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Holiday Events Make the Season Sparkle

Lafayette



Don't miss "It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette," presented by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by local Lafayette realtor Dana Green and Branagh Development, who together are also hosting the environmentally-friendly downtown Lafayette twinkle lights for the 2013 holiday season. The party runs from 4 to 6 p. m. Friday, Dec. 6, with Santa scheduled to parade on Lafayette's treasured "Old Betsy" fire engine, starting from the Lafayette Historical Society (Lafayette Library and Learning Center) at 4 p.m., traveling down Golden Gate Way and arriving at Lafayette Plaza Park at 4:30 p.m. Look for twinkle lights, live musical entertainment - including local student musicians and singers (pre-school on up), performers from the Peter Pan Foundation, Town Hall Theatre performers - ornament making and a holiday sing-a-long. Official tree lighting is slated for 5:30 p.m., complimentary hot chocolate and treats sponsored by Whole Foods. Food trucks will have dinner items to purchase.

The Contra Costa Children's Chorus performs "My Spirit Rejoices" a variety of holiday music at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church from 7 to 9 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6 in the Sanctuary, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Tickets: \$5 for students, \$10 for seniors and \$15 general admission.

Santa's Bag Boutique for one weekend only, Friday through Sunday, Dec. 6-8. Come early for the best selection of holiday, gift items, and cool stuff; all sales benefit the Lafayette Community Center Foundation. Edibles, unique handmade decor, jewelry, celebrity gift baskets and so much more at this annual event at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Rd., Lafayette. Hours: 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

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 ext. 103 or email reserve@LLLCF.org. Tickets may be available at the door.

Looking for a unique gift this Christmas season? Come to the Lafayette Art Gallery for the special Holiday Boutique Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 7 and 8, featuring one-of-a-kind gifts and craft items that are sure to make the recipient smile! The members of the Lafayette Art Gallery will be represented, as well as selected guest artists and artisans from the local community. The Holiday Boutique will feature wonderful holiday gift items including ceramics and glassware, holiday cards, scented beeswax and decorator candles, hand-made soaps, holiday ornaments, jewelry and fashion accessories, great stocking stuffers like coasters and fun magnets, designer accent pillows, handcrafted journals, and of course paintings and prints.

"Every Christmas Story Ever Told." Fun for the whole family at Town Hall Theatre beginning Saturday, Dec. 7 and running through Dec. 21. A three-person comic tornado takes on holiday classics from "A Christmas Story" to "The Grinch Who Stole Christmas." Check the THT website for ticket prices and times, www.townhalltheatre.com or call the box office at (925) 283-1557, 3535 School Street, Lafayette. (See story page B1)

"Christmastime" holiday music. Get in the spirit with a festive mix of fantastic Christmas tunes performed by not one, but two of the choirs - singing and ringing, from Our Saviors Lutheran Church, in the Sanctuary at 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8 at 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. Free. Carols from England, France, Spain and Puerto Rico along with some rockin' Christmas Spirituals will be featured.

Lafayette's Hospice of the East Bay Tree of Lights is now shared with Moraga. Look for the ceremony at the tree near the entrance of the Moraga Country Club (1600 St. Andrews Dr.) at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8 with a reception to follow. This year's tree is dedicated to Mary Ellen Dochterman.

Christmas Concert featuring the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church Choirs from 4 to 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14 in the Sanctuary, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Direct any questions about the free event to the church at (925) 283-8722.

In Lumine. From flares and fireflies to more introspective illuminations, WomenSing's wonderfully fresh holiday concert, "In Lumine" (In Light), will be the choral event to anticipate this holiday season. Full, robust and romantic elements abound in Imant Raminsh's "Missa Brevis in C Minor." The light of the Mother will shine in Ivo Antognini's "Ave Maris Stella" in its string-like lines, and cluster chords that create a glow of sound. In the song cycle "Lux Lucis," Seattle composer Karen Thomas provides two lustrous settings of 12th century texts by composer and mystic Hildegard von Bingen with numerous references to light, sun, flame and radiance. The light of fire in Dale Trumbore's "Flare" will rush to catch you! Join WomenSing, and Guest Conductor Jeremiah Selvey this holiday season. Program begins at 8 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 18 at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Tickets available at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/506271>.

Traditional Folk Songs of the Winter Holidays at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Kids and adults can enjoy a free holiday concert with legendary folksinger, storyteller and autoharp virtuoso Adam Miller from 6 to 9 p. m. Thursday, Dec. 19 in the Library's Community Hall. Sing-along songs will include something for everyone: Hanukkah, winter solstice, Christmas carols and more.

The Bethlehem Experience. The Lafayette United Methodist Church presents an interactive performance that takes you back through time. Tour Guides will lead groups of 10 people through the marketplace of Bethlehem on the night of the Messiah's birth with the smell of exotic spices, the festive sound of Jewish music, the sight of robed and sandaled merchants in their stalls, the taste of freshly baked unleavened bread, live animals in the stable and the soft feel of flaxen "swaddling clothes." The social event that emphasizes the spiritual meaning of Christmas takes place between 5:30 and 8 p.m. Dec. 20-22 at the Lafayette United Methodist Church, 955 Moraga Road, Lafayette. Hour-long tours begin every 15 minutes. Refreshments and entertainment provided while you wait. Freewill donation: \$5 per person or \$20 per family. For questions call (925) 284-4765.

"To All a Good Night." Improvisation play based on audience members' worst "home for the holidays" stories at 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 21 at the Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road. Tickets: \$10 at the door or via www.synergytheater.com, which also has more information about the production.

Kenn Adams' Adventure Theater - an interactive comedy show for heroes of any age - will begin at 11 a.m. Sunday, Dec. 22. Audience members make all of the sound effects, become the scenery, suggest the twists and turns of the plot and jump up on the stage to play the main characters. Tickets: \$5, available at the door or via www.synergytheater.com.

C. Tyson

Moraga

Saint Mary's Glee Club and Chamber Singers will perform a program of sacred music, spirited popular songs and seasonal classics at 1:15 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 4 in the Saint Mary's College Chapel. Suggested donation: \$10 general; \$8 seniors and non-SMC students; \$5 students, faculty, and staff. For more information, contact Sharon Cahill at (925) 631-4670.

Annual Holiday Tree Lighting Ceremony. Santa and the Moraga Youth Involvement Committee helpers will distribute cookies and hot cocoa with the Moraga Community Chorus entertaining the crowd at 6:30 p.m. and the tree lighting at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6 at the Moraga Commons Park. Residents can support the tree lighting by contributing to the Buy-a-Bulb fundraiser. The suggested donation is \$25 can be made online at moraga.ca.us; click on Quick Links, Register for Classes, Donations.

Hospice of the East Bay 27th Annual Tree of Lights Ceremony at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8 at the Moraga Country Club, 1600 St. Andrews Dr. (also at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7 in Orinda). 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.hospiceeastbay.org.

Free photo with Santa from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7 at 5A Rent A Space, 455 Moraga Rd., Suite F. Free framed picture, cookies, and games for the kids. There will also be a free gift wrapping room from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day but Sunday through Dec. 24 with wrapping paper, ribbon, and scissors.

Live Nativity. See the Christmas story come to life at the ninth annual viewing of the Live Nativity from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7 at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church, 10 Moraga Valley Lane. The courtyard will be transformed into a Bethlehem manger when members of the congregation take on the roles of Mary and Joseph, the three Wise Men, shepherds, Roman soldiers, and a host of heavenly angels. And the oxen, sheep, goats, and other animals truly transform the space into a spectacle not to be missed. While the courtyard will be a reverent scene, there will be additional activities, music and snacks in the Fellowship Hall. The Sanctuary will be open for prayer and contemplation. There is no cost to attend.

Breakfast with Santa. There are a few spaces left for the 10:30 a.m. slot on Saturday, Dec. 14 (8:30 a.m. is sold out), organized by the Moraga Parks and Recreation Department at the Hacienda de las Flores. Register at Moraga.ca.us, quick links "Register for classes."

You're invited to take a photo with Santa, so bring your camera from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14 in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center between Tuesday Morning and Nation's Giant Hamburgers. Photos, holiday clowns and balloon art are free with Rheem Valley Shopping Center receipts totaling \$25 or more. For info, visit rheemvalley.net.

m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14 at the Moraga Library. Library staff will take participants step-by-step through the process of making and then adding LEDs to gorgeous ornaments. There is limited seating for this special program. Register at ccclib.org or call the Moraga Library at (925) 376-6852.

Fratello Marionettes: North Pole Review. Join the fun with our puppet extravaganza, The North Pole Review, which showcases the high kicking antics of the Russian Trepak Dancers, the graceful ice skater Crystal Chandelier, and features dazzling acrobatic penguins at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 17 at the Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. Generously sponsored by the Friends of the Moraga Library, this is a perfect way to celebrate the holiday season!

Candlelight Christmas Service from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20 will include worship, scripture reading, biblical message and a dessert banquet at Refuge Community Church, 155 Moraga Road. For more information, visit www.refugecommunity.org.

S. Braccini
Orinda

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 Wednesday, Dec. 4. 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. at Orinda Community Church. Cost: \$40. For more information, call the Orinda Historical Society at (925) 254-1353.

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@ststephenorinda.org or (925) 254-3770, ext. 10.

Family fun holiday events at Orinda Theatre Square from 4 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 7 and from 3 to 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 14. Make your own ornaments, enjoy a holiday cappella performance by Miramonte High School students and a tree lighting ceremony (Dec. 7), or build a real snowman in the afternoon and take a horse and carriage ride before dinner (Dec. 14). Schedule details available at www.orindatheatresquare.com.

The 12th Annual Tarabrook Holiday Boutique will feature one-of-a-kind handmade gifts and food from over 30 local artisans from noon to 8 p.m. Friday, Dec. 6, and from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 7- 8 at 1 Tarabrook Drive, Orinda. Lots of parking. A percentage of the proceeds benefit the National Breast Cancer Foundation.

Orinda Tree of Lights Holiday Celebration. Get yourself in the spirit before fessing up to the big guy about whether or not you've been naughty or nice in 2013. Program begins at 4:30 pm Saturday, Dec. 7 at the Bank of America parking lot. To sponsor a light in memory of a loved one, visit the Hospice of the East Bay's website: <https://hospicee.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/2013TreeofLights/OrindaTree/tabid/482630/Default.aspx>.

Jingle Festival. Everyone is invited for an afternoon of family fun from noon to 3 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 8 at St. Mark's, 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.

L. Snyder

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