

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

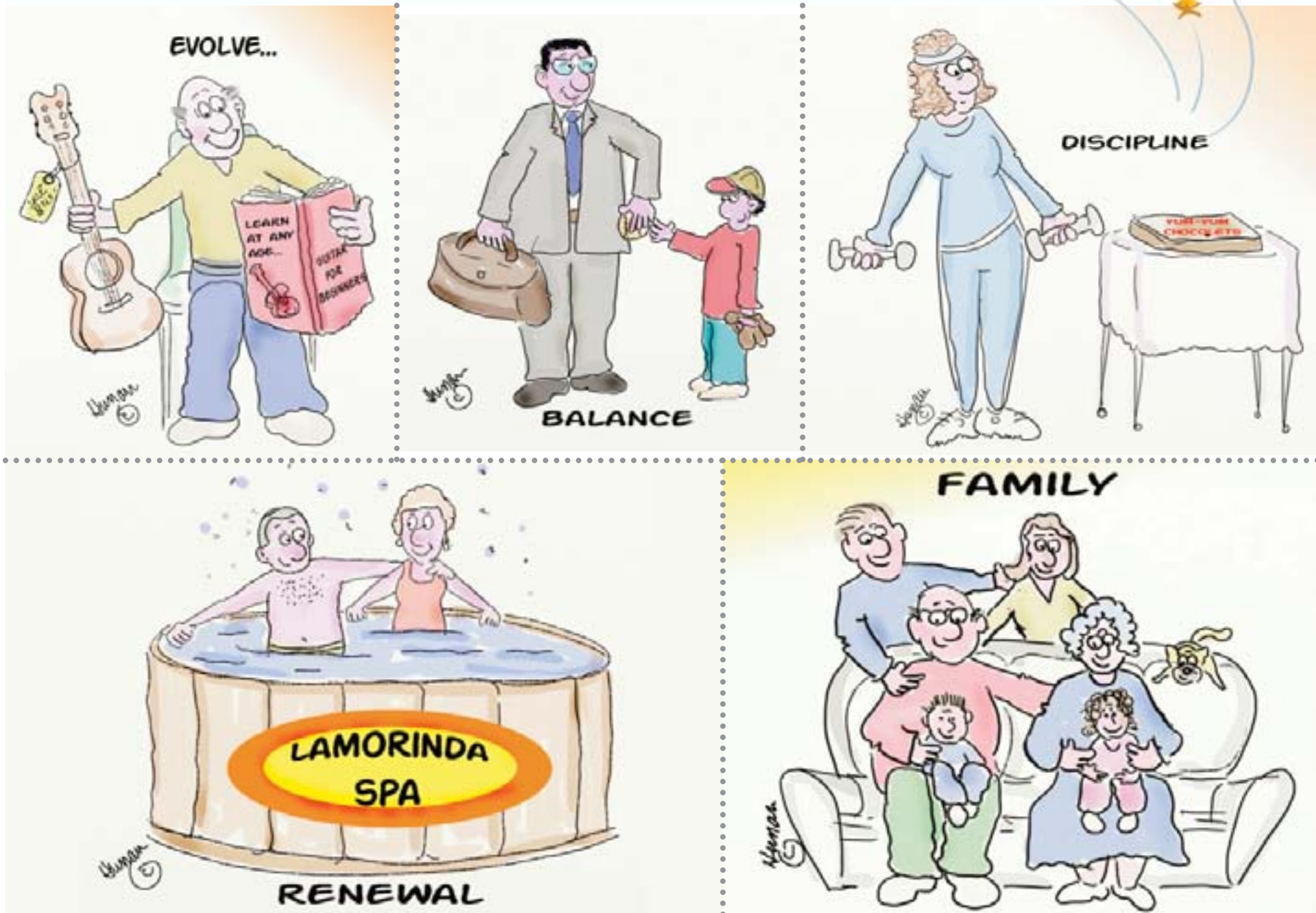
Happy New Year

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FREE



Lamorindans Share 'One Word' for the New Year

By Amanda Kuehn

What if one word could change your sense of self? Your meaning and purpose? Your life as you know it? That is the premise behind "My One Word," a book by authors Mike Ashcraft and Rachel Olsen that encourages its readers to forego the long list of New Year's resolutions and instead focus on one word that summarizes the changes they wish to make and the ways in which they hope to

grow in the coming year. The one word theory simplifies the resolution process by focusing a whole year of transformational hopes into a few simple syllables.

When asked to make an attempt at narrowing their resolutions down to a one-word goal, a few members of the Lamorinda community came up with some great ideas.

Danielle Mauldin, Saint Mary's College senior and Gaels

basketball player selected the word "evolve."

"That is the process I am going through as I am entering my second semester of my senior year," she said. "I am developing into the person I want to be, which is a better daughter, sister, leader, student, teammate and player. It's a scary, exciting, humbling feeling knowing that I am about to be graduating from college."

... continued on page A10

Quote of the Week:

"I have been planning for a long time to grow two and a half inches in height. That would put me at 5 feet 10 inches, which I think would be a good look for me in my uniform." Read Promises, Promises - page A9

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Increase in Residential Burglaries

By Laurie Snyder

"Burglar alarms? That's for when you go on vacation, or maybe at night! One o'clock in the afternoon? I came back an hour-and-a-half later. They'd come in through the doggie door. They'd ripped the sheetrock off the walls in the master bedroom closet, trying to pull the safe out of the wall," said 25-year Orinda resident Alison MacKenzie at the final Orinda City Council meeting of 2013. "They were able to peel the door back of the safe, and took every single possible piece of financial information, plus every Internet password to go with the laptop that they stole."

When the state of California released hundreds of inmates from prisons under the AB109 realignment, it hurt, explained Orinda police chief Scott Haggard. "We're feeling

that effect across the state, and in Contra Costa County." Although grand thefts and commercial burglaries in Orinda decreased by 46 percent and 30 percent respectively, residential break-ins jumped by about 40 percent. "Those are the most egregious of the property crimes." In contrast, Moraga had a 56 percent increase in home burglaries while Lafayette's auto and commercial crimes "skyrocketed," said Haggard, who added that San Ramon reported a 200 percent increase just in auto thefts alone.

MacKenzie's recent experience is a wake-up call for Lamorinda. "If I had known that, before my burglary, there were 84 residential burglaries during the daytime and that, when you leave your house even for an hour to go down to Safeway, you need to turn on your

burglar alarm, I would have turned it on!" said MacKenzie, who suggested city council members consider installing license plate cameras at freeway entrances and exits.

"They rolled right down my driveway ... They kicked down the door," said Orindan Marc Rovetti.

"If you've traveled at all, the use of cameras [in Tokyo and London] is prolific. They use those cameras for solving all kinds of crimes," said Orinda's former mayor Tom McCormack. "So, I would suggest maybe looking at technology as a solution to the problem." Piedmont, he said, paid \$678,713 to install license cams. "It says to me that we, as a community, need to take steps," added Brad Barber.

... continued on page A10

Life in Lamorinda B1-B12

Roses on Parade

A Tournament of Roses tradition ... Ed Stevenson has been there and done that - page B1.



Sports C1-C4

All-DFAL Honors

Lamorinda athletes shine in fall sports - page C2.



Our Homes D1-D8

Got Clutter?

The story of one woman's efforts to get organized - page D1.





Lafayette Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Jan. 13, 7 p.m.

Monday, Jan. 27, 7 p.m.

Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Jan. 6, 7 p.m.

Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Jan. 27, 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, Jan. 15, 7:30 p.m.

AUHSD Board Room at 1212

Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette

www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Thursday, Jan. 16, 7 p.m.

Regular Board Meeting

Stanley Library

3477 School St., Lafayette

www.lafsd.k12.ca.us



Crime Bulletin

Lafayette police chief Eric Christensen alerts residents to a trio of burglaries Christmas week at the east end of Lafayette near Olympic Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road. The thieves entered homes by prying open rear sliding glass doors and took off with jewelry and small electronics, leaving no fingerprints behind.

In at least one of the incidents, the suspects were in the area for a couple of hours casing and then burglarizing a home. Police are looking for a dark green or black, 2009-2012 Volkswagen Routan. Christensen offers some specific tips to avoid being the next victim: **Put a wooden dowel in the track of your sliding glass door** to prevent it from being forced open.

Set your alarm every time you leave your home.

Report suspicious vehicles and people; trust your instincts! Call police at (925) 284-5010 or, if you don't want to call, you can email the license plate number, and a photo if you take one, to 94549Tip@gmail.com.

Put out a decoy jewelry box. These burglars are looking for the jewelry box and for a quick escape.

A safe that can be carried is no good. If you have a small safe, bolt it to the floor or keep it very well hidden.



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Tatzin Takes the Helm as Mayor, Again

By Cathy Tyson



Mayor Don Tatzin with furry friends Tioga, Cloud and Tam.

Photo Ellen Reinties

Ever youthful civic statesman Don Tatzin is starting his 29th year serving the citizens of Lafayette, and marking his sixth term as mayor at the still spectacular compensation of zero dollars.

Residents will have to think hard to recall a time when Tatzin was not on the City Council – hint: it was when Ronald Reagan was in his first term as president.

At Lafayette's annual reorganization event held at the last City Council meeting in December, Tatzin graciously thanked his wife Ellen for her "endless and complete support," members of the public, city staff and his fellow council members, including now former mayor Mike Anderson who served in 2013.

... continued on next page

Refreshing, Sustainable Space for Recreation Coming

By Cathy Tyson



Image courtesy Alan Cross

The Manzanita room will get more than a facelift in the new year. Look for the demolition and replacement of this multi-use building at the Lafayette Community Center in the fall of 2014, after the busy summer recreation programs wrap up.

Park, Trails and Recreation commissioners weighed the options earlier in the year, considering whether to do an extensive remodel on the 60-year-old structure or simply tear down the old

building and start from scratch. They decided, and the City Council agreed, that the start-fresh option, which provided the most benefits to residents at a reasonable cost, would be better in the long run than a simple remodel. The contemporary design by project architect Alan Cross of Proto, Inc. delivers a fresh, expanded space to accommodate a wide range of uses from hectic Camp Awesome to dog training classes to weddings.

Cross came up with an eco-

nomical yet sustainable facility that provides flexibility. He described the project as a challenge with a fair amount of "healthy dialogue" about competing objectives; basketball games don't necessarily need the same kind of ambiance as a birthday party. The sleek 5,000 square foot design benefitted from input on users' perspectives with an emphasis on durability. He feels the design reflects the "spirit, vitality and excitement" the city is looking for, with double-duty fea-

tures like transparent panels incorporated into the walls that will let in natural light during the day, and provide a warm glow for a lantern effect at night.

The \$1.8 million estimated cost will be funded exclusively through development fees paid by developers along with voter-approved Measure WW Funds that can only be used for improving parks, trails and recreational facilities, along with an anticipated contribution from the Lafayette Community Foundation. Funding was approved by a vote of the City Council.

The project has been approved, subject to conditions. One of the conditions is that a subset of design review commissioners will continue to give feedback for minor tweaks of the project.

"We received insightful comments during the design process and feel the project has benefited from Design Review Commission input," said Jennifer Russell, director of parks, trails and recreation. She added that staff "is excited by this project and we look forward to developing cost-effective, sustainable solutions for the building systems. I have always considered the Lafayette Community Center a major asset for our residents and offering them a brand new building is a good investment."



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Glenside Drive Sign Helps Ring in the New Year



Photo Cathy Tyson

Longtime Burton Valley homeowner Larry Cody is famous for his messages on the sign in front of his home on Glenside Drive. Just a few days before Jan. 1, he painted his wish for a happy new year to his neighbors. Cody's family has a long history in the area; many acres in what is now Burton Valley were purchased by his grandfather Augustine Lobo. Lobo crossed the Atlantic coming from Portugal, first landing in Boston to find work in a shoe factory.

Later, in the 1920s he came west, purchased the land, made improvements and planted pears and walnuts. The family eventually subdivided the land in the 1950s. Cody is well known in the neighborhood for his signs, changing them from time to time with the seasons or for holidays. Some of messages recollect fond memories of past loves or his affinity for race horses. On a recent Saturday he was heading out to Golden Gate Fields to try his luck. *C. Tyson*

Tatzin Takes the Helm as Mayor, Again

... continued from page A2

Reflecting on the role of being mayor, Tatzin discussed the virtuous circle philosophy, a chain of events that reinforces itself through a feedback loop with positive results and how it is applicable to residents.

"Often we are the first level of contact people have with government," he said, explaining that the City Council is one of a number of components of the virtuous circle, that can create an environment of trust and respect, which strengthens the fabric of the community. Residents also contribute via a wide range of avenues, for example supporting their kids' education, or sports, which further benefits Lafayette and adds to its appeal, attracting new people. His role as mayor, he believes, is to support this circle, by being accessible, to listen, respond to citizens, and explain the decision-making process.

He shared a series of initiatives he'd like to address in the new year, that include a variety of civic concerns, for example working with the committee that is going to decide the future of two city-owned parcels, the old library building and a former medical office on Moraga Road.

Also on his agenda is encouraging residents to "think big," to find a real solution to Moraga Road congestion and downtown traffic. The incremental changes over the years haven't impacted the fundamental problem, in his opinion. Tatzin would like to "take this opportunity to step back and gather input to come up with a shared vision" for a plan that could address endless back-ups.

Tatzin anticipates the proposed Terraces project should be resolved in 2014, and he'll continue to work with

fire agencies to seek a solution to provide better fire and emergency response in Lafayette even though it's not a city responsibility. The new mayor has a unique perspective as a volunteer on the Contra Costa Local Area Formation Commission, also known as LAFCO. The organization oversees boundaries of towns, cities, and special districts, like water, sanitation, and especially relevant for Lafayette – fire protection.

As mayor five years ago for the official grand opening of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, he plans on a birthday celebration this fall along with a fundraising effort.

On a lighter note, as a dog owner, Tatzin would like to spearhead an event that focuses on pets. Planning is currently in the very preliminary stages for a furry friends party that could be called Dog-stravaganza or Bark in the Park. Possible features include a dog/owner look-a-like contest, perhaps a demonstration of canine search and rescue techniques, along with an education component.

In his free time, Tatzin logs endless laps in the Oakwood swimming pool. Results aren't yet in for 2013, but in 2012, Lafayette's mayor came in first in his age group with a staggering 1,524 miles for the U.S. Masters Swimming annual "Go the distance" fitness event.

That kind of dedication has served the citizens of Lafayette for almost 30 years. When asked if he was going to hang up his gavel when his term expires at the end of this year, he replied, "That's up to voters to decide." Tatzin plans to run again for City Council this November.

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Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Jan. 8, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, Jan. 22, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, Jan. 6, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

Design Review

Monday, Jan. 13, 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, Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
www.moraga.k12.ca.us
See also AUHSD meeting page A2



Police Report

Moraga Police Blotter will be back next time.

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Moraga's New Mayor, Ken Chew

By Sophie Braccini



Ken Chew Photo Sophie Braccini

This is the second time Ken Chew will sit in the mayor's seat and wield the gavel as the leader of the Town Council, setting the tone for the town in 2014.

Chew, a professional civil engineer and project manager in the construction and transportation field, was born and raised in Malaysia. After completing his education at the University of Wisconsin, he and his wife Aly relocated to the Bay Area and raised two sons in Moraga. The well-traveled Chew believes that Moraga is the best place on earth.

Although the title comes with no additional voting power, being mayor means Chew does have a few privileges – like working with the town manager to set Town Council meeting

agendas and keeping order during meetings.

During his tenure on the council, Chew has been known for saying what he thinks. "I have the courage to speak my mind, and I don't feel pressured to be popular," he said. "Some politicians are afraid of the elections and say that they you have to be careful in an election year; I don't do that. I believe that if I make the honorable decision, Moraga residents will continue to appreciate my service and support me."

This year Chew would like to further a change of style as the head of the town. "I will rely on staff a lot; listen to, and value, their recommendations," he said. "I want our very competent staff to be involved in issues from the beginning. People should not try to push issues through council members alone; communication can and should start with staff members, who then will bring the topic to the council if needed." Chew believes it is respectful to allow staff to do their jobs. "It is not to discourage (residents from) open communication with their elected officials," he said. "The role of the council is to make policy decisions and not to advocate issues for any special interest group; and staff's role is to make recommendations based on their professional knowledge and experience."

In developing an initial list of goals for the town for 2014, Chew has

already brought some change. "We are working together with Jill (Keimach, the town manager) to prepare for the goal setting session," he said. "This year we will not have hours of brainstorming because the council has done a great job in the last few years steering the town in the right direction. Many of this year's goals are continuations of those set in previous years. Together with input from fellow council members, staff, and residents, I will set most of my new goals for 2014 by building onto our successes in the past."

The preliminary list includes what is always the first goal in Moraga: fiscal sustainability and a balanced budget. Chew would like to see refinement of the capital improvement plan for all of the town's assets. "We are doing very well with our roads, but the town owns other properties and we need to be very clear on the maintenance and/or future of these assets," he said, including the land known as the "Back 40" that the town leases to the Moraga Country Club.

"This year we will complete Phase 2 of the Measure K neighborhood streets pavement program and the retrofit of 331 Rheem where we will conduct our public meetings," said Chew. Having a permanent meeting place will finally permit the realization of something Chew has been asking for since his first term: live video streaming and recording of

Town Council meetings. "This is part of the enhancement of transparency and communication," said the mayor.

Other activities will include building on the good relationship with Saint Mary's College, a dialogue between the town, the school district, the high school and the college for shared use of sports fields, a strategic plan for the Hacienda de las Flores and emergency preparedness training for council members.

In addition Chew will support several efforts that are already underway, such as streamlining the planning process, revising the sign ordinance and completing a climate action plan. As to the planned review of rules that apply to hillside and ridgeline development, "We will receive community input and consider zoning revision as appropriate," said Chew.

This is the last year of Chew's second four-year term on the Town Council; he plans to run for a third term next fall.

The goal-setting session for 2014 will be Tuesday, Jan. 14, 6:30 p.m. at the Hacienda de las Flores – all Moragans are welcome. The mayor encourages residents to submit suggestions for goals in advance of the meeting to Jill Keimach, town manager, jkeimach@moraga.ca.us.

Restoring Natural Habitat in the Heart of Moraga

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Planning Commission recently reviewed Summerhill Homes' application to

build 26 houses off of Camino Ricardo, one of the first projects in the area governed by the Moraga

Center Specific Plan to come to fruition. Already approved by the Design Review Board, the homes did not elicit much controversy. Planning commissioners also spent some time reviewing the proposal for a 5-acre passive park contiguous to the homes; the unique visual and educational area in the heart of Moraga will be donated to the town.

The portion of the 14.2-acre site located between Laguna Creek and its tributary was initially proposed as a neighborhood park with recreation equipment. Discussion with the Planning Commission and Design Review Board revealed that a passive park, for walking or informal picnics, was preferred. However, the developer intended to drop on the lot a large portion of the earth that would be excavated to place the homes and road. "It does not make a lot of sense to kill the vegetation by dumping eight feet of dirt on the site and then replanting it with native plants," said commissioner Teresa Onoda. She passed around photos she had taken of the site with a ladder illustrating the height of the excavated dirt, which made it clear that nothing would survive such a burial.

Residents pointed out the existence of a native animal population at the site, including the protected dusky-footed wood rat, and asked for as little disturbance as possible. Commissioner Nancy Schoenbrunner said she had learned that the creek was the place where local rainbow trout were originally discovered and she wanted an investigation into whether Moraga was still a spawning ground for the fish. The commissioners unanimously agreed that the developer must haul away all of the excavated dirt. The new

park is destined to be restored to pre-agriculture vegetation and will serve as a place of discovery and education about local flora and fauna.

Denise Cunningham, of Summerhill Homes, said that it might be possible for the company to use the excavated dirt as fill on the other Moraga property it is developing – Rancho Laguna II, near Rheem Boulevard.

Residents living next to the project acknowledged efforts made by the developer to minimize the visual impact of the new homes. "In Moraga, the code protects public views from being impacted by new development, but not private views," commented senior planner Ellen Clark. Summerhill worked to protect the views of neighboring homeowners by redesigning some of the houses to be single-level and moving the building pads; they asked to bend the setback rules slightly to accommodate the new design.

The Planning Commission is expected to approve the project's Conceptual and General Development Plan, the Vesting Tentative Subdivision Map, the Hillside Development Permit, the Grading Permit, the Conditional Use Permit, and Design Review in early January. These documents will be approved together, which is unusual in Moraga. Shawna Brekke-Read, Moraga's planning director, explained that any property that is zoned for planned development needs to go through a three-step process. Summerhill was asked to consolidate the process into one single phase, because the Camino Ricardo project is part of the Moraga Center Specific Plan that was seven years in the making and included many preliminary studies such as a traffic impact report.



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Be Part of History: Moraga Time Capsule Needs Your Contribution!

By Sophie Braccini



Moraga's time capsule.

Photo provided

As part of its 100th anniversary the Contra Costa County Library is offering each of its local branches a time capsule to be filled now and opened when the library system celebrates its 150th anniversary. "Anyone can contribute something to the capsule," says Moraga librarian Diane McDonnell.

"We are especially looking forward to contribution from children who want to write letters to themselves, or share their favorite elements of our popular culture with the kids of the future."

The time capsule is 2 feet high and 8 inches in circumference; it can hold many letters, pictures, and testimonies illustrating the

Moraga of today. McDonnell would also like to gather suggestions from people about what current books they believe will become classics in the future. Service groups may want to highlight what they are working on, town staff may want to share their challenges, and elected officials may want to share their vision for Moraga. "There are so many possibilities," says the librarian.

If you want to contribute to the time capsule just bring your letter or photo to the front desk at the Moraga library, 1500 St. Mary's Road. Elements will be on display until enough information has been collected to fill up the capsule; McDonnell will then officially seal it. It will be kept safe until 2063 when new residents, and perhaps a few of us, will witness the capsule's opening, read the contents, have a good laugh or shed a few tears and reflect on the passing of time.

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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Jan. 14, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Jan. 14, 7 p.m.
Founders Auditorium
Orinda Community Center
28 Orinda Way

Historical Landmark Committee

Tuesday, Jan. 28, 3 p.m.
Gallery Room, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

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

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District

Monday, Jan. 13, 6 p.m.
OUSD Office, Vintage Building
25 Orinda Way, Suite 200
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2



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Navigating Challenging Financial Seas while Looking Toward a Brighter Horizon

Orinda mayor Sue Severson sets city's course for 2014

By Laurie Snyder



Sue Severson Photo Ohlen Alexander

"I had the great privilege of meeting Sue Severson while serving as President of Orinda Arts Council (2002-03) and was struck immediately by her depth of character, sincerity, poise, and willingness to hear every voice and concern," wrote Orindan Elena Pang in a letter to the Lamorinda Weekly Oct. 13, 2010. "Sue balances her volunteerism between civic duties, work in the schools, support for the arts, and family life. Her generosity of spirit and humanity are insurmountable. Our community has been the lucky recipient of her positive presence, practical solutions, and experience. She understands and believes fiscal responsibility as priority and supports ongoing respectful communication between our community members and leaders."

Severson, who served for nine years as a board member of the Orinda Union School District,

was first elected to the Orinda City Council in 2006. Since then, she helped to launch the Orinda Community Foundation (www.orindafoundation.org/), which relieved the city of much of its financial burden during the national economic decline for Orinda's Fourth of July Parade and other events deemed by Orindans to be vital to the health of the community.

Severson sat down with Lamorinda Weekly at her home just after she took over the reins of the city as mayor for the second time. Still catching her breath after a year that many longtime community members say was one of the busiest ever for the Orinda City Council, she has been mulling over priorities for 2014-15, and plans to present her State of the City Address sometime in March. Traditionally delivered at a joint Orinda Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce meeting, this year's address may be held twice to accommodate Orindans' increasingly diverse scheduling needs.

According to the National League of Cities, "fragile fiscal health" is high on 2014's list of "10 Critical Imperatives Facing Cities," along with the worsening of America's transportation infrastructure. In response, Severson observed, "It's always an ongoing challenge - with increasing costs and decreasing revenues - to maximize your resources

while maintaining the high level of services expected by the community." Fortunately, Orinda "is very fiscally conservative as a city and has always had a balanced budget," she added. "We need to look ahead to make sure that continues to happen - to keep the cuts away from services as much as possible."

Having a balanced budget is no small feat in today's world, she said, and is even more challenging in Orinda because when the city incorporated, it inherited a decrepit drainage system from the county. At more than 50 years old, "All of it is beyond its lifespan." And with only about \$10 million each year to repair those problems plus support all of the standard services the city must deliver each year - housing development oversight by the planning department, maintenance and repair of roads and drains, parks and recreation services, public safety services provided by the police - money is tight.

That's why reserves are so critical. Drainage failures - like those on Glorietta and Tarabook that required million dollar-plus fixes each - can be tipping points for cities, along with earthquakes, mudslides, and Yosemite-type wildfires. "A city is basically like a household in terms of budgeting," explained Severson. "If you have an unexpected illness, accident, loss of job - if you haven't planned ahead and set aside a reserve, you could easily, as a fam-

ily, be wiped out." Vallejo. Stockton. San Bernardino. So many city governments have seen no other way out but to file for bankruptcy.

But not Orinda. "We're really running a tight ship financially to accomplish a lot of good and provide excellent service - despite our limited resources."

One of the other things Severson takes pride in is the role she played in helping to establish the Finance Advisory Committee, a body of Orinda residents with financial management experience which provides guidance to the city council in very much the same way as the Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Committee. Its members were, in fact, the ones who advised the City Council to gradually set aside a \$5 million reserve to help get life moving again for residents should disaster strike.

Ultimately, said Severson, "I hope that we will come together in a more united, collaborative way - in a kinder way - to be supportive of each other, to work together to better our community." One way to do that is to answer your phone this month when the city conducts its annual telephone poll regarding city services and the next steps Orinda should take when funding future road and drain upgrades. Another is to show your civic pride by volunteering for a city commission or helping with Orinda Action Day.

Solid Waste Authority to Raise Rates

Moraga more likely to be down in the dumps over garbage rates than Orinda

By Laurie Snyder

"These are pretty exciting times in the world of garbage," said Paul Morrison as he began his talk on behalf of the Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority before the Orinda City Council Dec. 17. A new decade-long franchise agreement could be worth as much as a half billion dollars to haulers. Morrison, the executive director of the CCCSWA which represents Orinda,

Lafayette, Moraga, Danville, Walnut Creek, and unincorporated Central Contra Costa County, was on hand to discuss both the new agreement and a likely rate hike coming at the end of the present 20-year contract.

Nine proposals for collecting, transferring, landfilling, and/or processing of recyclables and green (yard) waste are under consideration. The challenge ahead

will be to meet a new state mandate requiring the increased diversion of waste from 50 to 75 percent of what is being collected.

"You currently have two franchise haulers - Allied Waste that provides your solid waste service and Waste Management that provides your recycling and green waste services," said Rick Simonson, a representative of the firm

which performed CCCSWA's rate-setting analyses. The allowable expenses are calculated each year as required by the respective franchise agreements, and then allocated to each member agency. In this final year, Orinda's service costs will increase 2.1 percent. "That's primarily based on labor-related cost increases and increases for disposal fees at the landfill. And that is offset, partially by some decreases in depreciation and interest related to the collection vehicles."

Simonson, who met in November with the two council members serving on the subcommittee charged with oversight of Orinda's solid waste situation - Steve Glazer and Victoria Smith - explained that revenues for year nine were actually higher than expenses. So, CCCSWA only needs to increase collection rates for 2014 by 1.5 percent instead. Commercial service levels will rise by a uniform 1.5 percent with all proposed rate increases effective starting March 1.

In comparison, Moraga is looking at a whopping 9 percent hike.

Customers wanting to cut costs should use smaller collection bins. "Our recommended rate increases range from 51 cents per month for a 20-gallon container up to 94 cents more per month for the larger, 96-gallon containers." Planners anticipate that the new 10-year franchise agreement will start March 1, 2015.

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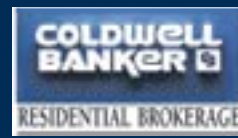


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Policy with Popcorn in Your Pajamas

Calling all concerned citizens, policy wonks, and fans of reality TV! You'll now be able to ponder the perils of potholes while your elected officials talk trash about recycling – all while lounging languorously in front of a roaring fire at home. The dream of live-streamed Orinda City Council meetings is finally coming true this month. So, pull on your rattiest PJs and pour a glass of wine. Then, use your iPad or laptop to access the live stream from the city's website: <http://www.cityoforinda.org/>.

Looking for an Affordable Home in Orinda?

Families hoping to snag one of the eight below-market-rate homes planned for the new Orinda Grove neighborhood are invited to attend a special workshop Jan. 13 at 7 p.m. in the auditorium of the Orinda Library at 26 Orinda Way. Households of four members or more – with at least one member working in Orinda for a year or more and still currently employed in Orinda, and whose members meet the median income and other basic eligibility criteria – will be given the first opportunity to qualify for purchase. Childcare will be available. For more information, visit the city's website: www.cityoforinda.org.

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Community Service

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Interfaith Communities Join Together to Help the Homeless this Holiday Season

Submitted by Jen Boxerman



Volunteers help serve dinner to over 30 guests at the 10th annual Winter Nights Shelter at Temple Isaiah.

Almost three years ago members of three Contra Costa faith communities, Temple Isaiah of Lafayette, San Ramon Valley Islamic Center and Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church came together to create Neighbor to Neighbor, an interfaith learning and action group dedicated to deepening ties between people of faith, identifying and discarding shallow stereotypes, and doing social justice work together in our community.

Activities have included study of each other's faiths, joint sponsorship of scholar lectures, worship at each other's services and participation in workshops on civil discourse. On Dec. 26 members of Neighbor to Neighbor, along with representatives from other Contra Costa faith communities provided and served dinner for the clients at the Mountain View Emergency Family Shelter in Martinez. Rabbi Judy Shanks of Temple Isaiah said, "This [was] the first small step of what we hope will be many opportunities for Neighbor to Neighbor to really to have an impact on the quality of life for all our neighbors as we join together to combat poverty, hunger and homelessness in concert with government agencies and other non-profits."

The interfaith community, including LOPC and Temple Isaiah, also comes together to host some of our county's homeless on their campuses during the coldest months of the year through Contra Costa Interfaith Housing's program Winter Nights Shelter.

The interfaith liaison at San Ramon Valley Islamic Center, Hina Khan-Mukhtar, really appreciates the shared values among the three Abrahamic faiths. "It's important to all of us to show gratitude for our blessings and then to also share those blessings with others who may not be as fortunate we are. Jews, Christians, and Muslims in the East Bay have been able to break bread together on numerous occasions ... it's nice to now take that same generosity and try to fill the hearts and tummies of the homeless in our communities."

Terry Clark, of LOPC and coordinator of Neighbor to Neighbor among the three faiths noted, "The unfolding journey of our learning and sharing together over these past several years has served to deepen all of our own faiths while enjoying the values and beliefs common among each of us, leading our faith communities inevitably together to identify common concerns where we can collectively engage in cooperative efforts on behalf of those disadvantaged or in need. The Dec. 26 shelter dinner became an obvious opportunity to address one of those concerns in the East Bay area, and it's a joy to experience the enthusiasm of all the participants in this common effort to help others less fortunate."

For information about Mountain View Emergency Shelter in Martinez, a service of Shelter, Inc. Contra Costa, visit www.shelterincofccc.org. Learn more about Winter Nights Shelter, a service of Contra Costa Interfaith Housing, at www.ccinterfaithhousing.org.



Aliza Metzner interacts with Winter Nights youth during her family's stay at Temple Isaiah.



Phyllis Ceasar, Shirley Bolton and Judy Berg help serve dessert for Winter Nights guests at Temple Isaiah. Photos provided

Moraga Rotary Sends Christmas Stockings to Children at Juvenile Hall

Submitted by Gary Irwin



Moraga Rotarians, spouses, and friends celebrate the completion of approximately 300 Christmas stockings. Photos provided

On Christmas Day, about 300 children currently held in Juvenile Hall received a gift of their own Christmas stocking which had been cut, sewn, decorated, and filled by Rotary Club of Moraga along with spouses, friends, and Campolindo Interact Club members. Treats in the stockings included a deck of cards, a pair of socks, puzzle books, candies, shampoos, soaps, and cosmetics. In many cases, these stockings are the only Christmas gifts these children received.

In early November, several Rotarians and friends joined with girls at Juvenile Hall to decorate the stockings with colorful glitter glue. Each stocking was uniquely and creatively designed. This year, eligible girls were able to decorate their own personal stocking. Many Moraga Country Club residents donated their

leftover Halloween candy for the stockings, and Joan Bruzzone donated funds for 100 dozen cookies to be given to the children while they received their gifts.

Coordination of this project was led by Janet Young, the executive director of the Juvenile Hall Auxiliary, working with Moraga Rotarians Barbara Bruner and Debbie Roessler. Rotary Club of Moraga has conducted this Christmas stocking project for more than a decade.

Rotary Club of Moraga is a local service club within Rotary International that meets most Tuesdays at noon at Saint Mary's College. For information about participating, please call Frank May of Moraga Rotary at (925) 376-8195.



Stocking stuffing assembly line workers. Facing camera, from left: Linda May, Carol Irwin, Mary Caburi, Suzanne Costanza, Ron Schopke, and Herb Wehmeyer.

Successful One Warm Coat Drive

Submitted by Corinna Sossano



Photo provided

The Lamorinda Soccer Club U11 Girls Navy team made this winter a little warmer for other families by collecting 64 coats, which were picked up Dec. 26 by the Women's Daytime Drop-In Center in Berkeley.

Local Students Work to Make a Difference During Holidays

Submitted by Stacy Giglio

While many local residents were caught up in the fever of the holiday season, local students at area schools decided to work to make a difference. Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School "adopted" classes from Cambridge and Fair Oaks Elementary Schools in Concord. Camino Pablo Elementary School's student council sponsored the Pennies for Patients program, which raises money for leukemia/lymphoma research. The student council chose this organization because they "want to help, to remember and to honor staff, students, families and friends whose lives have been touched by cancer." Rheem Elementary School kindergarten through third

graders provided holiday cheer to the children and mothers at the Women's Drop-In Center in Berkeley, while fourth graders collected spare change to benefit the Heifer Project, and fifth graders supported the current relief effort in the Philippines. Los Perales Elementary School again held their annual Toys for Tots program, and also raised \$420 in their "Chores for a Cause" campaign to support those affected by the recent typhoon in the Philippines by helping with chores around the house and the neighborhood. KTVU (Channel 2) matched these donations and \$840 has now been donated to The Red Cross to provide assistance and relief.



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Promises, Promises

By Nick Marnell

The personalities aligned with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District are usually not shy about dealing with the press. So the Lamorinda Weekly challenged them to go on record with their 2014 New Year's resolutions. And sure enough, many took us up on the offer.

Gloriann Sasser, MOFD administrative services director, was the first to respond:

"I am a faithful reader of the daily newspaper and Sports Illustrated, and this year I need to add some good books. Every day I drive past the Moraga library and I resolve to stop in and check out some books. My second resolution is to get more organized at home. I have lived in the same house since 1997, and there are a few drawers and closets that need [to be] attacked in 2014."

Bill Granados, ConFire commissioner, District 2, Lafayette, broke his already:

"I resolve to continue to make no New Year's resolutions."

Mark DeWeese, MOFD firefighter/Local 1230 representative, shouldn't have a problem keeping his second resolution. He looks like he's 27:

"To to continue to work as collaboratively as possible with the MOFD board to finally get a fair contract for the rank and file employees, and to get prepared for my 40th birthday in September while maintaining my 20-something lifestyle and outlook."

Jerry Lee, MOFD division chief:

"I would like to do a better job keeping in touch with old friends."

MOFD board president **John Wyro**:

"To work with the community to move the Moraga-Orinda Fire District forward on a sustainable path to continue to provide the best possible fire and emergency medical service."

Come to the district meetings and check on the progress of MOFD director **Alex Evans**:

"To develop a sustainable financial plan for MOFD and to get my hair cut more often!"

ConFire captain **Vince Wells**, president Local 1230, United Professional Firefighters of Contra Costa County:

"I will continue the fight to ensure that adequate fire and emergency services are provided for the citizens of Contra Costa County, and to assure the safest working conditions for the firefighters that provide those services."

If you need something done, ask a busy person! County District 2 Supervisor and ConFire director **Candace Andersen**:

"My New Year's resolution is a recurring one: how to be just a little bit more efficient. Ideally, I'd like to figure out how to fit 36 hours worth of work, community service, and time with friends and family into a 24-hour day!"

If MOFD fire chief **Stephen Healy** is able to keep his resolution, we would like to know the formula:

"I have been planning for a long time to grow two and a half inches in height. That would put me at 5 feet 10 inches, which I think would be a good look for me in my uniform."

Kelly Morris, one of the MOFD firefighters injured in the December 2012 Highway 24 accident:

"I am just hoping for successful surgeries, speedy recoveries, and to someday be able to run around and play with my children and teach them how to play basketball and ride horses."

Gil Caravantes, ConFire captain, Lafayette station 17, colorfully described his resolution to diet:

"I plan to see my feet in 2014!"

MOFD board member **Steve Anderson**, still in pain over the Florida Gators' football season:

"The same commitment I made when I took this job: to set the district on a sustainable path. And to run a marathon in 2014!"

MOFD's newest board member, **Kathleen Famulener**:

"In my day, girls went to graduate school so they would never have to learn how to type. In 2014, I'm resolved to finally learn how to use that computer they've put on my desk."

New ConFire chief **Jeff Carman**:

"Purchase a home and relocate family to the district. Provide the best possible service to our customers; provide open, honest, and transparent communications with our customers, both internal and external. Eat less, work out more, spend more time with my family."

Finally, MOFD division chief **Darrell Lee**. We are assuming, of course, that his second resolution has nothing at all to do with us:

"To create special times for family and tell them 'I love you,' and to continue to motivate the people I work with and not worry about what is written in the media."

Happy New Year, everyone!



Gloriann Sasser



Bill Granados



Mark DeWeese



John Wyro



Alex Evans



Vince Wells



Candace Andersen



Stephen Healy



Kelly Morris



Gil Caravantes



Steve Anderson



Kathleen Famulener



Jeff Carman



Darrell Lee

Not pictured: Jerry Lee

Photos provided

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors Meetings

Next meetings:
Wednesday, Jan. 15
check website for updates
(Go to www.mofd.org as the meeting date approaches for location and more information)

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From Front Page

Lamorindans Share 'One Word' for the New Year

... continued from page A1

For Mauldin, "evolve" is the one word that summarizes all of her hopes for 2014. "I feel that what I am going through now is preparing me for what I am up against in the new year, which is a new beginning. With the knowledge and experience I am getting here at SMC I hope to be ready for what is ahead of me."

Lynn Appleton, chef proprietor of Lafayette's The French Bakery Café and Tea House stated, "My word is 'renewal.'"

Mary Kay Moskal, professor and reading program director of Saint Mary's Kalmanovitz School of Education selected the word "family."

"This word is a reminder that I need to balance my time," she said. "I

spend too much time working and not enough time with my family."

For Rev. John Morris, a faculty member in the SMC theology and religious studies department, the answer was simple. "My word is an easy one; I did not need to think about it very long. It is what is often missing from my New Year's resolution. Discipline."

Aida Glimme, principal of Acalanes High School in Lafayette, took a little more time in developing her word. "I've thought a lot about different words," said Glimme. "And the word 'balance' keeps coming to my mind. In today's world, we have many stressors that continue to throw off our balance. I have to continu-

ously look at ways to balance my personal and family life with my job."

Though Glimme loves working in education, she sometimes finds it a struggle to also dedicate time to her family and to stay healthy. "I also feel that the concept of balance applies in how I view things on a much larger [scale]," she said.

Perhaps you'll take one of these words and fill it with personal meaning, or come up with one word that is all your own. Whichever word you choose—health, hope, life, simplicity, joy, or energy—may it be one that is filled with significance and that brings you the encouragement and assurance of a happy new year.

Increase in Residential Burglaries

... continued from page A1

Police are out in force, but they need help. Asked what citizens can do, Haggard continued to prod residents to be proactive. He's urging everyone to lock their

vehicles, residential windows and doors, and set their home alarms—even if just stepping out for a few minutes. And he hopes everyone will band together. Right

now, peering into the yard next door isn't being nosy, it's neighborly. So, keep your eyes open and call police right away if you do see something fishy.

Tips from Chief Haggard for Preventing Residential Burglaries

- Get to know your neighbors. Join your neighborhood watch group. If there isn't one, start one.
- If you live in Orinda, schedule a home audit with the Orinda Police Department.
- Store heirloom jewelry and important financial paperwork off site—in your safe deposit box at the bank.
- Lock and alarm your car whenever you leave it—wherever it's parked.
- Lock and alarm the doors and windows of your home—even if only leaving for a short trip to the store. Invest in strong locks and kick-proof doors. Lock side and back gates to prevent easy access to the back of your home.
- Create an appearance of occupancy. Leave a radio on loud enough to be heard from the front door. Keep driveways clear of advertising and newspapers. Ask a neighbor to bring in your trash containers and check for UPS deliveries while you're away at work. For longer trips, have someone pick up mail daily, or ask those who deliver to hold items until you return.
- Use motion sensor-activated lighting dusk to dawn, and be sensible with porch lights. Leaving them on during the daytime may signal that you're away.
- Install front-of-house signage to let would-be burglars know they're on camera and are visiting a well-alarmed home.
- Get a dog.
- Call police if you see something "not quite right" at your home or a neighbor's—a delivery person without appropriate identification, a member of the cleaning staff arriving with another person when the employer is out of town, someone "mistakenly" ringing your doorbell, a van parked in an unusual spot or backed into a driveway while a family is away.

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Roses on Parade

Experiencing America's grandest New Year's Day tradition through the eyes of "a White Suiter"

By Laurie Snyder



Retired Maj. Ed Stevenson has likely been part of your family's New Year's Day nearly every year for the past 30 years without you ever realizing it. One of a select few Americans to have the honor of putting on the distinctive white suit worn by Tournament of Roses Association volunteers, Stevenson has been among the earliest on scene and last to leave, helping with everything from float decoration to judging, as well as troubleshooting to keep the Rose Parade running smoothly. Photo Ohlen Alexander

Tiny tots wowed into silent wonder by the sheer awesomeness of ginormous, flower-bedazzled floats. Parents pumping fists proudly as their high schoolers strut with marching bands. Americans have been engaged in a shared obsession with the Tournament of Roses Parade since 1898 when East Coast newspapermen first traveled west to cover the phenomenal flower fiesta.

Although Ed Stevenson wasn't on hand back then, he has witnessed many exciting times since joining the Tournament of Roses Association in 1984. Stevenson, who recently retired as general manager of the Lafayette Veterans' Building, gave Lamorindans a behind-the-scenes glimpse of life as "a White Suiter" during a December talk at Orinda's Masonic Lodge.

"I grew up in Sunnyvale and was in the high school band," said Stevenson, a California State University, Hayward graduate. Earning a Bronze Star Medal with the Marines in Vietnam, he retired as a major. In 1982, work took him to Southern California, where he began helping La Cañada with its Rose Parade float. "That's how I got hooked." To join, said Stevenson, you

must work or live within 15 miles of Pasadena City Hall. But once you're in, you're in – even if you relocate. Now an Honorary Life Member, he served on 11 different committees before finally earning a spot with the Judging Committee. It's a coveted spot because the majority of floats now range in cost from \$100,000 to \$500,000 each due to animation and exotic flowers used. Many are now built by professionals.

Still others exude a different beauty. Stevenson still chokes up when recalling the work of Donate Life (www.donatelifefloat.org/). Each year, the group honors deceased organ, eye and tissue donors while educating viewers about the shortage of organs available for transplant.

The History of the Tournament of Roses

The Rose Parade began, according to the Tournament of Roses Association, "as a promotional effort by Pasadena's distinguished Valley Hunt Club." In 1890, members lured "former East Coast neighbors to a mid-winter holiday, where they could watch ... chariot races, jousting, foot races, polo and tug-of-war under the warm California sun. ... continued on page B4



In 2012, the Odd Fellows & Rebekahs wowed the crowd with "Shining Knights Still Exist," and were justly rewarded with the Tournament of Roses' prestigious Isabella Coleman Trophy for best presentation and harmony of color. Photo used with permission. Copyright: Ed Stevenson, 2012.

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Food for Thought from 400 Moms

By Cathy Dausman



Lamorinda resident, registered dietitian and author of "400 Moms," Jill West. Photo Cathy Dausman

highlight nutrition ideas. Chapters cover breakfast, lunch and dinner, snacks (snack bars good and bad), dessert, portion control and fast food and restaurant choices. Much of the book's input may surprise you. Of the registered dietitians surveyed, most (85 percent) feed their children a breakfast of ready-to-eat-cereal, and pasta is the quick go-to dinner meal for more than half (62 percent).

West further fine tunes the information by suggesting the tastiest (for kids) nutritional choices. She notes Lamorinda's rate of childhood overweight and obesity (ages 2-19) is less than half that of western Contra Costa County (15 percent vs. 42 percent), attributing that data to many factors, including the area's economic well-being and opportunities for physical activity.

West hopes to see families modeling good behavior, but knows that "reading [nutritional] labels" can be both a blessing and a curse. Although aimed at parents, West says her book is also "a useful guide for grandparents and the truly childless." She offered a Cliffs Notes summary of her book, citing:

- Breakfast every day;
- Encourage five fruits and vegetable servings daily;
- Stop serving sweet drinks;
- Trim down fast foods.

West admitted, tongue in cheek, that while the book has reached its target audience, it opened to somewhat mixed reviews, if the grocery shopping family she witnessed carting her book around is to be believed: "Oh mom," wailed the child in tow, "don't read that book!"

"400 Moms" (www.400moms.com) is available at Amazon, Orinda Books and Rakestraw Books in Danville. West is scheduled to speak on the subject at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 30 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

Jill West is convinced that mothers are the solution to reversing childhood obesity, especially since they often act as "gatekeepers" for the food their family keeps at home. West might know – as a registered dietitian, she compiled responses from over 400 other registered dietitians, mothers themselves, in her aptly titled book, "400 Moms."

A Lamorinda resident for the past five years, West is the mother of three sons aged 14 to 20. The author's inspiration came as she stood on the sidelines watching her sons play sports. When it came time for post-game snacks, West remembers thinking "all this junk for a 30 minute game?"

Children today are the first generation predicted to live shorter lives than their parents, mostly due to obesity and its complications, West said.

And carbonated drinks, those West labels "liquid candy," become a "big diet villain" by leeching away the body's calcium, increasing the risk of osteoporosis.

Soft drink consumption has increased fourfold since the 1970s, while milk consumption has dropped in half. Although there is some controversy related to cow's milk consumption, there are healthy alternatives available like rice, soy and almond milk.

Don't get West started on sports drinks either. "400 Moms" reads more like a "Nutrition for Dummies" manual than a preachy laundry list of unattainable New Year's resolutions, with bite-sized chapters and oversized type, peppered with a healthy serving of charts, graphs and illustrations.

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"Instructions Not Included" – A Family Movie

By Sophie Braccini



"Instructions Not Included" Loreto Peralta and Eugenio Derbez

Photo provided

The movie "Instructions Not Included," directed by Mexican actor, producer and TV host Eugenio Derbez, who plays the film's lead role, Valentin, will kick off the 2014 International Film Showcase at the Orinda Theatre.

Like the 1987 movie "Three Men and a Baby," the sweet story of three men who one morning find a baby girl on their doorstep and whose selfish ways are changed forever as the little girl takes hold of their hearts, "Instructions Not Included" is similar, with a few twists, including a "Kramer vs. Kramer"-like judicial battle.

The general idea of the movie is that to become a man, one has to start taking responsibility. In the case of Valentin, the selfish bachelor takes this premise to the extreme through self-sacrifice that borders on heroism. In order to keep the child he has learned to love, he gives up his own

country and pursues a professional career that takes him, literally, to dangerous heights. Then in order to protect the girl's happiness he risks losing her forever.

The film has many elements that are worthy of attention. The generational link between the hardboiled bachelor and the daughter who one morning falls in his lap, but also how Valentin's relationship with his own father shaped him, is well explored.

Derbez' years acting and directing a TV series show in the way minor characters over-act with an in-your-face caricature of their roles, which might be better suited for television than on the silver screen. But Derbez and Loreto Peralta, the little girl who plays Maggie, form a very charming and credible father/daughter duo. Although Derbez is not very believable at the beginning of the movie when he impersonates a Latin lover – which could be attributed to bad makeup –

his portrayal as a father who is tender, imaginative and totally unconventional has a lot of charm. The precocious little girl is definitely the more mature of the two and is very much in control of her performance.

There is nothing unexpected when the abandoning mother comes back and reclaims her daughter. The difficulties that erupt, the child's heartbreaking emotional pulls in different directions, are explored with sensitivity. The mother and her lover, portrayed as villains, are less well developed. But the movie picks up pace at that point and a series of unexpected turns allow for continuous entertainment.

"Instructions Not Included" is a sweet movie for the whole family, offering moments that will illicit both laughter and tears. It also offers a limited but interesting glimpse into southern California's Latino culture.

Submit stories and story ideas to
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Kevin Rivard: Blending Orchestra Sounds

By Diane Claytor



Kevin Rivard playing the natural horn (not his normal instrument).

Photo Keith Green

When he was in the fourth grade at Northside Christian School in St. Petersburg, Fla., local resident Kevin Rivard really wanted to play the trumpet. But at his parents' insistence, he learned the clarinet, with the promise that if he was still interested in two years, he could take up the brass instrument.

Two years later, the trumpet still called to Rivard, but with the encouragement of his music teacher, Carolyn Wahl, he took the French horn home to give it a try.

He obviously liked it because today, some 20 years later, Rivard is co-principal horn of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra and principal horn of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra.

And the trumpet? He's never played it! But he does credit Wahl for being his mentor and says it was "her tutelage that gave me a chance at this career."

From the very beginning, Rivard loved the horn – he loved playing it, he loved practicing it, he loved the music, the sound and the challenge. The French horn is a brass instrument made of more than 20 feet of tubing wrapped into a coil with a flared bell and a funnel-shaped mouthpiece.

"It's known for being a very difficult instrument," said Rivard, who lives in Saranap, just outside of Lafayette. "With most instruments, you put down the right finger and the right note comes out. The horn has a very large range with over four octaves and it works with a series of overtones, or a harmonic series. Each fingering produces a series of notes so that there are over 12 possible notes per fingering. Consequently, the accuracy of each note is determined by your lips," he explained. "If you're off by just a fraction, the most glorious, beautiful sound can suddenly sound like a dying goat."

According to Rivard, the sound has a huge range of expression. In movies, the horn has the voice of our favorite hero. "It's also the voice of love in many romantic scenes. It has the sweet, soulful sound that grabs at the heartstrings," he stated, adding, that it is also often a blending instrument, "helping the brass and woodwinds, or woodwinds and strings."

"The warmth and depth of the horn's sound give it the ability to meld together all voices in the orchestra," he said.

A Juilliard graduate, Rivard is in his sixth season with both the Opera and Ballet orchestras. He's won numerous solo competitions, including the 2007 International Horn Competition of America. He came to the Bay Area following stints as assistant principal horn with both the Florida Orchestra and Colorado Symphony Orchestra and has performed with many others, including The Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, Houston Symphony and Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Even with years of experience, Rivard practices just about every day. "I do a lot of drills, exercises, stuff that's not actual music. I want to be technically able to play anything."

In addition to his San Francisco jobs, Rivard teaches at San Jose State University and performs in solos and recitals throughout the area. He also teaches private horn lessons. He'll be playing with the Gold Coast Chamber Players in a "Horn and Plenty" concert at the Lafayette Library on Jan. 18 and will be a featured speaker during their pre-concert talk, beginning at 7 p.m.

Rivard is as passionate about arts education as he is about his music. He volunteers at both Stanley Middle School and Acalanes High School, as well as at other area schools. It's a personal thing, he said. "Kids in this area – which is so rich with cultural opportunities – should experience live, professional music. My goal is to let them experience it up close, let them hear and feel the sound," he stated. He typically performs a few pieces and then has an open forum. "I think great, high-end classical music has a connection to every person's life.

"What's so good about having a strong foundation in the arts is that you have this great work ethic, great discipline, great creativity," he continued. Without learning the arts, Rivard said, an entire portion of the brain goes unused. "With music, you learn how to get the two sides of your brain working together."

Rivard is part of a musical family: his wife, Liz, is a violinist, who freelances with local symphonies and chamber groups; his 4-year-old daughter is taking violin lessons and his 6-year-old son, who is much more interested in soccer, plays the piano.

The late Anton Horner, who was principal horn of the Philadelphia Orchestra, once said, "God made some people horn players. Others were not so fortunate." Rivard agrees with that. He expressed his happiness by noting that "when you have a job with great orchestras in a great area, it's the pinnacle of your career."



Kevin Rivard performing a solo on his French horn.

Photo Heather George

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Roses on Parade

... continued from page B1

The abundance of fresh flowers, even in the midst of winter, prompted the club to add another showcase—a parade “where entrants would decorate their carriages with hundreds of blooms.”

Motion pictures were made in 1900. Organizers were forced to raise wires above the parade route to accommodate taller, wider wonders by 1908. A year later, Isabella Coleman, the woman for whom one of the parade’s most prestigious trophies is named, began making her mark as the goddess of float design. By 1951, Bay Area residents were watching the

spectacle in glorious color on television, thanks to KPIX.

“The process of selecting a queen and court is one of the classic things” done by association members, said Stevenson. Roughly 1,300 girls from high schools around Pasadena audition each year. Chosen via competition, “not a beauty contest,” Stevenson said they are “incredibly sharp ladies.”

The association president, however, is the only one permitted to choose the theme and grand marshal. After many years of male grand marshals, the first woman received that

honor in 1933—Hollywood star Mary Pickford, who would ride “in a coach covered with lavender and shell-pink sweat peas, China lilies and pink roses,” according to the Associated Press.

Bob Hope was grand marshal twice (1947, 1969). Former President Dwight D. Eisenhower took a turn in 1964, followed by golfer Arnold Palmer (1965), and Walt Disney (1966). But it is Shirley Temple who has appeared most often. Presiding over the parade’s 50th and 100th anniversaries, Temple was also the youngest grand marshal ever appointed, and served a third time with astronaut Buzz Aldrin.

Despite those Hollywood ties, though, the parade isn’t all glam, said Stevenson. Since its 1983 launch, the association’s foundation has granted more than \$2 million to support leadership, arts and recreation activities.

Annual themes have included: Patriotism (1918), Tales of the Seven Seas (1934), Victory, Unity and Peace (1946), Dreams of the Future (1952), It’s a Small World (1966), Through the Eyes of a Child (1971), A World of Wonders (1987), Echoes of the Century (1999), and It’s Magical (2006). This year, the theme is Dreams Come True.

Hopefully, with the help of a little 2014 flower power, they really will.



The number of flowers used on a single float for 1 year, says Tournament of Roses volunteer, Ed Stevenson, often equals the number of flowers sold by the average florist during a 5-year period. This was just one aisle—among row upon row of roses at several warehouses—just prior to the 2012 Rose Parade. Photos used with permission. Copyright: Ed Stevenson, 2011, 2012.



“Long before it was fashionable, she was there by our side—a singular and fearless champion for AIDS activism,” said Michael Weinstein, President of AIDS Healthcare Foundation, in 2012 of Dame Elizabeth Taylor. AHF honored the two-time Academy Award-winning actress with its float, which was awarded the Queen’s Trophy for the most effective use of roses by the Tournament of Roses Association.



Gamers worldwide celebrated decades of engagement with their prized pastime as “Pac-Man’s 30th Anniversary Party” made its way along the 2011 Rose Parade route. Sponsored by Namco Bandai Games America Inc., this dazzler captured the Judges’ Special Award for showmanship and dramatic impact, and brought out the kid in everyone when a flower-covered Pac-Man leapt 50 feet above this castle, shown here during one of the judging rounds prior to the parade.

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Lunafest

SMC Women's Resource Center shows short films by, for and about women

By Amanda Kuehn



Image provided

What do you get when you combine the talents of female actors, directors, producers and artists with a fervent desire to raise funds for local non-profits and advocate for the elimination of preventable and environmental causes of breast cancer? An evening viewing of nine amazing short films and a whole lot of tasty Luna bars.

Lunafest is a traveling film festival filled with stories by women for women and about women that center around the themes of reflection, hope and humor sponsored by Luna, the makers of nutrition bars for

women. Originally founded in 2000, Lunafest has featured 110 filmmakers and has raised close to \$2 million. This year's festival will travel to over 150 cities – including Moraga – and screen in front of 25,000 people.

The Saint Mary's College Women's Resource Center has sponsored Lunafest screenings since 2009. This year the screening will run from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 22 in Saint Mary's Hagerty Lounge in De LaSalle Hall. The format of each screening is left up to the discretion of the organization. The WRC screening will feature a generous spread of snacks in a low-key environment.

This year's Lunafest films range in form from animation to fictional drama, and cover topics including women's health, motherhood, body image, sexuality, cultural diversity and breaking barriers. "It's a platform for women's stories," explained WRC director Sharon Sobotta.

The WRC charges \$5 for students and \$10 for non-students. Thus far, Lunafest has raised over \$656,000 for the Breast Cancer Fund and over \$1 million for other women's non-profit organizations. "All of our proceeds go directly to the Breast Cancer Fund," said Sobotta.

Previous screenings have been 75 people strong, a number that is expected to keep growing. Lunafest is open to the community and members of the Lamorinda area are encouraged to support female artists and join in the fight against breast cancer. "It's a great opportunity to really experience art and to connect through film," Sobotta said. Some SMC students get extra credit for January term courses, others just come for fun. "Often students will say it's one of their favorite events of the year."

For more information about Lunafest (or to watch a trailer of this year's shorts) visit: <http://www.lunafest.org/>.

"David and Goliath" Offers Lamorinda Readers Prescient Insights

By Lou Fancher

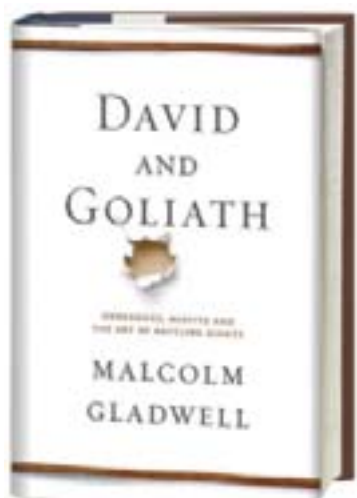


Image provided

The best thing about a new Malcolm Gladwell book might be the kerfluffle it causes. Starting with "The Tipping Point" in 2000 and floating on three subsequent best-selling books before this year's "David and Goliath: Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants," Gladwell isn't afraid to tell the world it doesn't understand itself.

Inevitably, the world accepts the bestselling author's blend of storytelling, selective social science research and 'crystal ballism' with everything from adoring astonishment to grudging resentment to outright animosity. Pleased or infuriated, the chatter his books inspire means we're finally talking about something other than whether or not Congress will ever get along.

"David and Goliath" tells us the world doesn't steer along predictable paths or reward the mighty to the exclusion of the meek. Instead, life tips in a blink on an unexpected axis: delivering success to hard working, lucky outliers, and frequently, mislabeling beauty as a flaw, or predicting impending, certain victory according to size.

Expanding upon themes in articles he's written for The New Yorker, Gladwell scavenges for compelling real life narratives and research studies with simple, eye-pleasing data to support the premises of his books. In his latest tome, he reaches back to the Bible for a foundational "cunning beats cumbersome" message and forward, to recent social psychology re-

search and stats related to college graduation rates and incarceration percentages. Inverted U-curves (demonstrating a featured item's rise-plateau-plunge trajectory) are his current favorite graphic.

Although Gladwell's opening argument – that "we consistently get these kinds of conflicts wrong" and "misinterpret them" – is deeply flawed when it comes to "David and Goliath" (I've yet to meet someone who thinks the story is an argument for weight lifting or for expecting oneself to be defeated by a bully with poor eyesight), Gladwell swiftly moves into his pursuit of the story's underlying implications. Like his previous books, it's entertaining, scientific (to a degree) and written with the clipped flair that has made his book sales – and his advances – number in the millions.

Dividing the book into three sections, readers are taken on an upside down ride meant, in large part, to jostle the brain's gray cells. Growing up poor spawns a basketball coach genius; large classroom sizes improve learning; second-tier colleges spawn bigger fish than Ivy League schools; and losing one parent as a child is advantageous. More outrageously, experiencing dyslexia, or slots of bomb explosions (rather than just a few), or suffering debilitating racism, are gifts. And landing "on the far end of the (disagreeable) continuum," is a precursor to innovative success. In the final section, unlikely heroes confound: pram-pushing Irish citizens, a police officer bearing turkeys, a grieving father, a heartbroken mother and a French Huguenot priest.

All along, Gladwell champions the underdog, and in doing so, he occasionally over-reaches. A murky section on Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 battle against segregation in Birmingham, Ala., is particularly flimsy. And most egregiously, as any parent of a child with a disability will tell you, it takes good people to create silver linings. Watching a child struggle to read isn't a blessing; grace arrives courtesy of the tools and people who help a child overcome the obstacles.

For Lamorinda's academic-centric community however, Gladwell's book has prescient insights. It would be unfortunate if Gladwell's tendency to skirt opposing arguments and stack his own deck caused local readers to overlook the chapters on wealth and happiness, class size and test scores, and college choice and career potential.

"Wealth contains the seeds of its own destruction," he writes, referencing studies showing happiness follows the inverted u-curve when income rises above \$75,000. And although Gov. Jerry Brown's popularity ratings once doubled within three weeks of announcing his intention to reduce school class sizes, Gladwell cites studies and economists finding little statistically significant evidence demonstrating students perform better in smaller classes. Especially relevant to parents of high school-age students, is the story of a bright young woman whose choice to attend a prestigious university over one with a lesser reputation knocked down her ambition – as surely as David's slingshot stone toppled Goliath.

A chapter on California's 1994 Three Strikes law allows readers without children to find close-to-home application of the book's themes. Created to combat crime with increasingly significant punishments, Three Strikes was supported by 72 percent of the voters. Statistics relating to the law's impact showed ambiguous reductions in some crimes – and costly, alarming prison population increases and an inflammatory effect on violent crimes. The law was amended greatly in 2012, by Proposition 36. If Gladwell ruffles the feathers of scientific purists demanding more or other substantiation for his claims, it's worth it. The benefit for the remainder of the world is astute, enjoyable storytelling and an opportunity to find contentment through better understanding. And maybe his sixth book will explore congress and discover they are, after all, getting along famously.

"David and Goliath" is available at Orinda Books and local libraries.

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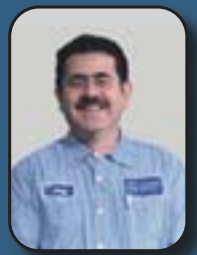


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Medalist and Acalanes Track and Field Coach Shares Joy of the Sport

By Michael Sakoda



Joy Upshaw, far right, runs hurdles for Acalanes High School in 1979.

Photo provided

In 2013, Acalanes track and field coach, Joy Upshaw, won three gold medals – 100, 200, and 80-meter hurdles – and a silver in the long jump at the World Masters Athletics Championships in Brazil, the latest accomplishments in a decorated career.

In 2011, just a week after her 50th birthday, Upshaw set world records for W50 in the long jump – 17 feet, 11 inches – and the indoor 200-meter – 26.24 – at a Masters Championship in Albuquerque, N.M.

But breaking records is nothing new for the Upshaw family, as Joy put it, “We’re a track family.”

Her father, Monte, broke Jesse Owens’ high school long jump record in 1954 (24 feet, 4.25 inches). “We never heard the stories from him,” Upshaw recalled. “But other people would tell us about how good he was.”

That’s where Upshaw says her love of the sport began, and it wasn’t long before she was competing for herself. “They used to have the Merriewood Relays out here near Fairview,” she said. “I went to Springhill, and we competed against Merriewood, and Happy Valley ... a fun little relay meet in Burton Valley.”

In 1968, Upshaw and her family moved from Berkeley to Lafayette where she and her three siblings competed for Acalanes. “The experience at Acalanes was great,” she said. “We had great coaches like Kris Brown and Scott Brady-Smith ... we had a really good team ... broke a lot of records.”

Her siblings, Chip, who was on Acalanes’ last championship football team in 1981, Merry and Grace all ran track for the Dons.

“I remember after Grace’s grad

night at Acalanes she got home at four in the morning,” said Upshaw. “I woke her up the next day and said, ‘Let’s go to a track meet,’ and we did ... and she jumped a 19 feet, 3 inches and set a school record.”

Upshaw said the memory gives her a ‘no excuse’ policy with her kids. “When they say, ‘I was up all night studying,’ I tell them, ‘So? You can still go break a school record,’” she said. Though, her sister did go on to long jump for team USA at the 2004 and 2008 Olympics.

After high school, Upshaw ran track for Cal State Hayward where she trained with Olympic coaches and received a degree in kinesiology with a dance minor. “My mom was really musically inclined,” she said. “So she always kept us in music, dance and art.”

While Upshaw isn’t dancing anymore, she did teach aerobics for a number of years after graduating from college. “I was teaching at the Walnut Creek Racquet Club in 1983, and the football coach at Acalanes had me come in and teach aerobics to the team during their summer workouts,” she said with a smile.

But sharing her love of track is her real passion, and she’s been doing it at every level – from coaching the Dons, to helping her sister, Grace, train for the Olympics, from coaching on several U.S. National teams, to founding the Jack Rabbits Track Club in 1998.

“The purpose of Jack Rabbits is to teach kids the joy of track and field ... to learn the sport and understand

it,” she said. “We work on posture and running mechanics and drills and introduce them to the long jump and hurdles, relays, shotput and discus.”

Upshaw is a mother of two, and unsurprisingly her daughters are runners. Her oldest, Sunny, was a standout at Gunn High School and is now a senior at Cal on a track scholarship; while her youngest, Windy, is a freshman on the track team at Acalanes.

So why has a world class athlete and coach returned to Lamorinda? The answer lies in her fondest memory.

“The best feeling was having the baton on the relay leg in the FAL Championship and winning as a team for Acalanes,” she said. “(Lamorinda) is a just a great setting ... a nice community ... I want to give back and see Acalanes do well again.”



100m (13.24 1st)



Upshaw winning her medal for the 100-meter hurdle in Brazil.

Family Focus

Are Your Children Helping Enough at Home?

By Margie Ryerson, MFT

Our children are busier than ever these days. There seems to be more homework, longer and more frequent sports practices and games or meets, more pressure to participate in a variety of extracurricular activities, and of course more pressure to succeed. Many parents tell me that they want their kids to do regular chores at home, but they don’t see how it’s possible given their hectic schedules. The choice might be between chores and sleep.

I hear from many parents (and know from my own experience too), that it is actually harder to set up and enforce chore implementation than it is just to do it yourself. As a result, there are many grumbling parents around who know their kids are getting off the hook, but who are too busy to do something about the situation.

As parents, you don’t want to be the ones to place additional burdens on your children when they are already busy and stressed. After all, their job is to do well in school and in their other activities. Why have them fold laundry when it’s so easy to do it yourself? They’re only young once, so do they really need to spend their limited time vacuuming or changing their sheets?

Some parents think their children are helping enough by putting away their toys, or later on, putting their own dishes in the dishwasher or doing their own laundry. To be sure, these tasks are helpful and important. But what I am suggesting is that they learn to do more than just take care of their own possessions. They need to pitch in with chores that help out others in the family and the family as a whole.

Through the years, I have seen many families in my practice who regret not having these kinds of expectations for their children. If parents allow their children to avoid pitching in with family chores, they run the risk of becoming subservient to their children’s needs. Children will see that their needs trump any family or parent needs, and consequently they may develop characteristics of entitlement and self-absorption. As these children get older, they may very well become insensitive to the needs of parents and others. Training them to help and think of others at an early age helps instill responsibility, thoughtfulness and consideration.

You can begin with simple tasks when your children are 3 or 4 years old. Young children can put the napkins on the table for meals or put a cup of dog or cat food in a bowl. Some parents have their children pick certain chores from a list so that they have some choice. Other families trade off chores among their children on a weekly or monthly basis so that no one is stuck for very long with tasks they dislike. The important thing is to develop a plan and stick to it until it becomes a natural part of your family functioning. You may need to think long-term, since training your children to do a good job and comply consistently can actually take months to incorporate.

Parents who elicit this type of cooperation from their children at an early age have an advantage. They can avoid, or at least reduce, what parents of older children may well incur at first: negativity and passive or active resistance. Training older children often requires a very positive approach. Parents need to demonstrate appreciation, flexibility, and collaboration with their children. It is important to obtain children’s buy-in to the general concept of helping others in the family before negotiating the specific tasks that will be involved. You need to expect that it may not be a perfect implementation with older children. If your children contribute to the family’s well-being on a regular basis, if not perfectly, it is still cause to celebrate your parenting skills. You will have enhanced your family’s cohesiveness and your children’s emotional health.



Margie Ryerson, MFT, is a marriage and family therapist in Orinda and Walnut Creek. Contact her at (925) 376-9323 or margierye@yahoo.com. She is the author of “Treat Your Partner Like a Dog: How to Breed a Better Relationship” and “Appetite for Life: Inspiring Stories of Recovery from Anorexia, Bulimia, and Compulsive Overeating.”

New Year’s Resolutions for Your Pet

By Mona Miller, DVM



Photo Mona Miller

It is the season of appreciation and reflection, a time to consider what changes to make for the next year that will enrich our lives. Perhaps we should take a few minutes to extend the same resolutions to our pets – what can we do in the new year to enhance their health and enrich their lives? This might be the year to update health/veterinary care, enrich your cat’s home environment, or explore new activities with your dog. Some of these resolutions might affect your budget and some might affect your time schedule, much as our own personal resolutions tend to do.

During the down economy over the past few years, most Lamorinda veterinarians noticed a decrease in preventive health care measures taken for pets. Some vaccines were delayed, blood test screenings put off, small lumps left alone. Now that the economy is swinging back up, this might be the year to reconsider some of these expenditures. Just as with any elective item (new TV, couch, etc.), it is wise to get the information ahead of time and incorporate it into your budget. Your next veterinary visit might be a good opportunity to ask for cost estimates for dentistry or geriatric blood and urine tests. Other preventive health measures include committing to brushing your dog or cat’s teeth four times weekly, adjusting food calories for the overweight pet, or maintaining a daily walk

schedule.

Environmental enrichment can be achieved with any pet, whether it’s a dog, cat, rabbit, bird or turtle. You can rotate toys – pick up the ones laying around for the past year or so, and introduce new toys every few months. Cats that enjoy catnip might need a refill or a refresher to the stuffed mouse from past holidays. Caged birds enjoy bells, colored ropes and food treat toys. It might be time to re-decorate the cage with new items, and you can save the old ones to bring back in four to six months. My son’s idea for this article is to make turtle and tortoise terrariums look as much like their natural environment as possible.

We are fortunate to live in the Bay Area, which is consistently rated by various groups as a dog-friendly place. This might be the year to explore some of the areas around that earn these ratings. A September 2013 Huffington Post article listed San Francisco as “a dog friendly city” – one of the reasons why people who live there are “so happy and healthy.” Likewise, Estate ranked San Francisco fifth in their list of “17 Best U.S. Cities for Dogs.” While these highlight San Francisco, the truth is that the East Bay has many places that are dog-friendly: downtown Lafayette, 4th Street Berkeley, and Point Isabel dog park, for example. You can find East Bay “Splash Spots” (such as in

Benicia), Oakland brew pubs that welcome your well-behaved pooch, and of course the numerous regional parks that allow you to hike with your dog. Field trips with your dog help strengthen your bond with him, allow for different socialization experiences than the home setting and provide some interesting new sights for both of you. An excellent resource is “The Dog Lover’s Companion to the San Francisco Bay Area.” My own 2014 new year’s resolution for my dog is to take him on more hikes, and for my cats is to brush their teeth more consistently.



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

Tree of Life Legacies

Doing more for families than just telling stories

By Sophie Braccini



April Bell interviews Dennis Erokan in her studio. Photo Sophie Braccini

A study by two psychologists, Marshall Duke and Robyn Fivush, who worked with children of 9/11 victims, concluded that the more children knew about their family's history, the stronger their sense of control over their lives, and the higher their self-esteem. Developing a strong narrative by documenting stories from the family is something Lafayette resident and businesswoman April Bell started to do four years ago, and with the help of a new app, she is making it even easier and more affordable.

One of Bell's clients is Orinda resident Don Carlson. "Only one of my grandmothers lived with us, but I didn't know much about my other grandparents and I regret it," Carlson says. "Now (in my 80s) I have great grandchildren and I want to pass my history on to them."

Bell interviewed Carlson and created two half-hour documentaries for him, one about his life and one about his company. "Most older people have experience and have learned a few things along the way," he adds. "It is important to share the good [memories] and the mistakes on the video; you never want to lie, especially about the mistakes you wished you never made." Carlson, who is the father of Richard Carlson, the best-selling author of "Don't Sweat The Small Stuff" who died at age 45, adds it is not necessary to share the most

painful memories. "You have to be selective about what you choose."

Coming from the publishing industry, Bell wanted to reinvent herself and decided that becoming a personal historian and creating videos captured all the elements she wanted in her professional life. "I love people and their stories; I am creative and technical at the same time," she says. "Starting Tree of Life Legacies encompasses it all."

Her style and skills are very much appreciated by her clients. "The process was easy," remembers Cliff Dochterman of Moraga, who worked with Bell three years ago. "We sat down in my living room and talked for four hours; she is a very personable interviewer and puts people at ease. Then she did a terrific job of editing our conversation, producing a 35-minute documentary that captured the essence of what we wanted to do." The movie was commissioned by one of his fellow Rotarians to document Dochterman's experience as president of Rotary International at the peak of the worldwide campaign to eradicate polio. The video has now been seen by Rotarians all over the world.

"I do projects for families, for companies, for groups like the Martinez Historical Society," says Bell. "Sometimes I am hired by children who want me to interview their parents, or by individuals who want to share a legacy." She sets a pre-inter-

view appointment where she determines the scope and purpose of the video, then prepares a set of questions before starting the actual taping.

Editing the video is "an involved process that can become a bit costly," says Bell, "and since I believe it is so important for generations to share their stories, I looked for a way to make it more affordable." And she did. With partner Urs Brauchli she developed a \$2.99 iPhone app called Story Catcher that was released in 2013.

"I used the app on my phone and created this little narrative about how I met my wife," says longtime Lafayette resident Dennis Erokan, founder of BAM Magazine who met Bell at a Lafayette Chamber of Commerce meeting. "Then I shared the story with one of my daughters." He said that his daughter was so moved that she started to cry; she had never heard the whole story.

The app allows people to record a video approximately two minutes long; users can access templates, if they want, to add pictures and subtitles, and create a very nice and professional looking product that can be shared with others.

"The app allows you to string together many of these shorts," says Bell. "My recommendation would be to take one question at a time, like: Who was the most influential person you met? Or, where were you born? What was the best trip you ever took? And construct a real portrait." Bell sees uses of the app for weddings, travel, great thoughts ... the list is endless and is only limited by people's imagination.

"Everyone has a legacy, everyone's life is interesting, whether they were presidents or had simpler lives," concluded Carlson. "Everyone should capture it before it's too late and pass it on to the next generation."

For information about Tree of Life Legacy, visit aprilbell.com or call (925) 465-5359.

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

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business briefs

New Year's Brunch at Café Hacienda
2100 Donald Dr., Moraga
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Café Hacienda is open today, Jan. 1, from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. for a special New Year's Day brunch at the Hacienda de las Flores. Owner Gayle Somers is working with the town to get approval on extended hours this year. The bucolic building and grounds belong to the town; it is the facility where most of the town's recreation activities and many public meetings are held. "We would like to offer Saturday and Sunday brunch from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. until the wedding season starts again," says Somers. "The plan would also be to open on Thursday nights for dinner, by reservation only. We would be closed on Mondays and would prepare an email blast each week with our seasonal menu for the following Thursday." The Café would be open for breakfast and lunch during the rest of the week, including Fridays. Somers is hoping for a decision by mid-January. Reservations are encouraged but not required.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette
The Chamber will reopen Jan. 2.

Lafayette businessman Brian Aiello was named Businessperson of the Year. Aiello runs Pinnacle Apparel & Promotions with his wife, Jennifer. "Family man, entrepreneur, coach,

impresario of the Lafayette Art, Wine and Music Festival, Reservoir Run artist, board member and all around great guy: those are some of the nice things said describing Brian," says the chamber's executive director, Jay Lifson. The celebration dinner, along with Mayor Don Tatzin's State of the City address will be on Saturday, Feb. 1 at the Lafayette Park Hotel and Spa.

The Chamber of Commerce has a new president: Stacy Spell of Oakwood Athletic Club will lead the board in 2014.

Moraga
Chamber office grand opening – come say "hi" to Kathe Nelson in her new office in the La Sala building of the Hacienda de las Flores from 8 a.m. to noon Monday, Jan. 6, 2100 Donald Dr.

Save the date for the first chamber business meeting of the year at 7:30 a.m. Friday, Jan. 31 at the Hacienda de las Flores.

Orinda
To bring its members a great way to stay in touch with their customers, the chamber has partnered with Constant Contact – the email marketing service for small businesses – and negotiated a 20 percent discount for its members if they sign up for six months of service and 25 percent if they sign for a year. Businesses that already have a Constant Contact account can also get the discount.

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

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Parents, Get Ready for Kindergarten!

2014-15 Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten registration for the three school districts will be happening in January and February. Children must be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1 to enter kindergarten for the 2014-15 school year. Transitional Kindergarten (TK) is an optional program for those children who have their 5th birthday between (including) Sept. 2 and Dec. 2.

Lafayette School District

(Burton Valley, Happy Valley, Lafayette, and Springhill elementary schools)

Registration for both programs will take place at the district's four elementary schools Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 21 and 22 at the following times:

- Burton Valley Elementary from 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m.
- Happy Valley Elementary from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m.
- Lafayette Elementary from 9 to noon
- Springhill Elementary from 9 to 11 a.m.

Registration packets can be obtained from the schools prior to registration, beginning Jan. 7, however the earliest day in which completed packets will be accepted by the schools is Jan. 22, during registration times. For more information about kindergarten registration, go to the district's website at: www.lafsd.k12.ca.us.

Moraga School District

(Camino Pablo, Donald Rheem and Los Perales elementary schools)

Kindergarten and Transitional Kindergarten registration for 2014-15 will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday and Friday, Feb. 6 and 7. For more information, visit www.moraga.k12.ca.us.

Orinda Union School District

(Del Rey, Glorietta, Sleepy Hollow, and Wagner Ranch elementary schools)

Transitional Kindergarten and Kindergarten registration for children entering an Orinda public school in August 2014 will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at each of four elementary schools Monday through Thursday, Feb. 3-6. Registration requires the presentation of various documents. These documents and specific instructions are outlined on the district's website. Please note that some of the items need to be the original, certified documents. Visit www.orindaschools.org for more information.

OIS Team Places Second in Winter Debate Tournament

Submitted by Allison Banisadr



Photo Allison Banisadr

An Orinda Intermediate School debate team placed second out of 48 teams in the OIS winter tournament Dec. 14. OIS hosted public and private school teams from Moraga, Walnut Creek, Piedmont, and other locations as far as Oregon. The second place winning team members were, from left: Tai Fox, Eric Banisadr, and Asim Khan. Eric Banisadr also won an outstanding speaker award for being one of the top ten debaters overall.

TEEN SCENE

The 21st Century Diary

By Youngjoo Ahn

The 21st century is the Age of Technology with rapid developments in communication. With programs like Skype, Google Hangouts, VSee, and Face-time, long distance face-to-face conversation is possible for anyone in the world connected via the Internet. One of the by-products of this "Age" is blogging.

Blogging is almost like a virtual diary that can be shared with everyone. Some blogs focus on one specific subject and have a niche following. There are many blogs dedicated to fashion, food, book reviews, traveling, dating, teens, and everything imaginable.

The most alluring aspect to blogging is sharing. How fantastic it is to know that a stranger in the Netherlands is reading your blog and struggling with your very same issues! A blog allows people from all over the globe to connect and learn about one another. Many people also use blogs as an outlet for opinions, rants, and random thoughts.

"Blogging is really fun. It consumes my life in a good way. I'm always thinking of new things to try from blogs I read and what I'm going to say in my blog. I'm constantly looking for different subjects to blog about," Miramonte senior Dashia Kwok said. "Blogging has helped me form opinions about topics that I probably wouldn't have considered otherwise."

Gaining followers and readers is not as easy as it seems. Overnight popularity is almost impossible and should not be expected. A blog, like any other hobby, takes time, patience, and care. The best way to gain readers is through excellent writing. It's important to actually

sit down and write something special, carefully editing for grammar and spelling. With so many blogs in the blogosphere, quality matters. Pictures and social media are additional power tools to enhance your blog.

The rewards of blogging are limitless. Blogging can be an online journal or a private 21st century diary. I enjoy looking back on old posts and remembering what I was feeling at that time. It's also gratifying to learn that others are intrigued with my thoughts.

For me, the most impressive reward with blogging is that I own a small slice of the Internet community. Blogging can boost your business and your career, but for me, and many of my Lamorinda friends, the best part is that my posts are personal keepsakes that we'll treasure forever.

Youngjoo Ahn is a senior at Miramonte High School. In her free time she hosts Express Yourself teen radio, volunteers teaching Korean, and blogs.



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

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

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Want a Festive New Year's?

Don't forget the crab!

By Susie Iventosch



Photos Susie Iventosch



where from \$4.99 to \$10.99 per pound in the shell. You can also purchase lump crab meat for a premium, but it does save a lot of time.

This mushroom-crab puff pastry is wonderful as an appetizer or as a side dish to accompany a light meal. I have served it twice as an appetizer during the holiday season, and on Christmas Eve, we served it as a side dish for my sister's posole.

This recipe is typically done using all of the ingredients mixed together, however everyone at our Christmas Eve celebration wanted a totally different combination. So, we put all of the ingredients out in separate ramekins and everyone made their own. We aim to please!

It is January, and that means it's crab season once again! Apparently, the catch is plentiful this year, and Dungeness crab is selling any-

Crab-Mushroom Puff Pastry with Blue Cheese and Gruyere



(Makes approximately 2 dozen appetizer pieces, or 6 large pieces to serve as a side dish to dinner, soup or salad.)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 and 1/2 sheets puff pastry
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 pound cremini or shitake mushrooms, caps and stems, chopped
- 1 large shallot, finely diced and sautéed until translucent
- 1 cup grated Gruyere cheese
- 1/2 cup crumbled blue cheese
- 1/2 cup roasted red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh tarragon
- 1/2 to 1 cup lump crab meat (your choice, depending upon how much you love crab)
- Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Roll out the puff pastry onto a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Cut into desired sizes. Poke pastry with a fork so the pastry does not puff too unevenly while baking. With a knife, make a line around the edges of the piece of puff pastry, about 1/2 inch from outside edge, forming a sort of frame. Bake for 10 minutes, or until golden brown. Remove from oven and cool.

Meanwhile, in a large sauté pan, cook shallots in olive oil until translucent. Add mushrooms and cook until beginning to brown. Remove and cool to room temperature. Add chopped roasted red pepper, both cheeses, tarragon and crab meat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Spread mixture over pre-baked puff pastry and bake again at 400 degrees until cheese is melted and just beginning to brown. Cut into desired number of servings for appetizers or side dishes. Enjoy!

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



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You can find most of the recipes published in the Lamorinda Weekly on our website. Click Food tab

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 - Volunteers with a Higher Calling
 - Upsurge of Commercial Theft in Moraga
 - History of the Hen House
 - New Saint Mary's College President Already Firmly Involved
 - For Love of a Car Local real estate agent starts the "Lamorinda Tesla Club"
 - Passing the Gavel, Moraga Style
 - Miramonte Girls' Basketball Strong as Ever Campo, Acalanes look to unseat
 - Saklan Kindergartners Learn the 'Art' of Giving at Special Event
- If you wish to view any of the stories above go to www.lamorindaweekly.com and click the link below the story.

Lamorinda's Religious Services



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www.holyshepherd.org



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WORSHIP JANUARY 12
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ART

Klein Gallery is pleased to invite the Lafayette community to its new show "Prickly Point." This month's show includes work from nine Bay Area Artists who use a diverse array of mediums including painting, drawing, sculpture and photography. As the title suggests, the exhibition celebrates the unique character of each artist's work while encouraging viewers to take in the show as a whole. "Prickly Point" will be up through Jan. 12 at Klein Gallery, open Tuesday through Sunday.



Loreta Landucci - Mount Diablo Spring

The Moraga Art Gallery's new show "Good Looking: California Revealed" highlighting the beauty and wonder of California through watercolor paintings by resident artist George Ehrenhaft and oil paintings by guest artist Loreta Landucci opens Jan. 8 and will run through March 15. There will be a free opening reception to see the exhibit and meet the gallery's artists from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 11 at 522 Center Street, Rheem Shopping Center, in Moraga. It is open from noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. For more information, visit the gallery's website: www.moragaartgallery.com, call (925) 376-5407 or email moragaartgallery@gmail.com.

SMC Art and Art History Department Alumni will showcase art in all media and sizes including video and small sculpture. Come see fantastic alumni art, catch up and network with fellow Art and Art History alums and faculty at the opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 9, refreshments included. If you would like to volunteer and help with press, installation, opening reception or de-installation, please feel free to contact Lily Manderville, (510) 849-8935, gallery@care-gtu.org or Professor Anna Novakov, anovakov@stmarys-ca.edu.

"Love at First Sight," the new show at the Lafayette Art Gallery will be opening on Jan. 7. It celebrates the love of the visual and tactile world, and the multitude of ways artists express that love through the mediums of our art. A champagne and chocolate reception will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. on Saturday Feb. 1, and all are welcome. If you haven't yet visited the new location at 3420 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette (at the corner of Brown Ave.), come by and view the over 100 works of original art by local members. For info, call (925) 284-2788 or visit www.lafayetteartgallery.com.

Please join us for Moraga Country Club's Third Art and Wine Event from 5 to 7 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 28. Discover the beautiful florals of artists Hilary Mills and Kiyomi Kubo while tasting wines from Jaime Serra Cristalino and Brandt Rossi Family Vineyards, including both still and sparkling wines from California and imported fruits. Cost: \$15 for members; \$25 for non-members (special offer: two for \$40). Appetizers and wine tasting Included. No host bar. For reservations, call (925) 376-2200 or email frontdesk@moragacc.com.

Student Art from Afghanistan will be on display at the

Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Community Hall through Jan. 13. 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 and the Lafayette Public Art Committee, highlights drawings created by students taking classes funded by TIE.

MUSIC

Experience the joy of singing in a community of talented and dedicated women! WomenSing is holding auditions Tuesday, Jan. 7 – and by appointment for experienced singers. All voice parts are welcome, and scholarships are available for qualified singers. You may also visit www.womensing.org to review our recent repertoire and listen online. For info, email audition@womensing.org, call (925) 974-9169, or visit womensing.org.

Gold Coast Chamber Players concert "Horn and Plenty" at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 18 at the Community Hall, Lafayette Library. Chamber music for French horn, oboe, strings and piano by Mozart, Brahms and Herzogenberg. Principals from SF Opera orchestra are featured. Tickets: \$10-35 Call (925) 283-3728 or at www.gcplayers.org. (See related story page B3)

Faculty Chamber Music Concert from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 19 at the Chapel, Saint Mary's College of California 1928 Saint Mary's Road, Moraga. The free concert opens with guitar trio Mori Achen, Michael Williams, and Martin Rokeach, performing Turina's delightful Rafaga. Donna Olson, Diane Maltester, and Wendy Tamis showcase music for mezzo-soprano, carinet, and harp. A set of jazz improvisations, with vocalist Julie Ford and pianist Bob Athayde, rounds out the performance. For more info, call (925) 631-4670.

Warm up in the New Year with beautiful music at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 22 at the Orinda Library. The Orinda Library continues the Winter Music Series with Brenda Lin, a Lamorinda vocalist, who performs a wide repertoire of songs. Standards, jazz, show tunes, classic rock, R&B, country and bossa nova. The performance is free and takes place inside the library. For more information on the upcoming concert, please visit the library website at ccclib.org or call (925) 254-2184.

THEATER

Role Players Ensemble presents Thornton Wilder's "The Matchmaker." The crafty scheming of widow Dolly Levi turns the world of Horace Vandergelder upside down in this frantic farce. The play opens on Jan. 17 and runs until Feb. 8 at the Danville Community Center. For exact times and tickets, visit www.RolePlayersEnsemble.com

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

Children who like to sing can audition from 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 8 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church for Spring Semester. This internationally known chorus is recognized for excellence in vocal training and performance skills. There are choir levels for boys and girls ages 6-16, with local performances and touring opportunities for advanced choirs. The honors level choir is currently preparing to travel to Argentina during the

summer of 2014. Call for an appointment or info at (925) 945-7101, ext. 1 or email frontdesk@childrenschorus.org.

Madeline Levine, clinical psychologist, author of "Teach Your Children Well," and co-founder of Challenge Success at Stanford University will discuss parenting for authentic success – why values and coping skills matter more than grades, trophies, or "fat envelopes." The event will be from 7 to 9 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 23 in the Acalanes High School Performing Arts Center. Tickets: \$10 for one; \$15 for two. Purchase tickets at http://madelinelevine.eventbrite.com.

Lindsay Wildlife Museum "Mini Mondays." At 10 a.m. Monday, Jan. 27, children from 2-5 years old become naturalists as they experience live animal encounters. The two-hour program allows little ones to explore different animal species through arts, crafts, activities and more. Nut-free refreshments are provided. Children must be accompanied by a caregiver. Registration is not required. Cost: \$8 members; \$15 non-members; \$5 each additional child age 2 and older. For more info, call Kelly Hughes, registrar, (925) 627-2913 or visit Lindsay Wildlife Museum.

OTHER

Start the New Year right by join Valley Stitches and Fiber Arts Guild for a presentation on a Revival of Tile Quilts: Reinventing a Forgotten Form. The technique can be used on many items such as clothing, accessories, wall hangings and more. The guild will meet at 10 a.m. Monday, Jan. 6 at the Faith Lutheran Church, 50 Woodsworth Lane, in Pleasant Hill but come earlier and shop for unique items at the Little Shop. For info, contact Sheila at (925) 945-1338.

"How Your Food is Grown: Challenges and Sustainability" features speakers Margaret Reeves, Ph.D., soil ecologist, Darryl Wong, UC Santa Cruz Agroecology Farm Site research land manager, and Barbara Cecchini, Brentwood farmer from 7:30 to 9 p.m. Friday, Jan. 9 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, Community Hall. For info, email Janet Thomas at janet@sustainablelafayette.org.

"Let's Talk About It: Muslim Journeys," a community reading and discussion series. Discussions will be led by nationally-renowned scholar Hatem Bazian, Ph.D., (UC Berkeley) and will cover five unique books at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill. The first program will explore the book "When Asia Was the World" by Stewart Gordon and will be held from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 14. For more information on the series, including links for registering and ordering the books, please visit guides.ccclib.org/journeys. For info, contact Jeff Gibson, project director at (925) 927-3240 or jgibson@ccclib.org.

... continued on next page

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OTHER ... continued

In January, Bentley School will honor PBS News Hour correspondent and president of Learning Matters, John Merrow, for his trailblazing work advocating for the elevation of the state of education in the United States, the social justice issue of our generation from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 16 at the Bentley School Student Performing Arts Center. Free. RSVP to communications@bentleyschool.net.

The Rotary Club of Orinda will host its annual all-you-can-eat crab feast from 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 18 at the Orinda Masonic Lodge, located at 9 Altarinda Road. Come for fresh-off-the-boat crab accompanied by delectable pasta, salad, sourdough (courtesy of La Piazza), wine, beer and live entertainment. Cost: \$50 per person. Advance reservations required by calling Barbara Bontemps at (925) 219-0082.

The Friends Corner Book Shop is planning its first sale of the year from 9 to 5 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 18 at the Lafayette Library. Everything will be half price.

LUNAFEST, the fundraising film festival dedicated to promoting awareness about women's issues, highlighting women filmmakers, and bringing women together in their communities, will be hosted by the Women's Resource Center from 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 22 in the SMC Hagerty Lounge. The films range from animation to fictional drama, and cover topics such as women's health, motherhood, body image, sexuality, cultural diversity, and breaking barriers. (See story page B5)

Special Presentation, "Global Warming: What's Changed Since an Inconvenient Truth?" from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday,

Jan. 22 at the Lafayette Library Community Hall. Come learn all the latest facts about climate change from Lafayette resident Wei-Tai Kwok who was trained by the Climate Reality Project to give Al Gore's most up-to-date slide show. Discover how your family can participate in the many solutions.

Learn how to make Sushi at 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 29 in the Community Hall, Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Participants can learn how to make delicious sushi at home. They will learn how to make both Hand rolls and Maki style sushi. No raw flesh will be used. Registration is required and is limited to 20 people. Register online at tinyurl.com/m3maab6 or at the Information Desk.

SENIORS

Sons in Retirement Lamorinda Branch 171 meets the first Wednesday monthly at Holy Trinity Culture Center, 1700 School St., Moraga, with social hour at 11 a.m.; lunch at noon. The after-lunch speaker on Wednesday, Jan. 8 will be Saint Mary's College Professor Ron Olowin, of the Department of Physics and Astronomy. Olowin is known for his creative and entertaining perspectives on the Universe. He will share his latest views of the cosmos. For details and membership information, call Larry at (925) 631-9528

Document Your Life Story - If you have wanted to write the stories, memories, and experiences of your life but haven't known where to start, wait no longer. Yuska Lutfi will guide you through the process of leaving a living history for future generations - what a gift! Included will be optional outings to Saint Mary's College for their creative writing reading series, "Afternoon Craft Conversations" from

10 to 11:30 a.m. the second and fourth Thursday of the month in the Cedar Room, Lafayette Community Center. Cost: \$1 members; \$3 non-members, per session.

Free Peer Counseling - Contra Costa Health Services offers free one-on-one counseling with senior (55+) counselors who use their life experiences to help other older adults cope with life changes, problems, crises, and challenges from 10 a.m. to noon on the second Tuesday of the month in the Alder Room, Lafayette Community Center. Confidentiality is strictly observed. Appointment required. Please call Lafayette Senior Services to sign up for one of the 60-minute appointments: (925) 284-5050.

Anne Randolph Physical Therapy Presentation: Parkinson's. Living with Parkinson's disease (PD) can be challenging, but there are things you can do to maintain your quality of life and live well. Learn about the stages of PD and how to optimize your physical ability as long as possible from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Friday, Jan. 24 in the Elderberry Room, Lafayette Community Center. Cost: \$1 members/ \$3 non-members.

GARDEN

Contra Costa Master Gardener's present "Pruning" at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 7 at the Lafayette Library. A gardening expert will be on hand to share the basics of healthy pruning practices for your trees, shrubs, and roses. Learn how to prune, when to prune and what to prune. Cost: \$5 per person. For reservations, email: higginsierra@gmail.com.

2013's Best Movie Picks

By Derek Zemrak



"Fruitvale Station" Photos provided

With a new year upon us, it is time to reflect on what I consider to be 2013's best movies of the year. It is always fun to generate the "Best of" list and realize what a good year 2013 was for movies that would have to be summarized by two key words: struggle and survival.



Top Five Best Movies of 2013

- "Fruitvale Station"** - The true story of Oscar Grant, a 22-year-old Bay Area resident who was shot by a BART police officer on Dec. 31, 2008. "Fruitvale" is a compelling drama by first time director Ryan Coogler and, while it may have been too close to home for many Bay Area residents, it is the "Little Gem of 2013."
- "All Is Lost"** - A gripping survival film starring Hollywood legend Robert Redford about a man's struggle to stay alive when his boat starts to sink. It is hard to fathom that Redford has only received a Best Actor Oscar nomination

- "12 Years a Slave"** - Director Steve McQueen brings to the big screen the horrors of slavery as they have not been seen before. This is a powerful piece of work with an astounding performance by Chiwetel Ejiofor that should get him the Best Actor Oscar on March 2. A difficult movie to watch but a must see!
- "American Hustle"** - Local con artists find themselves caught up in a big time FBI mafia bust. "American Hustle" has one of the best movie scripts in years and director David O. Russell evokes incredible performances from the stellar cast, including Christian Bale, Amy Adams, Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence. It looks like another Oscar for Jennifer Lawrence for Best Supporting Actress. Anyone who is contemplating an acting career should analyze this film. Acting at its best!



once in his astonishing career. "All Is Lost" will be his second.

- "The Spectacular Now"**
- "Nebraska"**
- "Inside Llewyn Davis"**
- "20 Feet from Stardom"**
- "Philomena"**

3) "Dallas Buyers Club" - A gripping film starring Matthew McConaughey as an HIV positive straight man who becomes the most unlikely protagonist for AIDS patients. Look for Oscar nominations for McConaughey and Jared Leto for their roles in the film. Leto will win Best Supporting Actor.

Five 2013 Movies you may have not seen, but are not to be overlooked:
4 Slates of 2013! See you at the concession stand in 2014!

Happy New Year!

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.



"American Hustle"

Service Clubs Announcements




Explore Lamorinda Rotary clubs 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.

A global volunteer organization working to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club

We meet Friday mornings at 7:00 am at Celia's Mexican Restaurant, 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. (Diagonally across from Trader Joes)

January 3: Health care executive Dawn Knight will speak about WHAT IS HEALTHCARE QUALITY AND WHO DECIDES?	January 10: Currency enthusiast and LSR member Dennis Kurimai will speak about A DEEPER LOOK AT MONEY AND BITCOIN	Please join us! 
--	--	---

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Gaels Defeat Zags in Overtime Thriller



Jackie Nared had 27 points in the win. She leads the WCC in points per game. Saint Mary's women's basketball opened up its WCC campaign with an overtime win against No. 21 Gonzaga. The Gaels (11-1) came from down five points at half to tie it at 72-each at the end of regulation. In overtime, SMC put up nine points to edge Gonzaga by one point, 78-79.

The Gaels have had luck against the Zags (10-2) in Moraga as of late, winning last year as well.

Senior guard Jackie Nared led Saint Mary's in scoring. She recorded

27 points, going 10-for-20 from the field and 6-for-9 from behind the arc. Nared added nine rebounds.

Senior forward Danielle Mauldin added another 24 points. Her 23 rebounds helped the Gaels make a comeback.

Nared and Mauldin have been essential to the team's success this season. Nared leads the WCC in scoring. Mauldin is tied for second in the conference in scoring, and she is leading the WCC in rebounds per game, averaging 13.7. The team is well rounded, though. Junior guard Kate Gaze leads the conference in assists per game.

Photos Tod Fierner

The Gaels took on University of Portland on Dec. 30 after the press deadline. *C. Mitchell*



Danielle Mauldin had 24 points and 23 rebounds in the win. She leads the WCC in rebounds per game.



Kate Gaze plays a pivotal role in the Gaels' success. She leads the WCC in assists per game.

Club Lacrosse Team Wins Title

Submitted by Kaaren Brickman



Photo provided

The Gamecocks defeated Team Blue Chip on Dec. 15 in the championship game of the 510 Lacrosse Tournament held at Bishop O'Dowd. The Gamecocks are coached by Acalanes High School varsity coach Brent Ringwood and include players from Acalanes and Las Lomas.



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2014-15 LMSC TRYOUTS U7-U18 - Elite - Junior Elite - National Elite					
AGES	DATE	DAY	TIME	LOCATION	
U7 Boys & Girls	1/10/2014	FRIDAY	4-5:30 PM	WILDER 2	NEW & PLAYERS
U7 Boys & Girls	1/11/2014	SATURDAY	9:30-11AM	WILDER 1	NEW & PLAYERS
	2/8/2014	SATURDAY	3:30-5 PM	WILDER 1	NEW & PLAYERS
U8 Boys & Girls	1/10/2014	FRIDAY	4-5:30 PM	WILDER 2	NEW PLAYERS
	1/11/2014	SATURDAY	4:30-6 PM	WILDER 2	NEW PLAYERS
	2/8/2014	SATURDAY	5:30-7 PM	WILDER 1	NEW PLAYERS
U9 Boys & Girls	1/10/2014	FRIDAY	4-5:30 PM	WILDER 2	NEW & PLAYERS
	1/11/2014	SATURDAY	4:30-6 PM	WILDER 2	NEW & PLAYERS
	2/8/2014	SATURDAY	5:30-7 PM	WILDER 1	NEW & PLAYERS
U10 Boys & Girls	1/18/2014	SATURDAY	4-5:30 PM	WILDER 1	NEW PLAYERS
	2/8/2014	SATURDAY	7-8:30 PM	WILDER 1	NEW PLAYERS
U11 Boys & Girls	1/18/2014	SATURDAY	4-5:30 PM	WILDER 1	NEW PLAYERS
	2/8/2014	SATURDAY	7-8:30 PM	WILDER 1	NEW PLAYERS
U12 Girls	1/6/2014	MONDAY	4-6 PM	WILDER 2	NEW PLAYERS
	2/8/2014	SATURDAY	7-8:30 PM	WILDER 1	NEW PLAYERS
U12 Boys	1/13/2014	MONDAY	4-6 PM	WILDER 1	NEW PLAYERS
	2/8/2014	SATURDAY	7-8:30 PM	WILDER 1	NEW PLAYERS
U13 Girls	1/28/2014	TUESDAY	4-6 PM	WILDER 1	ALL PLAYER
	1/30/2014	THURSDAY	4-6 PM	WILDER 1	ALL PLAYER
	2/20/2014	THURSDAY	4-6 PM	WILDER 1	ALL PLAYER
U13 Boys	1/28/2014	TUESDAY	5:30-7 PM	WILDER 2	ALL PLAYER
	1/30/2014	THURSDAY	5:30-7 PM	WILDER 2	ALL PLAYER
	2/20/2014	THURSDAY	5:30-7 PM	WILDER 2	ALL PLAYER

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Fall-Sport Lamorinda Athletes Earn All-DFAL Honors

Compiled by C. Mitchell

After a dominant fall season, Lamorinda athletes were recognized as the best in the Diablo Foothill Athletic League.

In girls' tennis, Lamorinda sent two teams, Acalanes and Miramonte, to the NCS. Top individual athletes earned DFAL awards.

First Team:

- Isabella Von Ebbe, Acalanes
- Taylor James, Miramonte
- Hannah Ross, Campolindo
- Holly Bohuslav/Merrick Goodman, Miramonte

Second Team:

- Tessa Karagocev, Acalanes
- Jennifer Stanten, Miramonte
- Riley Eversole, Miramonte
- Katja Brewer/Tori Kallerud, Campolindo
- Cece Andrews/Katie Hawkins, Miramonte

Honorable Mention:

- Jenny Leserman, Campolindo
- Anjali Majumdar, Miramonte
- Melissa Van Pell, Acalanes

Campolindo again reigned in girls' volleyball. The Cougars went to the NCS finals and advanced to the State Championship. Kelley Wirth was named DFAL Most Valuable Player.

First Team:

- Kristen Sibley, Campolindo
- Anne Doyle, Campolindo
- Molly Dalziel, Acalanes
- Maddie Goodreault, Miramonte
- Kacey Sorenson, Miramonte

Second Team:

- Maddy Miller, Miramonte
- Lizzie Fabian, Miramonte
- Rachel Cox, Acalanes
- Natalie Meniktas, Campolindo

Honorable Mention:

- Katie Nall, Acalanes
- Mackenzie Brown, Campolindo
- Emily Fabian, Miramonte

In water polo, Campolindo, both boys' and girls' teams, won NCS titles this year. Miramonte was hot on their tails, both boys' and girls' finished second in the NCS behind their Lamorinda rivals. Grant Sivesind and Annika Jensen of Campolindo earned Most Valuable Player. Cougars' Maddi Tagg was named Outstanding Goalie.

First Team:

- Tommy Bush, Acalanes
- Jordan Hoover, Miramonte
- Dylan Fara, Campolindo
- Tyler Kirchberg, Miramonte
- Clay Smudsky, Miramonte
- Spencer Tagg, Campolindo
- Hannah Buck, Campolindo
- Emily Byrne, Miramonte
- Katie Caron, Miramonte

- Dominique Clark, Miramonte
- Kristen Hong, Miramonte
- Hannah Kresnak, Acalanes
- Chase Lanier, Acalanes
- Natalie Seidermann, Campolindo

Second Team:

- Nick Coufal, Miramonte
- Garrett Felix, Campolindo
- Grayson Judge, Miramonte
- Ryan McCracken, Acalanes
- Tucker Stone, Acalanes
- Trevor Whitsitt, Miramonte
- Scott Zurnacian, Campolindo
- Reilly Fellner, Acalanes
- Nicola Gonzales, Miramonte
- Rachael Lewin, Campolindo
- Shannon Moran, Miramonte
- Brooke Presten, Campolindo
- Ellyn Stewart, Acalanes

Honorable Mention:

- Brendon Supple, Acalanes
- Yurii Hanley, Campolindo
- Jack Garrett, Miramonte
- Emma Myall, Acalanes
- Kari Jensen, Campolindo
- Lauren Paxton, Miramonte

Cross country athletes from each school were recognized for their top accomplishments, including Aidan Goltra, who finished first in the state.

First Team:

- Aidan Goltra, Campolindo
- Cameron Gaskell, Acalanes
- Charlie Zamanian, Miramonte
- Michael Wang, Acalanes
- Ben Weinberg, Campolindo
- Brighie Leach, Campolindo
- Mary Orders, Campolindo
- Sarah Cella, Campolindo
- Rachel Johnson, Campolindo

Second Team:

- Parker Lothamer, Campolindo
- Nathaniel Sauerberg, Campolindo
- Sid Bagga, Miramonte
- Miles McCaulou, Miramonte
- Kevin Buckley, Campolindo
- Andrew Lewis, Miramonte
- Sammy Taketa, Acalanes
- Robin Powell, Campolindo

Lamorinda sent three football teams to the post season, including Miramonte, who won the Division II NCS championship.

First Team:

- Drew Anderson, Miramonte, QB
- Rene Clark, Miramonte, RB
- Peter Mitchell, Acalanes, RB
- Phillip Rei, Campolindo, WR
- Will Fuller, Miramonte, WR
- Dominic Paoletti, Miramonte, WR

- Robbie Stern, Acalanes, WR
- Tyler Petite, Campolindo, TE
- Bennett Stehr, Miramonte, T
- Daniel Samaniego, Campolindo, T
- Kris Booze, Miramonte, G
- Will Simmons, Campolindo, G
- Isaac Christian, Campolindo, UTL
- Cristian Antezana, Campolindo, K
- Peter Golesorkhi, Campolindo, DL
- Kris Booze, Miramonte, DL
- Tom Hofmeister, Acalanes, DL
- Isaac Christian, Campolindo, LB
- John Lauth, Acalanes, LB
- Bennett Stehr, Miramonte, LB
- Jonathan McDonald, Miramonte, LB
- Rene Clark, Miramonte, DB
- Andrew Ahazie, Campolindo, DB
- Brett Merrill, Acalanes, DB
- Justin Dunn, Campolindo, DB

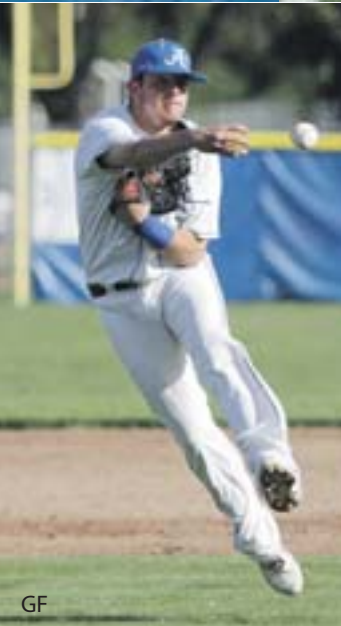
Second Team:

- Andrew Zolintakis, Campolindo, QB
- Nick Fadelli, Campolindo, RB
- Justin Dunn, Campolindo, WR
- Andrew Bosshart, Acalanes, WR
- Brady Aiello, Acalanes, T
- Alec Bizieff, Miramonte, C
- Drew Rule, Acalanes, C
- Jack O'Donnell, Campolindo, DL
- Tommy Kresnak, Acalanes, LB
- Adam Remotto, Campolindo, LB
- Conner Wong, Miramonte, DB
- Kevin Lehman, Campolindo, DB
- Tiger Garcia, Campolindo, DB

Honorable Mention:

- Casey Harrington, Acalanes, QB
- Conner McNally, Campolindo, RB
- Hunter Rosenbaum, Campolindo, WR
- Brian Chaney, Campolindo, C
- John Lauth, Acalanes, Utl
- Kyle Visser, Miramonte, K
- Chad Johnson, Acalanes, K
- Justin Dunn, Campolindo, P
- Rohit Verma, Campolindo, DL
- Terrance Frank, Miramonte, DL
- Kyle Kinnear, Acalanes, DL
- Jack Shurtz, Campolindo, LB
- Clayton Stehr, Miramonte, LB
- Jared Finney, Acalanes, LB
- Phillip Rei, Campolindo, DB
- Ryan Anderson, Miramonte, DB
- Andrew Bosshart, Acalanes, DB

For the third consecutive year, Acalanes senior Elizabeth Schultz earned Most Valuable Player honors in girls' golf. Other Lamorinda golfers recognized include Tori Hoff of Miramonte and Adrienne Lee of Acalanes. Both golfers earned First-Team honors. Second-teamers included Arielle Caronna of Miramonte and Emily Attiyeh of Acalanes.



Photos Gint Federas (GF) and Andy Scheck (AS)

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- Tod Fierner
- Gint Federas
- Ohlen Alexander
- Andy Scheck



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Lafayette Yetis Compete in Winter Tourney

Submitted by Jim Malmquist



Photo provided

The Lafayette Yetis, a 13U team, played "up" in the 14U NorCal Winter Classic Dec. 14-15. Grant Malmquist and Ben Stoddard put a team of friends together to compete in the tournament.

The Yetis played their best in Sunday's final game against the team that went on to

win the tournament.

The lesson these boys took away from the field was much more valuable than winning a trophy - that is does not matter what the score is, what matters most is being with friends and having a good time playing a sport they all love.

Undefeated Team Wins Tourney

Submitted by Scott Gardner



From left, back row: Coach Dwight Foster, assistant coach Chuck Engs; middle row: Charlie Engs, Ryan Gardner, Henry Engs, Timothy Zhou, Evan Persinger; front row: Matthew Hawkins, Jack Nixon, Jimmy Foster. Photo provided

The Santa Maria CYO third grade boys' National Division team won the 2013 MVP Flight Holiday Classic tournament with three consecutive victories

over the Dec. 20-22 weekend, defeating St. Perpetua in the championship game. The Santa Maria team has not lost a game this season.

St. Perpetua Wins Turkey Tournament

Submitted by Jim Malmquist



The CYO fourth grade boys' National team from St. Perpetua played in the 13th Annual Turkey Shootout Basketball Tournament and went undefeated to win the tournament.

The St. Perpetua squad defeated two teams from St. Joan of Arc and one from Santa Maria.

Outstanding offensive play from Cole Reagan, Mitchell Sweeney and Mason Archer helped the St. P's team get things going - but it was spectacular defensive efforts from Evan Malmquist, Cole Foster, Jake Henderson and Matthew Brock-Utne that prevented the other teams from getting any momentum. The St. Perpetua team out-rebounded their opponents behind Big Ben Larsen and the efforts of Zach Anderson and Luke Combi.

Photo provided

Acalanes Wrestling Underway

Submitted by Dan Nakahara



From left: Rain Mize, coach Bob Chance, Andrew Nakahara, Brian Lilienstein. Photo provided

The Acalanes High School wrestling team participated in the Bay Area Invitational Tournament on Dec. 14 in Castro Valley. Andrew Nakahara and Brian Lilienstein finished third and fourth, respectively.

Fourth Grade Holiday Champs

Submitted by Hector Chao



From left, back row: Kyle White, Mike Kostolansky, Will Stryker, Tate Nelson, Jack Wood; front row: James Frye, Luke Souza, Marco Chao, Aidan Mahaney. Photo provided

St. Perpetua's fourth grade boys' basketball team capped a successful MVP Holiday tournament by winning the American Division.

Orinda Blaze Way to Title

Submitted by April Murphy



This year the Orinda Blaze, the OYA 7/8th grade girls' team, won the LMYA/OYA 10-team league.

Kelly Murphy, Perrie Lundstrom and Kiki Immel went on to represent the Orinda Blaze in the All-Star game Nov. 16 where their team won 1-0.

From left: Kelly Murphy, Perrie Lundstrom and Zoe Zabetian. Photo provided

Silver in the Winter Classic

Submitted by Lynn McAuliffe



Sam Liang makes the slide into home, just beating out the catcher's tag. Photo provided

Wayne Franklin's 14U Revolutions baseball team played in a tournament at Manteca's Big League Dreams Field. The team is comprised of players from Moraga and Lafayette, and coached by former Major League pitcher Wayne Franklin, assisted by Dave Manousos. The boys were the first seed in the semi-final game on Dec. 15 after two wins on Saturday. They were defeated in the last inning of the playoff game 6-4 on Sunday.


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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 07 Issue 22 Wednesday, January 1, 2014



Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide
...read on page D6

Organization for the Naturally Disorganized

By Sophie Braccini



Christine Dodier (right) and "Jennifer" organizing the computer files.

Photos Sophie Braccini

The beginning of the year is a great opportunity to look at things with a fresh perspective and decide to improve one's life. One area is the organization of the home. For some, this is a simple process that can take a couple hours by defining a private space, adding shelving, or filing cabinets. For others who might be

stressed by a busy professional life, are going through a tough life transition, or are naturally disorganized, it is a major hurdle, especially for the long term.

One local resident, who asked to be called "Jennifer" for this article, decided she needed extra help to get a handle on things and move forward

with her life. Letting go, clearing up space, and putting simple systems in place made a major difference for her.

The retired stress management professional, who had traveled the planet, was at a point where she was no longer able to let go of material things around her. "It was like giving away some of my life," she said. After the loss of her husband, and raising a disabled child, then downsizing to a smaller space, Jennifer had the feeling that her brain was like a messed up ball of yarn, "like when a kitten has been playing with it," she said, "and I needed help slowly pulling the strings one after the other and getting a handle on things."

She found the help she needed with Christine Dodier, an interior designer and personal assistant who owns Spaces in Place in Lafayette. Dodier started working with Jennifer a few hours every week, reorganizing the space and setting in place what she calls simple systems.

...continued on page D4





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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	9	\$385,000	\$2,400,000
MORAGA	3	\$470,000	\$542,000
ORINDA	12	\$500,000	\$2,100,000

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

998 Almanor Lane, \$670,000, 2 Bdrms, 1178 SqFt, 1946 YrBl, 11-22-13
4077 Coralee Lane, \$920,000, 2 Bdrms, 2478 SqFt, 1975 YrBl, 11-27-13
921 Dewing Avenue, \$579,000, 2 Bdrms, 1311 SqFt, 1979 YrBl, 11-25-13
1110 Estates Drive, \$540,000, 2 Bdrms, 1304 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 12-3-13
3683 Happy Valley Road, \$2,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 4210 SqFt, 1974 YrBl, 11-22-13
3182 Old Tunnel Road #C, \$385,000, 771 SqFt, 1953 YrBl, 11-22-13
859 Sibert Court, \$1,685,000, 4 Bdrms, 3477 SqFt, 1946 YrBl, 12-3-13
3518 South Silver Springs Road, \$1,731,500, 3 Bdrms, 2292 SqFt, 1956 YrBl, 12-3-13;

Previous Sale: \$1,760,000, 05-09-08

1725 Springbrook Road, \$900,000, 5 Bdrms, 2381 SqFt, 1955 YrBl, 11-27-13;

Previous Sale: \$975,000, 06-02-06

MORAGA

2024 Ascot Drive, \$469,000, 3 Bdrms, 1687 SqFt, 1972 YrBl, 11-26-13
1438 Camino Peral, \$542,000, 3 Bdrms, 1348 SqFt, 1971 YrBl, 12-3-13;
Previous Sale: \$340,000, 11-02-11
1489 Camino Peral, \$470,000, 2 Bdrms, 1265 SqFt, 1973 YrBl, 11-27-13;

Previous Sale: \$430,000, 09-02-10

ORINDA

12 Bates Boulevard, \$930,000, 3 Bdrms, 1897 SqFt, 1956 YrBl, 11-26-13
316 Camino Sobrante, \$910,000, 5 Bdrms, 2286 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 12-2-13
572 Dalewood Drive, \$1,970,000, 5 Bdrms, 5211 SqFt, 1991 YrBl, 11-26-13
358 El Toyonal, \$775,000, 3 Bdrms, 1357 SqFt, 1954 YrBl, 12-4-13
138 Lombardy Lane, \$899,000, 2 Bdrms, 1435 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 11-22-13
724 Miner Road, \$500,000, 3 Bdrms, 1472 SqFt, 1960 YrBl, 11-22-13
62 Moraga Via, \$1,130,000, 5 Bdrms, 2619 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 11-26-13
673 Moraga Way, \$868,000, 4 Bdrms, 2002 SqFt, 1959 YrBl, 11-22-13
17 Rheem Boulevard, \$520,000, 2 Bdrms, 1408 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 11-26-13
17 Sleepy Hollow Lane, \$995,000, 3 Bdrms, 1803 SqFt, 1955 YrBl, 11-27-13;
Previous Sale: \$800,000, 04-14-04
258 Sundown Terrace, \$2,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 3616 SqFt, 1988 YrBl, 12-3-13;
Previous Sale: \$1,395,000, 12-02-11
30 Van Ripper Lane, \$1,339,500, 3 Bdrms, 1732 SqFt, 1951 YrBl, 11-27-13

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Organization for the Naturally Disorganized

... continued from page D1



Dodier recommended transforming the cloth closet into an organizing and storing space. Photos Sophie Braccini

“Some people need help once to solve a specific problem, but there are others who have been struggling with organization for longer periods of their lives, for various reasons, and are going to require a little more support,” said Dodier. She explains that people who need extra help have often experienced one of these three situations: disorganization has been a factor in life for many years; the level of disorganization interferes with the quality of life on a daily basis or affects relationships with others in house; or disorganization persists despite attempts to change.

Dodier worked with Jennifer to get boxes out of storage, a few at a time, and sort through them, but Dodier never told her to get rid of something, only asked her to consider it. “Sometimes it would take me a few days to get ready after she planted the seed,” Jennifer said. “It was like clearing the deck for the next

phase of my life.”

Dodier asks clients to think about the big picture. What is the goal? “You may want to organize your desk because you want to write a book, or organize the kitchen to have a healthier lifestyle. Higher goals are conducive to higher motivation,” she said. “First we create new habits, and only then we find the shelving or the cabinets that will fit.” Dodier acknowledges that getting more organized is a journey, and that there can be backsliding. “It is a commitment, and you need to have compassion for yourself.” She breaks down tasks into small commitments, gives homework so clients can practice the new skills, and then she builds on them, one step at a time.

Dodier looked at Jennifer’s living room and made simple adjustments to clear paths and increase circulation, and they worked together on a color scheme.

Then they tackled Jennifer’s office, focusing on information circulation. “Christine helped me with organization of my computer files,” explains Jennifer. “For example, we created a file for my medications where I record what I take, the frequency and the purpose. That allows me to interact better with the pharmacist and doctors.”

Her mail now goes directly into a receiving basket in her office, ready to be sorted. Each aspect of Jennifer’s life has a file, with sub-files, all neatly labeled.

“One very important element is to separate things by project,” said Dodier. “It makes working more efficient and keeps the mind and the space clear. It does not have to be absolutely neat, you can have piles, but they have to be organized piles.” For very important projects, Dodier recommends dedicating some permanent space that will hold all the elements of the projects.

Since her daughter is disabled, Jennifer has worked for years with professionals to develop a video that presents fitness exercises for affected individuals. Her most important project at this time is the publicizing and distribution of the CDs. In her office, a dedicated shelving system holds all the pieces of the project together: the CDs, the files, and all the material to complete the tasks Jennifer has given herself.

“I feel that Christine is giving me courage,” said Jennifer, “and I no longer feel lost.”

Dodier continues to come to Jennifer’s house once a week for a few hours, but said this is not always necessary; it depends on the personality and needs of her clients, who sometimes are busy people who simply need help in one area, like the kids’ rooms or the kitchen. “I can check in with them on a regular basis, meeting for tune-up sessions, first once a week, or once a month. For some, speaking on the phone can be enough,” she said. Dodier believes that being clutter-free in the home reflects how we are inside, and that clearing our space, both mentally and physically, starts with awareness and acknowledging the need to change our habits. Dodier has also worked in partnership with other organizers to help hoarders, “but that is a different field that requires additional sets of psychological skills,” she said.

For information about Spaces in Place, visit www.spacesinplace.com.



Dodier is also an interior designer and help Jennifer create an inviting and uncluttered living room.



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When pruned properly, crepe myrtles make a dramatic statement in the landscape.

Photos Cynthia Brian

To better serve our readers' gardening needs, Lamorinda Weekly will offer Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide in the first issue of every month. The second issue will showcase Digging Deep-Gardening with Cynthia Brian with some mid-month tips. The Ask Cynthia, Reader's Request will be published as space is available. We hope you enjoy our new garden format for 2014.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for January

By Cynthia Brian

"A gardener is one for whom the prospect of the future is not threatening, but happy." – Anne Morrow Lindbergh

Welcome to a new year filled with abundant cheer and probably too many deer! Okay, an accomplished poet I am not, however, I am a dedicated nature girl. I look forward to being your personal gardening guide every month. Most everyone begins January with big dreams, expansive goals, and resolutions to be and do better. We want to lose weight, get a better job, find our Romeo/Juliette, or move to our dream location. Statistics indicate that by Feb. 1, four out of five of those sacred resolutions have died like a plant that isn't watered. Why do we give up? Because it's hard work to change, morph, and grow. It takes dedication, perseverance, and a deep commitment to imagine magnificence and know we deserve to receive the best. Gardeners have the strength of character and the desire to make the world a more beautiful place, one seedling at a time. We are optimists. Even in a drought, or the long December freeze, our glasses remain half full. We know that failure is fertilizer for the compost pile. I look forward to meeting each landscape challenge with you this year with tenacity and courage. We are gardeners and we are strong. Most of all, we are not threatened and we are super happy. Together we will grow where we are planted!

- CREATE a budget for your gardening desires for the year. By including everything you want to do in your private paradise, you will be armored to meet the unexpected.
- THINK next winter harvest by putting a few different squash varieties on your spring planting list. Flavors, textures, and growing times vary. Consider Bush Delicata (80 days), Gold Nugget (95 days), and Sweet Mama (84 days), all appropriate for smaller garden spaces.
- ALLOW the bright berries of cotoneaster, pyroantha, holly, purple beautyberry, and viburnum to remain on the bush to give nourishment to the hungry birds.
- REFRAIN from pruning any foliage damaged by the December freeze. Wait until March when the frost danger has passed.
- PRUNE rose bushes towards the end of the month. Cut above the bud and also remove all crossing or deadwood. Your prized bushes will be sprouting new growth within six weeks.
- PRUNE wisteria, deciduous flowering vines as well as crepe myrtle, apple, pear, and peach trees. There is no need to prune cherries.
- FEED your citrus trees. Check with your local garden center for the best fertilizer combinations. A feeding of nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium in a ratio of 2-1-1 is usually a smart bet when used according to the directions.
- BRIGHTEN the dreary garden with paths of pansies and primroses.
- CUT back the dried foliage from ornamental grasses as well as any old stems from perennials.
- SPRAY diluted horticultural oil on fruit trees and roses to kill the overwintering insects and insect eggs.

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Winter Pruning

Winter is the best time to start pruning deciduous plants and trees, such as maples, shrubs, roses, most fruit trees and most of all your Monterey pines. They go dormant in the winter and some lose their leaves. Deciduous plants are best pruned in the winter because that's when they're dormant and less prone to disease.

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

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help make your yard its very best.

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Geraniums before the freeze are pretty and perky.



Geraniums look sad after the freeze. Once they are pruned in March, they return to their normal splendor.

- AVOID walking on your lawns when they are very wet or when there has been a cold spell as you will damage the grass blades.
- PERUSE seed catalogues to discover the new offerings for 2014. Stick to GMO free heirloom varieties. Check out www.sowtrueseed.com and www.rareseeds.com for suggestions on varieties.
- MIST houseplants and check for dryness often. During the winter months our houseplants suffer from our heating sources.
- PLANT bare root fruit trees, roses, and berries this month.
- REMOVE all ornaments, tinsel, lights, and hanging wires from Christmas trees. If at all possible, shred your tree and add to your compost pile. If you will be recycling through your waste service, make sure to check the pick-up days for your area.
- PLAN your spring and summer garden. We may be going into a very dry season. Consider drought resistant specimens. 2013 may be the driest year in California history since 1895. We need a mindset of "spare the water!" Plant more yarrow, sedums, sage, and gaillardia.
- SHARPEN and clean tools in preparation for spring.
- TAKE your mower and shredder in for annual maintenance.
- BEWARE of bees in your boots! Yes, before putting on your shoes, check if any living creature is visiting. My right foot will attest to the sting.
- ENJOY winter downtime by wandering in your backyard and daydreaming of what could be.
- FIND evergreen varieties of azaleas, camellias, and rhododendrons that suit your style, sun/shade exposure, and color preferences that bloom in late winter.
- VISIT a secret garden this year. Find out open days on private places at <https://www.gardenconservancy.org/opendays>.
- SET your sights high and grow for it!

Let's make this the best year ever in our gardens and in our lives. We'll do it together! Happy Gardening, Happy Growing, Happy New Year!

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Cynthia Brian

The Goddess Gardener

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925-377-7827

Cynthia is available as a speaker and consultant.



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\$219,000

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40 Dos Osos

Incredible Orinda, San Pablo Dam, Mt. Diablo views + abundance of nature surrounds this supersized parcel bordering EBMUD land. Once in a lifetime opportunity raw land sale.

\$545,000

ORINDA



34 La Vuelta

Located on coveted street in OCC, this appx .37 ac parcel is surrounded by expensive homes & incredible opportunity to build on special location. Approved site plan w/stylish designed home comes w/purchase.

\$569,000

ORINDA



Pending

20 Muth Drive

Beautifully updated contemporary ranch style, 4bd/2.5ba on spacious 3/4 ac lot. Hdwd flrs, slab counter kit. w/ breakfast area & formal dining rm together w/ big lawn & huge back patio w/spa are just a few of what this home has to offer.

\$899,000

ORINDA



54 La Campana

Brilliant 1938 south facing lathe & plaster construction in heart of Country Club. 4bd/3ba with approximately 2608 sf. One of largest pools in Orinda, Trader Vics built BBQ poolside, gardens. A bit of TLC needed.

\$1,000,000

ORINDA



9 Las Piedras

Picturesque private 6bd/3ba in park like setting w/panoramic views, level lawn & recreational pool. 3745 sf classic custom w/vaulted ceilings, walls of windows, hdwd flrs, den, workout rm, FR & well-appointed kitchen.

\$1,349,000

ORINDA



1 Camino del Cielo

Sophisticated and stylish 4900+ square foot newer construction with four bedrooms plus office, three and one half baths, decks and views.

\$1,599,000

ORINDA



92 Sandhill Road

Absolutely One-of-a-Kind Bay Area Home with 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



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



127 Cypress Point Way

Light, bright MCC Plan 4, 3bd/2ba with huge patio, living rm, dining rm, kitchen/family rm combo w/ new pecan hardwood floors & carpet. Very desirable location on cul-de-sac: walk to clubhouse, swim, tennis, golf & town.

\$749,000

MORAGA



Pending

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 hardwood flrs throughout, new eat-in kitchen/DR open to FR, voltaic solar panels, new redwood deck & more.

\$1,299,000



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