



MICHAEL VERBRUGGE
CONSTRUCTION INC.
General Contractor

925.631.1055 www.MVCRemodeling.com

Specializing in kitchens & bathrooms.
All forms residential remodel/repair.




"A little bit of myself goes into every job."
Michael Verbrugge,
Owner,
Moraga Resident




Clean | Courteous | Conscientious
On-time | Trustworthy | Local References
Full design team resources available

~ HE'S ALL ABOUT LAMORINDA ~



CLARK THOMPSON
REAL ESTATE BROKER
Village ASSOCIATES REAL ESTATE

Office: 925-254-8585
Cell: 925-998-7898
email: ct@clarkthompson.com
Search the MLS: www.clarkthompson.com



93 Moraga Way, Orinda
BRE #: 00903367

12th Annual 9/11 Remembrance and Candlelight Vigil Tonight

By Clare Varellas



Photo Doug Kohen

Many Americans remember exactly how they felt 12 years ago on that fateful Tuesday morning of Sept. 11, 2001 when hijacked passenger airplanes were crashed into the Pentagon and the World Trade Center. But despite the impressions that the attacks, the deaths, and the stories of heroes left on many souls, Lafayette resident Jim Minder worries that over time our memories of Sept. 11 will begin to fade, unless we work to keep them alive.

It is for this reason that Minder founded the Lafayette Flag Brigade in 2001, a group of eight that works with dozens of other volunteers to put on an annual 9/11 remembrance and candlelight vigil on El Curtola Bridge in Lafayette.

"The Lafayette Flag Brigade is about never forgetting 9/11, and we try to present people who were eyewitnesses and original source material," said Minder.

It all started on Sept. 11, 2001, when Minder noticed a man waving a flag on the bridge while Minder was driving on the freeway. Minder decided to join him, and

over time he and a small group of others organized monthly meetings to wave flags over the bridge at passing drivers.

One year later, the first remembrance and candlelight vigil was held. Every year the event has evolved, so that today it will feature various musical performances, a posting of the colors by Lafayette Boy Scouts, four significant speakers, a vigil prayer by a pastor, and an incredible amount of primary source photos and newspapers from around the country.

One of the event's speakers is Sean Hickey, one of the first responder New York firefighters who worked to rescue people at Ground Zero that day. Another is Stephen Gelman, a Navy Commander for the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) who worked with the FBI in counter-terrorism in both the United States and the Middle East following the events of 9/11. Gelman appreciates Lafayette Flag Brigade holding the event and was very willing to speak at it.

"Unfortunately, it's not a pleasant

thought to remember," said Gelman. "A lot of people died, and it's good to honor all the first responders. We tend to have very short attention spans in this fast-paced culture, so it's good to [look back]."

First responder firefighter Hickey expresses similar notions, and says that he appreciates people honoring the anniversary of a day that will never leave him.

"What happened to New York happened to the country, and New York is my home," said Hickey. "Every year I long to be with the guys I was with on 9/11, and because I'm so far away, [the people at the event] are like my adopted family. I can be around people that care about what happened. They honor a day that I have to live through 365 days a year."

The event is open to the public and will be held today, Sept. 11, from 4 to 8 p.m. on the El Curtola Bridge at the Hwy 24 overcrossing in Lafayette (take Pleasant Hill Road, south exit to Old Tunnel Road, then to the top of the hill). For information and a map showing the location, visit www.nevereverforget911.com.

Rose Hardwood Floors Inc.

Don, Manager
925-349-8509
www.RoseHardwoodFloorsInc.com
CA Lic#978671

NWFA certified Installation, Sand & Finish
Quality Workmanship
Dust Containment System



Free Estimates

Cabinet Modifications

With over 25 years fulfilling custom needs, we can alter or modify most cabinetry, while still utilizing your existing cabinetry for:

- Large TVs/ Refrigerators and appliances
- Recycle Bins and shelf pullouts
- Cabinet alterations/repairs

Thinking about home, office, entertainment, custom cabinetry, shelving, crown mouldings, baseboards, new doors or mantels? We can help there, too!

925.827.1093 Paul Kephart Master Craftsman
www.TheCabinetMd.com

TAXI BLEU All Airports Served 24/7

Dispatch: **925-849-2222**
Direct: **925-286-0064**
www.mytaxibleu.com
mytaxibleu@gmail.com



Rosewood House.com

FINE FURNITURE & ASIAN ANTIQUES SINCE 1969

CONCORD 4700 CLAYTON RD. (925) 827-9588
OAKLAND 2523 BROADWAY (510) 451-7373

Siggy's

CARPET CLEANING

LAMORINDA'S FAVORITE FAMILY OWNED BUSINESS FOR OVER 36 YEARS

(925) 283-8744
www.siggyscarpetcleaning.com
3408 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Lafayette

FALL SPECIAL 15% OFF




BURKIN ELECTRIC

"Let Us Light Up Your Life"
Residential • Commercial • Industrial

Serving Contra Costa since 1991
More than 35 years experience
All Work Done by Owner
Bonded & Insured
Lic.#C10-631523

Professional Installation of:

- Ceiling Fans, Recessed & Track Lighting
- Kitchen or Bath Remodel
- Exterior/Security/Landscape Lighting
- Electrical Service Upgrade
- Complete Home Wiring - Old & New
- Spa Installation

(925) 672-1519
www.BurkinElectric.net




James Burkin
Sole Proprietor

From Front Page

Two Local Firefighters Reflect on Work at 'Ground Zero'

... continued from page A1

It took Lee over an hour and a half to walk around the smoldering rubble of collapsed buildings. "I've been doing this a long time, and one of the things you don't see on TV, you don't see in the movies, you don't see in print, is what we call 'the smell.' It was an overwhelming smell of death," said Lee. "The smell of burning, decomposing bodies, buildings still smoldering, fuel, plastic, all mixed together. I've dealt with a lot of things, like decomposition, but ... you lock this in your memory. You'll never experience it again.

"And the sight of a firefighter, smashed. There was no structure to a body." He saw the metal self-contained breathing apparatus that firefighters carried, smashed flat. "That was on somebody's back," said Lee, pausing, collecting his thoughts. "The amount of pressure that caused it to flatten ... I couldn't imagine."

It was also the first time that Lee had seen what he termed the "big machine" in motion. "It was a teaching moment for me," he said. "To see the full arm of the federal government come in, with the state and local governments, the military - it gave me a real understanding of how the system works. It gave me a greater understanding of how to deal with a multi-casualty event."

The experience in New York also

infused into Lee a stronger commitment to his profession. "It made me more dedicated to do this job," he said.

Lee is a member of five outside emergency medical and incident teams in Contra Costa County. "We are training new teams - the next generation of disaster workers," he said.

"It's going to happen again, and what I learned, I want to pass on."

Gil Caravantes - Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, Station 17, Lafayette

When ConFire captain Gil Caravantes heard the news of Sept. 11, he did not hesitate to act.

Over the years, Caravantes frequently visited New York City, and during those trips the personable Caravantes made plenty of friends, particularly among fellow city firefighters. With the news of the attacks, he knew his friends and comrades were in trouble, and they needed him. He took 10 days of vacation time and flew to New York City.

He taxied into lower Manhattan, approached the battalion chief and told him he was there to do whatever was needed.

"We need you to go down to The Pile," he was told.

Caravantes donned his fire gear, hopped onto the department bus and

headed each day to the smoldering stack of collapsed buildings at Ground Zero to assist in the recovery efforts. He walked over a mile from the perimeter area, past fire engines that had been crushed and burned, into a hot, burning, smoking pile of complete devastation.

But what got to Caravantes most was not the destruction; it was the look on people's faces.

"People were around the perimeter area, they looked like skeletons walking around. They would hand us flyers as we walked toward The Pile. ... Can you look for my sister, please? My father? But we weren't finding people," he said. "We were finding body parts.

"I would dig and find a picture of a family, maybe from someone's desk, and I'd realize that I wasn't going to find anything that looked like what was in that picture." When Caravantes returned to California, his job became his comfort zone. One of his toughest adjustments? "It took me about five years to get through the national anthem," he said, choked up to this day as he recalled the many firefighter funerals he attended.

"This job is a passion for me," said Caravantes. "And the 9/11 experience just added to it.

"All of the petty stuff in life? None of it matters anymore."