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 Email Director Shane Carney at director@eastbayeclipsesoccer.com



Moraga dog trainer Judie Howard works with Ryder, preparing for obedience trial competition.

Photo Andy Schreck

The Lamorinda Woman Behind Champion Dogs

By Sophie Braccini

Judie Howard is a legend in the world of obedience training for dogs in the United States. People come from all over the country to spend time with the Bollinger Canyon trainer who can make the meekest dog of any breed a champion. For more than 25 years she has managed one of the largest obedience schools in the country, with more than 70 American Kennel Club obedience titles to her credit. She now trains one-on-one in her own facility with dogs and their owners who want to compete.

While small in stature, Howard emanates a purposefulness and determination. But she says she's not an alpha female: "We are far removed from wolves," she says with a smile. She does acknowledge, however, that dogs immediately recognize that she is in charge. The real secret to her success is she loves them to pieces. For her, each dog she trains is unique. She thinks something can be learned from each breed. If they are understood, she says, they give their best with joy.

The Moraga resident started dog training at age 9. "It was a neighbor's dog and I taught him to sit," she remembers. Her family could not have dogs, so she got her first German Shepherd and trained it after she got married. "Dogs love coming here to be trained," she says. "Owners tell me that their dogs start barking as soon as the car enters Bollinger Canyon Road. They pull them up my stairs and when they get in the arena they start running circles around me."

... continued on page A10

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer Announces Run for California Senate



"I'm in. Voters deserve an opportunity to elect a fiscally conservative, independently minded, bi-partisan problem solver." With that simple tweet, Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer announced his 2015

run for the California Senate. Stating via Facebook that he expects to see "more bricks flying my way from entrenched and powerful interests," he explained his rationale for filing papers late in the day Jan. 23. "The issues I previously campaigned about remain urgent priorities: a compassionate state government that lives within its financial means; banning BART strikes; reining in our unfunded public pensions; greater support for education but with reforms in teacher discipline and seniority; affordable higher education, independence from special interests, and protecting our environment." He added that he

will remain focused "on problem solving over partisanship." In response, Orinda City Council Member Dean Orr tweeted, "Best news item of the week. All in!" Orinda Union School District Board of Trustees Member Julie Rossiter also tweeted her support. Glazer, a former political advisor to Gov. Jerry Brown, managed Brown's successful 2010 gubernatorial campaign, and has also counseled CalChamberPAC, the California Chamber of Commerce's political action committee. He is also now in his fourth year of an eight-year term as a Brown-appointed member of the California

State University Board of Trustees. The District 7 seat was vacated by Mark DeSaulnier, who was elected to represent Lamorinda in Congress following George Miller's retirement. Glazer will run against three other Democrats, including Joan Buchanan of Alamo, who termed out in December as the California Assembly member representing Lamorinda and other District 16 communities. Other candidates include Assembly Member Susan Bonilla (Concord) and Terry Kremin. The primary election will be held March 17; the special election scheduled by Brown will be May 19. *L. Snyder*

please...

...thanks

Life in Lamorinda B1-B10

Two Lafayette Elementary School student artist winners – page B3.



Sports C1-C3

Basketball Mid-Season Reports – page C2.



Our Homes D1-D12

Helpful hues for good feng shui – page D6.





Lafayette

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Feb. 9, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Feb. 2, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Feb. 9, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Arts & Science Discovery Center,
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District
Wednesday, Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m.
AUHSD Board Room
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
Stanley Middle School Library
3477 School St., Lafayette
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

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

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Learning What Police Officers Really Do

By Cathy Tyson

It was a full house in the conference room of the Lafayette city offices for the second of six meetings of the Citizen's Police Academy. A cross section of a dozen eager residents representing the Rotary, the Chamber of Commerce, City Council, Oakwood Athletic Club and more came looking for a better understanding of the police department and the particulars of local law enforcement.

Police Chief Eric Christensen spearheaded the program, which was developed by members of the police department and the Crime Prevention Commission. This is the first roll out of the series of classes, which will be fine tuned and presumably offered

again later this year. So far, it seems to be working; attendees were engaged and had lots of opportunities to question, comment and learn.

It's a significant time commitment. Students are required to have a background check, then attend each three-hour session and complete a two-hour ride along with an officer in a patrol car. The initial session was an overview of the criminal justice system, followed up with last week's traffic and patrol operations session. In the coming weeks there are classes on police investigations, use of force, crime lab overview and tour, and a jail visit, culminating with an optional session at a firearms range along with a barbecue lunch. Graduation will occur at a council meeting.

With 23 full- and part-time personnel, which includes 17 sworn officers who are contracted through the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Office, available 24/7 every day of the year, it's nice to know that these brave men and women take the job seriously, but still have a sense of humor.

Kicking off the traffic meeting was a video of a very irate driver being ticketed, with a fair amount of "bleeped" bad language. Professional and con-

genial Sergeant Dan Nugent, main instructor for the evening, called it just another day at the office. His overarching theme: "Traffic enforcement lessens traffic accidents. Our goal is to make people safe – that's it." He continued, "A ticket is a reminder to change behavior with a kicker – a fine."

Officer Neil Black, the citation king of the department with a whopping 1,100 citations for 2014, talked about what it's like to be a motorcycle cop and what the strategies are. Fellow officer Jerry Shaman also helped out with the class, describing his experiences on the job.

The class touched on a number of traffic-related topics including directing traffic, bicyclists and bike lanes, along with bad biker behavior, pedestrian right of way, and the risk/reward calculation that goes into authorizing a high speed chase. To illustrate that point, a video from the dashboard camera of a police cruiser was shown in hot pursuit on Highway 24 and along Happy Valley Road, sirens and lights blazing at 4 a.m. As suspected, it did not end well for the driver of a stolen truck who was on drugs.

After hearing complaints from students about less than courteous bi-

cyclists, Nugent – who referred to them as "Spandex warriors" – clarified that they are supposed to ride single file, not two and three abreast. He said the department wants them to obey the law, encouraging their compliance by writing up tickets that can cost \$500 for running a red light or "impeding traffic."

The night shift sees all kinds of colorful behavior. "After 10 p.m. booze is usually involved somehow," explained Nugent, citing bar fights, DUIs, domestic violence – even teenagers stealing alcohol from grocery stores.

The highlight of the evening was riding in squad cars down Mt. Diablo Boulevard, learning the nuances of a traffic stop and ways police try to protect themselves, and even how to light flares. "Very interesting!" said Robin Fox.

Council Member Traci Reilly is also a student; she was formerly on the Crime Prevention Commission and wanted a better understanding of the department. It's the biggest budget item the city pays for, so she was eager to participate.

She describes the classes as "very impressive so far."

Do you have a person in mind for the City of Lafayette to honor as 2015 Citizen of the Year?

Criteria are as follows:

- Must NOT be a current *elected* or *paid* member of any city council, school board or commission;
- Must be a current Lafayette resident;
- Must be someone who has given of their time, money or energy to help make Lafayette a healthy community, where people will want to live, work and shop;
- Must be someone who models excellence in everything they do;
- Must be someone who brings this community together and/or makes us proud to be a member of the community.

A celebration dinner will be held on **Friday, March 27** at the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa to honor the winner! The deadline for submitting nominations is **Friday, Feb. 13**.

The 2015 Lafayette Citizen of the Year Award is co-sponsored by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and Lamorinda Weekly.

Please send your nomination to Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson

Mail: Lafayette Chamber of Commerce
Attn: Lafayette Citizen of Year nomination
100 Lafayette Circle #103
Lafayette, CA 94549

Email: jay@lafayettechamber.org



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

There are currently openings on the following Commissions and Committees:

- Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee
- Community Center Foundation
- Capital Projects Assessments Committee (CPAC)
- Circulation Commission
- Creeks Committee
- Crime Prevention Commission
- Design Review Commission
- Downtown Street Improvement Implementation Committee - DSIMPIC
- Emergency Preparedness Commission
- Environmental Task Force
- Parks, Trails & Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Public Art Committee
- Senior Services Commission
- Youth Services Commission
- Lafayette Representative to the Contra Costa County Advisory Council on Aging

For additional information visit the city's website:

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us/city-hall/commissions-committees

Or call Joanne Robbins, City Clerk 925-284-1968. Application deadline March 31, 2015. Positions open until filled.



Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report

Jan. 4-17:

Abandoned Vehicle

School/1st St
Silver Dell/Reliez Valley Rd

Alarms 64
911 calls 7

Burglary, Auto

500 block Silverado Dr
300 block E. Lowell Ln
3400 block Black Hawk Rd (2)
3900 block Franke Ln
Acalanes High School
1000 block Timothy Ln
Oakwood Athletic Club
10 block Green Place
10 block Ruth Ct
3500 block Herman Dr
600 block Augustine Ln

Burglary, Residential

3200 block Los Arabis Dr
100 block Lafayette Cr

Burglary, Commercial

3200 block Stanley Bl (2)
100 block Lafayette Cr

Battery

Hwy 24/1st St

Civil Disturbance

1st St/Mt Diablo Bl
1700 block Toyon Rd
Mt Diablo Bl/Oak Hill Rd
900 block S Thompson Rd
3400 block Golden Gate Wy
3300 block Mt Diablo Bl
10 block Gilmore Ct

Drunk in Public

Lafayette Park Hotel

DUI

Condit/Pleasant Hill Rds

Fire/EMS Response

Pleasant Hill/Springhill Rds
4000 block Happy Valley Rd
Mt Diablo/Village Center
1000 block Via Media

Found Adult

Hidden Valley/AcalanesRds

Hit & Run

Safeway
3200 block Rohrer Dr
Trader Joe's

Indecent Exposure

4200 block El Nido Ranch Rd
Stanley Middle School

Petty Theft

500 block Silverado Dr
500 block St Mary's Rd

Oakwood Athletic Club
10 block Rancho Diablo Rd
3300 block Springhill Rd
800 block Paradise Ct
3200 block Glenside Dr
30 block Lafayette Cr
3300 block Victoria Av
1000 block Windsor Dr
30 block Lafayette Cr
10 block Greenvalley Dr (2)
3600 block Mt Diablo
3200 block Sharon Ct
3400 block Moraga Bl

Juvenile Disturbance

School St/Moraga Rd
Moraga Rd/Moraga Bl
3400 block Mt Diablo Bl
Pleasant Hill Rd/Park Ln

Missing Adult

900 block Stow Ln

Promiscuous Shooting

10 block Gilmore Ct
500 block St Mary's Rd
200 block Camelia Ln

Public Nuisance

Solana Dr/St Mary's Rd
900 block S. Thompson Rd
Safeway (2)
700 block Solana Dr
Mt Diablo Bl/Happy Valley Rd
3500 block Mt Diablo Bl (2)
800 block Topper Ln
800 block Moraga Rd
1000 block Oak Hill Rd
Moraga Bl/4th St

Reckless Driving

Burton Valley Elementary
500 block Silverado Dr
Oak Hill Rd/Hwy 24
Mt Diablo Bl/Dewing Av
1600 block Springbrook
Moraga Rd/St Mary's Rd

Shoplifting

Safeway
900 block Moraga Rd

Suspicious Circum.

8

Suspicious Vehicle

24

Suspicious Subject

25

Threats

3300 block Mt Diablo Bl

Traffic Stops

129

Trespass

3300 block Sweet Dr

Vandalism

3500 block Mt Diablo Bl
1200 block Pleasant Hill Rd

900 block Hough Av
3500 block Springhill Rd
3200 block Mt Diablo Bl

Vehicle Theft

3400 block Moraga Bl
200 block Lafayette Cr

Violation Restrain

30 block Circle Creek Ct

Warrant Service

1400 block Sunset Lp

ALL LAFAYETTE RESIDENTS

Got Traffic? Can you say "gridlock"?

All tied up and somewhere to go?

THEN PLEASE SAVE THIS DATE:

APRIL 23, 2015 TOWN HALL MEETING 7 P.M.

COMMUNITY HALL- LAFAYETTE LIBRARY & LEARNING CENTER

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR DETAILS TO FOLLOW
SPONSORED BY LAFAYETTE HOMEOWNERS COUNCIL



Moraga

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Jan. 28, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, Feb. 2, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

Design Review

Monday, Feb. 9, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

School Board Meeting

Moraga School District
Tuesday, Feb. 10, 7:30 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate
School Auditorium
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
www.moraga.k12.ca.us
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

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



Moraga Police Department

Barely battery, 1/18/15 Four patrons watching a movie at the Rheem Theatre were causing a disturbance. Management and other patrons asked the vocal group to be quiet. They kept up the ruckus, but one suspect changed seats and sat next to the "victim." The suspect patted the victim's leg, which was apparently unwanted physical contact, so the victim requested an assault investigation. Police contacted the involved parties at the scene. The district attorney is now reviewing the matter.

Smashed windshield, 1/17/15 While parked on Ascot Drive, a car had its front window shattered during the night while parked on the street in front of its owner's condominium. No suspects or leads at this time.

DUI 1/18/15 Although there were no ticketed DUIs over the New Year's holiday, three occurred this week in Moraga. At 1:30 a.m. a black Honda Accord was traveling southbound on Moraga Road with a flat right front tire. When police contacted the 18-year-old driver, they noticed the distinct smell of alcohol. The driver had a blood alcohol level more than twice the legal limit, that is, if he was of drinking age. The teenager also was cited for having two fake California driver's licenses. His car was towed away.

DUI 1/17/15 The tipoff was blowing through a stop sign on Camino Pablo at Hodges Drive at 35 mph after midnight. An 18-year-old Pleasant Hill resident was driving with a blood alcohol level of 0.10 percent, just over the limit of 0.08 percent. The subject was released to a friend on his signed Promise to Appear; two male passengers and the driver's dog were released at the scene without incident. Seems like walking would have been the better option for all involved from the get go.

DUI 1/15/15 Officer #173 was hard at work on the night shift again, this time on Moraga Road at Buckingham Drive, when a black Lexus was found to be speeding at 59 mph in a 35 mph zone. The middle aged resident was arrested for DUI and was just over the legal blood alcohol limit. The subject was released to his girlfriend on his signed Promise to Appear.

Stolen car, 1/14/15 A red Honda Civic was stolen during the night from a Courter Lane driveway.

Identity theft, two incidents – 12/31/14 (on Donald Drive) and 1/05/15 (on Baltusrol) The Donald Drive New Year's Eve incident involved an unknown suspect attempting to open 10 credit/charge cards. The reporting person said she was notified of the applications and immediately reported the fraud. Only one Visa card was obtained from US Bank for the victim on Baltusrol. The bank canceled the card before it could be used.

The following incidents also occurred between Jan. 6-18:

Non-Functional Firearms to be Destroyed – Rheem Boulevard
Driving on a Restricted License – Rheem Boulevard
Violation of Court Order – Ascot
Traffic Incident – Moraga Road
False Alarm – Moraga Valley Lane, San Pablo Court
Small Dumpster Fire – Camino Peral
Package Swiped – Draeger Drive
Stolen Bicycle – Donald Drive
Annoying Phone Calls – North Sandringham
Magazine Sales – Campolindo Drive
Tree Down – Corliss Road

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Historical Designation in Moraga Will Not Require Owner's Consent

By Sophie Braccini

To the dismay of several large property owners, the Moraga Town Council adopted the first reading of the historic preservation ordinance Jan. 15 that will allow the town to declare a building or natural feature of historic significance, even if its owner does not agree.

Dave Bowie, the attorney for New Rheem Theatre owner Mahesh Puri, made the case to leave the ultimate decision to the owner. "We understand the need for a historic preservation ordinance, but we think it is critical that there be a condition requiring the owner's consent," he said. He noted that the Planning Commission had been sensitive to the owner's concerns and had asked in their recommendation to the council that the owner's approval be required. He argued that the requirement of the owner's consent will ensure a collegial and harmonious process.

David and Joan Bruzzone who own properties in Moraga such as Moraga Ranch, one of several build-

ings the Planning Commission cited as historically significant, voiced their opposition to a text that would not require a property owner's consent. Saint Mary's College Director of Community and Government Relations Tim Farley voiced opposition as well.

Councilmember Dave Trotter led the argument to remove all reference to owner's consent. "It is appropriate to give the town that tool," he said. "Whether we choose to exercise that power in the future depends on how the future plays out. But I'd rather have that tool in the town tool kit than not have it." Trotter added that if the property owner has veto power, there would not be any dialogue within the community about the best way to protect historical character.

Councilmember Phillip Arth opposed this idea. "If the town designates a property a historical landmark, (the property owner) loses some of his rights," he said. Arth also mentioned the potential economic risks included in a historic designation. "You should

not try to force a designation down the throat of anybody, because if the project is not viable as a historic asset, it's not going to be maintained," Bowie said. Arth added that the advantages that come with the historic designation, such as Mills Act property tax relief or flexibility in Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, should be offered to owners, not forced on them.

Per the new ordinance, a town councilmember, the Planning Commission, the Design Review Board, the Moraga Historical Society or the property owner can nominate a building or feature for consideration of historical status. Considerations for a proposed historical landmark include: the structure must be over 50 years old; it must have characteristics that are linked to the heritage or cultural characteristic of the town; it is in an area, place or site of historical significance; or it is identified to be the work of a master architect or builder. After nomination, all applications will

be referred to the Moraga Historical Society for comment. Then the council will conduct a public hearing and provide a reasonable opportunity for all interested parties to be heard before making a final decision.

Orinda's historic preservation code requires that the city solicit the cooperation and participation of the property owner in the designation process – the owner's approval is not required. In Lafayette, the nomination can be made by either the owner or by the historical society, especially when there is community interest in acquiring the property or otherwise arranging for its permanent preservation – in that case, the owner's consent is not required.

Mayor Roger Wykle supported Trotter's position, as well as Councilmember Teresa Onoda who asked that pear orchards be added to the list of natural features that could be designated as historic. In the absence of Vice-Mayor Mike Metcalf, the motion passed 3 to 1.

Moraga Livable Road Plan Stopped In Its Tracks

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council decided Jan. 14 that the different options to improve connectivity, pedestrian safety and traffic flow along Moraga Road needed to be weighed by the entire community before a decision is made. Staff was asked to come back with what it would cost to set up a mail-in or an online survey.

It's been more than a year since the planning department started working on a vision for the arterial between Campolindo High School and St. Mary's Road. After multiple public and committee meetings were con-

ducted, staff recommended a plan that would create a multi-use bike and pedestrian path along the entire road, adding bike lanes and potentially reducing the number of lanes from four to three between Corliss and Draeger drives.

Residents living on Moraga Road asked for even further lane reductions and increased safety. After being reminded about the speed bumps that were built on Camino Pablo years ago without much outreach, resulting in months of heated public debate, council members decided to get more feedback from the community.

The traffic study was also of concern to the council members. It showed that with the number of developments currently on the town's drawing board, a reduction in the number of lanes between Corliss and Draeger drives could lead to heavy congestion on Moraga Road, especially if no traffic light is installed.

The council asked planning director Ellen Clark to develop a proposal for a town-wide survey. No specific date was given for when this will be completed.

Moraga Town Center Homes Project Appeal to be Considered Jan. 28

At tonight's meeting, Moraga Town Council members will consider the appeal of the Planning Commission approval of the Conceptual Development Plan (CDP) for the 36-unit Moraga Town Center Homes project located adjacent to Moraga-Orinda Fire District Station 41 on Moraga Way. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. in the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School auditorium. The Planning Commission's decision to approve the conceptual plan of the development located next to the fire station on Moraga Way was appealed by a group of residents. The basis for the appeal includes non-conformance of the project with the General Plan, non-conformance with the town's Scenic Corridor requirements, failure to properly analyze the traffic impacts and safety issues. The Moraga Country Club board of directors sent a letter to the town Jan. 15, expressing concerns about serious traffic and safety issues on the segment of Country Club Drive that adjoins homes in the MCC and is across from City Ventures' proposed project. Additionally, at the Jan. 21 Moraga-Orinda Fire District board meeting, board members declared that a "purely residential development is incompatible with the MOFD training center." Chief Stephen Healy was instructed to attend tonight's council meeting to express the board's position. Recent communications from MOFD had stated concerns; this latest strongest statement is not part of the staff report. *S. Braccini*

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Town of Moraga Mayor's Welcome & Volunteer Appreciation Night

Tue, Feb. 10, 6 pm, Country Club
RSVP: (925) 888-7021



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Moraga Citizens Network Celebrates 10 Years

Building participatory democracy

By Sophie Braccini



started with 22 people in January of 2005 is now over 1,400 members strong. Members receive a bi-weekly e-newsletter about everything Moraga, put together by Ellen Beans.

In 2005 there were only two places to find the town's meeting agendas: the library and the town office, says Edy Schwartz.

... continued on page A9

From left: Ellen Beans, Marcia Farrar and Judy Helder Photo provided
 Ten years ago, a small group of friends passionate about the democratic process felt there was a need to inform the people of Moraga and get them more involved in their local government. The group that

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Plan for New Canyon Bridge Takes Shape

By Sophie Braccini



After CalTrans declared the Canyon Bridge unsafe and planned to finance its replacement, Moraga Public Works Director Edric Kwan – who has conducted two community outreach sessions with his team – is determined to answer questions from the Moraga and Canyon communities about the project. At the last outreach session on Jan. 20, plans for the new bridge were presented, along with the building strategy developed to avoid interruption of transit.

... continued on page A8

Image courtesy Town of Moraga Canyon Bridge Project Staff Report

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 CalBRE 01029160

3607 Powell Dr., Lafayette
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Desirable Woodlands Neighborhood. 4BR/3BA plus pool. Coming to market February 15. Call Jim Colhoun at 925.200.2795 for further information.
 CalBRE 01029160

3128 Chestnut Street, Oakland
COMING SOON



Charming vaulted 830 sf live/work style Victorian in West Oakland with 2 bedrooms and one full bath. Beautifully upgraded with skylights, a yard in back and gated front. Call Maureen Caldwell-Meurer at 510.915.0092 for more information.
 CalBRE#01909766

5523 Alaska Drive, Concord



Investment opportunity!! Single level home is immaculate and move-in condition. The 3BR home includes a fully enclosed patio room which increases the living area of the home to 1250 square feet.
 www.5523AlaskaDr.com Call Jim Colhoun at 925.200.2795 for further information.
 CalBRE 01029160

14 Las Palomas Road, Orinda
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Resort living in Orinda Country Club. Completely updated with 5 bedrooms, 5 full baths, beautifully updated and perfect for entertaining. Indoor/outdoor living with deck, Hawkins Pool, lawn areas, and play structure. Au pair unit, office and so much more!
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Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Feb. 3, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way

School Board Meeting

Orinda Union School District
Monday, Feb. 9, 6 p.m.
OUSD Office, 8 Altarinda Road,
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

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



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report Jan. 4-17:

- Abandoned Vehicle**
Altarinda Rd/Orindawoods
Alarms 46
- Animal Cruelty**
10 block Theatre Square
- Burglary**
20 block South Trail
50 block Via Floreado
- Burglary, Auto**
Wilder Bl/Hwy 24
100 block Goodfellow Dr
- Burglary, Residential**
10 block Wanda Ln
- 911 calls** 9
- Computer Fraud**
10 block Altarinda Rd
- Disturbance**
Valley View/Lost Valley
10 block Tappan Wy
Moraga Wy/Casa Vieja
Orinda Country Club
10 block Lost Valley Dr
- Elder Abuse**
20 block Ramona Dr
- Fire/Ambulance Call**
40 block Stanton Av
- Harassment**
10 block Cielo Ct
- Hit & Run**
Orinda Wy/Camino Sobrante
Shell Station
- Loud Party**
20 block Lavina Ct (2)
10 block Ivy Dr
- Theft, Petty**
200 block El Toyonal (2)
500 block Tahos Rd
10 block Camino Sobrante
- Theft, Grand**
10 block Glorietta Ct
10 block Irving Ln
- Public Nuisance**
Aspinwall Ct/Eastwood Dr
10 block Overhill Rd
Southwood Ct/Southwood
10 block Fallen Leaf Ter
- Reckless Driving**
Camino Pablo/Bear Cr Rd
San Pablo Dam/Bear Cr Rds
Lombardy Ln/Van Ripper
Camino Pablo/Monte Vista
Camino Pablo/Hwy 24
- Restraining Order Violation**
10 block Orinda Wy
- Shoplifting**
Safeway (2)
- Suspicious Circum.** 8
- Suspicious Subject** 20
- Suspicious Vehicle** 21
- Terrorist Threats**
Brookwood Rd/Moraga Wy
- Traffic Stops** 179
- Vehicle Theft**
Moraga Wy/Brookwood Rd
- Vandalism**
30 block Acacia Dr
- Warrant Service**
70 block La Cuesta Rd
200 block Moraga Wy



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Orinda City Council Delays Crime Cam Decision Again

By Laurie Snyder



One example of a fixed-mount Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) system
Photo public domain

"The city can only do so much to protect us. We need to protect ourselves."
—Vince Maiorana

Citing the old adage that "God helps those who help themselves," Vince Maiorana urged Orinda City Council members at their Jan. 13 meeting not to bow to pressure from residents pushing them to install security cameras across Orinda.

As reported in the Dec. 3 edition of this newspaper, crime is actually down in Orinda. The city had 76 residential burglaries in 2013, but by mid-November 2014, that statistic was halved to 36 – in a city with roughly 6,800 residential units. From Dec. 21, 2014 to Jan. 3, one instance each of residential, auto and commercial burglary, grand theft, and vehicle theft were committed.

"People leave their cars open, and they get burglarized. And what seems to me, when I walk the streets and talk to people about burglaries in their area, invariably they do not have an alarm system," said Maiorana. Sounding like the retired Contra Costa College football coach he is, he

exhorted Orindans to install and then keep burglar alarm systems in good working order. "I've also been burglarized. That burglary happened about 35 years ago, and nothing has ever touched our house again because we have an alarm system."

Conversely, council also heard from frightened residents who have arrived home after work to find windows smashed or doors kicked in. "When I went up to get my mail and saw the guy in a red pickup truck, putting his arm in and taking my mail out and into his truck, I was so shocked that I failed to get the license plate," said Janet Reeves. "He turned and looked at me; he was a Caucasian guy with a round face and sandy hair, and he glared at me and I glared at him." She said police told her they might have caught the suspect had a camera been installed nearby.

"The first time we talked about these cameras after we had a rash of burglaries and the helicopters flying overhead last year, we – at the end of the first meeting – had enough money to buy a camera and one person specifically donated enough money to

put a camera on St. Stephens," said Karl Richtenberg. "And we were willing to buy a camera and gift it to the police department – at no cost to you guys. So, I don't think money should be a major concern. If people want to buy cameras for their neighborhoods, I don't see why you shouldn't allow it to happen."

If approved by council, such cameras might be permanently mounted on trees or signposts on public property, or installed initially in one police car or as part of a grouping of cameras that could be moved from one higher crime area to another. License plate photos would then be checked against "hot lists" – databases of felony arrest warrants, registered sex offenders, stolen vehicles or vehicles used during the commission of crimes.

In his report, available on the city's website, Orinda Police Chief Mark Nagel cited several benefits: improved stolen vehicle recovery, accident investigation, clarification of fuzzy witness data and officer safety. The chief also advised council that Lafayette, Piedmont and other cities using this technology are reporting improved arrest and conviction rates.

But a number of Orindans remain concerned about privacy, and a 2013 report by the American Civil Liberties Union may give credence to their fears. In "You Are Being Tracked: How License Plate Readers Are Being Used to Record Americans' Movements," the ACLU cautions that "more and more cameras, longer retention periods, and widespread sharing allow law enforcement agents to assemble the individual puzzle pieces of where we have been over time into a single, high-resolution image of our lives. The knowledge that one is subject to constant monitoring can chill the exercise of our cherished rights to free speech and association."

Reminding readers of the 20th century's illegal targeting by federal agencies of civil rights and anti-war activists, the report also states that many police departments nationwide are planning to substantially increase the number of cameras they operate. And it expresses the view that most government agencies are poorly controlling access to and deleting the data of innocent citizens. In comparison to the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department (CCSD) one-year data retention policy, the Ohio State Highway Patrol immediately deletes all non-hit captures. The city of Tiburon deletes "all license plate data after 30 days or less."

After probing Nagel, his CCSD boss and City Attorney Osa Wolff about how the cameras would be maintained and by whom, city indemnification policies and the likely impact of Freedom of Information Act requests on data access, council decided to continue the matter to a third public meeting.



Three Reconyx motion-activated cameras similar to the one pictured here have been operating on the private roads of the Orinda Downs neighborhood since early 2014. According to Orinda Police Chief Mark Nagel, "The only time their association provides photos to the Police Department is when there has been a crime or suspicious activity."
Photo provided

Orinda Action Day Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed to join the planning committee for Orinda Action Day, scheduled for April 18, or for the NorCal Kids Triathlon scheduled for Aug. 29. Contact Sue Severson for more details at sseverson@gmail.com or (925) 254-1679.

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Motion to Bring Housing Element Special Election to Voters Fails

By Laurie Snyder

At the close of every Orinda City Council meeting, council members are asked if they want to initiate new matters. While sometimes policy-related, these actions often recognize worthy citizens or social causes. On Dec. 15, newly elected Orinda City Council Member Eve Phillips used her powers to have council consider whether or not to put Orinda's General Plan Housing Element up for public vote. On Jan. 20, with Council Member Amy Worth excused due to illness, council debated the idea at length, analyzing everything from fiscal prudence to the legal consequences of a failed vote.

City Manager Janet Keeter presented information from Contra Costa Elections staff that the city would be charged a rate of \$2.50 to \$4.25 per voter for administering such an election – plus \$91,000 to print the lengthy Housing Element for the voter information packet.

City Planning Director Emmanuel Ursu explained the available ballot options. In response to continued assertions by members of the activist group Orinda Watch that the city has not received enough input on the Housing Element, Ursu also illustrated how and

when the city has reached out to educate and receive feedback. (See the *Lamorinda Weekly's* 2013-14 archives for coverage.)

The vote could have occurred in one of three ways: a council-sponsored initiative; a voter-sponsored referendum requiring the measure to be placed on a ballot – if supporters could collect valid signatures from 10 percent of Orinda's roughly 12,000 registered voters; or a council-sponsored advisory vote.

Staff noted in its report that all three were problematic. The results of the advisory format would not have even been binding on the council, and it would have taken council members several meetings to draft ballot language. When combined with requirements that the election be held 88 days or later from the order of election, the city might not have been able to adopt its Housing Element by May 31, as required under California law. Furthermore, the costs seemed prohibitive in light of Orinda's road repair woes – woes that could worsen if the city were to lose the hundreds of thousands of dollars it receives annually in outside agency transportation

funding because voters torpedoed the Housing Element.

Orindans could also be risking fines and lawsuits. The City of Pleasanton has forked over about \$5 million – the amount of Orinda's current reserve – for Housing Element problems. "And that does not even take into account the more immediate impact on our residents," said Council Member Victoria Smith. Many settlements prevented cities from doing busi-

ness. "We could have people out on Ivy Drive or any other street in Orinda who couldn't even replace their water heater because they couldn't get a building permit because the city didn't comply with state law."

Council members also heard again from residents pro and con. A handful of current and former Orinda Watch members echoed Phillips' assertions that the majority of Orinda residents distrust city

leaders and disapprove of how they have conducted Orinda's Housing Element updates. Phillips suggested later on that ballot language should ask voters "whether you would prefer that document [the fifth cycle Housing Element draft] or one that would be written by a citizen committee."

But others said those accusations were unfair and a special election is unwarranted.

... continued on page A9

Potential Costs of a Special Election

- County Elections Department Cost Per Voter: \$31,800 - \$54,000
- Voter Information Printing – Housing Element: \$91,000*
- Resulting Roads and Drains Funding Loss (potential): \$330,000+*

* Printing costs eliminated if materials posted online. If Housing Element voted down, possible loss or delay in infrastructure funding by outside agencies (Contra Costa Transportation Agency, et. al.).

Other Orinda projects in the pipeline:

- Battery Backup-Traffic Signal Controls (2015-16): \$20,000
- Oak Park-Donald Drive Pavement Rehabilitation: \$180,000**
- Pavement Management (small pothole patches): \$75,000/yr (roughly)
- St. Stephens Trail and Drainage Improvements: \$80,000***
- Seismic Retrofit-Bear Creek Road Bridge: \$720,000**
- Seismic Work-Miner Road Bridge (Right of Way expenses): \$35,000
- Urgent Repairs (big potholes, failed road segments): \$100,000 per year (roughly)

**Estimated cost. Project currently unfunded and not scheduled.

***Estimated cost. Project delayed until 2018 due to lack of funds.

Source: The Orinda Capital Improvement Plan 2014-2018 and other city sources.



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MORAGA \$849,000
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Walter Nelson CalBRE#01461463



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Nancy Stryker CalBRE#01290021



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Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, Feb. 4, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library Community Room
1500 Saint Mary's Road
Moraga, CA 94556
For meeting times and agendas,
visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors

Tuesday, Feb. 10, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107,
Administration Building,
651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and agendas,
visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

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Lafayette Task Force Imposes Its Will

By Nick Marnell

Service on a government task force often goes unnoticed and unrewarded. But a task force created by the city of Lafayette exacted its own notice at the county governing level, and the residents of Contra Costa County may soon be rewarded because of its efforts.

When the Board of Supervisors closed Lafayette's station 16 of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, the city formed an Emergency Services Task Force to investigate alternative delivery of fire and emergency medical service to its residents. After months of deliberation, the task force agreed to support station 46, a joint venture at the Lafayette-Orinda border between ConFire and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. During a discussion of the

Lafayette ambulance service that would be provided out of the new station – to be staffed by MOFD personnel – the complexities of ambulance exclusive operating areas arose.

In 2013 ConFire captain Gil Caravantes responded to an emergency medical call in Lafayette, and based on his analysis at the scene, Caravantes requested mutual aid from MOFD to transport the patient to the hospital. His action violated the contract between Contra Costa County and its ambulance provider, American Medical Response, in part because AMR holds the exclusive right to provide ambulance service in Lafayette.

Task force member Jim Cunha spoke of the need to change that section of the county ambulance contract, portions of which are available for competitive bid this year. "Station 46 should be able to be dispatched to medical calls in Lafayette," he said. "Include in the (request for proposal) the ability of the new ambulance vendor to be allowed to cross district boundaries."

The task force agreed, notified the county EMS director in October and submitted to the Board of Supervisors the following revised paragraph for

the county ambulance RFP draft: "In the interest of getting the quickest ambulance to the patient, (the Local Emergency Medical Services Agency) requires the Contractor to make a good faith effort to execute a satisfactory mutual aid agreement with the agencies responding from a neighboring jurisdiction. LEMSA will approve an appropriately structured agreement to use the closer ambulances."

"(The Caravantes) situation is the very scenario that this paragraph is attempting to address," said Ben Smith, ConFire battalion chief, EMS division.

Co-chair Brandt Andersson further explained the rationale behind the task force action. "I think that it is just common sense and something that public safety agencies do as a matter of course," he said. "We wanted to be sure that if the contract is won by a for-profit entity, that they would be held to the same standard of safety first, profit second."

"It is our contention that patients' lives are more important than invisible borders that separate fire districts," added co-chair Traci Reilly.

The supervisors unanimously ap-

proved the RFP, including the task force changes, on Jan. 13. The RFP went to the California EMS Authority for approval, and unless it determines the need for substantive changes in the document, bidding for the available portions of the county ambulance contract is expected to begin by April.

The contract will be awarded by the Board of Supervisors, which is also the governing body of ConFire, a likely bidder for that contract. Sharon Anderson, county counsel, issued a report which states that the board is not precluded from considering the district's bid just because it serves as the governing body of both entities.

"We are cognizant of the risks as to being both boards," said Supervisor Candace Andersen. "That is why we've requested an independent financial analysis of each bid as well as the hiring of two independent observers. We are committed to providing the highest level of emergency medical service at the best price."

And as implored by the Lafayette task force, to provide emergency medical service that embodies a standard of public safety over profit.

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ConFire Academy Graduates 15

Hopefully not coming to a neighborhood near you



ConFire's Denise Cannon administers the oath to the graduating class of Academy 47.

Photo Nick Marnell

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District held its graduation ceremony for the 15 firefighters of Academy 47 on Jan. 15 in Concord near the district training facility. While the event bore a formal, almost militaristic air early on, the tone relaxed as the new firefighters satirized actions of their superiors, and family members pinned their heroes at the conclusion of the festivities.

Retired De La Salle High School football coach Bob Ladouceur, subject of the 2014 hit movie "When the

Game Stands Tall," delivered the keynote address. He talked about the similarities between football and firefighting, stressing the necessity for teamwork and how critical it is to watch each others' backs at all times. He also said that he applied to become a firefighter many years ago, "but I failed the written test," he confessed. His daughter learned from his mistake, though, as she works as a firefighter with the Berkeley Fire Department.

"These firefighters should be proud that they have passed all the

tests and rigors of our hiring and recruit processes, and they are now on the street serving the citizens of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District," said Fire Chief Jeff Carman. "I am confident that our academy staff has prepared them to pass their probationary period and we welcome these new firefighters to the district."

Probationary firefighters Peter Doppe and Natividad Porras are assigned to Lafayette stations 15 and 17, respectively. *N. Marnell*

Moraga

Plan for New Canyon Bridge Takes Shape

... continued from page A5

The total cost of the bridge is estimated at \$3.4 million. The town secured a federal grant for 88.5 percent of the total cost, and is required to fund \$400,000. Kwan added that the Contra Costa Transportation Authority (CCTA) might help with matching funds.

The new bridge will continue to have two car lanes, with added bicycle lanes on both sides and a raised pedestrian walkway on the side where Canyon Road meets the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail.

The new bridge will be significantly higher than the current one to incorporate 100-year flood data

as well as East Bay Municipal Utility District water discharge volume. In order to create a smooth transition onto the higher bridge, the road on both sides will be reconstructed.

One resident voiced concern about having a wide bridge with bike lanes that dump down onto a very narrow two-lane road. "That's very hazardous," he said. Moraga Chief of Police Bob Priebe noted that as far as he knows there has been only one collision on the bridge involving a horse trailer. He added that his concern is for bicyclists heading south, especially when they reach

the narrow turn bearing right on Canyon Road. "I would like to see us have advisory signs moving bicyclists from Canyon Road to the (Lafayette-Moraga) trail that comes back down (onto Canyon) where there is better clearance."

The construction, which will be staggered to keep one traffic lane open at all times, is scheduled to begin in 2016. Traffic will be regulated by a traffic light. More information is available on the town's website at moraga.ca.us/canyonbridge. A comprehensive Q&A is available on the bridge project page.



Letters to the Editor

Share your thoughts with our community! Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. **email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com**; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Editor:

The supporters of a revitalized downtown overlook the many side effects and collateral damage that would be involved in demolishing and rebuilding Orinda Village, and also overlook the drawbacks of a "revitalized" Village. How would Orinda obtain a revitalized downtown? Property would have to be acquired over time from the many owners. While that is happening, existing businesses would close and new businesses would not open. Our local, friendly, family-owned businesses would be forced to close. There would be years of construction noise, dust, and interference with traffic flow to the remaining businesses. What would the end result be? Instead of family-owned businesses paying affordable rents and charging affordable prices, we would end up with more expensive chain stores. We would have more traffic on the only street through the village, and parking problems, which already exist in the downtown around the Orinda theater. Parking meters would be in our future. Look at "revitalized" Lafayette. The costs of the new construction, including underground parking, will be enormous. The developer will have to charge high rents to make a profit. Only chain or specialty high end stores charging us high prices will be able to afford those rents. It is ironic for the pro-development forces to point to the empty Phairs building, when it was their efforts that helped scuttle the proposed Montessori school, which the community desired. And before we add more housing, let's first wait and see the effect of all of the recently-constructed housing on our quality of life -- on parking, traffic, schools and shopping. I prefer the current village, which serves the community and which will evolve slowly. There is easy access to our community park. I can conveniently park my car when I need to pick up a prescription at Rite Aid, eat lunch at Geppetto's, or obtain take out from the Szechwan Chinese Restaurant. We can always drive the short distance to Lafayette or Walnut Creek for an expensive meal or a high end retail product. Let's not destroy Orinda's village character in the guise of revitalizing it.

Nick Waranoff
Orinda

Editor:

In his letter of 1-14-15, Tom Trowbridge said: "Housing has been well established as an appropriate use of real estate in villages for centuries." Tom overlooks or ignores that this "establishment" was formed in medieval times. We now have the wonderful freedom of auto-

mobiles. Orinda does not need or want low income or high density housing. Housing prices should be set by supply and demand, left to the individual discretion of the individual owners of that land. All proposed or finished high density housing in Orinda does not have adequate parking for the residents to park their cars. This is not an accident. Central "planners" want people out of their cars so they are dependent on public transportation. Mr. Towbridge is resistant to change as well as progress. The freedom of the automobile is the future and is imperative of a free people. If you fly over the U.S. you will see this country is empty. We do not need to huddle together like medieval peasants. Democrats are seeking to impose this on us simply so they can control us.

Henry R. Pinney
Orinda

Editor:

As a long-time resident of Orinda, I totally understand why the City of Lafayette supports the plan to replace Orinda's Honey Hill Fire Station with a new station on El Nido Ranch Road at Lorinda Lane in Lafayette. The county closed their station in NW Lafayette nearly three years ago. Since then, the residents of that area have depended on our Honey Hill Fire Station to provide emergency services. If the new (very expensive) station is built, response times to NW Lafayette will be reduced by several minutes -- at no cost to Lafayette residents. It's a great deal -- for Lafayette!

However, the real "costs" will be borne by the taxpayers of the MOFD (especially parts of North Orinda) who will have their already sub-standard response times increased by two minutes. The MOFD Board hopes to save money on operations with this plan, but what is the real cost? What is the value of a life lost while waiting for help to arrive or the value of a house that burns down because MOFD couldn't get there within its own 6-minute response time goal?

I understand why Lafayette would support this move. What I don't understand is why any resident of the MOFD would do the same. I, personally, have no desire to fund a station that will be located in Lafayette and will primarily benefit Lafayette at the expense of the residents of Orinda and Moraga. For more information visit the following web site: www.savehoneyhillfirestation.com

John Robertson
Orinda

Orinda Motion to Bring Housing Element Special Election to Voters Fails

... continued from page A7

"I have been here several times suggesting that, as I participated in the fourth cycle, we came up with a good document. Everybody agreed with it," said Dan DeBusschere, who added that the fifth cycle should have been "a slam dunk" after the amount of work already done. "I urge you to move on from this issue," said Valerie Sloven. "You've bent over backwards to gather input." Exchanges between council and Orinda Watch members, working line by line to edit drafts, are audible on public meeting recordings.

"I think that the development and submittal of a Housing Element is a

clear example of the purpose of representative government," observed Judd Hammond. "By virtue of the election process, our city council members have been delegated the responsibility of and the authority to act on behalf of the citizens of Orinda in precisely this sort of activity. Developing a complex plan such as the Housing Element update requires gathering and assessing large amounts of information, including input and feedback from citizens of the city, identifying and evaluating various alternatives and plans of action and, finally, deciding on a plan

that's expected to best meet the needs of the city as a whole while also meeting external constraints, such as state and county mandates and regulations. This type of back and forth activity, often with several iterations, cannot realistically be accomplished through an election."

Too long to reprint here, the deliberation can be heard online at www.cityoforinda.org. Smith and Orr spoke of opportunities lost as the city has repeatedly back burned key issues to address the Housing Element. Phillips' motion died without a second.

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Moraga Moraga Citizens Network

... continued from page A5

To see a staff report about an issue, residents had to make an appointment with staff to take a look in person, and only summaries of the meeting minutes were available on the town's website, months after the meetings.

Schwartz called a meeting with a few friends, including Beans, and they started discussing what they thought was needed in town. Moraga Citizens Network (MCN) was born, with the simple objective of "promoting participatory democracy in Moraga."

Schwartz presented the project to the town council and received a cold reception from then mayor Mike Majchrzak, but this didn't stop the group. They began attending all the meetings and spreading information through their email newsletter. "In 2007, during his State of the Town address, Mike (Majchrzak) said in front of everybody that he wanted to apologize to Edy Schwartz, that he did not believe me and thought the group had an agenda, and that he was wrong and hoped everyone would support them," says Schwartz.

"Our first big information campaign came with the 2006 election," remembers Beans.

"We printed and sent our first mailing to all voters with a Q&A answered by all the candidates." The mailing was funded privately by MCN members. MCN also organized its first candidates' night in partnership with the League of Women Voters. Schwartz, Beans and a few friends advertized the forum by going door-to-door to every retailer in both shopping centers and asking to put flyers in their windows.

MCN members continued to participate in meetings, listen and sometimes comment, especially when issues dealt with freedom of speech or information for the public. In 2007 the website Moragacitizensnetwork.org was up and running and by 2008, MCN had 500 members. "We always had a table at the Pear Festival, at the Fourth of July, and spread the word that way about our activities," says Beans.

Then in 2008 there was a heated battle in Moraga, not only between council member candidates, but also about ballot measures that would affect land use. Knowing that the stakes were high, some people in town started questioning the neutrality of MCN. Beans welcomed

them to participate in the draft of the questions that were going to be asked at the Open Space Initiative forum that MCN organized at Saint Mary's College with proponents of each measure. It was also the year the Moraga Center Specific Plan's report was produced. The group videotaped the report and made DVD copies that were available in the library and other public places. *Lamorinda Weekly* began taping the candidates' nights and making them available online.

Now whenever the public needs to be informed about an upcoming meeting, initiative or workshop, staff sends the information to Beans for publication in the newsletter, MCN Link. In recent years, information about Saint Mary's College and service group activities were added to the newsletter. "MCN provides such a critical service to the community since citizens can rely on it for providing unbiased and transparent information," says Town Manager Jill Keimach. "Ellen (Beans) is one of the first people we call when we need to get the word out about something quickly." She adds that MCN's candidate forum provides all residents the opportunity to get to know and hear from candidates, again in a manner that is "non-political and unbiased."

The group's objective for the next decade? Reach the next generation of Moragans.

Beans and Schwartz acknowledge that a lot of progress has been made to provide information in town. Agendas, staff reports and minutes (including audio and, soon, video) are available online and the town publishes "About Town," which succinctly explains what happened from a civic perspective. "But it is hard to get information to the people on complex issues," says Schwartz, whose current objective is to get younger generations informed and involved in the land use questions the town will debate this year.

The Moraga Town Council will honor MCN tonight with a proclamation thanking the group for all it has done to expand participatory democracy in Moraga. The current MCN board includes Ellen Beans, Larry Beans, Mike Bernhardt, Tory Courtney, Denise Duff, Janet Forman, John Haffner and Tom Marnane. To sign up for the MCN newsletter, go to moragacitizensnetwork.org.



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Business

The Transformation of Star Pilates

By Sophie Braccini



Andrea Ruotsi teaches a barre class.

Star Pilates and Fitness in Moraga is undergoing a complete transformation under the new leadership of Andrea Ruotsi. The young mother lives in Moraga with her 5-year-old son, Oliver, and has the energy, training and business sense to make the studio a big success. She is adding classes and services that cater to a clientele who are looking for fun and stimulation in a casual atmosphere. Definitely not your average suburbanite, Ruotsi also has an interior design practice.

Ruotsi's business goals for Star Pilates are lofty: adding barre, yoga, TRX and spin classes, while providing morning childcare, making sure that the relaxed atmosphere is preserved, and the existing clients who come for Reformer or Pilates Mat classes don't feel pushed out of the way.

"I bought the studio last November," she says with a big smile. "I thought that this place had a lot of potential for development." Ruotsi was raised in Alamo and has lived in many different places in the United States including Reno, where she got her interior design degree, as well as New York and Los Angeles where she worked in the design industry. She came back to the Bay Area when she decided to start a family. Throughout her life, Ruotsi was athletic, participating in soccer, track and a lot of skiing. She started teaching fitness classes in high school as an extension of her summer job as a lifeguard at Livorna pool in Alamo. She's continued teaching fitness in tandem with her interior design career, steadily building her body of knowledge and experience.

"I loved teaching so much that I always knew someday I would have my own place," Ruotsi says. "I love barre classes but I didn't want to own a barre franchise, with someone limiting what I can do. I think that the healthiest thing for everyone's body

is to mix different exercises." She started teaching barre over 10 years ago, first in Marin County, then San Francisco, before coming back to the East Bay two and a half years ago. "If someone comes to my class regularly three times a week, I guarantee that person will transform their body within three months," she says.

The expansion of classes and services started at Star Pilates are all with the goal to better serve the needs of her clientele, such as opening the morning daycare that runs during the week or selling a selection of sports attire.

On the business side, she has partnered with her family. Her father is the behind-the-scenes finance officer of the company. "He was an executive and is now retired. This business endeavor is his way of fulfilling his dream of having a business, vicariously through me, and we've become very close in the process," she says. Ruotsi has always had a business ac-

men. Even when she was working for Anthropology in Los Angeles creating displays, besides the esthetics, she also had the drive to grow the business. "I would walk my stock room every morning and see what I owned a lot of," she remembers, "and then I would create displays around those units."

With Star Pilates, her goal is to make her space in the Moraga Center more visible. One of her first changes was the barre room that had no natural light and felt like a storage area. She removed the panels masking the very large windows, replaced the carpet with wood, and installed mirrors as well as beautiful red oak bars with custom-made stainless steel brackets.

Ruotsi's goal is to offer between five to eight different fitness classes a day. She won't touch the main lobby where the Reformer classes are located and she is continuing to employ the master teachers who are the foundation of Star Pilates. "I don't want to disrupt the existing classes; I don't want to lose the intimacy of the business, either," she says. "I'm not looking to pack the seams."

Ruotsi now offers a Sunday yoga class and is looking for more yoga instructors to offer power yoga. She also wants to add space to have a dedicated spin room and possibly locker and shower rooms.

Ruotsi continues to run Flutter Interiors, her design business. That, coupled with raising her son, makes for a very full and busy life indeed.

Information about classes is available online at www.starpilatesandfitness.com.

Star Pilates and Fitness
1460 Moraga Road, Ste. F, Moraga
(925) 376-7500

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

Orinda's In Forma Integral Fitness Celebrates 20 Years

Andrea Colombu started In Forma in 1995, starting with the idea of blending Eastern and Western approaches to fitness. The Italian man, who had been involved in semi-professional sports in his country, moved to California in 1986. In 1988 he went back to college to study anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, exercise science and nutrition. In 1990, he started his personal training career (AFAA & ACE certified), earned a certification in massage therapy from the McKinnon Institute and started his private practice. "We expanded the studio twice, doubling its size to offer all of our classes," says Colombu. "We offer pilates, barre, yoga, strength and cardio classes, nutrition and TRX." Colombu's ambition is to offer tools and practices for both the body and the mind. He went back to school in 2003 for a psychology degree and has made his meditation practice a big part of his life. "I started teaching meditation in the yoga studio in 2014," he says. Some of his clients have been with him for the past 20 years and new ones come in all the time, ranging in age from 13 to 93 years old. He says that he's seen a shift in what people demand over the last 20 years. "The awareness has increased, people want to live healthy lives, and they also want a meaningful lifestyle." In Forma also holds a Parkinson's working group (Colombu's mom had Parkinson's) with a specialized trainer. In Forma is located at 23A Orinda Way, Orinda. For info, call (925) 254-6877 or visit www.informaorinda.com.

from front page

The Lamorinda Woman Behind Champion Dogs

... continued from page A1



Judie Howard works with her dogs on differing commands. Photo Andy Scheck

After Howard won her first Utility title – an American Kennel Club advanced obedience trial category – with her first two dogs, she felt confident enough to start her own training school in Moraga in 1974. "We first used the tennis courts at Campolindo, then the gym," she remembers. She

trained at Acalanes High School, Del Valle High School and Saint Mary's College. Soon word spread about her training. "At some point we trained 350 dogs a week," she remembers. She had Novice classes that she ran with the help of one assistant for every four dogs, and had as much as

45 dogs at a time. "Within 15 minutes we could get every one of them to sit and not bark," she remembers.

Howard focuses on praise. "I'm very consistent, I am lavish with praise, and I set very clear boundaries," she says. "I don't punish, and when I raise the level of difficulty I explain to the dogs why I do it."

With the help of her husband, Gary Howard, she built her own training site on her property 20 years ago. "Training is very good for the dogs, both physically and mentally," says Debbie Hughes of Moraga, who's been working with Howard for two years. She brings her Papillon Remy for one-on-one training because he is very shy. "He was afraid of the

business briefs

Carefree Moves Celebrated

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Photo provided

Carefree Moves was recently recognized by Score (Service Corps of Retired Executives, an affiliate of the Small Business Administration) and nominated for an honorable mention as Outstanding Small Business Owned by Women. Since the two owners Dee Vance and Cynthia Nolan purchased the Lafayette-based business in 2009, it has been growing steadily. They say word-of-mouth is the reason for their success. They remove all the stress from moving and tailor their service to their clients' needs, from simple packing and unpacking help, to hand-holding throughout the moving process. "We work with all kinds of clients," says Vance, "from busy families, to people downsizing." Vance adds that their bigger assets are the 20 to 30 women they employ. "They are local women, professional organizers and packers who love to help people and be of service," says Vance. "They love to do a job that's out of the corporate world and that's project oriented." Packing, transport, un-packing and setting up the new home takes one to four days, depending on the size of the home. The pre-packing is a different story: it can take much longer if people are moving to a much smaller space. "We help them choose what they want to keep, what will be donated or recycled, and we employ men with a truck to transport everything," says Vance. The team has many emotional stories to tell, such as the husband who took his family for a vacation before the move and secretly hired Carefree Moves to do the job while they were gone. "When they came back and discovered their new place ready to live in, including the kids' rooms, the wife said that it was the best thing he had ever done for his family," recalls Vance. The ladies also love to work for the Warriors when they trade a player. "In that case we do only the unpacking for them, but we completely set up their homes, including their closets, the kitchen, hanging the pictures, and we even put fresh flowers on the table," says Vance. Carefree Moves charges by the hour and Vance says that a complete move costs between \$2,000 and \$4,000. Since 2009 they have moved hundreds of families in the Bay Area.

News from the Three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

Ribbon Cutting at 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29 at the new location of Bay Sotheby's International Realty, 3725 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

The Marquis Business Person of the Year annual dinner honoring Leila Douglass of Douglass Designs will be held at 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 30 at the Lafayette Park Hotel and Spa. The evening also includes the introduction of the chamber's 2015 board of directors, incoming president Debbie Cooper of Mechanics Bank, and the "State of the City" address by Mayor Brandt Andersson. Reservations can be made online at lafayettechamber.org or by calling (925) 284-7404.

Ribbon Cutting at 4 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5 for Merrill Gardens at Lafayette, 1010 Second Street.

Moraga

Welcome breakfast for chamber members starting at 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 6 at Terzetto in the Moraga Shopping Center.

Save the date for the Business Person of the Year dinner honoring Moraga Royale's Dianne Wilson at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24 at the Moraga Country Club. Tickets are \$50; reservations required by contacting Kathe@moragachamber.org.

Orinda

Save the date for the Chamber Luncheon at 11:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 20 at the Orinda Country Club. The Orinda Chamber of Commerce will present annual awards recognizing outstanding contributions to the chamber and the Orinda business community. Tickets are \$30; contact Candy at info@orindachamber.org.

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

Levels of Competition in AKC Standard Obedience

According to the American Kennel Club, there are three levels of competition in Standard Obedience: Novice, Open and Utility. Novice is for the dog just getting started and includes exercises such as heel on leash and figure eight, as well as standing for examination. The Open level includes more complicated exercises, and Utility is the third and highest level of obedience competition, involving more complicated tasks including scent discrimination and signal exercises. To achieve the Obedience Trial Champion title, dogs with UD titles must win 100 points and a first-place in Utility B and Open B, plus a third first-place win in either class, under three different judges. For more information, visit http://www.apps.akc.org/classic/events/obedience/getting_started.cfm.

Deficit Spending Continues for Local High Schools

By Cathy Tyson

At a recent Acalanes Union High School District governing board meeting in Lafayette the budget update for the 2015-16 school year included a “budget adjustment target of (negative) \$3,103,000 to maintain a positive fiscal outlook and balanced budget in the district.” What’s not immediately clear is that “budget adjustment target” is a euphemism for anticipated deficit.

The total projected spending for the next school year is slated to be \$62.783 million to provide an education for students at Acalanes, Campolindo, Miramonte and Las Lomas high schools as well as the Acalanes Center for Independent Study.

This will be the second year in a row of red ink for the district, after logging a \$5.5 million deficit for the 2014-15 school year. To address the current shortfall, the district has a hiring and spending freeze in place to reduce the size of the deficit.

Overall it’s been a rough transition to the Local Control Funding Formula, or LCFF, which started with the 2013-14 school year. LCFF is a new statewide funding formula that replaces the old system of general purpose funding from the state based on complex historical formulas. Districts receive more money for high-needs students based on counts of low-income, English learner and foster youth students. The problem is that the AUHSD has very few students who fall into those categories and the base funding level is inadequate.

In this first step of many to craft a budget for 2015-16, the district is actively looking at local and state revenue options to fill the gap, including Parent Club and foundation resources, community support, facility use fees and adult education consortia. In addition, there’s an assumption that LCFF revenue will grow due to pro-

jected increased tax revenue from the state and projected enrollment growth.

“This district is not going to be fully funded by the LCFF,” said AUHSD Superintendent John Nickerson. In March and in May of 2015 the district anticipates getting more complete financial information to further refine the budget.

While noting the uptick in state revenue due to a robust economy is a “pleasant surprise,” according to the superintendent, even with an anticipated bump in LCFF funding, that still leaves a projected \$3.1 million problem for the 2015-16 school year.

On the table for consideration to address the shortfall is reduction in maintenance and operations, possible anticipated retirements, and potential cuts or elimination of adult education programs.

In addition, Associate Superintendent of Administrative Services Kevin French was looking at master

scheduling options and outlined a new framework for electives. Typically, students get their first choice of elective; he proposed a shift in how the master schedule is built so that students may have to go with their second choice elective. It is possible there will be 10 fewer elective sections in 2015-16, said French.

He also said he thinks it’s possible to make slight classified instructional assistant reductions at each school site for the next school year. There’s a specific multi-step protocol, if need be, to make reductions in certified employees or teachers.

“We have to do everything we can,” said board member Nancy Kendzierski on the belt tightening. “This is distressing for a lot of people,” said new board member Bob Hockett, a former teacher. “I didn’t think we’d be talking about this at my second meeting.” The governing board is legally required to adopt the annual budget on or before July 1.

Complaints About Sex Ed Instruction

Although there’s usually an element of drama when discussing district budgetary concerns, during the public comment portion of the AUHSD board meeting quite a number of opponents and supporters came out once again to share their opinions about the district using Planned Parenthood instructors to teach a comprehensive sex education course that includes discussing HIV/AIDS prevention. The district has used Planned Parenthood as a consultant for over a decade. Parents are given notice of the course and can request their students opt-out. A group of passionate citizens, including representatives from NOISE (No to Irresponsible Sex Education) urged the school board to remove Planned Parenthood as the provider of sex education instruction, claiming the organization “promotes certain behaviors and promiscuity.” Another person commented that “it comes down to prayer; sins exist in the world, sins of the flesh.”

Another commented, “Religion has no place in school. Whatever happened to separation of church and state?” Citing a marked drop in teen pregnancy, a parent of two teenagers called improvements in comprehensive sex education including contraceptive use “incredible news.” The topic will be on the governing board’s agenda in April or May; in the meantime, if the item is not on the agenda, governing board members are prohibited from addressing the issue.

Lafayette

Photos Capture a “Day in the Life”

... On the shortest day of the year



“Stargazer: Astronomer David DeBoer” by Carol Reif Photos provided

The Public Art Committee held a reception on Jan. 26 to celebrate the abundant creativity of local photographers with their neighbors, family and friends at the official unveiling of works submitted to the Winter Solstice “A Day in the Life” photo contest. This is the contest’s second event. The first “Day in the Life” was held in the summer during the longest day of the year.

All the photos, including the five chosen for a juror’s award and one that received special recognition will be displayed in the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center for the next few months. The Public Art Committee had a difficult time choosing, since all the entries were remarkable, said Juliet Hansen, City of Lafayette Public Art Committee.

Juror’s Awards go to: Kim Crossley Overaa for “Love at the Community Garden,” James Meehan for “The River,” Laurel Palmer for “Eye on the Sky,” Carol Reif for “Stargazer: Astronomer David DeBoer,” and Stu Selland for “Gateway.”

Special Recognition went to April Logan for her untitled photograph. The Community Hall is open most Monday evenings for civic meetings and at other times for special events, check for specific hours with the library (925) 385-2280. C. Tyson



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Kindergarten Registration for the 2015-16 School Year

Will your child start kindergarten in 2015? To be eligible for kindergarten, a child must turn 5 years old by Sept. 1. To be eligible for the transitional

kindergarten program, a child must have his or her fifth birthday between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2.

Lafayette

Registration for kindergarten/transitional kindergarten took place at the district's four elementary schools on Jan. 20-21. For more information visit the district's website, www.lafsd.k12.ca.us.

For more information visit the district's website, www.moraga.k12.ca.us.

Moraga

Online registration for incoming kindergarten/transitional kindergarten students in Moraga opened Jan. 6 – go to https://moragaesd.asp.aeries.net/air to begin the registration process.

Orinda

Kindergarten and transitional kindergarten registration for the 2015-16 school year will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Thursday, Feb. 2-5 at each of the elementary schools:

Parents can complete their child's registration at the district's three elementary schools on Thursday, Feb. 5 and Friday, Feb. 6. Registration times are based on last names – those beginning with A-L should plan to register between 9 a.m. and noon; last names beginning with M-Z should register between noon and 2 p.m.

Del Rey Elementary
 25 El Camino Moraga
 (925) 258-3099

Glorietta Elementary
 15 Martha Road
 (925) 254-8770

Sleepy Hollow Elementary
 20 Washington Lane
 (925) 254-8711

Wagner Ranch Elementary
 350 Camino Pablo
 (925) 258-0016

To print out and complete the majority of registration forms, please access the "Registration" page and to identify the "home" elementary school, please access the "Attendance Area" on the district's website, www.orindaschools.org.

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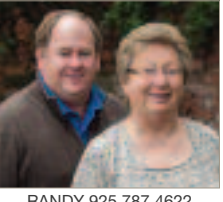















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New App Creates Smooth Ride for Lamorinda Casual Carpoolers

By Sophie Braccini



Commuter Kevin Newby uses a new casual carpool service to get a ride into San Francisco as Alex Mooradian and Zach Burghardt make sure everything is OK. Photo Sophie Braccini

San Francisco commuters didn't mind standing in the cold for a few minutes at the Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church parking lot in Orinda recently before hopping in cars that were heading across the bay. These Moraga and Orinda residents are pioneering a new service through an app called Commutr that guarantees riders and drivers they'll find matches in 10 minutes or less on their morning commute to San Francisco. After a few hiccups in its first week before the holidays, Commutr is now up and running, and developers are already thinking of expanding to new locations.

"This is better than BART," says Laurie Tennant from Orinda. "You can't get parking after 7:30 at BART, the drop spot is closer to my office (she works south of Market), and it's nice to have a guaranteed seat!" Other commuters were equally enthusiastic about the service. Moraga resident Jon Waide says it's more regular than the bus. Roberto Castillo, also from Moraga, likes that the evening shuttle that brings you back to your car from BART is available every 10 minutes, compared to the bus's 40-minute intervals.

During this initial stage, commuters or drivers who have never used the service before are greeted at the pick-up location by Moraga resident Alex Mooradian or one of his partners to set things up. Commuters

should already have downloaded the app on their iPhones – the android version should be available within a month – on the website (www.getcommutr.com) or on iTunes, and registered for the time slots they need to pick up commuters, if they are a driver, or need to be picked up. "It is critical that people register with the app, so we can guarantee the pick-up time," says Mooradian.

A glitch happened the first week when they had difficulty matching drivers and passengers every 10 minutes. So to remedy this Commutr is now only taking a few drivers at a time and adding paid drivers to pick up passengers. "We have a waiting list of drivers," explains Mooradian. "As the number of people (using the service) grows, we'll retire the black cars (paid drivers who can wait as needed) and add more commuters."

Commutr is a full-time business for Mooradian and his partners Sorin Neacsu, the CTO, Zach Burghardt, the designer, software engineer Ovi Roatis and Mooradian's brother-in-law, John Slack. "I had been using the casual carpool in Orinda for two years and in the back of my mind I kept thinking there must be a better way of doing this with the help of technology," says Mooradian.

The New Yorker moved to the Bay Area eight years ago and became

an entrepreneur. He has already started and sold two businesses and after the last one, Ready Force, was acquired by Looksharp, he decided to tackle the Lamorinda commute with former Ready Force colleagues.

"We have many requests to expand the service," says the young Moraga dad. They are considering adding a pick-up site in Moraga, another one in Orinda, one in Lafayette, Walnut Creek or Berkeley, as well as a drop-off in Oakland. They are also looking at expanding hours to 8:30 a.m. – the current window is from 7 to 8 a.m. The first two San Francisco drop-off locations are at the corner of Fremont and Howard streets, or the corner of Front and Pine streets.

The cost for the service is \$3 a day. "It costs much less than BART parking plus the ticket," says Mooradian. Of the total cost, \$2 per person goes to the driver, and \$1 to Commutr. "People have told us that we should charge more because they want us to stay in business," Mooradian adds with a big smile.

"After a while there won't need to be anybody here to make sure that people are getting into the right cars," adds Mooradian. "People will log in their times in the app, their pick-up and drop-off spots, and the program will create the groups in 10 minute intervals." The app is available on the company's website at www.getcommutr.com.

Pigeon Deaths in Lamorinda Linked to Avian Parasite

By Cathy Dausman

Like a scene from a Hitchcock movie, birds are dying in Lamorinda. At least one flock of approximately 30 band-tailed pigeons in Orinda has already been devastated, says Dr. Guthrum Purdin of Lindsay Wildlife Museum in Walnut Creek. "These birds look sick," he said. "It's upsetting for people to see."

The California native bird with an already low reproduction rate – single births happen only two or three times a year – is experiencing an outbreak of Trichomonosis, a disease caused by a single-celled

microscopic protozoan parasite, Trichomonas gallinae.

"It was driving me crazy," said Orinda resident Leeann Brady, who wondered if the deaths of the pigeons were caused by poisoning.

"It's definitely in the Orinda and Lafayette area," agreed Krysta Rogers of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Rogers is an environmental scientist and avian specialist who visited the affected area Jan. 16. She says the band-tailed pigeons are typically found in higher eleva-

tions in oak woods and conifer forests. They feed on acorns, eating them whole. The disease causes lesions near the mouth restricting their ability to feed and they die of starvation or suffocation.

The disease spreads readily when birds flock during winter months and generally dissipates as the pigeons pair off during mating season. Rogers said the disease Trichomonas gallinae is strictly an avian parasite and will not spread to humans or mammals. ... continued on page B4



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Campo Alum Paints, Sells Beautiful Artwork

By Diane Claytor



Bridgette Thornton paints in her studio at California College of the Arts.

Photo provided

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It's unlikely that many up-and-coming artists sell their first paintings before they're old enough to toast their success with a glass of champagne. Moraga's Bridgette Thornton did just that. But then, Thornton's incredible artistic talent is complemented by both her entrepreneurial spirit and her moxie.

A recent graduate of California College of the Arts (CCA), the 23-year-old painter grew up in Moraga and credits the local public schools for both teaching her the art form and supporting her passion for it. "Camino Pablo was where I remember first being introduced to painting and drawing," Thornton said. "I was able to develop my love of art just by attending the public schools and taking the art classes they offered." A family trip to San Francisco's Museum of Modern Art solidified Thornton's passion. "I was completely taken in by the power of painting," she noted.

Art classes at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School and Campolindo High School helped perfect Thornton's abilities. Pre-college summer programs at CCA intensified her enthusiasm. Jill Langston, Campolindo's visual arts teacher and a role model for Thornton, strongly encouraged her. "Bridgette's work was outstanding; she always had a lot of initiative – she was open-minded with her own unique style and personal vision," Langston said.

Art is what kept the very personable Thornton calm, particularly in high school. "Art is a great emotional outlet," she explained. "It's so relaxing, so therapeutic – especially when there are so many academic pressures on high school kids."

When it came time to apply to colleges, Thornton was torn; she couldn't decide if she should attend a state school where she'd get both a good education and great social experience, or try for an art school to pursue the career she really wanted to have. With the encouragement of her parents and Langston, she chose CCA where, she said, the "art programs help you learn to apply these talents to real world experiences."

Academic classes at CCA are

"taught through an artistic lens," Thornton stated. She attended a New York studio residency program where she met with practicing artists, as well as art collectors and art curators. The grand finale at CCA is the senior art exhibition where you "take over gallery space, market your art, and invite people to attend."

Thornton's senior art exhibition was in November and, by that time, displaying her art for public viewing was already old hat. "People in Moraga are so business savvy and I learned from many of them that I could turn my passion into a career if I wanted to. And I always wanted to be in charge of my own well-being," Thornton said. With this knowledge and her entrepreneurial spirit, while still in college, Thornton created a website, showcasing her pieces. And then, taking it a step further, she began contacting small local restaurants to see if they would exhibit her artwork. "I wanted to work with an audience that's not part of the art world," she explained. "And sometimes it's difficult selling a painting from a website – people want to see what they're buying, want to see the scale and quality of the piece." Some restaurants said no, but two – Lafayette's Chow and Berkeley's Rick and Ann's – both agreed. Thornton sold six paintings – not bad for a college sophomore.

Thornton's artistic focus is on floral works. "I love the organic shape

of the forms. Flowers are also great vessels for expressing color – it allows me to play with color in an interesting way," she said. Her most recent paintings are of floral fields where "flowers expand over the entire canvas. Your eyes are led all over the painting." She also enjoys taking photos of the various places she loves to visit around the Bay Area and then paints from these pictures. She admits, however, that painting from a photo is very different than painting from what you're actually seeing. "Your emotions in the moment can be translated more when painting directly from what you're seeing because there's no filter blocking your interaction with space," she said.

With school behind her, Thornton is now looking toward her future, aware that there are many directions in which she can go. She hopes to continue showing her paintings in the Bay Area and then perhaps expand to other locales; she'd love to collaborate with an interior company that would showcase her work or turn her pieces into textiles or other sellable goods. "It's always good to set goals for yourself," she said. "It keeps me going. Being a working artist is not an easy thing to do so I need to have goals to work towards."

Don't be surprised if, the next time you're enjoying a meal at a local restaurant, you admire a beautiful painting and see Bridgette Thornton's name attached to it.



One of Thornton's "Field of Flowers" paintings.

Image provided

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Two Lafayette Students Are Showcase Winners

By Diane Claytor



"Heal the World" by Rachel Zhang

Photos provided



Rachel Zhang

If you were asked to complete this sentence: "The World Would Be a Better Place if..." how would you respond? What if you were asked to illustrate your answer with a drawing, photo, dance or music composition? That's exactly what thousands of kindergartners through 12th graders

nationwide focused on recently when they participated in the National PTA's annual Reflections program. This arts recognition and achievement program, which began in 1969, is designed to encourage students to explore, participate in and be excited about the arts.

More than 100 Lafayette Elementary School (LES) student entries were submitted in the six categories named by the PTA: visual arts, photography, literature, dance choreography, film production and music composition. Ann Huchingson and Karen Moe, co-chairs of the program for LES, were very happy to see such an enthusiastic response this year. "What's really great is seeing the kids expressing themselves on their own terms and in their own way," Huchingson said.

Entries are judged by local residents who do not have children at LES. This year, 30 entries were se-

lected to move to the next level, which is the Las Trampas Creek Council (LTCC) Showcase, consisting of entries from eight local elementary schools. Two of these LES artists were the winners in their respective categories, moving them up to present at the District Showcase from 1 to 3 p.m. Jan. 31 at Alhambra High School in Martinez.

Rachel Zhang, a fifth grader at LES, won the LTCC's Visual Arts, Intermediate Category with her painting, "Heal the World." As she explained it, "The world is quite wonderful already, but we can make it better by protecting our animals, donating to people in need, keeping world peace, using more green energy, recycling, and planting more trees to replace the ones we've cut down."

Eight-year old Arthur Tkachenko, an LES second grader, won the Music Composition, Primary Category, with his original opus, "A Change of Life." Arthur, who has only been playing the piano for about a year, said, "In my piece, one person treats another person how he would like to be treated himself, like a mirror."

And now it's time for Lamorinda students to start planning for next year's theme: "Let Your Imagination Fly."

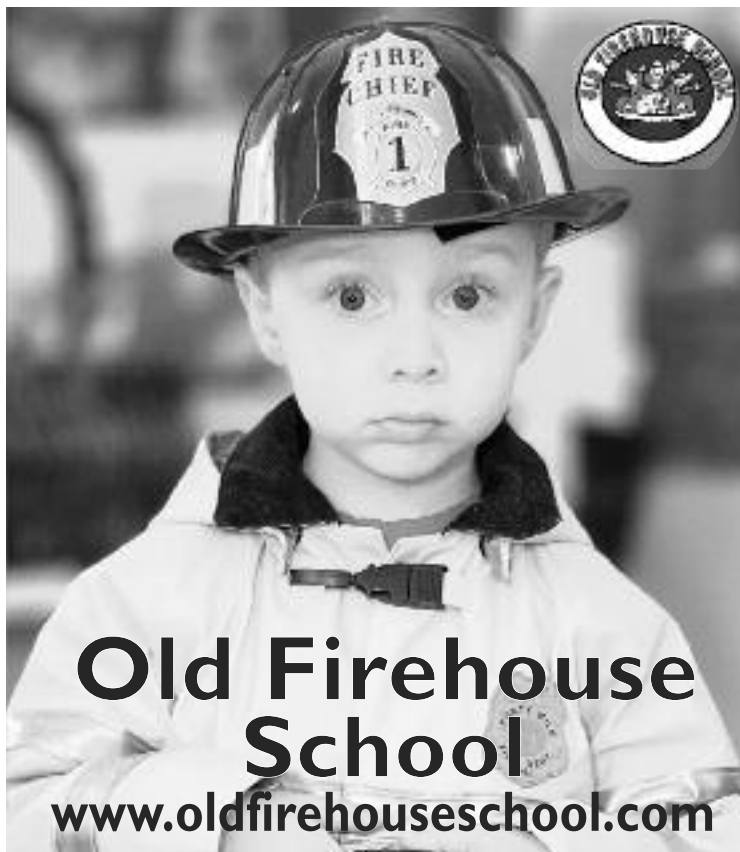
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Arthur Tkachenko playing his winning composition, "A Change of Life"

Cal Shakes Cleanup



Photo Cheryl Miller, Diablo Fire Safe Council

A team of workers from the East Bay Municipal Utility District, Cal Fire and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District recently spent several days thinning a eucalyptus grove near the Cal Shakes Theater entrance in Orinda. MOFD Fire Marshal Kathy Leonard said the project was funded by a grant from the Di-

ablo Fire Safe Council. "The project goal is to keep fire from climbing up into the eucalyptus trees, which could cast burning embers for miles igniting new fires," said DFC Executive Coordinator Cheryl Miller. Cal Fire's Delta hand crew provided labor and EBMUD supplied the equipment. C. Dausman

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Pigeon Deaths in Lamorinda Linked to Avian Parasite

... continued from page B1



Band-tailed pigeons eating acorns. Photo Krysta Rogers

Other birds including mourning doves, crow, raptors and rock pigeons may contract the disease from close contact with infected birds.

"Trichomonosis," Purdin explains, "is a very, very old disease" dating back to the time of Tyrannosaurus Rex. It is generally an environmentally

weak disease that survives only in warm and wet environments. But birds seek feeders and bird baths during drought conditions, and that makes it worse. Purdin is also concerned that a new strain of Trichomonosis, caused by Trichomonas stableri may be more virulent. Where gallinae generally attacks pigeons already weakened by other health issues, stableri takes hold even within the healthy bird population.

"We're getting lots of animals coming in," Purdin says. Normally they get 36 all year but this month they've already had 31. The museum would be overwhelmed if not for the disease's high mortality rate. Pigeons either die en route to the museum or before they've been examined. The remaining few have been euthanized.

"Identifying the species and strain of parasites is one of the primary goals of our research," Rogers says. She encourages the public to report pigeon deaths by calling (916) 358-2790, to take sick birds to the Lindsay Wildlife Museum, and to remove bird feeders and birdbaths from their yards.

If you must keep feeders, Rogers says to wash them weekly, scrubbing first with soap and water, then soaking 5 to 10 minutes in a weakened (1:10) bleach/water solution. Drain and clean bird baths similarly and rinse thoroughly.

To report pigeon deaths online, go to <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Laboratories/Wildlife-Investigations/Monitoring/Mortality-Report>.

Brother Fire Chief

By Cathy Dausman



A man of two cloths: Brother Chris Donnelly holds his Fire Chief uniform.

Photo Cathy Dausman

Christopher Donnelly moves a bit closer to heaven each time he reports to work at his second job. During the academic school year "Brother Chris," a Christian Brother assigned to Saint Mary's College, serves as project manager of facilities services for the college. During summers, however, Brother Chris lives and works in the High Sierras, both as sub-director at Camp LaSalle and as the Huntington Lake Volunteer Fire Department chief.

Huntington Lake is a recreation area east of Fresno and south of Yosemite within the boundaries of the Sierra National Forest, elevation 7,000 feet. Winter residency is a mere 34 souls, but the population swells to more than 14,000 in summer.

While scenic, the area is also remote. Fresno is two hours away by car, response by ambulance from the nearest station is at least 45 minutes, and although there is a helipad near the lake itself, weather and daylight dictate whether medevac flights are even possible.

HLVFD was established in 1993, although it struggled to maintain its apparatus, and field an adequate number of volunteers. Clovis fire captain Tom Zinn was HLVFD's first chief. Its equipment was limited to a 1956 water tender fire truck "with four flats and no brakes," Donnelly recalls. In 1997 Donnelly and camp director Brother Jack Henderson watched a camp guest suffer a transient ischemic attack or mini stroke. Two more back-to-back medical issues – a Boy Scout with a serious chest wound and a rollover car accident extrication in 1998 – convinced Henderson to earn an Emergency Medical Technician license. Henderson convinced Brother Chris to do the same; two years later he admits he was "hooked."

With a background and interest in heavy machinery – Donnelly holds a general contractor's license – he learned to drive Huntington Lake's old tired fire truck.

HLVFD volunteers used to joke they could only extinguish fires by driving their truck over the flames, Donnelly says. The engine's control lines were frozen and split and poured water over the road when placed in pump gear. Zinn spent four years training the Brothers, then Donnelly became chief.

Today, HLVFD has earned an Insurance Services Office rating, and is regarded as one of the best volunteer departments in the state. The current staff of 13 operates newer equipment in better condition – it owns everything from a 2006 Pierce Structure

1,000 gallon engine to a 4x4 and snowmobile, and a Jaws of Life rescue tool. HLVFD cruises the seven mile length of the lake in a converted Navy harbor patrol boat it shares with the local sheriff's department and the U.S. Forest Service.

The department aims for a six minute response time. Donnelly says his fire work requires about six hours a week in training, and on average about an hour or so a day on actual calls. His summer uniform consists mostly of "T-shirts and Levis" and he reserves his fire service uniform for fundraising – a job for which he is obviously well suited.

HLVFD receives no funding from state or county taxes, yet its operating budget has grown from a \$300 bank account to approximately \$110,000 – thanks to gifts, donations and grants. "Our balance sheet shows us worth over \$3 million in assets," in cash, buildings and apparatus, said Brother Chris.

Bass Lake Ranger District Fire Management Officer David Cooper met Brother Chris in 2000, as Cooper travelled through the Huntington Lake area. He got to know him as they worked together on small fires.

Cooper says Donnelly and Brother Jack once worked a 24-hour shift using their 1956 water tender to fight a fire threatening local homes after other equipment broke down. "You can always depend on Brother Chris. He's there with a smile," Cooper says. "You can never go by [Camp LaSalle] without [getting] a milkshake."

Lamorinda's Emergency Preparedness Manager Dennis Rein met Donnelly during the Aspen fire in 2013. "I was working as the Liaison Officer for the Incident Management Team," Rein says. "It didn't take long for me to meet up with the fire chief from the Huntington Lake Volunteer Fire Department." As they exchanged phone numbers, Rein inquired about his Moraga prefix and learned Donnelly worked at Saint Mary's.

"The relationship was instantaneous! We worked together for almost three weeks," Rein says. "Brother Chris even treated me to an ice cream at [Camp LaSalle's] Hofbrau." When asked how long he intends to remain HLVFD chief, Donnelly replies in a most down-to-earth manner, "Well, there isn't a long list of candidates that want to do this for nothing."

Huntington Lake Volunteer Fire Department is a 501 (c) 3 corporation. For details, visit www.hlvfd.org online.



Fire Chief Chris Donnelly, left, patrols Huntington Lake in 2013 with Public Information Officer Anne Grandy during the 2013 Aspen Fire, when the HLVFD boat was used to provide security for the fire helicopter "dip site."

Photo Dennis Rein



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Even in Lamorinda's Bucolic Towns, Stalking Happens ... and It's a Crime

By Laurie Snyder



Image provided courtesy of the Stalking Resource Center of the National Center for Victims of Crime.

“Anytime anyone is harassing and unwantedly giving you attention,” says Rachel Piersig, “that’s a huge warning sign.” Piersig would know. She heads the Domestic Violence Unit for the Contra Costa County District Attorney’s Office, and has sent many, many stalkers and batterers to jail during her legal career.

“Stalking is a pattern of harassing behavior with a credible threat toward a victim,” explains Piersig. “The credible threat can be outright – with the perpetrator threatening to kill the victim or trying to drag her off – or it can be implied, making the victim fearful.” In each case, police look closely at what’s being said and done. Unwanted gifts, nude drawings made by the stalker of his victim, or poetry with unsettling sexual content become evidence because it makes women reasonably afraid that they’ll be raped by the perpetrators.

The pattern can be short – two or more incidents documented under California law – but those can occur in a single day. In ex-

tremely serious cases, it’s ongoing. “Stalkers are intelligent – possibly more so than average individuals because they hunt their prey and often use technology to do so. Many have suffered some type of loss – death or divorce. And they’re very controlling. Trying to attain this person who doesn’t want to be with them is a large act of control.”

“While we have had cases of stalking here in Lafayette, most of those have been relationship based events – someone just cannot get over a part of their relationship,” observes Lafayette Police Chief Eric Christensen. But when cases do happen, he says he and his officers take those cases very seriously. “Today’s stalker hacks your email, forwards your phone calls and GPS tracks your car – that’s why they are so dangerous.” Orinda Police Chief Mark Nagel agrees, observing that more and more people appear to be using smartphones to spy on their spouses. “There are numerous apps that can reveal another person’s location, and the victims aren’t even aware it’s

happening.”

According to “*The Toll of Stalking: The Relationship Between Features of Stalking and Psychopathology of Victims*,” those receiving the unwanted and unprovoked attention frequently report increased anxiety, excessive tiredness or weakness, chronic sleep issues, headaches, appetite disruption or persistent nausea. In 1997, before researchers had seriously begun studying stalking’s impact, at least one quarter of victims said they had attempted or seriously considered suicide.

“The victims often do have a real sense of danger and fear. They feel there’s no safe place because their stalkers are showing up, calling, texting – putting surveillance in their homes,” explains Piersig. Some use “teddy bear cams” – cameras inserted in a seemingly sweet gift to a child – placed there by one parent stalking another. “It’s the unpredictability – never being sure when a stalker will show up. Many victims are genuinely afraid they’ll be killed.” Stalking may start out benignly, but it can escalate over time and cause such trauma that many victims develop post-traumatic stress disorder.

The difference with this form of PTSD, though, is that the battlefield is located not on foreign soil, but right next door. Arrested for assaulting a woman, one Lamorindan returned to the crime scene after being bailed out of jail. He attacked his victim again, this time pulling her head backwards by her hair – repeatedly – while he had her on the floor on

her stomach. Pretending she was dead until he finally left, she somehow managed to grab her small child and make it to a neighbor’s home for help. Surgery was required to repair the victim’s broken vertebrae.

According to The National Center for Victims of Crime, one in six women and one in 19 men will become stalking victims in their lifetimes. Jimmy Lee, spokesperson for the Contra Costa County Sheriff’s Office, reports that seven county cases occurred in 2014 – six in the sheriff’s office jurisdiction and one in Oakley. “All of the reports had stated that at some time or another domestic violence was an issue and that all of these victims

had restraining orders against the suspects.”

Piersig suspects the crime of stalking may be underreported because victims are either minimizing the events or are afraid to tell anyone.

“Domestic violence and stalking are not limited to the four walls of the houses where it’s happening. It might not be occurring in your relationship, but you might be there when someone comes hunting,” says Piersig, who strongly urges victims, their neighbors and family members to seek help. “You don’t have to be in a stalking or domestic violence relationship to be a domestic violence or stalking victim. It spills out into the community.”

January is National Stalking Awareness Month

Is someone:

- Following you and showing up at your home, school, work, or where you’re socializing?
- Sending unwanted gifts, letters, cards or emails?
- Going through your garbage, using online public records search services, hiring investigators, or contacting friends, family, neighbors or co-workers to obtain more information about you?
- Monitoring your phone calls or computer use, or using hidden cameras, global positioning systems (GPS) or other technology to track where you go?
- Posting information or spreading rumors about you on the Internet, in a public place or by word of mouth?
- Damaging your home, car or other property?
- Threatening to hurt you, your family, friends or pets?
- Committing other actions that control, track or frighten you?

If you are experiencing stalking or domestic violence, you are not to blame. Get help by calling your local police department or the confidential hotline at STAND! For Families Free of Violence: (888) 215-5555. Source: Stalking Resource Center, The National Center for Victims of Crime: <http://stalkingawarenessmonth.org/about>.

Local Students Compete at National Science Bowl

Submitted by Dirk Fillpot



Students from Acalanes, Cam-polindo, and Miramonte high schools participated in the National Finals of the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Science’s National Science Bowl Jan. 25 at Los Positas College in Livermore. The Office of Science began this competition to interest today’s youth in pursuing careers in science and math. The winner of the regional competition received an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. to compete in the Office of Science’s National Science Bowl in late April. The winner of the national competition will win prizes for the team members and their schools. More than 225,000 students have participated in the an-

ual event since it was created in 1991. During the competitions, teams of four students faced off against one another in a fast-paced, question and answer format. They were challenged to solve mathematical problems and were tested on their knowledge of a wide range of disciplines including astronomy, biology, earth science and physics. Questions included, “What planet has the greatest variation in temperature over a single one of its planetary days?” and “What is the most common term in physics for the product of mass times velocity?” For more information about the National Science Bowl, go to <http://science.energy.gov/wdts/nsb/>.

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Community Service

“Ya Gotta Have Heart!”

Submitted by Betty Miller



Assistant League member volunteer Susan Broderick feels that no teddy bear should be alone on Valentine's Day.

Photo provided

Beginning this week the Assistance League Way Side Inn Thrift Shop in Lafayette will virtually swim in various hues of bold reds, precious pinks, luscious lavenders, whimsical whites and everything for Valentine's Day including heart shaped boxes, small gift bags, stuffed bears sporting hearts, decorative pillows and assorted home décor. Sales from the Assistance League Way Side Inn Thrift Shop help fund nine philanthropic programs that improve the lives of those in the community who are in need and at-risk. To learn about Assistance League of Diablo and its recently awarded GuideStar Exchange gold participation level status, visit diablovalley.assistanceleague.org or the GuideStar Exchange.

Girl Scouts Celebrate the Holidays with Homeless Families

Submitted by Kim Jinnett



From left, front row: Kendall Schmidt, Kiera Crandall, Maria Wong, and Kyra Merryman; back row: Clare Ahearn, Josie Rosso, Lola Takhirov, Kenna Sherman, Jesse Rusk, and Juliet Arnswald

Photo provided

Moraga Girl Scout Troop 30072, all Campolindo sophomores, held a holiday party Dec. 12 for homeless families at Shelter Inc. in Pittsburg. The Scouts decorated gingerbread houses, cookies, ornaments and other craft items with the children and their parents. The Troop also shared a meal with the families and played with the “sugar-amped tots” well into the evening. Shelter Inc. tries to find people to adopt all homeless families during the holidays to ensure they feel cared for at that time of year. After adopting all families living at the shelter, the Scouts enjoyed selecting and wrapping gifts from a wish list the family members provided. Seeing the joy on the faces of the children and thankfulness of the families warmed their hearts. The Troop encourages others to adopt a homeless family next year.

New Eagle Scouts Honored

Submitted by Louis Phillips



From left, back row: Parker Watson, Evan Wentzel and Jack Winther; front row: Charles Bush, Evan Price and Tate Phillips

Photo provided

Lafayette's Boy Scout Troop 219 conducted an Eagle Court of Honor Jan. 11 at St. Stephens Episcopal Church in Orinda. Tyler Higgins led the ceremony and William F. “Rick” Cronk, the past president of the Boy Scouts, was the guest speaker for the ceremony. As part of earning their Eagle ranks, six Scouts led the following service projects:

Charles Bush of Acalanes High School landscaped and constructed a new walking path along the garden memorial at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church. This involved major demolition of an existing shed and concrete walkway. The project created an attractive walking path and a significantly nicer environment for the memorial garden.

Parker Watson of Las Lomas High School chose to improve the grounds and setting at his former school, Parkmead Elementary. He led a team of Scouts to plant a pistachio tree and then construct an octagonal park bench around the tree, creating a park-like setting for students and guests to enjoy.

Will Price of Acalanes selected a project to aid Lafayette United Methodist Church by renovating an outdoor area, power washing and

painting the area, designing and building a planter box, designing and installing an irrigation system, and replacing the aging plants.

Acalanes student Evan Wentzel constructed 10 outdoor benches for the Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center, a place for community members to grow a variety plants, and harvest plants, and hold outdoor classes to teach the importance of the environment and wildlife.

Tate Phillips of Acalanes constructed eight solar ovens and then delivered them to the Trust in Education organization for shipment to families in Afghanistan. A typical Afghan family spends about 30 percent of their income on wood for cooking and sterilizing water. The ovens offer a safe and cost-effective solution for both.

Acalanes student Jack Winther organized an effort to prepare and assemble first aid emergency kits for less privileged families in Contra Costa County. Once completed, he coordinated with the American Red Cross to teach first aid to the recipient families. He assisted the Red Cross in the classroom and he took responsibility to teach the children.

In Memory

George Wilson Hall II Resident of Moraga

Nov. 25, 1944 – Jan. 21, 2015



George Wilson Hall II, 70, of Moraga, passed away peacefully at home Jan. 21, 2015 with his family by his side. George was born on Nov. 25, 1944 in Malone, New York, and was a computer consultant before retiring and later becoming an esteemed office manager for his wife's business, the Hall of Taxes. His quick wit and generosity will be missed by everyone who knew him.

George enjoyed weekly golf outings (he recently posted his best score of 66), 30 years of playing softball with the St. Monica's team, being active with the Lion's Club, playing his clarinet alongside his musically-inclined family, poker nights with the guys, and had a passion for traveling and chatting with almost anyone willing to have an opinion on something. He touched all those around him with his love, sincerity, friendliness, humor, intelligence and incredible strength.

George is survived by his loving wife of 38 years, Peggy, children Julia (Kris) and Stephen (Ida), grandchild Ansley, sister Cindy, and brothers Steve and Brian, as well as numerous other loved ones.

Friends and family are invited to celebrate George's life during a funeral mass on Friday, Jan. 30 at 10:30 a.m. at Saint Monica's Church in Moraga, followed by a burial at Queen of Heavens in Lafayette. Afterwards, his family is hosting a reception where everyone can remember and share stories about George. We encourage you to view and leave comments on George Hall's Memorial website: www.georgewilsonhall.com.

For those who wish, memorial contributions in George's name may be made to the Moraga Lion's Club at 17 El Camino Flores, Moraga, CA, 94556.

Shirley Price Callister

July 2, 1922 – Jan. 18, 2015



Shirley Price Callister, our mother, grandmother, aunt and friend, passed away peacefully with her family at her side on Jan. 18, 2015. Shirley was born at home on July 2, 1922 in Salt Lake City, Utah, the youngest of five children of Julia Blanche Lauritzen and Thomas Lawrence Price. As a child, Shirley enjoyed dancing, spending time with her friends and trips to the family's ranch in southern Utah. She graduated from East High School in 1939 and then attended the University of Utah. As a young woman, she especially enjoyed her job as a roller-skating Western Union telegram courier. In 1942

Shirley married the love of her life, Cyril Taft Callister MD, and they remained inseparable for 61 years until Cy's death in 2003.

Shirley enjoyed gardening, bridge, cooking, needlepoint, and traveling but her family was the focus of her life. Her home of over 65 years in Lafayette was her castle and she was the anchor and practical voice in a house full of lively personalities. Her wit, humor, wisdom and love for life were contagious. From her famous 4th of July parties to many family events, she was the consummate hostess. Everyone was welcome. Even at 90 years old, “Mima's House” was always “home” for her extended family which over the years grew to include a multitude of her grandchildren's college classmates who all loved her dearly.

She is survived by her five children: Susan Price Callister, Barry Price Callister (Cecilia), Ann Callister (Bruce Brennen), Cyril Bruce Callister (Deborah Cox), and Thomas Brian Callister, MD (Rose Lorea) and eight grandchildren: Devin Taft Callister, MD, Mathew Riordan Callister, Andrew Price Callister, Coreen Denise Callister, Louis James Callister, Liam Joseph Callister, Erin Susann Callister and Connor Taft Callister as well as many beloved nieces and nephews and extended family. A celebration of life is planned for Saturday, Feb. 7, 2015 at 10 a.m. at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Center, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette, CA 94549. In lieu of flowers donations are welcome for Hospice of East Bay, 3470 Buskirk Ave., Pleasant Hill, CA 94523.

Mark Quinn

Nov. 24, 1958 – Jan. 7, 2015



Mark Quinn passed away at his home on Wednesday Jan. 7 at age 56.

Mark was born in Fort Lee, Virginia as the only child of Lew and Char Quinn. He is survived by his son, Brady, his ex-wife, Sherry, his father Lew, and his Aunt Kathy. Mark grew up in rural, upstate New York, attended college at WashU in St. Louis, and came to California in the early 80's. Mark was passionate about dogs, sports, and coaching – especially basketball. He coached hundreds of kids in the Lamorinda area over the past 13 years, including his son, Brady. Mark, Sherry and Brady carried on as a special, connected family even through separation; Brady and Sherry will always cherish the times they spent with Dad/Mark.

A celebration of his life was held on Sunday, Jan. 25 in the gym at Lafayette Elementary School.

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.

'Take a Picture/Tell a Story' Art Exhibit Opens at SMC Museum of Art

By Ryan McKinley



"Deodorant"

Photo Robert Gumpert, courtesy Saint Mary's College Museum of Art

The phrase "every picture tells a story" is given new meaning by San Francisco-based photographer Robert Gumpert in his first exhibitions in the United States, "Take a Picture/Tell a Story" and "I need some deodorant. My skin's getting restless," which will be on display through March 15 at the Saint Mary's College Museum of Art.

What sets Gumpert's photography apart, aside from the intimacy of the images, is the story. For every

photograph, Gumpert conducts extensive interviews. The exhibits are a combination of the visual and the oral. If the audience only examines one aspect, they are missing the experience. "The shows are unlike anything we have ever shown here," said Kyla Tynes, the exhibition's manager. "We want people to have a reaction and take the time to read the work. These are very deep societal stories."

Gumpert became interested in photography as a child in the 1950s.

He learned to develop film while still in grade school so his mother would buy him a camera.

He started his professional career covering the United Mine Workers of America strike in Harlan County, Ky., in 1974. He has continued to document social justice, labor movements and working conditions for the past four decades. "I have always related to topics touching on issues of class, race and power," Gumpert said.

The Saint Mary's exhibits feature

Gumpert's black and white photographs unframed on the museum's grey walls. "We thought the images were very raw and emotional, and we didn't want anything to detract from that," Tynes said.

For "I need some deodorant. My skin's getting restless," the photos are candid and almost voyeuristic. Sometimes looking around corners or through doorways, they show the staff of John George Psychiatric Emergency Services in Alameda County. Interviews are presented as block quotes on the walls and credited anonymously ("Health Specialist 1").

"For the psych ward project I wanted to speak about what the work and place are really like versus what is depicted in popular culture," Gumpert said.

"Take a Picture/Tell a Story" focuses on documenting prison inmates. These photos are close-ups of individuals looking directly into the camera. A computer in one corner of the gallery plays the audio interviews, the voices echoing off the walls. When combining image and audio together, it is as if the viewer is sitting with the individuals. The intimacy of the images is very striking. Audiences can look into the prisoner's eyes and see the lines on their faces.

"Take a Picture is intended to confront people," Gumpert said. "To say those we lock up are just like us:

they have kids, hopes, issues, bills and frustrations. With just a zig rather than zag you too could be where they are."

Gumpert hopes his work will show that "there is a need to appreciate and a need to correct. We, the USA, use the tools of incarceration to disappear our problems and 'the others' associated with them. For me the way a society treats those with the least of anything is a true barometer of the health of that society. The USA is getting sicker. But I see myself as an optimist and believe change is possible."

Tynes sees the exhibit as "an opportunity for Saint Mary's and this community to bring awareness to issues of human rights, prisons, prisoner rights, and start a dialogue that had otherwise not been thought about."

For more of Gumpert's work, visit <http://takeapicturetellastory.com>. Also on display are Christo and Jeanne-Claude's environmental textile art and William Keith's paintings of Native Americans. These other exhibits operate as counterpoint, with their vast landscapes, to Gumpert's intimate photography.

For more information about the SMC Museum of Art, visit <http://www.stmarys-ca.edu/saintmarys-college-museum-of-art> or call the gallery at (925) 631-4379 during business hours.

Concert Features Three Concerto Competition Winners, Two from Lafayette

Submitted by Keith Gleason



From left: Ellie Kanayama, Katherine Chen, and Oliver Taylor

Photo Vladimir Gurevich

Young People's Symphony Orchestra's (YPSO) Winter Concert will feature three Concerto Competition winners – two from Lafayette, one from Albany – in a program of Gershwin's *An American in Paris*, Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* with Katherine Chen on piano, Wieniawski's Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor with Ellie Kanayama on violin, Arutiunian's Trumpet Concerto with Oliver Taylor

on trumpet, and Ravel's *Rhapsodie Espagnole*.

Each season, YPSO offers all members who have been in the orchestra for at least one full season the opportunity to enter the Concerto Competition to compete for the opportunity to play one movement of a concerto with the orchestra at a regular concert. This year's judges were music director/conductor David Ramadanoff, violist and conductor

Rem Djemilev, who is music director of Young People's Chamber Orchestra, and Monica Scott, who is a cellist and cello teacher. This season's concerto competition had 15 competitors. Seven winners were selected in total.

Pianist Katherine Chen, of Lafayette, will play the first movement of the Falla, *En el Generalife*, which is about the jasmine gardens around the Alhambra. "I love the first

movement because there are parts of it that imitate rippling water or gurgling fountains. I also like that the piece is more of a balanced collaboration between piano and the orchestra," says Chen, who is a sophomore at The College Preparatory School in Oakland. Katherine began her piano studies at age 3 in China. At age 11, she began studying under two private studios and was actively participating in CCMA competitions and festivals. She is currently studying with Armando Pino. In fifth grade, she took up violin as well, fulfilling a childhood dream, and she became the concertmaster of her middle school orchestra in seventh grade. She now plays in YPSO's first violin section, and this is her third year with the orchestra.

Acalanes High School senior Oliver Taylor will play the complete Arutiunian Trumpet Concerto. "I love how the energy changes throughout this concerto. The excitement of the fast parts is contrasted by the slower mini-movements, which are very lyrical and beautiful. The juxtaposition between the fast and slow movements keeps it exciting and fun to play but also difficult. Navigating a piece like this is hard not only for the soloist but the orchestra as well," says Taylor. He currently studies trumpet with Jay Rizzeto and has played with the likes

of Wayne Wallace, Wynton Marsalis, Erik Jekabson and Mic Gillette. During his four years in YPSO, Taylor has visited Prague, Bratislava, and Vienna on the 2012 Central Europe Tour and played at Carnegie Hall, Central Park and Harvard University during the 2014 East Coast Tour. In addition to YPSO, he plays in the Acalanes High School Wind and Jazz Ensembles and in a private jazz combo. Taylor has won many awards over the years for jazz and classical music, including YPSO's 2013 Concerto Competition where he played the Hummel Trumpet Concerto. To watch Taylor's performance of the Hummel go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=13FA-gZiHZs>.

Ellie Kanayama, a 15-year-old freshman at Albany High School, will play the first movement of the Wieniawski Violin Concerto No. 2.

The final work on the program, which includes 103 young musicians ages 12 to 18, will be Maurice Ravel's *Rhapsodie Espagnole*. The Winter Concert will be held at 8 p.m. Jan. 31 at Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, and at 3 p.m. Feb. 1 at Dean Leshner Center for the Arts. For more information about YPSO, visit www.ypsomusic.net, email ypsomusic@yahoo.com or call (510) 849-9776. For tickets and information, call (510) 849-YPSO (9776), email at ypsomusic@yahoo.com or go to www.ypsomusic.net.

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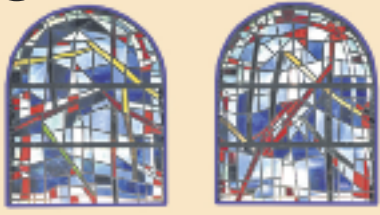
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ART

The Bancroft Library Gallery presents "California: Captured on Canvas" – an exhibit of 43 remarkable paintings from the library's collection highlighting the state's history and culture that have drawn people to California. The exhibit runs from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. through March 6, UC Berkeley Campus, Doe Library Annex.

Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery presents a solo exhibit with artist Julie Schumer. "Without Hesitation" focuses on recent work in the artist's bold expressive style. Landscapes are constructed in an intuitive manner in the tradition of post-modern expressionism. The show runs through Feb. 14. For more info, visit www.jenniferperlmuttergallery.com or call (925) 284-1485.

Orinda Library Art Gallery Exhibitors 2015 - February: Carla Gelbaum, paintings; Shirley Sanderson, photography; Whitchurch Glass Designs; Joan Ibaroll, ceramics.

The Lafayette Art Gallery kicks off the new year with the exhibition, "Voyages," which runs through Feb. 28. Artists show works depicting their travels, as well as the journeys they undertake to create their art. In January, featured artists will be Dalia Alekna and photographer Warren Emmett Rice. In February, the featured artists will be Marsha Ramp and Susan Erickson. The gallery will also be hosting a special Jewelry exhibit, "A Jewelry Extravaganza! Baubles and Bling!" Jan. 27 through Valentine's Day, with a reception scheduled from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 6. For info, call (925) 284-2788 or visit www.lafayetteartgallery.com.

Valley Art Gallery features "New Faces" through Feb. 28. Valley Art Gallery, located at 1661 Botelho Drive, Walnut Creek, offers over 300 original works of art in many mediums and styles. Open Tuesday - Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For info, visit valleyartgallery.org.

Diablo Valley College presents Anna Zusman, "Do You Think You Can Tell if It's Heaven or Hell?" through March 7 in the DVC library.

Town Hall Theatre in association with the Lamorinda Arts Alliance is proud to announce the opening of its latest art exhibit, "Beyond the Brush," through March 7, with a reception from 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 8. "Beyond the Brush" is a collection of works by East Bay women who gather each month to critique, share and support one another as they grow as artists. Free.

Bedford Gallery's next exhibition, "The Object and the Void: West Coast Metal Sculpture," will run from Feb. 17 to April 12, with an artist reception on Feb. 19. This show gathers works from renowned artists Bella Feldman, Linda Fleming, Yoshitomo Saito, and Clay Jensen. The exhibition will feature both large and small scale works, made using techniques from cast bronze to cut steel, demonstrating the artists' masterful command of their media.

Lamorinda Arts Alliance presents "Business Models for Artists" at 7:30 on Thursday, Feb. 5 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. Three LAA members who have very unique and interesting business models for their art will be speaking. David Vander Jagt and Olga Jusidman will talk about how they have set up their own ceramic studio which is shared with other ceramic artists. Margaret Lucas-Hill will talk about her business model for marketing her silk paintings. Free.

MUSIC

Flute, Clarinet and Piano Concert at 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 8, at Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 1035 Carol Lane, Lafayette. The OSLC Concert Series presents "Duo Cama-

raderie" with Sharon Lee Kim, piano, and Laura Scarlata, flute, with special guest Rebecca D'Alessio, clarinet. Works by Larson, Liebermann, Delibes and Martin, with the world premiere of a piece by Bay Area composer Omid Zoufonoun. Free. For more info, call (925) 283-3722 or email martin@oslc.net.

THEATER

Saint Mary's College Performing Arts Department presents "Pinocchio" at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 28 and at 4 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29 at LeFevre Theatre, Saint Mary's College, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. Tickets: \$8 for the general public; \$5 for Saint Mary's students, faculty and staff. www.stmarys-ca.edu/performingarts or www.brownpa-perftickets.com. For more info, call the Performing Arts office at (925) 631-4670.

DVC Drama presents Shakespeare's classic comedy "The Taming of the Shrew," directed by Kathleen Normington from Jan. 30 to Feb. 15. Sweet tempered daddy's girl Bianca has her pick of suitors, but not until her sister, the fiery-tongued Kate, is married off. Show times are 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and 2:30 p.m. on Sunday. For tickets, call (925) 969-2358 or visit www.dvcdrama.net. DVC Drama is located at 321 Golf Club Rd, Pleasant Hill. Free parking for all performances.

Diablo Ballet's Enticing Beauty Program features works by Christopher Wheeldon, George Balanchine, Sonya Delwaide and Robert Dekkers, and will run Feb. 6-7 at Del Valle Theatre. The performances, which place the audience within close proximity of the stage, feature live music and a lively, interactive Q&A with the dancers, hosted by local celebrity moderators. A dessert reception will give audience members an opportunity to get up close and personal with the artists. Playtimes are 8 p.m. Friday, Feb. 6 and 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7 at the Del Valle Theatre, 1963 Tice Valley Boulevard, Walnut Creek. Purchase tickets online at www.LesherArtsCenter.org or by calling (925) 943-7469.

Role Players Ensemble presents "The Ladies Man" by Charles Morey, from a farce by Georges Feydeau Jan. 30 to Feb. 15, 8 p.m. Saturdays and 2 p.m. Sundays at the Village Theatre, 233 Front Street, Danville. In Belle Époque Paris, the newly married Dr. Molineaux tells "one tiny, little lie" to cover an innocent but embarrassing indiscretion. Tickets: \$20-28; online at www.RolePlayersEnsemble.com; at Danville Community Center, 420 Front St, Danville; or call (925) 314-3400 Free Sneak Peek: 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21, Danville Library.

LECTURE & LITERATURE

The Lafayette Library and Learning Center is sponsoring a Book-to-Action series featuring "Dear Primo: Letters to our Peers." Meet Author Duncan Tonatiuh from 4 to 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5 in the Lafayette Library Community Hall, with a free book giveaway of "Dear Primo" at the information desk. Decorate your letter in the style of the ancient art of the Mixtecs from 3 to 5 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11 in the Children's Area.

Many Faces of Leukemia, Lymphoma and Myeloma from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 11 at Walnut Creek Library - Oak View Room, 1644 N. Broadway. An event focusing on the unique issues of patients with blood cancer, Diablo Valley Oncology/Hematology Medical Group's specialists Robert Robles, MD, and Kasra Karamlou, MD, will discuss and share exciting new research, treatments and therapies recently announced at the American Society of Hematology's annual meeting. Q&A session to follow presentation. Free. Space limited, to register call (925) 677-5041.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

Orinda Teen Advisory Council (OTAC) - Teens are invited to join OTAC anytime. The Orinda Teen Advisory Council (grades 6 to 12) meets at 4 p.m. the first Monday of the month, from September to June, at the Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way. Work with other teens and teen councils in the Lamorinda area to provide input about programs and events for area teens. For more info, call (925) 254-2445 or email orindateenadvisorycouncil@gmail.com.

For girls 4 to 9 years old, bring your mom (or other female role model) to the Hacienda de las Flores from 9 to 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 7 to celebrate the special relationship between mother and daughter in a pleasant tea party setting. Enjoy a variety of teas and delectables while sharing quality time with each other. In addition, your daughter will be able to create a wonderful craft to take home and memorialize this special day. Cost: \$50 per couple, \$27 for each additional guest. Cost includes tea, assorted beverages, finger sandwiches, pastries, fruit, sweet treats, child's craft and memories to last a lifetime. Pre-registration required at (925) 888-7045.

The annual Poetry Out Loud competition, a national recital program for high school students, is under way, with the countywide finals scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 7 at Las Lomas High School Theatre, 1460 South Main, Walnut Creek. This year, 14 high schools in Contra Costa County are participating, including a co-op of home-schooled students. Winners of school competitions advance to a county-wide and then state competitions, and ultimately to the National Finals.

Contra Costa Camp and School Fair - Third annual free event with booths for camps, schools, preschool, daycare, sports, martial arts, gymnastics, enrichment, performing arts, scouts and family vacations from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 22 at Acalanes High School, 1200 Pleasant Hill Rd., Lafayette. Activities and exhibitions. Free. For info, visit www.ContraCostaCampFair.com.

Oakland Museum of California presents Lunar New Year Celebration and Other Asian Traditions: Year of the Sheep from noon to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 22, at Oakland Museum of California, 1000 Oak Street. Bring the whole family to OMCA to welcome the Year of the Sheep. Enjoy a daylong festival with dance, music, crafts, food, and more for all ages. Cost: \$15 adults; \$10 students and seniors with valid ID; \$6 youth ages 9-17; free ages 8 and under. OMCA Members always get in free. For more info see http://www.museumca.org or call (510) 318-8400.

OTHER

Come to Miramonte High School's annual Public Speaking Showcase at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 29 and Friday, Jan. 30 in the Miramonte theater. Enjoy listening to persuasive, theatrical and inspiring performances by some of the brightest stars in the program, followed by a reception in the beautiful Art Center filled with visual art, tasty treats and great conversation. Tickets: \$5 available at the door or at the Miramonte web store.

Fall in love with a kitty! See the friendly felines of Community Concern For Cats this weekend, Jan. 31-Feb. 1 at Pet Food Express in Lafayette, Pet Food Express Pleasant Hill and Petco Walnut Creek. On Saturday, cats can be adopted from 12 to 3 p.m. at Lafayette and from 1 to 4 p.m. in Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill. On Sunday, the adoption hours for all locations are 1 to 4 p.m. For info, visit www.communityconcernforcats.org.

... continued on next page

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OTHER ... continued

Oakland Museum of California presents "Bees: Tiny Insect, Big Impact" from Jan. 31 to Sept. 20, 1000 Oak Street, Oakland. A new family-friendly exhibition on the intricate world of one of the most important creatures to human agriculture and the natural environment. Cost: \$15 adults; \$10 students and seniors with valid ID; \$6 youth ages 9-17; free ages 8 and under. OMCA Members always get in free. For more info, specific days and hours, visit <http://museumca.org/bees> or call (510) 318-8400.

Crab Feed and Dance from 6 to 11 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7 at the Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School Street, Moraga. Bring your appetites and dancing shoes. Dinner and Dance: \$50; Dance only: \$15. For non-crab lovers, chicken is available by special advance order. Dinner tickets must be purchased in advance. For tickets and reservations, call (925) 672-6799.

Vote for Summer Movies Now - Enjoy the movie choices from last summer? The City of Orinda will be selecting the movie picks for this year and would like the community to help. For those interested in ranking their top movie

◆ **Not to be missed** ◆

choices from a pre-selected list for the Summer Movie series, a survey has been created and posted online. To complete the survey, visit the Parks and Recreation webpage on the city's website at www.cityoforinda.org. The survey will conclude on Feb. 9.

The Saint Mary's College Guild will celebrate its traditional "Fun and Games Day" scholarship fundraiser from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19 at the Soda Center on campus, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. Everyone is invited to attend this Bridge and Bunco event; a buffet lunch will be served. Call Shirley at (925) 376-6588 for details.

Orinda Woman's Club is accepting applications for the major beneficiary awards of 2015. Accepted applicants will reach the criteria: Serving youth and women and children primarily in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties, and is a 501c-3 organization with an income of no greater than \$2 million annually. Application forms can be acquired from Orinda Woman's Club, Beneficiary Chair, at (925) 254-1162 or adeline@mcclatchie.com. Applications are due by 7 p.m. March 2.

SENIORS

Free Computer and eReader Help from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays for seniors and other adults ages 18 and up. Are you new to computers? Do you need help setting up an email account? Would you like to learn how to write a letter on the computer? Would you like help downloading library ebooks and audio books onto your eReader or mobile device? Visit the Information Desk at the Orinda Library, 26 Orinda Way to set up your appointment, or contact Melanie McCallum for information at (925) 254-2184.

Sons in Retirement Lamorinda Branch 171 meets at 11 a.m. the first Wednesday monthly at Holy Trinity Culture Center 1700 School Street, Moraga. The after-lunch speaker on Feb. 4 will be Thomas S. Marnane, president of Targeted Solutions LLC and sr. vice president of Steamguard LLC. Marnane will address the energy challenges facing the United States. He has had more than 30 years of firsthand experience in his field and his discussion should be

very informative. For attendance and membership info, call Larry at (925) 631-9528.

Cultivating Your Creativity - facilitated by Ted Fuller, Lafayette author and editor. This 5-week course will include exercises and challenges that generate ideas, creations of innovative, even quirky, individuals and problem-solving guidelines. Field trip – a guest speaker or two and myriad resources are all part of this innovative class. Limited to 15 participants. Please call Lafayette Senior Services at (925) 284-5050 to sign up. Classes are held from 10:30 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays from Feb. 25 to March 25 in the Toyon Room, Lafayette Community Center. Members: free; non-members: \$10 per meeting.

GARDEN

The Walnut Creek Garden Club will hold its general meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 9 at the Gardens at Heather Farm located at 1540 Marchbanks Road in Walnut Creek. The topic of the program is The Mission Blue Butterfly Project. Price Sheppy is the Community Manager of Golden Gate Park and he will speak about the effort to protect the endangered Mission Blue butterfly. For more info, visit mslitle44@gmail.com.

The Lafayette Garden Club will meet from 9:30 to noon on Thursday, Feb. 12 at Lafayette Veterans Memorial Hall, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd, featuring Rebecca Sweet, who will discuss "Refresh Your Garden Design with Color, Texture, and Form." Sweet has been featured in numerous publications and shares her many secrets in her popular blog, Gossip in the Garden. She is owner of design firm Harmony in the Garden and author of two wonderful garden books, both of which will be available for purchase. For info, email cpoetzsch@gmail.com.

Montelindo Garden Club Meeting will meet at 9 a.m. Friday, Feb. 20 at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephens Drive, Orinda. Visitors welcome. Speaker Susan Morrison, a landscape designer, master gardener and co-author of Garden Up will discuss Smart Space. For info, visit www.montelindogarden.com.

Please submit events to:
calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

'Strange Magic'

By Derek Zemrak



"Strange Magic" © & TM 2014 Lucasfilm Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Photo Lucasfilm/Disney

"Strange Magic" is a musical movie fairy tale based on "A Midsummer Night's Dream" by William Shakespeare – and created by master moviemaker and storyteller George Lucas. It should be noted that while George Lucas created the story, three creditable screenplay writers – David Berenbaum ("Elf," "Haunted Mansion"), Irene Mecchi ("Brave," "The Lion King") and Sound Designer Gary Rydstrom ("Finding Nemo," "Saving Private Ryan") – wrote a skimpy screenplay. "Strange Magic" is saved by the visually illustrated animation and voiceover talent in this mystical kingdom that is divided by good and evil. Of course the "good" are beautiful creatures while the "bad" are ugly, but cute. When Princess Marianne, voiced by two-time Golden Globe nominee Evan Rachel Wood ("Mildred Pierce," "Thirteen") is

two-timed by her vain fiancé, she finds herself falling in love with the ugly Bog King, voiced by the multi-talented actor Alan Cumming ("Spy Kids," "X-Men 2"). Cumming recently received a Golden Globe nomination for the role of Eli Gold in the hit television series "The Good Wife." The message of "don't judge anyone based on looks" is delivered loud and clear, which is a positive message for everyone attending the movie.

The musical score will have you tapping your feet with familiar songs from San Francisco native Michael Franti and The Temptations. "Strange Magic" is rated PG with a total running time (TRT) of 99 minutes.

Check out the Bay Area's new entertainment show, *Real to Reel*, every Sunday at 2:30 p.m., hosted by Derek Zemrak and Leonard Pirkle on KOFY TV20.

Service Clubs Announcements



Explore Lamorinda Rotary clubs The heart of Rotary is our clubs- dedicated people who share a passion for both community service and friendship. Learn about Lamorinda's Rotary clubs.

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



Please join us at our new location **THE LAFAYETTE PARK HOTEL** on Friday mornings at 7am. For more info, please email us at lamorindasunrise@gmail.com

January 30:
Rotary District 5160 Governor Pam Gray will update us on Rotary events and activities in the district.

February 6:
4 WAY SPEECH CONTEST. The best students from Miramonte's Public Speaking class will give a talk developed around Rotary's 4 Way Test.

Please join us for a great speaker and breakfast!!

SOROPTIMIST OF 24/680



"Improving the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment"

Please join us for our next meeting:

WHEN: Wednesday, February 4th
Social 5:30-6:00 p.m.
Meeting 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

WHERE: The Buttercup Grill
660 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek.

For more information, contact:
Regina Englehart @925-876-9076
or go to: soroptimist24-680.org

Lafayette Rotary Club

Step in on a Thursday. If you are interested in joining Rotary we welcome you to join one of our lunch meetings. Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

February 5:
Mark Heptig, Director of Golf
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February 12:
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Lamorinda Weekly

is an independent publication, produced by and for the residents of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, CA
26,600 printed copies; delivered to homes & businesses in Lamorinda.

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Photos: Tod Fierner, Ohlen Alexander, Gint Federas

Layout/Graphics: Andy Scheck. Printed in CA.

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Bring on the Bacon ... Just in Time for the Super Bowl

By Susie Iventosch



Ritz-Bacon Crisps

Photo Susie Iventosch

With Super Bowl parties just around the corner, it's essential to be on top of your appetizer game! A friend brought these tasty treats to our house for a party over the holidays, and I had never had them before. So, naturally, I inquired about the recipe, and she said, "Oh, it's just that old Ritz cracker and bacon recipe!"

Apparently they were all the rage in the '70s and '80s, but this is one of the oldies I never knew about. My mom, who seemed to know every recipe floating around, never served them in all of her entertaining years either, that I can remember.

If you like bacon ... you're going to love these!

Ritz-Bacon Crisps

(Makes 24)

INGREDIENTS

24 Ritz crackers, broken in half
12 pieces thin cut (uncooked) bacon strips, cut in half
¾ cup finely grated Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

Heat the oven to 250 F. Lay crackers on a rack on top of a baking sheet. (Stack two cracker halves on top of each other, using one full cracker for each stack.) Sprinkle ½ teaspoon (or so) of Parmesan on top of each cracker stack. Wrap the cracker and cheese with ½ slice of bacon, making sure the ends are on the bottom. Bacon should be wrapped snugly, but not too tightly. Bake on the rack with cookie sheet underneath it for about 2 hours until bacon is cooked and crispy. Can freeze and reheat!

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.



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

Can You Get a Job with That?

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

In his presentation "Can You Get a Job with That?" Stuart Nachbar, noted education writer and college counselor states, "A good school does good by its students." And, Stuart and I agree, if a school does a good job of what it is in the business of doing – educating and preparing students for life beyond college – you will get a job with a degree from the college. A good school is not necessarily the one that is most highly ranked or the one with the most recognizable name, but one which is honest and direct in its dealings with students and families. College representatives from these schools, whether in admissions, financial aid, enrollment management, student activities or career planning, are well-informed and can help a student and family reach sound decisions about everything from managing student debt to identifying faculty members in different academic departments who can help set a student on a secure academic path.

One of the most important questions to consider as you begin your college search is, "If you could get paid to do anything you wanted to do, what would that be?" "Good" colleges will be the ones that support that path and help you decide on an academic direction that is focused enough to support your present interests and broad enough to let you change course if needed. Those schools may be smaller liberal arts and science colleges or larger research universities. Both settings can work as long as the school provides supportive advising teams to help students move in the right academic direction, and college career centers that offer opportunities to test that direction through extracurricular activities, internships and capstone research projects. A good career development center interacts with students as early as the freshman year and collaborates with others both on and off campus to help students test a chosen career path or discover different career options (e.g. clinical assignments in health fields, student teaching for education, internships for business).

As you search for schools that fit your goals, remember that the best colleges for you are the ones that can support your learning style as well as your need for assistance with difficult subjects. For example, many students are interested in business but have difficulty in math. Instead of giving up your interest in business for fear of doing poorly in statistics or calculus, your college search should include an honest appraisal of the learning support network available to you at the various colleges on your list. If you learn best by talking to your instructors in high school, access to professors will be critical. If you experience success in difficult coursework by systematic use of peer tutors (those students who have taken the course you are struggling

with and gotten an 'A'), a similar program at the college should work well for you.

Once you identify a preliminary list of colleges that meets your goals and interests, it is important to consider costs. Some experts believe you should start your college search with cost as the primary factor. Regardless of when you take it into consideration, cost should be a consideration as you develop your college application list. Be sure to consider costs beyond the freshman year, especially indirect costs that happen once the student is further into a degree program – for example, a car, study abroad, or housing during an internship or co-op assignment. Housing costs can be significant and are more common in schools with cooperative learning environments that intermix coursework with applications in real work environments – and those employment opportunities may be located far from campus.

As you refine your college search, it is smart to go well beyond majors, campus size, location and climate to assess the factors that will ultimately make the biggest difference in the value of your undergraduate degree. I encourage students and their families to obtain 'straight' answers to their questions before entry to a college. You should expect a college to address your questions about affordability, academic advising, career center activities, housing and any other areas that deserve careful consideration. You generally have little time between when you learn about acceptance to a college and the enrollment deadline. Most of the important research should precede the college's decision on your application. In fact, I would maintain students should only apply to colleges that have demonstrated that their representatives are knowledgeable, honest and direct in their dealings with families. A "good" school does, indeed, do well by its students. And it does well by its applicants too.



Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D. is an independent college advisor who draws upon 25 years of higher education experience to help guide and support the college admissions process for students and their families. Dr. LaScala is a member of NACAC, WACAC and HECA. She can be contacted at (925) 891-4491 or elizabeth@doingcollege.com. Visit www.doingcollege.com for more information about her services.

Italian Thriller and Social Drama 'Human Capital' Opens Jan. 30

By Sophie Braccini



Image provided

The International Film Showcase will present Italian director Paolo Virzi's film "Human Capital" for a one-week run beginning Jan. 30 at the Orinda Theatre. The 2013 satiric social drama was selected as the Italian entry for Best Foreign Language Film at the Academy Awards this year. Set in Northern Italy, the film was inspired by a novel with the same title by American writer Stephen Amidon.

Dino Ossola is a real estate dealmaker on the verge of bankruptcy. The cunning middle class businessman thinks he is going to strike it big when he manages to endear himself to the very wealthy Giovanni Bernaschi, the father of his daughter Serena's boyfriend. Ossola persuades Bernaschi to let him in on a mysterious and highly profitable hedge fund investment. As his story unfolds, we also follow the lives of other characters such as Ossola's wife Carla,

who dreams of becoming an actress and is bored and aimless until she finds her calling and decides to become a patron of the arts with her husband's money. The family's balance is threatened after a car accident sends a cyclist to the hospital in very serious condition, and an economic downturn makes the mighty Bernaschi vacillate. As their worlds face collapse, the characters react with desperation, leaving the audience wondering who will make it out alive.

Virzi approaches the story from three characters' points of view: first Ossola, then Carla and finally Serena. As the film progresses, different layers and perspectives are revealed and different sides of the truth emerge. The film's clever construction adds to the suspense.

Social realism is nothing new to Italian cinema. Virzi presents a satire comprised of pathetic characters who are victims of their greed and fear – nothing incredibly innovative, but the film's quality of acting and the overall beauty of the imagery make it all worthwhile.

A large part of the movie's success in Europe comes from Valeria Bruni Tedeschi, who portrays Carla and was recognized as Best Actress at the 2014 Tribeca Film Festival for her moving performance of a poor little rich woman's quest for meaning. Fabrizio Bentivoglio as Ossola is painfully ridiculous until he turns into one of the most despicable characters of the movie. Superb newcomer Matilde Gioli plays Serena, the only angel of the movie. She has strength and emotion, but she is crushed like all the other youngsters in the film.

While a drama, the sarcastic overtone of the film provides many opportunities to laugh and smile. Hardly boring, this is a fast-paced movie. Don't leave before the last comment is displayed on the silver screen. It explains the meaning behind the movie's title.

The 'Showcase' in the Oscar Race

Efi Lubliner is proud to announce that the movie "Tangerines," presented last November at the Orinda Theatre by the International Film Showcase, and "Timbuktu," which will be showing in March, were two of the five 2015 Academy Award nominees for Best Foreign Language Film.

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

SMC Basketball Improving on Strong Start

By Michael Sakoda



Brad Waldow is central to the Gaels' success, averaging over 20 points per game.

Photos Tod Fierner

The Saint Mary's men's basketball team (16-4, 8-1 WCC) is off to an unexpectedly hot start this year, despite some big changes in the roster.

This past week, the team bounced back from a 68-47 loss at No. 3 Gonzaga on Jan. 21 by beating Portland 74-64 on Jan. 23, notching their eighth conference win of the season.

"The reason we're in this position is our seniors have been great," said head coach Randy Bennett. "Garrett Jackson's turned himself into a player, and then Brad (Waldow) and Kerry (Carter) were ready to go."

Rounding out this year's starting five are senior transfers Aaron Bright (Stanford) and Desmond Simmons (Washington).

"Aaron and Des had to get adjusted," said Bennett. "But those five have been able to give us the confidence, the toughness, the leadership, the experience to be where we're at."

Saint Mary's opened the season winning five straight before losing to Boise State on Dec. 6. They squeaked

by Creighton 71-67 in overtime and then lost two straight to Northern Arizona and No. 20 St. John's. The team then rattled off nine straight wins before losing to Gonzaga.

No one's as surprised by the team's success as Bennett.

"Going into the season, I just didn't know," he said. "I knew we had some good talent, but I didn't know how it was all going to fit together, and we're not done yet."

After being named to the All-WCC Pre-Season team, Brad Waldow has earned WCC Player of the Week honors and emerged as one of the front runners for the Lou Henson Player of the Year Award, given to the nation's top player from a mid-major school.

The 6-foot-10-inch 270-pound forward is averaging 20.2 points per game (second in the WCC) and 9.9 rebounds per game (first in the WCC).

"What no one talks about is [Brad's] two and a half assists a game," said Bennett. "That's where I think he really stands out. The ball

goes through his hands and he makes a lot of decisions."

But for all the good, there's always room to improve, and Bennett knows his team's weaknesses as well as he knows its strengths.

"Defense," he said. "This team needs to improve that. We've gotten better, but we have another jump to go. We're a pretty good rebounding team, pretty good scoring team, but our shot selection is still something we're working through. The number one thing is to get that field goal percentage defense number down."

With nine games left in conference play, the Gaels sit in firm control of the No. 2 spot in the WCC, but it's a tough conference and the tides can turn at any moment.

"It will depend on these last games," said Bennett. "The big thing is if we keep improving through January and February. If we do, we're going to be a good team. If we stay the same, we'll be okay, but this team has room to improve."

Hunter Gallaway's Spring Tennis Team Program MARCH 7- MAY 8, 2015

This Program gives kids the opportunity to play competitive tennis at their appropriate level, as a member of a team, promoting sportsmanship, camaraderie and fun!

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NEW PLAYERS:				
AGES	DATE	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
U6-U8 Boys & Girls	1/9/2015	FRIDAY	4-5:30PM	WILDER 2
	1/10/2015	SATURDAY	10:45-12PM	
	2/7/2015	SATURDAY	10:45-12PM	
U9-U10 Boys & Girls	1/11/2015	SUNDAY	5-6:30PM	WILDER 2
	2/8/2015	SUNDAY	5-6:30PM	
U11- u12 Girls & Boys	1/10/2015	SATURDAY	9:15-10:45AM	WILDER 2
	2/8/2015	SUNDAY	6:30-8PM	
NEW & RETURNING PLAYERS:				
AGES	DATE	DAY	TIME	LOCATION
U13 Girls	2/16/2015	MONDAY	4-6PM	WILDER 2
U13 Girls	2/19/2015	THURSDAY	5:30-7PM	WILDER 2
U13 Boys	2/17/2015	TUESDAY	4-6PM	WILDER 1
U13 Boys	2/19/2015	THURSDAY	4-5:30PM	WILDER 1
U14 Girls	2/17/2015	TUESDAY	6-8PM	WILDER 2
U14 Girls	2/19/2015	THURSDAY	5:30-7PM	WILDER 2
U14 Boys	2/17/2015	TUESDAY	6-7:30PM	WILDER 2
U14 Boys	2/19/2015	THURSDAY	5:30-7PM	WILDER 2

Please visit www.Lamorindasc.com for more information



Senior Kerry Carter is a leader for the Gaels.

There will be a celebration of Bob Wilson on Jan. 28 from 7:30-8:30 p.m. in the Campolindo High School big gym. Bob Wilson, longtime Campolindo PE teacher, coach and athletic director, passed away on Dec.17.

See related story at: www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0822/Longtime-Athletic-Director-Remembered.html

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Lamorinda Keeps Winning Girls' Basketball Mid-Season Report

By Conrad Bassett



Taylor Jones



Haley van Dyke



Jordan Bryant Photos Gint Federas

The three Lamorinda girls' basketball teams have all had success this year as they head into the second half of the Diablo Foothill Athletic League season.

As expected, perennial frontrunner Miramonte started the season strong. The 17-2 Mats are currently ranked No. 12 in the United States with their only losses coming to national No. 1 Mater Dei (Santa Ana) and Hawaii's top team, Konawaena.

Head coach Kelly Sopak noted that playing a tough schedule has allowed the team to grow.

"We are a work in progress but are making strides in the right direction and the scheduling was paramount for us," he said. "I knew going into the season that we needed to play a national type schedule in order for us to reach our potential."

Sopak cited the development and improvement of freshmen Clair Steele and Jordyn Bryant, sophomore Elle Louie, and junior Keana Delos Santos as reasons for the team's continued improvement.

He also spoke highly of one of the nation's top recruits, junior Sabrina Ionescu, saying he has not seen anyone better in his 10 years coaching in the DFAL.

"I continue to push her, but more and more I am catching myself watching her in amazement. I am a much better coach with her on the floor!" he joked.

In Lafayette, head coach Chad Wellon has already won more games this year than all of last season as the Acalanes Dons sit at 14-4. "We started winning early in the year and I think the team just expects it now," he said.

Wellon noted that he emphasizes hard work. "Our goal going into every game is to play harder than the team we play because I feel like that is something that is within our control."

Junior forward Taylor Jones has stepped into a lead-

ership role for the Dons, working hard to collect rebounds and stop opponents through solid defense.

"She is asked to do all the dirty work and just recently received the West Coast Jamboree MVP so her effort for that type of scrappy play was noticed," Wellon explained. "What makes her great is she doesn't care about anything except helping her team win."

The Dons are also getting help from sophomore Emma Godfrey, who is averaging nearly 10 rebounds a game, and sophomore Brooke Panfili, a transfer from Campo. In the first game where Panfili was eligible to play, she hit four 3-pointers against her old team and led the Dons with 15 points.

At Campolindo, head coach Art Thoms has seen the team chemistry building on and off the court every week. "I knew blending six seniors, a junior, and five freshmen was going to be a challenge. The team has really come together as the season has progressed."

Freshman Haley Van Dyke has made a huge impact, leading the team in points, rebounds, steals and blocks. Senior captains Rachel Sniderman, Kaylyn Murray and Ashley Dubrasich have stepped up as leaders as well. "Rachel sets a great example of support and building team chemistry, Kaylyn is a floor leader and Ashley is a vocal leader," Thoms explained. "All three have led to a positive locker room and fun season."

At 10-8, the Cougars have picked up some key victories, including a win against a strong Oakland Tech team that handed Acalanes their only non-league loss. In the win, Van Dyke had 16 points, 17 rebounds and six blocks.

As always, the DFAL is one of the premier leagues in Northern California and Dublin at 17-2 joins Miramonte and Acalanes as the first three in the DFAL standings.

Lamorinda Teams Set to Square Off with Playoff Hopes in the Balance

By Spencer Silva

Nearly three-quarters of the high school basketball season is in the books and the playoff picture is coming into focus. Campolindo (15-2) is putting the finishing touches on another brilliant season — they're regarded as one of the best teams in the Bay Area. Acalanes (5-13) and Miramonte (10-9) have less certain paths. Both teams have losing records against D-III schools, and they'll need a number of key wins against D-III opponents. Both teams need upset wins over titan Campolindo.

Campo owns a 10-game win streak and Miramonte's recent defeat of second-place Dublin High places Campo firmly in the DFAL's driver seat. Head coach Matt Watson, however, believes his team's best basketball is yet to be played. "We have a couple of football guys that are just getting adjusted," he explained. "We are hoping to hit our stride in the middle of February."

The Cougars will be tested over the next few weeks with a slate of games against second-place Dublin, then Acalanes and Miramonte. "In high school, any team can win, especially in rivalry games," Watson said of the upcoming games. "Acalanes and Miramonte are well coached, play extremely hard and have tremendous fan support, which makes both of them difficult to beat, especially on the road."

In spite of the Dons losing record, they can still qualify for the NCS Division III playoffs by closing the season with wins over Campolindo, Miramonte and Alhambra. The Dons have played a tough schedule, and while it won't be easy qualifying for NCS, one of their five wins came against a strong Liberty High School team, helping their case for an NCS bid.

The Acalanes Dons had a crucial double-overtime win over the Alhambra Bulldogs on Jan. 23. The win was highlighted by an impressive 37-point performance from senior guard Joey Hewitt. Hewitt is the team's offensive leader, averaging more than 20 points per game.

If the name Casey Harrington sounds familiar, it's probably because he started as quarterback for the Dons last fall. He didn't play basketball his junior season, but he has used his raw athleticism to become one of the team's most valuable assets on the court.

It's been a process getting all the new faces on the same page, but the formula hasn't changed much, according to head coach Dave Goldman. "We've focused on defensive intensity and running our offense," he said. "We don't score a lot of points, so we like to slow the game down and try to keep (our opponents) in the 50s."

Miramonte reached the NorCal semifinals for the first time in school history last winter, but they're going to need good fortune to repeat. They have two games left against league-leading Campolindo. If the rivalry weren't in and of itself enough, the Mats need to win at least one of those games to qualify for the playoffs. Campo's only league loss last season came at the hands of the Mats, so it's safe to say there will be no charity when the two teams meet.

Miramonte's up-tempo offense has buoyed the team all season. Seniors Jackson Wegener, Jake Linares and Moneer Mujaddidi engineer it. Head coach Drew McDonald spoke of the three captains' invaluable "experience and presence" on and off the court. He sees the underclassmen coming along too.

The Mats have struggled in league play, but their win over second-place Dublin on Jan. 23 could be the boost they needed. "We're struggling right now," McDonald explained before Friday's win. "We came into league play with a winning record, and we've known that we have to get better as the season goes along."

The Mats look to get back to their winning ways against Las Lomas before taking on Campolindo on Jan. 31.



Joey Hewitt



Chris Hansen



Jackson Wegener Photos Gint Federas

Wrestling Teams Aim for NCS

By Karl Buscheck



Front row, from left: Jose Herrera, Zach Francis, Alex Jang and Max Hahn

It's crunch time in the DFAL wrestling season.

The NCS Dual Meet Championships are looming on Feb. 14 and all three Lamorinda high school squads are battling to claim a spot in the competition.

With seniors Alexander Jang and Zachary Francis leading the way, Miramonte owns a 2-1 record in DFAL action. As head coach Jose Herrera explained, the team has also received key contributions from an array of underclassmen.

"We've had these young guys step up out of nowhere, put in the time and now our team is mostly young, hungry athletes," said Herrera, who has grown the program from eight wrestlers to 40 in the four years that he's been in charge. "We have an extremely young

team where when we graduate our seniors, we're not going to be down at all. We might even be better."

To open up the season, the Matadors beat Acalanes on Dec. 11 and topped Dublin on Dec. 18. On Jan. 15, Miramonte lost its first league meet to Dougherty Valley, the reigning DFAL champs. With three matchups remaining on the schedule, the team has one clear objective: to finish in the top three at NCS.

"Our goal is to qualify for North Coast Section Duals and bring back a banner, a team banner," said Herrera.

Campolindo is also trying to win a banner of its own. With a 0-3 record in DFAL competition, the Cougars have plenty of work to do. So far, Campolindo has dropped meets to Dougherty Valley on Dec. 18, Alham-

bra on Jan. 8 and Las Lomas on Jan. 15.

"We're not where I want to be yet," said head coach Bob McLaughlin. "We need to go 2-1 or 3-0 to make it to NCS Duals, and I think we'll do better as the season progresses. The team's working hard. The kids are doing well. Sometimes you eat the bear, sometimes the bear eats you."

Seniors Trevor Martinho, Eric Monasevitch, and Jason Pollock have been the Cougars most consistent wrestlers, while sophomore Avery Novick has also been impressive. McLaughlin is confident that his team will make the necessary adjustments in the second half of the season to earn a trip to NCS Duals.

"It's a process and I think the kids are aware of where we need to get to, and they're working hard to do that and I think they will," McLaughlin added.

Acalanes is also in need of a strong second-half showing if the team is going to make an NCS appearance. The Dons have a record of 1-2 in DFAL after claiming their first league win over Dublin on Jan. 8.

Acalanes began the season with back-to-back losses to Miramonte on Dec. 11 and to Alhambra on Dec. 18. The Dons still have three meets on the schedule including a rivalry matchup against Campolindo on Feb. 5.

State Champions Celebrated



Head coach Kevin Macy speaks to the crowd with Tyler Petite (8) and Nick Fadelli (20) both All-DFAL First Team selections. Petite and Fadelli were key to Campolindo's success this season. Photos Gint Federas

Campolindo's 2014 football team was honored for its historic accomplishments on Jan. 25. Under head coach Kevin Macy, the team went 16-0 on its way to winning the CIF State Championship, the first in

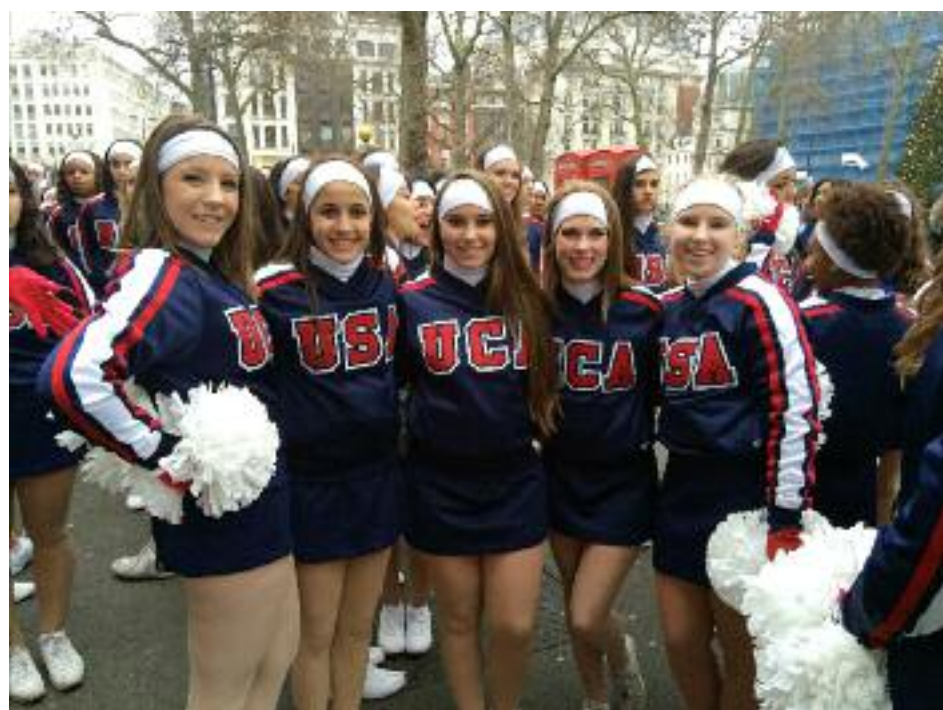
the program's history. The team was greeted by cheering fans from throughout the community. The celebration included food, special gear, and a showing of the championship game.



The team runs into meet a proud crowd.

Cheer for the New Year

Submitted by Mary Piscitelli



Dominique Gillis (center) poses with fellow cheerleaders, including Miramonte's Julia Gomes (left) and Jessie Musatchio (far right) Photo provided

Dominique Gillis, a junior at Acalanes High School, was selected as an All-American Cheerleader for 2014. Along with

the other All-Americans, Gillis traveled to London to participate in the New Year's Day parade.

Saint Mary's Holds On for Win

Submitted by Tony Samaniego



Sophomore Dylan Audsle on his way to his first of two tries against Arizona State.

After routing Arizona State 59-15 on Jan. 17, Saint Mary's rugby took on Olympic Club Jan. 24. SMC alum Michael Haley scored first for Olympic Club. Led by great plays from Kingsley McGowan, SMC took the lead 24-19 at halftime. The Gaels strengthened their defen-

sive efforts in the second half and held on to win 36-31. Saint Mary's was led by Tommy Wallace, who had three tries and three conversions, hooker Mike O'Neill, who notched two tries, and Niki Schlobohm, back from injury, who had one try.

Lamorinda Rugby Season Starts Strong

Submitted by Steve Peterson

Varsity Wins at UCLA Tournament



With Jack Fouts (3), Parker Watson, T.J. Low and Camden Hooser in support, Leon Martin fights for possession. Photo Geoff Martin

Lamorinda varsity rugby team faced some of the top high school programs in the U.S. at the Dennis Storer tournament

at UCLA on Jan. 17-18. Lamorinda finished the weekend 3-2, including a 40-5 victory over rival North Bay.

JV Faces Rival



Nima Raie runs for a try.

Photo Tammi O'Neal

Lamorinda junior varsity rugby team put down multiple scoring plays in a strong season opening scrimmage against Clayton Valley on Jan. 17.

Masters Swimmer Takes the Plunge

Submitted by Jon Wheeler




Ranie Pearce "poolside" in Siberia Photo provided

A longtime open water swimmer, Ranie Pearce has tackled some of the toughest open water swims in the world. She started swimming in 1988 as way to get exercise, but once she competed in the annual Lake Berryessa swim, she was hooked on open water swimming. Since 2008, she has conquered a series of open water swims across the globe including: The Straights of Gibraltar (10 miles), Catalina (20 miles), The English Channel (21 miles) and the Manhattan Island Marathon (28.5 miles). In August of 2014, Pearce travelled to Argentina to swim in the International Winter Swimming Festival. The event is a series of swims in increasingly colder water, culminating with a swim in a 37-degree glacier lake in Patagonia. In December, Pearce travelled to Tyumen, Siberia to swim in an ice pool. The pool is constructed by cutting a hole in the ice the size of a pool, then inserting lane lines. Despite the cold, Pearce says she is happiest in the water.

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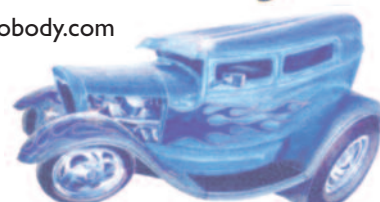
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The Real Estate Year in Review

...read on page D10

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 08 Issue 24 Wednesday, January 28, 2015

Don't Let It All Come Tumbling Down

Chimney and structure safety is preventable

By Chris Lavin



Unseen water can get in between the cracks in the mortar, freeze, and loosen the bricks, making them unstable. Photo Chris Lavin

Kids learn it when they're knee high from the wolf in the fable "The Three Little Pigs." The wolf huffs and he puffs and he blows the first two houses down with little effort, and gobbles two little pigs right up. So much for the inhabitants protected by straw and wood. But the third, the brick structure, the wolf cannot shake. Ergo, brick is the best construction material if you want to stay safe, right? The author (who was British, sniff) obviously wasn't living in earthquake country.

While brick is not a prime building material here any longer – it's not even allowed any more for new chimney construction anywhere in the state – brick chimneys are ubiquitous among Lamorinda's older homes, along with their brick walls, fences and other structures that could topple in a temblor.

... continued on page D4

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	11	\$700,000	\$2,650,000
MORAGA	5	\$328,000	\$1,251,500
ORINDA	8	\$890,000	\$2,750,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California REsource. Neither Cal REsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

LAFAYETTE

970 1st Street, \$935,000, 4 Bdrms, 1785 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 12-3-14;

Previous Sale: \$288,500, 05-12-95

3360 Beechwood Drive, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 2372 SqFt, 1942 YrBlt, 12-4-14;

Previous Sale: \$266,000, 05-18-94

840 Broadmoor Court, \$1,564,000, 4 Bdrms, 1956 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 12-1-14

1678 Foothill Park Circle, \$700,000, 4 Bdrms, 3526 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 12-2-14;

Previous Sale: \$700,000, 05-27-10

1655 Glen Oak Court, \$1,189,000, 2 Bdrms, 3199 SqFt, 1942 YrBlt, 12-11-14;

Previous Sale: \$875,000, 08-06-09

3251 Glenside Drive, \$2,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 3188 SqFt, 2013 YrBlt, 12-10-14;

Previous Sale: \$1,275,000, 04-19-12

673 Jennie Court, \$1,200,000, 5 Bdrms, 2392 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-4-14;

Previous Sale: \$640,000, 01-14-13

115 Marsha Place, \$1,030,000, 4 Bdrms, 1433 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 12-3-14

29 Olympic Oaks Drive, \$1,350,000, 3 Bdrms, 2484 SqFt, 1996 YrBlt, 12-9-14;

Previous Sale: \$598,000, 08-26-97

1072 Serrano Court, \$980,000, 3 Bdrms, 2249 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 12-4-14;

Previous Sale: \$49,000, 05-23-75

1115 Silverhill Court, \$900,000, 3 Bdrms, 3022 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 12-9-14;

Previous Sale: \$950,000, 10-21-08

MORAGA

2055 Ascot Drive #206, \$328,000, 2 Bdrms, 1082 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-5-14;

Previous Sale: \$140,000, 12-04-98

651 Moraga Road #36, \$390,000, 2 Bdrms, 1144 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 12-9-14;

Previous Sale: \$320,000, 05-08-13

1891 St. Andrews Drive, \$1,251,500, 3 Bdrms, 3424 SqFt, 1983 YrBlt, 12-4-14;

Previous Sale: \$555,000, 04-08-94

7 Via Barcelona, \$760,000, 3 Bdrms, 2109 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 12-5-14;

Previous Sale: \$267,500, 10-12-87

116 Via Joaquin, \$620,000, 3 Bdrms, 2117 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 12-10-14

ORINDA

17 Bates Boulevard, \$1,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 1432 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 12-10-14;

Previous Sale: \$650,000, 05-06-04

68 Camino Sobrante, \$890,000, 3 Bdrms, 1680 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 12-3-14;

Previous Sale: \$143,000, 08-22-78

21 Cedar Lane, \$1,035,000, 4 Bdrms, 2121 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 12-9-14;

Previous Sale: \$90,500, 06-05-75

26 Coachwood Terrace, \$2,070,000, 4 Bdrms, 2677 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 12-3-14

142 Crestview Drive, \$1,380,000, 4 Bdrms, 2185 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 12-10-14;

Previous Sale: \$53,500, 06-20-73

110 Estates Drive, \$1,020,000, 2 Bdrms, 2463 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 12-10-14

658 Moraga Way, \$1,100,000, 3 Bdrms, 1818 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-9-14;

Previous Sale: \$900,000, 10-12-06

18 Rabble Road, \$2,750,000, 12-1-14

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Don't Let It All Come Tumbling Down

... continued from page D1

Construction experts say that as long as homeowners pay attention to upkeep, older structures shouldn't be too much of a threat when the next "Big One" hits.

"You have to inspect," said Mike Fay of Mike's Mobile Screen and Chimney Service. He's not doing much work in Lamorinda now because of the quake last year that took out most of Napa's downtown and a lot of Vallejo. His crews are up there, still busy. Bricks galore tumbled into the streets. Thank goodness it happened in the middle of the night when a lot of people were not wandering the streets, Fay said. "It's a lot of work up there right now, but people can prevent this sort of thing."

That means you need to know what you have. "What happens is that people who have brick chimneys really need to be on top of their inspections," he said. "When the house shakes, the chimney doesn't necessarily need to shake with it." Brick strikes are dangerous and, above head height, can be deadly. "One brick and that could be fatal."

Fay recommends an annual inspection of anything brick. "Most people who use their chimneys regularly do get inspected," he said. The primary reason for malfunction, he said, is unseen – water gets in between the cracks in the mortar, freezes, loosens the bricks and makes them unstable. One earthquake, and they tumble.

Another hazard, he said, is listening to people who say that a chimney should be attached to a house. "I see rebar, I see straps attaching chimneys to houses," he said. "That's a mistake. A chimney is not attached to the house because a chimney is detached from the house. It's separate. When someone attaches the chimney to the house, in an earthquake that's going to make the chimney fall. Those straps will make the chimney shake with the house, and that shouldn't happen."

Therefore, do not attach the chimney to the house, Fay says.

"Nobody is using brick for chimneys anymore," said Dylan Llewellyn of Canyon. "You can catch problems early but otherwise you're outta luck." Fay agrees.

"The best thing is to catch any problem early," Fay said. "You can have structural or water damage. It's easiest to catch it early, otherwise it will have to be rebuilt." Nowadays that is done by replacing brick chimneys with pre-fab metal and wood chimneys that are built to live atop modern foundations and within houses that will pretend to have brick chimneys, so that Santa Claus next year still feels welcome.



Dylan Llewellyn checks out a neighbor's brick chimney for rot.

Photo Chris Lavin

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Feng Shui and Color

By Michele Duffy



Pink creates romance in a bedroom. Adding brown will tone down and neutralize the pink for wider appeal.

Photos provided

Color can be transformative, especially in feng shui. The principles of feng shui are founded on traditional Chinese medicine, based on the dynamic opposites of yin and yang – together with the five elements: water, wood, fire, earth and metal – as well as form, landscape, space orientation and time. Feng shui is about creating a natural equilibrium while promoting health, harmony, stability and prosperity. Activating an area of your home located on the Bagua map with color can activate the corresponding area of your life. In feng shui we like to apply color to activate a specific element that governs any of the nine Bagua areas and each of the five elements.

Color and hue or intensity selection can be downright daunting for many, but it doesn't have to be. Today there are endless inspirations, oodles of samples to try out before you commit to a color for an entire room. Start with the rooms where you spend the most time. Create a more romantic master bedroom with a pinky brown or transform your kitchen with feng shui favored whites that show off colorful food best.

If you overlay the Feng Shui Bagua (see diagram on page D8) over the space from the front door wall, you can easily see what rooms in the home are located in the areas of “wealth” (far left, wood), “relationships” (far right, earth) or

“health” (center, earth). Take another look at the Feng Shui Bagua to see which colors are associated with those areas and identify which of the five elements is activated when applying a color to that area of your home.

Picking specific colors based on what you do in a particular room needs special consideration. It would be inauspicious, for example, to incorporate “active” or yang colors – red, orange, bright yellow – in a bedroom where calmer, more yin colors work best for sleeping. Children's rooms often bloom with shades of soft green that signify growth and development.

It's also critical to choose environmentally-friendly paint. Remember to use a base coat and two coats of color for the best results, especially if you are covering darker walls.

Here are some examples of feng shui color meanings you can use to help decide what colors are appropriate for various areas in your home:

Black (water element): Black represents life, intuition, spirituality, wisdom, and psychological and intellectual depth, but if it is too dominant it creates depression and lack of hope.

Medium or Dark Blue (water and earth element): These hues of blue represent calm. They are soothing colors that re-

flect relaxation, peace and trust, adventure and exploration.

Blue-Green (water element): Blue-green is less auspicious than green, but it is also a secondary water color which is full of life force.

Dark Brown (earth element): Brown stands for stability, depth, something long-established and enduring, elegance, autumn, the passage of time and heaviness.

Green (wood element): Green evokes hope, development, family, tranquility, new beginnings and growth.

Grey (metal element): Too much grey denotes frustration and hopelessness but the marriage of opposites such as black and white creates balance and resolves conflict.

Gold (yin): Gold underscores health, nobility, calm, balance and spirituality.

Orange (earth element): Orange promotes happiness and power, and strengthens concentration and organization, but never use it in a bedroom if you want to sleep.

Pink (earth element): Pink denotes love and pure intent, joy, romance and happiness.

Purple and Lavender (wood element): Purple, deep red or plum are the colors of nobility, spirituality, and mental and emotional healing.

Red (fire element): Red is auspicious, the color of happiness, fire and passion, fame, strength and power. Never apply this color to bedroom walls.

Tan or Café au lait (earth element): Tan is soothing and is great for a master bedroom since it mimics the skin we should be in at least part of the time in that room.

... continued on page D8



This white kitchen in Orinda shows off the colorful Qi (energy) of the food prepared there.



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Feng Shui and Color

... continued from page D6

White (metal element): White represents confidence and purity, and is used mostly in combination with gold and silver to generate a calm atmosphere, but it needs other colors for balance.

Yellow (earth element): Yellow stands for sunbeams, warmth, motion, cheerfulness and friendliness. Yellows that are too intense, however, can create anxiety.

If you find choosing color a daunting task, I offer color

consultations to develop a color palette that will ignite your home and life in colorful Qi and enhance your health, wealth and happiness.

<p>WEALTH & PROSPERITY "Gratitude"</p> <p>REAR LEFT</p> <p><u>Wood</u> Blues, purple & reds</p>	<p>FAME & REPUTATION "Integrity"</p> <p>REAR MIDDLE</p> <p><u>Fire</u> Reds</p>	<p>LOVE & MARRIAGE "Receptivity"</p> <p>REAR RIGHT</p> <p><u>Earth</u> Reds, pinks, & whites</p>
<p>HEALTH & FAMILY "Strength"</p> <p>MIDDLE LEFT</p> <p><u>Wood</u> Blues & Greens</p>	<p>CENTER "Earth"</p> <p>Yellow & earth tones</p>	<p>CREATIVITY & CHILDREN "Joy"</p> <p>MIDDLE RIGHT</p> <p><u>Metal</u> White & Pastels</p>
<p>KNOWLEDGE & SELF CULTIVATION "Stillness"</p> <p>FRONT LEFT</p> <p><u>Earth</u> Black, blues & greens</p>	<p>CAREER "Depth"</p> <p>FRONT MIDDLE</p> <p><u>Water</u> Black & dark tones</p>	<p>HELPFUL PEOPLE & TRAVEL "Synchronicity"</p> <p>FRONT RIGHT</p> <p><u>Metal</u> White, grey & black</p>

"Front Door"

Feng Shui Basics

Feng shui (Wind and Water) is the practice of arranging your environment so that energy or "Qi" flows gently and smoothly through your home or business. Feng shui is not a meditation practice, a religion, or a New Age cult. In fact, its origins are thousands of years old. Feng shui is based on the concept that everything in your environment has a life force or energy. Just as Qi flows through your body, Qi also flows through your living environment. When the energy flow is stagnant, stuck, obstructed or moves too quickly, unbalanced Qi may lead to ill health, domestic strife or financial concerns. Professional feng shui adjustments can help you make sure, energetically, that everything in your environment supports your wish for good luck, good health, harmonious relationships and prosperity.



Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating "Space as Medicine" Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, and spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. For more info, visit www.mandalafengshui.com, email spaceharmony@gmail.com, or call (520) 647-4887.

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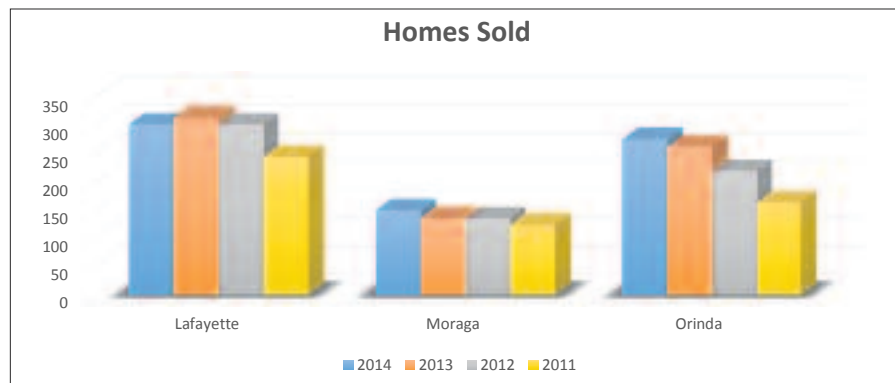
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The Real Estate Year in Review

By Conrad Bassett



Last year's average sale price for residential real estate was up significantly in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, making 2014 another extremely strong year for sellers. Similar to last year, homes stayed on the market for a limited time and prices rose as supply remained quite low throughout the year.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported for closings Jan. 1 through Dec. 31, 2014, 302 single family homes closed in Lafayette versus 314 in 2013, 302 in 2012 and 245 in 2011. There were two sales where the sales prices were not reported to the MLS. For the 300 reported closings, sales prices ranged from \$529,000 to \$4 million and the average time on market was 23 days, down from 31 days in 2013. In 2012 it was 32 days and in 2011 it was 49 days. The average sale price was \$1,339,303 up from \$1,248,532 in 2013, \$1,042,921 in 2012 and \$1,040,014 in 2011. The average sales price was 101 percent of the final list price. In 2013 it was 102 percent of the final list price. In 2012 it was 98.6 percent. Of the two unreported sales prices, the combined list prices were just under \$8 million so the actual average price in Lafayette would be somewhat higher. Both of these sold in less than three weeks on the market suggesting sale prices at or near the list price. There were five short sales reported in the MLS for the year in Lafayette.

In Moraga there were 150 single family closings in 2014, up from the 136 single family closings in 2013, the same as in 2012. There were 124 in 2011. Prices ranged from \$525,000 to \$3,337,500. The average sale price was \$1,205,576 up from \$1,147,207 in 2013. In 2012, it was \$991,469 and in 2011 it was \$894,768. The number of days on market in 2014 was 21, similar to 2013 when it was 23, down from 30 in 2012 and 40 in 2011. The average home sold for 102.5 percent of its last list price. One hundred six sold at or above their listing price.

In Orinda the number of single-family closings was 276, continuing an upward trend from 262 in 2013, 219 in 2012 and 164 in 2011. There was one property listed at \$4.95 million where the sale price was not reported to the MLS. The reported sales ranged in price from \$650,000 to \$3.58 million with an average price of \$1,370,088. In 2013 it was \$1,240,158 and in 2012 it was \$1,068,303. The average was \$1,021,751 in 2011. The average market time was 28 days, versus 27 days a year ago. It was 44 days in 2012 and down from 50 days in 2011. The sales price averaged about \$5,000 above the final list price for the reported sales. There were two short sales and one REO (bank owned) sale in Orinda in 2014.

There were no reported sales in the MLS in Canyon last year.

On an average price per square foot basis for reported sales in 2014 Lafayette homes sold for \$546.87, versus \$488.60 per square foot in 2013 and \$431.45 in 2012. In 2014 Moraga homes sold for \$495.15 per square foot, up from \$455.90 per square foot in 2013 and \$398.99 in 2012. In Orinda it was \$520.77, which was an increase from \$489.85 in 2013, and \$422.68 in 2012. In 2011, Lafayette homes sold for \$402.15 per square foot, Moraga homes for \$381.61, and in Orinda it was \$423.17.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had 21 closings, up from 16 a year ago. This increase included seven in the new development on Shreve Lane that were reported to the MLS. Lafayette had 14 closings in 2012 and six closings in 2011. Prices ranged in 2014 from \$488,888 to \$781,984. Moraga had 86, up from 70 in 2013 and 65 in 2012. Sales ranged from \$245,000 to \$870,000. This included attached homes in Moraga Country Club. Orinda had 12 – a big increase from the three in 2013. There were nine in 2012 and 12 in 2011. They sold from \$285,500 to \$1,192,500.

There were also a few direct sales that did not go through the MLS including some foreclosures that were sold at the courthouse as well as some sales between private individuals.

As of Jan. 15, 2015, there were 39 dwellings under contract per the MLS in the three communities combined with asking prices of \$347,500 to \$3.495 million. There are only two "Potential Short Sales" that are currently pending. In each case, the anticipated closing date may be several months into the future as sellers await approval from their particular lender or lenders. There were eight a year ago and 17 pending short sales in January 2013. As prices have risen over the last several months, more owners now have equity in their homes and have not had to go the short-sale process.

A comparison of year-end inventory in the three communities combined versus a year ago shows only 34 homes on the market. At this time a year ago there were 51. Typically the biggest inventory is in the spring and early summer, however this current number may point to another year with a combination of qualified buyers vying for a continued limited supply. The current asking prices range from \$267,000 to \$4.465 million in the three communities combined.

In Lamorinda in 2014, 81 homes sold for \$2 million or more. This is a huge increase from 2013 when 40 homes sold above \$2 million. It was 28 in 2012 and 17 sold above this amount in 2011.

Interest rates have remained historically low and are still very attractive to those with down payments of at least 20 percent. Corporations continue to expand and contract and also to relocate families. The minimal amount of single family new construction has helped keep supply and demand within a better balance than a lot of other neighboring communities. Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda as well as Piedmont and several neighborhoods in Oakland and Berkeley continue to benefit from their proximity to San Francisco where prices are very high. The East Bay is a "bargain."

There is a continued trend that began in 2011 in the three communities where sellers receive multiple offers and homes sell for above the list price. This, when coupled with an extremely low supply and a willingness by sellers to be realistic in their pricing, should continue to fuel a strong market.

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Pending

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 Bring your investor/contractor/sophisticated buyers only for this fixer! 3bd/1.25ba w/1372sf on .17ac. Frplc, formal dining rm & basement area. Needs plenty of work. Trust sale sold "as is".

\$529,000

MARTINEZ



New Listing

360 Donegal Way
 Spacious Virginia Hills 3bd/2ba home with hardwood floors, vaulted ceiling in living room with fireplace, large family room, great yard for entertaining, Pleasant Hill schools!

\$579,000

PLEASANT HILL



20 Whitfield Court
 Great 2.58 acre parcel at top of knoll with views of Mount Diablo & ideal privacy. Truly special setting sites for development zoned R-10 & R-15. Wonderful opportunity for investment.

\$1,950,000

WALNUT CREEK



Pending

2734 Oak Road #103
 Remodeled lower unit w/no steps in serene setting among redwds. New kit. w/granite countertops. New carpet & paint. Large fenced patio. Walk to BART, downtown W.C. & Club Sport.

\$265,000

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