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Yvonne Haley of Moraga regularly buys flowers from Marc Colliard, even on rainy days like last Sunday.

Photo Andy Schreck

## Winter Bounty at the Moraga Farmers' Market

By Sophie Braccini

Who said that winter was not a good time for a farmers' market? Certainly not Amy Smith who comes every Sunday morning and leaves with a bag full of brightly colored fruits and vegetables. The Moraga Country Club resident was one of the many locals to shop on Super Bowl Sunday before the game and stock up on fresh produce for the week. Nothing stops the Moraga farmers' market – not rain or even frost. It became a year-round market six years ago.

Marc Colliard only comes to the market during the winter. The Carmel flower grower sells fragrant bouquets of narcissus, freesias or paperwhites that perfume his corner of the market and attract a steady stream of clients. "Moraga is my favorite market, because people here are really nice," he says. Next to him, Rachel Smith, a college student from Concord, plays her violin, attracting the attention of the many small children who come to the market with their parents. There is always entertainment at

the market and families make it an outing, like the bike patrol organized by Brad Crane in Lafayette that comes down the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail on Sunday mornings.

Though the winter market is a little smaller than its summer version, the Moraga market houses some incredible stands that are hard to find anywhere else. The Fraternal Notre Dame Sisters from San Francisco have elected the little suburb as one of their only places of business. ... continued on page A12

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## Science Teacher Wins Award

By Cathy Tyson



Mike Meneghetti in his classroom at Stanley Middle School holds up one of the many robots that students have created. Photo Cathy Tyson

Winner of one of three Warren Eukel Teacher Trust Grants, longtime resident and popular Stanley Middle School science teacher Mike Meneghetti was humbled with an award given to him at a recent Lafayette City Council meeting. He grew up in Lafayette, attending local schools from Springhill Elementary all the way to Acalanes – class of '75 – and went on to get his teaching credential in San Francisco. The award is given for a teacher's extraordinary commitment to their students.

Council Member Mark Mitchell has known Meneghetti since they were both in first grade, and his kids have gone through Meneghetti's classes. In front of the robust crowd gathered to celebrate his achievement, Mitchell wanted to thank him personally for "making science so enjoyable and encouraging their curiosity." He added that both kids went into the sciences: geology and engineering.

In giving the award, Mayor Brandt Andersson also has a personal connection to Meneghetti. His daughter enjoyed his class, calling it a "truly unique experience."

"This is amazing," said Meneghetti receiving the award. "This is my 32nd year of teaching and it's still fun, in large part due to an incredibly supportive administration, amazing colleagues, a community that values education, and Lafayette's education foundation, (which has) supported the science program at Stanley for years. Thank you all very much."

For the last 22 years the youthful and energetic Meneghetti has been teaching sixth grade science and engineering/robotics to eighth graders. He credits the incredible support from foundation donations that make the robotics program possible, which has rejuvenated his career.

He spells out his philosophy on his Back to School Night handout: ... continued on page A8

please...  
  
 ...thanks

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Spice up your Valentine's Day – page B4



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Mats and Dons tie in heavy rain – page C1.



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Valentine's décor ideas – page D6





# Lafayette

## Public Meetings

### City Council

Monday, Feb. 23, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,  
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

### Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 17, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,  
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

### Design Review

Special Meeting  
Thursday, Feb. 12, 7 p.m.

Regular Meeting  
Monday, Feb. 23, 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. 18, 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



## Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report Jan. 18 to 31:

**Alarms** 52

**911 calls** 14

### Burglary, Auto

3600 block Happy Valley Ln  
Safeway  
Bentley Upper School  
1000 block Upper Happy Valley  
900 block Dewing Av

### Burglary, Residential

800 block Rosedale Av

### Burglary, Commercial

60 block Lafayette Cir  
200 block Lafayette Cir

### Civil Disturbance

1000 block Oak Hill Rd

### Credit Card Fraud

Reported to LPD (2)

### Drunk in Public

Round Up

### DUI

1st St/Hwy 24  
Olympic Oaks Dr/Olympic Bl

### Embezzlement

3500 block Mt Diablo Bl

### Fire/EMS Response

3400 block Mt Diablo Bl

### Grand Theft

3300 block Mt Diablo Bl (2)  
1700 block Reliez Valley Rd

### Harassment

3300 block Mt Diablo Bl  
1000 block Creekwood Pl

### Health & Safety Violation

1100 block Pleasant Hill Cr

### ID Theft

Reported to LPD  
3400 block La Caminita (2)

### Loud Music

3300 block East Terrace

### Missing Juvenile

Stanley Middle School

### Missing Adult

3600 block Hastings Ct

### Panhandling

CVS  
Safeway  
3600 block Mt Diablo Bl

### Petty Theft

3300 block Springhill Rd  
Springhill Elementary  
4100 block Coralee Ln  
3300 block Rossi St  
3200 block Mt Diablo Bl  
700 block Las Trampas Rd  
3200 block Andreason Dr  
3600 Bickerstaff St  
4000 block Happy Valley Rd

### Promiscuous Shooting

Little Ln/Foye Dr

### Public Nuisance

El Camino Moraga/Moraga Wy  
3900 block Peardale Dr  
800 block Bell St  
Old Tunnel Rd/Windsor Dr  
Mt Diablo Ct/Mt Diablo Bl  
3100 block Maryola Ct  
3500 block Terrace Wy  
3500 block Boyer Cr (2)  
3300 block Brook St  
3500 block Terrace Wy  
OConnor Dr/Moraga Rd  
Leland Dr/Old Tunnel Rd  
3600 block Mt Diablo Bl  
Pleasant Hill Rd/Rancho View Dr  
Mt Diablo Bl/Oak Hill Rd

### Reckless Driving

Hwy 24/Oak Hill Rd  
Acalanes Rd/Hwy 24  
1st/School St  
Silverado Rd/Rohrer Dr  
Pleasant Hill Cir/Acalanes Av

### Speeding

Reliez Station Rd/Glenside Dr

### Suspicious Circumstances

9

### Suspicious Vehicle

25

### Suspicious Subject

21

### Threats

Round Up  
3600 block Happy Valley Rd

### Traffic Stops

217

### Trespass

1000 block Stuart St

### Unwanted Guest

10 block Brookdale Ct

### Vandalism

30 block Prado Wy

### Vehicle Theft

Bentley Upper School (2)

### Warrant Service

700 block Old Jonas Hill Rd

# Sustainable Lafayette: New Board, New Energy, New Projects

By Sophie Braccini

Over the past 10 years, the non-profit organization Sustainable Lafayette has strived to make Lafayette greener. It recently instated new members to its board to help foster new ideas and projects, but also, as founding members leave the center stage, to make sure that the group – as its name suggests – is sustainable.

New board members Michael Cass, Melinda Krigel, Wei-Tai Kwok, Gailene Nelson and Amanda Walter are all Lafayette residents involved in differing aspects of environmental activism.

Krigel was exposed to Sustainable Lafayette through the green schools programs. “I have been co-chair of the ‘Wastebusters’ committee at Happy Valley Elementary for three years,” she says. She met Sustainable Lafayette board members while attending monthly meetings with the school’s “green” representatives. “That gave me a better understanding



From left, front to back: John Eaton, Erika Pringsheim-Moore, Kim Overaa, Melinda Krigel, Michael Cass, Steve Richard, Gailene Nelson, Nanette Heffernan, Brad Crane, Community Engagement Manager Pamela Palitz and Wei-Tai Kwok. Not pictured Amanda Walter. Photo Sophie Braccini

of the goals of the organization and its impact on our community,” she remembers. As a journalist, she covered a number of environmental issues and pursued a graduate degree in environmental law and journalism. Krigel plans to advocate for kids’ education on the board. “If children have the opportunity to practice environmental responsibility at school by doing such

things as recycling their papers or composting their lunch leftovers, then these practices can carry over into other part of their lives,” she says.

The school’s program was also Kwok’s entry point. “My wife Violet was a Sustainable Lafayette volunteer helping Happy Valley Elementary School adopt more sustainable recycling practices,” he says. A self-de-

scribed humanist, Kwok says he’s passionate about saving the people who live on the earth. “If we exhaust our natural resources, life will be difficult for our children,” he says. In August of 2013, Kwok traveled to Chicago for three days with 1,200 other volunteers from across the country to learn the latest facts about climate change. ... continued on page A8

## New Year, New Goals

By Cathy Tyson

It’s that time of year again: goal setting time. At the Jan. 26 city council meeting, the Lafayette City Council reviewed 2014’s completed items, carried forward goals that are still in progress and added new ones for 2015.

One of the goals Mayor Brandt Andersson and City Manager Steven Falk discussed is a series of community conversations for citizens to chime in on potential future projects. Because downtown development is under control and the road repair situation is almost completely addressed, this is an opportunity to get a pulse of the town and gather feedback and suggestions. “This is a chance to start looking ahead to expand our

horizons and see some new things that the city can do,” said Andersson. Look for the conversations to start sometime in the spring.

More concretely, city council members were asked their goals and priorities for the fiscal year that will start on July 1. Falk called it the “kick off to the annual budget process.” At the next meeting, the council can look at goals and staff prepares an estimated budget for those items, with a draft budget coming back to the council in late May or early June for final approval.

Other goals for fiscal year 2015-16 include organizing and hosting a Commissioners’ Academy to introduce successful meeting models to

ensure that city commission meetings are productive, and to help commissioners meet all legal requirements. Also on the list is to develop a strategy for downtown parking, and finally write and approve a master plan for downtown creeks.

Four of the five goals from last year are still in progress: consider a grand plan for downtown traffic circulation, process land use matters related to the Terraces of Lafayette, develop a plan to improve fire and emergency medical services, and develop a plan for financing downtown landscape maintenance. Finding the highest and best use of two city-owned parcels – the Old Library and 949 Moraga Road is complete.

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# Looking at Options to Improve Reliez Station Corridor

By Cathy Tyson



Reliez Station Corridor map

Image provided

After personally seeing congestion, analyzing data and hearing from residents, representatives from Stantec Transportation Consultants explained at a late-January meeting various alternatives, with estimated price tags for each option, to the currently failing intersections along the Olympic Boulevard and Reliez Station Road Corridor. Feedback from residents at the forum was lively, with many voicing concerns.

The consultants were tasked to work with residents and staff to identify problems, and to develop and evaluate options for addressing issues on this well-traveled route toward the freeway, popular with Burton Valley drivers as well as residents of Moraga. The City of Lafayette received funding from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority to pay for a study of traffic and safety issues along the corridor. Stantec Traffic Consultants had the winning proposal.

With roughly \$1.2 million poten-

tially available via county sales tax revenue to go toward upgrading intersections on the often-congested corridor, this was the first peek at potential solutions. Due to the number of problematic intersections along this route, and a limited amount of money, the city wants to get input from stakeholders and prioritize options.

The lengthy process started back in the spring of 2014 and included an initial opinion survey and multiple community walks along the corridor, identifying existing conditions and more.

At the January meeting, consultants presented exhaustive charts with issues identified by residents that rated characteristics like speed, congestion, safety and more at each of the four intersections along the route from the intersection of Pleasant Hill Road and Olympic Boulevard to Reliez Station Road and Glenside Drive North.

... continued on page A8

# Smiles Abound at Business Person of the Year Dinner



From left: Debbie Cooper and Leila Douglah

Photo Gint Federas

Chamber of Commerce President Debbie Cooper from Mechanics Bank congratulated Leila Douglah of Douglah Designs as the 2015 Business Person of the Year at the annual dinner event sponsored by the Lafayette Cham-

ber of Commerce. Douglah has grown and expanded her business in Lafayette and always gives back to the community. She was honored at the Lafayette Park Hotel, with many dignitaries there to sing her praises. C. Tyson

# 2015 Citizen of the Year Nomination Deadline Feb. 13

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

Email: jay@lafayettechamber.org

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

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	Under 2000 sq. ft.		2000-2500 sq. ft.		Over 2500 sq. ft.	
	2013	2014	2013	2014	2013	2014
Total Homes Sold	22	29	49	53	58	47
Avg. Days on Market	14	26	17	21	29	14
Sold Over Asking Price	18	16	29	28	34	32
Sold Under Asking Price	3	6	11	15	17	12
Sold at Asking Price	1	7	7	10	7	3
Avg. Sales Price	\$844,454	\$892,000	\$1,075,000	\$1,166,000	\$1,360,000	\$1,488,000
Avg. Sales Price Per Sq. Ft.	\$493	\$538	\$489	\$517	\$441	\$478

Another great year in Real Estate and for real estate values. Homes that sold for under the asking price were generally either in pretty rough shape or priced too high. Everything else did quite well.

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**ALAIN PINEL**



# Moraga

## Public Meetings

### Town Council

Wednesday, Feb. 11, 7 p.m.  
 Wednesday, Feb. 25, 7 p.m.  
 Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,  
 1010 Camino Pablo

### Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 17, 7 p.m.  
 Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

### Design Review

Monday, Feb. 23, 7 p.m.  
 Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

### School Board Meeting

**Moraga School District**  
 Tuesday, March 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

**Pair of rings lost, 1/29/15** A kitchen worker at Saint Mary's College left her rings in the pocket of her jacket; she presumes the rings fell out of the pocket as she carried her jacket to the manager's office. The reporting person checked the area and couldn't find them.

**Fake tax return, 2/01/15** A Sullivan Drive resident reported to police that she received a letter from the IRS on Jan. 31 stating a possibly fraudulent tax return was sent to them. The reporting person contacted the IRS, but they were closed for the weekend. She just wanted documentation.

**Possession of pot, 1/30/15** It was 4:15 in the afternoon when Moraga cops pulled over an Acura MDX after observing the car almost get into a collision. The 16-year-old driver and his 17-year-old male passenger were cited for narcotic possession and suspected marijuana was found in the vehicles. Both teens were later released to a parent.

**Mom vs. kid fight, 1/29/15** Officers responded to an Ascot Drive apartment where the reporting person said she had been kicked by her mother who also lived in the apartment. Paramedics arrived and cleared the reporting person at the scene. Kicker performed a Citizen's Arrest on her mom. Cops released the mother at the scene and the reporting person left the apartment for the evening. The report was forwarded to the Office of the District Attorney.

**Egging, 2/21/15** A Camino Pablo resident said her house had been egged on two occasions by kids. Apparently several raw eggs had been smashed on the house on both occasions, with an estimated damage of approximately \$2,800. Although the reporting person had specific suspect information, she simply wished to have the incident documented for her insurance.

Other crimes in Moraga that happened between Jan. 27 and Feb. 3:

**Battery** – Larch Avenue

**False Alarm** – Brookfield Drive, Ascot Drive, Blain Court, Corte Royal

**Damaged Parked Car** – Ascot Court

**Danger to Self** – Ascot Drive

**DUI** – St. Mary's Road

**Auto Accident** – St. Mary's Road and Moraga Road

**Susp. Circumstances** – Crossbrook Drive

**Petty Theft** – Camino Pablo

**Loud Party** – Ascot Drive

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## Gary Bernie & Ken Ryerson

# Back to the Drawing Board for Moraga Center Homes Project

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council neither upheld nor denied the appeal of the Planning Commission's approval of the City Ventures project on Moraga Way next to fire station 41 at its recent meeting on Jan. 28. Most council members agreed with the appellants that the conceptual plan had flaws, but rather than supporting the appeal, council asked staff to work with the developer to remedy the identified issues. The final decision was postponed to an uncertain future date.

Residents who came to hear the council's ruling filled the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School auditorium. Over the past months, after story poles were erected on the development site, the community had expressed concerns about the 36-unit development project. During the public comment portion of the meeting, Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Stephen Healy said he was directed by the district's board to notify the council that the proposed residential development project is not compatible with the MOFD's training facility at fire station 41.

Healy stated, "Regardless of measures put in place with City Ventures, the board believes it is inevitable there will be complaints from residents living in those homes and there will be pressure to curtail training activities – an unacceptable con-

sequence to the district." He referred the town to a 2008 letter sent from the MOFD expressing concerns regarding the zoning of the site, and mentioned many discussions he and an ad-hoc committee created by the MOFD board had with the developer and town staff to try to mitigate the district's concerns. Station 41 houses the only training center for the MOFD. Kathleen Famulener, who sits on the MOFD board, added there were potential risks of fatal accidents by having a fire training facility next to a development with a pocket park or children's playground (included in the project).

Appellant Dick Olsen and co-appellant Steve Bowey argued that the project's massing along a scenic corridor, the three-story height as well as the increased traffic on Country Club Drive all pointed to a flawed project, potentially destructive to the character of the town, and in violation of the town's General Plan and the Moraga Center Specific Plan.

Fifteen residents expressed similar concerns against the project.

Lucy Dendinger and Dan Alipaz, on the other hand, argued that Moraga had been a no-growth town since the 1990s, that retail had suffered from it, that the town needed an influx of young families, and that the tax base needed to grow. For these reasons

they supported a project they thought was well designed. Councilmember Phil Arth said he supported the project, based on the recommendation of staff and advisory bodies.

City Ventures CEO Phil Kerr reminded the council that the Planning Commission had found the project consistent with the Moraga Center Specific Plan, which is in accordance with the General Plan. But Councilmember Teresa Onoda said that she researched the MCSP and found the project to be non-compliant because when traveling along Moraga Way, a person's view of Indian Ridge would be blocked by the proposed development. She also added that the project was not compatible with its surroundings, since it includes a very different setback than its respective neighbors and contended that the massing was not compatible with town regulations.

Councilmember Dave Trotter said that height, view shed protection and setbacks should be reviewed. He also questioned whether the traffic study's projected 210 trips per day for the project was accurate.

Mayor Roger Wykle agreed with his colleagues and wondered if, with a combination of setback and building height modifications, the view shed could be protected. He also agreed that it was likely that the traffic impact had been underestimated. The coun-

cil directed staff to work with City Ventures to mitigate these issues.

After the meeting, Charity Nelson, City Ventures project manager, said, "I am confident that we will find a solution that will satisfy the council's concerns." She indicated that no additional traffic study needed to be done since their project was below the envelope allowed by the MCSP. She anticipated the project to come back to the council in March.

Town Planning Director Ellen Clark also said she was optimistic regarding a successful outcome. "We (should) be able to come back with project revisions that address the council's concerns regarding consistency with the Specific Plan, and that meet the developer's objectives for a viable project," she said.

The question regarding the position of the MOFD remains. During the meeting Chief Healy noted that it was not the intention of the district to interfere with the development of the town. However, the statement of incompatibility raises new questions and both Nelson and Clark stated they would reach out to MOFD and try to work out a solution. MOFD board members did not respond to this reporter's question regarding the possibility that the district could exert its eminent domain power and purchase the land.

## 2015 Goal Setting

### Mayor Wykle wants to leave his mark

By Sophie Braccini

Last month the Moraga Town Council and staff met to set the town's goals for the year. This is a traditional opportunity for a new mayor to outline goals he or she wants to achieve during the one-year tenure.

Town Manager Jill Keimach presented the staff's continuing goals for the year. In 2015 the town aims to become paperless and finalize the 331 Rheem Blvd. renovation, establish a storm drain system master plan and implement body-worn cameras for the police force. Another objective is the possible annexation within the town limits of a portion of the Carr Ranch. That property located along Camino Pablo between Sanders Ranch and Rancho Laguna Park is not part of

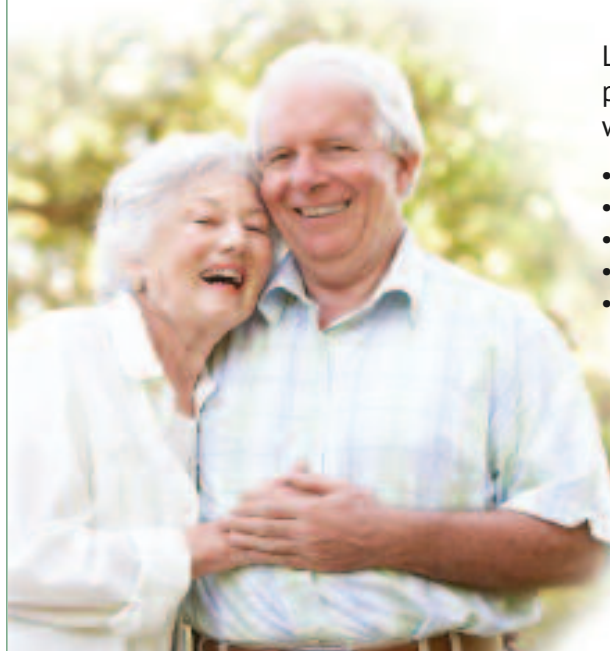
the town of Moraga, simply within its sphere of influence. An application for a residential project is in the making for a 24-acre portion of the ranch along Camino Pablo. Staff is encouraging the applicant to seek the incorporation of that property within the town.

Mayor Roger Wykle then introduced his goals, presented as a group effort that included staff and other councilmember input. Besides the obvious objectives of fiscal stability and the pavement improvement project, Wykle wants to continue democratic transparency by broadcasting meetings over the Internet, streamline the planning process, implement the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP), minimizing the impact of new develop-

ments on existing neighborhoods, improve the viability of the Rheem Theatre, explore the possibility to create a 'park bank' – where portions of funds collected from developers of the MCSP would be used by the town to purchase new park land – and work with the community to amend the ridgeline and hillside development code.

Wykle hopes to get more community input about how to prioritize the use of future funds. Should the millions that the town will get from Palos Colorado developers be spent on previously delayed maintenance, on new sports facilities, or on acquiring open space? The mayor would like what he calls a "statistically valid survey" to be conducted.

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## From the Runway to Directing Moraga Royale

*Dianne Wilson is Moraga's Business Person of the Year*

By Sophie Braccini



Dianne Wilson at Moraga Royale

Photo Sophie Braccini

Moraga Royale Executive Director Dianne Wilson, who has had an unusual career path, is being honored this month as the Moraga Business Person of the Year for turning around the assisted living facility. The former model who worked all over the world before choosing Moraga as her place to live, says that she is very grateful for the recognition and that it is the symbol of what this community has been for her and her family, in the good times as well as the darkest moments.

Wilson spent the first 12 years of her life in a rural Idaho community, "the kind of place where if you did something wrong, your family

would hear about it before you got home," she reminisces fondly. Then her father's career took the family to Washington, D.C. – quite a game changer. After college Wilson started a career as a fashion model on the runway in Paris, and was featured on glossy pages of popular magazines. Her agent was in San Francisco, so one day while visiting the area she ended up in Moraga. "I think that the place had this rural appeal I had loved as a child," she says. While she worked in San Francisco, she rented a cottage in Moraga. This is also where she met her husband, went back to college at Saint Mary's, and decided to start a family.

Wilson, her husband and two boys lived in the Pacific Northwest for a while as land developers. "We decided to come back when the activity slowed down there." Back in Moraga, Wilson saw an announcement for a marketing position at Moraga Royale, which was under different ownership at the time and called Summerville. After a couple of years, the original founders bought their business back and offered Wilson the executive director's seat.

"I took all the classes in order to get the needed licensing to run Moraga Royale," she says, "and then we started turning this place around." Wilson says that things may be done a bit differently at Moraga Royale than at other places because she runs the place with no preconceived ideas – just one guiding principle: the happiness of the residents.

Wilson also gives her employees opportunities to evolve and showcase their unique talents. Tina Delgado, who started by doing laundry, now works with Activity Director Eileen Alford, a local business owner of Studio E, and sings almost every evening for the residents. Al Pyne is a former CVS manager who drives the Moraga Royale bus. "We are large enough," Wilson adds, "but small enough that we know each of our residents very well."

Wilson experienced the power of the tightly knit Moraga Royale family when tragedy hit eight years ago after her older son died at age 24. "When it came time to go back to work, I thought I would not be able to do it," she says. "The residents needed me, staff needed me, the families needed me, and I thought I would not

be good for anybody. But the very first day I came back I realized that they were all here for me, they were my strength. All the residents here had lost so much, too. Some had lost children also; they had lost spouses, sisters. We didn't have to say anything, they all knew and were 100 percent supportive. It was unbelievable. I learned so much about human nature." And she says that is why the recognition means so much to her, because this town is so important for her. "I felt the very first time I came to this town when I was in my 20s that I had found a place where I belonged," she adds.

Recently both Wilson's mother and mother-in-law moved to Moraga Royale – a testimony to her belief in the institution. "People who move here thrive; they make friends, they get involved in activities," she says. Local residents from outside Moraga Royale are involved in activities with residents at the facility, such as the bridge group, pinocle teams, Girls Scouts volunteer activities, a knitting group and a Bible study group, as well as support by the Moraga Chamber of Commerce and the annual holiday party put on by Moraga Royale creative chef Gerry Lopez.

Now the center is running at full capacity, with a waiting list, so the focus for Wilson is the quality of life for her 93 residents, ages 68 to 102.

The dinner honoring Wilson is scheduled at 6 p.m. Feb. 24 at the Moraga Country Club. Tickets are \$50. For reservations, call the Moraga Chamber of Commerce at (925) 323-6524.

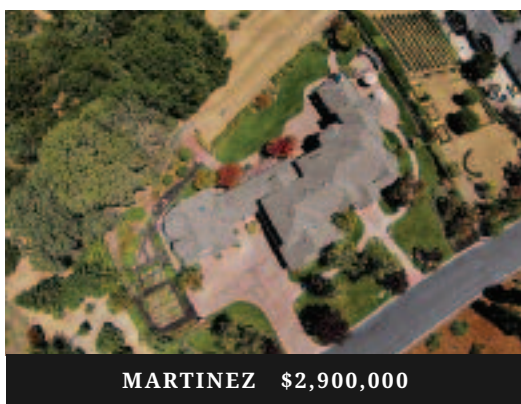
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# WELCOME HOME



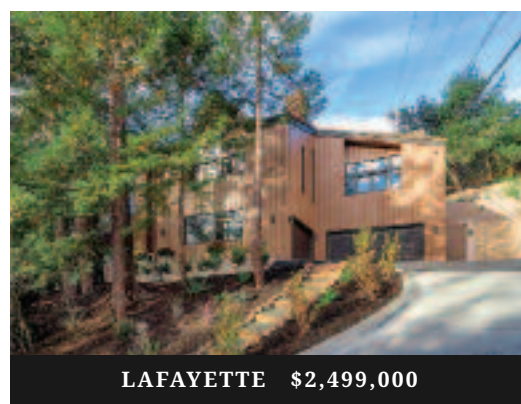
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# Orinda

## Public Meetings

### City Council

Tuesday, Feb. 17, 7 p.m.  
Auditorium, Orinda Library,  
26 Orinda Way

### Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 24, 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, March 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. 18 to 31:

**Alarms** 37  
**Battery**

- 10 block Theater Sq
- 10 block Lost Valley Dr

### Barking Dog

- 10 block Bates Bl

### Burglary, Auto

- Bear Creek Rd/San Pablo Dam Rd
- 100 block Scenic Dr
- 70 block Moraga Wy (2)

### Burglary, Residential

- 400 block Camino Sobrante

### 911 calls

8

### Disturbance

- 100 block Orchard Rd
- 50 block Muth Dr
- 20 block Don Gabriel Wy
- 10 block Totterdale Ct
- 10 block Knickerbocker Ln

### Drunk in Public

- Library

### Fire/Ambulance Call

- Orinda Intermediate School

### Forgery

- 30 block E. Altarinda Dr

### Hit & Run

- Moraga Wy/Meadowlands Ct
- Miramonte High School
- 40 block St Stephens Dr

### Loud Party

- 20 block Lavina Ct

### Missing Juvenile

- 10 block Honey Hill Ct
- 10 block St Stephen's Dr

### Missing Adult

- 20 block Irwin Wy

### Neighbor Dispute

- 10 block Crown Ct
- 80 block Oak Rd

### Theft, Petty

- 70 block Van Ripper Ln
- Brookwood/Camino Pablo
- 300 block Village View Ct
- 10 block Los Amigos

### Panhandling

- Safeway (3)

### Public Nuisance

- 10 block Snowberry Ct
- 10 block Tara Rd
- 30 block Carisbrook Dr
- Carmen Ct/La Cresta Rd
- 20 block El Patio

### Reckless Driving

- Miramonte High School
- Camino Pablo/Bear Cr Rd
- Moraga Wy/Altamount Dr

### Restraining Order Violation

- 10 block Orinda Wy

### Suspicious Circumstance

12

### Suspicious Subject

17

### Suspicious Vehicle

18

### Traffic Stops

171

### Trespass

- 50 block Zander Dr
- 100 block Amber Valley Dr

### Uncontrollable Juvenile

- 10 block Totterdale Ct (2)

### Vehicle Theft

- 20 block Muth Dr
- Los Venados/Lomas Cantada

### Theft

- Safeway

### Warrant Service

- 10 block Lavena Dr (2)
- 50 block Donna Maria Wy



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## Orinda City Council Clarifies Policies and Procedures for Public Meetings

By Laurie Snyder

On Jan. 13, Orinda City Attorney Osa Wolff began a report to the Orinda City Council by stating, "The city takes very seriously its obligations to comply with state, federal and local open meeting laws and rules about transparency." That report was prepared jointly with City Manager Janet Keeter and City Clerk Michele Olsen, and guided council's annual review of its policies and procedures manual (P&P). The resulting public discussion clarified practices which have been termed nonsensical by some but that are, in fact, grounded in the Brown Act.

City policies dictate that all public remarks at council meetings be directed to the mayor and council as a whole, rather than to a specific council member. Per Section 4.1 of the P&P manual: anyone may address council during the public forum period about items "within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Council and ... not otherwise on the agenda" unless he/she cannot be present for items scheduled to be addressed later. Per

Section 5.2, "as prescribed more fully in [the Brown Act]," council may not take action on items which are not on the agenda unless there is an immediate need for action, such as the Tarabrook sinkhole emergency, or when a matter is continued from a prior meeting.

Slightly more latitude may be allowed during policy discussions or quasi-judicial public hearings such as design reviews. Applicants, their attorneys and architects have 15 minutes to testify, as do appellants. Others are then each given three minutes – except when the mayor deems it necessary to "direct a like-minded group to appoint a spokesperson" to "preserve order and eliminate repetitious testimony."

Booing, clapping or similarly boisterous behavior is also prohibited. Per the California League of Cities, the Brown Act empowers council to "adopt reasonable regulations on public testimony and the conduct of public meetings, including measures to address disruptive

conduct and irrelevant speech," and permits police to remove disruptors.

Changes proposed Jan. 13 clarify that members of the public may, if they choose, speak anonymously during public comment periods. "That is already our policy, but this makes it clear," said Wolff. The changes also make clear that public forum dialogue between council and audience members is not permitted.

During council's deliberation, Council Member Eve Phillips requested further edits. "I know it says that completing this [speaker card] is optional," but reiterating this on the card might be helpful "since it's been ... not always so clear in the past that name and address, and telephone number, email, etc. is not required." Asked by Mayor Steve Glazer why this was necessary since the card already states that completion is optional, Phillips continued, "I don't believe that's been fully understood by the public."

... continued on page A8

## The Ralph M. Brown Act

Passed in 1953 by the California State Legislature as a simple, 686-word statute to guarantee the public's right to attend and participate in the meetings of California city and county public governing bodies, the Ralph M. Brown Act (aka "the Brown Act") now spells out everything from when meeting agenda must be released to what recourse officials have when meetings are so disrupted by agitators that average citizens are unable to exercise their own individual rights to engage with elected officials.

For more information, visit the California League of Cities' guide to the Brown Act at <http://www.cacities.org/Resources-Documents/Resources-Section/Open-Government/OpenPublic2010.aspx>.

## New Orinda Study Hangout Dazzles and Draws Teens



From left: Emma Rust, Danny Campbell, Jason Rudianto, Melanie McCallum (Teen Services Librarian, Orinda Library), Yassamin Emadi, Jordan Hardwick, Leila Minowada, Lara Sanli, Jackie Decareau Photo Andy Schreck

What do you do when the Young Adult section of your library becomes more popular with parents than their own teenagers? If

you're the library staff in Orinda, you redesign the spot so spectacularly that young Orindans can't help being curious and captivated.

Thanks to Melanie McCallum and Adriana Nino that's exactly what happened when the library's Teen Advisory Group (TAG) received a sneak peak of the new YA corner on Feb. 4. It was an immediate hit with those in attendance.

The project came about in 2014 when Teen Services Librarian McCallum and Library Assistant Nino noticed, soon after their hiring, that local teens needed a more enticing place to study and hang out. "With help from a subcommittee of Friends of the Orinda Library, they investigated other area library teen spaces, conducted research on current thinking on library services for teens, attended workshops on design of library spaces and came up with a design, color scheme and new wall art to completely overhaul the YA corner

with the intention of having an actual space that teens would want to utilize," says head librarian, Beth Girshman. "The new furniture was purchased from a company committed to sustainable business practices, and the upholstery fabric is made from recycled materials."

And to be sure they were hitting the nail on the head, McCallum and Nino also sought input from teen volunteers during the final design phase. Funding was provided by the Hart family and Friends of the Orinda Library with additional support from the Contra Costa County Library system. The Library's Teen Advisory Group will advise on program planning and book selection and also help promote library use for all ages in the community. A formal ribbon cutting will be held in March. *L. Snyder*

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Orinda Chamber to Honor Business Leaders at Special Awards Luncheon Feb. 20

Sue Breedlove awarded Business Person of the Year  
By Laurie Snyder



Sue Breedlove Photo provided

Genuinely cares about her clients. Honest. Professional. Gives sound advice. An insurance expert with integrity. Those are just a few of the observations made over the years about Orinda Sue Breedlove – the Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year.

A Wisconsin native and graduate of Arizona State University, Breedlove spent much of her professional life in corporate sales before venturing into the insurance arena. As owners of Breedlove Insurance, she and her husband, Jim, represent insurance buyers rather than sellers, and work directly with individuals, families and companies to assess their respective needs for health, business,

life or long-term care insurance. Clients never need to pay increased premium rates or other fees.

“We hear words such as puzzling, perplexing and frustrating when people tell us about their efforts to find the right insurance for their needs,” they explain via their website (www.breedloveinsurance.com/), adding that they’ve solved many a complex client puzzle along the way. Currently, they’re using their blog to teach others about potential tax implications of The Affordable Care Act. In addition, they have been volunteering in the Orinda community for nearly two decades – becoming familiar faces at St. Stephen’s Church and numerous Rotary and Chamber events.

Also slated to be honored at the Feb. 20 special awards luncheon are: Echo Grove (New Business of the Year), McDonnell Nursery (Small Business of the Year), Morrison’s Jewelers (Chamber Member of the Year), and Tom Romanek of Romanek Painting Company (Ambassador of the Year).

The program will be held at the Orinda Country Club, beginning with networking at 11:30 a.m., the luncheon following at noon. RSVPs are requested by Feb. 18. Tickets are \$30 per person, and may be purchased online at: www.orindachamber.org. For information, contact Candis Kattenburg: (925) 254-3909; info@orindachamber.org.

Having the Strength to Be Kind and Loving

Getting to know Orinda’s Rev. Hubert Ivery

By Laurie Snyder



Well before his arrival at St. Mark’s United Methodist Church in Orinda, Rev. Hubert Ivery had the good fortune to meet fellow theologian and Boston University student, Donna Fado Ivery. Now entering their third decade of marriage, they have two grown daughters. (To learn more about Donna Ivery and her art, see “Table of Tears Mosaic” in the Lamorinda Weekly’s March 2013 archives: www.lamorindaweekly.com.) Photo Jennifer Wake

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” – Martin Luther King, Jr., “Strength to Love” (1963)

Those words written by the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. are inspiring to many Orindans – liberal and conservative, young or old. Touchstones for those who

grew up, chronologically and spiritually, as they listened to Dr. King’s speeches on television during the turbulent 1950s and ‘60s, they have a resonance all their own for younger Orindans who are just now only experiencing King’s wisdom and powerful prose through the lens of history.

... continued on page A9

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 scseverson@gmail.com or (925) 254-1679.

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<p><b>MORAGA</b> \$1,298,000 4/2. Gorgeous remodel. Great flat yard. Convenient location. Close to Los Perales Elem. Rick &amp; Nancy Booth CalBRE#01388020/01341390</p>	<p><b>LAFAYETTE</b> \$895,000 3/3. Well maintained home in a great, quiet neighborhood on cul de sac. Lafayette schools. Jerry Wendt CalBRE#00178259</p>	<p><b>ORINDA</b> \$1,350,000 4/4.5. Coming Soon! Cape Cod style updated with old world charm. Close to downtown Orinda Village. Maureen Wilbur CalBRE#01268536</p>	<p><b>MORAGA</b> \$1,100,000 4/3. Single Level in Moraga! Great location, cul-de-sac, 2178 sf, updated kitchen, .26 acres w/flat grass &amp; patio. Elena Hood CalBRE#01221247</p>	<p><b>ORINDA</b> \$1,199,000 4/2.5. Never Before on Market ~ Mid-Century 4 bedroom 2 bath two story home with stunning VIEWS! Maureen Wilbur CalBRE#01268536</p>	<p><b>MORAGA</b> \$1,395,000 4/3. Terrific Sanders Ranch. Single lvl home w/ open floorplan and a nice backyard with patio, lawn and gardens. Elena Hood CalBRE#01221247</p>	<p><b>LAFAYETTE</b> \$980,000 3/2. Charming with views, close to everything. Extensive upgrades and custom landscaping. Woodward/Jones CalBRE#01335916/00885925</p>	<p><b>ORINDA</b> \$2,595,900 5/5.1. New Construction! Stunning custom home on 3.5 acre premium lot w/gourmet kit w/island. Visit OrindaOaks.com. The Beaubelle Group CalBRE#00678426</p>	<p><b>ORINDA</b> \$1,289,000 5/2.5. Rare gem with chic modern flare, spacious rooms &amp; flat, sunny backyard plus patio. The Hattersley's CalBRE#00445794/01181995</p>
<p><b>ORINDA</b> \$2,045,000 4/3. Delight in a classic Orinda setting w/ panoramic views of Mt. Diablo all on 1.43 acres. David Pierce CalBRE# 00964185</p>	<p><b>MORAGA</b> \$1,975,000 4/3. Spacious Sanders Ranch! 4075 sqft, + office + bonus room, great floor plan, 1/3 acre lot w/pool &amp; spa. Elena Hood CalBRE#01221247</p>	<p><b>PLEASANT HILL</b> \$445,000 2/2. Sun Valley Vineyards beauty. Updated featuring 2 Master Suites. Private patio. Move in NOW! Nancy Stryker CalBRE#01290021</p>	<p><b>MORAGA</b> \$975,000 4/2. Great Single level home. 1837 sqft, .27 acre lot, cul-de-sac, close to K-8 top schools. Elena Hood CalBRE#01221247</p>					



## Fire Districts

### Public Meetings

#### Moraga-Orinda Fire

District Board of Directors  
Wednesday, Feb. 18, 7 p.m.  
Moraga Library Community Room  
1500 Saint Mary's Road  
Moraga, CA 94556  
For meeting times and agendas,  
visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)

#### ConFire Board of Directors

Tuesday, March 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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# MOFD to Consider Citizens' Committee

By Nick Marnell

The few district residents who remained to the end witnessed an historic event at the Jan. 26 Moraga-Orinda Fire District finance committee meeting. Five minutes before the close of the meeting, committee chair Steve Anderson said that he would take the proposal of a citizens' finance committee to the full MOFD board for consideration. Should the board approve the formation of a citizens' committee, it will become the first in the history of the fire district.

District administrative services director Gloriann Sasser updated the committee on the mid-year financials, which not only projected a surplus of more

than \$719,000 but also showed a balanced general fund, with revenue exceeding expenditures, in each year of the district's long range financial plan. So flush is the district that, for the first time, it funded \$84,000 into a trust to cover retiree health benefit costs. Prior to this fiscal year, the district paid the retiree health benefits on a pay-as-you-go basis. "You don't wait till your kids go to college to start paying for it," explained Sasser. "We'll be funding their retiree health benefits while the employees are healthy and working."

After Sasser finished her presentation, Orinda resident Steve Cohn, frustrated with the lack of

resident input on the district finances, confronted the committee members. "The city of Orinda has many citizens' committees," he said. "The town of Moraga has many citizens' committees. MOFD's budget is as big as Moraga's and Orinda's put together, and you've never had a citizens' committee. Is it that much different?"

Cohn, with the support of Orinda's Vince Maiorana, proposed either appointing a private citizen to the MOFD finance committee, or that the district form a finance advisory commission. He suggested that the citizens' committee could parse the district's long range financial

plan, review the structure of the district budget and especially recommend revisions to the MOFD balance sheet.

"It's a useless document," said Cohn.

Anderson said that he will take the proposal into a full board session for thorough analysis. "The board would want to have a discussion with staff on how this might operate, how much staff time might be appropriate for it and to talk to the cities about how it works," added finance committee member Brad Barber.

"A citizens' committee is a good idea," said Anderson later. "Why wouldn't we want to do it?"

Lafayette

## Sustainable Lafayette: New Board, New Energy, New Projects

... continued from page A2

Al Gore was one of the teachers. Since then Kwok has passed what he's learned on to 1,200 people and plans double that number this year. "This is a critical year in global climate negotiations," he says. "We ask, what must America do to create success on the road to Paris

(December climate conference)? Then we can ask what must Lafayette do to create success and get other cities to act with us?"

Associate City Planner Michael Cass has served as the staff liaison for the City of Lafayette's Environmental Task Force for about two years. "The task force studies environmental issues and makes environmental policy recommendations to the city council," he said. "I was inspired to join based on my interaction with a number of current and former board members, who are actively working to make Lafayette 'green.'" Cass grew up in a family where environmental issues were routinely discussed. This year, as the chair of the Waste Diversion Committee, Cass plans to partner with Republic Services to help Lafayette reach its goal to divert 75

percent of all waste from the landfill. He is also actively involved with a small committee that is planning Lafayette's 10th Annual Earth Day Festival, which this year will focus on different transportation options.

Walter heard about Sustainable Lafayette through newsletters, "but it wasn't until I met Brad Crane – a fellow Lafayette Elementary School parent who also bikes his kids to school each day – that I became actively involved in the organization," she says. A very outdoorsy person, Walter runs a communications agency whose clients are green-minded architects and builders. This year on the board she will be co-leading, with Gailene Nelson, a new initiative focused on getting our kids outside. "We are so for-

tunate to have Lafayette's many open spaces in our backyard," she says. "Gailene and I want to encourage kids to connect with and play in our beautiful outdoors. We also want to help parents understand the many developmental and health benefits of unstructured play in nature."

"These kids are the next generation of Sustainable Lafayette members, it is a win/win to get them engaged," says Nelson, who is passionate about conservation and comes from a tech background. She is very interested in helping Sustainable Lafayette use technology more effectively. "I'm big about shortening time-to-market and getting things done," she says.

For more information about Sustainable Lafayette, visit [www.sustainablelafayette.org](http://www.sustainablelafayette.org).

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Lafayette

## Looking at Options to Improve Reliez Station Corridor

... continued from page A3

Pros and cons of each alternative were laid out, along with estimated costs of each option. Consultants sought to gather input from residents about the alternatives; some were more popular than others.

The biggest intersection at Olympic Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road features problems such as school traffic backups, right of way violations and pedestrian safety issues. Three alternative solutions were presented: a traffic signal, a roundabout, or doing nothing and leaving it as is.

One of the presenters pointed out that "the community repeatedly rejected" use of a traffic signal. The second alternative, a roundabout, was deemed an "eloquent solution" by the consultants, providing move-

ment along with free right turns that will accommodate an abundant amount of traffic, while reducing speed and reducing delays at a low operating cost but a higher installation cost.

"There's not one silver bullet," said Paul Menaker, explaining that each intersection poses different problems and needs a unique solution. As the meeting wrapped up, residents were asked to put a red sticker on the alternative option that they preferred for each intersection.

City Engineer Tony Coe explained that changes could be phased in or put on hold until further funding becomes available.

Additional topics discussed included what to do about large trucks on these narrow, hilly streets. The

goal is to improve signage to warn truck drivers ahead of time before they get onto Reliez Station Road so they have room to recalculate a more truck-friendly approach to their destination.

While most everyone at the meeting agreed there is room for improvement along the corridor, the challenging part will be selecting a solution, given existing budget constraints and differences of opinion. The entire presentation, including all of the alternatives and their respective costs can be viewed online at the city website ([www.lovelafayette.org](http://www.lovelafayette.org)) under the Hot Topics tab. Going forward, the plan will be presented to the Circulation Commission for review, which will then recommend a course of action to the City Council.

Orinda

## Orinda City Council Clarifies Policies and Procedures for Public Meetings

... continued from page A6

Of the roughly 20 speaker cards submitted Jan. 13, Glazer said about 14 provided addresses while all gave names – "except for the gentleman who wouldn't spell or pronounce his last name." In previous meetings, when council members have requested name clarifications, they indicated they were doing so to simply be polite and not mangle an occasionally challenging pronunciation.

"I know names has been a contention thing, and I think people have assumed that their name was required," explained Phillips, who reiterated later, "I think that it's very important to allow people to speak without necessarily saying what their name is or spelling their last name. So, I want to make sure people are aware that's not required to speak in a public forum."

Glazer observed that the "biggest misunderstanding that I think I feel when we're engaged in public forum is that, 'Why aren't you addressing? Why aren't you saying something, and why can't we talk about this problem whatever it is?'"

No input was provided by audience members Jan. 13 or on Jan. 20 when the changes were formally adopted by council.

From front page

## Science Teacher Wins Award

... continued from page A1

"I emphasize knowing versus memorizing, developing theories and explanations, drawing conclusions, observing and giving my students plenty of opportunities to use and develop critical thinking skills."

The Robotics class features a series of challenges throughout the school year; the last group project

had four classmates each programming their homemade robots to perform a choreographed dance together to music. The current mind blowing challenge is to program a robot to deliver one marble at each of three stations along a path with increasingly narrow openings. Students Cierra Taylor

and Sami Samuels happened to be in his classroom at lunchtime and were happy to have their robot "Fergie" included in Meneghetti's photo. Paul Verbanszky of Campolino High School and Karen Kreider Short of St. Francis of Assisi School were also awarded Eukel Teacher Trust grants.



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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. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines.

email: [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com); Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570



# Letters to the Editor



Editor:

The Moraga Town Council had the opportunity at their January meeting to do what was right. All property owners should have been appalled and incensed by the impending adoption by the Moraga Town Council, of the first reading of the historical preservation ordinance. The ordinance proposed the town to declare a building or natural feature, of historical significance, without the owner's agreement. It gave the City veto power over property owners on and about their own properties. This included any building over 50 years old, or not, if so designated, our house or any structure on it, for instance and maybe yours. Private property rights of exclusive use of one's property are guaranteed in the 5th Amendment of the Constitution. A designation of historical significance should not be forced on any property owner. Property taken through regulation is much the same as property taken through physical seizure, similar to eminent domain, except there would be no just compensation. The ordinance would increase cost to the property owner to meet ADA's strict rebuilding requirements and could subject them to fines and criminal penalties.

The ordinance affects everyone with a house originally built 50 years ago, not just commercial buildings or barns. So, you could need an exemption to remodel your ranch house or other building on your property, if it has been so designated, historically significant.

Take note now, and do something. Write or call the city before they do more to take away your rights. Before a final decision is made on nominations for historical significant buildings and properties, a public hearing will be held. Before more of your personal, private property rights are taken, speak up before or at a hearing to voice your opposition to removing the text that would not require a property owner's consent. Contact

the Town Clerk for dissemination to the Mayor and Town Council Members (5) at [town-clerk@moraga.ca.us](mailto:town-clerk@moraga.ca.us).

Patrick and Dawn Eames  
Moraga

Editor:

January 28's Lamorinda Weekly contained a long article about a for-profit company's recent establishment of a casual carpool system in Moraga and Orinda, for which participants must pay money to the company. The article exuded great enthusiasm for the commercial enterprise. But that commercial enterprise is not the only alternative to BART.

The article neglected to mention that for over 20 years, established casual carpool spots have existed in both Orinda (near the Orinda Theater) and Moraga (by the bus stop on Moraga Way across from Viader, near the Wells Fargo bank, where there is plenty of free parking). And they are free, except that in Moraga, at least, riders are generally willing to share the cost of the bridge toll. They run themselves, and no one has to pay a service charge to some company. In the evening, the County Connection bus goes straight from the Orinda BART station to the Moraga casual carpool spot.

The article quotes a partner as saying that the company might sometime add a pickup spot in Moraga. But one has long existed. It also quotes the partner as saying that some enamored patrons (apparently unaware of the other options) have suggested the company should charge more than it now does. I have no doubt the company intends to do just that in the future, especially if it squeezes out the current free casual carpool options.

If it is not already too late, I urge drivers and riders to connect in Orinda or, between around 6:30

and 7:15, in Moraga. (The hours are shorter in Moraga because of the relatively fewer users; with more users the hours might expand.) The system requires no payment to a for-profit company or any of the procedures the company imposes (apps, signups, etc.) in order to collect its money.

Try it; you'll like it.

Blair Hoffman  
Moraga

Editor:

The Moraga Women's Society is a non-profit organization which raises money from outside sources for the betterment of our community. Since 1967 we have primarily supported Moraga elementary and Campolindo High School programs, the Moraga Library, Moraga Parks and Recreation plus many other local organizations. The Moraga Women's Society would like to thank The Holy Trinity Cultural Center for making their facility available for our use over the years thereby helping us accomplish our goals. Monthly meetings, fundraising and social events can take place locally in a convenient, pleasant environment. Ron Mucovich and his staff are always congenial, cooperative and responsive to our needs. This facility is an asset to our community and we are very thankful for its existence and use.

The members of the Moraga Women's Society

Dear Editor:

It was good to hear Council member Dave Trotter address the unsubstantiated traffic survey at the Appeal hearing of the Moraga Center Town Homes. As he told Ellen Clark, the Planning Manager, of his concerns, it is one that the residents of Moraga have addressed over and over at the Design Review Board and

Planning Commission meetings.

The town has not run its own traffic report. It is normal process for a town to do so, to not appear biased. In Moraga if a development adds 20 or more cars to rush hour, then it must report the findings to Orinda and Lafayette. In Ellen Clark's Staff Report dated July 21, 2014 to the Planning Commission entitled: "Long-Range Development: Projections and Impacts". The 'Growth Management Element' of the General Plan, adopted as a requirement of Contra Costa Measures C and J, specifies a series of performance standards and levels of service with which new development must comply (or mitigate to achieve compliance). It also specifies requirements for regional transportation planning review and coordination to ensure that needed transportation improvements are constructed as new development occurs. For example, any project expected to generate more than 10 peak hour trips must be referred to the neighboring jurisdictions of Lafayette and Orinda."

City Ventures (CV) claims that it will increase only 19 cars to the morning commute and 9 in the evening - with 90 parking spaces and potentially more cars. This is a commuting neighborhood to the City and BART, and kids are driven to school, the traffic impact on Moraga Way and Road will far exceed 19. We need a revised and substantiated traffic survey with integrity as Mr. Trotter suggests.

We hope the town does not allow CV to use 20 feet of Moraga Way and 6 feet of Country Club Drive easements (for free), because it's project is too big for the lot (so CV can make more money). We need the ability to expand the roads with all of the development planned. CV violates numerous clauses of Moraga's Plans.

Margaret Gee  
Moraga

Orinda

## Having the Strength to Be Kind and Loving

... continued from page A7

One such man who draws great strength from MLK's ideals is the Rev. Hubert Ivery, the pastor at St. Mark's United Methodist Church in Orinda. Currently also chairing the Commission on Christian Unity & Interreligious Concerns for United Methodists of The California-Nevada Annual Conference, Ivery has been ministering to others for more than 30 years. At an Orinda City Council meeting in August of 2013, which followed some of the most heated council meetings in recent memory, he and his fellow members of the clergy inspired many Orindans to pause and reflect. "The notion of a healthy community is grounded in the ideals and values of human worth, integrity, principles of harmony, mutually affirming, responsible and just relationships as a basis of morality."

Compassion, justice and grace "can be applied to social entities such as cities and communities, as well as individuals."

Born in Clayton, Alabama, Ivery began his spiritual journey as a Baptist. "In my early years, I remember my dad not being at home. I know that he was, like many people from the Deep South, someone who went north because he wanted so badly to leave the part of the country where there was sharecropping and a lot of racism." Although his father never finished school, he worked hard - often holding two to three jobs, enabling him to purchase property and provide for his wife and sons. "I think his efforts are heroic," Ivery says quietly.

"My mom, I remember her working in the fields. I always felt that she cared very deeply for us." His mother

went back to school later in life, finishing high school and obtaining certification to provide care for people in private duty residential settings and care centers. "She became very independent during a time when most women were working in the home. I applaud her for wanting to be independent and wanting to better herself."

When he was roughly 5 years old, his family moved to Florida, just as Miami's schools were starting to integrate. By third grade, he was living with his brother at their grandparents' farm in Alabama. "My maternal grandfather wasn't much of a church goer, but he also worked really hard. Some of my favorite memories are watching him tinker with fix-it things. But I was most deeply impacted by grandmother. She loved us - had a sense of hope and faith in us, and tried

to help us develop our own sense of morality and responsibility." They are also both heroes in his eyes.

The Ivery brothers remained there for two years before returning to Miami to finish elementary, junior high and high school. An athlete, Ivery earned a basketball scholarship to Texas Southern University in Houston. It was while studying engineering technology and electronics that he "heard the call."

After completing seminary in Atlanta, he returned to Houston in 1982 for his first assignment - at a church in one of Houston's poorest sections of town. Increasingly interested in congregants' mental as well as spiritual well-being - and in ethics and community building - Ivery sought further training at the Interdenominational Theological Center at Boston

University's (BU) School of Theology - an institution rich in spiritual and intellectual tradition, and the very same place where MLK trained in ethics and philosophy en route to his 1955 Ph.D. in systematic theology (www.bu.edu/).

One can feel the Boston-MLK influence in Ivery's own writing, including in this passage on St. Mark's website: "We live in an imperfect world, but a world that has the potential to be kinder and more just. The hope and vision of the spiritual person is for such a world. The spiritually mature person engages in works of support, comfort, encouragement and advocacy for those who are the victims of tragic circumstances or injustice." Being a spiritual person, observes Ivery, means acting thoughtfully and responsibly in the world.



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Business

## New Options for Health

By Sophie Braccini



Raphael Rettner in his Lafayette office.

Photos Sophie Braccini

Set in a charming cottage on Mt. View Drive across from Trader Joe's in Lafayette, Raphael Rettner has opened a weight loss and wellness center. Dr. Rettner combines his chiropractic training with his studies in nutrition, Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine and yoga. Over his 30 years of practice, he has worked to uncover the underlying causes of individual's excess weight and to address it accordingly.

Rettner envisioned a wellness clinic a few years ago. He had a chiropractic office in Berkeley, but Lafayette's semi-rural atmosphere felt right to him. "I'm committed to treating the underlying causes (of weight gain)," affirms Rettner. "Most people think that in order to lose weight you cut calories, eat less and exercise more. It does not always work like that. You could have an imbalance in your endocrine system, you can have a neurotransmitter deficiency or food allergies. You can also have energy imbalances, emotional blocks causing you unconsciously to not want to lose weight even if you consciously want to lose it."

Rettner uses different tests and exams to identify whether the issues

are hormonal, emotional, linked to food cravings and brain chemistry, allergies or an acidic body. Malcolm Quint was his patient four years ago and lost 35 pounds when he removed dairy, gluten and nightshade vegetables from his diet. "We did extensive testing and I completely changed the way I eat," says the 62-year-old man.

Rettner also consults as a chiropractor for musculoskeletal issues, something of high interest to Moraga resident Amy Smith. A nurse by training, she studied with Palo Alto's Esther Gokhale, who the New York Times calls the 'Posture Guru of Silicon Valley.' Smith is conducting a series of presentations and classes in Lamorinda.

After suffering an accident that required spinal surgery, Smith decided to look for the best way to prevent future problems. "I found information about non-surgical approaches and the Gokhale Method," she says. She took the six-week training course and became so enthusiastic about it that she decided to further her training with Gokhale and become a teacher herself. "Esther has worked extensively on what she calls the pri-

mal posture," says Smith. "She's observed the natural posture of children, and of (people in) cultures where back pain virtually does not exist, and designed a method to teach people how to restore it for themselves."

Back pain is ubiquitous. It comes and goes and can degenerate into a serious handicap. When Smith offered a free session at the Moraga Country Club in January, word spread and the large conference room was filled in no time. Smith showed a simple shoulder-roll movement to reposition the shoulders, open the chest and improve neck posture. She had the group practice a different walk, adjusting the hips, legs and feet.

"The method shows how to change your posture and movements in everyday life," says Smith. "It is like learning a foreign language; it is a journey and with practice it becomes second nature." Smith explains that we change our skeleton completely every 10 years, and that by changing the way we impact our joints and bones we can change ourselves. "Bad backs run in my family,"



Amy Smith teaches people how to walk with better posture at the Moraga Country Club.

she says, "but I can change my predisposition. We are not stuck with how we are."

Smith teaches small group classes in Moraga and Lafayette. Her next free presentation will be at the Lafayette Physical Therapy office on March 4. For information, contact Smith at amy@gokhalemethod.com or visit www.gokhalemethod.com/bi-

ography/Amy\_Smith.

For information about Advanced Weight Loss and Wellness at 959 Mt. View Drive in Lafayette, call (925) 962-9160 or visit advancedweightlossandwellness.com.

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

## business briefs

### Novina is Closing

3559 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette - (925) 283-1800



Voytek Konopka

Photo Sophie Braccini

Voytek Konopka says that it is time for him to retire. The 67-year-old jewelry designer and watchmaker's retirement marks the end of a local craft that is very hard to find in this part of the world. Konopka was trained as a watchmaker in his original Poland and it is his craft that landed him his first job in New York where he had come for just a visit. The talented artisan had also learned jewelry making because he loved the artistry of that part of the business. After leaving New York he worked for Taylor & Jacobson of Walnut Creek as a designer and creator of unique jewelry pieces. Finally, 20 years ago he opened his own business in Lafayette, Novina. There he created custom jewelry, brooches, pendants, rings, and boxes for patrons. Clients from all over the country sent him their high-end mechanical watches for service. "I want to do other things now," says the friendly jeweler and watchmaker. "I want to travel back to Europe and visit my family, and enjoy life." Konopka plans to sell his inventory before closing the store on the evening of Feb. 14. Everything in the store is on sale. Konopka is conscious of the fact that this country does not have any school to teach watchmaking and that his skill is in very short supply. "I will continue to service my clients' watches," he says. He will keep his phone number active so they can continue to reach him, after he is back from Europe.

### Senior Helpers Announces New Lamorinda / Walnut Creek Senior Discount Card

1550 Viader Drive, Suite D, Moraga - (925) 268-8327

Senior Helpers of the East Bay announced that its new 2015-16 Lamorinda / Walnut Creek Senior Discount Card is now available to Lamorinda and Walnut Creek seniors. The current edition of the card that was first introduced in 2007 features discounts of between 10 and 20 percent at local restaurants, hardware stores, hair salons, bookstores, car washes, bakeries and more. The cards are available at the Senior Helpers office as well as local senior services departments in Lafayette and Walnut Creek. In addition, several participating businesses such as Ace Hardware on Mt. Diablo in Walnut Creek, UPS stores in Lafayette and Moraga, and many participating restaurants will also distribute the cards. "We love supporting this local discount program," said Ristorante Amoroma (Moraga) owner Hafiz Haidari. "We view it as a way to give back to our senior community and our customers and appreciate Senior Helpers' work in putting this program together."

### Local Designer Receives Awards

LMK Interiors - 1009 Oak Hill Road, Suite 301, Lafayette - (925) 962-9610

The Northern California Chapter of the Kitchen and Bath



Photo provided

Association honored Leslie Kalish of LMK Interiors in Lafayette with first place for the Judges' and People's

Choice Kitchen (that project also earned second place in the Large Kitchen category). Kalish won the prize with co-designer Jennifer Hobson for their Alamo Farmhouse Kitchen design. Kalish founded LMK Interiors 12 years ago. She started her career as a buyer, moving to textile and clothing design, and as design director at Obermeyer Ski Wear in Aspen, Colo. She is certified by the State of California as an interior designer. Nine years ago Gayle Leksan, a certified Color for Your Home color consultant, joined the team. LMK specializes in remodeling, new construction, space planning and furnishings, and inside or outside color consultation.

### New Contra Costa Community News Group Forms

www.lamorindaweekly.com/cccommunitynewsgroup



From left: Denise Rousset (Valley Sentinel), Elena Hutsler, Rebecca Coburn (Community Focus), Wendy Scheck (Lamorinda Weekly) and Tamara Steiner (Clayton Pioneer and Condor Pioneer)

Photo Rochellez Photography

Five local community papers are banding together to create the new Contra Costa Community News Group. Publishers from the Clayton Pioneer, Concord Pioneer, Lamorinda Weekly, Community Focus and Valley Sentinel launched the new CCNG late in 2014, mainly as an avenue to attract national and regional advertising. The combined circulation of the new enterprise is 150,000 with free delivery to homes and businesses. Wendy Scheck, associate publisher of the Lamorinda Weekly, explains: "As all of our papers are written and printed with significant costs and delivered free to all the single family homes in each of our communities, by forming this group and making it easier and more efficient for regional and national advertisers to place media buys with us, our newspapers will be stronger financially – and that means we can continue providing the local coverage our communities have grown accustomed to."

### News from the Three Chambers of Commerce Lafayette

Ribbon Cutting at 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12 at Bay Sotheby's International Realty's new building at 3725 Mt. Diablo Blvd. (This ribbon cutting was rescheduled from Jan. 29).

Monthly Mixer begins at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25 at Indigo & Poppy, 1009 Oak Hill Road.

### Moraga

Dinner celebration of the 2014 Business Person of the Year, Moraga Royale Dianne Wilson, on Tuesday Feb. 24 at 6 p.m. at the Moraga Country Club. Reservations required. For information, email kather@moragachamber.org.

### Orinda

Chamber Luncheon starting at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 20 at the Orinda Country Club. The Orinda Chamber of Commerce will present annual awards recognizing outstanding contributions to the Chamber and Orinda business community. For tickets, visit the chamber website: www.orindachamber.org.

Save the date for Live at the Orinda 2015 comedy night at 8 p.m. Friday, March 6, with Jimmie "JJ" Walker, Jeff Applebaum and Master of Ceremonies Anthony Hill. Advanced tickets are available at the chamber website: www.orindachamber.org.

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

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## Big Changes in Trash Collection Begins March 1

By Sophie Braccini



Ken Etherington pointing to labels that will be embedded in the new trash carts. Photo Sophie Braccini

Lamorinda residents will begin to see the new RecycleSmart logo on garbage receptacles starting March 1, but it's not just the Central Contra Costa Solid Waste Authority logo that's changing. With a new executive director, Ken Etherington, new franchise agreements and new services for all categories of users, the public agency is taking a big step and aligning itself to meet the California objective to divert 75 percent of its waste stream by 2020.

Starting in March, residential clients can recycle plastic bags, batteries, CFL bulbs, and all types of plastic containers. Aside from batteries, all other recycling will be available for multi-family units as well, including food waste, which will be accepted in new green containers. Commercial clients will also have standardized recycling services that will be part of the weekly collection.

Etherington is confident that the new services will help the agency reach the 75 percent diversion goal. The new director started working for the San Francisco Garbage Company part time in high school, and after

graduating from UCSF he got his first full-time job there and continued his career in that industry. He says he likes the environmental side of the business, as well as the operational aspects, and he also enjoys the public involvement.

"In Berkeley, I was the division manager for solid waste and recycling," he says. "There the agency is a full-service operation that does collection, recycling, and trucks to the landfill." Etherington has been meeting weekly to prepare for the transition with Republic Services, which will handle the collection, transfer and disposal of residential and commercial garbage.

One of the first changes for users is going to be the new trash cart colors. "The green cans stay green," explains Etherington, "the non-recyclables carts are black, and the recyclables are blue." Somewhat confusing, when the regular trash carts are now blue. "Blue for recycling is becoming a standard," he explains, "and all the cans will have embedded labels that will show what goes in each container." He is confi-

dent that the shift in colors won't be confusing, but changing 207,000 containers will take time. "The switch will take about two months," states Etherington. He explains that the new carts will be delivered the day before collection, people will take them to their homes, then on the next collection day the trash and the old containers will be taken away.

Moraga and Lafayette residents will keep the same pickup day, but a percentage of Orinda residents will experience a day change. Etherington promises extensive outreach to inform those residents. There will also be three different trucks powered by compressed natural gas on pickup days, which will result in less trucks and less trips altogether because each load will be optimized, says Etherington. "Timing may be different from what people are used to, so make sure your carts are out before 6 a.m. on pickup day," warns Etherington.

Multi-family and commercial RecycleSmart customers should benefit from a wide outreach campaign. "For multi-family units we are offering new food recycling containers and also recycling bags to transport their recyclables to the new containers," says Etherington. Two staff members will be in the field conducting training and answering questions. "In person contact, not only mailers, are key to getting [customer] buy-in," says the director.

Currently, multi-family units recycle 21 percent of their trash, commercial customers recycle 47 percent and residential customers 65 percent. Reaching a total of 75 percent within five years is not going to be easy – the residential recycling rate has not seen much improvement since 2011. "We need to keep reminding people that they can recycle the food waste in the green waste container," says Etherington. As for batteries and CFL bulbs, residents should put them in a clear zip-lock bags and set them on top of their recycling cart.

## Supervisors Vote to Implement Laura's Law

By Nick Marnell

The Board of Supervisors unanimously voted Feb. 3 to implement the State of California Assisted Outpatient Treatment Demonstration Project Act of 2002 ("Laura's Law") in Contra Costa County. The program was approved to run for three years, expected to begin this fall. Contra Costa joined eight other California counties that have either implemented or voted to implement some portion of Laura's Law, including Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Diego.

In 2001 Laura Wilcox, a 19-year-old Nevada County health care worker, was shot and killed by a mentally ill recluse who had resisted his family's attempt to get him into treatment. Wilcox's family advocated for passage of a law to permit court ordered treatment for the seriously mentally ill who pose a danger to themselves or others.

Laura's Law permits courts to order treatment for those who have been hospitalized or jailed twice within the past 36 months because of mental illness, or those who have been violent to themselves or others, or have threatened such violence, during the past four years. The order can be obtained only for people who have refused voluntary treatment

and whose condition is substantially deteriorating.

Without Laura's Law, police and social workers who were confronted with a suicidal or violent person with mental illness had little choice but to arrest or hospitalize them, under California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 5150. "Our department averaged about 25 mental health commitments from 2009-2012, but in 2013 it jumped to 45 and last year it was 41," said Moraga Chief of Police Robert Priebe. "Many of those commitments involved persons who had been diagnosed and prescribed medications, but had stopped taking (or) refused to take the meds."

Last year near the UC-Santa Barbara campus, an outcast went on a murderous rampage, killing six students plus himself. The son of Moraga resident Lisa Perrella attended UCSB, and the shootings occurred close to his house. "It was very tragic and possibly could have been avoided had Laura's Law been in effect," said Perrella. "We are very happy to learn about the passage of Laura's Law and hope that future tragedies can be avoided."

Kathy McLaughlin, a member of the county's Consolidated Planning Advisory Workgroup, claimed that forcing treatment on individuals who

do not want it does not work. "Would you force a cancer patient to accept radiation instead of chemotherapy? Why is mental illness different? Why is it okay to trample our rights and dictate what is the best treatment for us?" Disability Rights California, an advocacy group, has gone on record with its opposition to assisted outpatient treatment.

California counties were given the option to implement Laura's Law, but if they did, funding for county voluntary mental health programs could not be reduced. As such, Contra Costa County plans to design its program to establish the same level of service for both Laura's Law candidates as well as those who seek voluntary mental health treatment. The county Health Services Department has proposed to direct funding of \$2.25 million annually into the program, with an additional \$418,000 coming from the county general fund each year.

"Unfortunately, with severe mental illness, it's not just the person who is the victim, but also, in some horrible, horrific situations, it's a complete stranger," said Supervisor Candace Andersen. "Laura's Law, in my mind, provides a safe, compassionate alternative to incarceration."

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## Winter Bounty at the Moraga Farmers' Market

... continued from page A1



Michael Finocchio with his kids and Fanny Wilson from Victorian Farmstead. Photo Andy Scheck

This small group of sisters bakes from scratch all week in their congregation and uses to proceeds of their sales to fund their soup kitchen, which serves 300 hot meals a day. "Our mission is to feed the poorest of the poor," says Sister Marie-Bénédicte with a recognizable French accent. "Besides opening our soup kitchen in the Tenderloin, we bring hot food to where the people are, under the bridges and on the streets."

A bit further down the aisle from where the sisters offer their excellent quiches, cookies, pies and cakes, Flora Guzman and her team sell the fish that her husband Daniel has caught, including halibut, sole, snapper, butter fish and sardines. The stand also sells salmon from Alaska or tuna from Hawaii. "We've been here for four or five years and it has been the best," says Guzman. "It's almost a two-hour drive to come here, but we don't care because the customers are good."

The Tching family from Fresno has been working at the Moraga Farmers' Market from the start, selling what their 20-acre farm produces. Moraga is one of only two

markets where they sell their seasonal crops. "Right now we harvest all the greens like bok choy, spinach, kale, broccoli and the rest of the cruciferous vegetables," says M. Tching. The double-sized stand also offers root vegetables like carrots or sweet potatoes, or vegetables that can be stored at low temperatures like onions or pumpkins. The Tchings say that they do not use any fertilizer on the farm but that it is too costly for them to get the organic label. The market has a wide variety of stands, both conventional and organic, and all local.

Next to Tching, Victorian Farmstead sells meats and eggs. "It is very hard to find pasture-raised pork," says Fanny Wilson. After reading about the small market vendor, she realized that what they were selling was exactly what she was looking for to feed her family and she decided to try it out, then quickly became a subscriber to get a discount on her purchases. The market stand has a wide variety of chicken, pork, beef and other meats. Eggs are less plentiful in winter since hens lay less then, so it's better to get there before 10:30 a.m. if you want a dozen.

Fruits are also plentiful in winter. For a month or so, Rainbow Orchard will be selling apples that have been kept in a cold cellar since harvest. Many stands offer oranges, tangerines, Satsuma, grapes and pears, and of course dried fruits and nuts that all come from their own farms.

At a table in the middle of the market, Marty Roach sat eating the chicken taco she just purchased. She brought her niece Laura, who was visiting from Grass Valley. "We do not have a winter farmers' market in Grass Valley," says Roach's niece. "I am so impressed, everything is so fresh; it is so interesting." Roach particularly likes the variety of what can be found: the bread, pastries, cheeses, flowers, the olive oil and honey, soap, as well as the prepared Afghani, Mexican or Chinese food.

"I can't see what could improve this market," she says.

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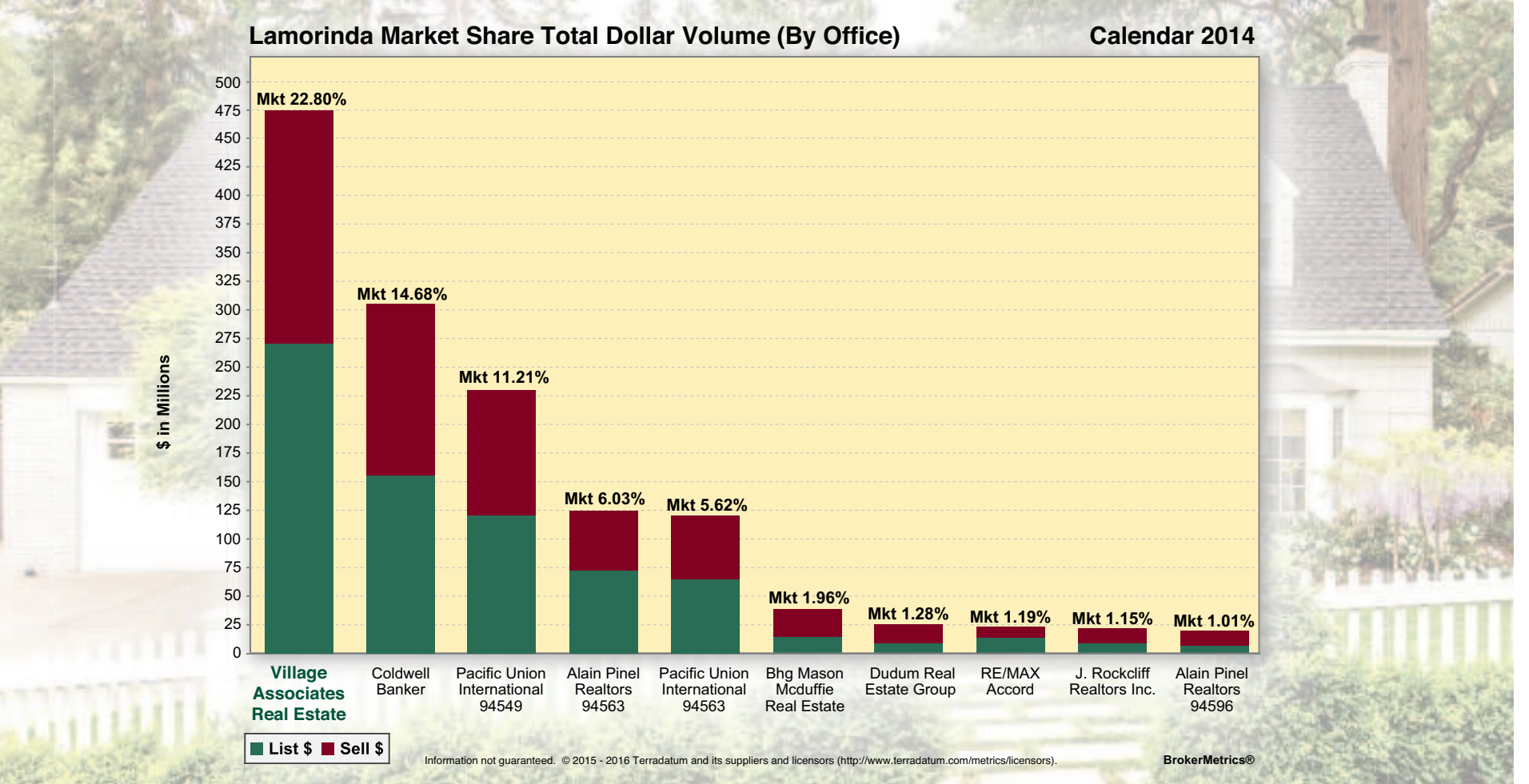
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# French Consul General Visits Lamorinda, Pays Tribute to Veterans of Normandy

By Laurie Snyder

"We shall fight on the beaches. We shall fight on the landing grounds. We shall fight in the fields and in the streets. We shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender." – Winston Churchill



Three Normandy veterans swap stories. From left: Leonard Snyder (Orinda), Warren Jensen (Concord), and Bill Armstrong (Walnut Creek). Photo Ohlen Alexander

When British Prime Minister Winston Churchill uttered those words before the House of Commons in 1941, he knew the world was in for a long, difficult fight. The "War to End All Wars" (World War I) had left behind the dormant seeds of despair, waiting for the wrong gardener to cultivate them into fields of hatred and horror. Less than a decade later, Adolph Hitler appointed himself for the job. By World War II's end, 25 million men, women and children had been wounded with more than 50 million killed. Many were soldiers; many more were innocent civilians.

On Feb. 2, Pauline Carmona, Consul General of France in San Francisco and Orinda Vice-Mayor Victoria Smith reminded listeners just how close the world came to oblivion as they led a special ceremony at the Orinda Community Church honoring those who helped end Hitler's reign

of terror. Joined by Bill Cooper, Scoutmaster Emeritus of Orinda Boy Scout Troop 237 who organized the event with help from Scouting authorities and VFW Post 8063 (Lafayette), Carmona saluted 14 East Bay residents who fought in the June 6, 1944 Allied invasion of Normandy: Leonard Snyder and Richard Hersey (Orinda); Hilbert Seiwert (Lafayette); Benny Jordan (Moraga); Bob Hitchcock (Benicia); Jake Larson (Martinez); Bill Armstrong, Daniel Franklin, Chuck Sapper, Bob Tharratt, Herbert Smith (Walnut Creek); and Lynn Freeman, Warren Jensen and Earl Mortenson (Concord).

"Far from being weakened by the vicissitudes of history," noted Carmona, "the state of the friendship and the alliance between France and the U.S. is very strong" – bolstered by the belief of their citizenry in freedom and democracy. "People of my generation were allowed to grow up in a

free country," she said, because American soldiers came by the thousands 70 years ago to help save her nation, freeing Paris on Aug. 25, 1944.

Many of the 3 million troops liberating France during Operation Overlord were former Scouts, including Medal of Honor winner Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, the only general to land during D-Day's first wave, and Colonel James Rudder, commander of the Army's 2nd Rangers which suffered a 50 percent-plus casualty rate as men scaled 100-foot cliffs and attacked the Nazi artillery at Pointe Du Hoc. A full 75 percent of the medals awarded for World War II heroism overall were in fact pinned to the chests of former Scouts, according to a 2008 speech by Vice Admiral Richard Gallagher, former deputy commander of the U.S. European Command (now U.S. Navy, ret.). ... continued on page B2



Taxis to Hell and Back: American soldiers head from a Coast Guard landing barge toward the Normandy beach on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Photo Public domain, U.S. Library of Congress, Robert F. Sargent

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# A Poignant Dialogue

Concert pianist and author to visit Miramonte for special show

By A.K. Carroll

When Miramonte instructor Heather Cousins took her advanced drama class to see “The Pianist of Willesden Lane” in December 2013, she had no way of knowing that a single performance would lead to a myriad of meaningful relationships between students and stories. The one-woman show performed by concert pianist and author Mona Golabek depicts the harrowing story of Golabek’s mother, Lisa Jura, a young Jewish musician whose dreams are interrupted by the dawn of World War II. It is a story of courage and hope, one that moved Cousins and her stu-

dents alike.

Shortly after the performance, Cousins penned a letter to Golabek expressing “how impressed and inspired” her class had been by the performance.

“It really entered my heart,” said Golabek, who called to personally thank Cousins, establishing the start of a fruitful connection. “I receive much mail, and am always grateful,” said Golabek. “Her [Cousins’] words just really connected for me.”

Golabek offered Cousins 30 copies of “The Children of Willesden Lane,” the book on which “The Pi-

anist of Willesden Lane” is based. Cousins was delighted, and taught the book to her freshman English class the following spring. “My students loved it,” she said. “They instantly connected to the themes.”

“It’s an extremely emotional story,” said Miramonte sophomore Sasha Gordon, who was inspired by Jura’s determination and strength in the face of the Holocaust. “It ranks amongst best books that I have read.”

Sophomore Leah Woodcox agreed. Her favorite part of the story is when Jura is accepted into the Royal Academy of Music. “It is a real, tangible triumph over the hardships that she has faced,” said Woodcox. “It’s an inspirational moment.”

Cousins’ students wrote essays on the theme of legacy and did close readings of quotes from “The Children of Willesden Lane,” many of them exploring their own ideas regarding what it means to hold onto their dreams. The unit incorporated music, literature and history, culminating in video projects produced by the students. “They said it was the very best thing they’d done all year,” said Cousins.

At the end of the unit, Cousins sent samples of the work to Golabek, along with letters from the students thanking her for the books. Golabek

was deeply moved by Cousins and her students’ work. “She is obviously a deeply dedicated teacher, who goes the extra mile to inspire her students and give them important experiences.”

When Cousins learned that Golabek would be returning to Berkeley for a short time in February, she made contact straightaway, asking if Golabek would visit Miramonte. Golabek immediately agreed and insisted that there would be no fee. “I’m doing this from my heart.”

In preparation for Golabek’s visit, the baby grand is being tuned and three Miramonte English classes are reading “The Children of Willesden Lane.” Cousins is reaching out to last year’s English class, sending them personal letters inviting them to Golabek’s private performance Thursday, Feb. 12.

“I am so excited,” said Gordon. “Mrs. Cousins showed us an excerpt from her show, and my jaw hit the floor.” Woodcox echoed Gordon’s sentiments, “I’m very excited to see Ms. Golabek perform!”

Golabek’s visit will include storytelling and playing the piano, and will reach students who were unable to attend the original performance. “The thought that I will get to see her live



Mona Golabek Photos provided and meet her is thrilling,” said Gordon. “I can hardly wait!”

“Even though my schedule is quite overwhelming, I knew I had to come to the school and present to her amazing students,” said Golabek, who will perform at the Berkeley Repertory Theater through Feb. 22.

In addition to a full month of performing, Golabek is also in the midst of preparing to film “I am a Pianist,” an hour-long documentary on the story of Lisa Jura and “The Children of Willesden Lane.” Produced in collaboration with KLCS/PBS, the film will feature interviews and concert excerpts, including one from the concert at Miramonte. Cousins and her students have also been invited to participate.

“Some stories are meant to be shared,” said Cousins. “This is one of them.”



Miramonte High School students read Golabek’s book in Heather Cousins’ class.

## French Consul General Visits Lamorinda, Pays Tribute to Veterans of Normandy

... continued from page B1



Pauline Carmona, Consul General of France in San Francisco, speaks with Normandy Veteran, Warren Jensen (Concord), after the medal ceremony in Orinda Feb. 2. (Note the Purple Heart on Jensen’s chest.) Photo Ohlen Alexander

Yet most of Normandy vets recognized by Carmona and Smith still believe they were just regular guys doing the jobs they were assigned to do – that the real heroes are those who fell in the mud and snow on Europe’s fields of honor.

Carmona respectfully disagreed during a follow-up conversation. Each one was a hero, and is genuinely beloved by the people of France. Formerly the Deputy Consul General of Hong Kong, Carmona is the first woman Consul General of France in San Francisco, the only woman in the French consular network in the United States, and is also the granddaughter of an Egyptian resident who joined the second D-Day in the south of France. As a child, she and her father, a historian, made the roughly three-hour trip from their Paris home to walk the Normandy and Omaha beaches. “With hindsight, we realize that if the Americans had not helped us at that time, we would probably still be under Nazi rule. All of the people from Jewish origin would have been eradicated. France and Europe would have been completely different.”

Smith concurs. She and her husband, longtime Boy Scout Wick Smith, and one of their two Eagle Scout sons have also visited Normandy and its environs. As she read the city council proclamation lauding the veterans, the normally no-nonsense official paused four times to compose herself. “When you see what these gentlemen experienced ... when you see how the artillery rained down upon them” from the Nazi bunkers high above and how the Allied planes were shot at from the ground, only then can you fully appreciate the “enormous sacrifice and enormous courage” of “the surviving heroes in our midst.”

### Do You Know a Veteran Who Is Deserving of Recognition?

If someone you know has an interesting story to tell about his or her military service, contact the Lamorinda Weekly: storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com. More specifically, if you hear of veterans who took part in the liberation of France, please call the Consulate General of France in San Francisco: (415) 616-4903.

Smith concurs. She and her hus-

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# How Technology is Changing How We Give

By Uma Unni



Orinda resident Jacqueline Fuller with 12-year-old Daniel, an entrepreneur who built his own phone charging station and charges people's phones for a small fee. Photos provided

Silicon Valley changed the way we socialize by turning conversations into text message chains and moving our social interactions onto Facebook walls and Instagram profiles. Now, it's changing the way we help those in need.

Orinda resident Jacqueline Fuller sees this every day as the head of Google.org, Google's philanthropic arm. Google.org supports organizations that are finding innovative, entrepreneurial ways to tackle the world's challenges. One such organization is GiveDirectly, a Silicon Valley nonprofit that identifies the poorest of the poor in rural Uganda and Kenya and sends a one-time windfall of \$1,000 directly to their cell phones, no strings attached. Surprisingly, it works. "The premise behind GiveDirectly," Fuller explains, "is that poor families know best how to allocate additional capital to address their many needs and

opportunities." This goes against the traditional belief that nonprofit agencies are able to make better decisions than the people whom they aim to help.

Founded by Harvard economists, and with Fuller as a board member, GiveDirectly currently operates only in Uganda and Kenya. GiveDirectly identifies the particularly needy and sends cash transfers to their mobile phones using a mobile banking technology called M-Pesa. If the recipient has no cell phone, GiveDirectly provides them with a cheap \$10 phone for this purpose. The money comes in two installments of \$500 over the course of one to two years. Before the money is sent, the family is evaluated to ensure that the recipients are responsible, and preliminary data are recorded on the family's income, health, stress levels (based on cortisol levels), among other things. A

subsequent interview records how recipients spent the money (and verifies their stories with other members of the village) and takes new measurements of the same things they measured on the first visit. Data show that GiveDirectly windfalls are put to good use. "According to the data," Fuller adds, "GiveDirectly grants do not affect spending on alcohol or tobacco, and even several months after receiving the grants, earnings are up by 34 percent." Entrepreneurs start businesses, and others invest the money in their children's education and precautionary savings.

GiveDirectly's method of gathering data follows a common approach in the scientific and medical fields; they use randomized control tests, providing a level of accuracy which is difficult to attain in the field of philanthropy.

Fuller hopes that this quantitative

approach can bring a new standard of rigor to philanthropy by providing concrete measures of success or failure. As she explains, "programs that want to take \$1 on behalf of the poor must prove they are able to do more with that money than the poor could do by receiving it directly." Because it doesn't try to make decisions for its beneficiaries, GiveDirectly does not carry a heavy administrative overhead and is able to send 90 cents of every dollar donated to their recipients.

Fuller and Google.org were so impressed with the data and results presented by GiveDirectly that they donated \$2.4 million to the organization. GiveDirectly's innovative approach to giving is gaining popularity and the organization was recently named one of the two best nonprofits by GiveWell, an organization that ranks nonprofits according to effectiveness and efficiency.

One of many standout organizations recognized by GiveWell is Charity: Water, which tackles the problem of bringing clean water to remote areas of the world by building hand-operated water pumps. To make sure that none of their pumps fall into disrepair, the organization uses remote sensors to monitor water flow rates in their pumps. They also offer a much more involved role to

those who are interested in raising money for the organization. Through their website, anyone can start a campaign to raise money for the cause. Campaigns can range from lemonade stands to sponsored runs, and much crazier ideas (like swimming the San Francisco Bay, or dyeing your hair blue). All of the money raised by these campaigns goes directly toward building and maintaining pumps, and campaign organizers can track exactly where their money goes and how it helps.

Through things as simple as data collection methods and satellite technology, there are now tools available to tackle the previously intractable challenge of poverty. To learn more about GiveDirectly, visit [www.givedirectly.org](http://www.givedirectly.org). To learn more about Charity: Water, visit [www.charitywater.org](http://www.charitywater.org).



A man holds up his phone showing the GiveDirectly windfall.

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# Lamorinda's Specialties of the House

## Spicing up Valentine's Day

By A.K. Carroll

Had your fill of stuffed mushrooms and fried calamari? Fine dining and fancy chocolates not really your thing? Looking for something spicy to jazz up your Valentine's Day? Lamorinda has lots to offer when it comes to non-traditional dining. If you're into the edible and exotic, check out one of these ethnic eateries.

With its bamboo elephant placemats, lavender-hued napkins and soft simple music, the gentle ambiance of

he plans to offer each of his guests a complimentary Rainbow Noodle Salad, a traditional Burmese dish featuring over 20 ingredients including kefir lime, bean thread noodles and green papaya. Located at 19 Orinda Way, Orinda, for info call (925) 566-4877 or visit [www.refinedpalate-orinda.com](http://www.refinedpalate-orinda.com).



Swad India's Tandoori Chicken

"Fresh" may not be the first word you associate with a buffet, unless you're discussing the flavorful array of authentic dishes and spicy sauces prepared each day at **Swad India** in Lafayette. From their savory Keema Kulcha, (a flatbread stuffed with fresh ground lamb and seasoned with herbs), to their creamy Chicken Korma or spiced Lahsooni Spinach (i.e., Saag Paneer), all of Swad's dishes are prepared with fresh, all natural ingredients. You're sure to find something to love from their crispy curried vegetable samosas (the best I've ever had) to their full offering of North Indian entrees, including the sultry chicken tikka masala and sizzling tandoori chicken, both served with cardamom-flecked basmati and recommended by owner Pardeep Singh. For those who can't make up their minds (or who prefer to sample broadly), there's Swad's richly-varied lunch buffet, available from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., seven days a week. It may be just the thing to savor when you're out this Valentine's weekend. Located at 3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. For info, call (925) 962-9575 or go to [www.theswadindia.com](http://www.theswadindia.com).



Golden Palace

Not up for a night out? Why not opt to stay in, and to bring a bit of Eastern Asia with you? Online ordering from **Moraga's Golden Palace** allows for easy pickup or delivery, giving you a cozy night at home with a couple of cartons and a set of chopsticks. If you're in the mood for Chinese, you'll find a number of favorites, including, spicy Szechwan beef and savory mango chicken. If sushi's more your style, Golden Palace has a wide array to offer, from a Lion King Roll filled with a crab-cucumber combo and topped with soft baked salmon, to the crispy tempura shrimp and unagi of the Dragon Roll. Jay's Special Roll tops the list of Golden's special sushi, and there are suggested combinations for sushi and sashimi dinners. Golden Palace offers dine-in eating, and when spontaneity is key, accommodates for walk-in take away orders. Located at 581 Moraga Road, Moraga, for info call (925) 631-0284 or visit [www.goldenpalacechinesemoraga.com](http://www.goldenpalacechinesemoraga.com).



Amarin Thai Cuisine

Photos A.K. Carroll

**Amarin Thai Cuisine** plays in contrast to its Spicy Pork Eggplant and Firecracker Prawns cooked in lobster-chili sauce. Opened in 1997, Amarin has been perfecting its popular pad thai, Himapan tofu and Massaman chicken for nearly 20 years, earning awards of distinction from both Diablo Magazine and Lamorinda Moms. Colorful plates come out trailing steam and sweet and savory aromas. In addition to traditional favorites, Amarin also offers weekly specials such as grilled lamb and pumpkin curry. Owner Tom Karmonphet says that something special will be on the menu for Valentine's Day, but you may need to wait until Friday to find out. Karmonphet's personal favorites include Amarin's Basil Supreme stir-fry and the Pad Kee Mow (drunken noodles). Amarin Thai Cuisine is located at 3555 Mount Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. For information, call (925) 283-8883 or visit [amarinlafayette.com](http://amarinlafayette.com).

From the refreshing rainbow array of a fermented tea



Burmese curried chicken and noodle chowder at The Refined Palate

leaf salad to the hearty creamy broth of the Ono Kaw Swe (coconut chicken soup), the national dishes of **The Refined Palate** are sure to give your taste buds something to talk about. Unlike other ethnic menus, this Burmese venue organizes its menu around exotic types of produce, rather than major proteins. With Indian, Chinese and Thai influences, Burmese cuisine has a flavor all its own, characterized by the use of fish products and ngapi (fermented seafood paste), with a wide array of condiments and seasonings. Co-owner and chef William Lue is no stranger to the industry, with over 25 years of restaurant experience and new ideas always on the horizon. This Valentine's Day

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# Local Women Crochet to Help Congo Schools

By Bobbie Dodson



Diane Steuber and Julie Fulford crafting necklaces. Photos provided

Beginning with four ladies learning to crochet in January of 2012, the Congo Necklace Project at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church has generated over \$21,000 at the end of 2014. At \$12 a necklace the math suggests the team, now some 15 women, has made around 1,760 necklaces.

The group began as an offshoot of the church's Congo Team. They learned that other Presbyterian churches have raised money for schools in Congo by making necklaces crocheted of ladder yarn with sparkling pendants attached. So, after they found Linda Downing who taught them to crochet, they began working at home and meeting bi-weekly at the church. Others were attracted to the project due to the fellowship and, more importantly, to raise desperately needed funds to pro-

vide for better education in Congo, one of the poorest nations in the world.

"When I saw pictures of the schools with their mud walls and thatched roofs, often crumbling away because of the huge rainfall, I couldn't imagine children attending schools like that. Often there were no desks nor textbooks but there would be rows of 50 children to a classroom sitting on the floor," says team member Diane Steuber.

There are over 900 Presbyterian schools in Congo. They are considered public schools and are the main school system in the country. A Presbyterian worker, Jeff Boyd, says, "In 2007 we visited 25 urban and rural Presbyterian schools. We were appalled by the conditions of the schools, but completely inspired by the churches, teachers, and parents'

commitment to educate their children in the face of excruciating poverty.

"We saw schools where walls were collapsing, there were no pictures or maps in the 75 classrooms, and worst of all, many children peered into classes through cracks and doors, because their families did not have tuition money, and the churches did not have the funds to educate them. Amazingly, teachers still walked miles daily to teach up to 60 or 70 students per class with little pay."

With the money the Congo Necklace team has sent to Congo they have helped build two brick and mortar schools, with a third soon to start construction, purchased a motorcycle that takes teachers and supplies to remote areas more easily than a car or truck, and supported an afterschool program for 50 girls, teaching them English and computer skills.

"We're especially happy to support the girls in this country where they are so undervalued. Often they have to drop out of school early because their parents don't think they need an education. However, parents realize that English and computer skills can lead to jobs, so the girls remain in school so they can also have the afterschool program we support. In fact, several girls who've completed the first year of the program have gone on to college, and have jobs there tutoring," says Julie Fulford.

The team also hopes to raise awareness of the desperate situation in Congo where the citizens have suffered from wars, causing more than 5 million deaths; other nations have plundered the rich supply of minerals; and corrupt government officials from the president on down have kept the people of Congo in abject poverty.

A local Congolese woman, who feels she should remain anonymous, says, "Education is key. Every child should be given the opportunity to learn in good conditions. We have to lay a solid foundation so that our children can be prepared to compete in the world - secure good jobs and become leaders that promote a culture of learning. This is the way we Congolese can hope to secure and transform our society."



Congo team at work: Karen Fearon, Michelle Buda, Camille Buda-Travis and Nan Reuther.

# A Reminder of Home Found in Unlikely Location

Submitted by Bruce Burrows



Photo provided

While ending a seven-month adventure throughout South America, Phillip Burrows and his girlfriend, Shanta Batra, decided to take in a movie at the Cinemark Palermo in the Palermo

district near their apartment in Buenos Aires and got a pleasant surprise. Burrows didn't find out who painted the Orinda Theatre on the wall, or why it was there, but he was happy to see it.

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## Delicious Mud Pie for Your Valentine

By Susie Iventosch



Traditional mud pie with a frozen yogurt twist

Photo Susie Iventosch

This is one of our family's all-time favorite desserts. The recipe was handed down from my grandmother, who lived in Orinda and was quite the hostess back in her day! It is delicious in summer, winter, spring or fall, but it makes the perfect Valentine's Day dessert! Grandmom made it with coffee ice cream, but with all of the wonderful ice cream substitutes available these days you

can certainly take your pick of frozen concoctions, in any flavor, to use in place of the ice cream. Strawberry, coconut, lime, dulce de leche, or chocolate ... any of these flavors would work well with the scrumptious fudge filling and Oreo cookie crust. And you can even replace the cookie crumb crust with your favorite cookies!

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.



### INGREDIENTS

#### Crust

30 Oreo cookies, pulverized in food processor  
½ cup (1 stick or ¼ pound) butter, melted

#### Fudge Sauce

4 ounces unsweetened or bittersweet-dark chocolate (good quality)  
1 cup granulated sugar  
2 six-ounce cans evaporated milk  
¼ teaspoon salt

#### Ice Cream

1 quart coffee-chocolate chip frozen yogurt (or yogurt or ice cream of your choice)

#### Whipped Cream Topping

1 cup heavy whipping cream  
1 tablespoon Kahlua  
½ cup toasted pecans, coarsely chopped (optional)  
Cocoa powder for dusting on top of whipped cream

### DIRECTIONS

#### Crust

Combine melted butter and Oreos and mix well. Pat into a very well-greased 9-inch pie dish. Freeze for about 30 minutes.

#### Ice Cream

Spoon 4 cups of your favorite ice cream or frozen yogurt, slightly softened, into shell. (Coffee is the traditional flavor, but any flavor will do.) Freeze until ice cream is hardened.

#### Fudge Filling

Place all fudge sauce ingredients into a heavy saucepan and cook until thick like fudge, stirring constantly. Remove from stove and cool to room temperature. Filling will continue to thicken as it cools. Spread cooled fudge sauce over frozen ice cream. Freeze again until hard.

#### Whipped Cream Topping

Whip 1 cup heavy cream until stiff. Add 1 tablespoon Kahlua. Spread over frozen fudge sauce and top with ½ cup finely chopped toasted pecans or walnuts (optional) and dust with cocoa powder. Freeze until time to serve. For you coconut lovers, simply replace the Oreo cookies with Mother's Coconut Macaroons and use coconut ice cream.

As Seen In...

## Feathers Fly at Moraga Town Office

By Cathy Dausman



A turkey creates a hole in a second story conference room window at the Moraga Town Offices.

Photo Jill Keimach

Moraga town employees are likely used to dealing with occasional ruffled feathers, but when one recent visitor had a heated argument with the building itself, its goose was cooked. Something startled a group of wild turkeys milling about the parking lot, causing one to fly up and into a second story room, breaking the window and tumbling inside. Town Manager Jill Keimach, whose office is adjacent, was away but happened to call in. "Everyone was in my office surveying the drama," she said. Moraga Police Lieutenant Jon King could hear the noise from his desk downstairs. "Of course I was right in the middle of something I could not leave," King said. By the time he went up, the turkey was simmering on the floor "looking back at me with one beady

eye." Town employees had already called county animal control, so King simply sealed the crime scene. He had no chance to "grill" the bird. "It was lucky that it came into my conference room instead of the upstairs lobby one window over," Keimach said. King admits that of all the things he learned at the police academy "they never taught us how to deal with turkeys." The fatally wounded bird was laid to roost shortly thereafter, and the window was replaced a few days later. As Town Clerk Marty McInturf mused in the *About Town* newsletter: "Staff was unclear whether the turkey wanted to get closer to its reflection in the window or had a pressing issue to discuss with the Town Manager. Either way, the turkey did not get its wish (bone)," she said.

As Seen In...

## Moraga Mountain Lion Sighting



Photo Bradley Bostick

Bradley Bostick spotted this mountain lion Feb. 2 on the ridge above Alta Mesa Road. "When I first came upon the mountain lion he was about 50 yards away sitting on the trail. It was about 2:30 in the afternoon. If you are facing Saint Mary's College, the area is behind the college and about a half mile west. It was at the top of Alta Mesa, just past the reservoir and electronic station," he said. "When he saw me, the big cat got up and starting heading down the hill toward a residential area, then eventually turned around and headed back and away from where I was, in the direction of Bollinger

Canyon." Bostick reported the incident to Moraga Police Officer Will Davis and sent him photos. "I also have some video. He said it was the first sighting that had been photographed in several years," Bostick said. Officer Davis told Bostick that about two years ago, a mountain lion was spotted on the hill behind 7-11 off of Moraga Road. "Even though I knew there was danger, I didn't feel threatened and the mountain lion did not exhibit any aggressive behavior," Bostick said. "I walked calmly away but kept my eye on him probably for a good two minutes." *J. Wake*

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# How to Be a Friend to Someone with Dementia

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC

Dementias such as Alzheimer's disease affect not only those who live with the condition, but also their family and friends. It is sometimes painful to see someone you knew at an earlier part of life fail to remember or process information logically and rationally. This is especially hard when the person you knew was once brilliant and full of joy before symptoms of the disease began to develop.

Occasionally, friends shy away and start excluding a person with dementia in invitations because they don't want a "scene" or assume the person will forget to come anyway. If a spouse is exhibiting signs of dementia, the well partner may have feelings of guilt, grief or rejection. This could add to depression and social isolation for the couple.

How then can you continue to be a friend to someone who has an organic dementia? The first action would be to learn more about what your friend is experiencing. A good way to do that is by attending classes in the community that explain the process and give families (and friends) tools to use in communicating with someone who is challenged with impaired memory or other cognitive processes.

As memory becomes more impaired, the "moment" becomes more important to those with dementias. This means that your invitation to take a walk, visit a beautiful public garden or art gallery might be well received because the only expectation is to view and enjoy. The individual is not challenged in passive experiences that don't rely on memory to participate. Taking someone to a drama or film that requires short term memory to follow the thread of the story could cause anxiety or increase confusion.

However, sometimes nature films and pure musicals (the old ones) can bring pleasure. If you do bring someone with dementia to a live performance or concert, you might think of leaving at intermission – especially if you see the person is restless. If you do leave, make the excuse for leaving about you, not him or her (always protecting self-esteem).

Going out for a meal can be a nice "in-the-moment" experience; however, because choices are very difficult for those with dementias, don't order from the menu. Instead say, "Let's go out for a nice Cobb Salad," or "Let's get some spaghetti tonight." If you use this approach, just tell the wait staff, "We have decided what we want; we don't need a menu." That's not unusual; you might have read the menu online or called for the evening's special! If you do give the person with dementia a menu, make some suggestions that you know they like and say something like, "I am

going to have a half tuna salad and the soup of the day, would you like that, too?" It is important to protect self-esteem and not leave your friend feeling that he or she is a failure. The more you pre-plan your event, the more likely everyone feels good about the time spent together.

Learning how to communicate with someone who has dementia is an art and often very challenging for those who are concrete in their thinking and accustomed to giving full explanations and rationalizing. This is why we suggest learning the important tools in order to be as supportive as possible as you change the way you communicate. Explaining a concept 10 times to someone only increases their sense of failure. Keeping information simple and reducing choices will allow you both to enjoy the moment.

Without a memory, you don't have the past and you are not engaged in the future – you only have the moment. For the individuals experiencing memory loss, that can mean they are not experiencing guilt of the past or anxiety of the future. When we are in the moment, we are most present for ourselves and others. This is a wonderful lesson that contributes to life satisfaction and can be taught to us by those experiencing this challenging journey.

Eldercare Services offers no-cost classes for those trying to understand memory loss and how to interact with those who have this illness. As there is limited seating, please call to reserve a place at our next class that is held in our Tice Valley, Walnut Creek office. Our next class, "Dementia: The Road Map from Diagnosis to Family Care," will be from 5:30 to 7 p.m. April 2. Call (925) 937-2018 to reserve a space. If you are in the midst of care and need support now, we have a support group open to all from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of every month. Share the care. Connect yourself to support and renew your energy.



Linda Fodrini-Johnson is the founder and executive director of **Eldercare Services**, a licensed marriage, family and child counselor, and a certified care manager. For information about **Eldercare Services**, visit [www.EldercareAnswers.com](http://www.EldercareAnswers.com) or call (925) 937-2018.

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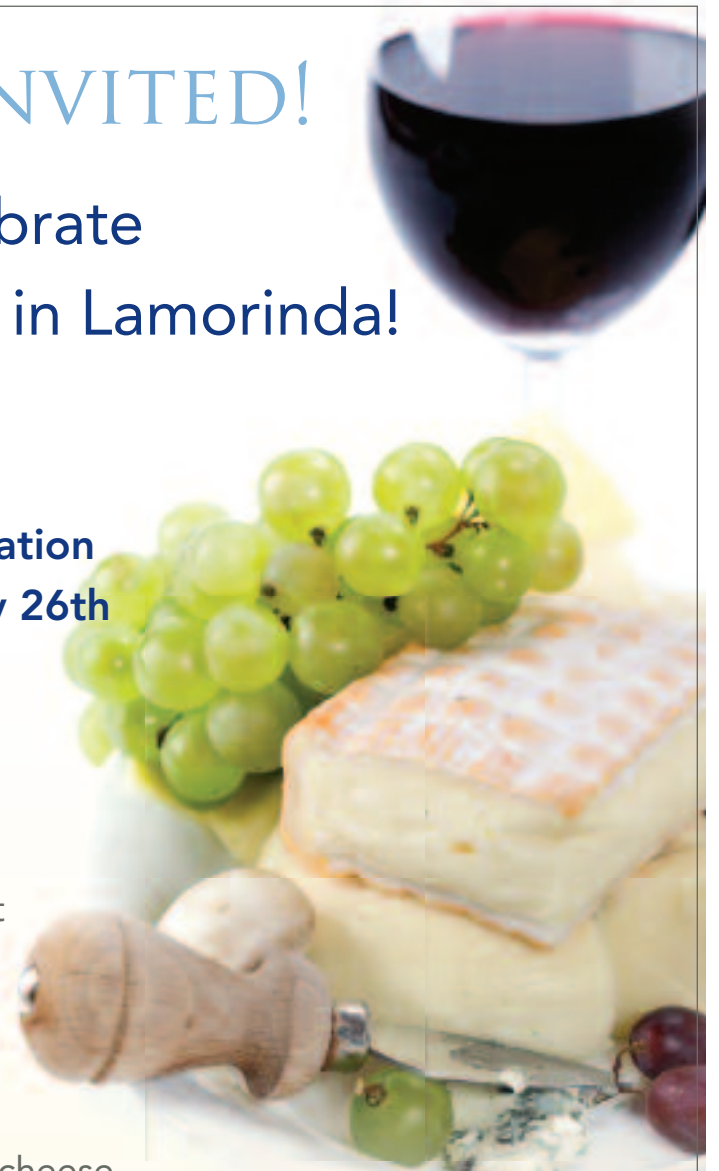
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## Spanish Fiesta Celebrates Orinda Elementary Schools' Immersion Program

Submitted by Jo McKinlay



Kindergartners from the Spanish immersion program at Sleepy Hollow, Del Rey and Glorietta elementary schools participate in the recent fiesta. Photo provided

As part of the Spanish immersion program offered at Sleepy Hollow, Del Rey and Glorietta elementary schools, approximately 200 parents attended the 8th annual Fiesta Jan. 29 to listen to their children sing and fluently speak in Spanish about the Colombian culture.

Sleepy Hollow School Principal Kenneth Gallegos, Ed.D., attended the event and said a few words about the significance of this program, which offers classes four days a week with instructors originating from Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Spain and elsewhere.

## Community Service

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

## Moraga Juniors Celebrate 45 Years of Service

Submitted by Stephanie Becker



From left: alumni Karen Flett (1970), current club president Stephanie Becker, alumni Fay Schoenberger (1974 president) and current member Shirley DeFrancisci Photo provided

Moraga Junior Women's Club celebrated 45 years of service to the community on Jan. 15 at Home/Made Kitchen with a bunco game night. The event included current and former members, some with service to the club dating back to 1970 before the town of Moraga was incorporated. Many of the alumni spoke about their experience with the club and the positive impact it has made on the community and for them personally. Fay

Schoenberger, club president in 1974 who led the effort to create Moraga's first children's park says, "Moraga Juniors has always been a valuable addition to our community and to the various outside charities that it supports. I'm so delighted that it is alive and well with over 100 members."

Moraga Juniors work to improve the quality of life for women, children and the elderly through volunteer service and fundraising in Contra

Costa County and the greater Bay Area. Through their volunteer work, they strengthen bonds in the community and make new friends. They are hosting their annual community egg hunt at the Moraga Commons on March 21 and their Garden Tour on May 3 benefitting the Contra Costa Crisis Center.

For more information on the Moraga Juniors, including how to join or how you can help, visit [www.moragajuniors.org](http://www.moragajuniors.org).

## Donation to Rescue One Foundation

Submitted by Greg Reams



From left, FF/PM Lucas Lambert, Battalion Chief Jerry Lee, Rescue One President Gordon Nathan, FF/PM Matt Lopez, Sally and Brad Whittaker, parents of Reed Whittaker, Capt./PM Sean McGee, and Rescue One Director Greg Reams. Photo Gene Gottfried

A memorial donation of \$13,000 was received by Rescue One Foundation from the family and friends of Reed Austin Whittaker, formerly of Moraga, who passed away in December 2013. Reed, who was 29 years old,

died in a tragic automobile incident while en route to Highland Hospital, where he worked as an Emergency Room Technician.

The donated funds were used to purchase a LUCAS 2 Chest Compression System for the Moraga-

Orinda Fire District. The Rescue One Foundation is a volunteer organization supporting the paramedic program of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. For information, visit <http://www.mofd.org/about/rescueone>.

# Old Firehouse School

[www.oldfirehouseschool.com](http://www.oldfirehouseschool.com)

## Announcing Open Houses

<p><b>Lafayette</b>                  Open Houses                  January 12<sup>th</sup>                  February 9<sup>th</sup>                  at 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Walnut Creek</b>                  Open Houses                  January 27<sup>th</sup>                  February 23<sup>th</sup>                  at 6:30 p.m.</p>
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*Open Houses are for adults only*

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# 'Angels in America: Millennium Approaches'

## Town Hall Theatre meets the challenge

Sophie Braccini



From left: Joe Pitt (Alan Coyne), Roy Cohn (Jerry Motta), and Martin Heller (Alex Bogorad) Photos Stu Selland

Town Hall Theatre's new production, "Angels in America," is one of the most ambitious and powerful plays produced by the local theatre group yet. The Pulitzer Prize-winning play by Tony Kushner resists easy synopsis. Set in 1985's Reagan-era America, it unflinchingly portrays AIDS and the politics of the time while remaining fresh and relevant by contemplating the themes of good versus evil, the use and misuse of power, courage in the face of adversity, and what it truly means to be human.

THT was ready for this play, and so is its audience. It is rated 'R' for good reasons, but it should not shock the Lamorinda public.

"This is one of the most powerful plays I ever read," says THT artistic director Joel Roster who chose and directed the play. "I had never seen it on this side of the tunnel. It was time to show it here."

The play is set in New York and shows the intertwined lives of different people struggling and trying to cope with the disease. At the center are two troubled couples: Prior (Jeffrey Draper) and Louis (Dennis Markam), a gay couple, and Harper (Alex Bogorad) and Joe (Alan Coyne), a straight one. Prior has AIDS and Louis cannot deal with it. Joe, who works in the same law office as Louis, is a Mormon struggling with his sexual identity. His mentor Roy (Jerry Motta) is a corrupt lawyer who also learns he has AIDS. The play deals with their personal struggles, but also with social issues and questions about community, racism and democracy. Tragic and poignant, the play is not without humor and sarcasm.

Roster adds that 50 to 60 actors came to audition, and it is quite understandable. This is great contemporary theater, steeped in a specific time period but with a universal reach.

It has an incredibly rich text that pushes the actors to the limit of their ability. Town Hall Theatre Company completely meets the challenge.

The actors give their best. Draper as Prior portrays a very sick man at times transcended by his disease with a chilling, raw power, while his tortured partner played by a very good Markam crumbles before the audience's eyes. Bogorad is Joe's wife, an emotionally challenged young woman, vulnerable, poetic and touching. Coyne as Joe struggles as he attempts to reconcile the purity of his conservative values with his secret desires. Motta clashes relentlessly with the other protagonists, unafraid and unapologetic for his lack of morals. The rest of the cast does well.

Roster says that this cast has been one of the most supportive he's ever worked with and that all of them came prepared to present a bold performance. There is a remarkable harmony to the show, as scenes rapidly blend into new scenes, sometimes with two different actions occurring simultaneously on either side of the stage, captivating the audience.

Special mention for the set. Roster and his team designed sliding doors that define both sides of the stage. This smart construction allows for a rapid change of props and setting, and also creates dramatic movement with the addition of lights and sounds.

This is the first part of a two-part play. The second part will be presented in February next year. "Some groups show the two parts together," says Roster. "That is a five hour performance. Next year, when we present the second part, we will have a refresher in the afternoon for our subscribers."

The play runs through Feb. 28. Friday nights (Feb. 13 and 20) are Theatre Club Nights with free wine

and talkback sessions with the director and cast immediately following the performance. For tickets, call (925) 283-1557 or go to www.TownHallTheatre.com.

## 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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or Hunter at 925-368-8882



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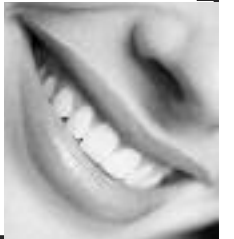
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From left: Harper Pitt (Alex Bogorad) and Prior Walter (Jeffrey Draper)

## Is this too young to go to Cal?



Actually, it's just the right age to get an eye exam at the University of California Eye Center. And again at three years. And regularly after that. (We developed ways to test kids' eyes while they play!) We're part of the UC School of Optometry, and offer you LASIK surgery, contact lenses, and an Eyewear Center with a vast collection of designer frames, too. We take most insurance plans, and major credit cards. It's time for your whole family to go Cal!

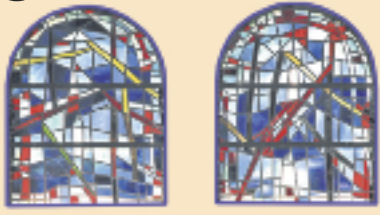


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10:15am Pre-Service Fellowship (Free Coffee & Bagels)  
10:45am Contemporary Worship Service  
**Wednesdays:** 10:00am Community Bible Study  
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www.willowspringchurch.net

### Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church

433 Moraga Way, Orinda, 254-3422  
www.holyshpherd.org



8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship  
9:40 a.m. Education for all ages  
10:45 a.m. Contemporary Worship  
Coffee Fellowship at 9:30 and 11:45 a.m.  
Childcare available for ages 5 and younger

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Sunday School 10:00 a.m.

### St. Anselm's Episcopal Church

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682 Michael Lane, Lafayette, 284-7420, www.stanselms.ws

### Lafayette United Methodist Church



955 Moraga Rd., Lafayette  
284-4765, office@thelumc.org, thelumc.org

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## ◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆

### 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 "Flesh and Mind," a group art exhibit featuring Kerry Sorenson, Polly Frizzell and Elizabeth Jameson, which runs Feb. 21-March 21. Exploring the ephemeral, the artists use technology and fabrication to bring attention to the non-material ideas of beauty, pain, love and existence. There will be an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 21. 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 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!" through Valentine's Day. For info, call (925) 284-2788 or visit www.lafayetteartgallery.com.

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 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.

The Moraga Library presents a Fine Arts Docent Lecture at 2 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12 - "Embodiments: Masterworks of African Figurative Sculpture." This features 120 pieces from the collection of Richard H. Scheller. Approximately 110 cultural groups are represented with sculptures spanning several centuries and encompassing a broad range of styles. For more info, visit ccclib.org or call (925) 376-6852.

San Francisco-based photographer Robert Gumpert in his first exhibitions in the United States will be on display through March 15 at the Saint Mary's College Museum of Art. 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 www.stmarys-ca.edu/saint-marys-college-museum-of-art or call the gallery at (925) 631-4379.

### MUSIC

Pacific Chamber Symphony presents "Romance in the Valley" concert at 7:30 p.m. at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center Community Hall on Friday, Feb. 13. The program includes Wagner's Siegfried Idyl and Piazzolla's Harp Tango Concerto with Anna Maria Mandetta soloist and Brahms' Serenade No.1. Tickets are available at www.brownpapertickets.com and at the door for \$10 to \$35.

### THEATER

Winner of the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, "Angels in America: Millen-

nium Approaches" by Tony Kushner and directed by Joel Roster, will be presented at Lafayette's Town Hall Theatre through Feb. 28. Tickets and show times at www.townhalltheatre.com. (See story page B9)

DVC Drama presents Shakespeare's classic comedy "The Taming of the Shrew," directed by Kathleen Normington through 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.

Role Players Ensemble presents "The Ladies Man" by Charles Morey, from a farce by Georges Feydeau Runs from 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.

### LECTURE & LITERATURE

The Lafayette Library and Learning Center sponsors a Book-to-Action series: "Dear Primo: Letters to our Peers." Decorate your letter in the style of the ancient art of the Mixtecs from 3 to 5 p.m. on 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.

The Moraga Library presents: Book Talk by the Moraga Movers group at 2 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 11. "Imperfecta," by Robin Martinez Rice - A fourteen year old girl, after a tiff with her father, decides she won't be perfect anymore. Martinez Rice will also share her other books: "Sisters in Pieces," a book of short stories and "Hidden Within the Stones," a mystical adventure.

SMC Creative Writing Reading Series welcomes Mary Volmer at 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 18 in Claeys Lounge, Soda Center.

The Moraga Book Club discussion is at 1 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 19 - "Her Royal Spyness," by Rhys Bowen. Lady Victoria Georgiana Charlotte Eugenie, 34th in line for the throne, is flat broke. She's bolted Scotland, her greedy brother, and her fish-faced betrothed for London - the place where she'll experience freedom, learn life lessons aplenty, do a bit of spying, and find a dead Frenchman in her tub. Now her new job is to clear her long family name.

"Charlemagne: A Fireside Chat with Humanities West" from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 24 Adults (18+). Humanities West's George Hammond visits the Orinda Library at 26 Orinda Way to preview the group's upcoming performance of "Charlemagne." For details about their performance, visit www.humanitieswest.org. Next Fireside Chat by Humanities West: "The Cultural Aftermath", April 28.

SMC presents Afternoon Craft Conversation with Mary Volmer - "The Tourist, the Expat and the Native: A Traveler's Guide to Writing Historical Fiction" at 2:35 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25 in Hagerty Lounge, De La Salle Hall.

The Lafayette Library and Learning Center's Science Café presents "The Future of Manned Missions to Mars," featuring Dr. Pascal Lee of Mountain View's SETI Institute, and Andy Weir, author of "The Martian," in discussion

on the science of future Mars missions from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, March 4 in the Library's Community Hall. Free. Registration required at tinyurl.com/TheMartianLLC.

### KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

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.

Orinda Recreation & Summer Camp Fair - The City of Orinda is providing community members an opportunity to meet summer day camp staff plus a variety of specialty class instructors during the first Recreation and Summer Camp Fair from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 28 at the Orinda Community Center located at 28 Orinda Way. Individuals who sign up for programs listed in the Winter/Spring Activity Guide and the Summer Camps Brochure during the fair will receive 10 percent off all fees. For more info, visit www.cityoforinda.org or call (925) 254-2445.

### OTHER

Valentine's Wine Walk in the Gourmet Ghetto - A Benefit for Berkeley Schools garden and cooking programs from 4 to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 11. Sample local small production wines and enjoy small bites at participating businesses in North Berkeley's Gourmet Ghetto. There will be tastings and sales throughout the neighborhood. Bring your sweetie on this special evening to sip, stroll and shop along Shattuck and Vine Street. Tickets: \$30 advance; \$40 at the door. For info, visit www.gourmetghetto.org.

Vanilla Queen event and book signing with author Patricia Rain from 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 12 at the Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery at 3620 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette - a seriously sensual evening celebrating vanilla's scandalously seductive history. You can visit her site and purchase vanilla at www.vanillaqueen.com.

Divorce Options Workshop - an informational seminar open to those who want to learn more about the process of divorce from 9:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 14 (the workshop is repeated the second Saturday of every month). Hear how mediation, collaboration and other alternatives compare to litigation from a local divorce lawyer, financial specialist and a mental health specialist. Understand the legal, financial, psychological and social issues of divorce. Learn how to talk about divorce with your children. Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church (LOPC), 49 Knox Drive, Room 201, Lafayette. No charge for therapists. Cost: \$45 per participant for non-therapists, cash or check only. www.cpeastbay.com For info, call (925) 943-7456 or email divorceoptions.eastbay@gmail.com.

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.

... continued on next page

Please submit events to:  
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**OTHER ... continued**

**Bentley School Science Thought Leaders Night** - a community event to discuss the topic of "Women in Science and Engineering" from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26 in the Student Performing Arts Center (SPAC) 1000 Upper Happy Valley Road, Lafayette. RSVP on the Eventbrite page.

**Aegis of Moraga 16th Anniversary Art & Wine Celebration** from 4 to 6 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 26 at 950 Country Club Drive, Moraga. Wine tasting by Captain Vineyards, music by Lafayette's Gold Coast, Chamber Players, artwork by Lamorinda Artists, Aegis' executive Chef selections of fruit and cheese, and fine chocolates crafted by Powell's Candies. For info, call (925) 478-7327.

**Free tax preparation for the 2015 tax season is available** starting this month from AARP's Tax-Aide and United Way's Earn It, Keep It, Save It (EKS) programs. All tax preparers are trained and certified by the IRS. For information or to make an appointment for the Tax-Aide sites serving the Walnut

◆ **Not to be missed** ◆

Creek area, please call: (925) 943-5851 Walnut Creek Senior Club site; (925) 405-6278 Walnut Creek Grace Presbyterian Church site; (925) 979-5013 Walnut Creek St. Paul's Episcopal Church site. For general information and other site locations, call: (925) 726-3199. For information on EKS sites call 2-1-1 or visit [www.earnit-keepitsaveit.org](http://www.earnit-keepitsaveit.org).

**During the month of February, Curves is raising funds** and awareness for ALS.net. ALS is often referred to as Lou Gehrig's disease. As a special fundraiser, individuals can work out at Curves for five days for \$5. All funds raised go directly to ALS TDI. For more information, contact Curves Walnut Creek at (925) 945-7484.

**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](mailto:adeline@mcclatchie.com). Applications are due by 7 p.m. March 2.

**SENIORS**

**Lafayette Reservoir Walking Group led by Jim Scala**, Lafayette Today's "Walking the Reservoir" Columnist. Every Thursday from 10 to 11:30 a.m. the group meets for camaraderie, fresh air and enjoyable exercise, all in magnificent surroundings. Optional bonus: at the end of the walk, Scala will lead you through easy yoga poses and breathing exercises in the most beautiful outdoor yoga studio: the band stage overlooking the water. Please call (925) 284-5050 to add your name to the email notification list. Meet at reservoir parking lot. Free.

**Sons In Retirement ~ Las Trampas Branch 116 welcomes** guests to socialize with us at 11 a.m. on Monday, Feb. 16 at our monthly luncheon at the Walnut Creek Elks Lodge, 1475 Creekside Drive. Our speaker Tom Lindemuth will discuss the important issue of desalination in the likelihood that California will run out of water. Please call (925) 322-1160 for lunch reservations. Cost: \$15.

**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(s), 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 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 owns the design firm Harmony in the Garden, and authored two wonderful garden books, both of which will be available for purchase. For info, email [cpoetzsch@gmail.com](mailto:cpoetzsch@gmail.com).

**Moraga Garden Club will meet at 9:30 a.m. Thursday**, Feb. 19 at Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga, featuring speaker Robin Stockwell of "Succulent Gardens of Castroville." Her subject will be "Stunning Succulents." Non-members are welcome.

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

**Home Composting for Busy People workshop** from 10:30 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Feb. 24 at Orchard Nursery, Lafayette. Free. Register online at [www.wastediversion.org](http://www.wastediversion.org) or call (925) 906-1801.

**Please submit events to:** [calendar@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:calendar@lamorindaweekly.com)

**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.

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<b>February 13:</b> Myriam Glez, Director, USA Synchronized High Performance will speak to us about 'What It Takes to Perform With Precision'	<b>February 20:</b> Lamorinda Sunrise's own Ray Welles will present his own soliloquy 'Eclipsed by Giants'
--	---

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<b>February 12:</b> Four Way Speech Contest	<b>February 19:</b> Speaker: Contra Costa County Sheriff Livingston on the topic of Law Enforcement in Contra Costa County
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**'Mr. Turner'**

Truly a piece of art

By Derek Zemrak



for Cinematography:



Timothy Spall as J.M.W. Turner

Photo Simon Mein, courtesy Sony Pictures Classics

**"Mr. Turner"** is a must see – not for great storytelling – but for the stunning beauty of every shot in the film, which is a painting unto its own. This film is truly a piece of art, one that would please the 19th century British painter J.M.W. Turner.

"Mr. Turner" is nominated for four Academy Awards: Best Cinematography, Best Costume Design, Best Production Design and Best Musical Score. These nominations alone should tell you that "Mr. Turner" is worth the price of admission. But veteran British actor Timothy Spall's performance of the complex, curmudgeonly J.M.W. Turner is top notch and an excellent character study for any inspiring actor. In most years Spall would be nominated for an Oscar for his performance, but this year the Best Actor category is probably the strongest in Oscar history. I am sure Mr. Turner is grunting and groaning over the missed nomination.

The film is written and directed by seven-time Oscar nominee Mike Leigh ("Secrets & Lies," "Vera Drake") who was also omitted from this year's Oscar race, which is another disappointment. Leigh accurately delivers the film through the eyes of Turner. The audience sees what this brilliant artist saw, from

just the right sunset to the perfect landscape.

The London Film Critics Circle awarded "Mr. Turner" seven nominations, which was the highest for any film this year. Don't miss this gorgeous piece of art. Every landscape, sunset, seascape and valley in film appears as if the actors are standing in front of a masterpiece painting. "Mr. Turner" is cinematography at its best! What a visual treat to have this quality film at the Orinda Theatre. I can see this film being used in film schools for years to come to analyze brilliance in cinematography.

"Mr. Turner" is rated R for sexual content and has a total running time (TRT) of 2 hours and 30 minutes.

*Want to talk more about this year's Oscars? Do not miss the next California Independent Film Festival Founders Night at 7 p.m. Feb. 20 at the Rheem Theatre. Leonard Pirkle and I will be discussing "Everything Oscars" from the history to this year's predictions. See the outstanding performances of the year on the big screen! Tickets are free to CAIFF Leading Role Members and \$7 for the general public, and are available through the Rheem Theatre Box Office or online at [www.lamorindatheatre.com](http://www.lamorindatheatre.com).*



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# LAMORINDA SPORTS

## Lamorinda Soccer Prepares for Postseason

By Karl Buscheck



Samantha DeVecchi

Photos Gint Federas

The NCS Championships are exactly a week away, and all three of the Lamorinda girls' soccer teams are virtual locks to be there when the playoffs begin.

On Feb. 6, Miramonte and Acalanes played to a scoreless draw in Orinda. The result marked a major departure from the last time the Mats and the Dons met back on Jan. 7 when the teams combined to pour in eight goals.

In the rematch, it was the pouring rain that kept either team from finding the back of the net. On a stormy Friday night, the first chance fell to the Dons just six minutes into the contest, but Mats' senior goalkeeper Maritza

Grillo made a lunging save to stop the header.

After a quiet first half, Miramonte began to dominate the possession when the teams returned from the break. Just eight minutes into the half senior Maddie Geary nearly handed the Mats a 1-0 edge, but instead lofted her shot just over the bar. With 18 minutes left in the game, Mats' senior Samantha DeVecchi stormed down the field on a fast break and sent her close-range shot crashing off the side of the net.

The Dons almost stole the game in the final five minutes. Sophomore Allison Merrill attacked from the left wing, firing a shot that floated just

over the top of the goal.

Even though the Mats had to settle for a tie, head coach Mohamed Mohamed was impressed with the way that his team battled with the Dons, who not only sit in first place in the DFAL standings with an 8-1-1 record but are also the early favorites to claim the NCS title.

"Our team is peaking and it's peaking at the right time," said Mohamed, whose Mats occupy the fourth spot in the league standings with a 5-3-3 record. "Acalanes is in first place and we showed that we should have had them."

With the Mats having earned either a win or a draw in six of the past seven games, Mohamed likes the direction that the team is headed with NCS looming. "I think as the playoffs come, Miramonte will be ready to play," he predicted.

Ernesto Silva, the head coach of Campolindo, also thinks his squad will be ready to play. "We are doing really well. We are moving in the right direction. No doubt about that."

After tying Miramonte 0-0 on Feb. 4, the Cougars are stationed in the No. 3 spot in the DFAL standings with a 5-2-3 record. While pointing out that the team has received plenty of contributions from its younger players, Silva gave the most credit for Campolindo's success to the senior core. "The seniors that we have really have stepped up and made it what it is to this point."

The group of standouts includes the likes of Sam Vankoll, AJ Morgan, Emily Parish and Bridget Coleman. Campolindo will face a difficult test in the final game of the regular season, as the team is slated to face off against Acalanes on Feb. 12. Still, Silva is highly optimistic about how the end of the season will play out: "Hopefully the story lines are still to be written."



Allison Merrill had a shot on goal.



Maritza Grillo had critical saves.

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## Fighting for Position

By Scott Wu



From left: Joseph Wang, Drew Wondolowski and Daniel Konstantino Photos Gint Federas

As the regular season of high school boys' soccer finishes up this week, Acalanes (2-4-3 in league), Miramonte (4-3-3), and league leader Campolindo (8-1-1) are reflecting on their seasons and vying for playoff spots. The NCS seeding meeting will take place on Feb. 15.

The Campolindo Cougars, who made it to the NCS semifinals against Dublin last year, have enjoyed a successful season so far. Led by seniors Jeremy Raine and Jacob Buchanan, the Cougars have outscored their opponents 52-18.

Head coach Shane Carney said that his team's chemistry has been the most significant factor to its success. "We've done well this season due to both strong senior leadership and younger talent on the team," said Carney.

With only two games left on the season, Campolindo is in a good position to win the DFAL. The team boasts a slight edge over Dublin in the standings. If they win out, they will take the title.

Despite a relatively young team, the Miramonte Matadors have held their own in league play. Juniors Joseph Wang and Clark Jordan have been key for the Matadors throughout the season.

Head coach Billal Samy stated that while his team may be young, they do not lack toughness or determination. "Our team is lucky to have such a dedicated roster, which we hope can make a difference in the postseason," said Samy. Despite a 4-3-4 record, the Mats are in third place in the DFAL and are on track to earn a berth in the postseason playoffs.



Eric Sirott

The Acalanes Dons have managed to retain their tenacity despite struggling this season. Like Miramonte, the Dons have a team filled with younger talent. Freshman Drew Wondolowski is one of the underclassmen stars of the team.

Head coach Paul Curtis said that while this season may not have met his expectations, he is excited for the future. "Our confidence has been tested this year, but we will return stronger and more competitive in the future," said Curtis.

On the night of Feb. 6, a cold and windy Friday, the Matadors and Dons met at Acalanes for their last regular season matchups. Early in the game, both teams seemed unable to push the ball deep into their opponent's territory. Miramonte's junior goalie Garrett Johnson made a couple of saves as the first half elapsed, but neither team had any threatening shots on goal.

The second half proved to be much more exciting. Only six minutes into the half, Acalanes sophomore Ian Franklin scored on a rebound that ricocheted around the box after a corner kick. With the rain pouring down, the intensity increased and two yellow cards were given out within a span of the next five minutes. Finally, Miramonte made a series of sharp passes that helped Wang draw a penalty. With fifteen minutes left in the game, Wang drilled his penalty shot into the lower left side of the net as Dons' senior goalie Eric Sirott dove to the right. Despite Acalanes pressure in the last minutes of the game, Johnson made multiple saves to force the game to end in a draw.



Garret Johnson

## SMC to Face Tough Opponent

By Michael Sakoda



Lauren Nicholson

Photos Tod Fierner

The Saint Mary's women's basketball team will face BYU in one of its biggest games of the regular season. On Thursday, the Gaels take on the Cougars (19-5, 11-2 WCC) to stay in contention for the WCC title. The game is even more important for Saint Mary's after the team lost to Pacific 61-48 for the second time this season (17-6, 9-3 WCC) on Saturday.

The Gaels (16-7, 9-3 WCC) have only lost consecutive games once this season, and they've followed up their last two losses, Pacific on Jan. 10 and Gonzaga on Jan. 22, with two and three game winning streaks, so Thursday's game should be a battle.

"After a loss, you become focused," said head coach Paul Thomas. "[We] have a tendency to pay more attention to the details of why we lost a game, if we lost because of rebounding, lost because we didn't take good shots, lost because we missed free throws, all of our players are going to pay attention to that detail."

Saturday's game at Pacific gives Thomas' team a few goals to keep in mind: defend the paint, defend the three, and rebound the basketball. Saint Mary's failed to convert a single one of their five 3-point attempts while the Tigers knocked down 10 in the game.

"[They're] just a tough matchup for us," said Thomas. "We, at times, struggle defending the drive, and that's what they do well. And we struggle to defend the kind of post player they have."

Kendall Kenyon, Pacific's 6-foot-2 forward, was critical down the stretch during the Tigers' overtime road win at Saint Mary's on Jan. 11, and she played big again Saturday, going for 12 points on four of five shooting, with a game-high 17 rebounds and two blocks.

The Gaels managed to rebound Pacific, 38-37, despite Kenyon's efforts, but the one re-

bound margin is 10 short of their plus-11 season average, and Thomas knows they'll need to be nothing shy of perfect to beat a tough BYU team.

"BYU spreads you out," said Thomas. "[Morgan] Bailey, is strong and physical, tough to guard one-on-one, so if you help down on her, she's good enough to find the open person, and that gets you rotating and helping, and helping the helper, and that's how they're successful offensively."

Bailey is averaging just shy of 19 points per game to go with just over 11 rebounds per game, so the Gaels' front court is going to have their hands full on the defensive end, but it's the Gaels' offense that Thomas says will need to step up to come out of the game with a win.

"They make it tough for you to score," he said. "At times we have scored easily, but overall this year we've had difficulty scoring. We've been efficient, but we've also made some tough shots, and that's going to eventually catch up to us."

As the regular season winds down in a WCC conference with virtually no separation, the Gaels find themselves in the fourth seed with a 9-3 record (Pacific holds the tie-breaker), but could jump as high as No. 2 with a win on Feb. 12.



Stella Beck

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National Champs

Submitted by Shannon Tague



Front row, from left: Collin Malmquist, Jackson Hink, Evan Sverak, Lucas Dissman, Michael Tague; back row: coach Bob Sverak, Gavin Bender, Aiden Yates, Miles Clark, Max Marino, Sully Bailey and coach E.J. Tague. Photo Shannon Tague

The St. Perpetua third grade boys' basketball team won the CYO National Championship on Feb. 1. It was an exciting finish to a successful season where the team went 9-1.

Lamorinda Rivals in Championship

Submitted by Eric Van Olst



Front row, from left: Jonathan Wang, Mitchell Herring, Max Robeson, Nicholas Powers, Jack Mooradian, Oliver Fetzko, Kai Van Olst, William Myers, Levi Olsen; back row: Mark Herring and Eric Van Olst. Photo provided

The St. Monica second grade boys' basketball team won the West Diablo CYO basketball league. They won the championship game 20-18 on Feb. 1 against St. Perpetua.

Looking Ahead

Submitted by Dave Hoover



Photo provided

Jordan Hoover of Miramonte signed a National Letter of Intent to attend and play water polo for the University of California, Berkeley on Feb. 4, National Letter of Intent signing day.

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- The Transformation of Star Pilates
- SMC Basketball Improving on Strong Start
- New App Creates Smooth Ride for Lamorinda Casual Carpoolers
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- The Lamorinda Woman Behind Champion Dogs
- Masters Swimmer Takes the Plunge
- Historical Designation in Moraga Will Not Require Owners Consent

If you wish to view any of the stories above go to www.lamorindaweekly.com and click the link below the story.

Goal!

Submitted by Richard Kilwien



Samantha Vankoll and Preston Kilwien sign National Letters of Intent. Photo provided

Three Lamorinda athletes signed National Letters of Intent to play college soccer this week. Samantha Vankoll is a senior at Campolindo and will attend Northern Arizona University on a soccer scholarship. Preston Kilwien, who played three seasons at Campolindo before joining the De Anza Force Academy in Cupertino, will attend Florida Gulf Coast University on a soccer scholarship. Wilson Hall, who also plays for De Anza Force Academy, committed to attend and play soccer at Notre Dame de Namur.

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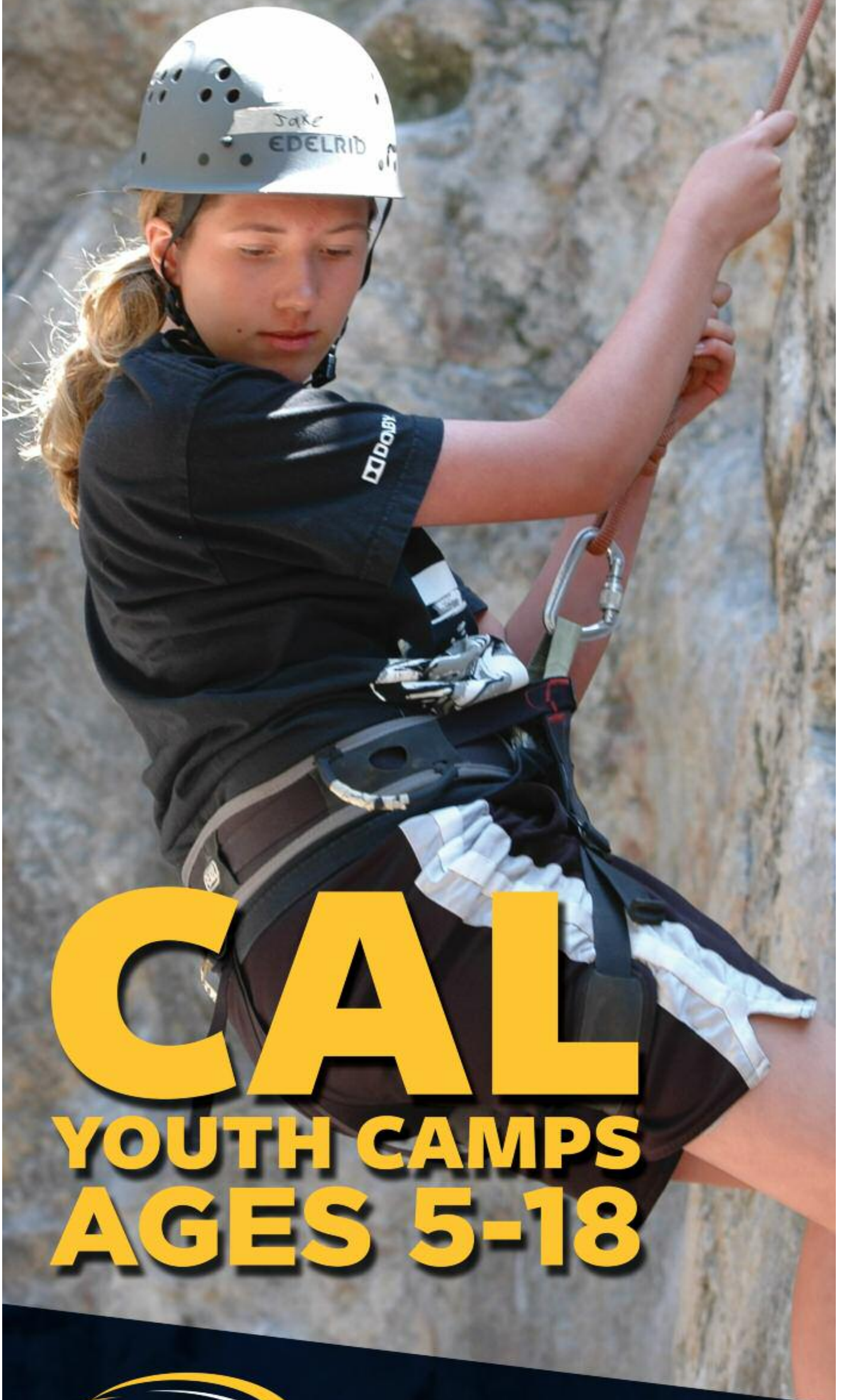
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# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 08 Issue 25 Wednesday, February 11, 2015



*Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian ...read on page D10*

## Downsizing a Perfect Fit for this Pair

By Cathy Tyson



*Marvin and Lois Kay smile in their new home at Merrill Gardens in Lafayette.*

*Photo Cathy Tyson*

Although they looked all over the area for places to relocate, Marvin and Lois Kay couldn't be happier with their decision to move to Merrill Gardens in downtown Lafayette. About three years ago they had an opportunity to look at the building plans before ground was even broken on the project; a friend told them the two-bedroom penthouse with its own rooftop patio was one of the nicest units in the building.

The early birds were one of the first interested parties to put down a deposit to hold one of those units. They moved there in January. The one-and-a-half mile move from their previous home in Olympic Oaks, just across town,

entailed a significant amount of downsizing.

It was a challenge to downsize from their 2,500 square foot home to around 1,000 square feet. They had to part with some furniture and belongings. Many pieces went to their children and some went to consignment.

But their brand new home features two bedrooms and two bathrooms with extra storage on their lovely patio, along with cabinetry for additional storage in the second bedroom that also serves as an office. Although the unit also has a kitchen, they don't use it much because meals are also offered in the Gardens' inviting communal dining area.

Located at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Second Street, the newest outpost of the Merrill Gardens retirement home franchise has only been open since late 2014 and is not yet full. But an open house with local dignitaries on Feb. 5 may have already enticed more newcomers. And the Kays, who have lived in the East Bay for almost all of their lives, plan to have lots of friends stop by. Married since 1948, the newlyweds lived in Piedmont for 53 years before becoming two of the first to join the newly constructed Olympic Oaks community, where they spent another dozen years.

While acknowledging the building has had a few growing pains, the happy couple is thrilled with all the staff – from the front desk person to the handyman, and everyone in between – who “are so nice,” said Lois.

It's apparent these two are well suited to the active social climate the facility provides. Exercise class, chess and dominos, bingo, Tai Chi and field trips via their van, most recently to see Beach Blanket Babylon, and movies in their own theater. The Lafayette Library is only a little over a block away, offering even more options.

Having returned just moments before our interview from a trip to Reno where they enjoyed a large Super Bowl party at the Silver Legacy Casino and visited with their son, a retired eye doctor. Marvin, who is not a gambler, said he won one dollar. Lois enjoys video poker. Their other son is a busy neuropsychologist, based on the East Coast.

... continued on page D4



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MORAGA	7	\$265,000	\$1,860,000
ORINDA	8	\$650,000	\$2,105,000

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

### LAFAYETTE

940 Acalanes Road, \$955,000, 4 Bdrms, 2683 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-15-14;

Previous Sale: \$735,000, 11-06-01

3495 Black Hawk Road, \$1,401,000, 4 Bdrms, 2529 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 12-17-14;

Previous Sale: \$880,000, 04-23-02

1166 Camino Vallecito, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 2441 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 12-23-14

1421 Eagle Point Court, \$1,335,000, 4 Bdrms, 2216 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 12-16-14

3330 Las Huertas Road, \$1,083,000, 2 Bdrms, 2124 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-19-14;

Previous Sale: \$120,500, 12-12-77

5 Lincolnshire Court, \$1,040,000, 4 Bdrms, 2194 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-23-14;

Previous Sale: \$676,000, 04-06-01

631 Sky Highway Court, \$1,626,000, 4 Bdrms, 3258 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 12-19-14

1431 Sunset Loop, \$690,500, 2 Bdrms, 1114 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 12-19-14

### MORAGA

1174 Alta Mesa Drive, \$825,000, 3 Bdrms, 2486 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 12-16-14;

Previous Sale: \$245,000, 10-09-85

2059 Ascot Drive #109, \$265,000, 1 Bdrms, 713 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 12-12-14;

Previous Sale: \$260,000, 09-03-04

1982 Ascot Drive #D, \$387,000, 2 Bdrms, 1233 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 12-16-14;

Previous Sale: \$375,000, 11-19-04

220 Calle La Montana, \$975,000, 3 Bdrms, 1775 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 12-16-14;

Previous Sale: \$820,000, 07-03-12

7 Canning Court, \$880,000, 3 Bdrms, 1620 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 12-19-14

157 Miramonte Drive, \$645,000, 3 Bdrms, 1742 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 12-22-14;

Previous Sale: \$480,000, 05-21-09

260 Valley Hill Drive, \$1,860,000, 4 Bdrms, 4425 SqFt, 1991 YrBlt, 12-22-14;

Previous Sale: \$935,000, 06-15-00

### ORINDA

5 Glorietta Court, \$1,229,000, 5 Bdrms, 2538 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 12-16-14;

Previous Sale: \$690,000, 12-03-10

328 Glorietta Boulevard, \$835,000, 3 Bdrms, 1679 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-19-14;

Previous Sale: \$710,000, 08-02-11

39 Hazel Tree Ridge, \$1,056,500, 12-15-14

232 Ivy Drive, \$1,362,500, 4 Bdrms, 2146 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 12-19-14;

Previous Sale: \$850,000, 06-16-14

78 Orchard Road, \$1,300,000, 3 Bdrms, 2229 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 12-15-14

309 Overhill Road, \$2,105,000, 6 Bdrms, 3168 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 12-18-14;

Previous Sale: \$1,100,000, 08-27-13

15 Snow Court, \$978,000, 3 Bdrms, 1906 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 12-23-14

18 South Trail, \$650,000, 3 Bdrms, 1339 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 12-18-14;

Previous Sale: \$198,000, 12-19-84

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# Downsizing a Perfect Fit for this Pair

... continued from page D1



*This cozy living space leads to the outdoor patio.*

*Photos Cathy Tyson*

Because they love to travel, having recently been to Cancun for a granddaughter's wedding and also back from a two-week cruise to France and Italy, the convenience Merrill Gardens offers is a real plus – housekeeping and maintenance are included in the monthly fee. "It's so nice not to worry about garbage cans and picking up the mail," said Lois, who is looking forward to settling in. Reviewing all of the many social choices, Lois adds, "What more could you ask for?" They have a car in the underground garage, adding to their sense of freedom. Looks like smaller is better for this charming couple.

"It's such a pleasure," said Marvin about thoroughly enjoying his retirement, not missing work a bit. Lois worked full time once their youngest turned 14. Marvin's dad, Sam Kay, founded the Kay Chesterfield furniture business back in 1921, with Marvin starting his career there in 1945, retiring 50 years later in 1995. The



*Lois Kay does some clipping on her patio.*

business used to make and sell high quality furniture, then focused on re-upholstery; while the location near the Oakland Coliseum hasn't changed, the business retains the family name but is under new ownership. A few lovely pieces, at least 40 years old, re-upholstered of course, decorate their new home.

*Merrill Gardens offers independent living, assisted living, and memory care options, spread out over 89 senior living units, in studios as well as one- and two-bedroom apartments. On the Mt. Diablo side, retail shops will soon be open to the public, once occupied. An underground garage with parking for shoppers, residents and visitors is easily accessible from the Second Street side. The roof top deck is open; it features a brand new outdoor kitchen with barbecue, tables and chairs, and several large raised planter boxes for residents to use. The common areas are spacious and stylishly decorated – there's even a grand piano for residents to enjoy.*

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## Stylish Solutions

# Valentine's Day Décor

By Ann McDonald



By using tools like Sherwin Williams' Chip it, you can see browns and earth tones are hidden within mint green feathers on this wreath. Tools like this, which are available online, are incredibly helpful in creating rich, layered and surprising arrangements, and equip you to make bold choices.

It's February and that means it's time to punch up your home décor with hearts, cupids and all manner of love. But how does a stylish suburbanite handle a minor holiday like Valentine's Day without descending into tacky or inappropriate kitsch?

Here are my top tips for decorating your stylish space for a fun, not too labor-intensive minor holiday:

**1) Modify what you have.** When design clients need a bit of bling but shy away from metallic, I like to use feathers. I love large-scale feathers and feather wreaths – I have them in several colors and stock both in quantity. One of my favorite uses is to bump up large-scale live floral arrangements in entry halls, passageways, powder rooms and master suites. Feathers bring a breezy lighthearted aesthetic to most any décor when used properly.

How does this fit into Valentine's Day homes? Simple. I have mint green feather wreaths up now in my Design Studio space and on several exterior doors. Instead of



Sherwin Williams' Chip It app shows the many layers of colors in simple candy.

changing these out for heart shaped or overtly scaled cupids with arrows, tie the wreaths onto their hangers using a simple red grosgrain ribbon.

Just like most things, subtlety rules. OK, yes, there are times I go all out kitsch. But there is also a place for subtle stewardship. When going subtle, effort and precision are keys. Tie and drape the ribbon properly and adjust so the items won't hang off kilter.

The best part? Once the holiday is over, switch out \$3 worth of ribbon and voila: You're ready for the next holiday.

**2) Pick three elements and stick to them!** Hearts, cherubs, paper and candy hearts are all awesome things, but remember, your home is not a retail store or the local craft fair. Those of us with overachieving hearts often come back from our favorite retail haunts, cars loaded with glitter, candy, projects, matching napkin rings and visions of recreating our favorite Pinterest board. ... continued on page D8

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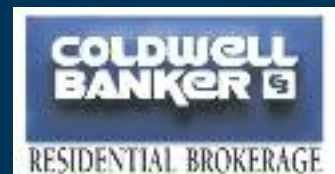
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## The Glorious Rent-Back

By Andi Peterson Brown

Without a doubt, the Lamorinda real estate market is currently a seller's market. Scores of qualified buyers continue to flock to open houses and inventory remains tight.

But many would-be sellers looking to make their next move feel stumped by the catch-22 of the current market: they want to move, but where will they go? They need the equity from their current home for their next down payment, but they are watching buyers write a few offers before finally securing a home. If they put their home on the market, how are they supposed to find and purchase their next home in the typical escrow period of a mere 30 days?

Thus enters the saving grace for this dilemma: the glorious rent-back. A rent-back is a contractual term that allows a seller to remain as tenant after the closing. And just why is this rent-back so glorious? Because it buys the seller time. Essential, priceless time. Knowing there's an option available that provides breathing room means that more sellers are bringing their homes to market, boosting our much-needed inventory. Many sellers today are getting 30, 60, even 90 day rent-backs. While eager buyers have to wait longer to move into their new home, a well structured rent-back is usually crucial in writing a winning offer and thus a vital component to keeping our market moving.



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## Valentine's Day Décor

... continued from page D6

Don't go that route stylish suburbanite! You are better than that. I am calling you stylish for a reason. Engage your power. Let's keep it simple this year. Simple does not mean austere, it just means fewer elements done well and completed.

Pick three elements and use those as your starting and ending points. This year, mine are: red grosgrain ribbon, tall candy, and pheasant tail feathers.

Admittedly, my children are grown and out of the nest, but what if you focused on doing three things really well this year? Your growing family might remember the holiday as one of love and appreciation instead of chaos and sticky fingers from paste trying to hand craft Valentine cards for every relative under the sun. Leave those crafts to the preschool teachers we love so much.

**3) Purchase good quality storage and inventory.** Storage and inventory keeping are the backbones of a well ordered home. Budget the proper storage into seasonal purchases. If you are taking the time to build a body of seasonal décor to serve you over the next three to five years or longer, preserving it properly and then knowing where it is when you need it may save your sanity.

Simple things like proper storage boxes, blocks of cedar, moth balls and/or eco-friendly natural herbs can keep your décor safe for years to come.

Use Google Drive or some other program to develop an inventory of your home and holiday décor. You will be pleasantly surprised how an hour on the computer will save you many hours of searching next year. You also won't re-purchase the thing you have in your shed but can't find. Been there, done that.

I am also passionate about storage and inventory because when it's time to pass your décor along to those less fortunate, those pieces and items will be in their best shape. How much kinder and more respectful it is to bring beautiful, well cared for items in proper storage to your local shelter than all mucked up in a brown paper bag. Let honor be the language of your home.

May your Valentine's Day be blessed and your home be a place of peace.



Photos courtesy Couture Chateau llc, photography by Couture Chateau llc

Ann McDonald, IIDA, NAPO, is the Founder/CEO of Couture Chateau, a luxury interior design firm in Orinda. For a complete blog post including other design ideas, visit [www.couturechateau.com/blog](http://www.couturechateau.com/blog)



## Behind the Studio Door with Ann McDonald

### Upcoming design workshops

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"Managing and Planning a Luxury Project As Your Own Designer" – for the savvy, stylish suburbanite from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, March 20 at the Orinda Country Club. Learn how to run your own design project like a professional designer and how to utilize professional receivers to complete projects in one day. You'll also receive insider access to downloadable materials on a private online dashboard for one month. For info, go to <http://luxurydesign.eventbrite.com>.

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# Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for February

By Cynthia Brian

*"I believe that the reason of life is for each of us simply to grow in love." ~ Tolstoy*

Love is in the air! Every February we are reminded about the importance of amour in every day living. Recently my gardening mentor, my mother, was hospitalized in the Intensive Care Unit of a major hospital when her lungs filled with fluid from an undetected virus. Picking two cultivars from my garden, fragrant narcissi and pink bergenia that she had originally given me from her garden years ago, I ambled to her bedside with a jar filled with these beloved winter blooms, only to be told by the head nurse that flowers weren't allowed in the ICU. With her saddened eyes, my mom pleaded, "Oh please, may I keep them? They make me happy." She survived her ordeal and her bouquet went with her as she was moved from room to room. I like to think that these small reminders of her home and the love she has for her garden spurred her miraculous recovery.

One of the most popular ways to show we care is to give those we love flowers. Florists sell more bouquets at Valentine's than any other time of the year. Last year over 200 million roses were grown for Cupid sales with men purchasing 75 percent of all blooms according to the Society of American Florists. Depending on what message a person wants to convey, there is a flower and a color that corresponds to the emotion. The Victorian era popularized the language of flowers with floriography, a poetic way to exchange messages with posies. Giving 12 red roses meant, "I love you. Be mine!" in the late 19th century, and it still means that today. I wonder what giving 12 red rose bushes would mean in the 21st century?

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*Fragrant narcissi brighten the February garden.*

*Photos Cynthia Brian*

## Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for February

- **STROLL** through your garden to soak in the natural aromatherapy. If you are feeling stressed, a handful of lavender florets or leaves rubbed between your palms and inhaled reduces anxiety, and increases feelings of affection.
- **RAISE** your libido with a pot of night blooming jasmine or passionflower placed bedside.
- **PROMOTE** concentration with a sachet of dried rosemary, grapefruit peels and eucalyptus leaves.
- **PICK** naval oranges, also nicknamed "the love fruit." An orange warms your heart, restores your sense of humor and brings out your sunny side. If you are feeling depressed or unloved, inhaling the peels works as a mood-elevator.
- **SPRAY** deciduous trees, fruit trees and roses with the final dose of dormant spray.
- **FLOAT** camellias as a sparkling table centerpiece and pick up all decayed blossoms from the ground.
- **PROTECT** your frost-tender plants by covering with burlap, blankets, cardboard or tarps. Water deeply before a freeze and don't touch the leaves.
- **HARVEST** winter cabbages, kale, Swiss chard and spinach. Pick the last of the arugula and allow the flowers to self-seed for another spring crop.
- **FORCE** your favorite spring bulbs by placing pebbles in a jar. Push the fat bottom part of the bulb into the pebbles, fill part way with water, set in a sunny window and wait for the science project to delight.
- **REMOVE** old bird nests from reachable spaces to allow our avian friends to build fresh, new houses for their young.
- **ENROLL** in a gardening class while the weather is wet and dark. This is a perfect time of year to hone your horticulture skills with education.
- **TURN** on the lawn irrigation system at least once a month to prevent grass from growing over sprinklers. Even in February I spent over three hours attempting to find my lawn sprinkler heads as lawn roots had spread, covering the tops in over four inches of turf.
- **GIVE** living romantic plants for Valentine's offers a breath of fresh air. Excellent choices are orchids, anthuriums, bromeliads or red aglaonema.



A beautiful pink and green cabbage is ready to be cut and consumed. Photo Cynthia Brian



A bromeliad is an easy maintenance, long-blooming indoor plant. It's great as a Valentine's gift.



Pear tree blossoms in the moonlight.



Cynthia Brian with gigantic Swiss chard leaves.

**ADVANCE  
TREE SERVICE**  
& Landscaping

Family owned in Moraga since 1987



Your friendly neighborhood  
ISA arborists Darren and Lew Edwards

### Why Not to Top

Shade trees should **never** be topped. The regrowth of a topped tree is structurally unsound. Topping required by utility right-of-way pruning is bluntly obvious and sets an unfortunate community standard followed by others. Instead of topping, use crown *cleaning, thinning, and/or proper reduction* methods, set by the ISA.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local ISA certified Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help you with your pruning questions.

Advance Tree Service

Your Authority on Trees and Landscape.



**925-376-6528**

**advancetree@sbcglobal.net www.advancetree.com**

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Show the love this Valentine's Day with a spray from your garden. Or be bold and give a rose bush or two to really express your lasting admiration! Although what we grow may not be perfect, we show how much we care by giving gifts from our heart.

Happy Gardening, Happy Growing, Happy Love Day.

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Cynthia Brian

The Goddess Gardener

Starstyle® Productions, llc

Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com

www.GoddessGardener.com

925-377-STAR

I am available as a speaker, designer, and consultant.

# Lamorinda's Leading Independent Real Estate Firm



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### ORINDA



#### 40 Dos Osos

Incredible Orinda, San Pablo Dam, Mt. Diablo views + abundance of nature surrounds this supersized parcel bordering EBMUD land. Once in a lifetime opportunity raw land sale.

**\$489,000**

### ORINDA



#### 170 Glorietta Blvd.

Build dream home on .98 acre lot with views near top rated Glorietta School. Ideal close in commute location.

**\$525,000**

### ORINDA



New Listing

#### 1 Carisbrook Drive

Beautifully remodeled 3bd/2ba ranch home on .31ac private view lot w/updated kitchen, formal dining rm, hdwd flrs, crown molding, level entertaining area in back! Walk to 12 yrs of schools.

**\$975,000**

### ORINDA



New Listing

#### 57 Davis Road

Curb appeal + convenience come together in a great family/ executive couple home. Walk to town yet private/ peaceful setting. Ideal floor plan, high ceilings, abundance of windows.

**\$1,299,000**

### ORINDA



New Price

#### 207 Camino Sobrante

Contemporary 3927sf 5bd/4ba built in 1987 w/large level front yd & level back yd surrounded by trees just steps from OCC & Lake Cascade. 2 master suites, large family rm & great rm, hardwood floors.

**\$1,745,000**

### ORINDA



#### 500 Dalewood Drive

Luxury home in well sought after Orinda Downs. One-time owner, built w/best quality. Apx. 2907sf w/two master suites, one large guest room, three baths, open kitchen/FR & pool on 1.02 acres.

**\$1,795,000**

### MORAGA



#### 10 Magee Court

Custom cul de sac Sanders Ranch 4bd/3ba 3551sf home on .68ac lot w/wrap around front porch & views. Great open floor plan for entertaining, gourmet kit, built in spa & gazebo. Top schools!

**\$1,495,000**

### LAFAYETTE



Pending

#### 4018 Tilden Lane

Delightful custom built family 4bd/4ba home is set on level .49 acre in Happy Valley. Functional floor plan, kitchen w/eating area adj. to family room, hdwd flrs. Patio, grassy yard, bar area, pool.

**\$1,550,000**

### LAFAYETTE



#### 23 Sessions Road

Gated English Manor 12.18 acre 5bd/6ba Estate. Grand foyer, living, family rms + "Club" rm, deluxe kitchen, dramatic solarium + executive office. Gorgeous grounds w/lap pool/lawns, views.

**\$3,895,000**

### CLAYTON



Coming Soon

#### 3 Xavier Place

Nestled in charming town of Clayton, this lovely 4bd/2ba home has .25ac lot on cul-de-sac w/lovely flat bkyd. Remodeled eat-in kit, lrg fam rm w/frplc & sliding drs to patio. Beautiful fruit trees.

**Call for Price**

### 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



Coming Soon

#### 1965 Cactus Court #4

Light and bright 2bd/2ba Cascade model in Rossmoor. New carpet, fresh paint, updated eat-in kitchen, fireplace and sunny deck.

**\$599,950**

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**Sunday Open Homes**