisfy Housing Element requirements is the former location of the playfields associated with the parochial school. The dirt lot, east of the church building and north of Altarinda Road, is owned by the Roman Catholic Welfare Corporation. We sincerely regret the inaccurate description previously published.

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Take Your Best Shot, Orinda

City photo contest celebrates July as "Parks Make Life Better Month"

By Laurie Snyder

WHEREAS, California's residents value their local parks and recreation services, as they provide access to the serenity and inspiration of nature, outdoor spaces, and places for play and exercise; facilities for directed and self-directed recreation; activities that facilitate social connections, human development, the arts, and lifelong learning; and positive alternatives for youth that help lower crime and mischief... - California Assembly Concurrent Resolution 50, June 14, 2013

The serenity and inspiration of nature - that says it all about living in Orinda. A truly special place where the built environment co-exists harmoniously with redwoods and old growth oak trees, there is also plenty of open space for bicycling, ambling or full-on hiking. Parks located in the heart of the city are also frequented by walkers, as well as by bibliophiles engrossed in their latest tomes and moms helping eager tots take flight on nearby swings.

In recognition of this important role played by open spaces in the lives

of Orindans, the Parks and Recreation Department has launched a contest to help locals show the world why they love their city. Orindans of all ages are encouraged to submit photographs that show how Orinda parks are making life better for residents and the community as a whole.

Photographs will be judged by a panel of representatives from the Orinda Library, city government, Orinda Community Center Auxiliary, and other organizations. The contest is being co-sponsored by the Orinda News.

Category winners will each receive a \$25 prize, and the photographer of the best overall shot will win \$50. Photos received may be used for display at city facilities or in promotional materials, including the city's website or activity guides.

The Rules

Professional photographers may only enter work in the professional category. Amateurs are welcome and strongly encouraged to participate. Multiple photo submissions are welcome - but only one image may be en-

tered per category: Play, Nature, Exercise, Positive Spaces, Gathering Places, Forever - Valued Today and Always.

Images must be taken within Orinda's city limits, and each shot must be submitted in digital format (300 dpi minimum resolution; high resolution preferred), and accompanied by a completed contest entry form, which is available online at: www.cityoforinda.org.

Images that have been altered significantly will not be accepted. Photographers are responsible for securing permission to use images of any individuals in their submitted works from those individuals prior to submission.

Images larger than 10 MB should be placed on CD or DVD and mailed to: Orinda Parks and Recreation Department, Parks Make Life Better Photo Contest, 28 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563. Smaller images may be emailed to OrindaParksRec@cityoforinda.org. For additional rules, visit the city's website. For questions, call: (925) 254-2445.

Deadline: Aug. 9.

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 Laura Abrams BRE# 01272382



ORINDA \$1,595,000
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 Maram Bata BRE#01435229



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 The Hattersley's BRE# 01181995/00445794



ORINDA \$3,200,000
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 The Hattersley's BRE# 01181995/00445794



LAFAYETTE \$1,150,000
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 Val Durantini BRE#01376796



ORINDA \$1,400,000
 5/4. Tranquil & spacious, 3000+sqft, light filled, new kitchen, guest ste, more at 2Madrone.com.
 Frank Woodward BRE#01335916



ORINDA \$1,950,000
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 Glenn Beaubelle BRE#00678426



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Recycle Lafayette

New citywide campaign pushes toward 75 percent diversion rate

By Sophie Braccini



Recycle Lafayette interns take a peek at Whole Foods' recycling practices. From left: Michael Shae, Nicole Nevin, Kendra Tietjen (Sustainable Lafayette), Nanette Heffernan (Sustainable Lafayette), Ryan Kastigar, and Chris Sallstrom. Photo Jane Shafer

Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation in 2012 establishing a 75 percent recycling goal for California by 2020, and while Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority is working on new contracts with the franchisees that will take charge of Lamorinda's trash in the future and hopefully take the community to that level, with single family residents already recycling at close to the 75 percent diversion rate, it is going to require a change by businesses, shopping centers and multi-family complex owners to make up the difference.

Recycle Lafayette, a group of motivated Lafayette organizations, wants to facilitate the transition.

Its goal is for Lafayette to be the first Contra Costa County municipality to reach the 75 percent marker. The official launch of its citywide campaign is July 18 at the Lafayette Library Community Hall starting at 6 p.m. with the presentation of the movie "Trashed."

"When we met last January to discuss this issue at a board meeting of Sustainable Lafayette, we looked at the data and found that the biggest opportunity to improve our citywide recycling rate lies with restaurants' food scrap recycling," says Nanette Heffernan. "There is a program that's offered by Allied Waste, but although quite a few restaurants are participating, it is not the majority." She adds

that among those that are participating, most can easily control the food prepared in the back of the house, but some self-service restaurants have a harder time in the front.

Recycle Lafayette hired four student interns from UC Davis, Saint Mary's College, and the University of the Pacific to spend their summer reaching out to restaurants, presenting them with the benefits of the program and helping them organize.

"The program is supported by the Lafayette chamber," says Chamber of Commerce Green Committee chair Marie Montoya. "Many Lafayette businesses are now 'green Lafayette businesses,' and have improved their practices. The 75 percent diversion

rate goal is doable and the idea of having interns help is a good step."

Montoya, who works at Lafayette law firm Hunsucker Goodstein PC, says that her firm has made a lot of progress already replacing paper with taped documents as often as possible, printing everything double-sided, using compostable paper, and reducing the use of water bottles, among other things. "It takes the will to do it at the top and training of all the employees," she says.

Recycle Lafayette knows that change cannot happen overnight and that it will take a lot of effort to raise awareness.

"Recycling has obvious benefits for the earth, but well designed programs can also be a cost savings for businesses and multi-family dwellings," adds Heffernan.

Erika Pringsheim, of Metro Restaurant, says that since the restaurant recycles all of its food scraps, it saves an average of \$425 a month. Allied Waste provides the extra small containers and trains the employees for free.

Another business supporter with a recycling policy is Whole Foods, which last quarter directed its Nickels for Non Profit collection to Recycle Lafayette. "On July 18th, we will present them with a check of \$1,386.85," says marketing team leader Jane Shafer.

Whole Foods also supported the

program by inviting the four interns for a visit to its facility to show them the different steps it takes to reduce its waste; it claims that almost nothing goes to trash. Whole Foods composts all the food waste on site, and partners with recyclers for almost all of its by-products including plastic bags and batteries.

"There are many opportunities for improvement," says Heffernan. "For example, in shopping centers it is the community of businesses that pays for garbage and recycling, so if one individual business makes an effort, it might not see any difference on its garbage bill. One of Recycle Lafayette's tasks will be to go door-to-door and talk to all the businesses, and all of the owners and property managers. Then to owners of multi-family units." The recycling level in these categories is where single family homes were 20 years ago.

"Seventy-five percent or greater diversion rate is the goal we are giving to our new franchisees," adds Bart Carr of the CCCSWA. "What we've learned is that you can set the best recycling programs into place, but it is the people and their desire to use them that will make them a success. What Recycle Lafayette is doing will be of great help in changing the collective thinking."

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

business briefs

Theatre Square's New Addition: Piccolo Napoli

2 Theatre Square #144, Orinda
(925) 253-1225, iccolo-napoli.com

A few days ago, Peter Eberle and his wife Maria Napoli opened a



Peter Eberle in his new restaurant Piccolo Napoli in Orinda's Theatre Square. Photo Sophie Braccini

new Italian restaurant in Theatre Square called Piccolo Napoli (across from Republic of Cake). A longtime Orinda resident — his parents moved there when he was 3 years old — Eberle lived all over the world before returning to Orinda with his wife to raise their family. Piccolo Napoli is their first restaurant, but Eberle was an entrepreneur in the financial world. They've hired Sarah Puge as their kitchen manager, and also used consulting chefs from San Francisco to partner and create their own menu. "What you will notice about our pizzas is that they are thin crust pizza, and yet they are really firm," says Eberle. "That's because we use a high protein more expensive wheat, to produce that crisp and firm feel." Piccolo Napoli also has a gluten-free option crust from Mariposa Baking that's made of rice and tapioca flour. "If people truly have a serious gluten allergy they should not come to a place that uses 50 pounds of flour a day to make the dough," cautions Eberle. "This option is more for people with a gluten intolerance." The sauce for the pizza is also made on the premises using fresh

high quality produce. "What makes the success of a restaurant in Orinda is repeat business," says Eberle, "and residents here know value and good quality. You want to keep your customers happy."

The wine list is not very long yet, but features interesting Italian and California wines at reasonable prices, and hard cider is offered as a gluten-free alternative to beer. The dessert list, a choice of ice creams, is served Italian style — soft, and the salty caramel is hard to resist. "For our first week we've seen so many of our friends and neighbors here," says Eberle who continues to be very active in the community.

GNC in Lafayette

3631 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette
(925) 284-1497

Two weeks ago the spot that used to be Handlebar Toys, between Diablo Foods and Trader Joe's, was taken over by the health food chain GNC. The store offers a wide variety of sports nutrition and vitamin supplements. It is open daily from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day but Sunday when it closes at 5 p.m.

New Coldwell Banker Associate, Tina Jones

5 Moraga Way, Orinda
(925) 464-3755, Tina@TinaJonesHomes.com

Tina Jones has joined Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage as a broker associate in its Orinda office. In her new position, Jones will specialize in residential sales in the East Bay. Prior to joining Coldwell Banker, Jones owned a highly successful boutique real estate brokerage for more than 20 years. She has earned the Certified Residential Specialist (CRS) designation through the National Association of Realtors® — a designation earned by only 3 percent of realtors nationwide. Jones said she made the decision to join Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage for a number of reasons, including the extensive marketing support, advanced technology, national network of referrals and other broker resources that the company offers. Jones began her career with Coldwell Banker in 1985, leaving to work in new homes for sev-

eral years before opening her own brokerage in 1993. Throughout her career, Jones has been a top producer and for many years was number one in sales among all agents in her area.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

Entrepreneur Club at 8:30 a.m. Thursday, July 18 at the chamber.

Mobile Websites Workshop at 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, July 23 in the chamber conference room. For reservations, email dwxler@blastmybiz.

Coffee with the Mayor at 8 a.m. Friday, July 26 in the chamber conference room.

Moraga

Second Annual Moraga Chamber Golf Tournament and Dinner Party on Monday July 22; check-in from 10:30 to 11:45 a.m., shotgun starts at noon. This is the chamber's largest fundraising event of the year. The party includes fun and prizes including foursomes at local golf courses, dinners at local restaurants, wine baskets and much more. Space is limited to the first 100 golfers, cost for golfers \$175. Non-golfers can come for dinner for \$60. Contact Kathe Nelson at (925) 323-6524 or kathe@moragachamber.org to register.

Orinda

Shop Orinda Bag Promotion. As a way to showcase its members and show support for nearby chambers, the Orinda chamber of commerce will gather members' gift certificates and items to include in a Shop Orinda Bag raffle item. The first bag was raffled at the July 10 Mega Mixer and the second will be raffled at the July 22 Moraga Chamber Golf Tournament. Chamber members who wish to be included should contact Candy Kattenburg at (925) 254-3909 or info@orindachamber.org.

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

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Good News/Bad News

MOFD awarded \$1.1 million; will lose \$100K

By Nick Marnell

The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced July 12 that the Moraga-Orinda Fire District will receive a 2013 SAFER grant of \$1.1 million.

The federal Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Act was created to provide funding to local fire departments and volunteer firefighter organizations to help them increase or maintain the number of trained, "front line" firefighters available in their communities. Outgoing MOFD Fire Chief Randall Bradley said that MOFD will use the funds over a two-year period to fund four firefighter positions.

The district has 60 days to formally accept the award, and according to Bradley, "there is no compelling reason not to accept." Districts have refused the SAFER grant, he said, because after two years, the district must maintain the increased staffing level and the new firefighters cannot be laid off. Bradley added that the addition of four firefighters should save the district well over the \$1.1 million in overtime costs over the two-year period.

The grant request was written by

MOFD battalion chief Jerry Lee.

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District was awarded a \$6.5 million SAFER grant in 2011.

On the downside for the district, the Board of Supervisors recently approved a new funding formula for the disbursement of Measure H funds that will reduce the MOFD's revenue by more than \$100,000 per year beginning in fiscal year 2015-16. The details of the new plan were presented at the board's July 9 meeting by Pat Frost, Contra Costa Health Services EMS Director.

In 1988, voters passed Contra Costa County's Measure H which provided for upgrades to the Emergency Medical Services system. The \$10 parcel tax has been used to support fire-EMS programs, such as providing more paramedic ambulance availability and subsidizing paramedic-staffed fire engines.

The new funding formula changes the paramedic-staffed fire engine funding subsidy from one based on the number of operational fire engines in a district to a formula based on population. Overall funding subsidies to fire districts in Contra Costa

County will increase \$600,000 per year under the new plan. But three fire agencies – MOFD, the Pinole Fire Department and the Rodeo-Hercules Fire District – will see a decrease in their allocations.

MOFD's share of Measure H funding for the current fiscal year is \$199,000; it will drop to \$93,000 in two years.

The top beneficiary of the reallocation is the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District; the Board of Supervisors also functions as ConFire's board of directors. "With the cutbacks in engines subsequent to the fire station closures, (the engine-based formula) was going to hit ConFire extremely hard and reduce their revenues almost by half," said Frost. ConFire's distribution of the Measure H funds will increase more than \$350,000 per year beginning in 2015-16.

MOFD board president John Wyro said that this funding issue will be discussed at a future district board meeting.

Burned-Out Fire District

By Nick Marnell

"I don't have enough revenue to do our job," said a weary Contra Costa County Fire Protection District chief Daryl Louder at the July 9 Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors meeting. Louder had just listened to a presentation by county administrator David Twa who said that, even with the recent closure of a fifth fire station, the district will be bankrupt in two fiscal years without an increase in revenue.

Despite the bleak financial report, Louder made three operational requests of the board: He asked for \$170,000 to staff three 2-person squads to respond to emergency medical calls during the height of the wildfire season; a reduction in automatic aid supplied outside the district; and authorization to renegotiate with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District on a joint fire station 46.

The station 46 consolidation plan was resurrected when the MOFD board voted to renegotiate with the owner of a parcel to be used for a joint fire station which would replace MOFD station 43 in Orinda and ConFire's closed station 16 in Lafayette. "My thanks to MOFD for looking at this once again despite our reluctance to enter into an agreement," said Supervisor Candace Andersen, whose district includes Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda.

Lafayette council member Don Tatzin and city manager Steven Falk also supported the revised ConFire station 46 plan. Though the city recently formed an Emergency Services Task Force to investigate alternative delivery of its fire and emergency medical service, "Lafayette has no appetite for changing fire districts," said

Falk.

Louder's new proposal for the fire station 46 consolidation included a major caveat: that MOFD waive ConFire's portion of the annual operating costs until ConFire's financial situation stabilizes; he said he will request a five-year waiver period. "I think it's a good proposal," said Twa. So did the supervisors, who unanimously passed a motion to allow the chief to renegotiate the deal.

As to whether MOFD also thinks it is a good proposal, board president John Wyro had no comment as he had not seen the new ConFire presentation.

The supervisors unanimously passed a motion to add the three emergency medical squads from mid-July through mid-October, over the objection of the firefighters' union. Vince Wells, president of Local 1230, wanted the money used to reopen ConFire station 87 in Pittsburg, which closed July 8.

Though no motion was passed, the directors also agreed with Louder's proposal that automatic aid to neighboring fire districts be restricted to a hard cap of four ConFire units at one time, with a maximum of two units deployed into any one district at a time.

MOFD fire chief Randall Bradley did not think that this restriction will adversely impact his district. "We have five engines and two ambulances," he said later that day. "With an additional two engines from Lafayette we can handle over 99 percent of our calls. If we need additional resources we can get them from Berkeley and/or Oakland."

MOFD Board Meeting July 15

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District board of directors met July 15 after press deadline. The agenda included the appointment of an interim fire chief to replace Randall Bradley; the possible appointment of one of three applicants for the board seat vacated by Frank Sperling; and discussion about entering a joint powers agreement with the city of Lafayette to purchase a property for the construction of the proposed fire station 46. Check our website for updates, www.lamorindaweekly.com.

N. Marnell

11 Critical Home Inspection Traps to be Aware of Weeks Before Listing Your Home for Sale

LAMORINDA - According to industry experts, there are over 33 physical problems that will come under scrutiny during a home inspection when your home is for sale. A new report has been prepared which identifies the eleven most common of these problems, and what you should know about them before you list your home for sale.

Whether you own an old home or a brand new one, there are a number of things that can fall short of requirements during a home inspection. If not identified and dealt with, any of these 11 items could cost you dearly in terms of repair. That's why it's critical that you read this report before you list your home. If you wait until the building inspector flags these issues for you, you will almost certainly experience costly delays in the close of your home sale or, worse, turn prospective buyers away altogether. In most cases, you can make a reasonable pre-inspection yourself if you know what you're looking for, and knowing what you're looking for can help you prevent little problems from growing into costly and unmanageable ones.

To help homesellers deal with this issue before their homes are listed, a free report entitled "11 Things You Need to Know to Pass Your Home Inspection" has been compiled which explains the issues involved.

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From Front Page

Swim, Baby, Swim!

... continued from page A1



A toy is a great distraction for this tiny swimmer.

That is when they develop the large motor skills and maturity with which to learn skills like putting their face in the water, breath control, and how kicking moves them across the water, said Harriett Plummer of Harriett Plummer Aquatic School in Lafayette.

Still, 16-month-old JR Morgan happily splashed in 90 degree water at Sherman Swim, wearing a swim diaper, safe in the arms of instructor Katy Conlan. While engrossed with a plastic toy, JR was being led through a series of shallow end hops and skips, kicks and scoops, exposing him to the rudimentary dog paddle motion.

Sitting upright, he was encouraged to watch the motion of his kicking feet, something he wouldn't see lying on his stomach, Sherman said. Soon JR was seated on the pool edge and was asked to fall into the water, toward Conlan's outstretched arms. She guided him in a semi-circle, urging him to swim back toward the pool edge "safe spot." JR's head and face were thoroughly wet, yet there was no coughing, no panic.

"This is the first step in the prevention of drowning," said Sherman, who distributes a safe swimming brochure by the Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation that notes, in addition to constant supervision and established pool rules, children are safer when they master swimming skills at a

young age.

Sherman's instructors normally work with a student for only 15 minutes – the length said to be the maximum attention span for young children. Instructors use a combination of cues: verbal (counting "1... 2...3..."), visual (taking a breath themselves before holding it with "balloon cheeks") and physical (a lift in the air and drop to the water motion) to prepare a student for the task ahead.

Ben Alfisi, 21 months old, was next. He started sessions when he was 10 months old, said his mother Leigh Alfisi. Big brother AJ, 3 1/2, was in the water, too, working with instructor Haley Lyon. There were tears when AJ started his classes, Alfisi said, and he wouldn't get in the water.

"They actually both wouldn't get in the water at all for the first lesson. But I think Ben was feeding off of and

Photo Cathy Dausman reacting to AJ's anxiety," said Alfisi. "It was mostly AJ who was quite scared."

"AJ was a tough one," admitted Sherman.

"Now they love it and ask daily if it's a 'swim lesson day,'" said Alfisi, who wants her sons comfortable in the water, especially since there is a pool in their neighborhood.

Rachel Day watched her daughter, June, who is not yet 3, begin her third session with Brianna Nicholson. "They are very gentle with their method," she said. Some of the young students even jumped off a low springboard with their instructors, and seemed unfazed by their accomplishment. But the children are never forced to do something that makes them uncomfortable.

"If nothing else, the children can be exposed to [swimming] and later it won't be a foreign feeling," Sherman said.

Water Safety Resources

The Safer 3 Water Safety Foundation, formerly Swim for Life Foundation, is a drowning prevention non-profit organization based in Tustin, CA. The organization's mission: Protect every life from drowning through education and heightened water safety awareness. For information about water safety, visit their website at http://www.swimforlife.org/about_us. Additional water safety websites include: <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/water-safety> <http://www.safekids.org/tip/water-safety-home-tips>

Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Editor:

As a resident of Orinda's government housing, I want to respond to the letter of Mr. Henry R. Pinney and invite him to visit us at Orinda Senior Village in downtown Orinda. He can call me from the directory at the entrance. I would like to show him around our building of 150 apartments. This soon-to-be 30-year-old government housing is our home. I would like to introduce you, Mr. Pinney, to some great residents who may have been a cook, teacher, caregiver, artist, doctor, researcher, banker, a valued housewife, nurse, clerk, factory worker or manager, Cal Berkeley or Stanford grad, etc.

We moved here to be near family members living in this area as we age or because we are disabled. We are of many nationalities and languages, work and life experiences, mental and physical abilities. This challenging diversity of residents live together, mostly happily, and often help and care for one another. We care about and have invested in our apartments, our building, and around our building. Together, we garden, care for many plants inside and out, bird watch and maintain hummingbird feeders and a Bluebird trail, run a thrift shop, publish a monthly

in-house newsletter, exercise on equipment we helped pay for, play bingo and table tennis with equipment we paid for, plan a monthly outing, paint, write, help with grandchildren, etc.

Back of all the above is a local board that cares about Orinda Senior Village and the residents. They give of their time and talents to make possible what you will see when you visit us. We have a staff that works to keep it that way.

We are a community as diverse as Lamorinda. I do not know the statistics, but I doubt the names of our residents are on the police blotter any more often than those of other Lamorinda residents. We may use the paramedics more often! Like most Lamorinda residents, most of us know this is a great place to live and we want to keep it that way. We are grateful to live in Orinda Senior Village, in Orinda, and near to those we love as we are aging and living with disabilities. I look forward to showing you around our lovely government-subsidized Village in Orinda.

Mildred Salmon
Orinda

100 Years of Living

By Cathy Dausman



Although he no longer drives, 100-year-old David Skilling still has a valid California driver's license.

Photo Cathy Dausman

David Skilling does not look like a centenarian. Yet the proof is on his driver's license, which is still valid. "I gave up driving at 98," he says, and gave his son his car. Skilling loves the reaction he gets from those who see an old birthday banner still tacked to his living room wall. He thought that would be his last party, but his family gathered again on Fourth of July weekend and included a 100th birthday celebration for him at their annual picnic.

The guest list included 40 family members and 20 local friends. "I never knew anybody close to 100," he admits, but he attributes his longevity to a philosophy of "everything in moderation" plus good family genes.

Skilling's mother lived into her 80s; his sister died at 98. "My kids think I'll live forever," says Skilling, who retired at age 60. He has three

grown children, a son and two daughters, who are themselves in their 60s. He has six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren, "so far."

A doctor once told Skilling he had the body of a 74-year-old man, long after he was 74. A burst appendix at age 17 left him with a blood clot in his leg, which doctors warned might travel to his head, but it hasn't happened in 83 years. He used to play tennis and bridge, and bowled on a league for 30 years. Now Skilling plays word games with neighbors and family.

Skilling was born in Eugene, Oregon. His family – five siblings and their mother – moved to Oakland when Skilling was a child. He graduated from the old University High School, served two stints in the Navy, graduated from UC Berkeley, and worked 32 years for Alameda County,

where his sister worked.

Getting a job with the county, Skilling says, was "a lucky break for me." He moved his family to Moraga 47 years ago, and lives in the same house today.

"I like my own company," he confides, adding that he gets hot lunches from Meals on Wheels. To entertain himself he reads or plays cards. Neighbors look in on him and his children call regularly. He tries to walk daily, and says he doesn't feel much different than he did at 90, although he admits that now "it is harder to bend, I can't move fast, and I can't play [on the floor] with my great-grandson."

Ultimately, though, Skilling is practical: "At my age, I don't look more than a month ahead," he says. "I'm fortunate that I can live by myself and enjoy it."

Lamorinda Slow Food Event at Moraga Herb Farm

By Sophie Braccini



Hollie Lucas-Alcalay picking herbs in her garden farm.

Photo Sophie Braccini

The multiple fragrances of the herbs that grow in Hollie Lucas-Alcalay's garden drift in the warm summer air; 10 different species of mints, five varieties of basil, lemon verbena, calendula, lavender, rosa rugosa, lavender balm, lemon balm, tulsi tea (tulsi krishna basil), to name a few, are beautifully lined up in 3,000 square feet of flat land, tight as a drum.

The Moraga mom has turned part of her garden into an herb farm and profitable business. Slow Food East Bay chose that safe haven for plants to hold its very first Lamorinda event July 20, when the garden will be open to people interested in learning more about growing, savoring, and cooking herbs.

Slow Food started in Italy in the

1980s as a response to the fast food invasion of an ancient culture. It has spread slowly (of course) to the rest of the planet and now counts chapters in some 100 countries. "The motto of our group is 'good, clean and fair,'" says Slow Food East Bay's Willow Blish. "We want to know what we are putting in our mouth, savor it and respect those who grew it for us."

Blish, who is a fitness instructor and nutritionist, considers food to be more than just fuel for the body, but an experience to be shared and an opportunity to support a whole community.

"Our chapter organizes events where we introduce people who grow the food, and how to savor it," she says. "Our spices and herbs series is about discovering new tastes and

using these substances from all over the world with whatever is in season."

Blish met Lucas-Alcalay at a similar event in Walnut Creek, and the two decided to bring Slow Food to Lamorinda.

"I was instantly interested in this young woman who is literally growing a business out of her garden," says Blish. The Moraga herb farmer will share her expertise with the group at the event – first with a tour of the gardens, discussing the best herbs to grow in the area, harvesting and storing techniques, and then cooking tips. She'll have participants taste a variety of teas and herbs in different forms, both fresh and cooked, to learn more about flavor differences and how to highlight them.

... continued on page B2

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Lafayette Filmmaker's Directorial Debut a Winner

By Michael Sakoda



Phillip Mayall and his family on the red carpet at the Snake Alley Film Festival in Iowa.

Photos provided

"8 Guns Over a Dead Girl," the directorial debut of Lafayette filmmaker Phillip Mayall, took home the award for Best Action Film at the Snake Alley Film Festival in Iowa. "I was genuinely stunned," said Mayall about the win. "I wish I had remembered to thank Luis Villalon and Rachel Steinberg and everyone who made it a success, but I was so shocked that all I could really say was, 'This is an honor, thank you.'"

Mayall was born and raised in Urbana-Champaign, Ill., and that's where his desire to work in film was sparked. "I've had this problem with theater since high school," he said. "I was doing plays there ... did plays at the University (of Illinois) during the summer. We had this community theater called The Depot ... but then I laid off for about 20 years."

In the interim, Mayall worked for the U.S. Postal Service for 28 years, but the itch was always there. "I think it was when *Beverly Hills Cop III* came along. I was one of the extras and that kind of refueled my interest in it, and I started working as an extra," he said.

"I was in a lot of Robin Williams films and 'Nash Bridges'... did a bunch of commercials for Bay Cable Advertising," he said. "I did some voice over stuff - 'Star Ocean: The Second Story' - and when the movie 'The Game' came out, I worked in that enough to become a SAG member."

In 1999, Mayall took a second job with American Airlines, and took a step back from his true passion. "There was an overlap there that limited my creative window of opportunity," he said.

But he always found a way. "I did the 48 Hour Film Festival a couple of times," he said. "Then I said one of those foolish things people say, 'If we can do this in 48 hours, imagine what we can do in three weeks.'"

Before his retirement in 2011, Mayall read a collection of short stories, and one tickled his fancy. "I read, '8 Guns Over a Dead Girl,' and thought, 'This would be a great movie,'" he said. "So I emailed the author, Patty Templeton, and sent her a script, and it went from there."

Mayall, his cinematographer, Luis Villalon, and producer, Rachel Steinberg, shot the movie in six days, then Mayall embarked on the post-production. "It took about two and a half years in post-production," he laughed. "Next time, I'm going to say, 'If we can do this in three years...'"

The film also marked the beginning of PhilMFilm, Mayall's production company. "It's Film-Film, or Phil M. Film," he said. "It's kind of a play on both." PhilMFilm was involved with Rebuilding Together San Francisco in April 2012. "They do a lot of good work for people who really need it ... sort of like Habitat for Humanity," he said. "They help doing work for senior centers and schools, so we went and shot for four days and made something for them to put on their website."

Over the past 25 years Mayall and his wife, Sharon, also retired from the Postal Service, have lived, raised their three children, Sy, Zach and Katy, and retired in Lafayette. "My wife really liked the schools here; that was what drew us to Lafayette," said Mayall.

"We did all those growing up things: Sy was a pitcher, and I was one of those parents that was always on the edge of being asked to leave; Katy played water polo; and all three of my children did the summer basketball camp at Saint Mary's."

His children are grown now - Sy lives in Dallas and works for American Airlines, Zach is an auto mechanic in Maui, and Katy is an attorney in New York City - and Mayall and his wife are enjoying their retirement, but as always, he has a creative project in mind.

Mayall has a script, "That Night," the story of a 20-year high school reunion and the culmination of a 20-year grudge after a bad break up.

"I have had and am having a good life," Mayall wrote. "It's not been that much different than the way I imagined it ... that night."



Lafayette filmmaker Phillip Mayall accepts award for Best Action Film.

Lamorinda Slow Food Event at Moraga Herb Farm

... continued from page B1

"Making food takes time," says Lucas-Alcalay, "and it's turned into a burden for a lot of us. But it can be fun, and when you grow your own food you get more inspired to cook it, and it tastes so much better than what you find at the store."

Lucas-Alcalay says that she involves her children and that as they taste what is being prepared their palates develop. "That's why I like herbs so much," she says. "You can take the same roasted chicken, but if you switch the herbs you have a completely different dish, it's not compli-

cated, but it takes time."

The mother of two school age children comes from a family of growers; her parents are viticulturists in the Santa Barbara area. She's chosen to grow in her own garden to be able to integrate family and business life. As far as distribution is concerned, she sells at events, on the web (hollieshomegrown.com) and in local farmers' markets, meaning that Lucas-Alcalay gets up very early during summer months to harvest and sell herbs of the day at the market.

Besides teas, dried aromatics and

flowers, she makes herbal culinary salts, herb infused olive oil, herbal bath salts, healing salves, lip balm and candles. She is working on a new concept to pair her family wine and herbs.

The Slow Food event will be held from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 20 at Hollie's Homegrown in Moraga and is a potluck. Participants are asked to bring one dish for six to seven people featuring one of their favorite herbs. The cost of the event is \$10; children under 10 are free. To register, visit slowfoodeastbay.com.

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Precarious Gas Meter Needs Security

Utility's program aims to remedy the situation

By Cathy Tyson



Gas meters like this one in Orinda could qualify for PG&E's Meter Protection Program. Photo Andy Scheck

A potentially dangerous gas meter was spotted on a windy road in Orinda, located within a few feet of a narrow winding roadway, coming out of the ground not anchored to anything. It wouldn't take much if a driver lost control to crash into it, with possibly horrific consequences.

With images from the devastating San Bruno disaster fairly fresh, Pacific Gas and Electric Company was very helpful and promptly clarified the situation and what could be done about it – for this meter and others that are similarly situated in Lamorinda.

Located on El Toyonal, this precarious gas meter could be a candidate for PG&E's Meter Protection Program, which seeks to identify gas meters that are too close to a road. "Safety is our top priority," said Tamar Sarkissian, spokesperson for PG&E. She explained that in this situation, the first step is to send a field inspector out to evaluate the location of the gas meter, relative to the roadway.

The curb matters. PG&E's regulations state that physical protection shall be provided for any gas meter within 3 feet of the following: driveway or roadway with a curb, in addition if a road, street, alley or driveway without a curb is within 8 feet of the

gas meter, it can also be a candidate for the meter protection program.

That protection usually means installing bollards – strong steel poles – at PG&E's expense. If that is not possible PG&E is required to move the meter, also on their dime, but the customer would be responsible for hiring a plumber to reconnect the line from the new location of the meter to the home.

That's where Maurice Williams, owner of LeapFrog Plumbing comes in; while he does all kinds of plumbing work, he's also been in the trenches with PG&E. "In my experience they have been extremely proactive," said Williams. He's been personally involved in a number of gas meter issues with the utility and notes that sometimes they get a "bad rap" that is undeserved – on the contrary, they've been very generous taking care of gas line concerns.

To get more information on the Meter Protection Program, or to see if your meter qualifies, call PG&E's main number at (800) PGE-5000. As a reminder, it's important for homeowners, contractors and excavators to call before digging to identify the location of underground gas lines. Underground Service Alert is a free service; simply call 811.



This over build gas meter in Lafayette qualified for PG&E's Meter Protection Program. Photos courtesy Leapfrog Plumbing

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Canine Hypothyroid Disease

By Mona S. Miller, DVM



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Is Fido tired all the time? Does his fur look patchy and dry, or he has ongoing skin infections? Is he 2-8 years old? Have you tried to get him to lose weight, but no matter what you do, he is still fat? Is he a golden retriever? Hypothyroidism is the most common hormonal disorder in dogs. Some breeds are predisposed, although this can occur in any dog. It is fairly common in golden retrievers, dachshunds and Dobermans. I have many patients who are hypothyroid who feel and look better within a month after starting treatment. I specifically talk about this condition with my clients who own goldens, Labradors and other medium or large breed dogs who come to me frustrated about their unsuccessful attempts to get their dog to lose weight.

The thyroid glands near the throat are responsible for making the active hormones that regulate metabolism throughout the body. Thus, low levels of thyroid hormone can affect almost every organ system. The most common causes of thyroid deficiencies in dogs are by natural decrease or atrophy of the glands, or by immune-mediated destruction of the glands. Less common causes are from iodine deficiency in the diet or a congenital disorder.

This can be a relatively easy disease to diagnose with blood tests. In simple cases, the screening T4 hormone is low, there is a mild anemia

and a mild to moderate high cholesterol level. As an aside, this is an important area in which dogs differ from humans. Dogs are not subject to the same process of atherosclerosis, or cholesterol deposition in blood vessels, as humans. Cholesterol levels in dogs are not nearly as meaningful as it is in humans, but in the case of hypothyroidism, high cholesterol can serve as a marker. Veterinarians generally do not separate out HDL and LDL cholesterol.

However, in some cases, diagnosis is not so straightforward. When a dog is ill, for almost any reason, his thyroid level may be low during the illness. This is called Euthyroid Sick Syndrome. Medications such as anti-seizure drugs, anti-inflammatory drugs, and certain antibiotics can cause a decreased level of circulating T4. Some breeds, such as Greyhounds and other sight hounds, usually have much lower T4 levels as their norm. More specific and sensitive thyroid testing can be done to differentiate whether true hypothyroidism exists. It may also be appropriate to use thyroid medication as a trial in order to make the diagnosis.

Treatment is relatively easy, straightforward and lifelong. Thyroid supplement is given in the form of a pill. This is another important difference between dogs and humans – dogs usually require supplement

twice daily and at much higher doses than humans. Initially the dose should be checked with a blood test, and each time the dose is changed, checked again. For dogs that remain at a stable dose, it is reasonable to check their blood T4 level every 6-12 months. Most veterinarians prefer to check the peak level during the day, which should occur about 4-6 hours after the morning pill. In some cases, though, a trough (or low) level would be recommended, so your vet would ask you to bring Fido in just before his next dose is due.



Dr. Mona Miller lives in Lafayette with her son, two cats and Luka, a yellow Labrador. She has worked in the Lamorinda area since moving here in 2001. She attended U.C. Berkeley as an undergraduate, and received her DVM from U.C. Davis. She can be reached via email at MonaSDVM@aol.com.

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Cover Girl Discovered

By Cathy Dausman



Cover girl Charlotte Tschann (striped dress) stands with Lamorinda Weekly staff after her family discovered she was front page news. Surrounding Charlotte, kneeling from left: Moya Stone, Jaya Griggs, Nick Marnell, Wendy Scheck and Andy Scheck. Back row: Cathy Dausman and Cathy Tyson. Photo Ben Tschann

At age 4, Charlotte Tschann is a bona fide cover girl. The smiling Orinda preschooler adorned the front page of the July 3 issue of Lamorinda Weekly, dressed in red, white and blue, clutching a lollipop in one hand and waving a U.S. flag with the other.

Photographer Ohlen Alexander captured her image during last year's parade when Charlotte rode with her father, Ben, and their friends in a military all-terrain vehicle. It was her first parade appearance.

Publisher Andy Scheck selected the archive shot to accompany the issue's lead story about Fourth of July

festivities, and ordered matching T-shirts silkscreened for staff to wear as they walked the parade route.

A friend alerted the family of their daughter's fame. "Early Wednesday morning [July 3], I received a text message telling me Charlotte was in the Lamorinda Weekly," said her mother Cary Tschann. "Charlotte and I went outside to look at it right away. We were surprised to see her on the front cover of the paper," she said.

This year the Tschann family (Charlotte, her parents, and Charlotte's brother, William) were part of the crowd.

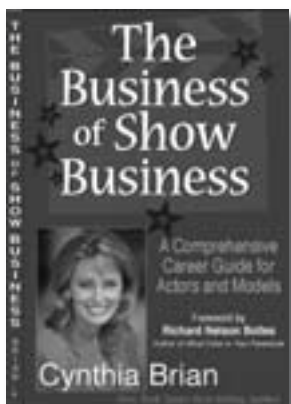
"We parked at BART and as we

were beginning our walk [to a spot near the Orinda Library] I saw [writer Nick Marnell] with Charlotte's photo on his shirt. My husband wanted one himself so we followed the man to float 12 and met the whole Lamorinda Weekly staff," she explained.

After Charlotte's family introduced themselves, she was re-photographed, surrounded by staff. The Schecks plan to give the family their very own T-shirts.

"We had no idea her picture was taken [last year] or that she would be in the Lamorinda Weekly. It was a very fun surprise," said her mother.

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Moraga Library Wants Teens to Come Back

By Sophie Braccini



Librarian Andrea Freyler (center) with teen summer volunteers Anaisa Lowson and J.P. Bagalithog. Photo Sophie Braccini

It is not always easy to get tweens and teens to consider the library a cool place to be. By the time they are in middle school, many young people who once loved to go to the library with mom and discover new books and activities often decide the quiet, book-lined rooms are just not appealing.

While Lafayette and Orinda libraries have great central locations, Moraga's library is not near a frozen yogurt shop or a fun hangout spot. But adult and teen services librarian Andrea Freyler has not given up on older kids. Since she arrived in Moraga last winter she's been thinking about ways to attract tweens and teens to the library and this summer she launched, with the support of senior community librarian Diane McDonnell, the Teen Tuesday program for

kids entering sixth through 12th grade.

The program that began in June has started to lure young crowds back to the historic building on St. Mary's Road near the Commons Park.

"One mom told me she was so happy we started this," said Freyler. "Her children started coming to the library for Baby Storytime; but since middle school they had no interest. Now they are coming back to the library and rediscovering that it is a place that welcomes them." The Tuesdays are designed for this age group and always include drinks and snacks.

The first Tuesday in July was "Lights, Cinema, Pixar," followed by "Fear Factor," which challenged teens to taste unusual food, and "Cupcake Decorating 101." July 23 will feature

"Game On" – adolescents will be offered board games and electronic games to play with.

"Girl Scouts from Troop 30114 came to us looking for a Silver Award project," explains Freyler. "They collected board games they will fit in a large box that we will use on the 23rd and that will stay with the library."

Incoming Campolindo freshman Kim Baxter decided to invest her babysitting money in board games to donate to the library. "I bought seven games that are fun to play as a group," says Baxter. "It includes Apple to Apple, Twister, Janga, chess and card games. I'll come on the 23rd to play with the group of teens." The games will be permanently donated and groups will be able to borrow them to play at the library.

There is also a movie party planned for July 30, and Teen Tuesday will continue through Aug. 17 when a game truck will come to the library.

"The library is a fun and safe place for teens to be," says Freyler with enthusiasm, "and it gives them something constructive to do in the summer." Freyler employs 10 teen volunteers from local high schools to help with the program, and is planning other teen-oriented offerings for the fall.

"There are some public libraries that are popular with teens," she adds. "Sometimes it is the location ... and sometimes it is appealing programs that draw them in."

Libraries Seeking Feedback from Lamorinda Residents

The Contra Costa County Library wants you to share your insights – about what local libraries are doing right – and what needs improvement. CCCL staff are conducting an online survey through July 31 to assist them with their future strategic planning, and are asking everyone to participate. So, take three minutes to share your two cents by responding to the questions at: ccclib.org/mylibrary. Then, share the survey link with family, friends and neighbors.

L. Snyder

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Author Examines Complex Life of Jesus of Nazareth in New Book, "Zealot"

By Lou Fancher



Reza Aslan Photo provided

Rising like a rigorous intermission amid a summer of escapist beach reading, writer and scholar Reza Aslan's "Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth" (Random House, 2013) is this season's muscular literary entity. The author of the international bestseller "No god but God" will appear courtesy of the Commonwealth Club at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center on July 23 to read from and discuss his new book.

Twenty years of research and a vigorous, intellectual thirst for clarity fuels Aslan's comprehensive, boisterous writing style. Widely regarded as a leading scholar on Islam and religion, the biography unfolds – or rather, plunges – into an investigation of Christianity's most vexing question: Who was Jesus the man and how did he become Jesus the Christ?

Relying on the gospels for narrative outline only (Aslan emphasizes the gospels were not written as eye-witness accounts but were authored well after-the-fact and presents a strong argument for their being colored by political, religious and cultural agendas), Aslan has said Jesus's biography "writes itself." Key to the factual architecture he prefers, historical writings and Roman documents support his central claim that Jesus the man's story is as good news as was (or is) Jesus the Christ's.

Aslan is a Muslim, he tells us in the book's intimate opening. After temporarily becoming a follower of Christ in his teens, he fell away when his studies exposed a gaping divide between fact and mythmaking within the folds and filters of Christianity. Ironically, a return to his ancestral faith stripped the shadows from the Jesus he thought he was leaving behind: revealing a social activist, possibly illiterate, an insurrectionist, a zealot, who nevertheless influences Aslan's beliefs and the

principals he imparts to his children. **Jesus of Nazareth**

First century Palestine was a morass of grand and minuscule religiopolitical skirmishes, we learn, as Aslan lays the contextual landscape of Jesus' time. Searching within the mess of messianic movers, Roman rulers and Temple priests, two truths are all that are certain about the life of the man who has shaped Western thought and culture more than any other: Jesus was a Jew and Rome crucified him for the crime of sedition, or "striving for kingly rule."

Distinguishing between "zealot" and a later, 66 C.E. (Common Era) Zealot Party movement, Aslan defines Jesus as a member of a "Fourth Philosophy" whose undying devotion to the rule of One God and Israel's independence required "zeal." Marching through religious and political history while never losing sight of the man leading the charge, "Zealot" tells two stories simultaneously.

The first is the tale of the birth of a religion amid an era rife with apocalyptic feverishness and profound nationalism. Civil strife, miracle workers and declarations of the coming of the Kingdom of God filled the streets and temple courtyards; causing tumult in the minds of pious Jews and fury in Rome's imperial circles.

The second is the story of a boy who barely became a man before he was crucified. Jesus was a peasant, teacher, minister, messenger, wonder worker – and almost more than anything else, Jesus was a keeper of secrets, a fascinating mystery. Aslan makes the point concrete in a chapter about Jesus' parables, noting that Jesus "consciously chose to veil the Kingdom of God in abstruse and enigmatic parables."

Aslan is a skilled scavenger who never tosses aside contradictory evidence without close examination: the book's "notes" section is a repository of authoritatively researched counter arguments. He freely acknowledges the limitations of his search and an academic mindset allows him to skirt dogmatism. Fortunately, with impressive investigation and unambiguous scholarship, Aslan makes the "abstruse and enigmatic" life and times of Jesus of Nazareth an elegant, illuminated read.

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Community Service

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Moraga Historical Society Honors Two Members

Submitted by Elsie Mastick



Susan Sperry and Maria Rieger

Photo provided

Honored for their contributions to preserve local history, two Moraga Historical Society members received awards from the Conference of California Historical Societies at a June 22 luncheon in Sacramento.

Receiving the Scholarship/Authorship Award was Maria Rieger. Born and raised in Spain, Rieger has a deep understanding of her native country and culture. She is invaluable at translating Spanish documents and researching pre-American California history. Rieger is one of the most prolific contributors to the El Rancho Moraga Quarterly, the Moraga Historical Society's newsletter, and she is consistently reliable and passionate about her work. In 1993 Rieger was recognized with a certificate of appreciation from the National Park Service for her leadership and contribution to the plan for the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, which the public can now follow with beautiful markers from Arizona to Northern California. Her support of and contributions to the Moraga Historical Society have been invaluable over many years.

Susan Sperry has been a staple of the Mor-

aga community her entire life. Sperry grew up on a cattle ranch in the area, where she still lives today with her two daughters and their families. After graduating from the University of California, Berkeley she taught fifth grade at Los Perales Elementary School. With graduate degrees in special education, Sperry moved to Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School in 1983. At JM for 23 years, she developed the curriculum for teaching the history of Moraga. Her unit included a walking tour of Moraga, often accompanied by descendants of original Moraga families – Carr, Sanders, Baitx, Trelut. This unit is still in use today in the third grades of the Moraga School District. After teaching in Moraga for 37 years, Sperry retired and joined the board of the Moraga Historical Society. Currently she is recording secretary and served as president for two terms. She has collected oral histories of many "old timers," turning them into a video in 2005. Sperry has watched Moraga grow from grassy hills to a thriving community. Mayor Dave Trotter calls Sperry a "living history of the Town of Moraga and this community."

Moraga Movers Musical Nostalgia

Submitted by George Fisher



Photo provided

On July 8, nearly 200 Moraga Movers were treated to a wonderful evening of music. Bonnie Weiss returned once again and entertained a very enthusiastic audience with the music of Cole Porter. Her one hour presentation featured many screen clips including Fred Astaire, Ethel Merman, Bert

Laahr, Bob Hope, Ginger Rogers, Cyd Charisse, Frank Sinatra and others. Weiss herself broke into songs which so embellished the evening. Moraga Movers is open to all Lamorinda residents 55 and over. For information, visit www.moragamovers.org or call (925) 376-6622.

Supervisor Candace Andersen Seeks Applicants for Seats on Advisory Bodies

Submitted by Jill Ray

District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen is looking for interested, motivated residents to serve on a variety of Contra Costa County citizen advisory boards. These voluntary boards usually meet monthly and advise the Board of Supervisors on a variety of issues. They provide a key communication link between the community and county government.

Supervisor Andersen is looking for volunteers from her district to fill the following positions:

- Assessment Appeals Board
- Contra Costa County Fire Protection District's Fire Advisory Commissioners (1 alt. seat)
- Economic Opportunity Council
- Mental Health Commission (1 Consumer Seat)
- Merit Board

District 2 includes: Alamo, Canyon, Danville, Lafayette, Moraga, Orinda, Parkmead, Rossmoor, San Ramon, Saranap, and Walnut Creek (west of Main Street). Applications and more information are available on the county's website: <http://contra.napanet.net/maddybook>.

Additional Rowing Camp Moves Closer to Home

By Michael Sakoda



Rowing camp participants on the San Pablo Reservoir in Orinda.

Photo Andy Scheck

This summer marks the inaugural year of the Oakland Strokes rowing camp at the San Pablo Reservoir in Orinda. The Oakland Strokes rowing club was founded in 1974, and began teaching rowing to local middle and high school students. More recently, they began offering instructional summer camps at the Tidewater Boating Center on the Oakland estuary. "We've been running the camps for about 10 years," said Beth Anderson, one of the Strokes' middle school rowing coaches. "But at the estuary, there's a lot of tide and water movement. San Pablo is really calm ... a better location for beginners."

The recent move to San Pablo is thanks in large part to the support of Lamorinda teens involved in the Oakland Stokes competitive rowing teams. "All the kids from (Lamorinda) row for us, but they come all the way out to Oakland," said Anderson. "We're trying to bring rowing a little bit closer to a lot of our students."

In these times of childhood obesity, diabetes and other weight-related epidemics, parents can't refute the importance of a good exercise, but more than that, rowing offers an opportunity that few other sports do.

"Middle school is a time when kids are changing sports and sort of discovering they might not be good enough to compete in the sport they're playing," said Anderson speaking as a mother of two. "The nice thing about rowing is it starts in middle school or the beginning of high school. It's good for kids who are athletes but haven't found a sport they're really great at because it gives them a place to excel."

Members of the Oakland Strokes competitive teams are sought after by recruiters from top universities. "Almost every college in the country that recruits for rowing comes to see us," said Anderson. "We're one of the leading programs in the country competitively, so we

send kids to all the great schools."

Several Lamorinda teens are moving on from the Strokes to compete at the college level.

From the US Junior National Champion Women's team, Alia Shafi (Acalanes High School) will be competing for the US National Team at the Junior World Championships this summer before attending Brown in the fall. Elizabeth Pate (Miramonte High School) will be attending Harvard, and her twin sister, Ellen, will be attending the University of Virginia. Indigo Catton (Campolindo High School) is set to attend UPenn and Camille Triebisch is heading for UCLA.

From the silver medal winning men's team, Erik Johnson (MHS) is off to Cornell, Karmi Chan (MHS) to UCLA, and Ben Peterson (CHS) is heading for Trinity College.

"It gives you an edge if you've got good grades and you're a strong athlete," said Anderson. "It's a good opportunity. We can teach them something new and take them to the next level."

The coaching staff of the Oakland Strokes will be at the disposal of campers at the San Pablo sessions where children of all skill levels are invited to join in for an incredible experience with a storied program.

"We have two sessions at San Pablo: Beginners go 8:30 to 10:30, and we teach them everything they need to know and get them rowing by the end of the week; and an intermediate group, where they've done one week of summer camp, comes from 10:30 to 1:30, and they progress from where they left off the week before," said Anderson. "What we're trying to do is introduce kids to the basic sport of rowing and the excitement of what crew has to offer."

The camp concludes its second session this week, and will run one more session for beginners July 22-26. For information, visit www.oaklandstrokes.org.

TEEN SCENE

Teen Treks

By Hannah Li

The day school lets out, high school students flock to their cars to flee the Lamorinda area as if a natural disaster had forced them to drive through the Caldecott towards Berkeley and Oakland. Admittedly, I was one of those people, yet this summer I've made it a point to enjoy the prospects that Orinda, Lafayette, and Moraga present; specifically, Lamorinda's fabulous hiking venues.

Hiking in itself is a great way to spend time with friends without spending money. We often take for granted the plethora of hiking opportunities that Lamorinda's beautiful rolling hills and safe off-road trails have to offer. While teens nowadays seem glued to their computers 24/7, getting some serotonin in the sunlight can really make up for those hundreds of hours of studying during the school year.

Jessie O., a senior at Miramonte chimed, "I love walking around the Lafayette Reservoir on weekends. It's a great way to exercise and I often run into old friends who also hike there. The park is so pretty and if I'm feeling adventurous I will walk the Rheem Trail."

Many lesser known areas provide quality hiking prospects as well. Senior Simone B. added, "Canyon Road has innumerable off-roading opportunities. Some trails go into Oakland and others loop back into Moraga. The road itself is a great trek into the Oakland hills. Be careful of cars as the roads are narrow and winding! I actually just took a hike up into Redwood Park the other day!"

Meg S. similarly explained her preference of taking exhilarating runs on Grizzly Peak with other teens: "A lot of people think Grizzly is only for cars, but I've had a lot of great hikes up there."

Indeed, many of these trails are less than

a ten-minute drive away. I recommend treks to King's Trail off Rancho Laguna Park, strolls around Valle Vista or in the wilderness areas off Bear Creek Road, walks along "the ridge" in Orinda, and runs through the trails in Moraga Commons Park.

San Pablo Reservoir and the East Bay Municipal Water District Recreation Area located between Orinda and El Sobrante is a scenic 1,000-acre park where hiking, biking, jogging, kayaking, picnicking, and fishing are all part of the summer fun. Although dogs aren't allowed in the water or boats, it's a bonus to take your pooch on your outdoor excursion.

Whether you are a serious hiker or a casual stroller, Lamorinda provides a plethora of hiking opportunities for everyone.



Hannah Li, a reporter on Express Yourself™ is a high school junior who runs track and tutors. In her free time she enjoys blogging, photography, and cooking.

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Cal Shakes' "Romeo and Juliet"

A classic tale of love, and hate

By Lou Fancher



Dan Clegg (Romeo) and Rebekah Brockman (Juliet) in Shana Cooper's production of "Romeo and Juliet." Photos Kevin Berne

If you think you've seen William Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" one too many times to see it once more, think again. Director Shana Cooper takes seven top-notch Cal Shakes actors on a terrific romp through the classic hate story at Orinda's Bruns Amphitheater in a production running through July 28. Yes, that's right. It's roiling hate, love's antithesis, smoldering beneath a universe of young passion and old feuding.

Cooper paints the vicious scaffold with a bold physicality, but never allows her quasi-contemporary portrayal to outshine The Bard's original wit, wisdom and wonderful way with words. Remarkably, she laughs out-weigh the horrified gasps, despite the play's inevitable, bloody, poisoned end.

On a stripped stage, scattered with classroom-style chairs, a stack of bricks, an upright piano, a table bearing electronic equipment and little else, the action begins with a mock fist fight. Daniel Ostling's minimalist set design keeps the focus in the right place: on the Capulets and the Montagues, two families who've fought for so long the elders' animosity has become an heirloom passed to the younger generations.

Romeo (Dan Clegg) breaks up the opening fight, hyperbolically confessing to his cousin Mercutio (Joseph Parks) his love for the never-seen Rosaline before lifting the fleeting devotion of young love like a petticoat and chasing pell-mell after Lord Capulet's 13-year-old daughter, Juliet (Rebekah Brockman). But Juliet has been promised to Paris (Nick Gabriel), a close-to-royal figure whose kinsman, the Prince

(Domenique Lozano), has decreed that any Capulet or Montague who continues the insufferable feud will be "banished." And Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, is incensed when Romeo appears at his uncle's masquerade ball.

"Is love a tender thing?" Romeo asks, early in the play. The rest of the production is as close to answering "no" as one can imagine. The only exception is Shakespeare's sumptuous writing, which offers bittersweet gems, like a reference to dreams ("they are children of an idle brain") and pathos, in Juliet's plaintive cry upon discovering Romeo is a Montague ("My only love sprung from my only hate!"). Throughout, the actors play multiple roles and never drop a word or a line's intention - even the mildly modernized script retains the linguistic characteristics and breadth of Shakespeare's original text.

Following the Capulet's ball, a spirited balcony scene - the two young lovers separated by 15 feet; their words swirling as intimately as cream in coffee - signals the play's pinnacle of love. From that moment on, it's a swooping slide into lies and betrayal when a misguided Friar (Dan Hiatt) agrees to marry Romeo and Juliet in secret.

Their marriage consummated, it's time for another fight, but this time Tybalt holds a knife in his fist and stabs Mercutio, killing him. Romeo kills Tybalt and when found out, is banished.

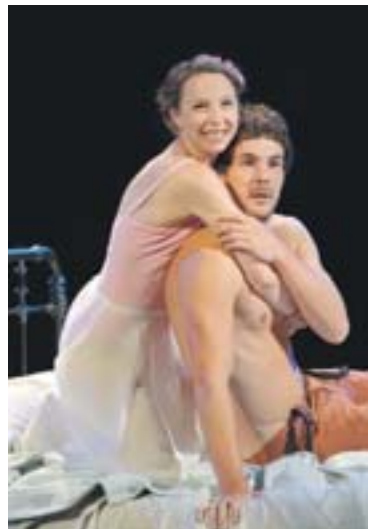
Act II is an extended tantrum that can best be described as youthful impulse partnered by horrendous opportunity and set to a fickle time-piece. Juliet secures a mild poison from the Friar and fakes her own death to escape marriage to Paris.

Romeo hears of her death, but lacks the Friar's message explaining the deception. Entering the crypt, clutching his own poisonous flask and intending to join his love in the hereafter, Romeo drinks, and dies. Juliet "awakens" 30 seconds too late, discovers Romeo's limp body, and ends her life (this time, for real) with the thrust of a knife. Lord and Lady Capulet rush to the deathbed of their only daughter: too late, it's "bitt' rest gall."

Cooper does a marvelous job with pacing in the first act and is particularly adept when teasing out the bawdy humor or wicked sarcasm of the dialogue. If the characters' precipitous descent into grief, revenge and death in the closing scenes is two shades shy of convincing, perhaps it's the result of our having been titillated or transported along the lofty language of early love scenes for too long.

The choreography and staging are meticulous: not in an uptight, persnickety way, but in a satisfying sum total way. From the cast's boisterous, wide strides to a lovely entwined multi-coupled pas de deux (dance for two) to a surreal scene in which Juliet is "passed" along a grapevine of characters who tip, swirl or bow her body, Cooper (sharing credit with Erika, Chong Such and Dave Maier for movement and fight director credits, respectively) has created the perfect physical storm. Add to that a flawless cast and truly, Cooper's "Romeo and Juliet" is a not-to-miss, fabulous take on the ruin and redemption of love and hate.

"Romeo and Juliet," presented by California Shakespeare Theater, runs through July 28 at the Bruns Amphitheater, 100 California Shakespeare Theater Way (off Highway 24), Orinda. For information, call (510) 548-9666 or visit www.calshakes.org.



Rebekah Brockman (Juliet) and Dan Clegg (Romeo) in Shana Cooper's production of "Romeo and Juliet."

Award-Winning Songwriter Returns to Hometown for Guitar Workshop

By Jennifer Wake



Ali Handal

Photo provided

Ali Handal has come a long way since singing in the choir and in musicals at Acalanes High School. Now a multi-award winning songwriter with three albums under her belt, her songs featured in numerous TV shows and movies, and author of a guitar instructional book/CD "Guitar For Girls," published worldwide by Hal Leonard, this gutsy guitarist will be returning to Lafayette July 27 for a special workshop at Lamorinda Music.

"I'm especially excited to start out the tour in my hometown!" says Handal, who is a member of the Les Paul Experience Artist Advisory Board along with Steve Miller and Alan Parsons. "My main goal is to share my story and encourage all aspiring guitarists."

Handal's first instrument was piano, which she started when she was 4, but her world changed forever when she discovered Led Zeppelin. From that moment on "it was all about the guitar," she notes on her website. "I wanted to be Jimmy Page." She started on a little acoustic, and went electric as soon as she could, ultimately swapping her acoustic for an airbrushed-dragon Fernandez Explorer purchased at a Berkeley music shop.

She attended college, first at Occidental and then UCLA, and earned a psychology degree with honors, but a career outside of music made her miserable. She decided to pursue her passion, and soon found herself living with a house full of musicians in North Hollywood, supporting herself with odd jobs while she worked on her craft. "I had to be willing to suck at first," she points out in her bio. "Something I'd never done. But that's what it takes."

Handal says she particularly loves encouraging young women to strive beyond what they think they're capable of. "I was so timid when I first approached the guitar, and I enjoy helping girls get over their own insecurities and fears," she says. "I like to

share what held me back and how I overcame the obstacles to becoming the player and singer I am today."

On her website, she says "people love it when I bleed, when I scream and hurt my voice, and when I play really fast, even on acoustic guitar. They liked when I'd do something more masculine, energy-wise, something loud and fast."

The catalyst for her book was Hal Leonard calling her up and asking if she'd be interested in writing a guitar method book specifically for girls. "As an ardent feminist, I actually had mixed feelings about writing a music book targeted only to girls - after all, the mechanics of playing guitar are the same for everyone, and I had grown up worshipping exclusively male guitar heroes," she says. "But the more I thought about the project, the more I realized that there were differences between how girls approach guitar and how boys do (of course, there will always be exceptions to this generalization). Generally speaking, girls tend to be shyer about putting themselves 'out there' and playing before they're really good, and while that may seem to be a good quality it's actually not helpful as an aspiring musician."

One of the most important activities Handal says you can do as a student of music is to jam with other students, perform as much as possible, and just put yourself out there. "My experience, and what I've observed, is that many girls deny themselves these experiences because they're overly concerned with embarrassing themselves, whereas boys tend to just go for it."

The free workshop will be held from noon to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, July 27 at Lamorinda Music in Lafayette.

Aspiring guitarists can also visit the Lessons page on Handal's website (alihandal.com), where she's posted free video lessons and a list of her favorite books on guitar playing, songwriting, and creativity in general.

Young Orinda Film Director Works on New Movie Short



A group of Miramonte High School students, with Christopher Tennant in the middle, work on their new production, "Before A Fall." Photo Sophie Braccini

Christopher Tennant and a group of friends from Miramonte High School were seen at Barbacoo in Orinda's Theatre Square shooting scenes for the young director's new production, "Before A Fall." Tennant says that the film he wrote, a silly, goofy story of a street gang that thinks of themselves as pirates. The young man, who

has already made other short movies, plans to release his new production at the Orinda Theatre in late August or the beginning of September and will subsequently compete in junior film festivals. The story of the film making can be followed on the facebook page: www.facebook.com/BeforeAFall. S. Braccini

GUITAR GIRLS

It's Too Late
Carole King
Landscape
Fleetwood Mac
Leather and Lace
Shelie Hicks
Love Sneakin' Up on You
Bonnie Raitt
Mean
Taylor Swift
Not a Pretty Girl
Ari Gibranco
Proud Mary
Bo & Tina Turner
Soak Up the Sun
Sheryl Crow
We Got the Beat
The Go-Go's
You Oughtta Know
Alania Morais
You're Still the One
Shania Twain

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284-4765, office@thelumc.org

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Youth Fellowship	Sunday	6 pm



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www.christianscienceorinda.org

Lafayette Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

Sometimes our children get it slightly skewed. For instance, one lad said: "The epistles were the wives of the apostles." Part of the fun of this church is getting back on track while you're becoming a disciple. **10 a.m. Worship**

584 Glenside Drive, Lafayette
(925) 283-8304 www.lafayettechristianchurch.org

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church 433 Moraga Way, Orinda, 254-3422 www.holyshepherd.org



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ART

On Saturday, July 20 the Lafayette Gallery is hosting an Artist's Market in the picnic area and parking lot in front of the Gallery! The area will be transformed into an enticing outdoor marketplace with a variety of artists exhibiting, demonstrating, and selling their artwork. Lafayette Gallery members will be there, and outside artists too – a total of 12-14 artists per show. There are several new artists in this show, with works including handmade scarves and purses, garden art, jewelry, wearable art, various types of paintings and prints, photography prints and note cards, and much more. The artists will be demonstrating their technique at the Market, for you to watch, learn and enjoy. For info, call (925) 284-2788 or visit www.lafayettegallery.net.

Saint Mary's College Museum of Art is presenting "Points of View" with en plein air painters Mary Lou Correia and Paul Kratter through Sept. 29. Two new exhibits will open Aug. 4 with a public reception and a walk through by curator Feldman at 2:30 p.m. opening day. "Afterglow" features installation, video, painting, sculpture, and photography by the next generation of light and space artists: Michelle Blade, Gina Borg, Claude Collins-Stracensky, Michael Damm, Kathryn Van Dyke, Chris Fraser, Evan Holloway, Ruth Laskey, Laurie Reid, Jonathan Runcio, and Dean Smith. Also opening on Aug. 4 is a new body of work by photographer Lee Saloutos. "Surface: Transformative Photography from Nevada and the Great Basin" featuring vividly colored and abstracted desert detritus and desolate but eerily beautiful abandoned mine interiors. Admission: \$5 adults, K-12 free. Hours: Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For info, call (925) 631-3379 or visit www.stmarys-ca.edu/saint-marys-college-museum-of-art.

The Moraga Art Gallery's show entitled "Beauty and the Feast" highlighting paintings by resident artist Josie Osolin, and ceramics by resident artist Elayne Isaacs runs through Aug. 10 at 522 Center Street, Rheem Shopping Center, Moraga. Free. The gallery is open Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. For more info, visit www.moragaartgallery.com, call (925) 376-5407 or email moragaartgallery@gmail.com.

MUSIC

Summer Concert Series at the Moraga Commons Park from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday evenings provided by the Moraga Park Foundation. Bring your picnic blanket or lawn chairs to the grassy hillside in front of the band shell and enjoy the free concerts. Concession stand opens at 6 p.m. for dinner. July schedule: July 18 Cal Alumni Big Band - big band swing; July 25 Houserockers - rock and soul.

Free Summer Concerts in the Park from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday nights at the Orinda Community Center Park, 28 Orinda Way. Concert schedule: July 23 - Pladdohg; Celtic rock. Gourmet food trucks – Food Truck Mafia and Loard's Ice Cream starting at 5:30 p.m. For info, visit www.cityoforinda.org.

Guitarist/songwriter/author Ali Handal is kicking off a Bay Area guitar workshop tour at Lamorinda Music. The free event is part workshop, part concert, part Q&A, featuring her new book "Guitar For Girls" from noon to 1:30 p.m. Saturday, July 27 at 81 Lafayette Circle. Free. (See story page B7)

Orinda Rotary is sponsoring its 5th annual free opera concert from 4 to 6 p.m. Sunday, July 28 at the Orinda Community Park, 28 Orinda Way. The concert will include beloved arias and favorite ensembles from operas such as Bizet, Mozart, Puccini, and Verdi. Classic musical theater repertoire will also be included. The program includes professional singers, who are graduates of the prestigious San Francisco Opera apprenticeship program, members of the elite San Francisco Opera Chorus and principal artists from Opera San Jose. Food and beverages will be available. Children are welcome. Free parking is available. The park also is within walking distance to Orinda BART and is accessible for the disabled. The concert receives support from The Orinda Park and Recreation Foundation and the Orinda Community Center Auxiliary. (See story page A6)

THEATER

Talented middle and high school students from all corners of Lamorinda take the stage at Town Hall Theatre July 19-21 to perform William Shakespeare's "Much Ado About Nothing." For additional info, visit www.thtc.org.

"Romeo & Juliet" presented by California Shakespeare Theater, runs through July 28 at the Bruns Amphitheater, 100 California Shakespeare Theater Way (off Highway 24), Orinda. For info, call (510) 548-9666 or visit www.calshakes.org. (See story page B7)

Orinda Starlight Players present "A Thurber Carnival" by James Thurber Aug. 2-24 at the Outdoor Theater in the Orinda Community Center Park, 28 Orinda Way. Regular admission: \$16; seniors \$8. For tickets call the Box Office at (925) 528-9225, or email info@orsvp.org for reservations. Be aware that this is an outdoor theatre and dress appropriately/bring blankets. More information about exact show dates and times is available at www.orsvp.org.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

All ears reading at the Moraga Library at 4 p.m. on the fourth Thursday of each month from July to October. Children in grades 1-5 can improve reading skills while enjoying the unconditional love of dogs by reading aloud to one of ARF's Pet Hug Pack therapy dogs at the Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. Dogs and their handlers are available courtesy of a partnership between the Moraga Library and the Animal Rescue Foundation. Please register online or at the library for a 10-15 minute reading session with a furry friend. Walk-ins are welcome as space permits. For more info, visit cclib.org or call Diane McDonnell at (925) 376-6852.

"Terrific Tuesdays." Fun-filled preschool programs, for ages 2-5 plus adult, are held from 10 to 10:45 a.m. every Tuesday morning at The Gardens at Heather Farm in Walnut Creek. The activities are designed to help your child learn and grow with our beautiful gardens providing the setting. Pre-registration is not required; please check in at the main office located at 1540 Marchbanks Dr., Walnut Creek. Nut-free refreshments will be provided. Cost: \$15 for the first child (\$8 for garden members), \$5 for each additional child, Children under 2 free with one paid admission. Call (925) 947-6712 for more info.

Lamorinda Idol 2013 Finalists will be performing at a series of summer performances leading up to the Lamorinda Idol Finals on Sept. 8. Check out these talented kids as they perform as soloists and groups at a variety of venues on the following dates: at July 28, Lafayette Reservoir Stage Concert at 2:45 p.m.; Aug. 24, Orinda Theatre Square Concert from 2:45 to 5 p.m.; and Sept. 8, Lamorinda Idol Finals at the Orinda Theatre (all day event). Visit www.orindaartscouncil.org for the full schedule of performances.

All summer long tweens and teens (6th grade or above, fall 2013) are invited to Teen Tuesdays from 2:30 to 4 p.m. at the Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. For more info, visit cclib.org or call (925) 376-6852. (See story page B5)

The new Design Quest exhibit at Lawrence Hall of Science in Berkeley provides young people with a platform for generating ideas and designing, building and testing their creations through Sept. 2. By building prototypes and optimizing them, kids get a chance to apply a process used by real engineers to solve problems. The Hall is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. General admission: \$6-12; children under 3, members, and UC Berkeley students and staff, free. For more info on the exhibit, visit www.lawrence-hallofscience.org/visit/exhibits/design_build_test/design_quest or call (510) 642-5132.

OTHER

For the third year in a row, Sustainable Lafayette will be hosting a summer film series at the Lafayette Library in the Community Hall featuring some of the most inspiring environmental documentaries that have been released recently. Upcoming movies include "Trashed" at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, July 18; "Elemental" at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Aug. 6. Cost: \$5 donation suggested, no reservations required.

Walk in John Muir's footsteps under sunlight and moonlight by attending two free, ranger-led saunters up Mt. Wanda, part of the John Muir National Historic Site (NHS) in Martinez. Join the National Park Service (NPS) at 9 a.m. Sunday, July 21 for a two-hour nature walk to discover the many plants and animals living in this diverse landscape. On the following evening at 7:45 p.m. Monday, July 22, experience the nighttime side of Mt. Wanda with a ranger-led full moon walk. For both events, visitors should meet at the parking lot on the corner of Alhambra Ave. and Franklin Canyon Rd. in Martinez (at the Alhambra Ave. exit off Hwy 4). Bring water and binoculars (if you have them) for both walks, and carry a flashlight and wear warm clothes for the full moon walk. Wear comfortable shoes, as the trail is steep. If it rains heavily, the walks will be canceled. Reservations are suggested but not required. Please call the John Muir NHS visitor center at (925) 228-8860 to make reservations or if you have questions. Ranger-led walks on Mt. Wanda continue through October. For more information, please visit the park website at www.nps.gov/jomu or call the visitor center.

... continued on next page

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Solano Food Bank and newest charity partners Cal Shakes Theater and Town Hall Theatre. For registration and sponsorship levels visit everydayheroes.golfreg.com.

The PSR West Coast Builder's Second Annual Golf Tournament and Ride is all geared to honor fallen Oakland Police Officer John Hege while raising funds for OPEN (Oakland Police Emergency Net) and the California Transplant Center. Tournament begins at 10 a.m. Friday, July 26 at the Diablo Creek Golf Course, 4050 Port Chicago Hwy, Concord. If you are interested in becoming a sponsor, make donations or play golf, contact Dawn Schadek at (925) 381-5873 or email dawn.schadek@gmail.com.

Salsa Mondays in Orinda! Classes of all levels and social dancing are offered from 7 to 9:45 p.m. Music starts at 6:45 p.m. Beginning Class: 7 to 8 p.m., social dancing after. Intermediate/Advanced: 8 to 9:30 p.m., social dancing after. Dance practice before and after each class! Drop-in for \$15/class at Orinda Center, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda.

Widowed Persons Support Group (WPS) meetings. The WPS support sessions are informal discussions of emotional and practical needs and concerns of the bereaving widowed persons. The sessions can be very beneficial and helpful, even if a period of years has passed. Meetings are held in the Oak Room at St. Stephens Church from 10 a.m. to noon each Saturday through July 27. Free. The meetings are facilitated by Gretchen Dabel and members of the WPS Board. For info, call Ruth Harrington at (925) 376-0321.

"Shred Fest" Supports Moraga Lion's Club. Destroy unwanted documents securely during Shred Fest from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 27 at 485 Moraga Rd. (adjacent 5-A). A \$5 fee for banker-sized boxes supports the Moraga Lion's

club local educational and service projects. Shred Fest is supported by 5-A Rent-a-Space, Moraga Motors, Coldwell Banker, Neighborhood Computers and Hall of Taxes. Security shredding is courtesy Shred Defense, Moraga.

Lafayette Physical Therapy is pleased to announce their third annual lecture series with information on injury prevention, fitness, and other related topics for the community. Highly educated and skilled physical therapists as well as highly respected doctors and community professionals will share their knowledge at 3468 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite B110, Lafayette. Lectures include **The Anti-Inflammatory Diet** with Cynthia Allen, RN, Natural Chef from 7 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, July 30; and **Off Balance: Gait & Balance Disorders Affecting Your Daily Life** Tuesday, Aug. 27. Seating for lectures is limited; please call (925) 284-6150 to RSVP and reserve your seat. For info, visit www.LafayettePT.com.

Relay For Life of Lamorinda begins at 9 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 3 and continues through the night, ending at 9 a.m. Aug. 4 at Burton Valley Elementary School, 561 Merriewood Dr., Lafayette. For info, visit relay.acevents.org or contact Kelli Nahas at kelli.nahas@cancer.org.

The Second Wednesday Book Group will read and discuss "Garden of the Evening Mists" by Tan Tuan Eng at 3 p.m. Wednesday, Aug. 14. They meet monthly at Orinda Books, 276 Village Square in Orinda, and welcome new members. For more info, visit orindabooks@thegrid.net, www.orindabooks.com or call (925) 254-7606.



Free Community Lectures

We are pleased to announce our 3rd annual lecture series with information on injury prevention, fitness, and other related topics for the community. Our highly educated and skilled Physical Therapists as well as highly respected doctors and community professionals are here to share their knowledge with you. **More info on Facebook.com/LafayettePT**

All Lectures are from 7:00pm – 8:00pm

- Tue July 30: The Anti-Inflammatory Diet** with Cynthia Allen, RN, Natural Chef
- Tue Aug 27: Off Balance: Gait & Balance Disorders Affecting Your Daily Life** with Valerie Watase, PT, Owner, Director
- Tue Sept 24: Shoulder Injuries & Prevention: Is it my rotator cuff?** With Lauren Masi, PT, OCS, ATC
- Tue Oct 29: "Oh my aching back (and neck)!" Common Injuries & Prevention** with Antonia Vega, PT & Christy Eschborn, PT

Seating for lectures is limited:
Please call 925-284-6150 to RSVP & reserve your seat
3468 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite B110
Lafayette, CA 94549
www.LafayettePT.com

OTHER ... continued

Orinda Community Foundation's 4th Annual Everyday Heroes Golf Fundraiser is July 22, at Orinda Country Club. Registration starts at 10:30 a.m. followed by a complimentary lunch buffet. At noon, a shotgun start (two best balls of foursome shamble) begins the fun with complimentary food, drinks, and contests on the course. Following golf is an awards ceremony with complimentary appetizers. Heroes this year are firefighters Michael Rattary, Stephen Rogness and Kelly Morris, from Moraga-Orinda Fire Department. Sponsorships are still available and needed to help support the many recipients: Orinda's 4th of July Parade, Library Improvements, Art in Public Places, Orinda Garden Clubs, Orinda Chamber of Commerce, Lamorinda Idol, Spirit Van Senior Transportation, Contra Costa

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MOVIE REVIEW

"Grown Ups 2"

By Derek Zemrak



Eric Lamonssoff (Kevin James), Marcus Higgins (David Spade), Robideaux (Johnathan Loughran), Kurt McKenzie (Chris Rock), and Lenny Feder (Adam Sandler) in Columbia Pictures "Grown Ups 2." Copyright: ©2013 CTMG, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Photo Tracy Bennett

Not much has matured in this latest Adam Sandler movie "Grown Ups 2." What does anyone expect from him, the king of low-brow humor? The movie opens with Lenny (Adam Sandler) being urinated on by a deer. Need I say more? The toilet "humor" continues for 1 hour and 40 minutes.

In this installment of "Grown Ups" (Sandler's first sequel ever made), Lenny, the retired hotshot Hollywood agent, relocates his family to the small town where he was raised. Lenny must deal with his wife, Roxanne, played by Oscar nominee Salma Hayek ("Frida") who wants another child. Lenny reunites with his childhood chums, portrayed by the all-star cast of comedians Kevin James, Chris Rock and David Spade, who are all dealing with mid-life issues: the other woman, forgetting the 20th wedding anniversary, and the long-lost son who shows up. Rob Schneider is the only cast member from the original movie with enough sense not to return.

There are a few chuckles in the movie, but "Grown Ups 2" is not what you would expect from a summer blockbuster release and is certainly not in the same league as "The Heat." As with all Sandler's movies, the cameos are numerous, including Steve Buscemi, Jon Lovitz, Shaquille O'Neal and wrestler Steve

Austin. "Twilight" star Taylor Lautner plays one of the frat boys Lenny and friends encounter at the lake. These are the funniest scenes in the film, but someone in Lautner's camp was intelligent enough, after seeing the movie, to pull his name from the credits and all promotional material. That should tell you something!

"Grown Ups 2" is not the worst movie Sandler has ever made; remember "That's My Boy" and "Jack and Jill." It is sad because Sandler in his early career delivered some funny movies (e.g. "Happy Gilmore", "The Wedding Singer" and "The Waterboy"). A better idea for Sandler's first sequel project would have been "Grow Up 2" and give the audience a more sophisticated script. "Grown Ups 2" is rated PG13.

A bit of trivia on Lamorinda history: the original "Grown Ups" was the first movie shown when the New Rheem Theatre opened June 25, 2010!

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. Derek can be heard every Friday on KAH1 950AM on the Poppoff Show.

Rustic Tavern

By Susie Iventosch



Photo provided

My father-in-law and I finally had the chance to visit Lafayette's Rustic Tavern for dinner a few weeks ago. We enjoyed a fantastic meal and excellent service in the outdoor seating area, and though we were a little skeptical about the cool weather that June evening, the outdoor heaters provided plenty of warmth.

The menu is concise, with just six entrees, but I was happy to see Papa's favorite pasta dish on the menu, a Rustic Tavern version of carbonara. It was different than most pasta carbonara dishes I've seen, because they served a poached egg on top, rather than stirring beaten eggs into the hot pasta after cooking. It was obviously made with wonderful homemade fettucine, which reminded me exactly of the noodles my great Aunt Clara used to make, whenever she babysat my siblings and me. Nostalgia!

I selected the Skuna Bay Salmon, which was nothing short of fabulous and served with a yummy artichoke hash, made with carrots and onions. It was so good that I went home to attempt it myself. Apparently, I didn't detect all of the secret ingredients, because mine was not nearly as good. We also shared the Lacinto Kale Salad, made with kale, currants, farro, tangerine, pine nuts and feta cheese. This salad was fantastic!

Rustic Tavern is owned and operated by Chris Amsden and Tressa and Gary Rust, all friends from their days of working together at Lark Creek in the late '90s and early 2000s. Though they all left Lark Creek to pursue other ventures, they longed to team up again one day to form their own restaurant. On April 30, they opened the tavern doors and have been very busy serving customers ever since!

While Amsden and Tressa Rust run the front of the house, including the bar and wait staff, Chef Gary Rust

heads up the kitchen and menu planning. He employs the "farm to table" philosophy, ordering fresh meats, fish and produce daily. He also tends his own garden, which supplies much of the produce served in the restaurant as well as the honey and herbs that go into the menu.

"Gary buys whole fish and filets them himself," Amsden said. "During crab season, he has a team of people picking fresh crab for our crab cakes."

The trio describes their menu as "Seasonal American Fare" and they have purposely kept the menu small so as to focus on the quality of every dish. Recently, they've offered several well-received luncheon and dinner specials, and they plan to vary the menu according to seasonally available ingredients.

Like any venture, it takes some time to iron out the wrinkles, and it appears to be no different for Rustic Tavern. One of our Lamorinda Weekly editors has had the opportunity to dine here a couple of times, and though she said the first time was a little rough in terms of the service as well as the meal she ordered, she visited a second time and was delighted with the results. She found her meal to be very good and the service great.

On the subject of working out kinks, Papa and I chose to dine outside, because the noise level is fairly high indoors making conversation a bit difficult. But Amsden says they are aware of the issue and are working on plans to improve the acoustics, soon.

Amsden and the Rusts are very pleased with the support the Lamorinda community has shown for their new establishment.

"It has been wonderful to have such a positive turnout of guests so far," Amsden remarked. "We look forward to continuing to make long-lasting friendships for many years, so thank you to all!"

Rustic Tavern's Mason Jar Mascarpone Cheesecake

Pastry Chef Nicolette Selvig was kind enough to share her recipe for her mascarpone cheesecake, which she says is "the world's most labor-intensive cheesecake!"

Yield: 12 half-pint mason jars
Time: 1.5 hours

INGREDIENTS

1 lb. cream cheese
10.5 oz mascarpone
5 oz creme fraiche
8 oz sugar
4 large eggs
7 egg yolks
1 teaspoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Note from Pastry Chef Nicolette Selvig: At the restaurant we like to use what is fresh and available. We make our own creme fraiche, but if we are in between batches I always substitute sour cream. This recipe is great for entertaining and can be topped with fresh fruit or jam.

Nicole also tops the cheesecake with a quinoa granola to give a texture somewhat like a graham cracker crust, but allows those with gluten allergies to partake!

Note from Susie: I made this recipe and the flavor was amazing, but because I was away from my own kitchen and all I had was a hand-held beater, I think I fell into the trap of allowing too much air into the batter. My cheesecake turned out just a little bit grainier and less smooth and creamy than I would have liked, as it seemed to 'souffle' rather than bake into a custard. Now, I am anxious to try it at the restaurant, so I can see how it is supposed to turn out!

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. It is very important that all of your ingredients are at room temperature (around 65 degrees) including eggs and lemon juice.
2. Remove lids from jars and place jars in an oven proof baking dish with sides at least two inches high.
3. Put the cream cheese and sugar in the mixing bowl of a Kitchenaid mixer with the paddle attachment. Turn to low speed stopping the mixer occasionally to scrape the sides of the bowl with a rubber spatula.
4. Continue mixing on low until most of the lumps are out of the cream cheese. Do not turn mixer up because it will incorporate air and the cheesecake will souffle in the oven.
5. Add the mascarpone and mix on low to incorporate.
6. Scrape the bowl again and add the creme fraiche, lemon juice, and vanilla. Mix on low.
7. Combine the eggs and egg yolks and add to the mixer in three additions scraping the bowl in between each one.
8. Strain your batter through a fine mesh sieve to remove any remaining chunks of cream cheese. It should be of pourable consistency.
9. Ladle the batter into the mason jars leaving a half inch to an inch of space from the top.
10. Wipe the rims of the jars where any batter might have spilled.
11. Place the baking dish in the oven then, using a pitcher fill around the jars until the water reaches halfway up the baking dish. I fill my water baths in the oven so I don't have to carry it to the oven full of water and risk splashing some in the cheesecake.
12. Seal tinfoil tightly around the baking dish and bake for 35 minutes. Do not rotate.
13. They should be slightly more firm around the edges and softer in the middle. When you tap the side of the jar, if the whole surface is loose it may need a couple more minutes. The cheesecakes are a custard so when you pull them out of the oven they will be VERY loose. This is perfect.
14. Immediately remove cheesecakes from the water and place in the refrigerator to chill. I do this by covering my hand with a towel. Oven mitts are too large and I have dropped more jars than not trying to use them.
15. Chill uncovered for two hours then store covered for up to two days.

**If your cheesecakes shrank at all around the edges after chilling they were a little bit over baked.*

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Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com.

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

Huge Feat at Mini Meet

Submitted by Amy Campbell



Grant Kurtz (top) beat the meet record for 25-yard freestyle set in 1972. Bronzen Trunzo (bottom) tied the record. Photo Andy Scheck

Over 600 swimmers on nine different Lamorinda swim teams ranging from age 3 to 8 years old gathered at Meadow Swim and Tennis Club for the 43rd Annual Mini Meet on July 14.

Six-year-old Grant Kurtz from Meadow broke the meet record for the boys' 6-and-under 25-yard freestyle, finishing in 16.19 seconds. The meet record of 16.50 seconds was set in 1972 by eventual Olympian Matt Biondi. In the same race Bronzen Trunzo, from Miramonte, tied Biondi's record.

"We are so excited for Grant," said Mini Meet co-chair Mallory Samora. "To break such a longstanding record held by a two-time Olympian is an incredible feat."

At the end of the day, the first place trophy went to the

1. Sleepy Hollow Legends (518 pts.)
2. Orinda Country Club (467 pts.)
3. Meadow Swim and Tennis Club (440 pts.)
4. Moraga Country Club (417 pts.)
5. Orinda Park Pool (261 pts.)
6. Moraga Valley Pool (253.5 pts.)
7. Moraga Ranch Swim Club (230.5 pts.)
8. Miramonte Swim Club (147 pts.)
9. Campolindo Cabana Club (42 pts.)

Sleepy Hollow Legends for the third year in a row. Orinda Country Club came in second place and Meadow Swim and Tennis Club took third.



Mini Meet 1st place trophy is presented to Sleepy Hollow Photo provided



Leyni Levenfeld of CCC in the 6-year-old's 25-yard breaststroke



Ella Binney of Moraga Ranch in the 5-year old's 25-yard backstroke

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WE'LL GET YOU BACK IN THE GAME

Swimmers went Bottom's Up at Meet

Submitted by Brooke Buckley



Michael Peyovich, MVP

In 1976, Moraga Valley Swim and Tennis members Craig and Linda McCay decided to organize and host a swim meet with a twist. The idea was to give children at the "bottom" of their age group an opportunity to compete against only swimmers of

the same age.

On July 7, MVP in Orinda held its 38th Annual MVP Bottoms Up Invitational Swim Meet. The club welcomed over 700 swimmers from local swim teams to compete in the summer tradition.



Christian Gee, MVP

Photos Eric Thompson

Results:

1	Orinda Park Pool Swim Team	706
2	Orinda Country Club	681. 50
3	Sleepy Hollow Legends	621. 50
4	Meadow Swim & Tennis Club	602. 50
5	Moraga Country Club	490
6	Moraga Ranch Swim Club	421
7	Moraga Valley Pool Swim Team	387. 50
8	Campolindo Cabana Club Marlins	142
9	Miramonte Swim Club	117

New Meet Records:

100 IM: Maren McDonald, age 7, finished in first place with a time of 1:37.10 while Adriana Smith finished in second with a time of 1:37.87. Both beat the meet record of 1:40.03

50 Back: Kelly Murphy, age 13, beat the 30.00 record with a time of 29.80.

Mixed 200 Medley Relay: The Meadow 13-year-old team finished the last lap at 1:57.67 to beat the record of 1:59.20.

Mixed 200 Freestyle Relay: The Meadow 13-year-old team came in at 1:44.87 to beat the 1:45.18 meet record.



Madison Tagg and Spencer Tagg, OPP

Lamorinda Native Prepares for Final Season with Gaels

By Hunter Hewitt



Beau Levesque graduated in May, but returns to SMC for another year with the basketball team while he completes a Master's.

Photo Tod Fierner

Since the end of the last season, the Saint Mary's basketball team has been in recovery mode.

First, the Gaels found themselves in the national spotlight following an NCAA investigation that resulted in penalties for recruiting violations. Soon after, four-year player and the team's leading scorer, senior Matthew Dellavedova, graduated.

In short, the Gaels have some

work to do. With Lamorinda native Beau Levesque and other key players returning, however, SMC is looking forward to a strong season.

"(Dellavedova) graduating leaves a huge void in a lot of statistical categories, but the biggest thing is leadership," said Levesque. "He is one of the best leaders I've ever played with, but I feel like with the seniors we have, we can fill that void."

Levesque and his teammates are currently working out on their own, but will be able to practice together as a team in just a few weeks. Although the violations were unfortunate, Levesque says he and his teammates have put the sanctions behind them.

"A lot of the penalties won't take effect until after I leave, but honestly, we don't even talk about it or think about it," he said. "There is nothing

we can do about it now, and we just want to focus on being the best that we can be."

It's a smart attitude to have, and it comes as no surprise from an intelligent player like Levesque, a two-time West Coast Conference All-Academic Team honoree.

Born and raised in Lafayette, after graduating from De La Salle High School, Levesque decided not to travel far to begin his collegiate career.

Levesque was not a superstar with eye-popping statistics in high school, but his work ethic and eagerness to improve drew interest from a handful of Division I programs. His strong body of work in the classroom also intrigued colleges.

"I focused a lot on academics, and I did pretty well," said a modest Levesque, who earned a 4.1 GPA in high school. "It opened up a lot of doors for me collegiately, and a lot of schools were interested because I could also qualify for academic money if they weren't able to give me an athletic scholarship at that time."

And that's exactly what happened.

Despite receiving interest from Ivy League schools like Yale and Penn, Levesque eventually chose to attend Saint Mary's on an academic scholarship. He was promised a spot

on the basketball team as a walk-on, and he wanted to stay close to home so his family could attend his games.

Levesque saw limited action as a freshman, and then used his sophomore year to redshirt while he recovered from hip injuries.

After earning a full basketball scholarship prior to his sophomore year, Levesque stepped into an increased role. In the 2012-13 season, he appeared in all 35 games and averaged 10.6 points and 4.4 rebounds per contest.

Never forgetting the importance of academics, Levesque graduated magna cum laude in May with a degree in sports management. He will begin a master's program in leadership studies in the fall.

"My parents always stressed the importance of academics to me even more than athletics," Levesque explained, "because athletics might not pan out. You always need to focus on academics."

After his final year, Levesque hopes to play professionally overseas. Although he may not be in Lamorinda at this time next year, he will always cherish the area he grew up in.

"Lamorinda will always be special to me because it's a very tight knit community," Levesque said. "I love living here, and I love going to school here."

SMC Basketball Briefs New Transfer Adds Depth

Saint Mary's men's basketball welcomed University of Minnesota guard Joe Coleman last week. Coleman will play in the 2014-2015 season, after sitting out a year per NCAA transfer rules. As a Gopher, Coleman helped his team reach the NIT Finals his freshman year and the third round of the NCAA tournament his sophomore year. He averaged a little over seven points, three rebounds and an assist game in his two seasons with Minnesota. *C. Graveson*

Dellavedova Plays Summer Ball with the Cavs

Former Saint Mary's basketball star Matthew Dellavedova is playing with the NBA's Cleveland Cavaliers at the 2013 NBA Summer League.

In his first game, Dellavedova logged 18 minutes, five assists, three rebounds, two steals, two points, and a blocked shot. The Cavs defeated the Lakers 70-62.

In his second game on July 14, Dellavedova notched three rebounds and three points in 12 minutes. The Cavs stayed perfect, defeating the Grizzlies 69-58. *C. Graveson*

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Orinda All-Stars Selected

Submitted by Junaid Khan



From left: Coach Junaid Khan, Ben Duncan, Adrian Hunt, Amir Khan, Chris Bruen, Stradley Foutch, Jack Lacour, Zack Schroeder, Manager Jeremy Foutch, Greg Austin, Will Hollerbach, Coach Brent Austin, Griff Hallahan, Spencer Tarkoff, Copper Tunney. Photo provided

The Orinda 10U All-Star team was selected to represent Orinda in tournaments over the summer in Manteca, Vacaville and Martinez against teams from all over the state. The team has an over .500 batting average. The experience gained this summer, as well as having lots of fun, will help them transition to next year when most players begin to join traveling teams. The All-star team will play over 20 games this summer, almost double the length of the regular season.

Moraga 10U All-Stars Win Tourney

Submitted by Lyn Schmidt



Top row, from left: Coaches Clarke, Wheeler, Schmidt, and Nelson; middle row: Joe Schmidt, J.T. Clarke, Ben Powers, Matt Wong, Shane Nelson, Brady Manz, Tanner Robeson, Casey Linden; bottom row: Jack Daugherty, Maxwell Weaver, Cole Jeter, Daniel Wheeler. Photo provided

The 10U Moraga All Star Baseball Team went undefeated June 21-23 to win the Pleasant Hill Baseball Association Boys All-Star Tournament.

LMSC Girls Earn Second Place

Submitted by Corinna Sassano (written by Chris Easter)



Photo provided

The LMSC U15 girls played great team soccer in the US Club National Cup Tournament in Davis June 22-25. Lamorinda beat the eventual champion Cal Blues 3-2 in the opening game. LMSC beat rivals Walnut Creek 2-1 in the next game. A 1-1 tie against Sacramento Extreme qualified the team for the semifinals. LMSC beat Central California Alliance to make it to the finals. In a rematch of the opening game, United lost 2-1 to Cal Blues.

Race to the National Junior Olympics

Submitted by Brian Gunn



Photo provided

Dylan Gunn (age 10) of Lafayette will compete in the 1500 meter at the 2013 USATF National Junior Olympic Track & Field Championships in Greensboro, NC on July 28. Gunn qualified for the meet by finishing first in the 1500 meter at the Central California and Pacific Regional Championship meet in Pleasant Hill July 6-7. Gunn hopes to beat his personal record for the 1500 meter run of 5:08 at the National Championships, which should put him in contention for one of the medals to be awarded to the top eight finishers.

A Basketball Euro Trip

Submitted by Amanda Forshay



From left: Amanda Forshay, Ruthie Shapiro Photos provided

Former Campolindo basketball players Ruthie Shapiro and Amanda Forshay took their game overseas this summer. Now playing for Pamona-Pitzer and the University of Puget Sound, respectively, the juniors joined the USA Athletes International (USAAI) basketball team on a 10-day tour of Europe. The team played in five "friendlies" or games against European club and University teams, while touring Austria, Slovenia, and Italy.



Ruthie Shapiro (#3) and Amanda Forshay (#6) with the Italian club team

Lamorinda Weekly

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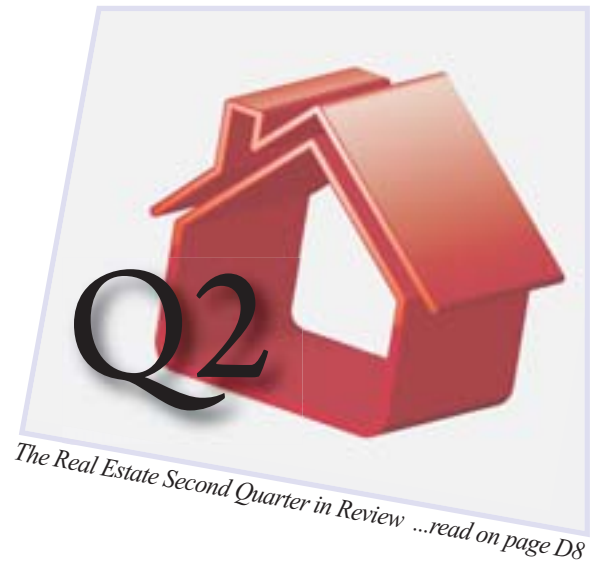

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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 07 Issue 10 Wednesday, July 17, 2013



Burglars, Beware:

The eyes of homeowners may be upon you!

By Cathy Dausman

The good news: Lamorindans live in an affluent area. The bad news: that affluence can entice would-be burglars. That is why Moraga Police Detective Will Davis is a fan of residential security cameras.

"A security camera adds a level

of protection," he said. "I'd be the first to voice concerns over Big Brother," Davis added, but he feels the camera benefits outweigh any detractions. Simply put, the cameras never sleep, and the video evidence they produce is readily admissible in

court.

Homeowners who are installing security cameras should consider having one that monitors the front of their house, and another that captures a view of the street, he said. The street view will capture auto traf-

fic, and that could be key to tracking down any suspects.

Davis said Moraga neighborhoods with one or two entrance roads and one or two exits are places which would most benefit from such cameras. Sanders Ranch has a camera at its entry guard shack, and video from the camera helped police search for a suspect vehicle after a burglary there in June.

Police learned a car was involved in that daytime residential burglary; Davis said video from that day was valuable in developing a general vehicle description. Sometimes it will even show the license plates. "Lafayette [police department] has had real success with camera use [to help solve crimes]," Davis said.

Lafayette Police Chief Eric Christensen said a number of Lafayette neighborhoods have already installed residential cameras, and the city's crime prevention commission is considering installing them at various city entry points. He cited six recent cases in which footage from residential camera systems helped develop leads. In one case, police responded to a break in along Reed Drive.

...continued on page D4



The entrance to this gated neighborhood in Lamorinda includes a security camera.

Photo Andy Scheck

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ORINDA	15	\$405,000	\$1,350,000
		\$809,000	\$1,900,000

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

- 10 Benthill Court, \$956,000, 2 Bdrms, 2852 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 6-14-13;
Previous Sale: \$830,000, 06-18-03
- 3633 Brook Street, \$610,000, 3 Bdrms, 1408 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 6-6-13
- 3623 Chestnut Street, \$437,000, 2 Bdrms, 741 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 6-14-13;
Previous Sale: \$175,000, 05-07-92
- 1161 Estates Drive, \$2,450,000, 3 Bdrms, 4224 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 6-11-13
- 670 Glorietta Boulevard, \$1,575,000, 3 Bdrms, 2584 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 6-6-13
- 3298 Greenhills Drive, \$1,725,000, 3 Bdrms, 4034 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 6-12-13;
Previous Sale: \$1,450,500, 05-28-04
- 3216 Judith Lane, \$833,000, 3 Bdrms, 1969 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 6-11-13
- 10 Julie Highlands Court, \$1,325,000, 4 Bdrms, 3813 SqFt, 1997 YrBlt, 6-18-13;
Previous Sale: \$1,259,000, 09-15-10
- 827 Las Trampas Road, \$1,742,000, 3 Bdrms, 1974 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 6-14-13;
Previous Sale: \$542,500, 08-27-90
- 3157 Lucas Drive, \$920,000, 3 Bdrms, 2110 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 6-11-13
- 3925 North Peardale Drive, \$1,255,000, 3 Bdrms, 1707 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 6-10-13
- 3554 Oconner Drive, \$1,187,500, 3 Bdrms, 1708 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 6-6-13;
Previous Sale: \$165,000, 12-14-84
- 510 McBride Drive, \$1,407,000, 4 Bdrms, 2534 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 6-12-13
- 3279 Mt. Diablo Court #25, \$730,000, 3 Bdrms, 1731 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 6-6-13;
Previous Sale: \$555,500, 03-03-11
- 16 Pidgeon Court, \$965,000, 5 Bdrms, 2359 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 6-14-13;
Previous Sale: \$686,500, 06-07-02
- 1294 Quandt Court, \$1,051,000, 3 Bdrms, 1656 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 6-10-13;
Previous Sale: \$988,000, 08-11-05
- 79 Silverwood Drive, \$825,000, 3 Bdrms, 2344 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 6-13-13
- 3148 Somerset Place, \$1,140,000, 6 Bdrms, 2900 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 6-6-13;
Previous Sale: \$670,000, 12-15-99
- 3402 Stage Coach Drive, \$1,730,500, 5 Bdrms, 3948 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 6-6-13;
Previous Sale: \$1,962,500, 07-26-07
- 688 Street Marys Road, \$1,070,000, 4 Bdrms, 2371 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 6-14-13;
Previous Sale: \$739,000, 06-22-01
- 1451 Sunset Loop, \$880,000, 4 Bdrms, 2105 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 6-7-13;
Previous Sale: \$869,000, 10-06-04
- 3356 Victoria Avenue, \$1,207,000, 4 Bdrms, 2031 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 6-18-13
- 115 Villa Court, \$860,000, 5 Bdrms, 2389 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 6-5-13;
Previous Sale: \$750,000, 11-14-03
- 3235 Withers Avenue, \$954,000, 3 Bdrms, 1914 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 6-12-13;
Previous Sale: \$320,000, 08-01-91
- 3280 Woodview Drive, \$725,000, 4 Bdrms, 2477 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 6-7-13;
Previous Sale: \$465,000, 01-29-97

MORAGA

- 1476 Camino Peral, \$405,000, 2 Bdrms, 1279 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 6-14-13;
Previous Sale: \$405,000, 07-30-04
- 279 Claudia Court, \$1,350,000, 6 Bdrms, 3103 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 6-14-13
- 113 Cypress Point Way, \$750,000, 3 Bdrms, 1749 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 6-11-13;
Previous Sale: \$547,500, 09-09-03
- 305 Donald Drive, \$1,205,000, 4 Bdrms, 2564 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 6-5-13
- 158 Paseo Del Rio, \$1,100,000, 5 Bdrms, 2710 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 6-11-13
- 21 Via Barcelona, \$899,000, 4 Bdrms, 2873 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 6-13-13
- 538 Woodminster Drive, \$550,000, 2 Bdrms, 1620 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 6-5-13;
Previous Sale: \$140,500, 08-19-87

... continued on page D11

**Patricia Battersby**

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*Per Public Records



Burglars, Beware

...continued from page D1

The homeowners were gone, but a neighbor who spoke to police mentioned a resident's security camera which covered the street. Using the video, police were able to identify the make, model and year of the suspect vehicle, and even saw photos of the female suspect pointing to the victim's house. From that lead, Lafayette Police sifted through Department of Motor Vehicle records and found a matching – stolen – suspect car.

"That's the value," said Christensen. He echoed Davis, saying the "most effective" surveillance cameras are the ones aimed at the street. "If neighborhoods can install them near a 'choke [egress] point' that is a significant value," he added.

Orinda Police Chief Scott Haggard sees both sides of the coin. Cameras, along with burglar alarms, he said, "may serve as a strong deterrent to your home," especially with signs warning of their presence. They're not foolproof, though.

"Most burglars are aware of the use of cameras and they tend to wear hoods or pulled down caps to conceal their face. I have viewed many video tapes of crimes that are rendered of minimal value because the subject cannot be identified," he said. "Conversely, cameras have identified many subjects."

Haggard suggests homeowners considering sur-

veillance cameras look into the video motion and off-site monitoring which alarm companies offer. "They cost," he said, "but they come with audio that the alarm company can see and hear." Additionally such systems allow the alarm company to give police a 'play by play' until police arrive on site.

Realtor Diane Reilly of Alain Pinel Realtors echoes Haggard's preference for off-site video monitoring capabilities. "Personally, I have found that for most buyers a security system is a must-have, and an up-to-date, state of the art security system with cameras and being able to monitor on iPad or cell phone is very desirable," Reilly said.

Reilly's co-worker, Ben Marshall, is more cautious: "I think it can come in handy, but it's a relatively cheap thing to install so it wouldn't increase the value of a home. If anything, seeing a security system in a house would give me pause, because I would assume that the previous owners didn't feel safe in that home," Marshall said.

Lastly, an insurance company weighs in on the matter. Abbe Sultan, president of Lafayette's Stone Creek Insurance, said he's actually brought up the use of surveillance cameras with their carriers.

"We live in an area where it's a little more affluent," Sultan said, and although insurance companies



Typical surveillance camera Photo Cathy Dausman

will offer a discount for homeowners who have central alarm systems or fire sprinklers, having security cameras offers "no additional discount."

The camera "doesn't inform," he said, "it only captures."

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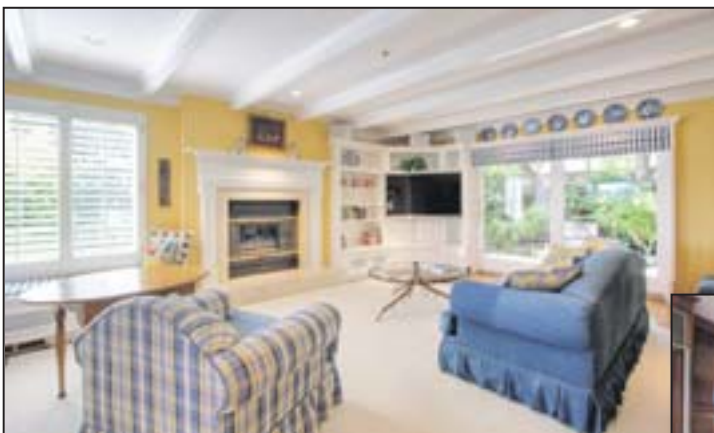
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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS

The second quarter of 2013 showed a continued increase in activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate with supply continuing to be low, pending sales down, and closings up with the average sales price higher in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda – much higher than the same period a year ago.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from April 1 through June 30, 105 single-family homes closed in Lafayette, an increase from 95 a year ago. Sales prices ranged from \$420,000 to \$3.2 million, averaging 18 days on market versus 29 days on the market during the second quarter of last year, and 44 days in 2011. The average sales price was \$1,226,216 which was a significantly higher number than \$1,053,173 in the second quarter of 2012. It should be noted that there was one sale of a home in excess of \$2 million that was not reported to the MLS with a sales price.

In Moraga there were 36 single-family closings, down from 51 in the second quarter of 2012, 40 in 2011 and 34 in 2010. The drop in the number of closings is attributable to the lack of available homes. Prices ranged from \$665,000 to \$1.85 million. The average sale price was \$1,144,668, an increase from the \$983,785 a year ago. The average marketing time was 18 days, the same as the second quarter a year ago. In 2011 it was 72 days and 85 days in 2010.

In Orinda, there were 83 single-family closings, up dramatically from 65 a year ago and 44 in 2Q2011. Sales prices ranged from \$260,000 to \$3 million with an average price of \$1,282,236. In the year ago period it was \$1,132,702. In 2Q2011 it was \$1,073,694. It took an average of just 20 days on the market to sell a home versus 36 in the identical quarter in 2012.

So far this year, on an average price per square foot basis, Lafayette detached single-family homes sold at \$495 per square foot, up from \$433 in 2Q2012. Moraga homes sold for \$458 and Orinda was at \$498. In 2012, in the same calendar quarter, these amounts were \$402, and \$421 respectively.

In Lafayette, the average sales price was 103.4 percent of the final asking price. In Moraga it was 104.1 percent and in Orinda it was 102 percent.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had six closings between \$513,000 and \$750,000, Moraga had 16 ranging from \$269,000 to \$899,000 and Orinda had one – in Orindawoods – for \$920,000.

As of July 9, there were 102 homes under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined with asking prices of \$407,900 to \$3.595 million. A year ago at this same time there were 141 pending properties. It should be noted that there are nine “Potential Short Sales”

currently pending and were subject to lender approval. At this same time a year ago there were 29! Two of the pending sales are REOs (bank owned properties.)

This is due to property values increasing versus a year ago and many of those sellers are no longer “under water” or have been able to refinance their homes and are no longer at the point of foreclosure.

Inventory, however, has plummeted from a year ago with a current supply of 96 properties, down from 129 properties in early July, 2012 and 219 homes in early July, 2011.

There are “only” 49 properties on the market in Lafayette – about the same as the 52 reported a year ago during this quarter. In July, 2011 there were 102. Asking prices in Lafayette currently range from \$679,500 to \$7.75 million. Of these, only one is a distressed sale – attempted short sale or REO. In Moraga, buyers have their choice of only 20 homes or condominiums listed between \$299,000 and \$3.65 million. A year ago at this time there were 24 and in July, 2011 there were 54. There are only two short sales or REOs currently on the market in Moraga.

In Orinda there are 36 on the market, down from 53 in July, 2012. The list prices range from \$599,000 to \$5.8 million. There are no bank owned or short sales currently in the MLS.

At the high end, 12 homes sold above \$2

million in the three communities combined. A year ago there were seven sales in the \$2 million-plus range in the second quarter. There are 27 currently available above this amount in the three communities combined.

Interest rates continue to be at very attractive levels and many corporations have expanded their activity and continue to relocate families both into and out of the area.

Lastly, it is important to look at what homes are selling for versus their list prices. Often homes come on the market at unrealistic prices, and they do not sell, but in the second quarter of this year many homes have had multiple offers and have sold at or above the list price.

Of the 105 single family sales that closed in Lafayette in the second quarter of 2013, 74 sold at or above the list price. All six of the non single-family homes in Lafayette sold at or above the asking price.

In Moraga, 26 of the 36 sales were at or above the asking price and in Orinda, 53 of the 83 sold at or above the final listing price.

One issue that has come up recently is having a property appraised for loan purposes. As appraisers use closed sales in establishing their values, they can trail a rapidly increasing market. In these situations, purchasers have often had to come up with the difference between sales price and appraised value in additional down payment or attempt to negotiate a lower sales price with a seller.

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The Home Designer

First Impressions

By Brandon Neff

According to recent national survey of both men and women on what qualities each sex notices first about the other on initial introductions, the results were fairly typical – men say they notice nice hair and posture (yeah, right), and women claim that good teeth and a great smile are at the top of the list. (I cannot speak to the honesty of these answers, people.)

Interestingly, neither gender listed a “winning personality” or the ability to speak in complete sentences as a priority – looks trumped all. Please, don't kill the messenger.

The reason I bring this survey up is to remind us all that when it comes to making a good first impression, how we present ourselves aesthetically matters. From finding a mate to finding a job, what we present to the world is often judged and evaluated. And it matters in other aspects of our lives – specifically our homes.

Walking into an unknown domicile for the first time one draws conclusions about who lives there – the resident's style, their personality and overall taste level all jump to mind as we cross the threshold.

Truly, if we connect this hypothesis to the importance of how first impressions impact the respective value of our homes, it starts to add up. As the real estate market



Fresh orchids, contemporary lighting and an antique Chinese cabinet make an interesting composition in a small entry. Photos courtesy Brandon Neff Design

continues its ascent into the stratosphere, and home selling becomes even more congested – each seller competing for the same buyer's dollar – distinguishing your listing is essential to capturing top prices. If, as I've said in this column before, making a great first impression is everything when selling a house, then let's focus on the first thing they see when they open the front door – the entry.

Remember, I was a home stager long before I entered the world of design – I know of what I speak. Pulling in a buyer, or simply extending a gracious welcome to guests for that matter, is all about setting the tone from the first step inside. Here then, are a few of my first impression "greatest hits" to create an inviting and personal foyer.

An entry table or bench. Whether you're working with a tiny vestibule or grand foyer, you need a place for your visitors to land upon entering. A graceful chair in an interesting fabric, or a vintage hall table, gives your guests a place to set down a coat or purse (or housewarming gift!), before you properly invite them into the rest of your home. Even an interesting coat rack standing guard can offer real interest to a typically dead corner.

A mirror. From contemporary and clean to ornate and embellished, a mirror can offer a reflective energy to a dark space, or even embolden a light filled one. Not to mention it's always handy to have a mirror by the front door to check your cow lick, or that spinach in your teeth before you throw open the door to collect your Publisher's Clearing House prize money!

Beautiful wallpaper. Small spaces are perfect for bold statements, and an ideal place to experiment with something daring. Look, you don't spend a lot of time hanging out in your foyer, so take a risk. Set a dramatic tone with a textured grasscloth, or add some panache with a historical Morris floral that lets all who enter know that you've got personality. I advise this even if you're planning to sell. Never before have buyers been more informed about interior design, and offering them something other than beige walls will be appreciated.

Good lighting. Unless you're fortunate to have a foyer flooded with natural light, most homes need a boost. Entering a dark space feels depressing and a little scary. Unless you're the Addams Family, install adequate lighting – a properly placed recessed can, a pair of eye level sconces or just a stylish table lamp can make all the difference.

Art. Last, but never least. A well-chosen canvas or provocative photograph works like Prozac for your home – it elevates the mood like no other. Art speaks to your in-



A well lit foyer highlighting the natural stone flooring and custom iron work sets the tone for the rest of this Mediterranean style home.

dividual style, and gives your guests an insight into how you live in the world. Art, more than any other home accent, gives the strongest first impression. I love to scour flea markets and consignment shops for vintage portraits, cheeky abstracts, and black and white architectural photographs. Look for something that's meaningful, that draws an emotion and offers a subtle, personal introduction to all who enter.

Brandon Neff is a Bay Area based Interior Designer. He can be reached at BrandonNeffDesign.com or at brandonneffdesign@yahoo.com.



Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

...continued from Page D2

ORINDA

- 75 Ardilla Road, \$980,000, 3 Bdrms, 1513 SqFt, 1929 YrBlt, 6-6-13;
Previous Sale: \$450,000, 04-27-99
- 11 Calvin Court, \$1,610,000, 4 Bdrms, 2602 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 6-18-13;
Previous Sale: \$690,000, 06-30-94
- 21 Camino Del Diablo, \$1,250,000, 5 Bdrms, 2470 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 6-11-13;
Previous Sale: \$47,000, 06-07-74
- 181 Camino Pablo #183, \$1,100,000, 2 Bdrms, 1338 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 6-18-13
- 11 Cedar Lane, \$1,735,000, 4 Bdrms, 3300 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 6-10-13;
Previous Sale: \$562,000, 06-30-89
- 41 Charles Hill Circle, \$1,322,500, 4 Bdrms, 2298 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 6-12-13;
Previous Sale: \$985,000, 09-17-03
- 44 Coachwood Terrace, \$1,900,000, 6 Bdrms, 3847 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 6-10-13
- 9 Corte Bombero, \$900,000, 3 Bdrms, 1251 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 6-11-13;
Previous Sale: \$789,500, 03-06-08
- 48 Crestview Drive, \$885,000, 3 Bdrms, 2351 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 6-13-13
- 21 Don Gabriel Way, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2597 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 6-6-13;
Previous Sale: \$865,000, 03-20-03
- 20 Ellen Court, \$1,400,000, 5 Bdrms, 3264 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 6-7-13;
Previous Sale: \$1,550,000, 12-04-06
- 107 Estates Drive, \$1,475,000, 3 Bdrms, 2223 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 6-11-13;
Previous Sale: \$890,000, 05-29-02
- 140 Glorietta Boulevard, \$809,000, 4 Bdrms, 1723 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 6-12-13;
Previous Sale: \$635,000, 02-28-03
- 4 Loma Vista Drive, \$929,000, 3 Bdrms, 1833 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 6-18-13;
Previous Sale: \$309,500, 04-30-97
- 2 Patrick Lane, \$1,550,000, 4 Bdrms, 3183 SqFt, 1995 YrBlt, 6-5-13;
Previous Sale: \$270,000, 09-19-94

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- See details on each home that has sold this year in Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda.
- At a glance, see sold price vs. list price for each.

I recommend doing inspections up front, as part of preparations to sell, and to give you the upper hand in negotiations. Mention this ad and get a professional home or pest inspection, before marketing your property, ordered and paid for as soon as you list your home with Troy Feddersen. Offer good thru 8/15/2013.

Troy Feddersen, CRS

Broker Associate
J. Rockcliff, Realtors

Presidents Club

(925) 550-2353

J. Rockcliff

REALTORS

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**4 Donald Dr.
ORINDA**



Just Listed! Mid-Century Contemporary perched atop a knoll offering complete privacy and panoramic views from the main house, the cabana/guest house and the pool area. Stroll through the gated arbor and into what will feel like a much awaited vacation paradise. Offered at \$1,799,000.



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ORINDA



New Listing

8 La Campana Super clean & ready one level living with 3bd/2ba, floor to ceiling windows, vaulted ceilings & lots of light. Easy access outside. New kitchen. Special setting, great high-end street, set for occupancy.

\$865,000

ORINDA



New Listing

51 Valencia Road Ideal home with spacious and comfortable floor plan boasts great curb appeal. Remodeled with quality and attention to detail. Beautiful Chef's kitchen, hardwood floors, quiet and private.

\$987,000

ORINDA



New Listing

3 Overhill Road Charming updated 4bd/3ba, 2559 sf traditional on .38 ac in premium location. Short walk to downtown & BART; home theater w/surround sound; updated kit. & baths; lrg level fenced bckyd. Top schools.

\$1,050,000

ORINDA



New Listing

83 Zander Drive Spectacular view of Mt. Diablo & Diablo Valley. 4bd/2.5ba, 2500 sf on .78 ac. Grand living room, formal dining, family room off spacious kitchen all overlooking sparkling pool. Detached in-law & workshop.

\$1,195,000

ORINDA



New Listing

5 Lavenida Location, Location, Location. Beautiful 3bd/2ba + office Orinda charmer located in the Del Rey neighborhood. Close to K-12 Orinda schools, this updated home w/spacious backyard is perfect for many.

\$1,199,000

ORINDA



New Listing

27 Via Hermosa Beautiful updated 4bd/3ba, 3172 sf traditional in desirable Country Club location. Formal LR & DR w/hwd flrs & Mt. Diablo view, updated eat-in kit. w/fplc, office, 2 family rms, lovely patio w/water feature.

\$1,350,000

ORINDA



New Listing

6 Hillcrest Drive Special 4bd/2.5ba family home w/incredible attention to quality & design integrity by architect owner. 3207sf w/easy access outside. Bonus "studio" off garage not incl. in sq. ft. Ideal location & pool!

\$1,450,000

ORINDA



29 La Vuelta Custom built contemporary in heart of OCC. Impressive entry, spacious living & well-appointed kitchen, walls of windows, master w/private terrace. Au pair quarters w/full kitchen. Separate office.

\$1,595,000

ORINDA



17 Tappan Lane Vistas across Orinda come alive from all rms of this spacious 4,155 sf w/ 6 bd/4 ba & 2 half ba. High ceilings & light & bright. Perfect for fun in the sun w/yards, decks, pool, & vineyard on 1.15 ac.

\$2,495,000

ORINDA



40 Los Altos Majestic, inspiring, tranquil. It doesn't get any better! 5bd/3.5ba on private gated 2.27 acre with pool/ cabana, tennis court/ cabana and serene garden paths.

\$3,595,000

ORINDA



92 Sandhill Road Absolutely One-of-a-Kind Bay Area Home w/captivating, sweeping views from every rm. Perched on foremost knoll of coveted Sandhill enclave. Ideal for active family as well as large scale entertaining.

\$5,800,000

MORAGA



New Listing

1369 A Camino Peral Cozy first level 2bd/1ba 951 sq. ft. with fireplace & private patio. Close to St. Mary's, shops, park & Sunday Farmer's Market. Ample storage in kitchen. Access to award winning schools.

\$325,000

MORAGA



New Listing

21 Tamarisk Beautifully maintained Moraga Country Club home with 3 bedrooms and 2 baths, eat-in kitchen, indoor laundry, hardwood floors, vaulted ceilings, new deck, and private backyard.

\$789,000

MORAGA



New Listing

10 Ross Drive Charming 4bd/3ba single level home. Hardwood floors, eat-in kitchen, updated baths, fresh paint, plenty of built-ins and storage. Convenient location.

\$1,050,000

MORAGA



1903 Saint Andrews Drive "Stunning One of a Kind", wonderful views & lvl yd, fabulous patios. Quality abounds in this 3+bd/2.5ba, aprx 3424 sf hm. Hdwd flrs, vaulted ceils, gracious hm w/all the amenities of Moraga CC included.

\$1,295,000

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

3802 Happy Valley Road Most extraordinary Happy Valley estate. Rare 3.35 level acres - two separate parcels sold as one. 1940 charming Spanish Hacienda, walls of glass, views of hills, grand sized living areas.

\$5,700,000



THE VILLAGE ASSOCIATES:

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