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## Caldecott Fourth Bore Opens

By Cathy Dausman

The Caldecott Fourth Bore Tunnel is now open for business – Highway 24 westbound motorists are driving under the Berkeley Hills and through a 21st century model of transportation. “Welcome to Bore Four,” Caltrans District 4 Director Bijan Sartipi told a standing room only audience of nearly 200 workers and dignitaries last Friday, yards from the mouth of its west portal.

The overhead electric reader board behind the blue ceremonial ribbon echoed Sartipi’s greeting exactly, while motorists honked in apparent agreement before disappearing into bore three. Sartipi’s remarks concluded with an announcement that fire, life and safety systems tests were complete (see related story on page B1), allowing traffic to begin flowing through the new tunnel early Saturday morn-

ing. The project, Sartipi noted, was completed “on time and under budget” – a recurring comment from speakers that day.

The selection of honored guests showed the depth and breadth of project cooperation, both federally and locally. The four year construction project was enormous by many standards. ... continued on page A12

**Quote of the Week:**

“We try to teach our children to be very grateful for what they have.” Read A Story of Serendipity - page B2.

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## Standing Room Only for State of the City Meeting

By Cathy Tyson

Although mayor Mike Anderson kicked off his state of the city address discussing major concerns for Lafayette – fire department and emergency services, what to do about the old library, and traffic – the main focus of the evening, and the subject of much of the question and answer portion of the Lafayette Homeowners Council annual public meeting, was Plan Bay Area and Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) numbers. Anderson and vice mayor Don Tatzin gave an informative overview of what both items are and how the city is meeting mandated requirements.

At several points during the meeting it became clear that there is a distinction between what the city of Lafayette is responsible for and can be acted upon and other topics and mandates handed down by the state of California, which citizens sometimes blame on volunteer city leaders.

“The biggest issue we’ve got is emergency services,” said Anderson. He explained that there’s

a task force working on determining what is the best course of action for the city to be better served and a clear goal of “not subsidizing (other municipalities), so we get what we pay for.”

Traffic congestion is also a hot topic, since the city is constrained by its topography. With a year-to-date 23 percent increase in home values and a median price of over \$1.1 million, Anderson believes these figures demonstrate that people want to move to Lafayette. Currently the Circulation Commission is working on a detailed study of downtown congestion.

The mayor introduced Plan Bay Area by saying that what happens at the state level affects counties and cities in California. In this case, Senate Bill 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, “supports the State’s climate action goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through coordinated transportation and land use planning with the goal of more sustainable

communities,” according to the California Environmental Protection Agency Air Resources Board.

“It gets complicated,” said Anderson of the Sustainable Communities Strategy and meeting the mandate of RHNA numbers, basically a matrix of potential housing that allows development that could accommodate low-income residents should the land owner decide to do so. “We can’t not do this,” he explained; all California cities must be in compliance.

Using population projections that are part of baseline assumptions, municipalities are required to address the state mandate – for Lafayette that means accommodating Housing Element potential for growth in the downtown area. By doing so, the mayor explained, this allows for priority conservation areas, open space that should be set aside and not developed, leaving semi-rural areas like Happy Valley and Burton Valley.

... continued on page A11

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**Life in Lamorinda**

**B1-B12**

### A Plethora of Persimmons!

The Urban Farmers pick persimmons (page B5) and Susie Iventosch features a recipe for persimmon cheesecake - page B9.



**Sports**

**C1-C4**

### Cougars Sweep Championship

The Campolindo boys' and girls' water polo teams both win NCS titles; Marissa Harnett reports - page C1.



**Our Homes**

**D1-D8**

### Pest Control Without Poison

Sophie Braccini looks at alternatives to pesticides and rodenticides - page D1.



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Lafayette Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

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

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Nov. 25, 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

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District  
Wednesday, Nov. 20, 7:30 p.m.  
AUHSD Board Room at 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette  
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m.  
Regular Board Meeting  
Stanley Library  
3477 School St., Lafayette  
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community.

Send a letter to the editor:

letters@lamorindaweekly.com



# City Asks for Building Use Submissions

By Cathy Tyson

Perhaps a marijuana dispensary will not be a future tenant in either of two existing city-owned buildings: the old library building and the doctors' office across the street at 949 Moraga Road. City leaders have put together a task force to examine proposals for possible uses that would encourage the highest, best and most financially responsible use of the spaces.

Wanting to get the word out and encourage submissions, city manager Steven Falk put together a simple form with input from mayor Mike Anderson and vice mayor Don Tatzin to generate consistency between proposals. Interested parties can find the form, and instructions, on the city's website at www.lovelafayette.org.

Proposals are due Jan. 1. Ru-

mors have swirled in the past about a new location for the police department, or perhaps a more centralized location for Lafayette's senior services department. Relocating the city offices to the old library is an option that surely will be on the table – numbers have been crunched and in the long run, it would save a substantial amount compared to current and future ex-

penditures for rent.

"My expectation is that the Council will appoint task force members in November," said Falk, explaining that they'll have an initial meeting in December, and analysis of the proposals will start in January and run through spring of 2014. The goal is have recommendations for the City Council to consider in April or May.

# Expensive Entrance Signs Approved

By Cathy Tyson

Nothing says welcome to Lafayette like an entrance sign. What started as residents looking to rebuild an aging sign near the Acalanes Road off ramp has evolved into a citywide upgrade of three entrance signs at Oakhill Road, Pleasant Hill Road and Acalanes Road.

Several meetings over a number of years have focused on sign design that will be durable for the long term. The final version features Alaskan Yellow cedar with a steel planter box, with half-inch thick letters that spell out "Lafayette," and a stone veneer at the bottom similar to the existing planters in Plaza Park. Steven Falk, city manager, said the "material is pretty bullet proof."

Initially \$80,000 was allocated for complete upgrades for all three main entrance signs, but because the current bid by Thomas Swan Sign Company of Richmond came in at over \$93,000 to build and install the signs, it became necessary to go back to the City Council for approval.

Lighting is extra, an additional \$9,000 to be exact, bringing the total to over \$102,000. LED lights can be placed behind the letters for a "halo" effect that the street improvement task force unanimously favors. With council member Brandt Andersson absent, there were three votes in favor and one against to approve the signs with the lighting. Council member Traci Riley was concerned with project creep, commenting that she's "hung up on the dollar amount" and that "a modest repair has morphed into something else."

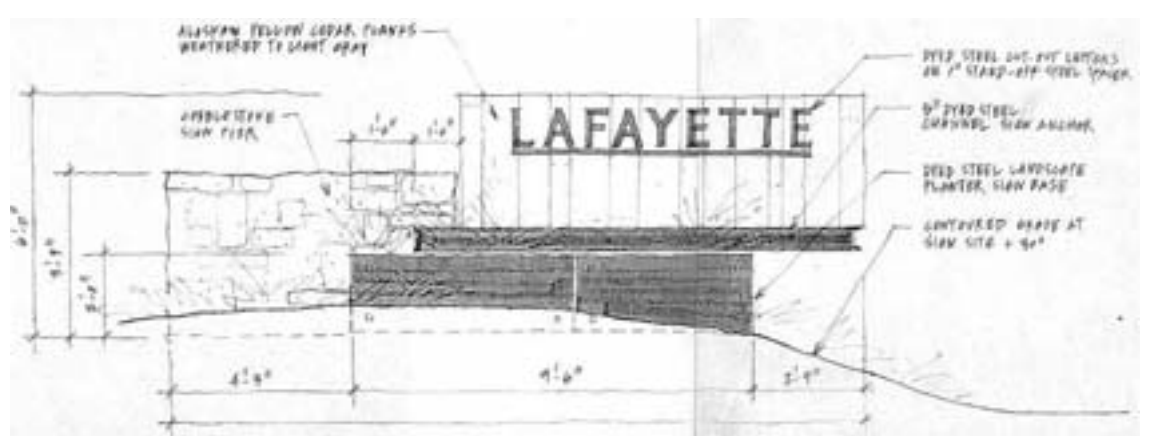


Image provided



## Financial Services Manager

The City of Lafayette is recruiting for the position of Financial Services Manager. The City prides itself on its healthy financial position: \$7M in reserves, clean audits for over 15 years and balanced budgets every year for over 20 years as well as a AAA credit rating. The position reports to the Administrative Services Director and supervises two employees (1.75 FTE).

The City is seeking an expert financial professional who can enthusiastically and competently manage all accounting activities for the City. The Financial Services Manager organizes and oversees day-to-day financial processing, reporting, and record-keeping activities for accounts payable, accounts receivable and payroll. Responsibilities include performing diverse, specialized, and complex work involving significant decision-making responsibility including reconciling accounts, monitoring investments, maintaining adequate daily cash flow, preparing State regulatory reports and coordinating annual financial audits. In addition, the Financial Services Manager is responsible for providing professional-level support to the Administrative Services Director in a variety of areas including budget preparation and benefits administration.

The ideal candidate will have exceptional communication skills, management ability and professional accounting experience as well as a degree from an accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in accounting, finance, business or public administration. Experience in a related field and five (5) years of management and/or administrative accounting experience, including three (3) years of supervisory experience is expected. Experience in the field of municipal or non-profit finance as well as a CPA is highly desirable. This is a big job in a great city! The new Financial Services Manager will be part of the City's management team joining a long-tenured staff of dedicated and fun professionals. For more information, please visit www.lovelafayette.org/jobs.

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## Mt. Diablo Sliced for Construction

By Cathy Tyson



Photo C. Tyson

Orange cones form a sporadic millipede inching from First Street to Brown Avenue, keeping motorists away from excavated holes running down the center of Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

The project is technically called the "East end pedestrian/bike and streetscape improvements," which when complete will feature new brick paver crosswalks, curb ramps and new median islands that will include landscaping and decorative lights, along with the installation of benches and bike racks. Low bid winner Gordon N. Ball, Inc. of Alamo is slated to finish the work this February.

Prior to the project, business owners in the neighborhood voiced their concerns about the locations of the medians. Ultimately a compro-

mise was reached that balanced beautifying the streetscape while allowing customers reasonable access to driveways on both sides of the road.

Drivers have already noticed some lane closures. Last week utility trenches at Second Street, along with irrigation and backfill, and street light electrical systems were installed in the median. Senior Engineer Farzaneh Sanders asks for "cooperation and extra patience," during the project and suggests being alert to the construction workers and equipment.

Detailed project updates are posted weekly on the city's website, www.lovelafayette.com – just click on Public Works and Construction, then Capital Improvement Program and look for the link.

## As Seen in Lafayette



Although it was still reasonably early in the morning, this furry fellow seems tired of waiting for a green light at the intersection of Moraga Road and Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

Photo C. Tyson

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- When:** Sunday, Nov. 24 & Monday, Nov. 25

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# Moraga Civic News

## Public Meetings

### Town Council

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

### Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 2, 7 p.m.  
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

### Design Review

Monday, Nov. 25, 7 p.m.  
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's 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

### School Board Meeting

**Moraga School District**  
Tuesday, Dec. 10, 7:30 pm  
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium  
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga  
www.moraga.k12.ca.us  
See also AUHSD meeting page A2



## Police Report

**D.U.I. 11/11/13** A Hyundai was spotted around 2:30 a.m. swerving erratically on Moraga Way near Camino Peral; turns out the car had a flat front tire and an allegedly drunk driver. When police spoke to the 21-year-old subject, they noticed an odor reminiscent of alcohol. The subject flunked a field sobriety test and was arrested.

**Really excessive speeding, 11/09/13** A white Honda Civic was travelling north on Moraga Road at 1 a.m. going 80 miles per hour. The car eventually crashed into a guard rail near Sky High. The 22-year-old male driver and his dog were not injured, but were checked by the Moraga-Orinda Fire Department. The driver showed no signs of substance abuse impairment, and replied "I guess I have speed in my blood" when asked what was up. The fellow and the pooch were picked up by a friend because police towed the car.

**Identity theft, 11/08/13** A Calle La Mesa resident reported that someone opened a credit card in his name after receiving a bill in the mail detailing over \$4,000 of purchases that he didn't make. Unfortunately the victim doesn't know who applied for the credit card. No suspects or leads at this time.

**Another D.U.I. 11/08/13** Speeding was the reason cops pulled over a car in the wee hours of the morning. Travelling at 50 miles per hour on Moraga Road, the driver submitted to three breath tests that were above the legal limit. Whatever happened to all that free advice on commercials to drink responsibly ... or at the very least call a taxi.

**Dog bite, 11/07/13** Police were dispatched to Sanders Ranch Road near Camino Pablo on a report of an 85-year-old woman bitten by a German shepherd while walking on the trail. The leashed dog lunged at the woman and bit her right hand, causing a minor injury. The dog and its owner were located on Larch Avenue where Contra Costa Animal Services took over.

**Out of control party, 11/02/13** A Southard Court party grew exponentially via teenage connections. Cops drove up and saw broken alcohol bottles in the street near the home and roughly 200 partygoers made a run for it as the police cruiser approached. Turns out the parents of the teenager who was hosting the shindig were out of town - what a surprise. The young lady apparently invited a few friends over, and more showed up than expected. An intoxicated 16-year-old female was found vomiting in the bathroom and was later picked up by her mom. The hostess was issued a warning notice and warned of repercussions should it happen again. Her parents were contacted and advised.



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## State of the Town Address

Mayor will speak at Moraga Country Club Nov. 21

By Sophie Braccini



Dave Trotter at the CAIFF opening night  
Photo Gint Federas

"It's been a good year," says David Trotter, Moraga's mayor – a year that saw a budget surplus, allowing the town to increase its reserves to over 50 percent of its annual operating expense; the implementation of the town's first road maintenance campaign, which resulted from the passage of the Measure K sales tax; and a series of projects dear to the mayor's heart

that have at least been put on the agenda, albeit with limited progress to date. Trotter will deliver the State of the Town address tomorrow, Nov. 21 at the Moraga Country Club. The event is open to the public and will include recognition of the close to 100 volunteers who have contributed to making things happen in Moraga.

Town staff has been working diligently for the past weeks to gather the facts and pictures that are featured in the State of the Town presentation. The mayor plays a major role in establishing the framework, just as he shaped the goals adopted by the Town Council the beginning of the year. "We had a limited set of goals," commented Trotter, "and we have reached them all, or at least started to address the complex issues that need to be addressed."

It was good news for the town and the mayor that revenue from the 1 percent sales tax, which was

adopted a year ago and went into effect last April, came in higher than expected. The town closes its 2012-13 budget year with a surplus of \$386,475, according to administrative services director Stephanie Hom. "The good results from the sales tax, strong revenues from the Planning Department and, on the whole, limited expenses are the factors that created this positive situation," said the mayor.

Trotter said his speech will also highlight the success of the recent paving program, with half of the town's neighborhood streets now completely resurfaced.

One of Trotter's most important goals, and one of the elements that defines him as an elected official, is the review of the hillside and ridge-line development rules in Moraga. The pro-open space mayor saw this goal pushed back by a majority of the Town Council last January, but the process of revision, likely to take another year, finally moved forward

in October.

The mayor also indicated his intent to pinpoint the importance of the emerging dialogue with the school district regarding partnerships in the construction and management of sports fields and facilities. Readers may recall that Trotter has been trying to find a way to get a gymnasium built in Moraga for years. "The gym at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School is inadequate," he said. "We could look at the partnership in Orinda, between Wagner Ranch Elementary School and the city, as a model of legal framework for sharing the operating and maintenance costs of a sports facility."

Thursday's event at the Moraga Country Club begins with a reception at 6 p.m. followed by the State of the Town address at 6:30 p.m. Reserve your spot by calling or emailing town clerk Marty McInturf at 888-7022, mmcinturf@moraga.ca.us.

## Climate Action Plan Consultant Hired

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga's Climate Action Plan Task Force recently submitted a report that lays out a long list of possible actions in the area of transportation, land use, energy, water, agriculture, and waste to achieve greenhouse gas reductions. The recommendation of the task force is to have a consultant evaluate what measurable impacts each of the actions could have; the Town Council agreed to a \$15,000 contract with Quest Consulting. Once the results are in, the Town Council will then decide what measures are appropriate.

In the area of energy, the task force proposed different measures to encourage energy retrofits for homes and businesses and to support the installation of solar energy. In the area of water and wastewater, the task force proposed the adoption of a water-efficient landscaping ordinance and encouraged water conservation measures for homes and businesses. For waste management, the task force recommended support of the state goal of a 75 percent diversion rate and to provide multi-family dwellings and businesses with the means to recycle. In addition, the task force recommended that 'green' purchasing be encouraged, asking suppliers to communicate on sustainability, and replace equipment when needed rather than on a schedule.

The area of land use and transportation boasted the longest list of suggestions and could have the largest impact. It includes elements such as providing a complete network of safe routes to schools for cyclists and pedestrians. The plan calls for a 10 percent reduction in car trips to schools, through carpooling, the use of transit and walking or cycling. It also proposes the goal of a 5 percent reduction in single vehicle occupancy trips and recommends the support of such

programs as Real Time Ridesharing that uses a smartphone application to connect people with similar commutes, find each other and create effective car pools; and suggests that new residential and non-residential developments could be required to have a transportation demand management plan and ongoing program that provides incentives to individuals to utilize alternative means of transportation.

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## Donald Drive Home Appeal Continued

By Sophie Braccini

Noting that some technical questions remain unanswered, the Moraga Town Council decided to continue the hearing of an appeal challenging the approval of the design of a new home on a steep hill off Donald Drive to Jan. 22.

The futuristic green home proposed for the lot at 1800 Donald Drive by Orinda architect James Wright has been on the drawing board for more than two years. Since the start, Wright worked with town staff to understand the rules and make sure that no grading per-

mit or variance would be required.

Wright designed a home that conforms to the topography of the hill, rather than excavating a flat building pad. The architect believes the amount of grading is zero, since foundations are not counted in the amount of dirt moved. The Town Council did not adopt staff and planning commission's recommendation to approve the design, but instead argued that the excavation could be much larger than is anticipated by the architect and required an evaluation of the dirt that will have to be moved, other than the

foundation itself, to place the building on site. If that amount were to be higher than 50 cubic yards, a grading permit would be required.

The second item that concerned the Town Council was whether the driveway that sits above the house and is supported by posts would require a variance for approval. Staff's position is that the driveway is integral to the house and does not need a variance; some of the council members declared they need legal certainty. The Town Council's questions should be answered at its Jan. 22 meeting.

## Café Hacienda to Stay for Now

By Sophie Braccini

Volunteers from the Hacienda Foundation of Moraga and the Moraga Park Foundation demonstrated their desire to be included in the discussion of Cafe Hacienda's future by waiting at a Town Council meeting until midnight on Nov. 13 for their chance to support the cafe but also request a discussion of the potential impli-

cations for the Hacienda de las Flores if it were to become the permanent location of a restaurant.

"The Hacienda is our sandbox," said Steve Woehleke, Hacienda Foundation president. The statement expressed the feeling of ownership that the volunteers, who have invested hours of expertise in the public facility, de-

rive from their work. Park Foundation members expressed the same sentiment.

Both groups met to discuss their concerns that the mission of the Hacienda as a public facility for events and classes could be altered by the cafe's use of the kitchen and dance room during the week. ... continued on page A11

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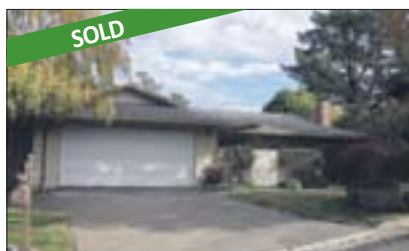
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# Orinda Civic News

## Public Meetings

### City Council

Tuesday, Dec. 3, 7 p.m.  
Auditorium, Orinda Library,  
26 Orinda Way

### Planning Commission

Tuesday, Dec. 10, 7 p.m.  
*Tuesday, Nov. 26, canceled*  
Auditorium, Orinda Library,  
26 Orinda Way

### Finance Advisory

#### Committee

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

### School Board Meeting

#### Orinda Union School District

Monday, Dec. 9, 6 p.m.  
OUSD Office, Vintage Building  
25 Orinda Way, Suite 200  
www.orindaschools.org  
See also AUHSD meeting page A2



**Maureen Wilbur**

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## City Council Declines Application for Phair's Site

By Laurie Snyder

Procedure became the story at the Nov. 5 Orinda City Council meeting as council members were excused (Glazer), recused (Severson), and briefed on policy prior to the hearing of a proposal to replace the Phair's building with a Montessori preschool.

"At the first hearing, the Planning Commission considered a threshold question – that is, whether or not the code, as it is currently written, even allows this type of a use, a preschool, in the downtown commercial district," said Emmanuel Ursu, planning director. If codes did allow, then the City Council could consider use permit standards. If not, no further analysis was required and the Montessori application would be denied.

"We have spent three years and hundreds of thousands of dollars to get to this point," said Shandy Cole, Fountainhead's executive director. "The Planning Commission, after hundreds of hours of staff time, approved our project with a 5-2 vote." Fountainhead's land use attorney and long-time Walnut Creek planning commissioner, Allan Moore, cited Orinda's General Plan and said it was the City Council's prerogative to determine what services could be offered.

During its examination the City Council was reassured that former site contaminants were resolved and lasered in on parking and traffic. Councilmember Victoria Smith questioned whether parents would or even could adhere to Fountainhead's plan for staggered drop-off times with Cole stating that, "certainly if you're working in San Francisco, you're probably coming at 7 a.m." As Smith illuminated the likely path of vehicle travel, it became clear that, of the 18 parking spaces allocated, up to 10 might be used for staff – and that most parents' cars would be moving

west on Orinda Way with the majority turning left onto Avenida de Orinda. Traffic would impact area business owners and patrons.

"Childcare is allowed in almost all of the zoning districts subject to a general use permit. It's allowed in residential and all of its classifications. It's allowed in downtown office," said appellant Terry J. Murphy. "But it isn't allowed in the downtown commercial district." Planning commissioners, he said, "rewrote our General Plan and the code. And that's not their job. It's yours."

Two-year Orinda resident Shelly Rose said a drop-off loop would make life easier. "Having come, like many of the other young families in the area, from San Francisco and Oakland, the one thing that we miss coming from those other areas is the walkability." Joanne McKinley said, "Young families bring wealth, vitality, and economic long-term commitment to a community." Orinda should design "a downtown which maintains all of its natural beauty and small town charm while introducing sophisticated and modern living solutions for its residents with world class schools, high end retail, entertainment, restaurants, and wellness practitioners – very much like Mill Valley and Marin have been able to do."

In contrast, one architect and city planner residing in Orinda for more than 50 years said that, while it would please him if his grandchildren could attend, he wouldn't want them in a preschool "squeezed into a downtown commercial area, sharing space with commercial uses, on a major city thoroughfare, across the street from a busy automobile garage."

During the deliberations Smith said, "I want to underscore that what is before us tonight is one actual project. We heard some speakers talk about, 'If this doesn't go in,

then affordable housing's going to go in' ... or 'luxury condos are going to go in.' And various things in between. And none of that is accurate. There is no other project before us tonight."

Examples of personal development services in city policy – dance, music, martial arts studios, fitness centers, dry cleaners, travel, beauty – "have one thing in common which I think we do not find here in this preschool use, and that is a constant amount of customers coming and going in smaller increments, which tends to lead to foot traffic, which tends to increase the vibrancy and the commercial use of this downtown commercial district, which I think is what the General Plan calls for." Plus, the

applicant "told us that over 80 percent of [parents] are going to use the drive through. So, they're not going to be parking and shopping and walking around and utilizing the other businesses, which is really what you look for in a downtown commercial district," Smith said.

Councilmember Dean Orr concurred. "I do not believe that a school or a daycare facility is like minded to any of those." Osa Wolff, city attorney, observed, "If you conclude that the zoning code does not permit this use, then there is no further analysis. The project is denied." The City Council unanimously declined Fountainhead's application (Glazer excused; Severson recused).

### Councilmember Sue Severson's Recusal Statement, Nov. 5

"Mayor, with your pleasure, I would like to make a statement if that's okay. It's about the most important to me that the public have full faith in the City Council decision makers, and also trust in the city processes – that are fair. It's come to my attention that certain members of the public question my ability to be fair and open minded in considering tonight's land use appeal. This concern seems to be based on a couple of email messages produced by the city in response to the California Public Records Act request from Orinda Watch. Over the years in my role as City Council member, I have had meetings, phone conversations, email exchanges, etc. with both proponents and opponents of the Montessori project. During those communications, I have stated my preliminary opinions regarding the proposal, and conveyed my thoughts regarding land use policies for the city of Orinda's downtown. Although I feel that I could consider tonight's appeal in a fair and unbiased way, I also recognize that some members of the public may reasonably have a different perception. When it comes to ethics, perception is very important. So, out of an abundance of caution and to safeguard the due process, I have herefore, therefore, decided to recuse myself.

The only other topic on tonight's agenda is the Orinda Mini-Park renovation project – Item I-1 – that involves consideration of an Orinda Community Foundation funding proposal. I have decided to also recuse myself on this item because I am a current member of the Orinda Community Foundation board. In reaching these decisions, I have consulted with the city attorney, and I am making these disclosures consistent with her advice. I will depart from this meeting before discussions begin on the public hearings and policy matter agenda items."

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**A New Welcome Home on the Horizon for Orindans?**

By Laurie Snyder

*“Show me your garden, provided it be your own, and I will tell you what you are like.” – Alfred Austin*

At the juncture of Camino Pablo and Brookwood Drive, tucked against Orinda Theatre Square, sits a tiny, green sanctuary. It has been there – in some shape or form – since 1973 when PG&E entered into a 20-year “Cooperative Landscaping Agreement” with Contra Costa County. Orinda inherited both park and agreement when it incorporated as a city.

Somewhere along the way, the patch was christened “the Mini-Park,” and redwood trees were planted. And therein is the rub – literally. Redwoods, magnificent though they are, do not mix with power lines.

PG&E advised the Orinda City Council in 2010 of its new maintenance initiative, requiring removal of trees to protect 230KV transmis-

sion lines. But the utility also indicated a willingness to hold off until Orinda could figure out how to replace the trees with shorter greenery. The City Council approved a plan with an estimated cost of \$57,000 in 2011, following input from the Orinda Parks and Recreation Commission and Public Works Aesthetic Review Committee, Montelindo Garden Club and Theatre Square management, but did not specify a funding source. Undaunted, Montelindo continued its tender loving care.

Cut to 2013 when the Orinda Community Foundation expressed interest in providing funds – potentially in the six-figure range – and presented ideas at a summer meeting with the city, PG&E, and Montelindo. Attendees were said to be open to new options “since OCF was committed to provide substantial financial support.” PG&E, while anxious to proceed, appears to be willing to give Orinda more

time since Orinda’s volunteers are, in effect, taking care of a headache by beautifying and maintaining the land for them.

“A design process with identified funding for this project could yield significant improvements to the entrance to the Theatre Square/Crossroads Downtown area,” wrote staff in a Nov.5 report to the City Council. Both the Parks and Recreation Commission and Public Works Aesthetic Review Committee would like to do more, but also want the project to move forward quickly. After council members considered the options – implementing the already approved plan or regrouping and re-envisioning – they directed staff to obtain more information about the funding available from the Orinda Community Foundation and work with the other bodies to consider what else might be done with the additional financial support.

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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](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com)**; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Editor:

Orinda Officials have expressed their love of Orinda as it is. So I ask, why are they promoting extensive high-density development and change - from the Irwin Senior Center, to Orinda Grove, J&J Ranch, Lavenida Subdivision Phairs and the rezoning for condos at Santa Maria? Loading Orinda with apartment buildings transforms and degrades the City in countless ways. Respectfully, there seems to be an empire-building mentality at work.

Alas, I just got wind of plans for more condo development around the Phairs property.

Like many Orindans, I am profoundly concerned that such multi-unit condo ventures are being approved without proper diligence of analyzing impending traffic pileups. Maddening car congestion cannot be stopped after development is approved, especially where no room exists to add streets. Many of us already sit in traffic shuttling to and from Wagner Ranch School.

Hundreds more are enduring the same jam of cars along our educational corridor, Moraga Way. Even before this development at Phairs goes into effect, Orinda will be adding over 1,850 new residents over the next nine years from current construction that is underway. Meanwhile, parking is already maxed out at Orinda's Community Center, around Theater Square, at the BART parking lot in the morning and to OIS and Miramonte.

This building boom is systematically eroding our quality of life and ruining our ease of travel, yet you promised to maintain Orinda's semi-rural character. We would like to see a meaningful, comprehensive traffic impact study that doesn't just account for traffic impact of one building project, but the combined effect of all construction - anything short of that is deceptive. Please, we also want to know how you are addressing maxed-out parking at the Community Center and Theater Square.

If you are increasing the city's population by 12-14% in a decade, there must be consideration I am unaware of for thousands of more cars moving along the eroding streets of our tiny community.

Thank you,  
Alvin Ziegler  
Orinda

Editor:

Congratulations Moraga for understanding and voting for Measure B, and thank you for all the work folks did to get it passed. Supporting our schools so all our kids have the greatest opportunity to get a balanced education, one that includes music, library access, the latest in technology opportunities, clean campuses, scholastics and so much more is key to a successful life. I was educated in the fifties. I went to public schools from grammar school through college. Without that public support, I would not have had the opportunities for the life I have today. The next time we are asked for supplemental money for our schools, be sure to look for substantiated facts of where that supplemental money goes and how much money we actually get from the State. Be mindful of how the State money keeps getting less and less and what has been cut because of it and what will be cut in the future. Everyone who owns a home in Moraga needs to remember that our schools are the number one reason people move to Moraga and keep our home prices where they are. You can verify this fact by talking to any of the many realtors who sell homes in Moraga. Thank you again for the 68.2% yes vote on Measure B. May our schools continue to provide a good and balanced education for all our kids.

Edy Schwartz  
Moraga

Editor:

As we are so rapidly approaching the season and the spirit of Thanksgiving, I thought it an appropriate time to acknowledge a very special group of volunteers in Moraga. I mention my two favorite groups of volunteers, those who sponsor and plan for the tremendously popular Summer Thursday concerts, the Park and Recreation Foundation, as well as the Hacienda Foundation volunteers who are dedicated to preserving and beautifying the Hacienda. These two groups, many volunteers, I suspect, serve on both projects, are certainly deserving of all our appreciation and gratitude for making Moraga such a very special place in which to live. I do think these volunteers are like unsung warriors who don't often receive the appreciation that their dedication deserves. I hope this letter of appre-

ciation will be acknowledged by many grateful people who enjoy the fruits of their many labors.

Joan Bruzzone  
Lafayette

Editor:

We are writing to thank the Measure B Campaign Committee members, its volunteers, and the Moraga voters for coming together to pass Measure B, the Moraga Elementary School District parcel tax measure. The education of children has long been a defining community value in Moraga. Multiple years of State funding cuts was eroding the quality education that we expect in our schools. The passage of Measure B protects our schools by providing funding to preserve core academic programs in math, science and technology; manageable class sizes; art and music programs; safe and well-maintained schools; school libraries; up-to-date technology; and the ability to attract and retain the most qualified teachers. We are extremely fortunate to live in a community that is willing to make a financial sacrifice to maintain our outstanding schools.

We are also fortunate to have so many people throughout the community volunteer so much time and talent to the campaign, whether or not they have children attending Moraga schools. Thank you to everyone who walked the neighborhoods, called the voters, wrote the letters, scanned the call sheets, took the photos, kept the books, signed the ballot argument, endorsed the measure, put up yard signs, wore buttons, painted their cars, brought goodies for volunteers, donated to the campaign, and most of all, cast their votes for the children of Moraga.

Sincerely,  
Nancy Kendzierski and Kathy Ranstrom  
Moraga

Editor:

Recently, the Orinda City Council overturned the Planning Commission on an application by a Montessori School to build on the old Phairs property downtown (which has been vacant for 12 years). As part of this process, facts came to light that clearly shows an example of a lack of transparency that shocks the essence of equity and good governance. I point to emails sent by Councilwoman Severson which were produced as part of a freedom of information request.

Ms. Severson and Bruce Barrows (according to the City of Orinda website representing developers as a member of the Planning Process Review Task Force) communicated about the Montessori project and agreed that the project should not be approved. As acknowledged by Ms. Severson herself, she then communicated with the head of the Planning Commission on the project and discussed how to defeat the application at the Planning Commission. She then stated that she felt those who disagree with her on development issues are "uninformed."

The City Council appoints the Planning Commissioners and has in essence appellate authority over their decisions. As an appointing and appellate authority over the Planning Commission, it is in my opinion inappropriate and unethical for a sitting City Council person to influence them on a project that will be or is pending before them (especially on a project that was most certainly going to be appealed). We need to upgrade our downtown and this will involve bringing together many diverse opinions and perspectives. The process needs a high level of trust, open-mindedness, compromise, and transparency. Ms. Severson's continued tenure will only enhance the mistrust and belief by many that the process is stacked in one direction. She has done tremendous good for Orinda and my daughters enjoy the part of the library that she has generously contributed to. Like she did in recusing herself on the Montessori project appeal, I would encourage her to resign as soon as possible so the air of distrust in Orinda can begin to dissipate.

Ed Jajeh  
Orinda

Editor:

Thank you to Orinda's Amy Worth for her tireless work for years to make the fourth bore of the Caldecott an impressive reality. She has helped improve the daily lives of thousands of drivers in Contra Costa and Alameda County.

Carol Penskar  
Orinda

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# Short-Term Financial Mess

By Nick Marnell

Barely one month into her job, Gloriann Sasser, Moraga-Orinda Fire District administrative services director, discovered an accounting error in October that decreased the district's general fund balance by more than \$2 million. The incorrect figure had been reported on the district's books for seven years; the district took immediate action to reduce the increased deficit at the Nov. 6 board meeting.

### The Discovery

Something did not make sense. As Sasser reviewed the activity in the district's bank accounts she noticed the term "Bond Fund" printed on a Wells Fargo Bank statement. Drawing on her years of experience as an auditor and a certified public accountant, Sasser knew that the \$2 million in that account was restricted cash; it was held by Wells Fargo to pay the principal and interest on the district's pension obligation bond. Yet the district had been reporting the money as available in the general fund.

After meetings with Wells Fargo, legal counsel and a number of bond experts, Sasser determined that the bond fund was indeed restricted until the POB was paid off, in 2022. She advised the district's finance committee: directors Steve Anderson and Alex Evans. Then she, the finance committee and the district's auditor presented the findings to the MOFD board on Nov. 6.

### The Deflection

John Cropper, managing partner of the Cropper Accountancy Corporation, the district's auditor, knew of the district's concerns over the \$2 million of restricted cash, which were raised at the Oct. 29 finance committee meeting. After he presented the audit summary for fiscal year 2012-13 at the board meeting - the audit was once again a clean audit - Cropper went on the offensive.

"Somewhere between the accounting department and the board, there is an issue," he said. "I don't know why the district would do some of the things they're doing ... like purchasing property." He also chastised the board for not understanding its own financial documents, and cautioned that the district had a cash flow problem.

His admonitions did not go over well with the board.

"I have a very strong disagreement with the current auditor," said Anderson, his face glowing a darker shade of red with each sentence. "They've failed in their job. And they should not be making gratuitous comments about the board."

Evans piled on. "You produced six years of audits," he said, his voice rising with each sentence. "In five of those years you didn't identify the restricted fund. And now you come here and say, 'I don't know why you bought this property.' The truth is, you don't know why we bought the property. So you're better off not talking about it, because the more you talk about it the angrier we're going to get."

Calm was restored thanks to Weil's urging, who made a motion to simply acknowledge, but not accept, the audit findings; the motion passed unanimously.

Cropper fired the last arrow from his quiver. Before he walked out of the meeting, he warned the board that the district was on an "unsustainable fiscal path."

### The Determination

Because of the restricted cash adjustment, the district has, as of June 30, a negative balance of \$100,000 in its general fund. After deducting the July Lorinda Lane property purchase, the capital budget has a balance of less than \$2.5 million. At its recent rate of operating loss of nearly \$1 million per year, the district will run out of available cash in two years.

The board took action to avert that calamity. It approved a reduction in minimum daily staffing, from 19 to 17 fire personnel, which should save \$550,000 this fiscal year. It moved one step closer to revising the schedule of fees for district services, which is expected to increase revenue \$50,000 a year. And though it will be in instant violation of the policy, it voted to set aside 10 percent of general fund revenue into a reserve fund.

Anderson's frustration carried over after the meeting. "By next year," he said, "there will be a new auditor."

But Brook Mancinelli, past board member, thought the treatment of Cropper by the board was uncalled for. "(The directors) are realizing how close they are to being broke, and they were looking for a scapegoat," he said.



**Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors Meetings**

### Next meetings:

**Wednesday, Nov. 20**  
**Wednesday, Dec. 4**

(Go to [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org) as the meeting date approaches for location and more information)

# Commitment to Lafayette Reaffirmed

By Nick Marnell

Jeff Carman was never obsessed with being a fire chief.

"I was always operations oriented," said the new chief of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, who worked for the Roseville Fire Department since 1984. "We were making big strides in operations, and I was going to retire as a battalion chief."

But he was promoted to assistant chief of operations in 2010 - "kicking and screaming," he said - and he began to look at fire issues more globally. It was only recently that he felt the desire to become a fire chief. He started to look around; "I didn't want to be a fire chief just anywhere," he said.

Carman's industry friends told him that there were a lot of easier jobs available than the one he took with ConFire. He explained why he did.

"Relations between labor and management are good," he said. "The people here are great, and they truly do a good job. And the citizens love their fire department."

His main goal is to make the district sustainable - "to deliver the best service to our customers with the money that we have." Another goal is to market the fire district: "We need to let people know exactly what our firefighters do. 'This is what

you're getting for \$95 million a year.'" As part of his marketing plan, he said that he intends to escalate the district's presence at city council meetings and at civic functions.

The biggest surprise in his first month on the job? "I knew ConFire was busy, but I didn't realize how busy," he said. But he was also surprised at what he heard at his first Lafayette Emergency Services Task Force meeting. The task force - charged with investigating alternative delivery of fire and emergency services to Lafayette - "was already down the road, looking at other fire agencies to come in and to get rid of ConFire. And that bothers me," he said.

"It's emotional that we closed a fire station, but do we really know what level of service has dropped? Or, was there even a service drop? No one has taken a hard look at that data," he said. "We closed (Lafayette station 16) for funding reasons but also because it's uninhabitable. In the station's current condition, we couldn't put a company back there if we wanted to."

The chief said that he is "100 percent behind station 46," the proposed joint fire station venture at the Orinda-Lafayette border between the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and possibly ConFire. ... continued on page A11

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## business briefs



New Arco gas station with car wash on Moraga Road Photo Andy Scheck

### Arco Station Opens 425 Moraga Rd., Moraga

After many months of planning and permits, the new Arco gas station and carwash has opened in Moraga. Located at the south-east corner of Moraga Road and Rheem Boulevard, the owners followed the Design Review Board recommendation to make the station appealing; they even added a water fountain in the garden in front of the station to improve curb appeal. The station's price signage is a bit smaller than that of its competition since the new owners had to abide by Moraga's most recent signage ordinance while the older stations' larger signs were grandfathered. The car wash will cost between \$6 and \$9, depending on the level of service. When the cars are being washed, doors enclose the vehicle so the operation is completely contained and does not create a noise nuisance for neighbors. The station also offers smog checks. Arco does not accept credit cards – a company business model that, it says, keeps prices low. PayQuick terminals are available for debit cards purchases, which include a 35 cent flat fee, and cash is welcome. Arco also provides pre-paid Arco cards. The community is invited to the Nov. 23 grand opening to enjoy food, music and \$3 carwashes with a minimum purchase of 12 gallons of gas.

### Kiwanis Sees Candy Holiday Shop Opening Soon

Moraga Valley Kiwanis will open the 2013 See's Candy Holiday Shop beginning Nov. 22 through Dec. 24 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day in Moraga's Rheem Center (next to Starbucks). Other sales locations will include the Moraga Farmers' Market and CVS in Rheem. All the most popular See's chocolates, peanut brittle, and holiday novelties will be available at the same prices found in See's stores. Sugar-free items will also be offered. See's Candy holiday sales are the major fundraising effort of the Moraga Valley Kiwanis Club. All proceeds are donated to local charities, including Meals on Wheels, the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano counties, Lamorinda schools' educational foundations, and many others.

### Beall Named Prudential Regional Manager (925) 708-0800

Prudential California Realty announced that Mary Beall, previously the manager of the company's two Walnut Creek offices, has been named regional manager for the brokerage. Beall expands her leadership role gaining reach and authority in overseeing operations throughout the Lamorinda and Walnut Creek market.

### DeFoe Named Moraga Employee of the Month for November



From left: Kevin Reneau, vice president of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, Safeway manager Bonita Vigil, Brenda DeFoe, and Moraga Rotary president Nora Avelar. Photo provided

Brenda DeFoe, who has been serving local Safeway customers for 22 years, has been named the Moraga Employee of the Month for November. DeFoe manages the customer service desk at Safeway and assists in several different areas in the local grocery store, including working as a checker when needed, doing price changes and managing the store's donations to local charities. Before coming to Moraga in 2009, DeFoe worked for 16 years at the Orinda Safeway store. The Moraga Rotary and Chamber of Commerce awarded DeFoe with a gift card to Safeway and a gift certificate to Mountain Mike's Pizza in Moraga at the Nov. 19 Moraga Rotary luncheon.

### News from the three Chambers of Commerce

#### Lafayette

Ribbon Cutting for the new Lafayette Art Gallery at 5 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21 at 3420 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite A.

The 35th Annual Community Thanksgiving Breakfast will be held from 7 to 8:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 22 at Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane. The breakfast will be catered by Dave's Cuisine (chef Dave Krider). The scheduled keynote speaker is SemiFreddi's owner Tom Franier. For reservations, visit the chamber website at [lafayettechamber.org](http://lafayettechamber.org).

Save the date for "It's a wonderful Life in Lafayette" – a holiday celebration with tree lighting, food, drinks, music and entertainment, children's activities and Santa – from 4 to 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6 at the Lafayette Plaza. The event is sponsored by The Dana Green Team and Branagh Development.

#### Moraga

The chamber has an office. On Nov. 13 the Town Council approved the use of a small corner office (about 100 square feet) in the La Sala at the Hacienda de las Flores for use by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. After the first of the year the chamber will have office hours on Monday mornings (excluding holidays) from 8 a.m. to noon. After being named executive director, Kathe Nelson will finally have a place to put her computer and set appointments. The space was formerly a storage area for the Moraga Movers and the Hacienda Foundation.

Save for date for the Chamber's Christmas party from 6 to 9 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 10 at Moraga Royale.

#### Orinda

The 12th Annual Holiday Party is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 5. As in previous years, the chamber invites its members to gather on the first Thursday each December, which has been deemed by the city of Orinda as Hilton House Day. Everything will be on sale from 5 to 9 p.m. Free gift wrap, refreshments, music – and a lot of fun, too.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact  
Sophie Braccini at [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)

*'Tis the Season of Giving*



## Need Donations this Holiday Season?

During the holiday season, Lamorinda Weekly will accept and publish opportunities for local giving. Please send 100 words or less describing the cause, type of donation needed, and where to bring/send it. The organization collecting the donations, or receiving the donations, should be within our extended community. Submissions must be sent to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com) by Nov. 26 for inclusion in our Dec. 4 issue, and by Dec. 12 for inclusion in our Dec. 18 issue.

## Community Service

### Gold Award Focuses on Water Safety

Submitted by Kathy Biro



Juliana Biro Photo provided

Alcalanes High School junior and Girl Scout Troop 31017 member Juliana Biro completed her Gold Award project this past May. Her project, "Water Wise: A Water Safety Program," in partnership with Lighthouse Community Charter School in East Oakland and the Downtown Oakland YMCA, provided 75 eighth-grade students instruction and offered activities about nutrition, sun safety and water safety. Students also had the opportunity to learn basic swimming skills. Water safety is a passion for Biro as she nearly drowned as a young child. As part of the Water Wise safety program, Biro organized a swim gear

drive to provide suits, goggles and towels for every participating student. She also led a coffee talk at Lighthouse School for the eighth-grade parents to explain the purpose of her event and the importance of water safety. Caitlin Leverenz, a 2012 bronze Olympic medalist, joined Biro at the Lighthouse Community Charter School to kick off the event by talking to the students about her Olympic experience and what a difference swimming has made in her life. With this project, Biro hopes to break the pattern of children not knowing how to swim because their parents never learned to swim.

### Daffodil Planting in Full Swing

Submitted by Dale Walwark



Photo provided

Former Moraga mayors Margaret Depriester and Graig Crossley planted daffodils, along with members of the Kiwanis Club of Moraga (not pictured), Nov. 9 along Moraga Way. "Margaret started the whole daffodil thing years ago and Moraga now looks great every spring," said Dale Walwark. "For the first time, a group from Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church planted a bunch of daffodils recently along Moraga Road north of the skate park. The more the merrier."

### Backpack and Art Supply Drive Benefits Refugees

Submitted by Anne Obsitnik



Photo provided

Fourth-grade Junior Girl Scouts from Rheem Elementary School Troop 31525 recently undertook a backpack and art supply drive for 120 refugee families arriving in Oakland from refugee camps outside their home of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Troop 31525 learned that these families were arriving (as part of

a U.S. State Department effort) with nothing but the clothes on their backs after fleeing their country. The troop contacted the International Rescue Commission, the organization responsible for settling the refugee families, to see how they could help. The IRC asked for backpacks and art supplies for the children, who in many cases have been living in tents in countries bordering the DRC for months or even years. They will be attending school for the first time in Oakland. This troop of 19 girls contacted neighbors, friends and family and collected 67 backpacks filled with art supplies and passed them on to the IRC for the Congolese refugees.

### Cadette Girl Scouts Organize Camporee

Submitted by Kim Jinnett



Photo provided

Cadette Girl Scouts from Lafayette Troop 30072 organized Camporee Adventureland for Daisies, Brownies and Junior Girl Scouts at Twin Canyon Camp in

a broad range of girl scouts songs, made friendship bracelets and lanyards, decorated bandanas, played trust games and got physically active with parachutes and boomerangs. Before being tucked-in for the night in their tents, campers had a blast around the campfire with skits, songs and a dance party. The next day was filled with a big game of capture the flag and heartfelt goodbyes from campers and parents who attended. The Cadettes considered the opportunity to host the Camporee one of their favorite Girl Scout events of all time. They may even host a Camporee again as Senior Scouts.



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## Relaxing Sprinkler Rules for New Homes and Remodels in Moraga and Orinda

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council recently ratified the Moraga-Orinda Fire District's ordinance relaxing the rules regarding the installation of sprinklers in homes, large remodels and commercial buildings. In 2010 Moraga and Orinda agreed to regulations that were more demanding than the rest of Contra Costa County. The new text aligns the local guidelines with the rest of the county.

Fire Marshall Kathy Leonard explained how the 2010 rule required residential remodels to include a sprinkler system when it added over 50 percent of the existing home and reached over 2,500

square feet. "For commercial new buildings, any size called for the installation of sprinklers," she added. "Last year I granted a variance for a 750-square-foot concrete block bathroom. It would have cost more than the building was worth to add the sprinklers."

The fire marshal met with the city of San Ramon and other agencies within the county to align common practice. The new size that will trigger the installation of sprinklers for remodels is now a total of 3,600 square feet and a 50 percent addition. For commercial buildings, 5,000 square feet of new building triggers the sprinkler

requirement. "The new code also allows for flexibility in building construction," she said. "We are also allowing for alternate means in commercial building. If someone can prove to the fire district that there are detection systems, or specific construction that give a substantial amount of safety, then we will consider it as well."

The city of Orinda also ratified the new rule that will take effect in 2014. Leonard will present the resolution to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors on Dec. 3 (the board oversees the unincorporated areas covered by MOFD).

## Civic News Lafayette

### Standing Room Only for State of the City Meeting

... continued from page A1

Questions ranged from an opinion that the Downtown Specific Plan is flawed, encouragement to have robust fire protection locally, perception of "ugly" structures being built, to crowding on BART and in schools. Anderson calmly explained that the city doesn't run BART or the school district, and the public is always welcome at meetings to comment on the attractiveness or concerns regarding potential development, and that they are diligently working to resolve the fire and emergency service situation.

Subsidized housing came up; one person stated there is no reason to use Lafayette's resources to bring in subsidized housing and "bring in people who can't afford to live here." The mayor replied that all of the develop-

ment going on downtown is not subsidized by the city with the exception of the Eden housing development which will provide 47 units for low-income local senior citizens.

The current surge in construction downtown is a concern of many residents. Lafayette's General Plan controls development, along with an extensive review process for all structures, said the mayor, making it clear that a Priority Development Area doesn't override that process. PDAs are eligible for capital infrastructure funds.

"People have an economic interest in developing their property," said Anderson, adding those interests have nothing to do with the PDA or Plan Bay Area. "Building is going to hap-

pen regardless;" having the PDA and obtaining grants will help keep the downtown functional. "We can't tell someone they can't build on their property."

President of the Lafayette Homeowners Council and longtime resident Jenny Kallio was pleased with the large turnout and described the meeting as constructive, bringing awareness to citizens and complimenting the mayor on how he explained these volatile issues. In her opinion, the City Council is "doing its best to contain development." She added that information on current and future construction projects is available on the city website for "all the world to see." Go to www.lovelafayette.com for information.

## Civic News Moraga

### Café Hacienda to Stay for Now

... continued from page A5

Gayle Somers, owner of the Café Hacienda, said her challenge is that at the end of each business week she must pack up her supplies and store them somewhere else to make room for the caterers who come for weekend events,

such as the weddings that are a major source of revenue for the Hacienda.

Everyone agreed that café is an asset for the town and that it has attracted visitors to the lovely location, serving the quality food that

residents have been seeking for years.

The Town Council decided to extend Somers' rental agreement for three months, at no cost, while the stakeholders meet to discuss the future.

## Civic News Fire Districts

### Commitment to Lafayette Reaffirmed

... continued from page A9

He is in talks with MOFD, but neither district has sufficient capital to fund the project right now, he said. Still, he is looking at all angles.

"What if we sold our current station (16) site?" he said. "We're looking at liquidating properties that we own to make this happen, even asking for a loan. We're serious."

Carman's message to Lafayette is one of commitment; a commitment to provide the city with the best possible fire and emergency service. He is aware, though, that the city feels it is not getting the service from the district that it pays for.

"If the cities want more say in

how the district provides service, they should seek a governance change. The current system doesn't allow for city input," he said. "Maybe a new governance model would allow that."

"At least, I want to make Lafayette understand fully what we are doing and why we are doing it."

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**From Front Page**

**Caldecott Fourth Bore Opens**

... continued from page A1



There were representatives from the U.S. Department of Transportation, the state of California, area transportation commissions and local city councils. U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx brought encouragement from President Barack Obama, who said "great things are still worth doing."

Foxx said the Obama administration's "commitment to transportation investments," including the Caldecott tunnel project, "will help connect people to jobs, grow our economy and improve the overall quality of life in communities across the country."

Orinda mayor and Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Bay Area Toll Authority chair Amy Worth had similar thoughts: "The opening of the new tunnel heralds not only a huge increase in the reliability of travel to and from Contra Costa County, but an important boost for the regional economy as both commuters and freight move more efficiently."

"The tunnel is a very big deal and a triumph for Lamorinda," said Moraga mayor Dave Trotter. U.S. Congressman George Miller saluted the incredible work force of trained, skilled construction workers, while Caltrans director Malcolm Dougherty commented on the size of the project. "We haven't had this big a [construction project] year since the completion of the East Bay and Golden Gate bridges [in 1936 and 1937]."

State Assemblymember Nancy Skinner said the 5,000 to 6,000 jobs the tunnel work provided over four years was particularly valuable, noting the first two bores were built in the midst of the Great Depression, while the new Fourth Bore was built during a recession.

The crowd gave a standing ovation in memory of Bhaskar Thapa, a lead engineer for Jacobs Associates who died just months before the project's completion. They delighted in the introduction of Tom Caldecott, grandson of Thomas Caldecott, after whom the tunnel was named. The latter was mayor of Berkeley in the early 1930s and president of Joint Highway District 13.

After the speeches ended, the ribbon was cut, medallions revealed, photos by the hundreds were taken, and guests flowed into the Caldecott Fourth Bore – on foot – to admire its golden hued lighting, high-tech ventilation fans, generous

walkways and emergency automobile shoulders.

California Highway Patrol captain BJ Whitten was asked exactly how the lane would open on Satur-

day. "It's Caltrans' road," Whitten said. "They'll just pick up the barrier." And they did. On time. Under budget. And definitely low-key!

**Worth Doing Right**

By Cathy Dausman



U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx and Amy Worth  
Photo Ohlen Alexander

Call it ironic or call it poetic justice but Amy Worth ran slightly behind schedule one recent weekday, having found herself the victim of construction-caused delays along Lafayette's Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Transportation issues in Contra Costa County are all in a day's work for the Orinda mayor and chairwoman of the 21-member Metropolitan Transportation Committee which has overseen the Caldecott Fourth Bore Project.

Worth equates transportation mobility with economic prosperity in Contra Costa County, insisting government needs to "make transit work for people," and not the reverse. She cites the Fourth Bore Project, which opened to westbound Highway 24 traffic last weekend, as a great example of inter-agency cooperation – "local voices coming together as a regional government."

Worth's personal involvement in transportation issues began nearly 25 years ago when she worked to re-structure Contra Costa County libraries when state and county funding dropped to an all-time low. It was obvious future finances would have to come from local resources, she said. Worth explained that municipalities soon discovered they shared common issues and worked toward mutually beneficial solutions.

In 1998, Worth won her first election to Orinda's city council. There she followed the transportation interests of former council member Sarge Littlehale. She became a member of the Contra Costa Transportation Authority, and later its chairwoman.

"Orinda is so close to this [Highway 24] corridor," Worth noted. As mayor she took a seat on the MTA; this year committee members selected her as chair.

"Amy really brought the Fourth Bore Project to life," said former Orinda mayor and current councilwoman Victoria Smith. "Her leadership on the MTC, the Contra Costa Transportation Authority and in the Measures C and J campaigns drove the project to completion on time and under budget. The Fourth Bore will benefit Contra Costans as they travel to the other side of the tunnel for work, sporting events and entertainment, and will also benefit our communities by allowing residents from the other side of the tunnel to come to Lamorinda and beyond to spend their time and sales tax dollars."

The Fourth Bore will ease commute anxiety and make travel time more predictable, said Worth, even if a Lamorindan's final destination is only Wilder Fields.

# Tunnel Vision

By Nick Marnell



MOFD fire engine at the new bore entrance

Photos Nick Marnell

The week before the opening of the Caldecott Tunnel's Fourth Bore, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, along with other fire agencies, participated in safety drills that simulated events ranging from a car fire to an explosion inside the tunnel. Many of the tests involved upgraded systems requested by the district.

As MOFD is the first responder on the Orinda side of the tunnel, the California Department of Transportation asked the district what specific safety measures it would like to see implemented in the new bore. The district re-

quested a new and improved water system and an upgraded radio communication system, according to fire chief Stephen Healy.

Fifty-year-old pipes run water through the system in bores one, two and three; the Fourth Bore uses a looped system, which provides superior water pressure and, during a fire, its cut-off valves can be manipulated so that the water supply may be diverted and concentrated to put the fire out. "We will be upgrading the system on one, two and three," said Caltrans project engineer Byron Lim. ... continued on page B2



MOFD Firefighter Janet Brandi hooks up a hose at the entrance of the Caldecott Tunnel's new Fourth Bore.

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## A Story of Serendipity

How a simple act changed one local woman's life

By Michael Sakoda



Ana Maria Blaj

Photo Andy Scheck

When Ana Maria Blaj and her husband, Ronnie, bought the property on Moraga Road in 2005, they were planning on living in it. Instead, they followed their passion, and in February 2006, Moraga Retreat, the residential care home Blaj now runs, opened its doors for the first time.

"My husband's family ran care homes for 20 years. He was a paramedic when he was younger, and I think he always thought he'd do this," said Blaj. "We got the care home bug ... it took us over a year to do the construction on it and to get all the approvals from Moraga and the county and finally to go to the Department of Social Services to get the license."

Moraga Retreat holds the same licenses as Moraga Royale and Aegis, but the benefits of small care homes cannot be quantified. "In other states, care homes are non-existent," said Blaj. "We can take on people with behavioral problems who would be medicated beyond recognition at larger places and do environmental changes, like playing music while they sleep, that larger homes just don't have the manpower to undertake."

How Blaj came to run two care homes in Moraga (the second located on Woodford Drive) is, in itself, a story of serendipity that spans two continents.

In 1989, when communism fell in Romania, Blaj was a little girl living with her chemist parents in Bucharest, the country's capital, and she received a shoe box as part of Operation Christmas Child. "I was in music



class and the principal came in and told us we had received packages," said Blaj. "We went to his office, and he lined us up in front of them and said, 'Go pick one.'"

Ana's parcel contained a letter from a high school student in Greece, some markers, some gum, some chocolates and a pendant. "I didn't start wearing it until middle school,"

Blaj said, yet it was one of the only things that made the journey with her to America.

"I came to America with my parents when I was 16," she said. "We only came with two suitcases, literally, between the three of us, but that pendant is one of the things I brought. I loved it. It meant that the sky's the limit."

Ana and her parents settled in Colorado Springs, a far cry from the metropolitan Bucharest. "It was like taking a New Yorker and sending them to Idaho ... and we were thinking of going back, but my mom's friend, who lived in Fremont, invited us to California for the holidays," said Blaj. "We went, and went to the Romanian Baptist Church, and met about 300 members, and Ron, my husband, was one of them – and he was cute."

After getting married, Ana Blaj and her husband moved to Milpitas. He was working in fiber optics for a solar company in Silicon Valley, while she managed an insurance office in Hayward, but when the time came to buy a house, the couple began looking in the East Bay.

"We were first looking for homes in Woodside and on the Peninsula, but decided to be closer to the family," said Blaj. "My parents live in Brentwood and (Ron's) brother lives in Walnut Creek, so we bought the house here."

The couple and their three children – Sofia, 8, Mati, 5, Ari, 3 – live in Lafayette, and attend church at Calvary Temple in Concord, where Blaj's children are helping her pay it forward. "We try to teach our children to be very grateful for what they have," said Blaj. "They get Christmas presents for children of inmates through our church. Every November, we go to Target, and they pick out clothes and toys for needy children. It's humbling for them to walk (in) and not pick anything for themselves."

Each year, Calvary Temple participates in several outreach programs including Convoy of Hope, which collects over a ton of groceries and hosts an event where doctors, dentists, even barbers, volunteer their services to the underprivileged.

Blaj's journey began with an act of compassion, the shoebox, the pendant, and it has led her to a life of compassion, which can be summed up best by her, as she discusses her role as the proprietor of Moraga Retreat: "Families are losing their mom or dad in front of their eyes ... it's not easy ... a big part of my job is being there for the families ... being their advocates with doctors, with insurance companies, with home health agencies ... making sure their loved one is getting the care that they need. My job is to take care of the entire family, not just the resident."

## Tunnel Vision

... continued from page B1



MOFD crew inside the tunnel

Photo Nick Marnell

MOFD division chief Darrell Lee said that the tunnel's radio system was upgraded from line-of-sight technology to the digital microwave standards of the East Bay Regional Communication System, which is used by public agencies within Alameda and Contra Costa counties. "I can talk to somebody in that tunnel now from my office," said Healy, his office being nearly seven miles from the tunnel entrance.

Many other new fire and safety features were

added, including huge, loud jet fans that can replenish fresh air inside the tunnel in minutes. Healy said he was impressed with the installation of new crossing arms in front of bores three and four, which will provide instant closure of the tunnels in case of emergency. The most obvious emergency feature visible to motorists may be the new bore's 10-foot-wide shoulder, large enough to handle a disabled vehicle or an emergency vehicle.

Among the exercises conducted the week of Nov. 11 was a drill involving the new water system. An MOFD firefighter responded to a simulated car fire inside the tunnel, and she connected the engine's hose to one of the two new hydrants outside bore four. But there was uncertainty over which hydrant was associated with which standpipe. A congregation of firefighters, engineers and technicians who witnessed the drill suggested that the pipes be color coded to dispel potential confusion. And by the end of the week, they were. "Blue for high pressure, red for low pressure," said Caltrans engineer Jim Adair.

"That's why we go through these exercises," added Lim.

The fire and safety efforts and traffic management will be coordinated out of a new Operations and Maintenance Control building on the west side of the tunnel. The building will be staffed 24/7 by trained operators who must pass a test administered by the state fire marshal.

"It will make it quicker to respond, and for us to send the correct response," said Bijan Sartipi, Caltrans district director.

# Stanley 'Teacher of the Year' Uses Unique Strategies to Tackle a Far-Reaching Problem: Understanding Math

By Clare Varellas



Stanley Middle School math teacher Cooper Howard Photo provided

At one point last year, Stanley Middle School principal David Schrag and his co-administrators worried that someone had abandoned a car in the school parking lot because the same car was in the lot every day when he arrived to school and when he left. As far as he knew, the car never moved.

But contrary to what the administrators thought, the car was not abandoned. It merely belonged to Cooper Howard, a Stanley math teacher who recently won the Lafayette School District Teacher of the Year award for spending an extraordinary amount of time helping students, planning, and working toward being the best teacher she can be.

"Just the fact that she is here so much, working long hours is pretty remarkable," said Schrag.

Schrag himself nominated Howard for the award, aware of her leading role as math department chair, her ability to work with students, and her use of new math strategies in the classroom to make concepts more accessible to students.

"If there were three things I would use to describe Cooper Howard, I would say she is reflective of what she does and she is always trying to get better, she is very student-centered and she is always keen on what's best for kids, and she's passionate," said Schrag.

Now in her 13th year at Stanley – she started teaching math after working in business – Howard is constantly seeking better methods of getting the material across to students, an attribute that contributed toward her receipt of the district award. Most recently, she has incorporated several new activities into the teaching of her pre-algebra and math support classes that allow more students to participate in the learning action.

The first new activity Howard likes to call "silent math," because it allows students to start class off with a set of problems to do on their own, free from the voices of other students who know the answer. Howard writes several quick math problems on the board that follow a pattern, reinforcing concepts students have already learned. She then takes the pattern one step further to a type of problem the class has yet to learn, to see if students can solve the new problem by following the pattern.

"It's a nice, quick activity that involves and engages the students, and it allows them to see math patterns that they might not have necessarily

seen before," said Howard, who learned the activity from a district-hired math coach last year. "Quite often I'll use [it] as an entry point to a lesson. You can take material that they know and incorporate it into the pattern."

Howard also likes to allow students time to discuss these math problems amongst themselves to move closer to the answer. And much to her surprise, students take advantage of this time to improve their math skills.

"Here's the amazing thing: they actually talk about math," said Howard. "If it goes too long, then yeah, there will be kids that go off, but it floors me."

Finally, Howard likes to have students explore multiple ways of solving math problems by inviting students to write on the board their different strategies for solving a given problem.

Howard's ability to use these new methods in the classroom and her leadership within the math department garnered the administration's admiration, as the math class structure at Stanley has undergone change in the past few years.

"We are always talking about our students, and sharing ideas with each other," said Howard of her relationship with her colleagues.

Former Lafayette School District superintendent Fred Brill chose Howard out of the five teacher nominations he received, one from each school in the district. Howard then proceeded on to a contest for Contra Costa County Teacher of the Year, for which she had to apply by writing essays and submitting letters of recommendation. Though Howard did not win the countywide competition, her title as "Teacher of the Year" among a district of over 380 teachers is notable.

But Howard is in no way prepared to stop improving her teaching skills. Although she grew up knowing she wanted to be a teacher, Howard very much disliked math and struggled with it when she was younger because of a lack of confidence in her ability to do it correctly. Howard didn't realize her competency in math until she was working in business, teaching engineering companies computer-aided design.

"I was never, ever going to teach math. I hated math when I was younger," said Howard. "It was a very, very painful subject."

Even now, Howard admits that she sometimes doubts her mathematic

skills. This is exactly why she hopes to incorporate into her teaching of math a lesson about having the right mindset toward challenges, and the ability to work hard toward a goal. It

was this concept that allowed her to finally understand math, and to be teaching it today.

"Quite often in [a parent-teacher conference], my story will come out,

and then we talk about strategies to help [a student] overcome their particular challenges," said Howard. "We're doing a lot of teaching other than just math."

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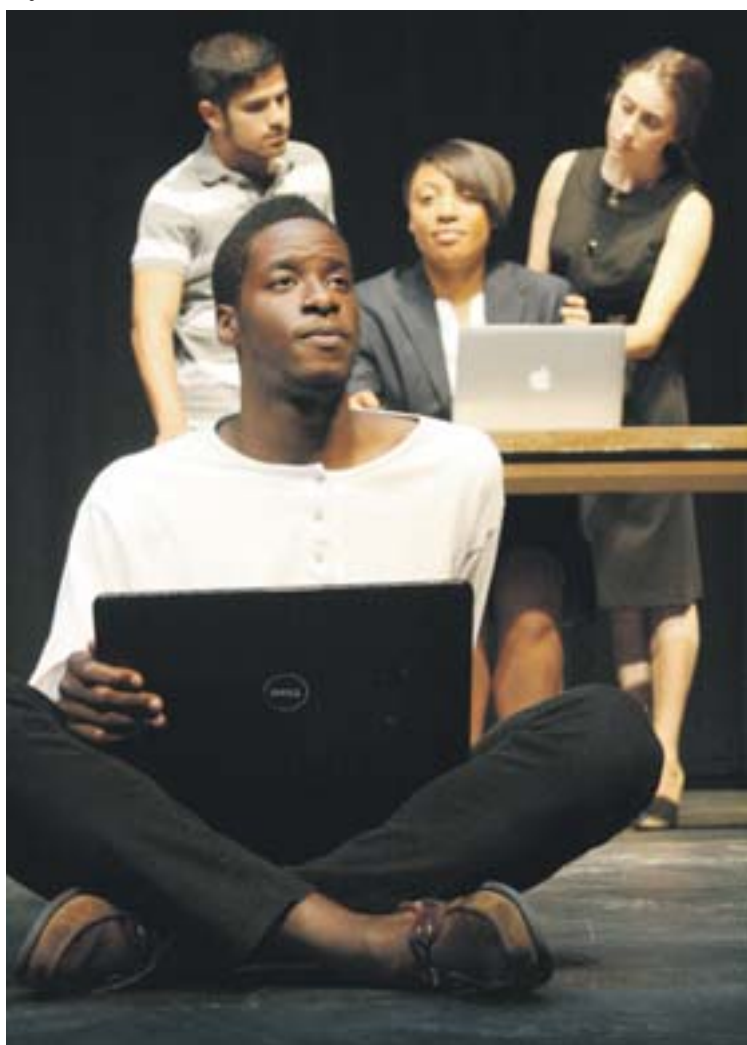


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## SMC Production Explores What It Truly Means to Help

By Lou Fancher



SMC performers, from left, back row: Joseph Klink and Haley Leitman.  
Front row: Paul Nnaoji and Kentaley McCurdy. Photo Michael Cook

A current theater production at Saint Mary's College reflects contemporary society's wired, surreal landscape with a dark-edged fable that poses more questions than it provides answers.

Playwright Laura Jacqmin's "And When We Awoke There Was Light and Light," directed by Susannah Martin, features students in the college's Performing Arts Department theatre program. The play opened on Nov. 14 with a pre-show talk by Martin and runs through Sunday, Nov. 24. A discussion with Jacqmin, Martin, the cast and Theatre Program Director Rebecca Engle as moderator is scheduled for after the performance on Saturday, Nov. 23.

Written in 2007, Jacqmin's play won the \$25,000 Wasserstein Prize in 2008 and was premiered at the University of Oklahoma in 2012. The story circles around Katie (Kentaley McCurdy), an affluent high school senior who befriends David (Paul Nnaoji), a boy in Uganda. Their on-line bond – and all sense of trust – is broken when David eventually reveals a secret from his former life.

Katie's helicopter parents, a too-tight teacher, a smart-aleck sister and a cadre of magic, fantastic entities (a clock, a luggage carousel) provide a backdrop for Jacqmin's ambitious examination of what it means to "help." Is the risk of personal sacrifice the blade cutting off compassion? Are we willing to "do good" if it comes with a price tag?

In an email, Jacqmin says the play has continued to evolve. "I was making changes all the way through the production process last fall," she writes.

Influenced by Sam Shepard, a playwright whose one act plays cause Jacqmin to ask herself, "You can do that?" she admires Shepard's "sheer theatricality and inventiveness." Edward Albee, she suggests, created "fascinating toxic spirals" for his characters. But her contemporaries – Jackie Sibbles Drury, Marisa Wegrzyn, and Sheila Callaghan – light the brightest sparks with their innovative language and stories that push the parameters of universal concerns like trust, honesty, goodness, evil and mercy.

Martin is an in-demand, Oakland-based director who teaches drama at San Francisco University High School. While directing the play at SMC, she's also developing Ariel Luckey's solo show about race and integration that will premiere at La Pena Cultural Center in May 2014 and she will be directing "Our Town" at Berkeley's Shotgun Players next season.

Martin's working process is layered, like many of her peers. Piercing each step, from research to script readings to rehearsals, probing questions lead to dramaturgical understanding.

"I come in prepared, but I don't have a set idea of everything that's going to happen," she says, in an interview. "Everyone I work with has a skill set I don't have, so what they bring will make it go in a direction I don't expect. I get a more expressive storytelling."

Martin admits to being "intense, rigorous – even a hard-ass," and says the Saint Mary's students are sweet and hard working. Adjusting to their varying level of experience, she insists on professionalism. The scripts might be a magical blend of deceptively simple folktales, instant messaging and the rhythm of teenagers in conversation, but the issues addressed are hard core.

The fact that the David character is not just a refugee, but was once himself a Lord's Resistance Army child soldier who has killed, unraveled streams of inquiry for Martin. She researched every element: cultural capitalism, globalization, Ugandan and LRA history, Ivy League schools, and the Evanston, Ill., educational system.

"There are no easy answers to the questions the play is asking," she says. "It's thoughtful, but it's also demanding we think about what we are giving up with all our technology and 'instantness.' That's a subject worth paying attention to."

The Saint Mary's College production "And When We Awoke There Was Light and Light" will run at 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, Nov. 21-23 and at 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 24. Tickets can be purchased at the door, or by calling (925) 631-4670 or visiting [www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com).

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## Restoring History to San Leandro Creek:

*An Afternoon of Thoughts About Moraga's First People*

Submitted by Nina Egert



Cattle walk along a trail beside Grass Valley Creek, a tributary of San Leandro Creek and part of the watershed.

Photo provided

On Dec. 7, several local speakers, including Kent Long of the Friends of Joaquin Moraga Adobe and Merritt College professor Robin Freeman, will discuss the history of San Leandro Creek and the people who lived there as part of a series of events to be held over the next few months to bring awareness to the native presence along the San Leandro Creek watershed, and to support several environmental organizations striving to revitalize the watershed's steelhead population.

Recently, Freeman joined colleagues from the Friends of San Leandro Creek, East Bay Regional Parks, East Bay Municipal Utility District, and other organizations to begin to restore native plants and steelhead trout runs to

the creek by focusing on its history.

Lamorinda figures prominently in the Bay Area's early historic period as the site of a Spanish and Indian battle in 1797. In his book, "A Time of Little Choice," Randall Milliken discusses the Saclan Indian resistance to Spanish missionary culture of the mid-1790s. An initial Indian revolt at Mission Dolores in 1795, during which the Saclan resistors escaped capture, was followed by a secondary chase scene in 1797. Spanish soldiers from Mission San Jose (in Fremont) rode north on horseback – most likely on the trail following the path of San Leandro Creek – to present-day Moraga, where 130 Saclans had gathered in three housing clusters. A small battle ensued, with several Spanish horses and

one Saclan man being shot. The Saclan resistors were captured, and later subjected to corporal punishment at the San Francisco Presidio.

Later, in 1835, the Moraga family, descendants of the Spanish military officer in charge of settling San Francisco's presidio and mission, received land – initially slated by the Spanish to be returned to Saclan hands – as a grant from the Mexican government.

The public can learn more about the important history of the San Leandro Creek watershed and its people during this free discussion session, "Restoring History to San Leandro Creek" from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7 at the Moraga Library Conference Room. For information, call (925) 376-6852.

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## Huge Community Effort to Feed 10,000 People

By Sophie Braccini



Siamack Sioshansi gives instructions to the volunteers

Photos Sophie Braccini

A small army of volunteers, many from Lamorinda, gathered at the property of Charlotte Sturgeon in Vacaville Nov. 16 at the urging of the local non-profit organization Urban Farmers to pick as much as possible of the thousands of pounds of persimmons that would otherwise go to waste. This new challenge taken on by the all-volunteer group seemed daunting at first, but founder Siamack Sioshansi cannot stand wasting fresh vegetables and fruit when so many people are hungry. He and his core volunteers made the impossible happen in just two weeks: they created the infrastructure and gathered the volunteers to harvest and distribute 50,000 pounds of fresh fruit to those in need.

“(On Oct. 31) I received a call from the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano County introducing me to a widow who lives in Vacaville,” said Sioshansi. “She explained that her late husband planted 812 persimmon trees and shortly after the planting, he passed. Her orchard has now matured and since she is not a farmer, she does not know what to do with all the fruit. Last year over 100,000 pounds of fruit rotted on the trees. This year, she wants to donate the fruit to the needy.”

A few years ago, Sioshansi founded the Urban Farmers, an all volunteer Lafayette-based non-profit with a mission that evolved from helping suburbanites grow their own food to gleaning the thousands of pounds of fruit that is wasted every year by people who grow more than they need.

“The annual Thanksgiving feast is a reminder of how fortunate my family has been, and when I think of helping the hungry, I try to find a better option than donating cans of soup,” said Sioshansi. “One can of soup or six pounds of fresh, tree-ripened fruit? If you were poor, which one would you pick?”

Last Saturday morning, the trees in the Vacaville orchard seemed to be begging to be picked, many branches

weighted down to the ground with ripe, juicy, bright orange persimmons. The volunteers came from all over the Bay Area, from San Francisco to Sacramento to San Ramon, with probably the largest contingent arriving in two buses filled with Saint Mary’s College students. Those familiar with persimmon trees came with cutters and gloves; the students just made it work by twisting the firm fruit a few times.

Sturgeon was pleased. “My late husband was his own man and he had all these business ideas,” she said. “I don’t know why he planted all these trees, but if he can see us this morning, he must be very happy.”

Tina Pars, of Orinda, was one of the many volunteers who worked in pairs, endlessly dropping persimmons into milk crates before transferring them to larger crates provided by the food bank. They were then taken by a small pick-up to the larger Loaves and Fishes trucks, which began to fill very quickly. “I just love persimmons,” said Pars. “I just bite into them like in an apple, or sometimes I cut them in thin slices and eat them with Brie.”

Other organizations helped with technical aspects of the harvest. Moraga Hardware and Lumber owner Bill Snider donated 100 picking poles and Charter Pro, a local transportation company, offered the use of its buses. In addition to the 100 Saint Mary’s volunteers, Diablo Valley College recruited 50 helpers, UC Davis sent 100 people and The Athenian School, which has an orchard of 125 fruit trees that are harvested for donation, sent a busload of students and parents.

“The volunteers from the local churches came to serve lunch to the working volunteers, and the list goes on,” said Sioshansi.

The volunteers stopped picking around 3 p.m. when the 50,000 pound objective was reached. “That’s all the Food Bank could take,” said Sioshansi. The fruit, which preserves well in cool, dry conditions, will be

distributed over the next weeks to hungry families around the East Bay.

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## SMC Student Completes Gold Duke of Edinburgh Program

Submitted by Joshua Poolis



Expedition at Brecon Beacon Mountains in Wales.

Photos provided

Saint Mary's College junior Joshua Poolis, who attended Cwmtawe Community School in Swansea in the United Kingdom, travelled to London Nov. 12 to receive his certificate from the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's (DofE) patron and founder – his royal highness The Earl of Wessex. The Gold Award Presentation recognized Poolis' completion of his DofE program that took over two years to achieve. In total, over 4.4 million people have participated in DofE programmes and achieved over 2 million Awards



in the UK since 1956. Program activities included helping young carers, volunteering for a charity workshop, and intense weight lift training for his 100-mile expedition across the stormy Welsh Brecon Beacon Mountains. Poolis' quick thinking came into play when one of his team members injured his ankle at the peak, Pen Y Fan, at 3,000 feet during a storm. He quickly realized his team member's condition was potentially serious and acting on instinct, he pitched a tent for his team member to rest in while he went to get help.

## Student Loans That Make Sense

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

The wide availability of student loans in the U.S. reflects the value our nation places on access to higher education. As a college admission counselor, I have worked with students who could not attend college without the help of a student loan. However, student loans are often viewed negatively, in part because they are associated with the rising cost of higher education.

From the consumers' perspective, the rising costs of education can put students or parents in serious debt. But loans can also be viewed as a sensibly used credit card or home equity line of credit. If you choose and use credit judiciously, it can build a sound credit history, add value to your life now and help you prepare for your future. For these reasons, there is no need to avoid student loans entirely, and some good reasons to take out a loan. For example, a student can build a good credit history with a small loan that she can afford to pay off after graduation. Some affluent families may still include a loan in the plan to fund college so the student can be a stakeholder in his or her own education. The key for students is to use loans wisely so you end up with a manageable loan debt while building and maintaining a good credit history.

One way to conservatively manage your loan debt is to plan on borrowing no more than the maximum allowed by a direct student loan, a federal loan made through the William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program for which eligible students and parents borrow directly from the U.S. Department of Education. There are two types: Direct Subsidized Loans are available to undergraduate students with demonstrated financial need and Direct Unsubsidized Loans are available with no requirement to demonstrate need. The college you attend determines the amount you can

borrow based on your cost of attendance, your need and other financial aid you may receive. If a student were to take a maximum subsidized student loan for each of four years, the aggregate total allowed would be \$19,000. If a student does not qualify for subsidized loans, she or he could still borrow the unsubsidized version and the full amount of \$27,000 would be available. If there is need for some of the time a student is in college, these two types can be mixed, but the aggregate amount cannot exceed \$27,000 over four years. Thus, this loan program has built-in caps which keep a student from going beyond certain limits. The interest rate on the Direct Student Loan Program is fixed for the current year at 3.86 percent. Interest rates are tied to the 10-year Treasury bill and may rise in future years. The rate is set every July 1st. The Department of Education (<http://studentaid.ed.gov/eligibility>) provides very clear and annually updated guidelines to the affordability of college and reasonable levels of college debt.

Taking advantage of the direct student loan program should not overburden a recent graduate.

Loans from these programs are designed to be affordable and many entry level employment positions will permit a careful spender to make a repayment plan work.

So, let's take a concrete example. Since interest rates are expected to slowly rise, let's use a rate of 4.62 percent. If a student qualifies for a subsidized loan and takes the aggregate limit of \$19,000 at an interest rate of 4.62 percent, repayments would be right around \$200 per month to pay off the loan in 10 years. This is manageable on an income of \$30,000 a year. If the same student took the full aggregate limit of subsidized and unsubsidized loans and accrued a debt

of \$27,000, he or she would have to earn closer to \$35,000 with a monthly payment of about \$280. There are loans that tend to sink families into deep debt and these are the ones that give all loans a bad name. Take for example a family that takes out an \$80,000 Parent Plus loan at an interest rate of 8.5 percent. To pay off this loan in one decade would take an annual salary of at least \$119,000 with monthly payments of \$991. That's a huge chunk of change!

For a useful tool that estimates the salary one needs to earn to pay back a specific dollar amount of loan under various terms and limits, visit <http://www.finaid.org/calculators/loanpayments.phtml>.

Paying for college should never be an afterthought, and families who construct a sensible plan to pay for college costs by reviewing the full range and mix of options, including the federal student loans, fare best.



Elizabeth LaScala Ph.D. guides families through the sometimes complex world of college admission. She helps students identify college majors and career paths, develops good fit college lists, and provides essay coaching and application support to help students tackle each step of the admission process with confidence and success. Elizabeth also helps families maximize opportunities for scholarships and financial aid awards. Visit [www.doingcollege.com](http://www.doingcollege.com); Call (925) 891-4491 or email at [elizabeth@doingcollege.com](mailto:elizabeth@doingcollege.com).

# Warm Fire, Warm Hearts, and Warm Jazz at the Orinda Library

By Laurie Snyder



Mary D'Orazi and friends, Tim Campbell and Greg German, will warm hearts with an evening of Brazilian and jazz music at the Orinda Library Dec. 4 at 7 p.m. D'Orazi was captured in a recent Jazz at the Chimes performance by photographer, Grason Littles. Photo used with permission

San Francisco Bay Area jazz lovers will send winter blahs packing Dec. 4 at the Orinda Library when vocalist, Mary D'Orazi, brings her artistry to Lamorinda. D'Orazi, an accomplished vocalist who has

gunning at 7 p.m.

"D'Orazi's rhythmic sensibility and thoughtful phrasing are winning her fans across the San Francisco Bay Area," says jazz fan and Orinda head librarian, Beth Girshman. "When she sings a jazz tune, her rich, round tone compliments the talents of her fellow performers. Her vocal lightness and flexibility are marvelous on highly syncopated Brazilian songs."

In 2013, D'Orazi headlined at Out & About in Rockridge and at Jazz at Peace. She also performed with the Marcos Silva Band in Jazz at Filoli, the Montclair Jazz and Wine Festival, Rockridge's Jazz and Wine Stroll, the Sonoma Arts Guild Art Show, and other Bay Area venues. In addition, she has won fans at Grass Valley's Center for the Arts.

The performance is free – thanks to the Friends of the Orinda Library, which funds the library's Winter Music Series. The library is located at 26 Orinda Way – just a short walk from the BART station and restaurants serving up a diverse range of tasty delights. Parking is also available on the street and in the library garage. So chow down, and warm up.

For more information on this or other upcoming events, visit the library website at ccclib.org or contact Girshman at: (925) 254-2184, ext. 15; bgirshma@ccclib.org.

# Finding Balance: Movement and Motion at Any Age

By Amanda Kuehn



Advanced Balance Class instructor Esther Wetzel (left, red shirt) with her students. Photo Amanda Kuehn

It was 2 p.m. last Wednesday and the senior members of Esther Wetzel's Advanced Balance Class had just finished with their hour of mental and physical exercise when this reporter walked in to the Lafayette Dance and Movement Center. "Oh, you should have been here a few minutes ago!" said Wetzel. "We were passing beanbags with our hands and playing soccer with our feet."

"Yes, you missed a good laugh," added a smiling woman with cropped white hair. Three other ladies nodded in agreement.

Originally from Switzerland, with a master's degree in physical therapy and a keen interest in people, Wetzel is an ideal instructor for this motley crew.

"Movement is always very exciting to me," she said. Having given up physical therapy to raise her children when she moved to the States in 1990, Wetzel began looking for ways to use her skills and expertise about five years ago. She found just that at Lafayette Physical Therapy.

Wetzel has a particular interest in working with geriatrics. "It's special to help them keep their independence," she remarked. Wetzel takes continuing

education classes on senior fitness and makes an effort to engage all parts of the brain, accessing different senses and abilities in her students. "Everybody deals with something," she noted. "Everybody is different."

"Esther's classes provide an interesting, ever changing variety of techniques to enhance one's balance, posture and visual acuity," said class member Charlotte Dethero.

"She is beyond wonderful!" exclaimed Dethero's neighbor, Ginnie Menezes. "Although I hate to exercise I decided to attend a class. A year and a half later, I still don't like to exercise, but class with Esther is so much fun, the ladies I've met so delightful and diverse, I actually look forward to going."

"Esther has absolutely changed my life," said Ione Gille. "She knows each of our shortcomings and works with us." Classes are small – 4-6 people – in an effort to make sure students receive personal attention. "My favorite part of the class is Esther's ability to gently and humorously push us to improve," said Menezes. "We have absolute trust that she knows what she is

doing." A major goal of the classes is to train members to be alert, to keep themselves from injury and practice catching themselves. They also, "laugh and joke and dance and amaze ourselves," as Menzes put it.

Wetzel recognizes that the social aspect of the class is both healing and rejuvenating. "We laugh at ourselves a lot," she remarked. "What our bodies do and what they don't do. Sometimes the ladies say that's what they really come for – to laugh."

Dethero couldn't agree more. "We have a good time," she noted. "I never want to miss a class."

Wetzel teaches balance classes Wednesdays from 1 to 2 p.m. at the Lafayette Dance and Movement Center and on Mondays and Thursdays from 12:15 to 1:15 p.m. at Lafayette Physical Therapy. Classes are \$20 per session. Contact Wetzel at esterwetzel@yahoo.com or (925) 262-3155.

Beginning Balance Classes are also offered through Lafayette Physical Therapy. For more details or to arrange a pre-class screening call (925) 284-6150.



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## New Horizons for Upcoming SMC Graduates

By Amanda Kuehn



Image provided

You work and explore and learn and grow, and at the end of four years of hard work what do you have? For eight senior students at Saint Mary's College of California the answer is "plenty." Though not all undergraduates can take their hard-earned insights to the stage, for students majoring in dance, performance is essential.

The choreography of seniors Ally DeBoer, Britney Edens, Jenny Glosser, Joseph Klink, Melissa Miller, Christina Nelson, Kelsey Peterson and MarthaClaire Pile will be front and center on the stage of Le Fevre Theatre Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 5-7.

"I'm extremely impressed with what our seniors have done," said Catherine Davalos, artistic director of the Davalos Dance Company and professor at Saint Mary's College. "Horizons," the name the students have chosen for the production, is a unique concert of movement. "The image of the horizon reflects the vastness of the world, as well as the vast-

ness of humanity, and reminds us where we have been and where we are going," the students stated in a press release. "No two people have ever, or will ever live the same life, but ultimately we are all looking at the same sky."

From the lighting and costumes to the promotional materials, including the poster, the performance is completely student-run and will include a variety of dance styles, from modern to tap to dance theater. "I'm really pleased with their work," said Davalos. "I find it fascinating." The dances explore such themes as love, magic, faith, innocence, sacrifice and competition.

Most of the pieces deal with struggle in one form or another. "I see it a lot in their generation," said Davalos. "They're more connected to their personal struggles and to struggles on a global level as well." Pieces by Pile and Klink will address a need to endure. Glosser's "Tap That" puts forth a more friendly form of competition, while DeBoer's "First Thing, Last Thing" depicts a struggle between

love and loss. The struggle in Edens' "Buried Chains" is one of hiding emotional turmoil from the rest of the world. In Miller's "Nine and Three Quarters" we see the age-old struggle between good and evil. Peterson's "From the Dust" focuses on the struggle of finding faith in dark times, and Nelson's performance explores the tension between childlike and adult behavior.

In addition to its senior stars, "Horizons" will also feature a solo by Saint Mary's junior Felicia Cazares and a group dance by faculty member Jia Wu. The 12 senior dance students (eight of whom are choreographing) will be joined by a cast of two dozen underclassmen. "They're a particularly strong and artistic group," noted Davalos.

Each show begins at 8 p.m. Tickets are free for Saint Mary's students and \$5 for general admission. For information and reservations please contact (925) 631-4670. Tickets are also available on [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com).

## TEEN SCENE

### Behind the Wheel

By Caie Kelley

Although I have a hunch that my mother would disagree, I was an immensely talented driver the moment I sat down behind the wheel. During my first try, I repeatedly mixed up the turn signals, shifted gears to neutral when trying to drive in rear, and stepped on the accelerator when I meant to hit the break. Needless to say, it was a relief when I passed my driver's license test (the first time, shockingly!) after many bumper scratches and stressed-out squeals from the passenger seat. To my excitement, this summer my own little sister repeated the experience and began learning to drive. In light of my own joyous memories of the test, and her nervous anticipation, I thought I would find out: How did other teens do when they took hold of the wheel for the first time?

"It was horrible," explained a friend who wished to remain anonymous. "I grew up watching my mom and dad drive, so I was pretty confident. But it's a very different view from the back seat!"

Sammi K., who took her driver's test over the summer, echoed that sentiment when she said, "Learning to drive has been a big challenge. I assumed that it would be a breeze, and I used to laugh at my Korean immigrant grandma's stories with the dreaded DMV some 30 years ago when she passed on her fourth try. After my first lesson, the story was not funny anymore - my driving instructor even told me that I fit both stereo-

types of the Asian driver and reckless teenager."

Even after passing the test, many Lamorinda teens have stories about the rookie mistakes they made after getting their licenses. Gabi D. shared, "I have dented my car more than five times from hitting the front curb when I park. I have hit my friends' cars multiple times, too. I swear though, I am a responsible driver!"

Fortunately, there seem to be at least a few safe new drivers on the road. Stephany H. said, "I learned to drive in a parking lot, and it was pretty easy. I always pay attention to the road, because I want to defy the teenage-driver label."

So while new drivers can certainly be something to fear when cruising around windy Lamorinda roads, hopefully most 16-year-olds will seize Stephany's approach when taking the wheel for the first time.



Caie Kelley is a junior in high school and the Pop Culture reporter on the teen show, *Express Yourself*. In her free time, she enjoys swimming, teaching piano, and volunteering.

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

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

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# The Perfect Cheesecake Using Persimmon Puree

By Susie Iventosch



Persimmon Cheesecake

Photo Susie Iventosch

The Great Persimmon Harvest took place in Vacaville on Saturday, and The Urban Farmers of Lafayette was on hand to make sure the fruit from Charlotte Sturgeon's 810 fuyu persimmon trees did not go to waste like it did last year. Sturgeon's late husband planted the trees, and because she is not a farmer, she was unable to harvest some 100,000 pounds of fruit that rotted on the trees.

This year, in an effort to prevent that from happening again, she contacted The Urban Farmers, whose mission includes harvesting backyard fruit for the needy. Their primary focus is on hunger relief, so they joined forces with the Contra Costa-Solano Food Bank to mobilize hundreds of volunteers from local schools and other organizations to pick the fruit. (See the related article on page B5).

Although Sturgeon's persimmons are the fuyu variety, which are perfect for eating when barely soft, most baked goods that call for persimmons use the hachiya variety, which are best when super soft. The fruit is usually peeled and then pureed to add to the batter. The fuyus are more round and squat in shape, while the hachiyas are more elongated and almost heart-shaped.

My grandmother always seemed to know exactly when the hachiya persimmons from her backyard tree were perfectly ripe, yet not overly soft. She would peel them and toss them into a simple butter lettuce salad with a light vinaigrette. Delicious!

For more information on The Urban Farmers, please visit [www.theurbanfarmers.org](http://www.theurbanfarmers.org).

## Persimmon Cheesecake

### INGREDIENTS

#### Crust

- 1 1/4 cup pecans
- 1 1/4 cup walnuts
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- 3 tablespoons butter, melted

#### Filling

- 2 eight-ounce packages cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup hachiya persimmon puree (peel persimmons before pureeing ... can blanch in boiling water to loosen skins)
- 3 eggs

#### Topping

- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

### DIRECTIONS

#### Crust

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease a 9-inch pie dish with butter or PAM. Chop nuts in a food processor, until fine. Mix in a bowl with sugar, spices and melted butter. Pat into the bottom and sides of the pie dish.

Bake for 10-12 minutes. Remove from oven and cool completely.

#### Filling

In a large bowl, beat cream cheese with both sugars, until smooth. Stir in persimmon puree. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each.

Pour filling into cooled pie shell and bake for approximately 30 minutes, or until mostly set, but still a little jiggy in the very center.

#### Topping

While the cake is baking, mix sour cream, sugar, spice and vanilla. As soon as you take the cheesecake out of the oven, spread this mixture over the top and continue to bake for another 10-12 minutes.

Remove cake from oven, cool to room temperature and refrigerate for several hours, or overnight before serving.

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), and [www.taxbites.net](http://www.taxbites.net). Susie can be reached at [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com). **This recipe can be found on our website:** [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://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.



## THE APP RAP

By Eric Pawlakos

**App: Swype by Nuance Communications Inc.**  
**For: All Android phones and tablets**  
**Price: \$0.99**

Typing a few words in a text message is no big deal, and most smartphone keyboards are up to the task. But what if you are using word documents or a note-taking app and you need to type much more than a few words? That's where the Swype app comes in handy. Swype calls itself an 'intelligent' virtual keyboard that is better, faster and smarter than ordinary keyboards. It comes with many different features to assist the user in inputting words quickly and easily. For example, Swype gets its name from the fact that you can enter a word by swiping (tracing) the letters on the keyboard. Another really useful feature is Dragon Dictation, a highly sophisticated voice recognition program, which allows you to dictate text quickly, accurately, and hands-free. Swype also has a built in Smart Editor which has the ability to look at entire sentences you have entered and underline possible errors and suggestions for fixing them. The app allows you to go back and forth between three different key-

board designs, including a moveable keyboard, a full screen keyboard and one that is split-screen. The app also 'trains' itself to learn your unique vocabulary, enabling it to predict your words before you type them. If you use your smartphone to type more than just a few texts, you will love Swype. Unfortunately, this app is not compatible with the iPhone.



Alex Pawlakos enjoys biking, weightlifting, and tutoring in his spare time. He is a reporter on Express Yourself!(tm) Teen Radio. Alex is an economics major at UC Berkeley.

## MOVIE REVIEW

## "The Book Thief"

By Derek Zemrak



Liesel (Sophie Nélisse) reads to Max (Ben Schnetzer), who's hiding in her home. Photo Jules Heath TM and © 2013 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All Rights Reserved. Not for sale or duplication.

"The Book Thief" is a film based on the international best-selling novel by Markus Zusak that tells the story of Liesel, an adopted girl in World War II Germany who is intrigued by the only book she brought with her to her new home. This book inspires her to begin collecting other books as she is taught to read by her adopted father and a young Jewish man the family is secretly hiding in their basement.

The talented cast makes "The Book Thief" a winner. The young gifted actress, Sophie Nélisse, impressively

portrays Liesel, who many of you will recall from her role in the 2012 Oscar nominated film "Monsieur Lazhar," which also won the 14th Annual California Independent Film Festival Best Picture. I predict many quality roles for Sophie as she continues to grow as an actor. Liesel's adopted parents are Hans (Oscar winner Geoffrey Rush) and Rosa (two-time Oscar nominee Emily Watson). Hans is a character that audiences will find pleasant, lovable and caring. Rosa on the other hand will have to grow on you, but give her some time. Both Rush

and Watson deliver Oscar nominated performances.

Although the movie takes place in a horrific time period in history, the screenplay adapted by Michael Petroni ("The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader") adds a touch of humor in the scenes between husband and wife, Hans and Rosa. Hans' quick wit will have you laughing as he reluctantly interacts with Rosa. The humor is well placed throughout the film.

Brian Percival, an Emmy Award winning director ("Downton Abbey") directed "The Book Thief" that has a TRT (total running time) of 2 hours and 11 minutes. It is rated PG13 for some violence and intense depictions of WWII.

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.

# Business Directory

Heating

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**ATLAS**  
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 Old-fashioned service and high-quality installations.  
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 License #: 018287  
 25 yrs. experience in Lamorinda

**LOVABLE PET-SITTING**  
 Cats, Dogs, Birds, Fish  
 Play-Time - Walks - Feeding  
 Tender-Care - House-Sitting  
 References - 15 Years Experience  
 Lamorinda  
**Linda Kucma**  
**(925) 746-4649 or (925) 788-1429**  
[mywoodypup333@hotmail.com](mailto:mywoodypup333@hotmail.com)

Not to be missed

ART

**The Glover Group: "A Legacy of Light and Color"** which features the current works 21 local plein air painters who studied under the late acclaimed landscape painter, Pam Glover, and who continue to paint together today and participate in both individual and group showings throughout the Bay Area runs through Jan. 1 at the Orinda Library Gallery. The public is invited to a reception from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8. For info, visit [www.thepamglovergroup.com](http://www.thepamglovergroup.com).

**Saint Mary's College Museum of Art's Schedule of Exhibitions** through Dec. 15: "Judy Dater: Edo Redux," one of the country's most influential living photographers (in the new Studio Gallery). "The Artist Revealed: Artist Portraits and Self-Portraits" (in the Hearst Gallery). Fifty portraits and self-portraits are on loan from the Syracuse University Art Collection. "Malcolm Lubliner: The Automotive Landscape" (in the new Armistead Gallery). "Nature's Placid Splendor" (in the Keith Gallery). Landscape paintings with three private collection paintings never before on public view. Open 11 a.m. to

Not to be missed

4:30 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. For info, call (925)-631-4379 or visit [stmarys-ca.edu/museum](http://stmarys-ca.edu/museum). Admission: free to K-12 graders; \$5 adults. Free parking.

**The Moraga Art Gallery show entitled "Capturing Light: Lens and Glass"** highlighting photography by resident artist Wenda Pyman, and cast sand glasswork and flamework by guest artist Janice Peacock will run through Jan. 4. The show also includes works by the gallery's 14 resident artists and several guest artists at 522 Center Street, Rheem Shopping Center, Moraga. Free. The gallery is open Wednesday through Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. For more information, email [moragaartgallery@gmail.com](mailto:moragaartgallery@gmail.com) or call (925) 376-5407.

**Student Art from Afghanistan will be on display at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Library Gallery (Community Hall) through Jan. 13, 2014.** Afghanistan is a country with deep roots in art and culture. Though many beautiful treasures have been destroyed by war and political strife, Afghan children continue to create art and imagine a world of peace. This exhibit, brought to you by Trust in Education (TIE) and the Lafayette Public Art Committee, highlights drawings created by students taking classes funded by TIE.

MUSIC

**Experience the vibrant rhythms of salsa, sultry blues, and beloved Big Band standards** performed by the SMC Jazz Band from 8 to 10 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21 at the Soda Activity Center, Saint Mary's College. Cost: \$5 general; \$2 SMC community and seniors. Buy your tickets by phone at (925) 631-4670, at the door, or online at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/467632>.

**As part of a celebration of the Symphony's 25th season,** the Pacific Chamber Symphony, with conductor Lawrence Kohl, presents "Crazy About Bach: All Six Brandenburg Concertos" at 8 p.m. Friday, Nov. 22 in the Community Hall, Lafayette Library and Learning Center. To hear the complete set of the beloved Brandenburgs in one evening is a tour de force display of the virtuosity of the members of the Pacific Chamber Symphony and of Bach's incredibly mastery of substance and form. Tickets: \$30 seniors; \$35 adults; \$10 students with ID - children under 13 free with adult by calling Brown Paper Tickets at (800) 838-3006 or online at [www.pacificchambersymphony.org/lafayette](http://www.pacificchambersymphony.org/lafayette)

**As a holiday treat, Diablo Theatre Company offers up the delightful "A Grand Night for Singing,"** a romantic, entertaining revue of music by Rodgers and Hammerstein, the duo who created songs that are standards of musical theater and American popular culture. The show will run Nov. 29 through Dec. 7 at Walnut Creek's Leshar Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. For tickets, call (925) 943-SHOW (7469) or visit [www.lesherartscenter.org](http://www.lesherartscenter.org) or [www.diablotheatre.org](http://www.diablotheatre.org).

**The Walnut Creek Concert Band under the musical direction** of Harvey Benstein will present the Annual Holiday Concert at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 3 at the Leshar Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. This Walnut Creek tradition features many of your Holiday favorites, plus a guest appearance by the United States Air Force, Travis Brass. Tickets are available through the Leshar Center for the Arts Ticket Office by calling (925) 943-7469, or by ordering online at [www.Lesherartscenter.org](http://www.Lesherartscenter.org). Ticket Prices: adult \$17; seniors and students \$14. Group rates available.

**Welcome Winter with warm Brazilian Jazz - a free musical event** to celebrate winter with Brazilian songs, and a few seasonal tunes featuring Mary D'Orazi with Tim Campbell on piano and Greg German on drums/percussion at the Orinda Library at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 4. For more info, visit [ccclib.org](http://ccclib.org), call (925) 254-2184, ext 15, or email [bgirshma@ccclib.org](mailto:bgirshma@ccclib.org).

**"Horizons," the fall dance concert slated for 8 p.m. on Thursday** through Saturday, Dec. 5, 6 and 7 in LeFevre Theatre is presented by Saint Mary's College Dance Company. Featuring the

work of eight Saint Mary's seniors, and exploring many facets of the human experience, including love, magic, faith, innocence, sacrifice, and competition, this concert will appeal to and entertain a wide variety of audience members. Tickets are \$5 general admission and free to Saint Mary's students with ID. For info and reservations call (925) 631-4670. Online tickets are also available at [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com).

**Voices of Musica Sacra sings a variety of Christmas favorites,** featuring Britten's "A Ceremony of Carols" with harp accompaniment, plus other holiday music by Ives, Byrd, Burt, Thomas, and more, plus a carol sing-a-long at 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1924 Trinity Ave., Walnut Creek, and at 3 p.m. on Dec 8, at St. Stephen Catholic Church, 1101 Keaveny Ct., Walnut Creek. For info, visit [www.vmschorus.org](http://www.vmschorus.org), email [info@vmschorus.org](mailto:info@vmschorus.org), or call (925) 228-1181.

**The Merola Opera Program Holiday Concert is coming to the Lafayette Library** at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7 for a performance by two of its renowned opera artists in the library's Community Hall. The hour-long recital will star Kristen Clayton and Bojan Knezevic, who have performed with the San Francisco Opera and around the world. Tickets: \$10, with all proceeds going to the Lafayette Library Learning Center Foundation. It will feature a repertoire of selections from popular operas as well as holiday favorites. To purchase tickets, call the Library at (925) 283-6513 x103 or email [reserve@LLLCF.org](mailto:reserve@LLLCF.org). Tickets may be available at the door.

**Diablo Women's Chorale presents their December concert "Home—for the Holidays"** - an intimate concert of home, hearth...and chimney at 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7 at Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek. The house band and special guests will delight and amuse your whole family. DWC is directed by Mary Sorenson and accompanied by pianist Steven Evans. Tickets: \$15, students \$10 at the door or online at [www.diablowomen-schorale.org](http://www.diablowomen-schorale.org).

THEATER

**Saint Mary's College, Performing Arts Department Theatre Program** proudly presents the West Coast premiere of "And When We Awoke There was Light and Light," Laura Jacqmin's contemporary fable about teenage idealism and activism in the age of global connections. Guest director Susannah Martin stages the production, which opens Thursday, Nov. 14 and performs for two weekends on the Saint Mary's College campus. "And When We Awoke" performs at 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, Nov. 21-23, and at 2 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 24. Tickets: \$10 general; \$8 seniors (65+) and non-SMC students; \$5 SMC students, faculty and staff. Tickets are available online ([www.brownpapertickets.com](http://www.brownpapertickets.com)), by phone at (925) 631-4670 or at the door. (See story page B4)

**Snow falls onstage and the Christmas tree magically grows** to great heights in the beloved annual California Academy of Performing Arts presentation of "The Nutcracker." Performances at 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 6; at 2 and 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7; and at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8 at the Del Valle Theatre, 1963 Tice Valley Boulevard, Walnut

Creek. Tickets: \$22, can be purchased at <http://www.lesherartscenter.org/ticket-office-information/> and more information can be found at [www.capadance.net](http://www.capadance.net). Contact: [lynnkdavis@comcast.net](mailto:lynnkdavis@comcast.net).

**Town Hall Theatre has been the go-to place for theatrical holiday family fun** in Contra Costa County for generations. This season Town Hall mixes it up with a three-person comic tomado, "Every Christmas Story Ever Told (And Then Some!)" runs from Dec. 7 to 21, with previews on Dec. 5 and 6. Just as the title suggests, three actors take on the entire Christmas canon from "A Christmas Carol" to "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas" to "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" - Gustav the Green-Nosed Reingot and beyond. For exact times and prices, contact the Town Hall Theatre Box Office at (925) 283-1557 or visit [www.TownHallTheatre.com](http://www.TownHallTheatre.com).

LECTURE & LITERATURE

**The LLLCF Authors and Athletes series presents Tim Green,** best-selling author of young adult novels, former NFL star, lawyer and TV broadcaster, who will discuss his latest book, and share his wisdom about finding success at home, on the field and in the classroom at 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 20 at the Lafayette Library. Green will sell and sign books after the presentation. Tickets: free for youth, \$5 adults. For info, visit [www.lllcf.org](http://www.lllcf.org).

**Have holiday book shopping to do? If so, why not do it at Barnes & Noble** Nov. 24 and 25? Part of every purchase at the Walnut Creek Barnes and Noble store (or on their website, [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)) will benefit the Lafayette Youth Writing and Photography Contest. Pick up a voucher at the Walnut Creek store to use at check-out. If you shop online, use the check-out code: 11219672.

**Come enjoy a special reading of "Trap the Elf" by author Susan O'pelt** at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7 at the J. Colleen Holiday Event, 261 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. Twenty percent of the book sales on the day of the event will go to the [lilyarahgracefund.org](http://lilyarahgracefund.org) (supporting the arts in underfunded elementary schools across America).

**Stanley Middle School Holiday Gift and Book Fair Sunday** through Tuesday, Dec. 8-10 at Barnes & Noble in Walnut Creek. Shop for the holidays while supporting Stanley Middle School. Free concerts will be performed by the Stanley Chorus from 7 to 8 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8 and by the Stanley Jazz Band from 7 to 8 p.m. Monday Dec. 9. Up to 20 percent of purchases will go directly to Stanley.

**"A Night of Many Colors" presented by the Friends of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center** will feature award-winning artists Lou Fancher and Steve Johnson, who have collaborated on over 45 picture books as well as pre-production set and character designs on movies including "Toy Story" and "A Bug's Life." This husband and wife team uses an unusual approach wherein both artists conceive, design and paint together. They will speak at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 12 at the Lafayette Library & Learning Center. For info, visit [lllc.org](http://lllc.org).

... continued on next page

Please submit events to: [calendar@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:calendar@lamorindaweekly.com)

Lamorinda's Religious Services



The Orinda Community Church

10 Irwin Way, Orinda | 925.254.4906 | [www.orindachurch.org](http://www.orindachurch.org)

"No matter who you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!"

Join us Sundays at 10:00 a.m.

St. Anselm's Episcopal Church  
A Loving Community

Sunday Services: 8 and 10 AM

In-church Youth Zone, 10 AM Nursery Childcare  
682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, 284-7420, [www.stanselms.ws](http://www.stanselms.ws)

Lafayette United Methodist Church

955 Moraga Rd., Lafayette,  
284-4765, [office@thelumc.org](mailto:office@thelumc.org)

Worship	Sunday	10 am
Children/Youth Sunday School	Sunday	10 am
Youth Fellowship	Sunday	6 pm

► Something for everyone, birth through senior adults  
► Seedlings Preschool  
► lamorinda familycenter  
► Sunday Worship

LAFAYETTE-ORINDA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
See more at [LOPC.org](http://LOPC.org)

ORINDA CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

24 Orinda Way (next to the Library) - 254-4212

Sunday Service and Sunday School 10 - 11 am  
Informal Wednesday Meeting 7:30 - 8:30 pm  
Reading Room/Bookstore M - F 11 - 4; Sat 10 - 1  
[www.christianscienceorinda.org](http://www.christianscienceorinda.org)

**Worship the Lord!**  
Sundays, 9 & 10:30am

MORAGA VALLEY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
10 Moraga Valley Lane, Moraga CA  
[www.mvpctoday.org](http://www.mvpctoday.org) • 925-376-4800

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church  
433 Moraga Way, Orinda, 254-3422  
[www.holyshepherd.org](http://www.holyshepherd.org)



8:15 a.m. Traditions Worship Service  
9:40 a.m. Education for all ages  
10:45 a.m. Contemporary Worship Service  
Coffee Fellowship at 9:15 and 11:45 a.m.  
Childcare available for ages 5 and younger

St. Giles Episcopal Church  
An Inclusive & Affirming Community

Sunday School & Eucharist at 9am  
St. Mary's College Chapel  
1928 St. Mary's Rd., Moraga  
925-376-5770 - [www.stgiles-moraga.org](http://www.stgiles-moraga.org)

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Rotary



**Explore Rotary clubs in Lamorinda** The heart of Rotary is our clubs—dedicated people who share a passion for both community service and friendship. Learn about Lamorinda's Rotary clubs.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club

We meet Friday mornings at 7:15 a.m. at Celia's Mexican Restaurant, 3666 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. (Diagonally across from Trader Joes)

November 22:

Real Estate Fraud - Ken W. McCormick, Deputy District Attorney, Contra Costa County.

December 6:\*

Mary Jane Margraff. Local Lafayette resident will talk about women in aviation and sub-orbital space flight.

Please join us!



\*November 29: no meeting Thanksgiving week

◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆

**KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS**

**Teen Art Session for teens ages 13-19 at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 20** in the Arts and Science Discovery Room at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Come and create art to be publicly displayed at the library or to take home. Supplies, food and art examples will be provided.

**Young Adult Author Talk. Local author Corina Vacco, winner of the 30th Annual Delacorte Prize for a First Young Adult Novel, will discuss "My Chemical Mountain" at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21** in the Community Hall at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

**Jingle Festival. Everyone is invited for an afternoon of family fun** from noon to 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8 at 451 Moraga Way, Orinda. Come decorate gingerbread houses, sing holiday karaoke, and make ornaments and other crafts. There will be a holiday bazaar for your shopping pleasure featuring handmade scarves, crafts, jams, jewelry, baked goods, and books. After the festival stay from 3 to 4 p.m. for the Jingle Festival Holiday Concert. For more info, contact (925) 254-5965.

**HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTINGS**

**Refuge Community Church Christmas Tree Lighting at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 1.** Dress warm for this outdoor celebration featuring hot apple cider and cocoa, catered hors d'oeuvres, children's activities, Christmas carols with the Refuge band and the lighting of the 25-foot Blue Spruce Christmas tree at 155 Moraga Rd.

**Moraga Commons Park Christmas Tree lighting. Music, cookies, and cocoa** begin at 6:30 p.m., tree lit promptly at 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 6 at the Commons.

**Hospice of the East Bay invites the public to participate in its 27th Annual Tree of Lights Ceremonies** to be held in Contra Costa County throughout November and December at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7, 31 on Orinda Way, Orinda (by Bank of America) and at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8 at the Moraga Country Club, 1600 St. Andrews Dr. The tree lightings offer community members a way to honor the lives of their friends and loved ones. Funds raised allow Hospice of the East Bay to provide essential programs and services such as the Vigil Program which ensures no one has to die alone. For light dedications, donations, sponsorships and event questions, call (925) 887-5678 or visit www.hospiceeast-bay.org.

**The first-ever "It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette" community celebration** is scheduled for 4 to 7 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 6 in Lafayette's Plaza Park, located at the corner of Mt. Diablo Blvd and Moraga Rd. in Lafayette. Free admission. Arrive early and plan to stay! This fun and festive event includes visits with Santa, one-of-a-kind photo ops, live musical entertainment and a holiday sing-a-long. Santa will be arriving at Lafayette Plaza at approximately 4:30 p.m. and the official lighting of the Lafayette holiday tree is planned for 6 p.m.

**OTHER**

**Celiac/Gluten-Free Discussion Group from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 21** in Meeting Room 3 at the Rossmoor Creekside Clubhouse. Guest Speaker: Jody Dragon, R.D. - Clinical Dietician at John Muir Medical Center. Guests welcome. For info, call Walter at (925) 930-8875.

**Due to Thanksgiving the "Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church Taize" service** will be on Thursday, Nov. 21. Come as you are and refresh your spirit. The candle-lit Sanctuary, quiet songs, silence, and scripture reading (but no sermon) invite you to rest at this non-denominational service. Child care is provided if there are at least three children and two business days notice. Email Susan Wentworth at childcare@LOPC.org. Other questions? Contact rlspsalding@earthlink.net.

**The 35th annual Community Thanksgiving Breakfast** will be held

from 7 to 8:30 a.m. Friday, Nov. 22 at Our Saviors Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. Cost: \$20 per person. Begin the holiday season in a significant and meaningful way. Register online at www.lafayettechamber.org or call (925) 284-7404. Keynote speaker will be Semifreddi's CEO and president Tom Franier.

**For the 16th year Bobbie and Tom Preston will be holding the Cycle Recycle, collecting repairable bikes** to be refurbished and given to charitable groups to distribute at Christmas. New and/or used bikes and trikes—in working order or repairable – or useable bike parts may be delivered to the side driveway of the Preston's home at 1307 Larch Avenue in Moraga throughout the month of November only. No skateboards please; no need to call beforehand. For info, contact Bobbie or Tom Preston at (925) 376-8474.

**Annual Holiday Dinner, Orinda Historical Society. Be there or be square** for what is sure to be one of the community's most enjoyable and memorable evenings this holiday season! Laugh and learn while dining on scrumptious salmon, chicken or vegetarian delights. Presentations: History of Holden School (Joel Weber and Caroline Cogan); What's New at the Old Yellow House (James Wright). Social hour begins at 6 p.m.; dinner begins at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 4 at the Orinda Community Church. Cost: \$40; mail checks to Orinda Historical Society, P.O. Box 82, Orinda, CA 94563. For more info, call the Orinda Historical Society at (925) 254-1353.

**The Orinda Arts Council board's annual holiday luncheon** will feature holiday songs by Lamorinda Idol singers and the "Trial of Robin Hood" highlights by the Orinda Intermediate School Theater Company actors from noon to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 3 at the Orinda Country Club. Cost: \$22 per person. RSVP by Nov. 27 to OrindaArtsCouncil.org/holiday/or Contact Myrna Witt at keyofm@aol.com.

**Family Science Night Inventors Festival. Kids ages 4-12** can step into the shoes of an engineer as they investigate, experiment, and problem solve solutions to real world problems at this free event from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 4 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Community Hall, sponsored by the Lawrence Hall of Science.

**A community sing of Handel's Messiah will be held at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6** at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephens Dr., Orinda. The Messiah Sing will be directed by Minister of Music Robert Train Adams, with Festival Choir, professional soloists and chamber orchestra with harpsichord and organ to benefit the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano Counties. Childcare is available by reservation. A free-will offering will be taken. For more information contact Brenda Free, office@ststephen-sorinda.org or (925) 254-3770, ext. 10.

**Santa's Bag Boutique - A Lafayette tradition from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6, and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7** at the Lafayette Community Center. Don't Miss the annual Celebrity Gift Baskets at the boutique. All sales benefit the Lafayette Community Center Foundation. For more information, call Judy Gregerson at (510) 918-2280 or email santasbag@comcast.net.

**The LLLCF Distinguished Speaker Series welcomes noted travel expert and TV personality Rick Steves** at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6 at the Orinda Theatre. Steves, host of the PBS series Rick Steves' Europe and best-selling author of over 50 European travel books, will share tips on becoming a "temporary local" and connecting with your destination more intimately and authentically. Post-presentation book signing; books available for purchase at the event. For info, visit www.lllcf.org.

**The White Kitty Foundation is hosting a holiday photo session** with esteemed photographer Michael Tedesco from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7 at Danville Paw Spa, 581 San Ramon Valley Blvd. Plan for your holiday photo

session with your furry family members today! All proceeds will benefit the White Kitty Foundation to help needy cats and dogs. Appointments are encouraged, but walk-ins welcome! Cost: \$40, which includes one full-size digital image emailed to you. All images will be posted online and available for separate purchase. For info, contact Cris at (925) 837-2411.

**POLITICAL GATHERINGS**

**Two distinguished panelists, professor Ronald Ahnen and Aaron Owens, will be discussing capital punishment** from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 20 at the Saint Mary's College Soda Center.

**Join the Town of Moraga for the annual Moraga State of the Town Address and Volunteer Recognition Night** on Thursday, Nov. 21 at the Moraga Country Club, 1600 Saint Andrews Drive, Moraga. Doors open at 6 p.m. with appetizers and refreshments. Meet your local elected officials and socialize with community groups, residents, and neighbors as Mayor Trotter reports Town achievements from the past year and recognizes all of the volunteers who have completed their terms on town committees, commissions and boards. Email mbeasley@moraga.ca.us or call (925) 888-7021 to RSVP or for more information.

**GARDEN**

**Moraga Garden Club meeting will feature Dr. Anthony O'Geen, soil specialist at UC Davis, who will discuss "Fascinating Information about Soil and Its Ecosystems"** at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 21 at Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. Guests are welcome.

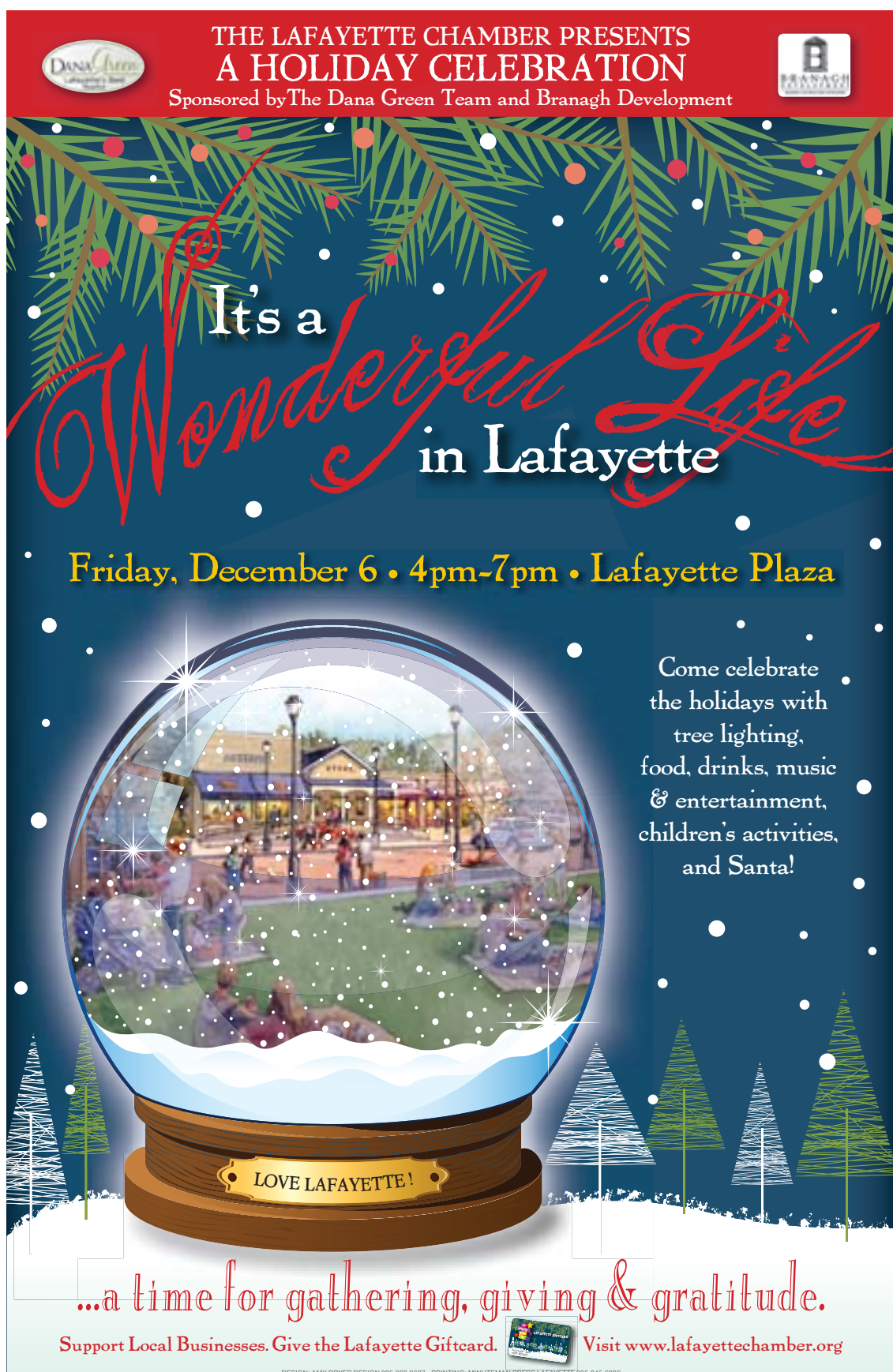
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# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Campo Wins NCS Water Polo – Twice

Both boys and girls defeat Miramonte

By Marissa Harnett



Campolindo Boys' Water Polo wins its first NCS Championship.

It is not unusual for two Lamorinda rivals to meet up in the North Coast Section finals, but it is rare to have the same two schools face off in both the boys and girls divisions of the same sport – on Nov. 16, the Miramonte and Campolindo water polo teams battled for the championship. The Cougars came out on top in both games.

### Boys

In Saturday's Division 1 Boys NCS championship game No. 2 Campolindo edged out top-seeded Miramonte for their first ever NCS win, with a final score of 11-10.

Acalanes' Heaston Aquatic Center was standing room only as a roaring crowd watched a physical and tense back-and-forth final match. The majority of the game was either tied or led by the Mats; Campo only possessed the lead twice early in the second quarter.

"We never felt as if we were climbing up hill, we were as prepared as possible and confident. Our boys never let down and that was the key to the victory," said Campo head coach Miles Price.

With 26 seconds remaining, Cougars' senior captain Dylan Fara netted the go-ahead goal bringing the score to the final 11-10. With precious seconds still left on the clock Miramonte at-

tempted to even the score, but time ran out, ending the Mats' quest for a ninth title in 10 years.

"Every one of them played outstanding," Price said. "Grant Sivesind controlled that game until he fouled out with three minutes to go. At that point (Garrett) Felix, Fara and (Spencer) Tagg took over and made some key plays. It's tough not to mention the other guys though because they made a huge difference ... It was really a team victory."

### Girls

For the No. 2 Miramonte girls, it was their first appearance in the Division 2 NCS finals since 2007. Top-seeded Campolindo has played in the finals every year since 2009.

Miramonte came out strong, scoring first and keeping the score even through the first quarter. Campo surged in the second quarter, opening up a 10-goal lead.

The Lady Mats held off Campo's at-will scoring in the third but, despite their tenacity, could not make up the deficit. Campo widened the gap in the fourth quarter with fierce defense and aggressive offense as the Cougars clinched their third NCS title in four years, 19-6.

"Off of great team defense we produced good counter attack opportunities, which led to players

getting open in the front court. The team passing was excellent and players shot the ball well," said Campo head coach Kim Everist.

Senior captains Annika Jensen and Natalie Seidmann were high scorers with seven and six goals respectively. Junior goalkeeper Madison Tagg logged 15 saves.

"No doubt that Annika, Natalie and Maddi were on. All three had an outstanding game," Everist said. "One of our strengths is that we play as a collective unit, it's never about one individual. The team worked really well together," she explained.

Miramonte head coach Trevor Rose gives kudos to both Campo and his own team. "I'm very proud of my team and to win 20 games in a season is awesome. Their hard work earned us that last game, but in the end Campo was just too strong," he said.

Fourth-seeded Acalanes advanced to the semi-finals where they were defeated by Campolindo.

Photos Gint Federas

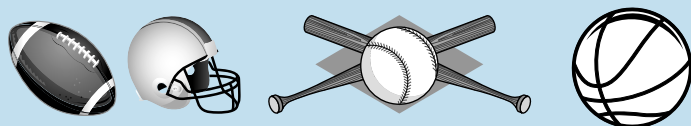
### Final Season Records

	Boys	Girls
Campolindo	22-6	24-3
Miramonte	19-9	20-7
Acalanes	11-14	15-12



Campolindo Girls' Water Polo wins the NCS Championship for the third time in four years.

## Youth Sports Registration



### Lamorinda Rugby Football Club



Registration is now open for the 2014 rugby season! Season runs January through March for youth, and through April for HS. All ages welcome. Girls welcome through age 11. No prior rugby experience necessary. Practices are located at the Wilder Fields in Orinda. Youth parent informational meeting is scheduled for Nov. 20 at 7pm in the Miramonte HS Cafeteria. The High School level team is hosting a recruiting event at 6:00 PM on December 4th at Round Table Pizza in Lafayette for anyone in high school interested in learning more about us. Find out more about our team and how to register online at [www.lamorindasc.com](http://www.lamorindasc.com). Contact head youth coach Doug Pearson for more info: [dpearson@lee-associates.com](mailto:dpearson@lee-associates.com). For High School, contact Recruiting Director Tim Mascheroni at [tim@mascheroniconstruction.com](mailto:tim@mascheroniconstruction.com).



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## Campolindo Starts NCS Run

By Brad Kvederis



Junior Annie Doyle had a great all-around effort in the win. Photos Gint Federas

After easily defeating John F. Kennedy High School in the first round of North Coast Section playoffs, top-seeded Campolindo survived a scare Nov. 16, holding off visiting Petaluma in four close sets to advance to the semifinals of the NCS volleyball championships. The DFAL champion Cougars, who had some big-game experience from playing several elite opponents this year, needed every bit of it to escape with the win, 25-23, 24-26, 25-23, 25-21.

Kelley Wirth (16 kills, 5 blocks) and Kenzie Brown (40 assists) turned in solid performances to help the Cougars overcome a slow start in which they trailed for most of the first set before scoring the final five points in a row, then dropped a tight second set that went to extra points. Head coach John Vuong said that playoff jitters cost his team early, in the form of shaky

passing and a few mental mistakes – but having the experience of playing in some high-profile tournaments "was a huge factor."

"We had played so many of these types of games before - the only difference is that in those tournaments, we have a second chance. Here, you don't have a second chance, and when that factor comes in, that's when the nerves start to quicken. But it helps a little bit," said Vuong.

The Cougars had a tough time with Petaluma's left-handed outside hitter, Alyssa McClure, who often hit right through the defense despite having two blockers assigned to her. But Campo's combination of Wirth, Emma Johnson (6 kills, 4 blocks), and Kirsten Sibley (7 kills, 1 block) eventually proved equal to the task as the Cougars closed out the third and fourth sets with strong net play and defense.

Utility player Annie Doyle recorded a great all-around effort with 4 aces, 8 kills, 5 digs, and 2 blocks on the night. Beyond the stat sheet, several acrobatic saves by Doyle and senior captain Natalie Menikitas kept Campo in the game at key moments and countered Petaluma's big hitters. Doyle said that while there is still some getting used to the high-pressure postseason games, she and the other underclassmen are enjoying their increased roles and like their chances of continuing on in the NCS bracket.

"We're definitely a younger team, and we definitely have a lot to improve on in the next two days for semifinals," Doyle said, "but I think we've got a chance (at winning the tournament)."

Campolindo next faces Tri-County Athletic League champion Albany (29-3, 10-0 TCAL) at 7 p.m. tonight, Nov. 20, in Moraga. Albany has lost only once since Sept. 14, and defeated Miramonte in straight sets Nov. 16.

Miramonte's season came to an end with the Albany loss, but not before the Matadors (15-11, 8-4) exceeded expectations for the year by finishing second in the DFAL and winning their first-round playoff game against Terra Linda. "This year was a phenomenal year for Miramonte. We played up to the potential we could have, and finished strong," said head coach Dave Masdeo.

Acalanes also saw its season end with a loss in its first-round NCS playoff game against Analy. The Dons (16-14, 7-5) finished tied for third in the DFAL.



Junior Kelley Wirth notched 16 kills.



Sophomore middle Emma Johnson had 6 kills and 4 blocks.

## Coming Up: NCS Football, Round Two

By Michael Sakoda



Casey Harrington threw for four touchdowns in the Dons' win over Sonoma Valley. Photos Gint Federas

All three Lamorinda high school football teams will compete in the second round of the North Coast Section Championship playoffs this weekend.

Miramonte finished the season with an 8-2 record (5-1 DFAL), winning four straight to lock down the third seed in the Division II playoffs. In their first round game Nov. 16, the Mats put 20 points on the board in the third quarter to dismantle No. 14 Tennyson, 54-25.

"We knew we were in control after the second offensive play where we scored," said Mats' head coach Jack Schram, noting that his team has been playing very well offensively. Miramonte's red hot offense has scored 41 or more points in each of the games that followed their 38-10 loss to Campolindo on Oct. 4, dropping a combined 248 points on opponents during the winning streak.

The Mats will have the home field advantage when they meet No. 6 Northgate at 7 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 23 in Orinda.

Acalanes (8-3, 3-3 DFAL) wrapped up its season nicely, winning four straight after dropping three in a row to Campolindo, Las Lomas and Miramonte.

"We battled through a tough stretch in the league," said Dons' head coach Mike Ivankovich. "We had a lot of significant injuries, but we've been consistently improving ... and are healthy."

The Dons won their first playoff game since 2005 on Nov. 16, hammering No. 10 Sonoma Valley 49-10. A pair of touchdowns in the final two minutes of the first half gave the Dons a 35-10 advantage. "That really was the back-breaker for (Sonoma)," said Ivankovich, who described his team's offensive play as "pretty explosive."

Acalanes will not have to travel far this weekend as they take on the top-seed Campolindo Cougars in Moraga at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 22.

Campolindo finished the season a perfect 10-0 (6-0 DFAL) earning themselves a first round bye in the NCS Division III playoffs.

"It was probably the toughest 10-game season we've ever played," said Kevin Macy, the Cougars' head coach. "Of course a key to that success was Phillip Rei ... he really was a difference-maker."

Rei, the senior receiver, began the year at quarterback while starter Andrew Zolintakis recovered from an injury to his throwing arm. After resuming his usual role, Rei led the team with 557 receiving yards before tearing his ACL.

With several injured players, "We're in a tough place right now," Macy admitted.

The Cougars beat the Dons 24-14 during the regular season. Looking ahead to Friday's game Macy said, "Concern number one is stopping (Peter) Mitchell."

Both Macy and Ivankovich said there's no decided advantage to playing a familiar opponent.



Peter Mitchell ran for the Dons' first touchdown Nov. 15.



Brett Merrill caught three touchdown passes in the game and intercepted a Sonoma Valley long bomb to end the first half.

## Lamorinda Weekly

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

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## Congratulations



Lamorinda Weekly would like to congratulate newlyweds Caitlin Rose Mitchell (née Graveson, our sports editor) and Jonathan Mitchell. The couple was married at Saint Mary's College on Nov. 16. We wish them a joyful life together.

# Lamorinda Weekly Writers on the Field

## Bassett Tabbed for Big Games



Lamorinda Weekly's own Conrad Bassett, sports and real estate writer, was recently selected to officiate both a Northern California Regional Championship football game, likely to be played in Sacramento, and a State Championship game at the Stub Hub Center in Carson mid-December. Only 10 officials from northern California are chosen each year to fly south for the championships. *L.Borrowman*

Conrad Bassett at work as the back judge last Saturday when Miramonte defeated Tennyson in the first round of the NCS championships.

Photo Jim Cottingham

## Desert Stormed



From left: Tri-Valley Giants Alvaro Alvarez, Edward Cooley and Nick Marnell prior to an Oct. 30 MSBL World Series game at Papago Park in Phoenix. Photo Roger Lara

Besides covering the fire beat for the *Lamorinda Weekly*, I play in the Tri-Valley Mens' Senior Baseball League during the regular season, April to September. From that league Don de Cordova, one of the commissioners, recruits, organizes and manages teams he enters into a national tournament in Arizona: the MSBL World Series. This year de Cordova invited me for the first time. I was the Lamorinda addition to the roster of the 60+ Tri-Valley Giants, Central Division.

Baseball teams travel to Phoenix for this event from all over the country. The tournament games are scattered throughout the Major League Baseball spring training complexes in the Phoenix area, and each team plays one game at a major league stadium. Our games were scheduled the week of Oct. 28.

After an opening game victory over the Chicago Blackhawks, we lost our next five contests. We were defeated in a couple of very

close games, against Portland and Orange County; and we lost not so close games to teams from Hollywood, San Antonio and Alberta, Canada. San Antonio finished in first place in our division.

Despite our won-lost record, the tournament provided every one of us a sublime moment or two. On offense, we were led by David "Doc" Currie, who had at least one hit in each game. The defensive star was centerfielder Edward "E" Cooley, who made a spectacular, back to the diamond, over the shoulder catch of a long fly against Alberta. My personal highlight was rapping a hard base hit in our major league stadium game – at Maryvale Baseball Park, spring home of the Milwaukee Brewers.

But the best gauge of our experience: Every Tri-Valley Giant said he looked forward to the opportunity to return to Phoenix next fall. *N.Marnell*

# Sherman Divers Fall Fun Meet

Submitted by Steve Sherman



Photo provided

Sherman Divers Fall Fun Meet took place Nov. 2 at Sherman Swim School in Lafayette. Teams from across northern California attended the event in which 89 divers competed.

### Top Lamorinda finishers include:

- Morgan Matranga (Moraga) 1st place, Junior Olympic 18U girls
- Joe Zacharin (Moraga) 3rd place, Junior Olympic 18U boys
- Brenna Cetrone (Orinda) 3rd place, Junior Olympic 15U girls
- Audrey Lundgren (Lafayette) 1st place, Junior Olympic 13U girls
- Spencer Drennan (Moraga) 2nd place, Junior Olympic 13U boys
- Evan Clark (Lafayette) 1st place, Junior Olympic 11U boys
- Camille Valvur (Moraga) 1st place, Future Champions level 8, girls
- Maia Marshall (Lafayette) 3rd place, Future Champions level 8, girls
- Maggie Phillips (Lafayette) 1st place, Future Champions level 6, girls
- Maia Warren (Lafayette) 3rd place, Future Champions level 6, girls
- Evan Man (Lafayette) 1st place, Future Champions level 6, boys
- Daniel Zabronsky (Moraga) 1st place, Future Champions level 5, boys
- Emily Flores (Lafayette) 2nd place, Future Champions level 4, girls
- Ian Milne (Orinda) 1st place, Future Champions level 3, boys
- Andy Stotroen (Lafayette) 1st place, Masters age 70-79, men

# Campo Athletes Sign Letters of Intent

Submitted by Tom Renno



Photo provided

Several Campolindo athletes participated in a National Letter of Intent Signing Day ceremony Nov. 13. From left:

Allison Stevens	UC Santa Barbara	Swimming
Denis Karas	UC Berkeley	Baseball
Matt Ladrech	UC Berkeley	Baseball
Annika Jensen	USC	Water Polo
Natalie Seidemann	UC Irvine	Water Polo
Hannah Grubbs	UC Los Angeles	Swimming
Emily Orwig	Cal Poly	Soccer
Janell Ingersoll	UC San Diego	Crew

# Former Lamorinda United Teammates

Submitted by Larry Margerum



Photo courtesy of Scobel Wiggins Photography, Corvallis, Ore.

Former Lamorinda United '94 Teammates Val Margerum (Oregon State and Campolindo High School) and Megan Turner (Stanford and San Ramon Valley High School) faced each other at mid-field Oct. 27 in the rain at Paul Lorenz stadium in Corvallis, Ore. Margerum had one of 16 shots for OSU, but Stanford prevailed 4-1.

# Local De La Salle Players Head for NCS

Submitted by David Ortega



Photo provided

Charlie Payne-Louden (#85) and David Ortega (#51) enjoyed Senior Night at De La Salle High School on Nov. 9. De La Salle enters the NCS playoffs with a 10-0 record. Payne-Louden and Ortega share a collective record of 42-1-1 since fresh-

man year. Payne-Louden, starting wide receiver, attended Glorietta Elementary and Orinda Intermediate schools; Ortega, a 2nd Team all-EBAL linebacker, attended Los Perales Elementary and Joaquin Moraga Intermediate schools.

# Campo Freshmen Celebrate Winning Season

Submitted by Erika Pringsheim-Moore



Photo provided

Campolindo's freshman football team won its final league game against Dublin High School 34-6 on Nov. 7. The

team was 8-0 in Diablo Foothill Athletic League competition. The boys celebrated with a team dinner at Metro Lafayette.

# Bulldogs Win Regionals

Submitted by Catja McDonald



Front row, from left: Abby Dulski, Margaux McDonald, Oceane Steubel, Caroline Berg, Julia Lima; back row: Freddie Bell, Arthur Waterman, Nick Wong, Kai DiGrande, Thomas Boyden, Tanner Zhahlen, Joe Henderson, Manu Prabandham, Reed Callister; not pictured: Stewart Fetzko.

The Orinda Intermediate School 6th grade cross country teams won their regional championship meets in early November. The

OIS runners scored the best out of 32 teams and a total of 137 runners. The last year both teams were this successful was 2004.

# JM 8th Grade Girls Win Championship

Submitted by Lyn Schmidt



From left, top row: Kate Miles, Grace Schmidt, coach Eric Standring, Jessica Thomas, Mia Schafel, Isabel Artiaga, Paige Johnson, Claire Meniktas, assistant coach Renata Sos; bottom row: Jessica Nelson, Grace Huber, Sam Massoni, Jillian Yick, Sophie Hein; not pictured: Cassie Nguyen.

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School's 8th grade girls' volleyball team brought home the championship this season after

beating undefeated Foothill Middle School in an exciting two-game win.

# Local Reiner Qualifies for Nationals

Submitted by Megan Lindberg



Tessa Lindberg

Photo John O'Hara

Fifteen-year-old Tessa Lindberg, who has been competing in the sport of reining for the past seven years, recently

took first place in regional championships to qualify for the national finals that will take place in Oklahoma City in December.

# SMC Rugby Prevails

Submitted by Tony Samaniego



The Saint Mary's College Sevens Rugby team hosted the "Battle in the Bay" Sevens Rugby Tournament Oct. 26-27 in which 16 of the top colleges from California, Arizona and Washington competed. The Gaels knocked off strong Cal Poly, Cal and Central Washington teams to qualify for a spot in the Division 1A National Championships to be held Nov. 23-

24 in Greensboro, N.C. Before heading to Greensboro the team traveled to a tournament in Long Beach and went 6-0 for the weekend, beating the SDSU Aztecs 40-0 in the finals. Saint Mary's has played in four Sevens tournaments since Sept. 7 and have a combined record of 22-2. The Gaels finished fourth in the country last year at the National Championships.

# JV Cougars Take DFAL

Submitted by Chitra Suri



Photo provided

Campolindo's JV water polo team won the 2013 DFAL championship for the second straight year going undefeated in league play.

# Head Royce Sweeps Tennis Tournaments

Submitted by Juliana Wong



From left: Coach Barrie Bulmore, Lauren McCormack, Samantha Farrell and Christine Esserman.

The BCL-East Women's Tennis Individual Singles and Doubles Tournament was held Nov. 4-5 at the Diablo Country Club in Danville. Head Royce freshman Lauren McCormack of Lafayette won the singles title 6-1, 6-0 and senior captains Samantha Farrell and Christine Esserman (Orinda) defeated College Prep in the doubles final, 7-6, 5-7, 6-3. Head Royce, coached by former Cal Tennis All American Barrie Bulmore, won the BCL-East team tournament as well, narrowly defeating College Prep 4-3. Head Royce

competed in the NCS team playoffs Nov. 12 but fell 2-5 to San Francisco University High School. The singles and doubles winners will play in the NCS individual championships that began Nov. 19.

The Miramonte and Acalanes girls' tennis teams advanced to championship play. Acalanes fell in the first round, losing to James Logan 1-6. Miramonte handily beat Alameda 6-1 in round one but was upset by Foothill in the second round, 1-6. *L.Borrowman*

# Lamorinda U12 Boys League Champions

Submitted by Matt Hansen



Photo provided

The LMSC U12 Boys Navy clinched first place in the NorCal Premiere League's Gold Division. Team United was also successful in tournament play this fall where they won both the Walnut Creek and Brentwood tour-

naments and were runners-up in the Dublin tournament. The team holds an overall league and tournament record of 15-3-2. The U12's now set their sights on the State Cup Tournament which concludes in January.

# MVP Swims for Right to Play

Submitted by Meredith Yox



Photo provided

Moraga Valley Pool's fall and masters swimmers held a swim-a-thon Friday, Nov. 15 to raise money for Right to Play USA. Olympic gold medalist, Right

to Play Ambassador and MVP alum Heather Petri joined 30 Marlins swimmers to swim over 2,500 laps and raise more than \$640 for the non-profit.

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 07 Issue 19 Wednesday, November 20, 2013



*The Home Designer: Color Your World ...read on page D6*

## Taking Care of Pests Without Pesticides

By Sophie Braccini



*James Schmerker with a skunk trap.*

*Photo Sophie Braccini*

Jenny Papka knows all too well that the use of rodenticides, the poisons to get rid of gophers, rats, mice, or voles, can end up being a catastrophe for other wildlife. The co-owner of

Lamorinda-based Native Bird Connections, who owns 16 non-releasable birds of prey that she partners with to educate residents of all ages, says: "It's lethal, it's hideous." She recently cited figures from

UC Davis that showed high levels of poisoning, often lethal, in 70 to 80 percent of the sick birds that come their way.

Papka is a supporter of Parents for a Safer Environment's training campaign designed to show residents ways to get rid of pests of all sizes, inside and outside the home, without using chemicals. At a recent day-long training session in Moraga conducted by PfSE, the public and representatives of local agencies were invited to learn about alternatives to pesticides and rodenticides.

"The Department of Fish and Wildlife are finding out that every animal has traces of rodenticide in their systems, even road-kills," said PFSE founder Susan JunFish at the training session. "[Veterinarians] are finding out that pets are also being affected."

One of the main strategies James Schmerker from Animal Damage Control suggests to deal with the problem, pesticide free, is to use different types of traps for rats, mice, gophers and voles. "For rats we recommend the raticator," said JunFish. The trap gives a deadly electric shock to the rodent. For mice, regular wooden mousetraps should be placed in the direction mice would be traveling, like along a wall or an edge, affixed with putty.

Traps are also the best option for bigger pests: raccoons, skunks and ground squirrels. "If you have skunks under your house, you can use a one way door trap," said Schmerker. "Attach it to the access where the skunk goes in and out or under your house. If they are not in breeding season, you will have no problem catching them."

...continued on page D4



## VLATKA BATHGATE



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## Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	14	\$555,000	\$1,955,000
MORAGA	9	\$380,000	\$1,340,000
ORINDA	9	\$720,000	\$3,275,000

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

- 652 Augustine Lane, \$1,100,000, 3 Bdrms, 1989 SqFt, 1937 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 07-29-05
- 1197 Bacon Way, \$755,000, 3 Bdrms, 2039 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 10-10-13;  
Previous Sale: \$900,000, 01-20-05
- 205 Happy Hollow Court, \$875,000, 4 Bdrms, 1906 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 10-8-13;  
Previous Sale: \$99,000, 03-04-77
- 3836 Happy Valley Road, \$1,955,000, 4 Bdrms, 3548 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 10-9-13;  
Previous Sale: \$596,000, 12-24-98
- 4120 Happy Valley Road, \$950,000, 5 Bdrms, 4761 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 10-22-13;  
Previous Sale: \$1,320,000, 06-21-02
- 2245 Hidden Pond Lane, \$1,199,000, 4 Bdrms, 3455 SqFt, 1993 YrBlt, 10-11-13;  
Previous Sale: \$500,000, 05-03-93
- 13309 Moraga Boulevard, \$980,000, 3 Bdrms, 1504 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 10-14-13;  
Previous Sale: \$777,000, 08-24-12
- 35 Marsha Place, \$1,030,000, 4 Bdrms, 1729 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 10-22-13
- 3279 Mt. Diablo Court #14, \$555,000, 2 Bdrms, 1697 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 10-21-13;  
Previous Sale: \$485,000, 03-12-03
- 1545 Rancho View Drive, \$1,080,000, 3 Bdrms, 2229 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 10-18-13
- 3334 Ridge Road, \$1,284,000, 5 Bdrms, 2616 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 10-15-13
- 6 Songbird Court, \$679,000, 2 Bdrms, 1378 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 10-11-13;  
Previous Sale: \$655,000, 04-06-07
- 1749 Springbrook Road, \$1,830,000, 6 Bdrms, 4562 SqFt, 2008 YrBlt, 10-10-13;  
Previous Sale: \$370,000, 05-31-01
- 3332 Stage Coach Drive, \$1,695,000, 4 Bdrms, 3127 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$1,250,000, 01-04-13

### MORAGA

- 2083 Ascot Drive #134, \$380,000, 3 Bdrms, 1444 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$258,000, 12-18-01
- 11 Birchwood Place, \$1,340,000, 4 Bdrms, 2492 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 10-16-13
- 1457 Camino Peral, \$480,000, 2 Bdrms, 1159 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$165,000, 07-22-88
- 774 Crossbrook Drive, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2048 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-9-13;  
Previous Sale: \$14,000, 02-02-73
- 6 Dolores Court, \$710,000, 3 Bdrms, 2095 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$472,500, 07-06-01
- 6 Harold Drive, \$790,000, 4 Bdrms, 1886 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 10-16-13
- 15 Hetfield Place, \$950,000, 3 Bdrms, 1811 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 10-17-13;  
Previous Sale: \$588,000, 06-26-01
- 295 Rheem Boulevard, \$1,249,000, 3 Bdrms, 2595 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 10-21-13;  
Previous Sale: \$290,000, 03-11-97
- 1135 Sanders Drive, \$1,045,000, 4 Bdrms, 2073 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 10-17-13

... continued on next page

# Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

...continued from Page D2

## ORINDA

- 211 Canon Drive, \$1,799,000, 5 Bdrms, 3722 SqFt, 2011 YrBlt, 10-21-13;  
Previous Sale: \$939,000, 11-09-06
- 101 Casa Vieja Place, \$875,000, 4 Bdrms, 2110 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$341,500, 05-03-91
- 40 Charles Hill Road, \$1,250,000, 3 Bdrms, 2505 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$555,000, 03-14-97
- 2 El Caminito, \$1,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 2861 SqFt, 1937 YrBlt, 10-22-13;  
Previous Sale: \$665,000, 06-14-89
- 5 Hall Drive, \$720,000, 3 Bdrms, 1760 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 10-8-13;  
Previous Sale: \$48,500, 09-01-72
- 117 Hillcrest Drive, \$790,000, 3 Bdrms, 1638 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 10-18-13
- 37 Muth Drive, \$895,000, 3 Bdrms, 1732 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 10-16-13;  
Previous Sale: \$740,000, 09-09-05
- 630 Tahos Road, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 3286 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-11-13;  
Previous Sale: \$1,580,000, 06-10-05
- 28 Tappan Lane, \$3,275,000, 6 Bdrms, 5372 SqFt, 1995 YrBlt, 10-15-13;  
Previous Sale: \$2,959,500, 07-15-08

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# STAMPS OF APPROVAL IN 2013

At this time of giving thanks, I want to thank the wonderful buyers and sellers I have been fortunate to work with in 2013. Any way you look at it, it's been an *impressive* year. After all, it's about finding the **Right Fit**.

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# Taking Care of Pests Without Pesticides

... continued from page D1



Susan JunFish speaks during a recent workshop at the Hacienda de las Flores.

Photos Ron Whitehurst

“You need a much stronger trap with locking doors that can stop a raccoon,” he added. “In a smaller skunk trap, a raccoon would be able to open the doors with its hands and destroy it.” And he recommended leaving opossums alone. “They may be ugly, but they are like a cleaning crew in your garden and they will eat grubs. They are not too problematic in yards, they don’t even eat fruit, and they’re pretty mellow.”

In 2011, the Town of Moraga caught 95 gophers in three and a half months utilizing Victor Black Hole traps, and in 2012 it caught 57 gophers in two and a half months, according to Moraga Public Works superintendent Dan Bernie. “With proper training, this can be a very effective way of limiting gophers in your lawn,” he said.

Steve Fishbaugh, maintenance operation and transportation director for the Acalanes Union High School District, got rid of about 150 gophers over six months at the local high schools using Cinch traps. “Praise the school district for agreeing to be pesticide free,” commented Papka, “and for agreeing to give me some of their catch to feed my birds.”

“Carbon dioxide is also an alternative to kill gophers,” said JunFish, “but it also kills anything in the burrows including salamanders, burrowing owls, and snakes.”

Another effective way to deal with rodents is with owls. The Town of Moraga set up two owl boxes in local parks, with two nestlings sighted per year. One barn owl nest box houses a family of these beneficial raptors that can consume up to 3,000 rodents per year. “When we clean up the boxes in the middle of November, we find 4- to 5-inch-high stacks of rodent bones,” said Bernie.

Shortly after the presentation, Fishbaugh confirmed that the AUHSD is now

considering installing a network of owl boxes at local high schools so the predators will also dispose of the rodents, thus reducing the amount of needed labor.

“Barn owls require 150 grams of food a night,” explained John Schuster of Wild Wing Company. “That’s three voles or seven deer mice. Great horned owls can extract gophers from their hole because they hunt by sound, not sight.” Schuster added that when babies are born the amount of food needed multiplies. The difficulty is placing the box at the right location on a specific property. “Owls do not hunt directly next to their nest, they cover a wide circle away from it,” said Schuster. “A solution is to have three boxes positioned in a triangle to cover an entire neighborhood.”

New techniques are also available for the tiniest of pests – termites – without having to fumigate the entire house. Chris Garcia from ATCO Pest Control said they use acoustic emissions for termite detection. “Our Termite Tracker detects both dry wood and subterranean termites actively eating and communicating within the galleries of the wood,” he said, adding that the sonic technology can detect very small infestations, with as little as six termites. “We locally treat infested areas by drilling a small hole into the chambers created by the termites. We then inject Premise Foam into the wood, filling the entire chamber and killing the termites. The residual foam is absorbed into the wood, thus preventing any further infestation for approximately two to three years.”

Jon Nelson from Alliance Environmental Services stated that, according to the California Department of Consumer Affairs, the only two effective methods for total, whole-house eradication of termites are fumigation and heat.



James Schmerker with a gopher trap.





Jenny Papka

Photo provided

“The heating process introduces clean, dry heat into a structure, gradually increasing the temperature until the inside temperature is between 140 and 150 degrees and the wood core reaches 120 degrees,” he explained, “Technicians then maintain the temperature at or above that level for 1.5 hours to ensure a complete kill. The entire procedure may be completed in as little as 8 hours.”

The training day was a huge success, offering many chemical-free pest control strategies.

“We had 71 registrants and it is very encouraging to see so many experts in the field of pest control providing options that work well, are cost effective, and safer than using poison,” said JunFish, “We hope that residents and businesses, as well as public agencies would look at our web site to get resources and get started.”

PFSE is raising funds to be able to assist schools and cities that want to adopt alternative methods of pest control. For more information, visit pfse.net.

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## The Home Designer

# Color Your World

By Brandon Neff



Walls were painted a custom grey to accent the grand fireplace stone. Photos courtesy Brandon Neff Design

Have you ever entered a room and instantly felt your spirit lifted? Or, driven past a field of flowers and been transported? That's the power of color. Sure, we all have different preferences when it comes to color – some cooler, some warm and enveloping. Many studies have been done on the psychology of the way color impacts us, but the bottom line is we like what we like. Color is visceral – it transforms.

For my client, Connie, it was all about saturated hues reminiscent of a spring bouquet – cerise, raspberry, coral, peony and leaf. She hadn't updated her home in many years and was ready for something transformational.

For her home in Moraga, Connie wanted her space to speak to her love of happy, candy colored accents and soft fabrics blended to create an altogether glamorous effect. Strong colors take a confident hand and not a small amount of courage to pull off successfully. But, oh, what a payoff! What I hope we achieved in her home is an expression of her warm and inviting personality mixed with her tradi-

tional and sophisticated heritage.

For starters, there were several great elements in her living room – high ceiling, sundrenched light from the patio doors leading to the pool and a grand fireplace that climbed the height of the space. While the room had potential, it felt washed out. Her pastel fabrics and white walls were overwhelmed by the strong California light – a light that needs stronger color to stand up to.

When I suggested turning up the volume on their palette, and adding a range of patterns, she and her husband came on board – enthusiastically.

Adding color to your life, and design, doesn't mean splashing it everywhere – especially in a room that needs to work cohesively with adjacent spaces. With a kitchen on one end, and the entry flanking the other, it was important to link the spaces in my client's home while still achieving something beautiful and fresh. Think of the walls as the shell that can be a neutral, but highlighted backdrop for enhancing everything you put in that room – and a landscape to highlight the art you hang.

With that in mind, I suggested a warm grey for the walls that helped pop the crisp white mouldings and accent the wood planked ceiling. Grey is a fantastic foil that works in any room to add depth to your walls while accenting nearly every other accent color. Grey and chartreuse, grey and yellow and grey with coral are a few of my favorites. Grey keeps more intense hues from looking too garish – grey adds a subtle sophistication.

The mantel was painted a deeper shade of grey to pull out the field stones that clad the fireplace breast – the original light oak mantel looked dated and out of place. It wasn't a particularly interesting feature, but by painting it out it became more a part of the room.

Remember, painting wood isn't a sacrilege unless the piece is a treasured antique or somehow integral to your home. A coat of paint has brought many a vintage chair or dresser back to life.

At nearly 20 feet by 15 feet, the room had enough scale to handle heartier pieces – always keep proportion in mind when designing any space – as small pieces in a large room feel like doll furniture. My clients wanted the space to work for both cozy TV watching and for entertaining larger groups. Having several areas within the space for lounging, reading

and conversation divided the room into “zones” that allowed it to work on many levels. I introduced them to a bench with gracious bolsters that serves to flank the oversized ottoman I designed, while adding seating and allows informal gathering around the center of the room. Its brass capped legs and mid-century lines worked beautifully with more traditional elements.

A classic club chair in the corner upholstered in a rich watermelon mohair provides a place to read and enjoy the view to the pool, and a vintage Queen Anne chair can migrate to serve as needed while adding a traditional silhouette. From the onyx side tables to the velvet pillows, every piece added layers of color, texture, pattern and warmth.

Draperies were kept simple and elegant with a tailored valance. Table lamps in Grecian urn shapes made of glass mix with a blue and white chinoiserie task lamp for added interest and to keep everything from looking too predictable.

Tips of the trade:

In a room with two large upholstered and skirted pieces (in this case the sofa and loveseat), try adding leggy accents like the ottoman with cabriole legs and the single armchair – this helps to keep the room from looking too “heavy.” Try and keep your wood finishes to fewer than three in any room – we mixed deep walnut, lighter oak and a large painted media cabinet to hold her beloved Vermont pottery to full effect without it looking like a tag sale – think about continuity in every detail.

... continued on next page



Groupings like this onyx table, Chinese lidded jar and coral colored roses give high impact style to a corner of the room.



*An oversized ottoman does double duty as a place for snacks and extra seating in a pinch.*

Don't be afraid to mix metals. Layering brass, silver, and even chrome can add interest and keep everything from looking too staged.

You don't need to match your art to your room. Fewer things in design can drive me over the edge more than when I see homeowners match the art colors to their furnishings and fabrics. It reminds me of a Starbucks where the quaint coffee posters pick up every tone and hue of the flooring, walls and banquette seating. Your home isn't a corporate logo, so stop matching! The eye needs to travel, and a room needs visual tension to keep it interesting. Mix it up. Vary the lighting. I've said this before, but it deserves repeating. Every room needs three kinds of lighting: general light (recessed cans), accent lighting (to highlight art or a specific view) and task lighting (for reading and to keep light at eye level where it's more flattering on the face.)

And please, everything on dimmers. Your guests will thank you.

*Brandon Neff is a Bay Area based Interior Designer. He can be reached at [BrandonNeffDesign.com](http://BrandonNeffDesign.com) or at [brandonneffdesign@yahoo.com](mailto:brandonneffdesign@yahoo.com).*



## DUDUM REAL ESTATE GROUP *Distinctive Properties*

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**660 LOS PALOS DRIVE**  
5 BR/4 bath modern craftsman in Burton Valley sold in 10 days with 3 offers over asking at \$1,775,000.



**566 SANTA MARIA WAY**  
4 BR- 3 bath traditional rancher in the Trail Neighborhood sold in 7 days with three offers over the asking price at \$1,000,000.



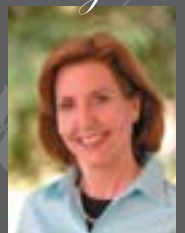
**1706 JEANNE CIRCLE**  
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## ORINDA



### 9 Las Piedras

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## ORINDA



### 1 Camino del Cielo

Set in the picturesque area of El Toyonal, this spacious 4900 sq. ft. newer construction 4+ bedroom, 3.5 bath brown shingle style home offers spectacular views & privacy yet is located just mins from downtown Orinda. **\$1,599,000**

## ORINDA



New Price

### 11 Fairway Drive

Rare find. Mid-century modern 4bd/3ba + 2 half bath home on 4th fairway. Private, large rooms, high ceilings, office, boudoir, great guest setup, updated kitchen. Grand, comfortable, very special property. **\$1,599,000**

## ORINDA



### 17 Tappan Lane

Vistas across Orinda come alive from all rooms of this spacious 4,155 sf with 6 bd/4 ba & 2 half ba. High ceilings & light & bright. Perfect for fun in the sun with yards, decks, pool, & vineyard on 1.15 acres. **\$2,389,000**

## ORINDA



### 11 Scenic Drive

Elegant updated 4bd/3.5ba, 4695 sf single-story estate property on .64 ac. Custom millwork, hand carved biblical stone fppls, lrg bdrms, ofc, Chef's eat-in kit/fam.rm; guest house, pool, lrg patio, gorgeous landscaping. **\$3,350,000**

## ORINDA



### 92 Sandhill Road

Absolutely One-of-a-Kind Bay Area Home w/captivating, sweeping views from every rm. Perched on foremost knoll of the coveted Sandhill enclave. Ideal for active family as well as large scale entertaining. **\$5,200,000**

## MORAGA



New Listing

### 137 Via Joaquin

Updated Moraga Townhome with Oversized loft, chef's kitchen, open floor plan, lots of windows, private setting. Inviting patio backs to open space. 75 Walk Score. **\$645,000**

## MORAGA



Coming Soon

### 30 San Pablo Court

Remodeled 4 bedroom & 2 bath home with high end finishes located on a huge flat yard. Desirable "The Bluffs" neighborhood with top rated Moraga & Campolindo schools. **Price Upon Request**

## MORAGA



### 1743 Spyglass Lane

Moraga Country Club Forest Hills model, updates throughout include new kitchen appliances, granite counters, updated bath, hardwood floors, new carpet, paint & lighting. **\$950,000**

## LAFAYETTE



### 9 Mountain View Place

Fabulous updated 4bd/2.5ba, 3481 sf custom contemporary on .78 ac in tranquil setting. Spacious LR & DR, new hardwd flrs throughout, new eat-in kitchen/DR open to FR, voltaic solar panels, new redwood deck & more. **\$1,299,000**

## ROSSMOOR



New Listing

### 4829 Terra Granada # 2B

Sunlight fills upper-level 2bd/2ba home. Soaring ceilings & dramatic windows highlight living rm. Patio door from dining rm leads to deck. Eat-in kit. & large formal dining rm. Take in the view from window seat in Master. **\$549,000**

## WALNUT CREEK



### 3737 Waterford Lane

Mini Merlot Vineyard! Home included! Own your own grapevines & fruit trees on gorgeous lot with beautiful almost 3700 sq ft 4 bdrm home. Hardwood floors, 3 fireplaces, formal dining & separate ofc. A must see at **\$1,398,000**



## THE VILLAGE ASSOCIATES:

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