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Lafayette Park Hotel
Sunday March 2nd
11am-4pm
Tickets: EastBayBridal.com



High Schools Prep for Stellar Spring Productions

By Clare Varellas

Photos Ohlen Alexander

For many of us, the word “musical” conjures up images from the most classic Broadway productions: Curly beaming while belting out “Oh, What a Beautiful Mornin’” in “Oklahoma” or Fantine executing a tear-jerking rendition of “I Dreamed a Dream” in “Les Mis.” So when you venture into the auditoriums of Acalanes, Miramonte, or Campolindo high

schools during one of their March musical performances, you might be surprised to find onstage an ogre singing in his swamp, or a man loudly expressing his opinion that people have the right to use the restroom without taxation.

Armed with deep talent pools and hard-working directors and musicians, Lamorinda high school musical casts have chosen

to perform some relatively new and groundbreaking productions this year, or to take new, interesting spins on old ones.

Acalanes High School cast members will be performing the well-known musical “Guys and Dolls” March 6-8 in the Acalanes Performing Arts Center.

... continued on page A14

Quote of the Week:

“Technology is not the silver bullet. It doesn’t replace teaching and learning.” Read Technology and Education - page B6.

Advertising

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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A Bridge to the Future: Improving Orinda’s Aging Infrastructure Piece by Piece

By Laurie Snyder

“Sometimes, if you stand on the bottom rail of a bridge and lean over to watch the river slipping slowly away beneath you, you will suddenly know everything there is to be known.” – Winnie the Pooh

It began with the removal of trees in January 2013, and ended with a rainy day ribbon cutting Feb. 10 that was brightened by smiles and feelings of civic pride and genuine relief. Along the way, blustery days were endured, creek waters were diverted and a one-lane bridge was installed temporarily to facilitate demolition of aging structure near an important East Bay Municipal Utility District water treatment plant in Orinda.

Built in 1937 over the San Pablo Creek, the Manzanita Bridge was seismically unsafe and increasingly at risk

from Mother Nature’s mutability. In its place now stands a concrete super-structure that is wider, longer and elevated 5 feet higher above the flood zone – engineered to improve water flow as well as public safety with structural, hydraulic and alignment deficiencies mitigated and a new sidewalk in place to separate pedestrians from cars.

Carolyn Elsberry, an Orindan who has been walking the Manzanita area for 69 years, was one among the crowd who witnessed the ribbon cutting. “It’s really a love story with the bridge ... For me, the bridge was a central part of my life and my social life,” she said of her time growing up nearby. “To me, it looked brand new when I came here as a child.”

... continued on page A11



Big scissors for a big project. After years of planning and a fast-tracked year of construction work, the ribbon was officially cut Feb.10 on Orinda’s new, safer Manzanita Bridge. Shown here (from left): Orinda City Council member Amy Worth, Mayor Sue Severson, Carolyn Elsberry, former Orinda mayor Joyce Hawkins, city manager Janet Keeter. Photo Ohlen Alexander

Life in Lamorinda B1-B12

Family Feud?

“God of Carnage” comes to Town Hall Theatre - page B5.



Sports C1-C6

Soccer Semifinals Tonight

Two Campo squads and the Miramonte girls set their sights on the goal - pages C2, C3.



Our Homes D1-D12

Disaster Preparedness

Canyon hopes for the best and plans for the worst - page D1.





Lafayette Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, March 10, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Tuesday, March 3, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, March 10, 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, March 5, 7:30 p.m.
Wednesday, March 19, 7:30 p.m.
AUHSD Board Room at 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, March 12, 7 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
Stanley Library
3477 School St., Lafayette
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us



Lafayette Police Department Incident summary report, Feb. 9-15

- Alarm calls:** 21
- Animal Cruelty:**
Mt Diablo Bl
- Burglary, Auto:**
Mountain View Ln
- Burglary, Residential:**
Upper Happy Valley Rd
Mountain View Dr
Valente Court
White Oak Dr
- Burglary, Commercial:**
Safeway
- Suspicious Vehicle Stops:** 6
- Suspicious Person/Circumstances:** 17
- Reckless Driving:**
Near McDonalds
- Hit & Run:**
Mt Diablo/Pleasant Hill Rd
- Panhandling:**
Mt Diablo Bl
- Petty Theft:**
Mt Diablo Bl
S Thompson Rd
White Oak Dr
El Curtola Bl
Mosswood Dr
Address not available (2)
- Vehicle Theft:**
Mt Diablo (2)
Diablo Foods

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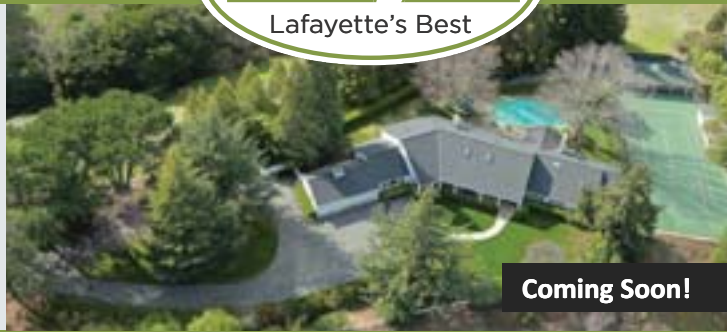
2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013

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Mountain View Drive Project Building on Suggestions

By Cathy Tyson

Looking to get feedback from the Design Review Commission, local developer Lenox Homes, LLC heard constructive suggestions at the second study session for its proposed eight-unit multi-family in-fill project that would be located at 945 Mountain View Dr. directly behind Trader Joe's. Two levels of four units each would rest atop a slightly lowered parking area, 2 feet below grade. The roughly 0.3-acre site currently has a vintage bungalow style home with lots of asphalt. Bordered by the Trader Joe's loading dock on one side, an apartment complex to the east, and a driveway that serves the apartments directly to the south, it's a challenging site for the developer to balance an economically viable

project while being sensitive to the neighborhood.

Dan Freeman, president of Lenox Homes, is looking forward to working locally after having focused on projects in Alamo, Danville and Walnut Creek. He calls the project unique, very pedestrian friendly and geared toward active move-down buyers. Research by the company indicated a growing market exists for current residents who don't want to leave Lafayette, but are seeking a one-level home that's convenient to shops and BART, but with less maintenance than what's required to take care of an aging single family home. "We're exploring concepts at this point and gathering input," said Freeman who plans to reach out to

stakeholders again and consider the whole project in response to comments received from design review commissioners.

Suggestions from commissioners focused on the overall size of the project; vice chair Gordon Chong described it as "edge to edge on property line, with no breathing room." A common refrain suggested reducing the building footprint by adjusting the number of parking spaces and perhaps shrinking the overall number of units or the size of the generous two-bedroom plus den units from around 1,825 square feet to something smaller. The city parking requirement for an eight-unit building is 12 spaces, the current version of the project includes 19 parking spots.

Fellow commissioner Ken Hertel commented that the current design needs to be pared down and pushed further back on the site.

Neighbors chimed in about the overall mass of the building and shared their concern about lack of space for emergency vehicles or delivery trucks on the street. Also with an overall height of over 34 feet, just below a maximum height of 35 feet, the current version towers over neighbors directly south of the building – at a previous study session it had been described as an aircraft carrier.

"This is a journey," said Freeman, "an organic process." He explained that changes are part of the journey and the structure is still a work in progress at this point.

Regulating Massage Parlors Successful

By Cathy Tyson

It's been over a year and a half since the city of Lafayette adopted an ordinance that regulated massage establishments, in response to some arrests, suspicious behavior and citizens' concerns. Businesses had 30 days to submit documentation after Ordinance 606 was adopted on May 29, 2012 or face penalties.

"All seem to be complying," said Chief of Police Eric Christensen. "None have left because of registration, but the wild times are certainly over."

The new rules require all massage therapists and practitioners

operating within Lafayette to be state-certified and forces all massage businesses to register with the city and post their certificates of registration in visible locations. Existing businesses that are licensed for therapy like chiropractors, orthopedists, and physical therapists are specifically exempted.

A quick check with the police department revealed smooth sailing since implementation for the 16 massage establishments, spas and therapeutic centers currently operating within city limits. All have filled out the appropriate ap-

plication for certification, and police have verified every business license applicant and their employees.

The ordinance calls for each employee to have a California Massage Therapy Council number. Although Lamorinda Weekly was unable to review the confidential applications, "We check everyone that applies," confirmed community services officer Cathy Surges-Moscato.

Presumably employees come and go, like in any other business – the new regulations are set up to address turnover; applicants must

submit new employee names and are required to re-apply on an annual basis and their certification is reverified, said Surges-Moscato.

Additionally, certain minimum health and safety standards are spelled out and contact information for business owners must be provided to police. Originally the city's goal was not to prohibit legitimate practitioners, but to keep track of the massage businesses in town. Prior to the ordinance, massage parlors fell into the "personal services category" that were permitted to operate downtown, similar to nail or hair salons.

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Lafayette Planning Commission Vacancy

The City of Lafayette is looking for a volunteer to fill a vacancy on the seven-member Planning Commission. The Planning Commission is charged with development of the General Plan, implementation & administration of the Zoning Ordinance and review of development applications including subdivisions, land use permits, and hillside development permits. Applicants must be residents of Lafayette. The Commission typically meets at 7:00 p.m. on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month in the Community Hall at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center located at 3491 Mt. Diablo Boulevard. For more information about the Commission's duties, please contact Planning Director Niroop Srivatsa at 925.299.3206.

Applications can be downloaded from the City's web site at <http://www.ci.lafayette.ca.us/>. The deadline for filing applications with the City Clerk is March 7, 2014. Interviews will be scheduled in mid to late March.



The Lafayette City Council is soliciting applicants to fill the following volunteer vacancies:

Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, Circulation Commission, Lafayette Community Center Foundation, Capital Projects Assessment Committee (CPAC), Creeks Committee, Design Review Commission, Downtown Street Improvement Master Plan Committee (DSIMPIC), Environmental Task Force, Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, Public Art Committee, Senior Services Commission, Youth Commission and Lafayette's representative to the Contra Costa County Advisory Council on Aging.

Lafayette is a community that prides itself on its strong volunteer participation. For information about these vacancies and the responsibilities of each of these bodies please visit our website. www.lovelafayette.org Applications can be downloaded from our webpage or contact city offices (925-284-1968) and an application will be mailed to you.

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Steep Lots on Happy Valley Still Challenging

By Cathy Tyson

An application to build two homes on a pair of steep, fairly constrained vacant parcels on Happy Valley Road continues to have issues. The initial building request for the project came in late 2011, with public hearings starting in 2012. At that time the Lafayette Planning Commission didn't support city staff's recommendation to approve the project. It was discussed again in August of 2013 and the project recently returned to the commission with design plans that have been adjusted in response to concerns about the size and mass of the structure, drainage – an especially sensitive topic to downhill neighbors – and sight distance to the shared, sloped driveway along busy Happy Valley Road.

The Phase I Hillside Development Permit would approve the siting and massing of two new, approximately 5,600 and 5,700 gross square foot, two-story homes; this measurement includes living and garage areas. Combined, the two properties total over 12.5 acres, but only a relatively small section of the long narrow lots are buildable, even with considerable soil remediation.

Designer Steven Kubitschek responded to planning commissioners at their Feb. 18 meeting, "We've done what you've asked us to do." He explained that the applicants have met with the neighbors and "tried to satisfy them to the extent possible," and prepared an engineer's report, that included a sight distance evaluation by third party National Data and Surveying Services, and two hydrology re-

ports. He concluded that the applicant Melcor Homes has "met and exceeded the sight distance requirement," and adjusted the architecture to be smaller and set back into the hillside.

Longtime city engineer Tony Coe reviewed the grading and drainage plans along with sight distance plans, and has had multiple conversations with concerned neighbors and the project engineer; he is satisfied with the plans.

Nearby neighbors spoke out against the homes, describing how they will "loom" over Happy Valley Road and urging commissioners to consider another hydrology report and continue to reduce the size of the homes, and commenting on the enormous amount of impervious surface that would be created if they were built.

Planning commissioner Tom Chastain pointed out that these are legal lots and the owner has a right to build there.

After some discussion about the retaining walls, the water runoff situation, building sizes and expressing confidence in the city engineer and his review, commissioners preferred to have a west side entrance to the property and supported a 20 percent reduction in the size of the house on the eastern side of the property. They also voiced their concerns about the capacity of the property. Tom Chastain opined that it is "hard to definitively say how much is too much." Phase I was approved; Phase II will be discussed in March with the Design Review Commission.

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Moraga Civic News

Public Meetings

Town Council

Special meeting:

Wednesday, Feb. 26, 6 p.m.

Regular meeting:

Wednesday, Feb. 26, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 12, 7 p.m.

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, 1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, March 3, 7 p.m.

Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

Design Review

Monday, March 10, 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, March 11, 7:30 p.m.

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium

1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga

www.moraga.k12.ca.us

See also AUHSD meeting page A2

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Moraga Council Steps (Almost) into 21st Century

By Sophie Braccini

Watching a Town Council meeting from the comfort and privacy of your home, maybe with a glass of Chardonnay by your side, is a patriot's dream about to come true in Moraga – as long as you're not in too much of a hurry. On Feb. 15, the Moraga Town Council approved the purchase of an audio-visual system for the soon to be completed council chamber at 331 Rheem Blvd. that will enable the town to broadcast public meetings.

The first delay is temporary – the retrofit of 331 Rheem Blvd. is not quite finished and some electrical work needs to be done before the system can be installed. Town manager Jill Keimach predicts that the first meetings will be held, and

recorded, in the new council chamber before the end of the year.

Those who want to see the action as it unfolds will still have to attend the meetings in person; the initial system does not include the creation of a Moraga channel that would broadcast live streaming. “We thought about it,” said Keimach, “but the problem would be to populate (the channel) between meetings.” The solution is to use Contra Costa TV, but that’s shared by several jurisdictions and is unavailable at the time the Town Council meets. “The meetings will be available to be viewed online and on TV within 24 to 48 hours,” promises Keimach. A live Internet stream is possible but, due to the additional cost, would be used only in an emergency.

“Silicon Connections, LLC will design, furnish, install and provide training on a complete audio-visual and IT system for the Town of Moraga Council Chambers,” said its principal, Mark Dahlen, during the meeting. Keimach reminded the Town Council that video recording of council meetings, intended to increase transparency in local government, has been on the agenda since 2006. “But to make this happen, the town needed to have its own meeting room where the equipment can be permanently installed,” she said.

The equipment purchased for \$165,000 includes three high definition remote controlled cameras with production switcher for live event recording, three high definition wall-mounted displays, switchable to view sources including table/podium mounted laptop connection stations, two computer sources, one document camera, Apple Air-Play devices and DVD/Blu-Ray sources, and four assisted hearing devices with multiple microphone inputs. Silicon Connection will set up the control room with a production desk outfitted with camera and video production-editing capabilities.

“We get \$35,000 a year of grant money from Comcast that we have never spent and that will cover the capital cost,” explained Keimach. “We’ll recruit interns to operate the cameras during the meetings,” she added, noting that the Planning, Design Review and Parks and Recreation meetings could also be recorded.

Because 331 Rheem Blvd. is outfitted with a power generator and batteries for uninterrupted electricity, the system will also be useful in a disaster. “In case of an emergency, all you have to do is to push the ‘EOC’ button to put the system in the emergency command center mode,” explained Dahlen. “Monitors will come up and

you can select which information channel you want to monitor. The guest Wi-Fi Internet will be accessible to anyone flowing into the room, accessed from a laptop or one of the two onsite computers. The EOC system also supports live broadcast to the Internet for public announcements,” at an additional cost that would be marginal in the context of an emergency.

Since the new council chamber will have Wi-Fi, Councilmember Mike Metcalf asked about going paperless during meetings. “I can just use my computer during the meeting and will not have to carry all the pages of the packet,” he suggested. Keimach said the idea is possible, but to go completely paperless the town would need to acquire software that would allow council members to annotate reports online.

Metcalf also asked about remote display of the meeting in a larger facility, such as the nearby Rheem Theatre, in case more residents are expected to attend a meeting than will fit into the council chamber, which has a capacity of 60. “You can do that anywhere that has an internet connection,” confirmed Dahlen. “All you need is a projector and a small decoder. Sending the video and audio somewhere else is very easy.”



Moraga Police Department

D.U.I. 2/17/14 A 17-year-old driver was pulled over for speeding on Camino Pablo at 1 a.m. The officer on duty noticed the smell of alcohol and non-burnt marijuana coming from the inside of the car. The teen driver flunked his field sobriety test and to make matters worse a small amount of suspected cocaine was found on the driver.

Pajama fireworks? 2/15/14 A male subject was found standing on a fire trail near Mulholland Ridge dressed in a T-shirt and pajama pants in the rain at 10:15 p.m. and was reported to have fireworks. When an officer tried to contact the fellow from 50 yards away, he began to growl and hiss, then took a fighting stance and refused to talk. With help from Lafayette police the individual was approached and he attempted to fight with the cops, never a good choice. In police lingo, a Conducted Energy Device (a taser) was deployed, but the subject continued to violently struggle and was eventually handcuffed. The gentleman later stated he wanted the officers to hurt him and that he also wanted “suicide by cop.” He was placed on a ‘danger to self’ hold and taken to the Contra Costa County Regional Medical Center by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District where he was seen by a mental health professional.

Panhandling, 2/15/14 Police made contact with a 43-year-old Concord resident who was panhandling at a large grocery store with his pit bull. He told police he was simply looking for employment. He left without incident after he was given a warning. Nothing really says approachable like a pit bull.

Car vs. leg 2/15/14 A 65-year-old driver was attempting to park on Augusta Drive and failed to put her Nissan Sentra into park as she exited the vehicle. The driver got tangled up in her safety belt, fell to the ground, and the car ran over her leg. She complained of pain and was taken to John Muir Medical Center by the fire department.

Large party, 2/15/14 Cops were dispatched to Country Club Drive on a report of a loud party with approximately 100 college-age people inside and outside the residence drinking alcoholic beverages. It was only 11 p.m. but apparently guests were already on their way out when their hosts were issued a “Loud or Unruly Party Warning” notice.

Dirty pool, 2/12/14 Moraga police officers were flagged down by a Redwing Place resident who stated someone dumped dirt in her pool and then used a pool brush to spread the dirt around. Unfortunately the homeowner didn’t see or hear anything suspicious. Future dirt devils beware, extra patrols will be cruising the neighborhood.

In addition, the following crimes were reported between Feb. 11 and Feb. 18:

- Loud party** Rheem Blvd
- Petty theft** Redfield Pl
- Grand theft** Deerfield Dr
- False alarms** Moraga Rd, Merrill Circle South, Spyglass Ln
- Danger to self** Moraga Wy
- Soliciting** several neighborhoods
- Vandalism** Miramonte Dr
- Tampering with a vehicle** Miramonte Dr
- Identity theft** Birchwood Dr
- Battery** Lenelle Ct

Moraga’s First Development Agreement Stumbles Over Pedestrian Bridge

By Sophie Braccini



Map data Google maps, labeled by Lamorinda Weekly

A potential new crosswalk on Moraga Road, in the vicinity of the Lamorinda Skatepark, is at the crux of a debate between Moraga’s Planning Commission

and Town Council. The proposed crosswalk would connect the Commons Park with a new passive park, via a pedestrian bridge that will be constructed by Sum-

merhill Homes as part of the development agreement for acreage lying between Camino Ricardo and Moraga Road.

...continued on page A11

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Improving Access to Sports Facilities in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini

Sports are taken very seriously by everyone who has something to do with youth and recreation in Moraga. This was evidenced on Feb. 10 when the "Who's Who" of town staff and educational institutions met to discuss how to improve the availability of sports facilities for residents. The Town Council, the Moraga School District and the Moraga Sports Alliance were all present – and, more unusually, the heads of Campolindo High School and Saint Mary's College also joined in to discuss the sharing of sports facilities within the town. Together they form a subcommittee that will meet monthly for about nine months.

The Joint Ad Hoc Facilities Planning Subcommittee is comprised of James Donahue, president of Saint Mary's College; town council members Dave Trotter and Mike Metcalf; John Walker, principal of Cam-

polindo; the Moraga Sports Alliance's Harry Crouch, Chris Maher, Ken Towers and Judy McNeil; Charles McNulty and Shari Simon of the Moraga School District Governing Board; and Park and Recreation commissioner Phil Crosby. Jay Ingram, parks and recreation director, is the staff liaison.

Ingram summarized the three objectives of the subcommittee: To establish a complete list of existing sports and recreation facilities belonging to the town, the school district, the high school and the college; to establish joint use agreements for cross-use of the facilities; and to discuss possible long term joint projects that will increase the availability of facilities.

The first meeting of the committee was entirely dedicated to the inventory of the recreation and sports facilities that exist in Moraga. The

town itself does not own many sports fields. The sand volleyball courts at the Commons Park have been used by the college as additional courts for large competitions and both the Commons and Rancho Laguna parks are used for sports practice by younger age groups and for informal games. The school district, the high school and the college own the bulk of the sports facilities.

During the first meeting the representatives of the Moraga Sports Alliance did not say much. Josh Weaver, of the CYO basketball league, said later that sports groups in Moraga are challenged by the lack of facilities. In Moraga, CYO teaches basketball to about 240 boys and girls from second to eighth grade. It has access to only two half-size courts at Camino Pablo and Los Perales elementary schools and one court at the middle school.

... continued on page A11

Hetfield Continuation

The Moraga Planning Commission was scheduled to discuss the General Development Plan for the Hetfield Estates project on Feb. 18, but the item was continued to March 3 after the project's neighbors noted that the package was made public right before a long weekend when many people were out of town and the complexity of the documents required additional study time so they

could provide meaningful feedback.

The Hetfield project proposes seven new homes on 58.2 acres of MOSO land located across a creek off Sanders Drive in Moraga. The Conceptual Development Plan was approved and the Environmental Impact Report for the project was certified in 2012.

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CalBRE#01495118/#01465617

1117 Avenida Sevilla, Walnut Creek

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Offered at \$412,000 by Elizabeth Haslam 925.899.5097 and Ann Cantrell 925.639.7970.

CalBRE#01494942/#01058289

1860 Tice Creek Drive, Walnut Creek

NEW LISTING

Lovely Waterford Middleton condo located on the 3rd floor with pleasant views from the spacious balcony. This home is in move-in condition and located near the elevator for easy access to the dining room. Dues include a daily meal, weekly cleaning service & more!

Offered at \$310,000 by Elizabeth Haslam 925.899.5097 and Ann Cantrell 925.639.7970.

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2900 Castro Street, Martinez

Gorgeous craftsman! Complete & stylish remodel featuring 3 BR including spacious master suite w/ walk in closet & gorgeous bath. Both baths have double sinks & granite counter tops. Hardwood floors, great room w/ vaulted ceilings, patio doors, gourmet kitchen, attached garage, & so much more! Offered at \$537,000 by Ruth Eddy, 925.788.9567.

CalBRE#01313819

1124 Flowerwood Place, Walnut Creek

PENDING

Attractive two-story home on cul de sac is ideal for entertaining with remodeled gourmet kitchen and over 3200 sf. Huge backyard features saltwater pool with solar heat, auto-cover plus separate spa. Four bedrooms are upstairs plus downstairs office too. Custom finishes, new carpet, Venetian plaster. Offered at \$998,000 by Jim Colhoun 925.200.2795.

CalBRE#01029160

958 28th St, Oakland

PENDING

Huge 6088 SF Live/Work Loft converted with character, including a brick walls, hardwood floors and vaulted ceilings. Living area has 3 bedrooms and 2.5 baths plus potentially 8-10 rooms. Warehouse has a light-filled main area and 28' ceilings. Energy efficient with solar electric system. Offered at \$650,000 by Maureen Caldwell Meurer 510.915.0092.

CalBRE#01908929

TIP OF THE WEEK

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Orinda Civic News

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, March 4, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, March 11, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, March 12, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

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

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District

Monday, March 10, 6 p.m.

OUSD Office, Vintage Building

25 Orinda Way, Suite 200

www.orindaschools.org

See also AUHSD meeting page A2



Orinda Police Department Incident summary report, Feb. 2-8

Alarm calls: 27

Auto Burglary: Dalewood Dr

Suspicious Vehicle Stops:

Glorietta Elementary
El Sueno
Spring Road
El Camino/Camino Sobrante
Wilder Fields (3)
Dalewood Dr/Lombardy Ln
El Toyonal

Suspicious Person/Circumstances:

Camino Pablo/Miner Rd
Knickerbocker Ln
Orinda Theatre (2)
Tappan Ln
Nations
Silver Oak Tr
Donald Dr
Safeway
Northwood Ct/Northwood Dr
La Campana Rd

Arrests:

WB 24/Fish Ranch Rd

Warrants:

Hall Dr
Camino Pablo (3)

Reckless Driving:

San Pablo Dam/Bear Creek Rds
Camino Pablo/Manzanita Dr

Panhandling:

Orinda Wy/Santa Maria Wy

Petty Theft:

Greenwood Ct

Missing Juvenile:

Westwood Ct

Vehicle Theft:

Tappan Ln

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The Dollars and Sense of Orinda's Financial Operations

By Laurie Snyder



Bob Thompson Photo Ohlen Alexander

"We're an excellent sounding board," said Bob Thompson recently when asked about one of Orinda's most important volunteer groups – the City of Orinda's Finance Advisory Committee. "We bring different eyes and brains and perspective to their concerns and reports, and we also look at things from a consumer point of view – from a citizen point of view."

The longtime Orindan has been a member of the FAC since its inception. Formed Dec. 16, 2008 when the Orinda City Council modified

the city's budget committee to tap the brainpower of financial and investment professionals living locally, the FAC is charged via Resolution 75-08 to "serve in a broader advisory capacity for all financial matters related to City operations" while advising city leaders in a manner that does not conflict with the Municipal Code. Its seven at-large voting members are Orinda residents appointed by the City Council to serve three-year terms as unpaid volunteers. At least one council member serves annually as liaison. Committee members review and recommend changes to Orinda's proposed budget and statement of investment policy, attend budget-related meetings, and advise the City Council and staff on other financial matters as appropriate.

"It's great to have people knowledgeable in these areas," observed Thompson of the roles Orindans play on the city's diverse commissions and committees. Serving on one, he said, you realize how many neighbors are giving back. He devotes about an hour and a half, once a month to the FAC, with occasional homework. "You don't have to be expert in everything," he said. "It's great to have a forum to query people and say, 'What about this? Educate me.'"

Those collective volunteer hours have produced change. When the Contra Costa County Grand Jury required cities to help county residents better understand financial operations, Orinda's leaders asked the FAC for help. "There were some people on that committee that brought wonderful ideas forward." Now,

the city's website is more robust, and staff reports at council meetings contain reader-friendly budget graphics.

"What they really need is some time," said Thompson in describing residents considering volunteering for a commission or committee. "Not an inordinate amount. Just a commitment to doing things right, a willingness to learn and collaborate, and a modest skill set and (good) attitude."

Stanford trained, Thompson works as a portfolio manager for a privately held Bay Area investment management firm. In addition to volunteering with Orinda's FAC, he serves as a member of the board of directors for the United Way of the Bay Area, the investment committee for the Girl Scouts of Northern California and as board vice president for the Bay Area Financial Education Foundation.

He has also served, since 2009, as the board secretary for the Cavalla Historical Society in Galveston, Texas that is dedicated to preserving the USS Cavalla, a memorial to World War II submariners.

Like another great fighter, Muhammad Ali, Thompson clearly believes that "Service to others is the rent that we pay for our room here on earth," and hopes more and more residents will offer their talents.

The Finance Advisory Committee meets publicly in the Community Room at City Hall on the fourth Wednesday of each month, beginning at 6 p.m. To learn about volunteering, visit the City of Orinda's website: www.cityoforinda.org.

Roads Bond Measure Headed for the Ballot?

By Laurie Snyder

Orinda is a small town with a small budget. Roughly \$10.6 million is spent annually to operate recreation programs which keep residents healthy, beautify city parks, provide police protection, conduct elections, and maintain city roads and storm drains. Its residents are generally happy as evidenced by Forbes' declaration of Orinda as America's second friendliest city.

There is one word, though, which produces an immediate buzzkill when uttered – roads. During the past decade, the City of Orinda has devoted roughly \$2.3 million annually to its infrastructure. But with 92.5 miles of roads to maintain and an underlying network of storm drains that were already aging when the county transferred control to Orinda upon incorporation, city leaders have been forced to channel funds to areas impacting the greatest number of people. Smaller residential roads began crumbling as storm drains failed, flooding neighborhoods, sparking legal action and forcing costly fixes that further strained city coffers.

So in July 2012, the Orinda City Council enacted a battle strategy. Known as the "10 Year Roads and Drainage Repairs Plan," it outlines "four phases in which the City will fund, plan and manage the construction and repair of public roads and drains," costing \$52 million when completed. Phase 1, a 0.5 percent sales tax hike approved by voters in 2012 (Measure L), is already showing promise. City officials believe it will generate close to \$1 million per year over the 10-year life of the tax.

Now, the City Council is signaling its readiness to launch phase two – asking voters to support a \$19.8 million bond which, if approved in 2014, would provide the city with an additional \$3.3 million to spend on repairs each year for six years, starting in 2015. In addition to debating whether or not to ap-

prove the revised 10-year plan Feb. 18, city leaders considered a Resolution of Public Convenience and Necessity (14-14) and Ordinance

Calling for a \$20 Million General Obligation Bond Election (14-02) – the prior approval of both being required by state law if the City

Council decides to place a bond measure on the June or November ballot.

... continued on next page

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Roads Bond Measure Headed for the Ballot?

... continued from page A6



Greenwood Court, PCI

Taking up most of the City Council's nearly 4-hour meeting, the discussion included presentations by city staff and bond consultants, as well as residents for and against the plan. Brad Barber called the roads situation a "municipal embarrassment" that "negatively affects essentially everyone in the city," noting that "with the passage of the sales tax increase ... we have begun to see some real improvements." Support-

ing the phased, incremental plan he observed, "That's been the way that we have done things in this country since colonial days."

Orindan Steve Cohn asked the City Council to delay action, expressing concern that the Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Committee (CIOC) had not been given enough time to review the 4-phase plan and calling it deficient. "While it purports to address Orinda's infrastruc-

ture deferred maintenance deficit, it does not provide enough money to either fund the entire deficit or provide future maintenance to prevent the deficit from growing back to original levels within 15 years."

Representing the CIOC, Terry Murphy stated that the committee voted unanimously to approve the 10-year plan, and urged council members to ensure that wording on the ballot make clear to voters that money raised by the proposed bond will be used on roads.

Ultimately, council members delayed finalizing the 10-year plan, electing to clarify key points based on citizen input. A revised version will be discussed at a future meeting. The City Council then adopted an amended version of the Resolution of Necessity on a 5-0 vote before introducing the bond ordinance in its amended form. Changes to the documents included reducing the bond's maturity date from 40 to 30 years, and changing the phrase "municipal improvements" to "municipal road

and drain improvements" to ease worries that bond funds could be diverted to other city projects. Ordinance 14-02 will appear on the

consent calendar of the City Council's agenda at its next regularly scheduled meeting March 4 and will likely be approved at that time.



Keith Drive, PCI 35



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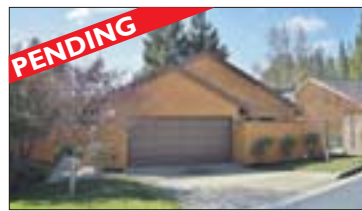
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Maureen Wilbur CalBRE#01268536



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Jeannette Bettencourt CalBRE#01154506



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Elena Hood CalBRE#01221247



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The Beaubelle Group CalBRE#00678426



ORINDA \$1,495,000
4/3.5. Sunny oasis. Remodeled throughout. Pool, spa w/large deck & lawn for play. Bonus inlaw suite.
Laura Abrams CalBRE#01272382



MORAGA \$1,150,000
4/2. Completely updated single level, 2160 sf, great playroom, nice backyard, .35 acres.
Elena Hood CalBRE#01221247



MORAGA \$829,000
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Jerry Wendt CalBRE#00178259



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Letters to the Editor

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Editor:

I read with sadness that the venerable old valley oak tree next to the historic Casa Verana in Orinda fell down in the recent storms. However, I was not surprised that this happened. The property owners caused this to happen by burying the roots around the tree with soil and planing an irrigated lawn around the tree. This is a death sentence for native oaks. Native oaks have evolved in an ecosystem of summer drought and need to have their roots in dry soil during California's dry season. If they are subjected to year around moisture, the roots will develop dry rot and will not be able to support the weight of the tree and the tree will eventually fall to a premature death.

Any Lamorinda readers that have a majestic native oak in their yard should reconsider watering any surrounding landscaping if they want their oaks to survive. I know it looks beautiful to have a green lawn or lush shrubs surrounding beautiful old oaks but know that, at some point in the future, the trees will not survive.

Fred Smith

Orinda

Editor:

In a survey of Orinda voters commissioned by the Orinda City Council, "Seven in 10 voters would initially support a \$20 million bond measure" to fix Orinda's roads (Lamorinda Weekly, Feb. 12).

The results of the survey were presented to the city council on Feb. 4. The survey was conducted by the FM3 company, located in Oakland.

A key question is this: Does Orinda need to pass any kind of bond measure to fix the city's deteriorating roads?

According to an Orinda environmental group, Orinda Watch, sufficient money is already being collected from gasoline taxes to fund Orinda's bad roads. Orinda Watch argues that Orinda does not need a bond measure for road repair.

Orinda Watch, in a statement released on Feb. 12, says that Plan Bay Area, a project calling for the construction of high-density, high-rise housing in Orinda and elsewhere, "takes massive amounts of public funds from gas tax revenues that should go to road maintenance and diverts them to mass transit subsidies..." The statement adds: "These diversions of gas tax revenue have been practiced by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) for many years..."

MTC is a regional governmental transportation agency whose directors and officers have not been elected directly by voters. MTC's chairperson is Amy Worth, who also sits on the Orinda City Council.

MTC has not been shy about disclosing its intentions. In a report issued on May 10, 2010, MTC said that automobile pollutants (often called greenhouse-gas or GHG emissions) can be lowered. In the report, MTC stated: "Most of the GHG reductions that can be realized will result from how successful the region can be in moving toward more dense/mixed use transit oriented development and implementing creative ways to price the transportation system to adequately reflect the true costs of a limited resource."

It appears that MTC, rather than voters, is deciding how gasoline-tax money is to be spent.

Until MTC's policies on spending gasoline-tax money are clarified, Orindans should not support any bond measure to fix the city's roads.

Richard S. Colman

Orinda

Editor

Regarding Gordon Nathan's letter of February 12.

For those unfamiliar with Mr. Nathan's history with MOFD, he was a Director of the District from its inception in 1997 through 2008. During that time period, the Board saw property tax revenue increase from \$9 million to \$16 million, growing at twice the rate of inflation, and yet managed to spend it all and put in place the current labor agreements that have caused the District to now be \$90 million in debt. Any criticism from him of the current board, attempting to clean up the financial mess caused by their predecessors, must be taken with a grain of salt.

As for his complaint that a claim by Orindan Keith Jacobsen that Orinda taxpayers are paying an inordinate portion of MOFD's expenses is "nonsense", is a baseless criticism. Mr. Nathan states Orinda taxpayers should pay more for service than Moraga taxpayers because they receive more service; and they do. This year Orinda taxpayers will pay about \$11.8 million in property taxes to MOFD while Moraga taxpayers pay about \$6.7. Mr. Nathan suggests that the total should be divided by the number of stations in Orinda (3) and Moraga (2). However, as a former director, he well knows that 90% of all expenses go to pay for the personnel who perform the services and not to maintain real estate. And with nine firefighters stationed in and serving Orinda (at a cost to taxpayers of \$1.3 million per firefighter), and eight firefighters stationed in and serving Moraga (at a cost to taxpayers of \$850,000 per firefighter), the inequity in funding is obvious.

There is a solution to this problem which Orinda residents were promised would never happen when they voted to form MOFD. That is for Moraga taxpayers to pay their fair share, an average of \$1.1 million per firefighter or about \$2 million more than they are currently paying. That could happen, as Mr. Jacobsen suggested, by increasing the rate on the Parcel Tax Moragans agreed to before MOFD was formed but which has never been fully assessed. This extra money would not go back into the Orinda taxpayers' pockets but would provide services they are paying for. These services could include a paramedic station in Sleepy Hollow to alleviate the fact that 40% of all Orinda emergencies are not responded to within MOFD's response time guidelines; or vegetation control in large areas of Orinda that are considered very severe fire hazard zones due to excess vegetation as is now being done in Tilden Park; or repair some of the more than two dozen sub-standard fire hydrants which the fire flow parcel tax was supposed to address when it was voted for in 1997 but so far not a cent has been used for hydrants.

Orinda residents and their City Council should demand that their MOFD representatives act on their behalf and Moraga's MOFD representative should keep their half of the bargain.

Steve Cohn

Orinda

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Union Rallies Against MOFD Board

By Nick Marnell

A loud, standing-room-only crowd of disgruntled firefighters punctuated its message to the Moraga-Orinda Fire District board of directors at the Feb. 19 district meeting: the rank and file are not happy with the direction of labor negotiations.

In January the board made its last, best and final offer to Local 1230 of the firefighters' union. The terms included a 9.5 percent pay cut for one year. The board declared an impasse; the union rejected the offer and has until Feb. 27 to request state-mandated fact finding.

MOFD union representative Mark DeWeese said that the board, not the firefighters, needs to be held accountable for its poor financial decisions. "We are the ones out in the street doing the work," he said. "If you don't sup-

port your workers, you are going to hurt your chances of having a successful organization."

"We don't deserve to be treated like this," said an emotional Tim Hill, MOFD engineer-paramedic.

Board president John Wyro assured the firefighters that nothing has been imposed and negotiations are ongoing. "Our goal is a sustainable fire district five years from now," he said. "We are available to talk at any time, about anything."

The most raucous ovation of the evening came after DeWeese blasted the terms of a self-administered pay cut requested by fire chief Stephen Healy.

In November, the board approved an employment contract for Healy at an annual salary of \$220,000, more than \$30,000

over the salary of his predecessor, Randall Bradley. At the meeting, Healy offered to amend his contract with a pay cut of 9.5 percent, the same reduction in salary offered to the firefighters.

"I appreciate your leadership on this," said director Fred Weil. "I take it to mean that you are prepared to do whatever else develops out of the negotiations or imposition with respect to the firefighters. On that basis I would vote to approve this." Healy said he understood that, at the will of the board, the term and the amount of the adjustment could change.

"The board is trying to market this agenda item as the same proposed pay cut they are threatening to impose on the firefighters," said DeWeese. "This move may deceive a casual member of the pub-

lic, but the rank and file employees are able to put it in proper context." He explained that the 9.5 percent pay reduction that the board presented to the firefighters would lower their pay to 2 percent less than they made in 2006. The comparable base salary for Healy should be \$169,000, he said.

DeWeese did acknowledge appreciation for Healy's gesture. "But he is about \$30,000 short of putting (his salary reduction) on par with what he and the board are trying to force on the rest of us," he said.

The motion to amend Healy's contract passed 3-0; directors Alex Evans and Steve Anderson were absent.

Wyro later confirmed that the original negotiations with the chief were done in good faith. He said that one of the reasons for the

chief's large pay increase was that Healy would be taking a hit in loss of overtime from his prior position as division chief. Wyro also insisted that the pay reduction amendment to Healy's contract was not a predetermined ploy.

"I can see how it might look that way, but that's definitely not the case," he said.



Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors Meetings

Next meetings:
Wednesday, March 19
Wednesday, April 18
check website for updates
 (Go to www.mofd.org as the meeting date approaches for location and more information)

Lafayette Task Force Inches Forward

By Nick Marnell

The Lafayette Emergency Services Task Force, charged with seeking alternatives for the delivery of fire and emergency medical services to Lafayette residents, presented an update at the Feb. 10 City Council meeting. It also received a lecture from the president of the firefighters' union.

"Some of the things you've been saying are insulting to us," said Vince Wells, president of the United Professional Firefighters of Contra Costa County. "I have never heard a discussion at your meetings about putting fires out. All of the discussion has been on the finances." The task force meetings have focused mostly on the city's possible detachment from the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, the finan-

cial condition of the local fire districts and a proposed fire station 46 at the Lafayette-Orinda border, to be jointly owned and operated by ConFire and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

"There has been no intention to insult you or the firefighters," said Councilmember Mike Anderson. "That's not the issue. We're not getting what we're paying for, and the Board of Supervisors is not giving us what we want."

Task force co-chair Traci Reilly was just as direct. "Our residents demand that we fix a problem," she said. "We are trying to do what's best for Lafayette."

Wells, a ConFire captain, tried to downplay the city's frustration. "I hear this same complaint in

every district," he said. "Orinda thinks it's subsidizing Moraga. Brentwood thinks it's subsidizing East County. I'm almost ready to tell Brentwood to go ahead and leave. They'll find out how good they had it." He concluded with an admonition to the task force on its priorities. "Fire should not be minimized," he said.

The task force's report to the City Council outlined the bleak financial situation of both fire districts, but it noted that MOFD has taken steps to address its problems. It specified that a detachment from ConFire would be very difficult to accomplish without a negotiated agreement on the allocation of assets. Reilly explained that Lafayette is too small to stand on its own, so contracting for fire service is an option – with

ConFire, MOFD and Cal Fire as potential candidates.

Slower response times in western Lafayette since the closure of ConFire station 16 were confirmed by task force co-chair Brandt Andersson, who complimented fire chief Jeff Carman on his willingness to at least consider new ideas for service delivery. Because of the deterioration of service, Andersson urged the City Council to not close the door on the idea of station 46, in spite of the current financial challenges.

Mayor Dan Tatzin summarized the direction from the City Council. "What level of fire and emergency medical service do our residents want, and what will it take to get us there?" he said. The task force was given the go-ahead to continue its investigation.

A glimmer of cautious optimism arose at the Feb. 20 task force meeting.

Andersson, who has been pushing Carman and MOFD chief Stephen Healy to move on station 46, requested an update. Healy said the district is awaiting results of environmental tests on the property, and after that, it will have architectural renderings of a new station to show the committee. Carman said he is putting together a presentation for the Board of Supervisors on the financing of the shared fire station. Commenting on the initial feedback to his proposal, Carman uttered a phrase not often heard the past two years in discussions of fire district finances.

"I'm encouraged by it," he said.



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Orinda Startup Blazes Its Way into the Retail App World

By Sophie Braccini



From left: Peter Jackson, Darby Anderson, Sandy Breber, Erin MacEwen, Jake McGuire and Paul Martinelli. Photo Sophie Braccini

Sandy Breber loves to shop, but she is also efficient and on top of things, so she wants her receipts, reward and gift cards, her coupons, to be organized and at her fingertips when she needs them; and preferably accessible on her phone, the one device she never leaves home without. No wonder Breber is one of the three founders of Ziploop, Inc., the Orinda-based company which launched a new app four months ago that digitizes and manages receipts, coupons, and promotions.

The local startup must be responding to a real need because it has already attracted more than 10,000 users and gets a new user every couple of minutes, according to Ziploop's CEO Peter Jackson. Ziploop does everything Breber wanted, and more – and it's free to download and use.

Ziploop is part of the new world of cloud-hosted, digitized shopping documents. Other apps include Gyft, Lemon Wallet and OneReceipt. The idea arose during a conversation between Breber, a former managing partner at Anderson Consulting, and fellow Orindan Peter Jackson, an entrepreneur with previous success in business endeavors such as Granit System; his first company, based in Lafayette, had 7,800 employees when he sold it, and Orinda-based Intraware was a software delivery and maintenance service that grew to \$3 billion on the Nasdaq.

The third member of the trio is Paul Martinelli, code writer extraordinaire, who has partnered with

Jackson before. The three wanted to develop a service based on super-cheap Cloud storage and smartphones. "And that's when Sandy entered," says Jackson. "She said that retail is a mess, that people keep getting papers (receipts, coupons) that end up in their purses (or wallets). They need them for returns, proof of purchase, warranties. Plus you get a variety of things in the mail; and it is going to take five or six years for all that to become digital." Jackson recalls that at this point in the conversation Martinelli proposed the idea of taking an image of everything you have in your purse and using an app to sort it and organize it.

Ziploop also features tags that users can create to track purchases by category. Breber keeps track of what she spends for each of her kids. She also loves the 'safe' space where people can store items that are important to them in the long term. "You can use it to store bills for big ticket items, or to keep different purchases together as part of a larger project," she says.

And Ziploop is not only for women, even though Breber wanted to give it a non-aggressive look with soft colors – but no pink. In fact, Home Depot records are among the most frequently stored.

Dan McNerny is an early user of the application. "I like to keep my receipts organized and have them available if I need to return something," says McNerny who

shops at sporting goods establishments, surf shops, Target, or the Apple Store, "I keep my reward cards there as well because it is easy and simple." McNerny noticed that some retailers can send receipts to email addresses, and so he gives them his Ziploop email, and keeps everything organized by category in one place.

Since the app is free, the company needed a revenue stream. According to a Deloitte Consulting LLP study, "The Dawn of the Mobile Influence," "... customer behaviors are changing profoundly ... Consumer adoption of mobile is growing at an exponential rate;" the same report also notes that, "(among) consumers who are 25–34 years old: 65 percent own a smartphone and 68 percent use it to help with shopping in a brick-and-mortar retailer." Having reward cards, time sensitive promotions, and targeted rebates sent directly to customers' cell phones made sense; this is where Ziploop makes its money.

"It costs companies 0.40 cents to a dollar to send loyalty cards or coupons in the mail, and they don't know what the response rate is," says Jackson, "but if you opt in and like five stores, then they will populate your rewards (directly in the Ziploop account) and we would charge them only 0.10 cents. And you will only get what you want."

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

business briefs

Clinical Psychologist Jennifer McCollum, Ph.D.

37 Avenida de Orinda, Orinda
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Jennifer McCollum has come full circle. The Campolindo High School graduate who earned her Ph.D. from Temple University in Philadelphia and completed her postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford's School of Medicine, is expanding her practice, Bay Area Women's Wellness, to Orinda. She started her practice four years ago in Menlo Park, providing behavioral medicine for women. McCollum works with women who are struggling with perinatal depression and anxiety (which includes the more commonly known postpartum depression), maternal stress (assisting moms in coping with the stresses and challenges of motherhood), infertility challenges, medical illnesses, behavioral changes (such as weight loss), and general wellness/life challenges. The mother of two continues to work part time in Menlo Park. "I am also on the medical staff at Stanford Hospital and an affiliated clinical instructor with the university," says McCollum, who specializes in "evidence-based treatments – treatments that have been shown to be effective through scientific research studies, in particular, cognitive-behavior therapy," she says. "My work is collaborative and goal-oriented." The clinical psychologist does not contract with any specific insurance group and people wanting to work with her do not need a referral. She will discuss goals to be reached and the frequency of the visits. McCollum is also starting group work to address different topics: weight loss, behavior change, maternal stress (for mothers of children 12 months and younger), and a life value group.



Jennifer L. McCollum, Ph.D. Clinical Psychologist in her new Orinda office Photo provided

Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery
 3620 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette
 www.JenniferPerlmutterGallery.com
 (925) 284-1485 f

In early February Jennifer Perlmutter opened her first gallery in Lafayette, on Mt. Diablo Boulevard, across from Diablo Foods. The contemporary abstract painter works on-site and exhibits her work there. To deepen the art experience, she also plans to offer classes, demonstrations, book readings, and other events at the gallery. "I've been working out of a studio for almost 15 years, and it's enabled me to create some very strong work. But it's also been limiting," she says. "The gallery allows me to connect with people face to face and tell the story behind each piece. It's a different way to dialogue through art." Perlmutter works in the rear studio, enabling conversation and access to the artist's process. Different events have already been planned such as a poetry reading/book signing in March and a family interactive nature event planned for April. Perlmutter will offer classes such as the Spring Break Art Camp for kids ages 9-12 from March 31 to April 4. Check her website for details. There is a ribbon cutting ceremony scheduled at 5 p.m. Thursday, March 6 at the gallery.

Refuge Community Church Celebrates 4-Year Anniversary
 155 Moraga Road, Moraga
 www.refugecommunity.org
 (925) 942-1000

Refuge Community Church was founded four years ago by Pastor Ron Johnson, who rented a space at the Veterans Memorial Building in Lafayette. The church was then moved to its current location at 155 Moraga Rd., close to the Lafayette/Moraga border. For the fourth anniversary of its founding, Refuge will be hosting a private showing of the new motion picture "Son of God" – scheduled to be released Feb. 28. Festivities will start at 9:30 a.m. Saturday, March 8 at the Rheem Theatre. The event is free and open to the public. For information, visit www.refugecommunity.org.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce
 Lafayette

Monthly mixer at Lafayette Physical Therapy from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 12 at 3468 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Suite #B110. Free for chamber members.

Moraga
 Chamber mixer at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, March 25 at the Serbian Cultural Center.

Orinda
 The Orinda Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with Tommy T's Comedy Clubs will host the fifth "Live at the Orinda" event March 7, with doors opening at 7 p.m. The line-up includes: returning stand-up comedian Kabir Singh (Kabezy); Shea Suga, who's been incredibly successful in the Bay Area; Cody Woods, one of the most hilarious and talented comedians today; Ellis Rodriguez, a favorite at comedy clubs including the Improv, Laugh's Unlimited, Tommy T's, PepperBelly's, and the Laugh Factory; and Kirk McHenry who blends all of his life experiences together into a storytelling brand of comedy that has been described by some as Bill Cosby with a Richard Pryor twist. Advance tickets are \$35; \$40 at the door. For information, visit orindachamber.org or call (925) 254-3909.

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

Celebrating an Anniversary?

If your business is celebrating a significant anniversary (5, 10, 20 years or more ...) send us a photo of your business, the owner(s) or the staff with specific information about your business and what you're celebrating, and we'll include it in an upcoming issue.

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Civic News Moraga

Moraga's First Development Agreement Stumbles Over Pedestrian Bridge

... continued from page A4

As part of its 26-home project, Summerhill Homes will create, and donate to the town, a 2.5-acre passive park located between Rancho Laguna Creek, where it flows along Moraga Road, and one of its tributaries – the new park would sit on a peninsula across from the skatepark. Pedestrian access to the park will require two bridges; one over the tributary and another over Rancho Laguna Creek itself to connect the new park to existing trails.

Where to bridge the creek is the question.

Summerhill Homes proposed to build the bridge on the project's northern edge, across from the skatepark. The Planning Commission, believing this would lead pedestrians to cross Moraga Road in an unsafe location, removed the bridge from the plan. At the request of staff, commissioners later consented to a bridge built further south in the hope that pedestrians would use the crosswalk at Moraga Road and St. Mary's Road.

But the Town Council decided on Feb. 10 that it would prefer to see the bridge built at its former northern location, along with a new crosswalk to the skatepark. Moraga's police chief, Bob Priebe, also supported the original plan. "A crosswalk by the skatepark makes a lot of sense," he said.

The town now needs to resolve an inconsistency. The project plan, as approved by the Planning Commission, includes a southern bridge; while the development agreement supported by the Town Council includes a northern bridge.

What's a council member to do? "You can approve this (the development agreement), and give direction back to the Planning Commission that your expectation is to have a bridge (in the northern part of the property)," Jill Keimach, the town manager, advised the Town Council. Town staff has strongly supported the northern bridge and crosswalk that would allow visitors to park their cars at the Commons, have a straight route to the proposed passive park and create a link from the new development, and the Sonsara and Corliss Drive neighborhoods, to the Commons and existing trails.

The development agreement defines other conditions that the developer agrees to satisfy in order to gain certainty regarding the rules and regulations applicable to the development over time. In addition to the park, the bridges and the crosswalk, Summerhill Homes will include an "outlook point" including a seating area; construct a sidewalk along Camino Ricardo in front of the development and continue it to Moraga Way; and designate Moraga as its

point-of-sale for the construction material used in the project, meaning that the town will collect the applicable sales tax. Shawna Brekke-Read, the town's planning director, highlighted the fact that Summerhill Homes went beyond what the Moraga municipal code requires – according to current code the developer was obligated to dedicate only 0.265 acres of park land and to build a sidewalk only in front of the development.

Councilmember Dave Trotter tried nonetheless to convince his colleagues to drive a harder bargain with Summerhill Homes in negotiating the development agreement. He wanted the developer to pay for the second bridge and a portion of a third, more southern, access in the future; he also wanted Summerhill Homes to pay for the maintenance of the park. He was not met with much support – staff, advocacy groups and neighbors who have worked with this developer over the past two years have praised its exceptional community spirit and Keimach noted that asking Summerhill Homes to pay more could result in a diminution of the quality of the project.

The development agreement will come back to the Town Council for final approval Feb. 26. A date for the Planning Commission to re-examine the project has not yet been set.

Improving Access to Sports Facilities in Moraga

... continued from page A5

"We have to be creative," said Weaver, "but some parents complain that the children do not get enough practice."

The discussion about joint use agreements between the parties will begin at the next meeting. For example, the town and school district will talk about special conditions for use of the field at Camino Pablo Elementary School; in 2011 the town used \$700,000 from its Measure WW funds to restore the school's sports field. Other examples in-

clude the former use of Campolindo fields by the Moraga Baseball Association and the college facilities that are used during the summer by the town to offer camps to young residents.

Finally the subcommittee will discuss possible joint projects for the future. One of them could be the renovation of nine acres at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School; the fields have great potential but need a lot of work. Another project that could come to the table is a multi-

generational community center, a structure that would be similar to the Wagner Ranch gym in Orinda – an 8,000 square foot building that is operated under a joint use agreement between the city and the Orinda Union School District.

The subcommittee will meet the first Monday evening of each month at the Hacienda de las Flores. The agenda is publicized on the town's website – from moraga.ca.gov go to the calendar – and the meetings are open to the public.

Civic News Orinda

A Bridge to the Future: Improving Orinda's Aging Infrastructure Piece by Piece

... continued from page A1



Photo Ohlen Alexander

Her father moved their family from the Ygnacio Valley in 1945 because he disliked the heat. "He needed to be near the fog... We were able to keep one head of livestock per acre," she recalled. He built their home on their lower acre near a rivulet feeding into the San Pablo Creek; her horse grazed happily on the acre above. She fondly remembers waiting with classmates for the school bus at its stop near the bridge, and still keeps in touch with several of those friends.

There were days, though, that were worrisome. In 1947, her family's property took a beating as much of its fill washed into the feeder creek. "Our house was just hanging ... just teetering there." While working at UC

Berkeley in the early 1960s, she was unable to reach home when rising waters made the bridge impassible. By 1987, it was "pretty dicey driving over it" yet again. "That little creek ... to think it could go up 13 or 14 feet and wash over the bridge."

So, the Manzanita upgrade began – part of a larger effort to enhance bridge safety across California. City officials and staff sought public input, secured project approval from review authorities and pulled together the necessary funding. Reassured by a July 2012 public hearing that the California red-legged frog and other sensitive flora and fauna would be protected, the Orinda City Council authorized staff to open the construction bidding process.

"I was very impressed with the naturalist that was hired," said Elsberry, remembering his efforts to document native trees and other species. "We had a family of mallard ducks ... he took care to find that it was part of their flyway."

The bridge replacement was important, explained Chuck Swanson, public works director, because the bridge serves a large neighborhood. Although the final tab is still being computed, the city's budget will most likely not take the hit one would expect from so massive a project. Recent estimates indicate that about \$2.5 million of the roughly \$3 million total cost will be covered by state and federal grants.



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Community Service

We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions can be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

Kiwanis Crab Feed a Huge Success

Submitted by Steve Woehleke



More than 300 crab-lovers gather at the recent Kiwanis Crab Feed.

Photo provided

Moraga Valley Kiwanis Club held its 14th Annual Charity Fundraiser Crab Feed Feb. 1 at the Saint Mary's Soda Center, with over 300 attending the sellout event, which featured lots of fabulous crab, social hour, dancing, and silent auction. Attendees included District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen, Moraga mayor Ken Chew and Moraga council members Mike Metcalf and Dave Trotter. One hundred percent of the event proceeds will be contributed to local

charities that focus on children and youth, including the three Lamorinda education foundations, the Food Bank and the Monument Crisis Center. A good time was had by all, thanks to organizations and individuals who contributed time and materials, including over 30 members of local Kiwanis Key Clubs (high school clubs that focus on service work) who served the meals. For information about Moraga Valley Kiwanis, visit moragavalleykiwanis.org.

Built to Read - Silver Award Recognized

Submitted by Trina Audley



From left, front row: Jen Donat (leader) Brianna Donat, Jaime Brown, and Trina Audley (leader); middle row: Eva Poulson, Hannah Kramer, Rebecca Lamotte, Callista Asuncion, and Margot Audley; back row: Julia Stedman, Dante Bamont, Alex Matson, Cara Wolfe, and Claire Terentieff.

Photo provided

Lafayette Girl Scout Troop 30863 celebrated the completion of their Silver Award service project at the end of 2013. The girls were recognized for their "Built to Read" project which included a year of individual and committee group effort to raise funds and collect and sort books. The troop then spent five weekend building sessions to construct two free-standing book shelves for donation.

Through Shelter, Inc. and the Mt. Diablo school district, the troop identified a single mother recently placed in new housing as well as an elementary school in need of the books and shelves. Each received delivery of the books and shelves in the fall.

"She can be our library now," commented a neighbor of the residential recipient who looked on as the troop delivered the painted free-standing book shelf and three large boxes of books. At the elementary school, a second grade teacher waited joyfully as the books were carted in by the troop. "Many families do not have books at home for outside reading. Now the kids

can just pick one to take home," she said.

"Helping build the shelves and donate books really made me feel like we were making a difference," commented Julia Stedman, a troop member and freshman at Acalanes High School. "I love to read - reading is a privilege that all children should have."

The Silver Award project also marked the culmination of 10 years of learning and growth together for troop 30863. The majority of girls have been with the troop since it started. Additional members and their parents, who joined over the years, enriched the troop. Sharing careers, helping with camping and cookie sales and providing committee leadership and guidance, the parents played an active role. "Our time together as a troop will never be forgotten - it was a big part of my daughter's childhood," commented one 10-year parent after the ceremony.

Many troop members plan to continue their service as Juliette Girl Scouts, working to obtain their gold award within two years.

Blankets of the Heart

Submitted by Becky Maher



Rheem Elementary School first grade teacher Jennifer Strohmeier and her class display blankets given to the Bay Area Crisis Nursery.

Photo provided

Jennifer Strohmeier's first grade class at Donald Rheem Elementary School learned about giving of oneself to others on Valentine's Day. The children hand tied three twin-sized blankets which were then donated to the Bay Area Crisis Nursery.

JM Students Learn About Giving and a Random Act of Kindness

Submitted by Heidi Hoehn-Felt



From left, back row: Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School students Kellen Kvech, Elizabeth Oxendine, Rico Zuniga, Bradley Thompson, Mark Lindblad of Boy Scout Troop 234, JM school counselor Heidi Felt and Kevin Hughes, director of gift planning at Children's Hospital Oakland. Front row: Gilma Rivera, CHO Foundation receptionist, and JM student Olivia Rogers.

Photo provided

In recognition of national Random Act of Kindness week Feb. 10-16, the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School leadership class led by Tricia Reyes along with advisory teachers Kim Lockett and Mary Ann Shimer created a project JM students will never forget. After about a month of collecting new toys, signing get well cards, and wrapping gift bags, over 300 bags and toys were delivered Feb. 13 to Children's Hospital Oakland - just in time for Valentine's Day. Scoutmaster Wendell Baker's Moraga School District Boy Scout troops as well as 27 leadership students compiled

the gift bags with heart ribbon and attached a get well card signed by a JM student to each one. "Timing was perfect," said Heidi Hoehn-Felt. "They had just run out of Valentine goodies at CHO." CHO Foundation receptionist Gilma Rivera said these gifts bring "joy and comfort to these ill children and help them cope (with their illness or pending surgery) and also helps their parents who are often a wreck emotionally but can't show it to their kids." She added, "When our kids are coping better, we cope better as parents."

Assistance League of Diablo Valley Offers Scholarships for Fall, 2014

Submitted by Betty Miller



Scholarships Chairman Jodi Riley (back row, far right) congratulates 2013 Scholarship recipients.

Photo provided

Assistance League of Diablo Valley scholarships provide financial aid to qualifying high school students, community college students, as well as foster youth in the Contra Costa community who are planning to enter a community college, a four year university, or a vocational school in the fall of 2014. Applicants must demonstrate the need for financial aid and a desire to further their education, maintain a specified grade point average, participate in campus life, be hands-on involved in community service, and provide a timeline for academic and career goals. The deadlines that follow are firm; no exceptions. Community College Scholarships for students completing their final

term at Contra Costa College, Diablo Valley College, or Los Medanos College and transferring to a four-year college or university: application deadline, Feb. 28. High School Scholarships for seniors graduating from any high school in Contra Costa County and entering a two-year or four-year college, deadline March 14. Foster Youth Scholarships for current or former dependents of the court in the foster care program of Contra Costa County eligible to attend a two-year college, four-year college, or accredited vocational school, deadline March 21. For more information and application forms, please visit diablovalley.assistanceleague.org.

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Community Service

And the Winner Is ...

Submitted by Fred George

The Moraga Lions Club Student Speakers Contest, which had a topic of "Community Service-What Does It Mean and Why Does It Matter?" was held Feb. 19 at the Moraga Library. Pictured from left, contestants Omid Boorzarpour (Campolindo High School), Lina Mathkour (Miramonte High School), Fred George, Moraga Lions Club chair, Caie Kelley (Miramonte), and Kelly Evans (Campolindo). The winner was

Kelley, who will go on to compete at the Zone Level contest being held at 6:30 p.m. March 13 at Oak Grove Library in Walnut Creek. The speech contest includes high school students from the states of California and Nevada; the ultimate winner is awarded \$21,000 in scholarship money, with many other contestants winning scholarship money also along the way to the finals being held June 6 in Pasadena, Calif.

Photo provided

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

DAR honors Good Citizens 2014

Submitted by Jude Putman-Fenz



From left, Barbara Snyder, DAR Good Citizens Award chairperson, Miramonte High School student Linda Lan Phung, Las Lomas High School student Sara Chen, and Acalanes DAR Chapter Regent Louise Diracles. Photo provided

The Acalanes Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) recently awarded several high school seniors the Good Citizens' Award. These students are selected based on their ability to demonstrate qualities of dependability, service, leadership and patriotism within their community and schools. Good Citizens' Award chairperson Barbara Snyder presented DAR Good Citizen pins, certificates of recognition, monetary awards and

an American flag flown over the U.S. Capitol building in Washington D.C. to this year's winners: Sara Chen from Las Lomas High School and Linda Lan Phung from Miramonte High School. Also selected, but unable to attend, were Briana Grether from Acalanes High School, McKenna Williams, from Contra Costa Christian High School (her mother, Mitzi, accepted the award on her behalf), and Marina Han from Campolindo High School.



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From Front Page

High Schools Prep for Stellar Spring Productions

... continued from page A1



Acalanes Stagecraft students work on creating modern sets for "Guys and Dolls" show.



Miramonte student fine-tunes dance moves at recent rehearsal.

But though the production – a story of a romance between a missionary and a gambler in a town notorious for its casinos – has been performed many times before in forms ranging from youth dramatic productions to Broadway shows, Acalanes is working to incorporate a slightly new "look" to its set and costumes with the help of Acalanes' Stagecraft class, a newly added elective that allows students to craft onstage sets for school productions.

"Mr. Meehan and his Stagecraft class have created a set that's not really like anything we've done before," said director Cathy Challacombe. "It's a much more modern use of sets. The costumes are predominantly black and white, so visually it will be very different."

In addition to an artistically crafted set, Acalanes boasts an outstanding group of singers and actors participating in the production, some of whom already have plans to pursue music at prestigious colleges next year. Briana Grether, Andrew Cope, Caroline Whelehan, and Danny Igoe will carry out the roles of their outlandish characters with gusto, all the while wowing audiences with their vocal talents.

The musicians and actors of Miramonte High School opted for a more contemporary show when they selected "Shrek the Musical," to be performed March 13-16. Based on the 2001 DreamWorks animated movie, this brand new Broadway musical, which depicts an ugly ogre who falls in love with an equally 'beautiful' princess, appealed to Miramonte students who had fond childhood memories of the movie.

"When it first appeared on Broadway, I was skeptical," said director Heather Cousins. "However, it was the perfect choice for this particular generation of students because as they say, 'Shrek' is their childhood. They grew up with the movie."

But most people would not expect such a quirky production to include such catchy, captivating music – songs that will give cast members Daniel Cook, Tosca Maltzman, Maritza Grillo, and Andy Tobin perfect opportunities to showcase their supreme vocal skills.

"As soon as I heard the music, I was fully on board," said Cousins. "Both the movie and the musical appeal to the entire family with clever jokes which will fly right over small kids' heads. What the movie doesn't have is the original Broadway score, music by Jeanine Tesori and lyrics by Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright David Lindsey-Abaire."

But Miramonte's cast members are not the only ones daring enough to take on a more cutting-edge production this spring. Campolindo High School's actors and singers will perform the satirical musical "Urinetown" on the weekends of March 13-16 and March 20-23. Originally written by playwright Greg Kotis, the dystopian production depicts a world in which water is so scarce that using the restroom costs money. Albeit centered around an obscure topic, Campo students embraced the challenge of putting the show together.

"We're always looking for shows that explore genres and themes that we haven't previously tried, and modern, 'in your face' so-

cial satire is something we've not done before," said director David Pinkham. "Urinetown" itself is an important example of the evolution of musical theater, having opened the doors in 2003 for shows like 'Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson' and 'The Book of Mormon' on Broadway. We think it's brilliantly funny and a romping good time."

But as strange as the musical's theme sounds, the production is thought-provoking, triggering philosophical, environmental, and political questions about society, without explicitly presenting answers at the end of the show.

"While it doesn't 'preach,' it does make one think," said Pinkham. "We particularly like the fact that 'Urinetown' points out some of our foibles (including how easy it is for us to shy away from something just because of its name), and deals with important issues like corporate greed, governmental oppression, the folly of idealism and the scarcity of environmental resources."

Combine with these deeper meanings plenty of opportunities for talented Campolindo vocalists to break out into song, and the result is a show that not only entertains, but inspires. Guy Clearwater, Nathan Correll, Maddie Browning, Alyssa Murray, Will Martin, Ricky Lomas, Nani Senderwicz, and Marissa Monopoli will all shine in this double-casted musical.

For tickets and showtimes visit: www.showbiz4u.com ("Urinetown"); www.showtix4u.com ("Shrek the Musical"); and www.ahsperformingarts.org ("Guys and Dolls").



Campolindo students work on choreography for "Urinetown" production.

Photos Ohlen Alexander

Happy Hearts Walk for Henry

By Cathy Dausman



Henry Branagh, 22 months, is all smiles ahead of the second annual Happy Heart walk in his honor. The walk supports those affected with Barth Syndrome. Henry was diagnosed with the syndrome at age 3 months.
Photo Cathy Dausman

Henry Branagh, age 22 months, is all heart; perhaps more so than he should be. The lively Lamorinda toddler has severe dilated cardiomyopathy, an enlarged left ventricle, due to Barth Syndrome (www.barthsyndrome.org), but you wouldn't know it to look at him, especially since his nasal feeding tube has been removed.

Barth Syndrome is a rare genetic disorder affecting more boys than girls; it is marked by enlarged heart, low white blood cell count, muscle weakness, and energy deficiency. Henry was just 3 months old when he was diagnosed at the onset of what be-

came a five-week stay in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit at Children's Hospital Oakland.

He was hospitalized again before his first birthday.

Shortly after, his mother organized a Happy Heart Walk around Lafayette Reservoir "to honor Henry and to promote awareness of Pediatric Cardiomyopathy." The Happy Heart term was coined when Branagh's best friend from Texas sent words of encouragement, and referenced a biblical passage: "A happy heart makes the face cheerful ..." (Proverbs 15:13).

Megan Branagh hosted a second walk Feb. 22. This time

nearly 150 participants donned matching red T-shirts to hike the Reservoir trail, before enjoying a sausage, hot dog, fruit and cupcake lunch – some of Henry's favorite food. The walk itself was free – "we pre-sold T-shirts," Branagh explained, but the family encouraged donations to Barth Syndrome Foundation.

... continued on page B4

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Program Focuses on Coping with Betrayal and Pain in Middle School

By Sophie Braccini



Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School participants in the Communication Skills for Girls workshop. Photo provided

When you ask high school girls from the Sister-to-Sister series – a life skills program for middle school girls offered by the Lamorinda branch of the American Association of University Women – about the most painful memories of their years in middle school, half of the time their response is “betrayal” – betrayal by girls who they thought were their closest friends.

One Miramonte High School senior's worst experience in middle school was that suddenly her best friends stopped talking with her on the phone and stopped inviting her to hangout. When confronted about it, they started sending awful texts and putting her down.

Another Miramonte senior, who also asked not to be named, was part of a very close knit group of friends and was ostracized one day when one of the girls said that their group was “too exclusive” and it was that girl's fault. The same thing happened to an Acalanes High School senior one day in middle school when she heard that her friends were hiding in the bathroom because they didn't want to hang out with her anymore. “It was a metaphorical punch to my gut,” she recalls.

A Bentley Upper School junior adds that throughout sixth and seventh grade she can't remember a day when her “friends” weren't saying things like, “You're pathetic” or “You're a selfish brat,” or “No one cares.”

“Being turned off by friends is one of the worst feelings a young girl can experience in her early teenage

years,” she says.

Tween and early teen years can be hard for growing girls, and can result in a culture that's confusing for young women. Moraga School District Superintendent Bruce Burns asked AAUW's Valarie Burgess, who's been managing the Sister-to-Sister project in Lamorinda for 15 years, to offer a multi-week program for female Joaquin Intermediate School students to work on communication issues and healthy relationships. The pilot program, called Communication Skills for Girls, was held in the fall; the Sister-to-Sister summit scheduled March 22 is a one-day opportunity for young girls to experience how to better navigate the emotional roads of middle school.

The programs offered are managed by high school facilitators – local high school girls who can testify to the difficulty of middle school years and to the better times that lie ahead. They are trained by AAUW members year-round.

“The purpose of the six-week program at JM is to empower girls and raise their emotional intelligence,” says Burgess. “It teaches healthy communication and relationship skills, raises awareness of negative cultural and social messages, and helps the girls to be resilient and proficient advocates for themselves and their peers.” Burgess designed the program with Laura L. Wittenberg, a marriage and family therapist, based on their participation in the Rachel Simons' Boston Girls Leadership Institute.

“People who act mean are some-

times the most insecure, and they are the ones who would need help,” says Miramonte senior Elizabeth Chenok, who was a facilitator. “The girls who work with us learn techniques to identify and handle their own emotions, without lashing out or being overwhelmed.” The senior thinks that middle school is a time of change and insecurity, when all people desperately want is to fit in.

April Tabler, a sixth grader at JM, participated in the program. “We had a lot of fun learning new skills,” she says. “We practiced the ‘I’ statement – when you say what you feel rather than accusing someone about what they did – or how to identify and defuse ‘pushing’ statements. We learned how to avoid being bullied and we made new friends.”

April's mother, Sarah Tabler, appreciated the information session that was held for parents before the series started, and the follow-up emails sent every week to reinforce what the girls were learning. “They learned to avoid using ‘always’ and ‘never,’” she says. “They learned how to name emotions, recognize feelings. They also discussed the importance of having your own thoughts and being your authentic self.”

Burgess hopes to offer a second Communication Skills for Girls session starting in April. All the girls who participated in the first program have been invited to the March 22 Sister-to-Sister summit, held from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. on the Bentley High School campus in Lafayette. For more information or to register, go to oml-ca.aauw.net/s2s/.

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MOFD Updates GIS Evacuation Maps

By Cathy Dausman



Uriel Garcia and Dennis Rein discuss evacuation routes in Orinda's Sleepy Hollow neighborhood. Their map is a print version of the GIS overlay system they are building.

Photo Cathy Dausman

Usually residents want to get into their neighborhood, but there are times, and situations, where the goal is getting out. A flood, wildfire or hazardous material spill may make a neighborhood uninhabitable and evacuation imperative. This is why the Moraga-Orinda Fire District is utilizing computer technology to pre-plan local evacuation routes. The goal is to update the MOFD area GIS, or geographic information system, allowing first responders to identify

safe exit routes and trouble shoot traffic control “choke points” – potential traffic jam locations – ahead of a real disaster, said Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein.

In 2013, Rein and MOFD intern Uriel Garcia worked to electronically note the location of the area's every fire hydrant, fire trail, and street. Garcia also uploaded parcel map information, the location of Central Sanitary (sewer) lines, East Bay Municipal Utility District water lines,

local creeks, streams, and other hazards. Gas main information from PG&E is yet to be added.

The job was a good fit for Garcia, who describes himself as “a big picture kind of guy.”

This information, and much more, can be layered into the GIS system, the way celluloid pages built the “visible man” in printed reference books. Each layer can be turned on or off as needed. To illustrate GIS use, Garcia showed how a simulated fire might grow from the Bear Creek trail – along the shore of Briones Reservoir – and progress south toward Orinda's Sleepy Hollow School. The location was picked because Sleepy Hollow neighborhood will soon become one of Contra Costa County's first Firewise (wildfire community preparedness, www.firewise.org) communities.

“GIS is a lifestyle program; it needs to be kept up,” Rein said. MOFD started its evacuation route mapping back in 2006-07 under then fire marshal Tonya Hoover, who is now the California state fire marshal. She said the initial effort was tied into the California Fire Safe program (<http://www.cafiresafecouncil.org/>), with data layers intended for use by fire responders.

... continued on next page

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Lamorinda Native Scales Myanmar's Highest Peak

By Cathy Dausman



From left, Mark Fisher, Po Pin, Eric Daft, Andy Tyson, Molly Loomis and Chris Nance celebrating the first ascent of Myanmar's Gamlang Razi Mountain. Photo courtesy Fisher Creative

Molly Loomis has traveled to places those in the western world usually don't go. Late last summer she became the lone woman in a group making the first ascent on Myanmar's Gamlang Razi Mountain. They spent more than a month in its conquest.

While Myanmar claims another peak, Hkakbo Razi, as Southeast Asia's highest, Loomis said new map data taken from the GPS readings they made atop Gamlang Razi proved otherwise. Their readings recorded Gamlang Razi's elevation at 19,238 feet.

Loomis recently shared slides of her journey at a private reception in Lafayette. The audience included school friends – Loomis is a 1995 graduate of Acalanes High School – their parents and neighbors. Loomis' adventure began with a 180-mile, two-week hike to reach the mountain's base camp. The mountaineers carted everything in themselves – local villages were too small to support their needs. They hired dozens of local porters, each of whom shouldered about 30 kilos (66 pounds) of supplies in baskets made of bamboo and rattan.

"We definitely were not moving 'light and fast,'" Loomis admitted. Her team walked an average of 15 miles daily in heat and tropical humidity, drinking four or five liters of water to stay hydrated. En route there were hardships – leech bites, sand flies and swarms of bees.

The leech bites "looked worse than they felt," she said, and the sand flies produced an awful skin rash. They crossed handmade rope bridges of uncertain weight limits. On a single day they once gained 8,000 feet in vertical elevation. But by acclimating carefully, the group avoided suffering major altitude sickness.

The trip offered beauty as well, in the form of spongy rhododendron forests and "stunning" butterflies. Arriving at base camp, elevation 15,500, they endured rain for 10 days straight.

"Things were pretty wet," Loomis said. Still, the group accomplished the unbelievable – a summit

on first attempt. Anticipating a break in the weather, the team rose at 3 a.m. The rain turned to snow, then white-out conditions as the expedition veered slightly off course; still they climbed the final 4,000 feet to the summit.

The weather was such that "we never saw the top of the mountain until we were coming down," Loomis said. On their return to civilization – the city of Yangon – the Myanmar government presented them with a congratulatory letter "for climbing the second highest" peak.

"Myanmar is big in the formality of celebrations," said Loomis, which might also explain why their group was formally recognized once before they even began their journey.

Loomis' lush photography gave the adventure the exotic feel of a National Geographic outing, but Loomis' mother, Liz Loomis, who attended the presentation, admits it is "hard to be a parent" of a child who climbs.

"You have to have a certain modicum of faith," she said, recalling when "walking to the end of the driveway" was a major accomplishment for her daughter. That changed when she enrolled her then-teenager in Cal Adventures, a UC Berkeley outdoor program, and Loomis hiked from "one side of the Sierra near Devil's Postpile to Yosemite Valley."

Loomis took up outdoor adventures in earnest attending college in Colorado. "What's next?" an audience member inquired as her presentation ended.

"Nothing," she replied. "The record is just out there."

Loomis is now a writer in Teton Valley, Idaho, and works as a park ranger in the Grand Tetons during the summers. Her adventures and photography are documented online at www.mollyloomis.com.

At least two other climbers have roots in Lamorinda: Hans Florine, who shares the Speed Climb World Record for ascending The Nose of Yosemite's El Capitan; and Steve Wampler, the first person with cerebral palsy to climb El Capitan.

MOFD Updates GIS Evacuation Maps

... continued from page B2

MOFD was one of the first fire districts in Northern California to employ such technology, she said.

Hoover recalled planning "pretty lengthy" evacuation drills for Bollinger Canyon and Canyon. "Unfortunately, we didn't quite get there," she said, meaning the program was still in its infancy. (See related story on page D1.) Recent improvements now make GIS technology more accessible and certainly more affordable.

"High resolution ortho (aerial) photos used to cost thousands of dollars," Rein said. "Now many maps are available online, either free or inexpensively, through National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and U.S. Geological Survey websites."

Map analysis allows for better evacuation decisions to be made, with less risk of life for first responders, Rein said. GIS is "just a tool," he said; but Hoover called it a "wonderful" tool, and emphasized the need for

fire service responders "to have all the best possible info."

This summer, updated 8 by 12 foot GIS maps will adorn each MOFD fire station. Garcia and Rein will also provide map books to every MOFD fire engine, and oversee GIS information updates for Saint Mary's College.

Garcia will continue to work as a private contractor for MOFD through the current fiscal year; he is also negotiating with the Town of Moraga to perform similar updates on their GIS data. The project goal is to share information with "neighborhoods, emergency responders, cities and regional [entities]," Rein said.

"This area seems very good for sharing," Garcia said. And GIS data will become even more important as fire season approaches.

GIS is useful in operations, training and prevention applications, said Hoover. In a word, she calls it "amazing."



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Happy Hearts Walk for Henry

... continued from page B1



More than 100 neighbors and friends of the Branagh family donned red heart shirts during the second annual Happy Heart Walk at Lafayette Reservoir Saturday. Photo Cathy Dausman

"We had great support from local businesses (Peet's Coffee, Susie Cakes, Lafayette Carwash, Boswell's Party Supplies and Whole Foods, all in Lafayette, plus East Bay Screenprint, Concord, and Gianna's Baking Company, Castroville)," she said. And the outreach has expanded.

This year a group of eight families, Branagh friends from Ft. Worth, Texas, wore the same T-shirts and walked in solidarity with the Lafayette contingent. Also joining the Reservoir group was the family of a young Alameda teen, the only other Bay Area child the Branaghs know

with a Barth Syndrome diagnosis. "The past year and half has been quite a journey, definitely the most trying time in our lives, but also a time of feeling very loved and supported by our family, friends, and community," Branagh said. "We're very thankful."

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“God of Carnage” Opens at Town Hall Theatre Feb. 22

By Sophie Braccini



From left: Jacquie Duckworth, Derrick Silva, Henry Perkins, and Suzie Shepard. Photo Stu Selland

Civilization may give us polish, but contemporary playwright Yasmina Reza shows us that underneath it all, humans are torn with frustration and pain that can erupt into violence. Set in a city that could easily be San Francisco, New York, or Paris (Reza is French), the play is the humorous story of what happens to us when the “God of Carnage” arises and the veneer falls away.

“God of Carnage” tells the story of parents from two civilized families – the Novaks and the Raleighs – who meet to discuss an altercation that occurred between their two 11-year-old sons, resulting in one of them losing front teeth. The meeting takes place in the Novaks’ living room and soon turns into a fight between families and sexes. Alan Raleigh (played by Derrick Silva) is a business lawyer, his wife Annette (Jacquie Duckworth) is a wealth manager; Michael Novak (Henry Perkins) owns a wholesale hardware company, his wife Veronica (Suzie Shepard) writes

books about Africa.

Alan keeps responding to business calls; Annette vomits after being lectured by Veronica, who turns on her own husband; the foursome reproducing the violence that engulfed their children.

The humor comes from the way the play is constructed: the gradual deterioration of the relationships; Reza’s understanding of human character; and the slight caricature of the participants who are reminiscent of people we all know.

Director Susan Hovey, who previously produced “The Graduate” for Town Hall Theatre, and who also directs at Contra Costa Civic Theatre and Tri-Valley Repertory Theatre, says, “This play is about parents, and marriage, and adulthood. The play shows the inner battle between the savage instincts that you have to control and the civil decency that you have to rein in so you don’t sound phony. And everyone can relate to that.” She adds that the comic aspect of the play

comes from the difference between where the characters start and where they end up.

The team had only five weeks to put the play together, and a few days before opening night the tempo still needed tightening, especially at the beginning. Alan’s constant phone interruptions were not marked enough, maybe because there were no sound effects, and the actor was sometimes hard to understand. The women were already at the top of their game, wonderfully energetic and funny, losing control with flair.

The short play (1 hour and 10 minutes, with no intermission) will make you laugh; it is a superb opportunity for intelligent entertainment.

“God of Carnage” runs from Feb. 22 to March 15 at Town Hall Theatre at the corner of Moraga Road and School Street in Lafayette. For tickets, contact the Town Hall Theatre Box Office at (925) 283-1557, or purchase online at www.TownHallTheatre.com.

Boomers Invited to Find Balance and Bone Up on Health

By Laurie Snyder

If you’ve reached the stage of life where the snap, crackle and pop of your morning breakfast cereal is being drowned out by the creaking of joints, it may be time for a visit to the Orinda Library.

On March 7, library staff will join forces with the Orinda Parks and Recreation Department and Friends of the Orinda Library to get area residents moving with the launch of “Health Matters for Boomers and Beyond: Embracing the Benefits of Living a Balanced Lifestyle.” The free lecture series will kick off at 9:30 a.m. with a lecture on Bone Health and Aging by Bay Area chiropractor and women’s health expert, Lani Simpson, DC, CCD (www.lanisimpson.com/biography/). Pre-registration is not required.

Dr. Simpson, a certified clinical bone densitometrist, “has been researching and studying bone health for the past 20 years,” says Orinda Library manager Beth Girshman. Experienced at educating adults regarding life

changing health challenges they are or will be experiencing, she also co-founded the Menopause and PMS Center and the Osteoporosis Diagnostic Center in Berkeley, and teaches other healthcare practitioners about spinal anatomy and osteology.

During a 20-minute session break, participants will be given a special opportunity to try out one of three fitness options that have been much in the news of late – yoga, Zumba Gold, or improving balance.

Attendees will then hear from Saskia Kleinert, NC, CMT, founder and Director of the Emeryville Wellness Center (www.integrativehealthnutrition.com/). Kleinert, who will speak about Nutrition and Aging Well from 11 a.m. until noon, is a third degree black belt who has taught massage therapy and health education at the National Holistic Institute in Emeryville. In private practice since 1993, she has received training at Dr. Andrew Weil’s Institute of Integrative Medicine and Hawthorn Univer-

sity. “My goal,” she explains, “is to bring equilibrium to the body, mind and spirit through integrative health and wellness care.”

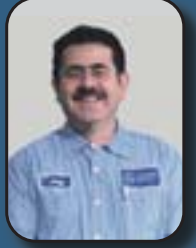
So, if you’re tired of sounding like a wounded buffalo when you get up to grab that second morning cup of coffee, be there or be square. Registration begins at the Orinda Library Auditorium at 9 a.m. Coffee, tea and treats will be available. For more information, contact Girshman at: (925) 254-2184, ext. 15; bgirshma@ccclib.org. Or, visit: www.friendsoftheorindalibrary.org.



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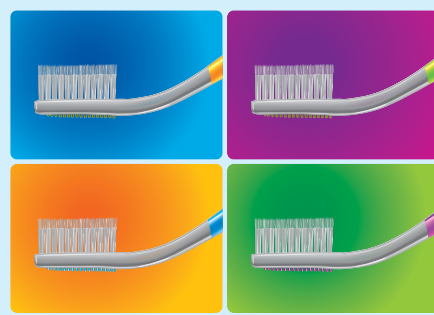
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Technology and Education

Changing how teachers teach, students learn

By Amanda Kuehn



Photo courtesy Lafayette School District

Recent innovations in educational technology are changing the face of traditional classrooms. “In the last decade, especially in the last five years, I’ve seen more and more technology used,” said Raina León, assistant professor in the Kalmanovitz School of Education at Saint Mary’s College. “I’m a huge proponent of using a lot of resources.”

León is no stranger to the classroom. She taught at a global education high school in Las Vegas before working with middle and high school students in Bamberg, Germany, and currently teaches courses on the foundations of secondary education and

instructional design at SMC. Her research includes the effective use of digital technology in the classroom. “I have a lot of technology in my own life and use it with my students as well,” said León.

Technology has come a long way since León began teaching in 2007. “[My first school] was tech-focused, so every classroom had a projector and every teacher had a computer. We had multiple labs, but no tablets or smartphones,” she said. “Then I went overseas and every classroom had a Smart Board, but the majority of teachers had no idea how to use it.” The Smart Board is an interactive

whiteboard that uses touch detection for user input. It functions as part of a system that includes a computer, a projector, whiteboarding software and a board that accepts touch input from a finger, pen or other solid object.

According to long-time educator and program director of SMC’s Educational Leadership Program, Heidi Marie Rambo, Ed.D., “Technology threatens that comfort space of the teacher knowing where the class is going and being in control of how it gets there.”

Rambo, who works with pre-service and in-service teachers, explained that learning to use new tools

not only takes time, but poses risk. “It’s a different way of thinking. It represents a paradigm shift in how you access information and use materials.”

It used to be that teachers were viewed as content masters who passed along information to their classes, but this is changing with the influx of technology and integration of new tools. “Now every student can have an iPad,” said León, whose students connect to the classroom through Apple technology. “Students being a part of that kind of education is a huge shift.”

Though technology can, as Rambo noted, “create ways for students to take ownership over their own learning,” it can also cause complications.

“You have to be resilient,” said León, “able to adapt on the fly to a hiccup.” That adaptation isn’t always easy.

“It’s a mindset shift to say ‘I can give up control,’” added Rambo.

One of the biggest challenges in integrating technology is that teachers “have to know the technology in order to be an expert,” León noted. That kind of learning takes time, and with the rapidly changing tech industry, new tools are always being introduced.

“There’s just an explosion of apps,” said Rambo. “There are so many that are relevant and usable. The problem is how am I as a teacher supposed to know about all of these apps and become proficient in learning how to use them?” León agreed. “Teachers can easily be over-

whelmed by the process and the cost.”

“There’s also a perspective from outside of the classroom that this one magic app will solve all of the problems,” said Rambo. “Technology is not the silver bullet. It doesn’t replace teaching and learning.”

For León, one of the keys to combatting teacher frustration is collaboration. “My caution is for teachers to work with one another; that can help so much in helping with the fear and anxiety of having to relearn something.”

“It seems to me that we are all subject to shiny object syndrome,” said Rambo. “There’s always this idea that new is better. But sometimes you don’t have to look further. Find out what kinds of creative capacities you already have. If you can teach in a more effective way using the white board, use the white board.”

For Rambo, the key question to ask is “How is this technology helping us do what we already do better?”

“And in a more innovative way,” León added. “There may be something we can’t even imagine that students can do with that material and that technology.”

“It accesses and creates capacities for different learning styles to come forward in a classroom,” said Rambo.

“The students who are most likely to really push us forward, who innovate and dream are probably the ones we don’t understand right now,” said León. Giving them new tools as a means of creation, discovery and expression may empower these students to push us further into the future.

Use Your Most Powerful Tool for Getting Into College

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

As a college advisor I give college related advice all year round. One of the most common conversations I have with families is about high school coursework—what to take, when to take it and how much it matters (to get into a good college). In order to give back to a community which has given so much to me, this article addresses this question in the most fundamental way possible. There are, of course, many special needs and unique situations to be considered. Still, there are some general principles that can apply to most of our students, most of the time.

If you are a high school student that is college bound you should understand that the most powerful tool for getting into college rests in

your hands. Simply stated, colleges admit students who show an interest in going to school. This statement rests on the premise that you like learning, since you are going to college to continue your education. So your best tool to help you get into college is to design a four year schedule that shows your commitment to learning, and your willingness and ability to take core coursework, and possibly some advanced coursework during your high school years. The recommendations below work well for each year in high school. A few are especially important for certain grade levels.

1. Middle school sets the foundation for your high school curriculum. Work hard and do well in a

foreign language and math in middle school and prepare to take geometry and the 2nd year of your foreign language in high school. Take your first laboratory science as well, biology. If the language you studied in middle school truly doesn’t suit your interests, switch to another language in your freshman year so you can still complete four years of a foreign language in high school. If language is not your ‘thing’ be sure to take at least three years and then supplement the dropped language with strong coursework that does interest you.

2. Take core coursework. Remember, meeting minimum requirements does not make you a competitive applicant. In today’s college admission world it is wise to go well beyond the minimum, not only to be admitted to college, but to be eligible for scholarships and grants to ease the financial strain of college costs. Continue taking core courses in all academic subjects, including English, mathematics, laboratory sciences, social sciences, and a foreign language (see the tip above if you are utterly convinced you must drop language.) Five core subjects plus one elective is ideal for your senior year. In earlier grade levels you will have additional coursework because you are taking physical education for two years and meeting your visual and performing arts requirement.

3. Complete your VPA requirement early. The University of California (UC) and California State

University (CSU) systems as well as many other four year colleges require one full year of college preparatory coursework in the visual and performing arts. Don’t leave that to your junior or senior year. Unless you are an arts focused student, you will want to free up your schedule for academic subjects that help further explore and expand your interests, like creative writing, if you love composition, or introduction to computer science, if you enjoy programming.

4. Challenge yourself. If you took Honors or AP classes in earlier grade levels and enjoyed the challenge, continue taking advanced coursework in 11th and 12th grades. If you did not take advanced coursework in earlier grades, add one or two to your junior and/or senior year schedule.

5. Use summers wisely. Colleges say that fancy summer programs that cost a great deal of money and don’t enhance your education add little, if anything to the college application. On the other hand, taking a college level class for credit to open your eyes to a new academic interest or add depth to an existing one does add value to your college application. So does being gainfully employed or participating in a program that builds substantive skillsets (like laboratory methods or customer relations), or doing an activity that helps meet a specific goal (like earning the President’s Service Award or your Girl Scout Gold Award). These types of en-

deavors strengthen the college application because they strengthen you.

Don’t misunderstand these recommendations. You are not participating in a summer program, taking core coursework or performing an activity in order to ‘get into’ college (although this may well be one of the rewards); you are doing it to help you better understand yourself and what you want to do in college and beyond. Parents, teachers and counselors support your college aspirations by helping you understand and use the power of your high school years.



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

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Students Learn from the Pros

Submitted by Kristen Correll



Performing arts students gather on the Campolindo High School stage during the Feb. 14 event.

Photo Provided

Sixty performing arts students from the Acalanes Union High School District spent a few hours at Campolindo High School Feb. 14, even though they could have had a day off, to participate in a Q & A presentation with Krysta Rodriguez (“SMASH,” “First Date,” “Addams Family”) and Jonathan Bernstein (artistic director of the Performing Arts Project, New York director/artist, and faculty member at NYU). The event was hosted by Campolindo Music Director Mark Roberts, and was sponsored by The Performing Arts Project.

offer this program to students in the AUHSD, saying, “I am always thrilled to have professional performers speak with our students and put real flesh on the concepts we consistently strive to achieve.”

The Performing Arts Project is a not-for-profit organization formed by a group of respected educators and entertainment industry professionals to help prepare the next generation of performers. Bernstein noted that, “This place (The Performing Arts Project) dedicates itself to being a three-week laboratory whereby you have the freedom to be yourself. We truly prize process over product. If

we do our jobs well, I believe there will be better shows on Broadway and on television, and better films in our theaters. But to my mind, the ultimate goal is there will be better friendships and happier marriages.”

The AUHSD has many talented performers and there was no shortage of questions in the hour and half spent with Rodriguez and Bernstein. As the students prepare for their upcoming school performances, many questions focused on how to create the best performance possible for the audience. Rodrigues shared with the group that understanding the characters while making them authentically unique

would be a winning combination. Campolindo High School will showcase “Urinetown the Musical” in March, Miramonte High School will perform “Shrek,” and Acalanes High

School is preparing to do “Guys and Dolls.” (See related story page A1.)

You can learn more about The Performing Arts Project by visiting www.performingartsproject.com.

Name that Gum!

By Cathy Tyson



Gum Tasters share a laugh as they guess flavors and brands during a recent contest at the Lafayette Library Teen Center.

Photo Cathy Tyson

Creative library assistant in charge of teen services, Patrick Brogan, had a unique idea for a gum guessing contest recently. While back in the day food, drink and especially gum was frowned upon in libraries, the Lafayette Library and Learning Center paved the way for respectful noshing. Brogan had a variety of gum flavors and brands separated into numbered baggies; each participating teenager got to chew and savor, however briefly, a piece of gum from each unidentified bag. Whoever guessed

the most correct number of flavors and their corresponding brands would win a 380 count giant tub of Double Bubble gum. In the case of a tie, there would be a bubble blowing contest as a tie-breaker.

The lure of complimentary bubble gum, along with bragging rights proved irresistible. Stride, Orbit, Wrigley’s, Juicy Fruit – if only the students could focus so intently on their respective homework, as analyzing gum. A record and slightly rowdy crowd showed up in the Lafayette Li-

brary’s Teen Center to try their luck. After much chewing, and discarding used gum in Dixie cups, without so much as a palette cleansing drink of water in between rounds, many of the contestants tied. So, as pressure mounted, it all came down to a bubble blowing contest to determine the winner. Young 13-year-old gum connoisseur Anya Weinstein took home the tub of Double Bubble. “She was the only one whose bubble was not only biggest, but also did not pop,” said Brogan.

Acalanes Senior Wins Logo Design Contest

Submitted by Janet Supple



Image provided

Senior Zach Kisner won a logo design contest held in Susan Lane’s Graphic Design class at Acalanes High School to create a new logo for the Nurtury Preschool located on the campus of Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church. Kisner was awarded with a check and a certificate for his efforts. Connie Kelleher, director of the MVPC Nurtury Preschool, said, “Our school enjoyed the opportunity to work with such talented high school students and I am very excited about the new design.” MVPC Nurtury Preschool, is located in Moraga, at 10 Moraga Valley Ln. Information about preschool can be found at www.mvpc.today.org/programs/nurtury-preschool.

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Local Author:

An Orinda Author's Obsession

New novel melds fact and fiction, shines light on silent film star

By Lou Fancher



Orinda author Robert Murillo Photo provided

Long before former stock broker and first time author Robert Murillo penned his debut book, "The Vanity," he was a 9-year-old boy, curling up with a radio. His imagination set aflame by sci-fi broadcasts and tales of quirky time travel, his childhood fever for fiction never diminished. Murillo will read from and discuss his novel at 1 p.m. Saturday, March 1 at Orinda Books. Joining him will be Thomas Gladysz, founder/director of the Louise Brooks Society – and several ghosts.

Yes, ghosts. Because Murillo has been haunted by Louise Brooks, a real-life silent film star, ever since he retired from his job as a Wells Fargo financial advisor in 2009.

"My original retirement plan was to learn to play golf and the piano. I also wanted to travel and write," he said.

Murillo had been a high school English teacher in Richmond for 11 years, prior to moving into the finance sector, so thoughts of writing didn't arrive out of the blue. Suzanne, his wife of 43 years, encouraged his ambition, suggesting a short story he'd written might have legs for a longer journey. Neither of them knew that Brooks, whose films and bobbed haircut inspired a moderate, but rabid fan base that continues to this day, would soon consume Murillo's thoughts.

"I got hooked," Murillo said. "I began to think, what if she wins the negatives back (the real life Brooks sued a photographer to retrieve risqué photos he threatened to release) and doesn't destroy them? And then, what if someone steals them from her?"

Murillo's dreams of shooting par-

faded to occasional outings with buddies; the antique upright piano became a dust bunny haven; travel meant descending their Orinda home's staircase to write for up to ten hours a day in "the dungeon." Murillo said he writes "until I lose my muse," which seemed quaint and even laughable, until he insisted she's real to him. "I call her Molly, because the name seemed to flow. When she takes off, I quit for the day," he said.

"The Vanity" is a blend of fact and fiction. Brooks' allure, jumping out of a 1927 snapshot Murillo saw, amplified itself into the story of Mike Lundy, a writer living in Brooks' former home – but in the year 2011. Time travel allows their lives to overlap and Lundy considers whether or not he should intercept the scandalous images and thus, alter destiny.

Murillo said he loves films, but if given a choice between a stack of DVDs and a stack of books, he'd chose the latter. "When you read, things happen in your imagination," he explained. "It's less the director's point of view and more your own interpretation."

He also chose to self-publish using CreateSpace, because of its close connection with Amazon. "They promote it and make it possible to have the book on your Kindle, your phone, or in your hand," he said. "The ease of buying a book on Amazon led me." It's a statement putting him in an awkward position, he admitted, because of his great devotion to independent bookstores. "As a book buyer, I go to Orinda Books all the time. I think there's room for both."

At Orinda Books, Murillo will speak about his writing process and Gladysz – who Murillo calls "the world expert on Louise Brooks" – will bring information about a movie Brooks made in Berkeley. A Q&A will follow, accompanied by "unbelievable refreshments" Murillo said will arrive courtesy of Suzanne.

After promoting "The Vanity," he plans to return to the dungeon. He'll be listening to Molly and working on "The Thirty-Third Floor," a collection of short stories based on his life as a stockbroker.

Celebrations

Fire and Wings – A Hot Burning Love Story

Two Campo grads celebrate the wedding of their dreams

With palm trees blowing in the breeze, on a sunny Sunday in October 2013, radio personality Heather Brittany and firefighter Brian Rankin tied the knot in a vineyard fête at the elegant Villa de Amore in Temecula, Calif., officiated by fellow firefighter, Steven Marcinko. One hundred and fifty guests traveled to this Southern California viticulture paradise from around the globe to celebrate. The couple placed love letters written to one another into a wooden box containing a bottle of their favorite vintage to be opened on their fifth anniversary.

The Matron of Honor was Jamie Zeimer York, their Moraga friend who has known them individually for over 18 years and re-connected the couple at her wedding. "They are both my best friends and if they were a bottle of wine, the label would read: This wine is the perfect balance of elegance, depth, and sweetness. Its robust flavors are intense, spicy, yet, smooth. Each sip of this complex blend will leave you wanting more, making it clear you are experiencing magic," stated Jamie. The Best Man was Brian's youngest brother, Michael, who kept the guests laughing with his gentle jests directed at his older sibling. Flowers for the tables and bouquets came from the brides' family Lamorinda gardens. "With great friends and four generations of family, it was the most perfect, beautiful, blessed day of our lives!" the happy couple chirped.

Heather and Brian enjoyed an exotic extended honeymoon in Japan and Thailand.



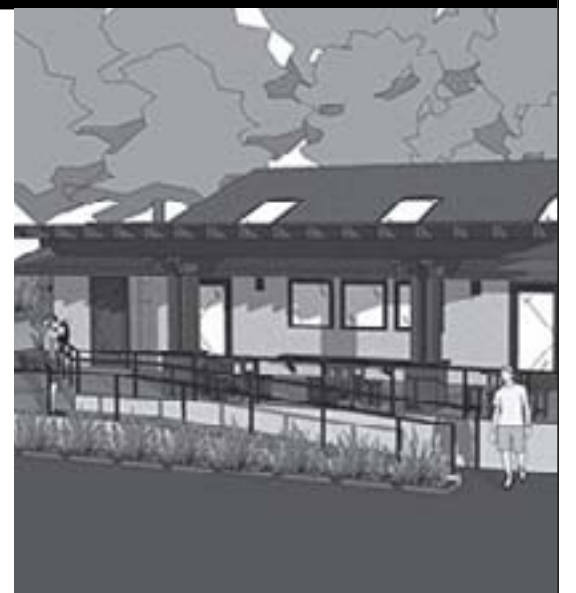
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These Muffins Don't Need Gluten or Dairy to be Yummy!

By Susie Iventosch



Gluten/dairy-free cinnamon streusel muffins Photo Susie Iventosch

There are not many conversations around food these days that don't involve a discussion of gluten allergies or intolerance, and the growing demand for a gluten-free diet. At first, I was somewhat skeptical, thinking it a bit trendy unless there was a real diagnosis of Celiac disease. But more and more people seem to be testing the results of such a diet, and many Lamorinda restaurants now offer gluten-free menu options. Quite a few of the people I've spoken with who've gone off gluten say that

chronic pains have disappeared, or it's improved gastrointestinal issues, or they've had an easier time losing weight, or they just plain feel better.

So what is gluten, anyway? By definition, gluten is a mixture of two proteins present in cereal grains, especially wheat, but not limited to wheat, and it is responsible for the elastic texture of dough made with flour from these grains. People who have Celiac disease have an abnormal immune response to gluten and shouldn't eat it. Those with an intol-

erance or sensitivity to gluten, may feel better by avoiding it.

According to articles on WebMD.com and Harvard Health Publications, it is strongly suggested that a person consult with their doctor before going on a gluten-free diet, especially if they suspect a gluten allergy, or Celiac disease – a disease that causes damage to the small intestine when gluten is ingested. The reason for this is that the diet can skew the results and interfere with a true diagnosis. Also, a gluten-free diet can be lacking in minerals, vitamins and fiber. People who choose to eat a gluten-free diet may want to consult with a nutritionist to make sure they are getting the fiber they're accustomed to and the essential vitamins and minerals they need.

Although I've never had a problem with gluten or wheat, I do love these muffins and would like others, even those with gluten or dairy issues, to be able to enjoy them. So, I have replaced the wheat flour with rice flour and the milk with coconut milk. The recipe turned out nearly identical to the regular recipe, except that the rice flour makes them a little finer in texture. Next time, I am going to try making them with apple juice in place of the milk and see how that works out. Enjoy!

Team Members Pitch In

By Cathy Tyson



David Kleven Photos provided

Whole Foods marketing team members are pitching in their non-work talents for a fundraising drive that runs through the end of March. Professional chalk artist David Kleven, a team member who is responsible for all of the lovely chalk signage throughout the store will be donating some unique handmade chalk art, Lani Lee from Customer Service Support, a youth minister and busy mom of five will be donating healing body work, and Jennifer Spencer, who works in the bakery department will also be contributing her original artwork.



Lani Lee

These are just some of the donations that shoppers can look for and bid on to raise money to go to the Whole Planet Foundation – a charitable non-profit organization that seeks to alleviate poverty through micro-credit loans in communities around the world that supply Whole Foods Markets with products. The grocery store chain covers all of the operating costs of the foundation, so that donations go directly to micro-lending.

Since 2006 they have partnered with professor Muhammed Yunus and the Grameen Bank, co-recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize, to give something back to those in communities who have helped the store succeed, while focusing on world poverty and hunger. The foundation is currently supporting over 330,000 women micro-entrepreneurs in 59 different countries around the world. Giving back via direct micro-credit loans is a way to create constructive economic partnerships with the poor in the developing world. Loans go to a wide variety of businesses like furniture making, tailoring, handicrafts, homemade and bakery made foods, clothing and more.



Jennifer Spencer

For example, Pod from Borikhan in Laos used her loan to enhance her weaving business; she recently purchased a used sewing machine to finish her hand-made woven products that she sells locally. With an average loan size of \$175, extending a relatively small amount of credit can make a world of difference to these women and help them support their families.

"This will offer a new perspective of our team members," says Jane Shafer, marketing and community relations team leader.



Sources:

- <http://www.webmd.com/digestive-disorders/celiac-disease/features/gluten-intolerance-against-grain>
- <http://www.livescience.com/39726-what-is-gluten.html>
- http://www.health.harvard.edu/newsletters/Harvard_Health_Letter/2013/April/considering-a-gluten-free-diet?utm_source=health&utm_medium=pressrelease&utm_campaign=health0413
- <http://www.webmd.com/diet/healthy-kitchen-11/truth-about-gluten>

Gluten/Dairy-Free Cinnamon Streusel Muffins

(Makes 12 muffins)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 2 cups rice flour
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 2/3 cup canola oil
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans or walnuts, or combination
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup lowfat coconut milk, or coconut milk creamer
- 1 teaspoon cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray 12 muffin tins generously with cooking spray.

Mix first four ingredients together in a large bowl. Add oil and stir with a fork or spoon until crumbly. Set aside 1 cup of this mixture along with the chopped nuts for streusel topping.

To main batter, add eggs, coconut milk, vinegar and baking soda. Mix until smooth.

Divide batter evenly in the 12 muffin tins. Then, sprinkle streusel topping over each, completely covering batter with crumb topping.

Bake for approximately 20 minutes, or until tester comes out of muffin centers clean.

These can be stored in the freezer for several weeks.

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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254-3770. www.ststephensorinda.org
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ART

Orinda Library Art Gallery February exhibitors: Kabir Adejare, history makers; Robert Wahrhaftig, portraits; Carole Dwinell, multiple disciplines; ceramic artists of Lafayette Gallery. For more information visit www.orindaartscouncil.org.

Saint Mary's College Museum of Art – four exhibitions now on view. From Swords to Plowshares: Metal Trench Art from World War One; Songs of the Patriot: How Music Helped Win World War One - through original chromolithographic cover illustrations of popular songs, sheet music and lyrics, this exhibition explores how music publishers, songwriters, cover artists, and singers generated support for troops overseas; Malcolm Lubliner: The Automotive Landscape - The noted Bay Area photographer and Los Angeles native received an MFA in photography from Otis Art Institute. This gorgeous and sometimes humorous display reveals his life-long love affair with the car. William Keith: Nature's Tranquil Splendor - A rotating selection of oil paintings from the College collection is always on view. Open 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. For info, call (925)-631-4379 or visit stmrys-ca.edu/museum. Admission: free to K-12 graders; \$5 adults. Free parking.

Town Hall Theatre is pleased to announce a free art exhibit in their gallery at 3535 School Street, Lafayette. "Greeting the New Year," which runs through March 8, is a colorful and energetic exhibit showcasing the work of eight members of the Lamorinda Arts Alliance. Gallery hours are from 3 to 6 p.m. Monday - Friday and for one hour before performances. For more info, contact curator JoAnn Lieberman at olabambola@sbcglobal.net.

With nearly two million veterans in California and a generation of veterans returning from two wars, Contra Costa County Library has launched a timely and relevant project, War Ink, an online exhibit of Iraq and Afghanistan veteran memorial tattoo art. War Ink will launch on Veterans Day 2014, and represents a platform to explore the unfiltered record of war that veterans have documented on their body. Veterans interested in the project are encouraged to contact Jason Deitch directly at jasonadeitch@gmail.com or (510) 593-8423.

The Orinda Arts Council is pleased to announce its 11th Annual Visual Arts Competition! Open to all high school students attending school in the Acalanes Union School District, which includes Acalanes, Campolindo, Miramonte, and Las Lomas High Schools, and/or residing in Orinda, Lafayette, or Moraga. Artists and Awards Reception from 4 to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, March 12 and Exhibit March 1 - 27, Orinda Library Art Gallery. For more information, visit: orindaarts.org or <http://orindaarts.org/schools/high-school-visual-arts-competition>

Lafayette Art Gallery's new exhibition, "Location - Location - Location!" opens March 4; the current exhibit, "Love at first Sight" continues through March 1. "Location - Location - Location!" . . . may be the rule of real estate but what does it mean to the artists at the Lafayette Art Gallery? First, it means the gallery has a new location with almost twice the space, three times the windows and light, and an artistic heritage at The Forge, built on Mt. Diablo Boulevard by the noted metal artist Carl Jennings in 1946. Regardless of the meaning, the gallery is celebrating "Location" with the new exhibit opening March 4 through May 3. A reception will be held from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 14.

Moraga Art Gallery's show "Good Looking: California Revealed" featuring watercolor paintings by George Ehrenhaft and oil paintings by Loreta Landucci continues through March

15. A new show featuring paintings by Kerima Swain and Karen Kramer opens March 19. Meet the artists at the opening night reception from 5 to 7 p.m. Saturday, March 22. The Gallery is open from noon to 5 p.m. Wednesdays - Sundays, and is located at 522 Center St., Rheem Valley Shopping Center, Moraga. For info, visit moragagallery.com.

MUSIC

A celebration of the Pacific Chamber Symphony at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Feb. 28 at the Community Hall, Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Mozart's Concerto for Clarinet in A Minor, Schubert's Symphony No. 5 in B Flat Major and the world premiere of Christopher Caliendo's Sherlock Holmes Suite. For tickets: \$30 seniors; \$35 adults; \$10 students with ID; children under 13 free with adult - from Brown Paper Tickets or call 800-838-3006.

THEATER

The Acalanes Performing Arts Department is proud to present Frank Loesser's "Guys and Dolls," an adaptation of Damon Ruyon's urban tale of gamblers, dancers, and love at 7 p.m. March 6, 7, and 8 in the Performing Arts Center at Acalanes High School 1200 Pleasant Hill Rd. Tickets: \$16 for Adults; \$14 for seniors (60 and older) and students. Tickets may be purchased by going to the Acalanes Webstore: <https://acalaneshs.revtrak.net/tek9.asp?pg=products&grp=38>. (See related story page A1)

Campolindo High School's production of "Urinetown" – said to be brilliantly funny and sure to be a romping good time – will be performed on two weekends, March 13-16 and March 20-23. For tickets and showtimes, visit www.showbiz4u.com. (See related story page A1)

The Miramonte High School production of "Shrek the Musical" will run March 13-16. Tickets and showtimes at www.showtix4u.com. (See related story page A1)

Town Hall Theatre's production, "God of Carnage," runs through March 15 at Town Hall Theatre at the corner of Moraga Road and School Street in Lafayette. For tickets, contact the Town Hall Theatre Box Office at (925) 283-1557, or purchase online at www.TownHallTheatre.com. (See related story page B5).

LECTURE & LITERATURE

Contra Costa Tale Spinners: Keeping the Oral Tradition Alive from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 27. Come one, come all to a wonderful evening of stories. Come tellers new and old with your tales of enjoyment. Come listeners to laugh, cry and clap in delight. Featured performer Nancy Schimmel, followed by "open mic" stories on the fourth Thursday of every month, Gallery Room of the Orinda Public Library, 24 Orinda Way, Orinda. Contact Sally Holzman, (925) 478-8488, or Liz Nichols at liz@liznichols.net. Free. Plenty of safe parking.

Multimedia update on "An Inconvenient Truth." As part of the Wine and Tapas Speaker Series, Wei-Tai Kwok presents the latest facts and findings about the climate crisis from 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday, March 8 at Our Saviors Lutheran Church Friendship Hall, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. As a volunteer climate leader, Wei-Tai was trained by Al Gore in an effort to provide greater public awareness around this issue. Bring a drink or small plate of food to share.

Saint Mary's College Creative Writing Reading Series: Joshua Mohr, author of four novels, including "Damascus," which The New York Times called "Beat-poet cool," will speak at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 12 at the Soda Center, Claeys Lounge. Mohr also wrote "Some Things that Meant the World to Me," one of O Magazine's Top 10 reads of 2009 and a San Francisco Chronicle best-seller, as well as "Termite Pa-

rade," an Editors' Choice on The New York Times Best Seller List. He lives in San Francisco and teaches in the MFA program at USF. His latest novel "Fight Song" was published in February 2013.

Lafayette Physical Therapy is pleased to announce their fourth annual lecture series with information on injury prevention, fitness, and other related topics for the community. Highly educated and skilled physical therapists as well as highly respected doctors and community professionals will share their knowledge with you. More info on Facebook.com/LafayettePT. All Lectures are from 7 to 8 p.m. at 3468 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Suite B110, Lafayette. On Tuesday, March 25 Kevin Wong, DC. Will discuss "Everyone's Feet Tell a Story - Are You Listening?" Seating for lectures is limited: call (925) 284-6150 to RSVP and reserve your seat.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

Spring Soirée to celebrate the extraordinary family and community support of the Moraga Education Foundation from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, March 6 at the Moraga Country Club. This is an open house featuring the talents of Moraga K-12 Students accompanied by a complimentary tasting of local wines and delicious appetizers. Delight in the sights and sounds of our talented Moraga youth, and experience the other incredible programs made possible through MEF support. This event is for parents and community members.

An evening of fashion fun - fashion sewing summer camp open house hosted by Sewnow from 6 to 8 p.m. Thursday, March 6 includes live embroidery demos, previews of summer camp programming, and a free bracelet making 'make and take' activity. Preview the Spring/Summer 2014 fashion colors and trends, and ask expert instructors which summer program is perfect for you. RSVP on the Sewnow Facebook page. Sewnow is located at 3534 Golden Gate Way in Lafayette, with free parking at 3503 Golden Gate Way, and plenty of meter parking. Full camp info available at www.sewnow.com, or call at (925) 283-7396.

Story Hour at Orinda Books from 10 to 11 a.m. every Thursday. All 2-4 year olds with their grown-ups are invited. Cathy G. hosts a delightful and lively hour.

Better Homes and Gardens Mason-McDuffie's Education Foundation is now accepting nominations for outstanding public school teachers for their 2014 grant program. Every year, Better Homes and Gardens Mason-McDuffie Real Estate awards cash grants to outstanding public school teachers in an effort to acknowledge their priceless contributions to our children's future. It is their way of giving back to the communities in which their realtors, owners, managers and staff work and live. To nominate a favorite teacher for 2014, visit www.bhghome.com/education-foundation. The deadline is March 31.

OTHER

For the fifth year, San Francisco's laugh-lovers will have the renewed opportunity to enjoy a champagne-filled night of comedy at the landmark Orinda Theatre at 7 p.m. Friday, March 7. Advance discounted and VIP tickets may be reserved until March 6 using credit cards at the Chamber website - www.OrindaChamber.org - or at First Republic Bank, 224 Brookwood Road. Tickets at the door (if available) will be at increased pricing. Advanced reservations are recommended, so attendees should reserve early.

... continued on next page

Please submit events to:
calendar@lamorinda-weekly.com

Not to be missed

Not to be missed

Not to be missed

OTHER ... continued

St. Mary's College Guild's presents a St. Patrick's Evening from 5:30 to 10 p.m. on Sunday, March 9 at the Soda Center on the Saint Mary's College Campus. The evening includes music, a show and silent auction with a traditional corned beef and cabbage (chicken fettuccini) dinner and wine. A no host bar opens at 5:30 p.m. \$45 per person. Call Billie Jones (925) 254-3645 for reservations. Everyone is welcome.

Workshops on "How to Raise Your Own Chickens" in Lafayette. Topics will include raising young chicks, laying hen maintenance, and sustainable coop construction. Workshops are free and will be held from 1 to 3:30 p.m. on Sundays during March. Reservations are required. Contact: jhkiefer@comcast.net.

Daughters of the Goddess, a Bay Area Women-only Goddess Temple, will be holding its annual celebration of Spring Equinox from 7:30 to 10:30 p.m. Thursday, March 20. East Bay location address upon RSVP. Newcomers: \$15. Call Leilani at (925) 787-9247, email Leilani@DaughtersoftheGoddess.com, or visit www.DaughtersoftheGoddess.com.

Another year of classic films is scheduled for Moraga's New Rheem Theatre. A time-honored movie is slated for the third Wednesday of each month. New for 2014: 1 p.m. starting time. Each film program is introduced by Larry Swindell. Once again, the 8th annual Lamorinda district wide film festival will be held, this year showcasing over 20 films at 7 p.m. on Feb. 28 at Campolindo High School's Performing Art Center. LAUFF (Lamorinda Acalanes Union Film Festival) showcases the best of student films from the community.

The East Bay's Best Bridal Fair will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, March 2 at the 5-star Lafayette Park Hotel. Sip champagne, sample hors d'oeuvres and meet with the finest wedding vendors in the East Bay as you plan that once-in-a-lifetime wedding. Tickets: \$15 at www.EastBayBridal.com.

Join visiting experts for inspiring details of historic shifts in U.S. policy in 2013 and hear testimonies of the power of prayer, advocacy and education, starting at 10 a.m. Sunday, March 2 at the Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Content appropriate for ages 13 years and up. Childcare available by reservation, childcare@LOPC.org by Feb. 28. Questions? Call (925) 812-2496.

For the fifth year, San Francisco's laugh-lovers will have the renewed opportunity to enjoy a champagne-filled night of comedy at the landmark Orinda Theatre on Friday, March 7. Advance discounted and VIP tickets

may be reserved until March 6 using credit cards at the Chamber website - www.OrindaChamber.org - or at First Republic Bank, 224 Brookwood Road. Tickets at the door (if available) will be at increased pricing. Advanced reservations are recommended, so attendees should reserve early.

CSEA Tax Help Day - Get Your Tax Questions Answered. Enrolled Agents, "America's Tax Experts" will be answering tax questions free of charge from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, March 7 at the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce 100 Lafayette Circle, and Women's Initiative for Self Employment 1814 Franklin St., Suite 200, Training Room, Oakland. Please visit the Taxpayer Information Center on www.csea.org, or call 1-800-TAX-PRO-5 for more information.

The Moraga Book Sale will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Moraga Library Saturday, March 8. Proceeds from this sale help support library programs for children, teens, and adults, new materials for the library, and continued Sunday hours. If you have any questions, please contact ckstanley@gmail.com or at (925) 360-0572.

Volunteer opportunity: English tutors needed. The next workshop will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 22 and Saturday, March 29 at the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 4000 Clayton Rd. in Concord. English need not be your first language - no teaching experience is required - we will teach you to be a tutor. You must attend both sessions. There is a nominal fee to cover the training and material costs. Adult volunteers typically give one or two hours per week. For more information visit our website at dvlc.tripod.com. To register call our hotline and leave a message at (925) 685-3881 or e-mail us at DVLC4ESL@gmail.com.

Free Film Screening - "Behind the Orange Curtain" from 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 25, Miramonte High School Theater. Panel Discussion and Q & A will immediately follow the film screening. http://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E45A8A928A02-signup1.

Our creeks, environment, and sewage treatment - How does it all work? Speaker, Michael Scahill, from the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District, will give a free public lecture sponsored by Friends of Orinda Creeks at 7 p.m. Wednesday, March 26 in the Garden Room at the Orinda Library. Learn about: How the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District works, the Sanitary District as a steward to the environment, and how we can prevent sewer overflows. For info, contact Jim Luini, (925) 254-6208.

State-of-the-art "cross-cut" shredding will be done from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, March 29 at 5A Rent-A-Space in the Shred Defense Truck starting at just \$5 per file box. Save your boxes of papers to be shredded

for March. Financial advisors, attorneys, medical offices, and other businesses can meet their legal obligation to dispose of clients' information responsibly, while helping send Lamorinda middle school girls to AAUW's Tech Trek Science and Math Camp. Shredding details: Government Specified Approved Shred, HIPAA Compliant Shredding, TWIC Certified Drivers. Certificates of Destruction and Donation receipts will be provided.

SENIORS

Sons in Retirement Lamorinda Branch 171 meets the first Wednesday monthly at Holy Trinity Culture Center 1700 School St., Moraga. Social hour 11 a.m.; lunch at noon. The after-lunch speaker on March 5 will be Mark Peterson, Contra Costa County district attorney. His Office is responsible for prosecution of crimes committed in Contra Costa. His office also actively supports and develops programs aimed at crime prevention. Mark will provide current updates on his department activities and share some of his experiences as district attorney.

Health matters for Boomers and Beyond: Embracing the Benefits of Living a Balanced Lifestyle. Health experts will be covering various healthy aging topics, as well as offering free mini fitness classes suitable for all levels from 9 a.m. to noon Friday, March 7 at the Orinda Library. Free. Registration begins at 9 a.m. in the Orinda Library auditorium. Coffee, tea and treats will be available. For more info, contact Beth Girshman, Orinda Library, bgirshma@ccclib.org, or call (925) 254-2184, ext 15, or visit www.friendsoftheorindalibrary.org. (See related story page B5)

The Boomers' Journey to 100 Years Young - a workshop to empower and prepare Boomers from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 20 at the Lafayette Library, Art and Science Center. Workshop Topics: Aging Families, Levels of Care Covering Hospital to Home, and Common Estate Planning Pitfalls. Wine and hors d'oeuvres provided. Registration required by Tuesday, March 18. Email Lori Luckenbach at LoriL@EldercareAnswers.com or call (925)324-5985.

The First Friday Forum, "The Village Concept - A New Way of Aging," with Ruth McCahan and Andy Amstutz as presenters will be at 1:30 p.m. March 7 at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. Refreshments served at 1 p.m. in Fellowship Hall followed by the lecture in the Sanctuary. The Village Concept began in 2001. It combines efforts of members with services of local vendors and community organizations to off services to help keep seniors in their own homes either free or at a discount. The Lamorinda Task Force is in Phase II of the development process. Come learn about this new vision for the seniors of Lamorinda.

GARDEN

Lafayette Garden Club March meeting and Plant and Garden Sale will be at 10 a.m. Thursday, March 13 at the Lafayette Christian Church 584 Glenside Dr., Lafayette. Speaker Stephan Andrews, UC Berkeley professor, will discuss "Good Soil, Bad Soil, and Soil," and include a soil testing demonstration. For info, contact cpoetzsch@gmail.com.

Montelindo Garden Club Meeting (third Friday, September through May) will be at 9 a.m. Friday, March 21 at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephens Drive, Orinda. Visitors welcome. Topic: Succulent Jewel Boxes. The speaker will be Patrick Lannen, garden designer and consultant, Flora Grubb Gardens. For info, visit www.montelindogarden.com.

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

St. Patrick's Evening of Dinner, Music, and Show, with Silent Auction

Mc'd by Dick Callahan
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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Miramonte Wins DFAL

Mats, Cougars prepare for NCS Tourney

By Conrad Bassett



Sophomore Sabrina Ionescu started the scoring for Miramonte in the win over Campolindo. Photos Gint Federas

The Diablo Foothill Athletic League girls' basketball season finished last week with Miramonte going undefeated in all 12 games on their way to a 25-1 regular season record. Campolindo finished in third place for an 8-4 DFAL record and 16-10 overall.

The North Coast Section seeding meeting was held on Feb. 23 and both Miramonte and Campolindo qualified as high seeds, No. 1 and No. 3, respectively. Both teams earned first round byes and will play at home on Friday, Feb. 28.

In their last week of DFAL play, the Mats spoiled Senior Night at Campolindo on Feb. 18 by beating the Cougars 80 to 45.

Campo junior Ashley Dubrasich started the scoring for the Cougars with a lay-up but Miramonte came right back behind sophomore Sabrina Ionescu's runner and two 3-pointers in the period. The Mats never looked back, pushing the lead to 37-16 by halftime. Ionescu finished with 23 points and led all scorers.

The Mats completed their perfect DFAL season on their own Senior Night, Feb. 21, beating Acalanes at home 72-21. Senior Breanna Alford had 23 points and 14 rebounds to lead the team. Senior Megan Reid had

eight steals to go with her 11 points and senior Mariah Seals added 17 points and eight assists.

The Dons finished at 4-8 in the DFAL and 11-15 overall.

After sweeping DFAL play, Miramonte is poised to win the NCS

tournament. Miramonte head coach Kelly Sopak says his team is ready for the tournament. "This is the best time of the year for the players, coaches and parents," he noted. "All the hard work gets revealed in the next 4-6 weeks." ... continued on page C2



Senior Breanna Alford had 23 points in the win over the Dons.

Campolindo Wins DFAL

All three Lamorinda programs reach NCS

By Michael Sakoda



Andrew Zolintakis

Photo Gint Federas

Campolindo, Miramonte and Acalanes wrapped up DFAL play last week with two rivalry games on the schedule before opening the first round of the NCS playoffs.

The Campolindo Cougars (20-6, 11-1 DFAL) had payback on their mind. On Feb. 1, Miramonte (15-11,

6-6 DFAL) handed Campo its first and only loss in league play 69-68 on a game winner from Drew Anderson. On Feb. 18, the Cougars hosted and routed the Mats, 73-52.

Miramonte scored the first four points of the contest, but back-to-back layups from Andrew Zolintakis saw

the score tied. Later, the Cougars went on a 16-3 run, taking a 28-12 lead.

"Last time we played, it was a similar game, and they came back and beat us in the second half," said Cougars' coach Matt Watson. "So the effort level on our side was not going to let up this time."

Five Cougars hit at least one three-pointer.

"They shot the ball really well in the first half," said Miramonte's coach Drew McDonald. "As we stretched the zone, they were able to get inside."

Campolindo's Chris Hansen, who was held to just four points in the first contest, finished with 16 points, seven rebounds and two blocks.

... continued on page C4

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Campolindo Boys Advance to NCS Soccer Semifinals

By Marissa Harnett



Preston Kilwien recorded in an assist against Las Lomas.



Photos Gint Federas Michael Samaniego (#27) had the second goal of the game against Las Lomas.

Division II high school soccer concludes this Saturday at the NCS championship match. The only Lamorinda boys' team still alive in the bracket, No. 2 Campolindo, is on track to the finals. They face No. 3 Dublin in tonight's semifinal, 7 p.m. at Campo. Acalanes also qualified for NCS as the No. 13 seed. They fell in the first round to Hercules.

After a disappointing second place finish last year, this year's league champion, Campo, has their eyes on the prize. "I'd be lying if I said our goal wasn't to win it all," admitted head coach Shane Carney. "We believe we have a good shot at it if we're able to finish our chances and minimize mistakes in our defensive third of the field," he said.

Campo's journey to the semis has been decisive. Although both games have had just a two goal differential, the Cougars dominated the play. On

Feb. 19, Campo shut out No. 15 Las Lomas, 2-0.

While the match was competitive, most of the action was at Campo's goal. After more than 10 minutes of anxious play, junior Preston Kilwien drilled a big kick from the midfield straight at goal. Senior co-captain Gus Keeble got his head on it to find the top left of the net.

With eight minutes left in the first half junior Michael Samaniego fired off a huge shot from the midfield. Hard, low, and fast, it penetrated the crowd around the goal and found the back of the net. The second half remained scoreless and Campo won, 2-0.

Carney considered Las Lomas a tough first-round opponent and acknowledged that the Cougars were not at peak performance. "We didn't play our best game, but we put the effort in to earn a shutout and took care of some of our chances on goal," he said.

On Feb. 23, Campo faced No. 7 Bishop O'Dowd. Historically strong, O'Dowd came out fighting and defending well. However, Campo utilized their strengths to bypass the O'Dowd defense. All three Campo goals were scored with headers. At 13 minutes junior Ryan Donat scored the first of his two goals.

Two minutes into the second half, senior co-captain Will Simmons whipped one of his running throw-ins to reach the front of the goal where Donat was waiting to net his second goal. Two minutes later senior Zach Taylor headed Campo's third and final goal off another Simmons' throw-in. O'Dowd scored their one and only goal in the last 10 minutes, ending the game, 3-1.

If the bracket plays out according to the top seeding, the finals would be an intense showdown between

Campo and No. 1 Ygnacio Valley. Last year the two teams faced off in an extremely physical semifinal match in which Campo came out on top. The Cougars had been down by two goals until the last four minutes when they scored twice to tie and then won it in sudden death overtime.

"I think it'd be fair and exciting for the two of us to meet up in the final if we can both progress through the other stages of NCS," Carney said. "Our game last year in the semifinals against YV was probably the most exciting game I've ever been a part of," he added.

To get the finals though, Campo needs to first make it past No. 3 Dublin tonight. Having won one and tied one during the regular season, Campo will have their work cut out for them.

Acalanes:

After a slow start to the season,

the Dons improved as the season progressed to earn third place in DFAL and the No. 13 spot in the tournament. They fell in the first round, 3-2, to No.4 Hercules.

Acalanes held a 1-0 lead at the half. Despite battling hard in the second half, the Dons ceded their lead and the game. "The Acalanes players performed well showing tremendous intensity, passion and outstanding character," said head coach Paul Curtis.

With a decidedly young team this year, the Dons focused on rebuilding. "Constant progress was made in training on individual and team development and improvement," Curtis said. "The program is in good shape going forward as there will be over 50 players returning to the program next season."

Acalanes finished their season 5-5-2 in league (7-12-4 overall).

Miramonte Wins DFAL

... continued from page C1



Megan Reid eight steals to go with her 11 points against the Dons.

Photos Gint Federas



Senior Ariel Padua goes up for the shot.



Ashley Dubrasich looks to hit the free throw.

Although Miramonte will host the winner of the Hercules/Pinole Valley game, their biggest rival, Bishop O'Dowd was disqualified from the NCS tournament because they played one more game than allowed under the rules.

"I am stunned about Bishop O'Dowd," Sopak said. "We wanted to earn the right to face them again."

Without O'Dowd, there is a chance for an All-Lamorinda NCS final. Campolindo begins the tournament run against the winner of the Petaluma/Sonoma Valley game.

"Our team is excited to be in the playoffs. That was our goal from the beginning of the season," said Campolindo's head coach Art Thoms. "The girls have big dreams."



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Girls' Soccer Strong in NCS Playoffs

By Scott Wu

With the competitive regular season finished, Lamorinda girls' soccer programs look to earn the North Coast Section title. Miramonte, who finished 13-2-1, won the DFAL championship and earned the No. 1 seed. Campolindo, 12-3-1 on the season, followed closely behind as the No. 3 seed. Both teams advanced to the semifinals to be played tonight. Despite rivaling both Miramonte and Campolindo in thrilling regular season games, Acalanes did not advance to the 16-team playoff.

In the first round on Feb. 19, Miramonte cruised to an 8-0 victory against No. 16 Moreau Catholic.

"We played great soccer, and took care of the ball on every possession," said head coach Mohamed Mohamed.

Mohamed named three standout players who have contributed extensively to the team chemistry. Goalkeeper Mali Tehaney, center-back Jane Fessenden, and Megan Reid each add a key component to the at-

tack. Mohamed said Tehaney is the centerpiece to the backfield while Fessenden is the backbone of the defense. At forward, Reid is a key piece of the offense. Each played well in the first round victory.

Moving on to the next round, the Matadors played No. 8 Alhambra, beating the Bulldogs 4-1. Reid recorded two of the goals, while Tehaney and Fessenden controlled the tempo of the game defensively. Under their leadership, the team can focus on planning ahead. "The strong senior class always plans the next possession," Mohamed explained.

Miramonte will take on the No. 4 Las Lomas Knights in a semifinal game Feb. 26 at 7 p.m.

Campolindo, who was matched up against No. 14 Tennyson, also triumphed 5-1.

While content with his win, head coach Ernesto Silva said that it is important to stay focused. "We need to make sure we stay in the moment and

not allow the excitement to overwhelm us," he added. "It is key that we maintain our composure and focus for the duration of the tournament."

The Cougars did just that in their next contest, as they secured their spot in the semifinals with a victory over Northgate.

Silva said his team knew what to expect against Northgate, their second round match-up. "We played Northgate earlier in the season, we knew that they are well coached and have the ability to challenge us in all aspects of the game," he said.

Campolindo's squad narrowly defeated the Broncos by a score of 2-1.

The Cougars have a specific strategy for their playoff run. "We will need to establish the pace and energy that suits our game early on; it is best if we can force the opposition to make the adjustments," Silva explained.

The Cougars travel to face No. 2 Bishop O'Dowd on Feb. 26 at 7 p.m.



Mali Tehaney

Photos Gint Federas



Hailey Lyon



Jane Fessenden

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Campolindo Wins DFAL

... continued from page C1



Buster Souza had 18 points against the Mats.

The Mats couldn't get into an offensive rhythm. Drew Anderson, who's averaging 20 points and 10 rebounds a game, was held to just one field goal.

The Mats were paced by 15 points, three rebounds and three assists from Joey Goodreault, but even he struggled, committing five of the team's 13 turnovers.

For Campo, Zolintakis racked up 16 points, four rebounds and seven assists and Matt O'Reilly added 14 points to help lock up the school's third DFAL title in the last five years.

Just 48 hours later, the Mats suffered their fourth

straight DFAL loss at home to Acalanes (15-11, 5-7 DFAL) 49-43.

Acalanes' execution won them the contest.

With a minute to go in the first half, the score was 20-19 in favor of the Dons, when Buster Souza pulled in his seventh rebound of the half, threw an outlet pass to Brett Merrill, who found Ross Teichman under the basket to lay it in. Souza stole the subsequent inbound pass and scored two of his 10 first half points, giving Acalanes a 24-19 lead.

With just over five minutes to play in the fourth quarter, Jackson Wegener hit a deep three to bring the Mats to

within four, 42-38, but it wasn't enough.

Souza finished with 18 points, 14 rebounds and 5 blocks. Zack Kisner added nine points to go with his 4 assists and Matt Thomas finished with eight points.

All three Lamorinda teams were selected for the NCS Division III playoffs this year, and had opening round games Feb. 25.

No. 3 Campolindo hosted Albany, while No. 5 Acalanes tried to defend their home court against San Marin, and No. 6, Miramonte looked to steal one at Analy. Follow @lamorindasports on Twitter for score reports.



Chris Hansen had 16 points.

Photos Gint Federas



Zack Kisner had nine points and four assists against the Mats.



Drew Anderson goes up for the shot.

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Lamo Varsity Rugby Showcases Talent at Cal

Submitted by Steve Peterson



The Lamorinda Varsity Rugby team at Witter Field in Strawberry Canyon at Cal.

Photo provided

The Lamorinda Rugby Football Club's varsity team defeated North Bay 38-10 on Feb. 15. The match served as a "Curtain Raiser" for the Cal Bears who took on the University of British Columbia right afterwards. Cal also won its match 33-22.

The game was particularly special for head coach Ned Anderson, a Cal Hall of Fame rugby player and coach.

Winter Games Continue for Locals

Submitted by Leslie Ryder



Sierra Ryder earned second place in the Western Region Elite Tech National Qualifier Photo provided

While the Olympics have finished, the competition is just heating up for four local ski racers who qualified for the Regional and National Ski Championships.

Sierra Ryder, a senior at Miramonte, qualified for U18 Nationals to be held Feb. 28 through March 6 in Colorado.

Ryder took the Silver in U18 Slalom, Bronze in U18 Giant Slalom at the Western Region Elite Tech National Qualifier in February. Ryder will race against the top 45 U18 ladies in

the country Brooke Norton, a junior at Campolindo, Lisa Rose Longton, a junior from Orinda, and Will Leonard, a senior at Campolindo, all qualified for the Western Region Junior Championships that will take place March 4-9 at Squaw Valley.

Norton won the gold in the Super G Western Region qualifier on Feb. 6. She will race against the top Western Region Ski racers.

Karate Athletes Bring Home Medals

Submitted by Thomas Westernoff



From left: Kai Thomas (silver in kata), Jared Avenell (silver in kata and bronze in kobudo), Justin Simpson (gold in kumite), Logan Simpson (bronze in Kumite), Trevor Simpson (gold in kata and bronze in kumite), Arleen Thomas (gold in Kobudo, gold in Kumite and bronze in Kata), Morgan Langstaff (gold in Kumite and bronze in Kata), and coach Sensei Thomas Westernoff. Photo provided

Seven members from The Karate & Fitness Place USA returned home from the West Coast Karate Championships held in Yuba City on Feb. 16. Hundreds of athletes from all over Northern California came to participate in this event. Participants ranging from 4- to 65-year-

old competed in beginner through advanced levels.

Lamorinda athletes brought home 12 medals in Kata (Forms), Kobudo (weapons) and Kumite (sparring).

LMSC Sends Athletes to Play at Next Level

Submitted by Corinna Sassano



From left: Emily Orwig (Campo), Cal Poly; Jane Fessenden (Miramonte) MIT; Jessika Martinez, Oregon State; Julia Reshke (Campo), Georgetown; Lindsay Wilson (Campo), Emory; Mali Tehaney (Miramonte), UC Davis. Photo Brian Fessenden

The LMSC G95 team has players talented enough to play at the collegiate level. While a few athletes are still contemplating their next step, several players have already signed Letters of Intent with schools.

Campolindo sends Emily Orwig to Cal Poly, Julie Reshke to Georgetown and Lindsay Wilson to Emory. Miramonte sends Jane Fessenden to MIT and Mali Tehaney to play at UC Davis.

Lamorinda Wins Soccer State Cup

Submitted by Paul Pitt



Back row, from left; Isla burch, Katherine Liu, Anna Pitt, Avalon Scheone, Monique Zarling, Ivy Souza, Coach Pedro Osorio, Yasmeen Idao, Katherine Dunn, Sierra Harley, Jamie Bishop; Front row: Alex Bonardi, Celia Campo, Christine Massoni, Caitlin McDonagh, Holland Ericson, Mallory Louis, Juliet Adams. Photo provided

The Lamorinda United U12 Navy Girls soccer team capped a great season with an exciting 2-1 victory over highly ranked COSC 01 girls' Red team from Fresno to win the State Cup Final.

The game started at a fast pace with both teams playing high level soccer. Midway through the first half Lamorinda took the lead when a corner by Anna Pitt was headed off the line by a COSC defender, only to be headed

back into the goal by defender Monique Zarling. COSC leveled a few minutes later on a fast break attack. Just before half time a great defensive play by Avalon Scheone resulted in a pass to Katherine Liu whose powerful run took her past three defenders and then the keeper for what proved to be the winning goal.

In the final minute a great save by goal keeper Mallory Louis preserved the victory for the Lamorinda girls.

Dons are DFAL Champs

Submitted by Karen Elliott



From Left: Sean Hisaki (Coach), Maya Canonizado, Allyson Anderson, Allison Merrill, Emily Attiyeh, Delila Tesfai, Melissa Elliott, Naomi House, Bella Denny, Cara Wolfe, Carly Porep, Emilie Malinovsky, Maddy Ponzo, Sabina Patel, Sophie Ross, Victor Silva (Coach), and Asiana Tam. Photo Karen Elliott

The Acalanes junior varsity girls' basketball team defeated Miramonte on Feb. 21 to end the season with a perfect 12-0 record and the DFAL league championship. Overall, the team notched a 20-6 record, including a second place finish in the Irv-

ington Holiday Invitational Tournament in Fremont in December. They lost to Bishop O'Dowd in the championship. The young team includes five sophomores and 10 freshmen.

Mats JV Wrestling Wins on the Mat

Submitted by Johnny Santos



From Left: Jared Deloso, Joseph Santos, Alec Gates, Max Han, Max Fleming, and Joseph Baie. Photos provided Johnny Santos

The Miramonte junior varsity wrestling team competed in the JV North Coast Championships at Dougherty Valley on Feb. 8. The team was led by freshman Max Fleming who won all four of his matches en route to the first place medal in the 106-lbs division. Other medalist include: sophomore Jared Deloso who earned sixth place at 182-lbs, sophomore Joseph Santos who earned fourth place at 120-lbs, freshman Alec Gates who earned sixth place at 132-lbs, junior Max Han who earned fifth place at 132-lbs, and freshman Joseph Baie who earned fifth place at 170-lbs.



Max Fleming

Santa Maria Wins in Overtime

Submitted by Teresa Juergens



Top row, from left: Ryan Miller, Nolan Brown, Sam Foster, Nick Foster, Leo Korsunsky, Cole Wolfe, Andy Schrittwieser, Elijah Hodges and Tim Tague; Bottom row: Ethan Kohler, Fletcher Simon, Jackson Hegarty, Nicolai Bell, Brendon McCulloch, Sam Ross, Kenny Kostermans, Donovan Davidson and Benjamin Chinn. Photo provided

The Santa Maria fourth grade National team was cheered on to a 25-22 victory in overtime during its last game on Feb. 8 by the Miramonte freshman team.

Making the Cut

Submitted by Dax Lowry



Daria Torba Regina Kong Sophia Kong Photos provided

The USA Synchronized Swimming program announced its 2014 U.S. 13-15 year olds and 12 and Under National Squads on Feb. 19. Three Lamorinda athletes made the cut. Regina Kong of Moraga and Daria Torba of Orinda qualified for the 13-15 year olds' team. Sophia Kong of Moraga made the 12 and Under team.

Acalanes Senior Night

Submitted by Kristin Kisner



Photo provided

Acalanes students celebrated the seniors on their basketball team by showing their support in a big way. Acalanes walked away with a win over Dublin after honoring Matt Thomas, Kyle Kinnear, Ross Tiechman, Zack Kisner, Brett Merrill and Buster Souza.


CYO Champs Advance

Submitted by Michael Lenahan



Back Row, from left: Coach Michael Lenahan, Mark McCurdy, Ryan Fritch, Hunter Clarke, Ryan Lenahan, Jake Crumbaugh, Coach Julie Clarke; front row: Kyle Sintchak, Rex Curtiss, Kellen Clancy Photo provided

St. Monica's sixth grade American boys' basketball team beat St. John Vianney 54-36 on Feb. 16 to win the West Diablo League Championship. The champions finished the season with a record of 18-2. The team qualified for the Oakland Diocese playoffs.

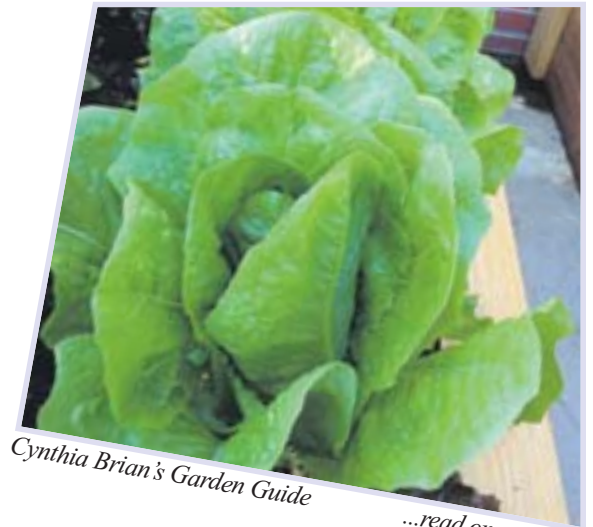


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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 07 Issue 26 Wednesday, February 26, 2014



Cynthia Brian's Garden Guide

...read on page D8

Disaster Preparedness Isn't Only About Storing Bottled Water

Block by block, communities ready themselves

By Chris Lavin

Nine-year-old Sean Swanson of Canyon has it down. What would he do if a wildfire was suddenly sweeping up the canyon?

"Take the important documents," he said firmly, "and go to the staging area." He is asked if he knows what important documents are, or where they are kept. His mother breaks into his detailed response regarding exactly what, exactly where.

"We've talked this. We have meeting spots," says Sonya Wilson, mother to Sean and Orion. "We've practiced it." But then Sean broke in: "And then I would get the pictures, and my fish, and my mealworms. And watch after my brother."

"No," 6-year-old Orion replies. "I will look after you."

We are all told repeatedly that it's coming. "The Big One." Maybe a nearby fire, instead of an earthquake. We're overdue for the quake, and the dry weather has the worried among us looking at tinder-like brush piles beneath bay trees on slopes. Residents are told to prepare an earthquake kit, order pharmaceuticals ahead, make sure to have a flashlight and shoes by your bed. We've heard it all. And we're tired. We're either prepared or we're not. Most of us fall into the latter category.

According to the California Emergency Management Agency, fewer than 20 percent of Californians are prepared to last relatively comfortably for three days without power and water, although Northern California is slightly more prepared. The



Sean Swanson, left, and his brother Orion hold up the disaster preparedness signs they have ready to post outside their house in the aftermath of an emergency. The signs are provided through the fire department with a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Photo Chris Lavin

agency names "citizen preparedness" as the weakest link in the chain of disaster readiness. In the Lamorinda area, with its narrow, winding roads and remote neighborhoods, a big disaster will likely leave hundreds, if not thousands, of pockets

inaccessible to emergency crews – and to public works crews able to clear felled trees, providing access to services and stores and hospitals.

...continued on page D4

GLENN AND KELLIE BEAUBELLE

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MORAGA ~ COMING SOON

This desirable single level home with approx. 4,152 sq. ft. sits on an almost $\frac{3}{4}$ -acre lot at the end of a cul de sac. Its many classic features include a bright and open floor plan with beautiful detailing throughout its four bedrooms plus office, four baths, master bedroom suite wing, amazing gourmet eat-in kitchen with adjoining family room, garage space for three cars including finished one-car garage with cable and electrical wiring ideal for home gym or workshop, and grand entry with direct view to the beautifully landscaped backyard, vine-covered arbor and fountain. Offered at \$2,095,000



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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	3	\$690,000	\$2,350,000
MORAGA	3	\$450,000	\$915,000
ORINDA	3	\$849,000	\$2,110,000

Home sales are compiled by CalREsource, 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

112 Haslemere Court, \$690,000, 3 Bdrms, 1638 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 1-28-14;
Previous Sale: \$248,500, 05-03-88
1986 Marion Court, \$925,000, 4 Bdrms, 3040 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 1-22-14
15 Northridge Lane, \$2,350,000, 5 Bdrms, 5902 SqFt, 1987 YrBlt, 1-17-14;
Previous Sale: \$2,200,000, 10-19-00

MORAGA

1040 Bollinger Canyon, \$450,000, 1515 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 1-28-14
1515 Camino Peral #C, \$460,000, 2 Bdrms, 1428 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 1-27-14;
Previous Sale: \$140,000, 08-04-88
1743 Spyglass Lane, \$915,000, 3 Bdrms, 2828 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 1-16-14;
Previous Sale: \$340,000, 05-02-86

ORINDA

109 Lombardy Lane, \$849,000, 3 Bdrms, 1392 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 1-22-14;
Previous Sale: \$850,000, 07-29-13
38 Los Altos Road, \$2,110,000, 3 Bdrms, 3799 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 1-24-14;
Previous Sale: \$1,330,000, 09-14-12
20 Muth Drive, \$1,002,000, 4 Bdrms, 2202 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 1-17-14;
Previous Sale: \$863,500, 11-26-08



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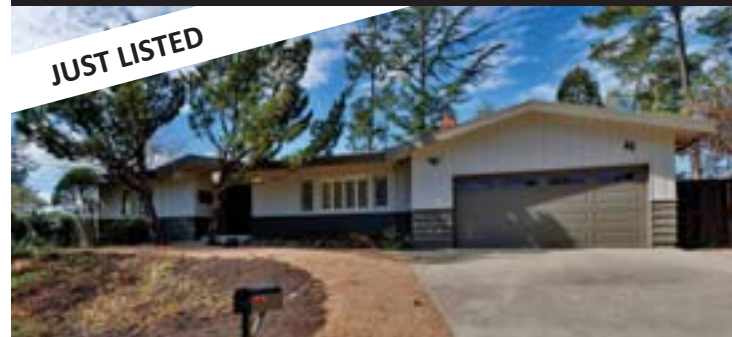


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Disaster Preparedness

...continued from page D1



Contractor Rolland Mathers of Shelter Belt, Inc., points out some fire ladder hazards to EBMUD's Mark Silva in Canyon.

Photos Chris Lavin

For it's when the ground settles, the work begins. "That's the scary part," said Jonathan Goodwin, the community appointed fire-and-disaster chief of the small community of Canyon, west of Moraga. "People don't think about what happens after." (See related story on page B2.)

People in Canyon, as in other neighborhoods in Lamorinda, are thinking about those moments "after." The United States Geological Survey offers interactive maps (www.usgs.gov and search shakemaps) that show that Moraga, for instance, sits mainly on mud. "You can expect landslides and closed roads," Goodwin said.

Yet the key to getting through any disaster, he added, is to consider the concept of "reciprocal altruism." It is a concept that is widely accepted in biological fields, one in which organisms help each other to keep them all alive and healthy. Using in part an elaborate brochure funded by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, called "Map Your Neighborhood," and available through the fire department, Canyon and other neighborhoods are beefing up their awareness of who lives where, who has pets, who might have an elderly relative, or who might have children home alone after school.

"Here in Canyon, we know most of that already,"

Goodwin said. But things change all the time, he added. Tenants change, people have babies, elderly parents move in or people become incapacitated.

The MYN brochure outlines nine steps to take after a disaster, and is intended for neighborhoods that

are already organized or attempting to organize. Its first step: Look after your family, but then "reciprocal altruism" takes over. The idea is to be self-sustaining after any type of disaster. The brochure includes "Help" and "OK" signs to hang outside your house to let neighbors know your status.

As the brochure says, "In a disaster, your neighbors are your closest sources of help."

People have different abilities," Goodwin said. Some people can look after children, some will know how to approach a collapsed structure, some will know CPR.

"That's the critical thing," Goodwin said. "If you have a person with a crushing injury, or someone with a heart attack, and emergency services can't get in, you need to know how to get that person out."

In other words, one must know who has a chainsaw, or a four-wheel drive.

"It's a starting point," Goodwin says about the brochures. The next step is to get to know the neighbors, so that reciprocal altruism can take over when disaster strikes.

"Everybody loves a potluck," Goodwin said. So maybe we should all plan to have one.



Residents from Canyon meet at Canyon School to discuss plans for reacting to an emergency.



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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for March

"It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade." — Charles Dickens,

Wake up! The days are getting longer and warmer. Nature is stretching and coming out of its winter slumber. Our flowerbeds are beckoning. The fruit tree buds are bursting with color (some a bit too early) while daffodils and tulips carpet the terrain. Soon it will be springtime when the season of outdoor chores officially begins. Even with the six inches of rain of mid-February, a drought is imminent. Be water conscious and conservative. March is the month to aerate, dethatch, reseed, replant, or replace lawns. With water consumption as a major issue of all lawns, consider planting less thirsty turf such as Buffalograss, fescues, zoysia grass, or Bhaia grass as alternatives. St. Patrick's Day reminds us that green is the color of the month as we hope for the greening of our landscapes and hillsides.

... continued on page D10



Cymbidiums will rebloom when placed outdoors in a northeast location, or buy these orchids in bud at local outlets.

Photo Cynthia Brian



Valerie Durantini Presents

Spacious contemporary Townhome tucked away on a cul-de-sac that opens to the bike trail. Enjoy the Country Club lifestyle which includes swimming, tennis and golf as well as the clubhouse with restaurant. Close to the Moraga farmers market, hiking, biking and award winning schools. This 2291 sq. ft. Plan 4 home has 4 bedrooms and 3.5 bathrooms features a serene master suite with vaulted ceilings and updated master bath with skylight; a lovely front patio area for outdoor entertaining; an updated eat-in kitchen with granite slab counters, stainless appliances and recessed lighting; a gracious living room with brick fireplace and sliders that open to back deck; and a dramatic dining room which opens to private deck area. Hardwood floors throughout the common areas.

The fourth bedroom has a private full bath and its own balcony and could also be used as family room or studio. Moraga school district for K-8 Acalanes school district for high school. Visit valeriedurantini.com for more photos and information.

109 Westchester Street in the Moraga Country Club



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CalBRE# 01376796

The positive momentum continues to build in our local housing market. Inventory remains low but it will not stay that way forever. If you or someone you know is looking to buy or sell remember..... **VAL BRINGS VALUE**

East Bay Luxury Home Sales Jump 17% in January, According to New Report

Submitted by Steve Maita

The East Bay's luxury housing market began the new year with a bang as sales in January were up sharply from a year ago and the median sale price rose as well, according to a new report by Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, the Bay Area's leading provider of luxury real estate services. The figures are based on Multiple Listing Service data of all homes sold for more than \$1 million last month in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

A total of 90 luxury homes sold last month, up from 77 transactions in January 2013, a 17 percent increase. High-end sales were down from December's 160 units, although it's not unusual to have a drop from year-end closings. Meanwhile, the median sale price of a luxury home in January rose to \$1,325,000, up 6 percent from a year ago when the median stood at \$1.25 million and up 1.1 percent from the previous month when it was \$1,310,500. There were nine sales of more than \$2 million in January, up from eight at the same time last year. Homes also sold faster on average than they did the previous month and a year ago.

"The East Bay's luxury housing market began the new year right where it left

off last year with very strong sales gains and a solid increase in prices," said Rick Turley, president of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. "Well qualified buyers see good value in the local luxury market and continue to push sales and prices higher."

Turley said the one hurdle facing the luxury market in the East Bay – as well as throughout much of the Bay Area – is a serious shortage of homes for sale. Inventory of available homes is down more than 50 percent from a normal market, and there aren't enough properties to meet the tremendous demand from buyers.

"Homeowners who have even kicked around the idea of selling should think seriously of jumping into the market now," he said. "Real estate has always been a business of supply and demand, and right now this is very much a seller's market. Savvy homeowners who sell now are in a very favorable position."

The *East Bay Luxury Housing Market Report* is a monthly report by Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, a specialist in high-end real estate sales with nine East Bay offices serving Berkeley, Castro Valley, Danville, Fremont, Oakland, Piedmont, Orinda, Pleasanton, and Walnut Creek. For more information, call (925) 771-5285.

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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for March

... continued from page D8

- **CHECK** out Renee's Garden online catalogue for the best seeds from their trial gardens. I'm experimenting with their Scatter Garden Canisters and will plant the cover crop mix this summer. Visit www.reneesgarden.com.
- **SAVE** rain water by positioning wine barrels or garbage cans under drain spouts. Use a hose to water garden. Don't use roof water for edibles.
- **ENRICH** your soil by making your own compost utilizing kitchen scraps, lawn clippings, shredded leaves, coffee grinds, and other plant matter. Spread a layer of two inches to improve your soil, maintain moisture, deter weeds, and feed your plants.
- **LOOK** for bird nests in low hedges and under shrubs before pruning or trimming. Most nests are hidden and this is the time that moms are laying eggs.
- **BUY** in bloom cool-growing cymbidium orchids native to the subtropical highlands of Southeast Asia. After the last flower dies, cut the spike to the base. Cymbidiums will re-bloom the following year when kept in cool temperatures with bright light.
- **SOW** a number of diverse species of nectar rich plants that will bloom at different times of the year to attract bees to work and pollinate. Suggestions include aster,

cosmos, gilia, linaria, nepeta, tithonia, monarda, coreopsis, lantana, and lavender.

- **EXPERIMENT** with growing your own gourmet mushrooms at home. Check out the five-pound bag selections priced at \$29.95 each at www.sowtrueseed.com and start enjoying ready-to-fruit inoculated varieties of pearl oyster, lion's mane, red reishi, and shitake.

- **WARD** off cancer by planting and consuming parsley, artichokes, blueberries, bok choy, broccoli, kale, lemons, strawberries, red grapes, and tomatoes.

- **AERATE** lawns and leave the plugs on the grass to feed the soil. It's best to do this when nights are still dewy as warmer climate dehydrates the plugs.

- **SPRINKLE** laundry detergent on mushrooms to eliminate the fungi.
- **WANT** instant no fuss made raised beds? Buy galvanized steel tubs meant as horse or cow troughs. Add rocks as drainage, good potting soil, plant. Voila! You won't have to worry about gopher invasions and these troughs will save on water.
- **PICK** up a pot of shamrocks, also known as oxalis, and get your Irish on. Oxalis blooms in yellow, pink, and white and can be invasive if let loose in the landscape.
- **PLANT** sweet peas, flowering shrubs, dianthus, pansies, and leafy greens.
- **RECYCLE** bricks, rocks, and pavers to keep your landscaping budget in check.



Don't forage for mushrooms unless you are an expert! Buy. Photos Cynthia Brian



A bright, colorful bloomer is the purple lilac vine (*Hardenbergia violaceae*) which is great on fences.

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Your friendly neighborhood arborists Darren and Lew Edwards

IT'S TIME TO PRUNE YOUR PINE TREES

With current winter drought conditions home owners need to make sure to water their trees too. Lack of water brings bugs and diseases. Proper pruning is also essential this time of year for your Pine trees. Bark Beetles can infest your tree when it is weak from lack of water or due to sap that comes from pruning in the spring and summer; these beetles are dormant during the fall and winter months. Beetles also can carry diseases from tree to tree, and the only way to stop them is to prevent them by having a healthy tree in the first place. So don't wait until it's too late have a complete inspection by a Certified Arborist at Advance Tree Service

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- **MIX** your coffee grinds and tea leaves in water to give acid loving plants a jolt of energy. Azaleas, rhododendrons, roses, fuchsias, camellias, and gardenias enjoy a sip of java.
- **HARVEST** tangerines, lemons, and oranges that have not been frost bitten for an extra boost of vitamin C to fight off the flu.
- **CUT** sprigs of purple lilac vine (*Hardenbergia violacea*) for indoor enjoyment. This vine is grown well on fences and screens.
- **SALVAGE** household items that you don't want any more and repurpose them for the garden. Old doors can be made into screens, a metal chair can become a trellis for a vine, paint a dresser to use as a potting bench. Be creative.
- **DOWNLOAD** garden apps. These recommended apps range in price from \$0.99-\$4.99 are available from the iTunes store: Armitage's Greatest Perennials and Annuals; Foolproof Plants for Small Gardens; and Purdue Tree Doctor.
- **CHECK** that all of your tools are sharpened, cleaned, and ready to get to work.
- **ADMIRE** the bark on trees even as the leaves unfurl.
- **VISIT** the Ruth Bancroft Gardens in Walnut Creek, a premier dry garden of water conserving specimens specializing in succulents, agaves, aloes, cactus, and a collection of plants from around the world that thrive with minimal irrigation. Tours, events, seminars, music, sculpture, and history are offered. www.ruthbancroftgarden.org.

Keep doing your personal rain dance. Be green with garden envy by getting your landscape ready for a beautiful rebirth. Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.



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Cynthia is available as a speaker and consultant.

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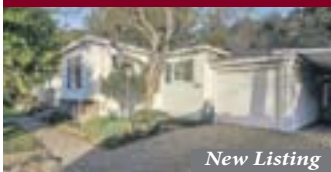
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ORINDA



New Listing

120 Glorietta Blvd. Fabulous traditional home lovingly maintained to preserve charm of yesteryear. Vaulted ceiling in gracious living rm, formal dining, cozy breakfast nook, Wedgewood stove. Priv. yd w/patio, lawn, terraced gardens. **\$819,000**

ORINDA



New Price

119 Moraga Way Fabulous location by downtown Orinda. Classic ranch w/sparkling high-end remodel incl. Great Rm, gourmet kitchen & baths, bamboo flrs, dual pane wndws. 3bd/2ba. Large private lot w/ level area. **\$820,000**

ORINDA



8 La Campana Super clean & ready one level living w/ 3bd/2ba, floor to ceiling windows and lots of light. Easy access outside. New Kitchen. Special setting, great high-end street, set for occupancy. **\$865,000**

ORINDA



New Listing

48 Dolores Way Lovely ranch style 2073sf 4bd/2.5ba on .46ac features updated gorgeous eat-in kit. w/granite, ss appliances & island w/chopping block top; LR & large FR; great bckyd w/stone water feature & paver patio. **\$995,000**

ORINDA



8 Williams Court Lovely single story Rancher featuring 4bd/2ba, 2094 sf on .65 ac w/panoramic views; solar heated pool w/patio, pool house/media room w/projector & surround sound; dual panes; EMF blocking system. **\$999,000**

ORINDA



New Listing

214 The Knoll Stunning Orindawoods townhome in prime tranquil location. Beautifully renovated w/over \$400,000 in custom upgrades! Fabulous gourmet kitchen, gorgeous master, private atrium retreat. **\$1,179,000**

ORINDA



9 Las Piedras Picturesque private 6bd/3ba home in park like setting w/panoramic views, level lawn & pool. 3745sf classic custom w/vaulted ceilings, walls of wndws, hdwd flrs, den, workout rm, FR & well-appointed kitchen. **\$1,349,000**

ORINDA



New Listing

18 Mira Loma 'Classic Orinda' Spanish home circa 1930 offering formal living, dining & family rooms, w/ approx. 2546 sf on two levels. Located across the street from the Club's 18th fairway, pools and lower tennis courts. **\$1,450,000**

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



New Listing

18 Charles Hill Road Extensively remodeled Spanish hm w/apx. 4000 sf, 4bd/3.5ba, on .67 ac. Chef's kit, deluxe master, media rm, wine cellar. Indr/outdr living areas w/ patios, balconies & grassy lawns. Near shopping, commute & schls. **\$2,425,000**

MORAGA



712 Augusta Drive Charming 2bd/2.5ba Creekside home in Moraga Country Club. Huge bonus room - perfect for home office, media room or playroom. Walk to golf, tennis, clubhouse and swimming. Vacation Living! **\$739,000**

MORAGA



New Listing

223 Corliss Drive Turn-key, updated 4bd/2ba home opens to large private yard w/pool. Granite kitchen and family room with wood floors open to yard. Milgard windows/doors, plantation shutters throughout. **\$1,185,000**

LAFAYETTE



Pending

206 Contessa Court Spacious 4bd/2ba charming home w/private yard located on quiet Burton Valley cul-de-sac. Kitchen & baths remodeled, vaulted ceilings, dual pane windows. Beautifully landscaped yard with deck, patio. **\$949,000**

LAFAYETTE



Pending

971 Pleasant Hill Road Light & airy contemporary home on private .50 ac Mt. Diablo view lot. 4 spacious bd & 3.5 ba incl. 2 master suites. Updated kitch. w/breakfast bar. Huge master suite w/private deck, home office area. **\$995,000**

LAFAYETTE



New Listing

1036 Dolores Drive Private creek-side setting w/ level yard. Sought after walk to town location. Newly remodeled kitchen & master ba., vaulted ceils, hdwd flrs, formal dining plus family rm. Lovely single story on quiet cul-de-sac. **\$1,195,000**

LAFAYETTE



Coming Soon

1 Springhill Lane Wonderfully rebuilt 2516 square foot, 4 bedroom, 3 bath one-story home on fabulous half acre. Open floor plan with huge kitchen/ family room. Walk to Acalanes High, Springhill Elementary. **\$1,599,000**



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