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Presents
Easter Worship Services
Sunday, April 20th, 2014
9am & 10:30am
also join us for
Palm Sunday: April 13th, 9 & 10:30am
Maundy Thursday: April 17th, 7pm
10 Moraga Valley Lane, Moraga, CA
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Volunteers helped customers pick out the perfect plants for their gardens April 5 at the Moraga Gardens Farm.

Photo Andy Schreck

Time for Planting

Plant sales like this one at the Moraga Gardens Farm last weekend have been popping up throughout Lamorinda as residents prep gardens and yards for spring planting. While understanding how plants and trees grow in different light and various temperatures is one of the keys to a successful garden, understanding microclimates within the three Lamorinda communities – and even within each individual plot of land – can be the difference between lush and lackluster. To learn more about our communities' microclimates and to get other planting tips, read "How to Plant in Lamorinda's Microclimates" in the Our Homes section on page C1.

Quote of the Week:

"These opponents would be right; it does seem overwhelming. But I see it a little differently." Read Letters to the Editor - page A10.

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Local Governments Stop PG&E Tree Cutting Project – For Now

By Sophie Braccini

Pacific Gas and Electric Company officials announced March 27 that they are putting a hold on tree removal related to the utility's Pipeline Pathways safety program in East Bay communities, except on private properties by agreement with property owners. The statement was made in the aftermath of an organized revolt by affected cities against the agency's campaign to clear a pathway above its gas lines that would include the cutting down of thousands of trees.

The quick reaction of the jurisdictions that formed a coalition to stop the tree removal was very effective in changing the agency's attitude from one of "we can do what we want" to "let's partner and find a solution together." Lamorinda cities participated in a general meeting March 21 to share information; Lafayette and Moraga didn't hesitate to make forceful statements opposing tree removal without a permit.

In his address to the City Council on March 24, Lafayette's city manager, Steven Falk, explained that the purpose of PG&E's project was to create a clear pathway above all of its gas transmission pipelines, allowing PG&E to better maintain, inspect, and safely operate the system. All trees within 10 feet on either side of the center line of a gas transmission pipe would be cut down, and all trees with canopies that extend into the 20-foot pathway margin would either be removed or trimmed. PG&E claimed the right to remove trees in the public right of way without the need for local permits and authorization.

Lafayette City Council members reacted strongly to the tree removal plan. Mayor Mike Anderson noted that some of the trees are well over 200 years old, predating the pipelines, and exclaimed, "This is the most ham-fisted effort I've ever heard!" Councilmember Mark Mitchell sug-

gested it "might be easier to move the pipelines than move the trees." Lafayette was one of eight cities to sign a letter to PG&E requesting a dialogue, and the City Council voted to enter into a fee-sharing agreement with other municipalities to hire a law firm to challenge PG&E.

"Tree and vegetation roots can damage an underground pipeline by impacting the pipeline's protective coating system, exposing it to corrosion," stated Jesus Soto, senior vice president of PG&E's gas operations. The Pipeline Pathways project would remove thousands of trees on private and public properties, including some very well established ones in downtown areas and scenic corridors.

"In Moraga the gas transmission line PG&E has identified runs down St. Mary's Road from the Lafayette border for 1.32 miles, approximately to the Mulberry Tree Preschool parking lot," said Jill Keimach, town manager. ... continued on page A14

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Grace and Passion

Local marathoners return to Boston - page B1.



Dealing with Drought

Part two of Cynthia Brian's series on gardening during a drought - page C13.



Summer Camp Guide

So much to do, so little time! Half-day camps let your kids try something new - page D1.



New Coach at SMC

Valenzuela sets a new course for Gaels' baseball - page E1.

