



**925.631.1055** www.MVCRemodeling.com

**Specializing in kitchens & bathrooms. All forms residential remodel/repair.**



*"A little bit of myself goes into every job."*

Lic# 681593  
Michael Verbrugge, President, Moraga Resident



**Clean | Courteous | Conscientious**  
**On-time | Trustworthy | Local References**  
Full design team resources available

~ HE'S ALL ABOUT LAMORINDA ~



**CLARK THOMPSON**

REAL ESTATE BROKER  
VILLAGE ASSOCIATES

Office: 925-254-8585  
Cell: 925-998-7898  
www.clarkthompson.com  
ct@clarkthompson.com



Giving Dreams an Address



**TC HARDWOOD FLOORS**  
Moraga California  
DESIGN • REFINISHING • INSTALLATION  
**925-376-1118**  
Lic # 974651

Since 1993!  
Tom Gieryng, owner and operator

CALL TOM FOR A FREE ESTIMATE

**Rheem Valley Cleaners**

568 Center St., Moraga  
Rheem Valley Shopping Center  
Rheemvalleycleaners.com  
925-247-5499

Celebrating our 1st Year Anniversary!

**50% OFF** all dry cleaning\*

Proud to announce the first green and Eco Friendly Dry Cleaning in Moraga

**GREEN EARTH** CLEANING  
We Clean Your Clothes Eco-Friendly

\*In the Month of November all new and returning customers

**Cabinet Modifications**

With over 25 years fulfilling custom needs, we can alter or modify most cabinetry, while still utilizing your existing cabinetry for:

- Large TVs/ Refrigerators and appliances
- Recycle Bins and shelf pullouts
- Cabinet alterations/repairs

Licensed Cabinet & Millwork Contractor #598395

Thinking about home, office, entertainment, custom cabinetry, shelving, crown mouldings, baseboards, new doors or mantels? We can help there, too!

**925.827.1093** Paul Kephart Master Craftsman  
www.TheCabinetMd.com

**Flamingo's Flooring**

CARPET • LUXURY VINYL TILE • SHEET VINYL LAMINATE • TILE • HARDWOOD  
Special Financing Options Available

**10% DISCOUNT** to Lamorinda Residents

SHOP AT HOME. WE WILL BRING THE SAMPLES TO YOU

**925-828-9600** Contact us for a FREE In-Home Estimate

info@flamingosflooring.com • www.flamingosflooring.com

**Providing Insurance and Financial Services**

It's no accident more people trust State Farm.



Mike Rosa, Agent  
Insurance Lic. #: OF45583  
1042 Country Club Drive, Moraga  
925-376-2244

LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR STATE FARM IS THERE.™

PO40036 02/04 State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company (Not in NJ), Bloomington, IL

**BURKIN ELECTRIC**

**"Let Us Light Up Your Life"**

Residential • Commercial • Industrial

Serving Contra Costa since 1991  
More than 35 years experience

**All Work Done by Owner**

Bonded & Insured  
Lic.#C10-631523

Professional Installation of:

- Ceiling Fans, Recessed & Track Lighting
- Kitchen or Bath Remodel
- Exterior/Security/Landscape Lighting
- Electrical Service Upgrade
- Complete Home Wiring - Old & New
- Spa Installation

**(925) 672-1519**  
www.BurkinElectric.net



James Burkin  
Sole Proprietor

**Civic News Lamorinda**

**Problems with your Government?**

Here's what you can do

By Nick Marnell

Many who witnessed the mudslinging and the negative advertising before the election have little interest in running for elective office. But winning an election is not the only method by which citizens can participate in local government. In fact, membership on appointed civic commissions and committees sometimes allows for even more influence on the creation of public policy.

That is why Contra Costa County and the Lamorinda municipalities rigorously vet those who apply for these appointed posts. Roughly speaking, a commission has powers delegated to it and is assigned a specific task to perform, while a committee is typically a deliberative body that investigates and advises on a specific issue.

For filling Lamorinda positions, the work begins in the office of the city or town clerk, who announces the vacancies, collects the applications and agendas the candidate interviews. Moraga and Orinda council members hold the interviews during full council sessions, while city clerk Joanne Robbins confirmed that the Lafayette interviews are conducted by the city council liaisons and the commission chair. "By having the commission chair participate, we have input from a person who has the best understanding of what additional skills are required on the commission," said Lafayette mayor Don Tatzin. He stressed that the commission meetings are public meetings and anyone can attend. In all cases, the city or town council appoints the positions at a public meeting.

In Contra Costa County, the clerk of the board posts vacancies, collects the applications and forwards them to the appropriate county staff person and the district supervisor. Depending on the position, interviews are con-

ducted by the supervisor or by the county Internal Operations Committee. Erling Horn talked about his experience securing the District 2 alternate seat on the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District advisory fire commission.

"Make your resume as short as possible," said Horn. "And be prepared to be flexible." Horn applied for a seat on the county planning commission, but during the vetting process, Supervisor Candace Andersen suggested that Horn, who helped write fire standards for the National Fire Protection Agency, might be a fit for the advisory fire commission. He then interviewed with Andersen for an hour.

Andersen, whose district includes Lamorinda, explained what she covers in her candidate interviews. "I want to know how often they've been to community meetings," she said. "I evaluate their expertise, their education, their volunteer experience. I explain the frustrations of working on public boards. And of course, we do a thorough check of their background and their character references." Ten days after his interview, Horn learned that Andersen recommended him for the fire position to the Board of Supervisors, which officially appointed him at a public meeting.

One aspect of public service that terrifies many potential applicants is the financial disclosure requirement. Most appointees must fill out the California Fair Political Practice Commission Form 700 Statement of Economic Interests, a full disclosure of personal assets and income. The form includes a cover letter and six financial schedules, with the degree of disclosure set by the municipality's conflict of interest code. Lafayette posts the completed forms on its web-

site, town clerk Marty McInturf confirmed that Moraga posts them on the FPPC website, while Orinda retains its forms in-house, available for public inspection, per city clerk Michele Olsen. The county also posts required Form 700s on the FPPC website.

In addition, many local and county appointees must complete courses in both California ethics and the Brown Act, which guarantees the public's right to attend and participate in public meetings.

Committee-specific experience is not a prerequisite for serving. Jim Cunha, a member of the Lafayette Emergency Services Task Force, had no background in fire or emergency medical service, but he brought along his experience as a trustee and executive committee member of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Foundation. His curiosity over the complexities of the fire service drove him to investigate its problems.

"If you don't understand something, then it's not right," said Cunha. "Keep digging, keep asking questions until you do understand it. More times than not, it needs fixing."

"I encourage people to apply," said Horn. "There's a real need for citizen involvement." He certainly knows of what he speaks, as Horn is active on three Lafayette public committees. "Yeah, I'm probably at the upper end," he said, noting that most citizens manage participation in only one.

And though at times it may not appear to be so, citizens under the age of 30 are strongly urged to apply for all government appointed positions. "Because many of the meetings are held in the evenings, it should be relatively convenient for working individuals to make time in their schedules," said Orinda city manager Janet Keeter.

**Civic News School Board**

**Significant Deficit Spending Slated for High Schools**

By Cathy Tyson

"The Local Control Funding Formula was not kind to the Acalanes Union High School District," said Chris Learned, associate superintendent of business services for the AUHSD.

The district, which oversees Acalanes, Campolindo, Miramonte and Las Lomas high schools, finished the 2013-14 school year with a deficit of \$1.7 million; for the current school year, 2014-15, it is projected to be \$5.4 million in the red, tapering to \$3.8 million for 2016-17, if nothing changes.

At a recent school board meeting that went late into the night, Learned gave an in-depth presentation on revenue, expenses and projections into the future; his conclusion: "Doing nothing is not an option."

What caused this? Mainly the Local Control Funding Formula, LCFF, along with the loss of one-time funds to implement the Common Core and a significant increase in CalSTRS and CalPERS seven-year phase-in of employer contributions. CalSTRS is the California State Teachers Retirement System and CalPERS is the California Public Employees Retirement System which

manages pension and health benefits for non-teaching school employees.

LCFF replaced the convoluted 40-year-old school funding methodology from the state; changing the way it distributes \$41 billion dollars per year for public education. While that sounds significant, California is 49th in school funding levels compared to other states. The new system gives more local control and endeavors to equalize base funding amounts, providing additional money on top of base amounts in several categories. Once LCFF is fully implemented it will only bring schools back to 2007 funding levels, due to years of deep and significant cuts.

The LCFF funding formula provides a base amount of dollars for all students, recognizing the difference in the cost to educate kindergarten students versus high school students. Then there are add-on funds for class size reduction, and more add-ons for certain students who need more resources, English language learners, students from low income families and foster kids. Beyond that, the state also recognizes that in addition to these supplemental dollars, students who live in districts that have a higher

concentration, over 55 percent, of disadvantaged youth get further additional funding.

While clarifying funding, establishing equity and providing more resources to students who need them makes sense, the problem is that in Lamorinda the base funding level is low and the district doesn't qualify for much additional funding. Based on enrollment in the 2013-14 school year there are 5,307 students in the high school district; only 5.1 percent are socio-economically disadvantaged and 2.2 percent have limited English proficiency.

Superintendent John Nickerson explained in the 2014-15 Final Adoption Budget, "the base-funding level of the LCFF remains absolutely inadequate and the formula will place extreme fiscal pressures on the District going forward."

The board voted to create a finance committee that will meet monthly, starting before the winter break and including teachers, parents, students and administrators, to look at all possible options to find a solution. "We can fix this problem, but we need to be aggressive," stated Learned.