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Lamorinda

## Higher Water Bills for Lamorinda?

*That depends on Mother Nature*

By Cathy Tyson

Prior to the first big storm of the winter season the East Bay Municipal Utility District's board of directors adopted measures in response to the drought, with the potential to raise customers' bills.

The utility is calling for increased customer conservation on a voluntary basis. Early this year, customers were asked to cut back 10 percent of their water usage. This suggestion was successful with all district customers combined - residential, commercial and irrigation - reducing their use by 12.6 percent compared to 2013. Now EBMUD is asking for even more voluntary conservation, requesting that customers cut back 15 percent starting on New Year's Day, Jan. 1.

Equally important, if needed, depending on Mother Nature, the utility will make a second purchase of water

from the Sacramento River. "This is our third dry year in a row. Our customers' ongoing conservation before and during this drought is one reason why we have not had to ask for harsh cutbacks," said board president Andy Katz. "We do expect some more rain this winter, but possibly not enough."

Back in April, EBMUD purchased and delivered 18,600 acre feet of water from the Sacramento River. The \$8 million cost of purchasing, pumping and treating that water was absorbed by the district. At its Dec. 9 meeting the board of directors considered making a second purchase. Depending on relatively near term rainfall, if the board decides to go ahead with the purchase customers will see a 14 percent surcharge on their bills. According to Abby Figueroa, senior public information

representative, EBMUD residential customers could see their bills increase by an average of \$4.30 per month, depending on their level of conservation, until drought costs are paid.

"Recent storms are helping, but water supply is about more than rain. It's about the timing of storms, temperatures and how long snow stays on the ground before it melts," said general manager Alexander Coate. "We will need at least the average level of precipitation this winter and spring to be in better shape than we were this past year," he said.

Precipitation in the Mokelumne watershed was only half of normal from July, 2013 to June, 2014. EBMUD reservoirs received only one-third of their normal runoff, making it the fifth driest year on record.



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Moraga

## Sand Bagged



CERT volunteers filled sandbags the evening of Dec. 10 in anticipation of the impending storm. Two hundred bags were filled by 5:40 p.m.; two hours later, they were all gone. Pictured, from left: Gordon Nathan, John Burgess, Tim Freeman, John Haffner; not pictured, Ellen Beans and Rob Lucacher.

Photo Rob Lucacher

Moraga

## Moraga's New Council Member – Teresa Onoda

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Photo A. Scheck

Onoda says she was attracted to art since her very early years. "I always loved art and remember riding my bicycle to the Des Moines Art Center on weekends when I was still in grade school," she said. "As soon as I took my first formal art course in high school, I knew that this would always be part of my career."

Her artistry evolved over the years and she experimented with many kinds of art, but it took a back seat to raising her children when they were very young. "When we moved to Moraga in 1989, I met Pam Glover, one of the premier plein air painters in California, and began to develop into a professional artist," she stated. "My relationship with Pam Glover evolved to the point where we were painting partners on a weekly basis for years. Sadly, Pam passed away in 2010." Onoda almost always paints

in outdoor locations somewhere in the Bay Area. If the weather is poor, she might stay home and paint under the covered entryway of her front porch. On very rare occasions, she paints inside her house near a window that allows natural light to reach the canvas.

For the past 15 years, Onoda has been creating paintings that have been displayed in galleries in downtown San Francisco and Carmel. Her work has also been in galleries in Vail, Colo., and in Palm Desert, Calif. She has conducted workshops in California, New Mexico, Iowa and Michigan. "When I'm painting, I lose any sense of myself and become part of the landscape," she said. "I feel like I am part of nature, not a person standing apart from it. That's why I feel so strongly about preserving natural beauty."

When she is not painting, Onoda spends a lot of time doing all of the things a small business owner must do - marketing, managing finances, keeping up her supplies, hanging shows, managing her online presence and working with various gallery owners and show curators.

Moving to Moraga changed Onoda's life as she became more active as a citizen, tackling problems in the community, and as an artist striving to develop an expertise in plein air painting. "One of my first experiences advocating for improvements in Moraga involved a dangerous

stretch of Donald Drive that Rheem Elementary School kids were using where there was no sidewalk," she remembered. "I helped to form a group that helped get a grant that paid for a sidewalk so the students could move about safely." Another event was the golf course at Palos Colorados, which as originally proposed, she felt, would have blocked the migration corridor for wildlife. "I was involved with a group of citizens who raised money to pay for expert reports that informed the discussion and ultimately led to the elimination of the golf course from the proposal," she said.

Onoda got involved with her art organizing a yearly open space art exhibit, and participating in an art "paint out" and art show on the slopes of Mount Diablo for Save Mount Diablo.

She was appointed to the Moraga Planning Commission two years ago. "I gained a working knowledge of Moraga's General Plan, the town's ordinances, the procedural mechanics of the commission and town council and boards, the roles and contributions of town staff members and the constellation of concerned citizens providing input into all of the local activities," she said. Now on the council she will place a high priority on preserving Moraga's open spaces and ridgelines, and will work on improving residents' participation.