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From left: Vicki Breton, Valerie Briscoe, Maynard Clark, Dudley Braun, Alise Gillman, Toni Lewis, Giulia Massari and Jim Scala

Photo Andy Scheck

Lafayette Reservoir Walking Group's Focus on Fitness

By A.K. Carroll

Life can be stressful. That's no secret. But the solution can be as simple as getting up, getting out and taking a stroll. Author, biochemist and nutritional expert Jim Scala understands this. He recently started a walking group at Lafayette Reservoir through Lafayette Senior Services designed to build cardio vascular health and camaraderie.

Scala has been walking the reservoir for decades. "[My wife and I] have lived in Lafayette for 37 years now," he said. Scala used to regularly jog the 5.5 miles from his house around the reservoir and back, but "as you get older, you sort of slow down," Scala laughed. "Slowly but surely I started

walking the reservoir and have been doing it ever since."

Walking is one of the Mayo Clinic's recommended forms of exercise. It can help you to meditate, boost your endorphins, increase your energy and reduce your level of stress.

The idea for the walking group came from Lafayette resident Don Jenkins. After reading an article about Scala in a local newspaper, Jenkins asked if Scala would join him for a stroll around the reservoir. Following the walk, Jenkins talked to Lafayette Senior Services about his experience. They asked Scala if he would lead a group of reservoir walkers. ... continued on page A12

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See Real Estate Section for more details...

Combined City Councils Ponder Public Safety in Lamorinda

By Laurie Snyder



An officer uses a license plate recognition system (ALPR) inside his patrol car. Photo public domain

Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda united for another Tri-Cities meeting Feb. 19. Focused on public safety, the combined council membership heard an update on emergency preparedness from Dennis Rein of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and a lengthy presentation from Lafayette Police

Chief Eric Christensen regarding Lafayette's use of Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) and other security cameras.

Christensen spent most of his time on positives, reporting that violent and property crimes in Lafayette are down 19 percent and that residential burglaries dropped 21 percent while the "solve rate" increased by 33 percent. Although armed robberies rose, he said 100 percent of those have been solved – a rate he attributed to the city's increased use of technology. He also recalled several crime solving successes, and outlined how his department developed its system, saying Lafayette's council had, several years ago, challenged its seven-member Crime Prevention Commission (CPC) to look at implementing "surveillance of on ramps and off ramps and the entrances to the city of Lafayette."

ALPR testing began in July 2013, followed by a January 2014 community survey to assess the positives and negatives. Charged with providing six-month updates to the Lafayette council, the CPC reported on site visits with the Antioch, Pittsburg and San Pablo police to learn about their

closed circuit television (CCTV) systems, which monitor specific intersections or other key community areas. CPC members also learned about Piedmont's ALPR system. With costs for those running about \$600,000, they then studied how cameras might be sparingly placed in Lafayette to help solve residential burglaries, and decided three layers of security should be created.

"The first layer starts with the resident's house," said Christensen, who strongly advised all Lamorindans to install both alarms and cameras. The second layer includes "community camera systems – taking neighborhoods that want to have camera systems, getting the neighbors together themselves to pool their resources to install a camera system within their community itself." Both high quality and very affordable, each camera typically photographs a single block.

"We also began a process with our businesses in the community to have them install camera systems that not only surveil their business, but also surveil the roadways out in front of their business," he said. ... continued on page A9

please...

...thanks

Life in Lamorinda B1-B10

Art exhibit gives life to MRI images – page B4.



Sports C1-C3

Mats undefeated in all 12 DFAL games – page C2.



Our Homes D1-D16

Tips to attract honeybees to your garden – page D15.





Lafayette

Public Meetings

City Council

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

Planning Commission

Special Meeting
Wednesday, Feb. 25, 7 p.m.

Regular Meeting

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

Design Review

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

School Board Meetings

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

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, March 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

Feb. 1-14:

Alarms 63
911 calls 33

Battery

Hwy 24/Oak Hill Rd

Burglary, Auto

1000 block Lindsey Ct
1300 block Sunset Lp
1500 block Sunset Lp
10 block Westminster Pl
1200 block Quandt Rd
4000 block Los Arabis
1100 block Oak Hill Rd
3700 block Highland Rd
900 block Dolores Dr
900 block Risa Rd
Dolores Rd/Mt Diablo Bl
3400 block Golden Gate Wy
1000 block Via Alta
3300 block Sweet Dr

Burglary, Residential

1500 block Rancho del Hambre
3300 block Hermosa Wy
10 block Greenvally Ct
1000 block 2nd St
10 block Diablo Cr

Burglary, Commercial

1000 block 2nd St

Civil Disturbance

3200 block Glenside Dr

DUI

Pleasant Hill Rd/Mt Diablo Bl (2)

Exhibition of Speed

Silverado/Rohrer Drs
1800 block Reliez Valley Rd

Fire/EMS Response

Reliez Valley Rd/Almaden Ct
3300 block Reliez Highland Rd
Library
3300 block Rowland Dr
900 block Moraga Rd

Forgery

3500 block Mt Diablo Bl

Grand Theft

3200 block Quandt Rd

Hit & Run

3400 block Monroe Av (2)
1000 block 2nd St
Mt Diablo Bl/Moraga Rd
Trader Joe's (2)
Safeway
Postino's

Loitering

Los Arabis/Upper Happy Valley Rd

Loud Party

4000 block Natasha Dr (2)

Petty Theft

1500 block Sunset Lp
1000 block Roderick Ct
1600 block Reliez Valley Rd
Trader Joe's

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Quest for Dream House Approval Continues

By Cathy Tyson

Linda and Steve Wight have been on a seven-year quest for a permit allowing their dream home to be built. At the Feb. 9 Lafayette City Council meeting, it was apparent that there had been a change of heart with city council members about the proposed 10,000-square-foot home on 13.66 acres at the end of Monticello Road, which looked like the permit would be denied after years of hearings.

The wheels of city government grind slowly especially for a building within the Hillside Overlay District, which requires both a Phase I approval about siting and massing and Phase II which evaluates the design and impacts of the project. In preparation for their December 2014 meeting, a denial resolution for a Phase II Hillside Development Permit was ready to go, attached to the staff report. The denial resolution preparation was the result of the Sept. 22, 2014 hearing, which culminated with a vote of four against and one in favor of the home. The matter dragged on into the new year; it was continued three times, to address legal concerns, to review grading information and to look into comments by Lafayette's attorney.

At the February 2015 city council meeting, attorney for the applicants, David Bowie, obviously disagreed with the still pending de-

nial resolution and pointed out that the project meets the criteria for approval, explaining that "the Phase I application requires all the findings be actually made. This council made those findings." He added, "I think there's a real problem with that."

Arguing that the required amount of grading had been minimized as much as possible, and that the applicants had agreed to monitoring and mitigation for the amount of traffic, additionally because only a small portion of the large site is being developed, the applicants have not violated the city's design guidelines. Bowie calls the home a "perfectly acceptable project" with "no impacts on anyone off-site," adding it "really meets every single one of your requirements."

"We've spent considerable time with our attorneys discussing this application," explained then Mayor Don Tatzin at the Dec. 2, 2014 council meeting. "As a result of those discussions, I've concluded the best course of action is to investigate further what conditions would reduce the impacts of the project that we included in the Phase I approval, to an acceptable level."

Tatzin acknowledged that he still has concerns about the impacts of the project, specifically excessive grading and roughly 5,000 truck trips through the narrow residential Mon-

ticello Road. He and fellow council members expressed the hope that they can work cooperatively with the applicant and the public.

While the project still hasn't been officially approved, it's clear that the denial was not approved. Procedurally the council is taking steps to update the mitigated negative declaration. Once that is complete it will go back to the council to flesh out the conditions of approval, which include public input.

Throughout the entire process, residents who live on Monticello and in surrounding areas have consistently urged the council to deny the project, asking it to consider the narrow roadway with no sidewalks and lots of kids, diesel particulate matter and noise pollution for the estimated two years of construction, which in their opinion is hazardous.

Some of the neighbors are so concerned they pitched in to hire their own attorney to join the fray. Edward Shaffer of Archer Norris is representing the Glen Road Neighborhood Association. He sees many significant impacts of the project.

The Wight's journey started with an application for a 5,900-square-foot home by a different architect, which was approved back in the spring of 2008. They let that approval expire and endeavored to

apply for a Phase I permit for a substantially larger home in 2011. After initially being denied for the Phase I permit by the planning commission in March of 2012, the property owners appealed the decision and asked for a de novo public hearing later that month. In July of 2012 the city council voted to uphold the applicant's appeal and approved the Phase II permit application would be reviewed on its own merits.

An open letter from Peter Clark, president of the Happy Valley Improvement Association, presented at the February city council meeting speculated about the reasoning behind the council's about face: "One possibility is the fear of losing a costly lawsuit." He concludes, "Happy Valley residents pay enormous amounts of state and local taxes; while we know that the city gets little of it back, we think that going to court to deny special land use privilege to a litigious few is an excellent use of our tax dollars."

Calls to the senior planner and Lafayette's city attorney, as well as David Bowie, attorney for the applicants were not returned. Going forward, the comment period for the Mitigated Negative Declaration was extended; it will be on the council's agenda March 9 and again on March 23.

More Lafayette News on Page A11

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Photo by Megan Allen

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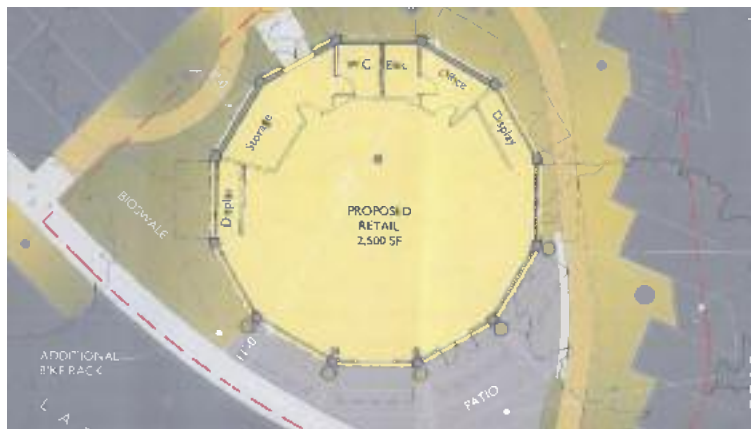
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Lafayette's Citizen of the Year Announced

Elder statesman and longtime Lafayette resident Marechal Duncan was chosen as the Citizen of the Year for 2015. It was a tough decision for the panel; the city is lucky to have so many residents who selflessly donate their time and energy to make life in this little slice of paradise better. With more than a half century of community involvement, Duncan,

at 95 years old, is still involved in organizations all over town from the Historical Society to the Lafayette Community Foundation. A dinner will be held in his honor at the Lafayette Park Hotel on March 27. For more information, contact the Chamber of Commerce at (925) 284-7404 or visit www.lafayettechamber.org. *C. Tyson*

Goodbye Art Room and Klein Gallery?



Architectural rendering by SZFM Design Studio

Image courtesy City of Lafayette Staff Report

If all goes according to plan, the small house on Lafayette Circle that now contains the Art Room and Klein Gallery will be demolished. In its place, eventually, will be a new retail building.

Main Street Properties filed an application on behalf of the Whitten Family, LLC to demolish the existing 1,233-square-foot aging home on the very visible parcel, and to tweak the existing Tenant Design Guidelines for façade and signage improvements.

Sudhish Mohindroo, one of the principals of SZFM Design Studio, is very familiar with the site, having designed the Mercantile Building and La Fiesta Square. Mohindroo explained his preliminary proposal for the unique space, calling the proposed 2,500-square-foot structure a pavilion in a park-like setting that relates to the

geometry of the site – the curve of Lafayette Circle and the decagon shape of Chow restaurant across the street.

The Design Review Commission gave the applicant feedback at a recent meeting, suggesting smaller height and mass and asked the architect to rethink the use of the front patio space. Commission chair Gordon Chong commented that the idea of a circular pavilion is interesting, but "I just don't think it fits."

The applicant took note of the suggestions and will bring back revised plans at the Design Review Commission's March 9 meeting.

Carrie Klein of the Art Room and Klein Gallery definitely wants to stay in Lafayette and is in discussions for a new location with the landlord. *C. Tyson*

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All information herein deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



Giving Dreams an Address



Moraga

Public Meetings

Town Council

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

Planning Commission

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

Design Review

Monday, March 9, 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

Stolen car, 2/10/15 A Camino Peral resident parked and locked his white 1994 Saturn in front of his residence at around 9:45 p.m. As he was preparing to leave the next morning at 8:30 a.m. the car was gone. The area was searched but the Saturn was nowhere in sight.

Gift basket swiped, 2/11/15 A Corte Maria resident reported that sometime between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., an unknown person removed a gift basket intended for a charity auction from his front porch. The basket, valued at \$100, was supposed to be picked up at 3 p.m. by one of the charity event organizers.

It was picked up, but not by the intended party who also neglected to leave a donation for the mystery charity. Is the stolen basket still tax deductible?

Asleep at the wheel, 2/11/15 On Paseo Del Rio at Campolindo Drive cops responded to a report of a person sleeping or passed out in a parked car. The subject displayed objective signs of alcohol intoxication, once awoken. After finding out his or her blood alcohol level was more than three times the legal limit, the subject was arrested and taken to jail. Lesson: You don't have to be driving to get a DUI. Call a cab; it will be way cheaper in the long run.

Strong arm robbery, 2/16/15 In the middle of the afternoon, near the corner of Camino Ricardo and Dane-field two males in black hoodies exited a Mercedes with dark tinted windows and confronted a woman. The two suspects reached for a woman's over the shoulder khaki purse and ended up dragging her approximately 15 feet while forcibly attempting to remove her purse. The victim said her purse contained \$200

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Chickens and Energy Efficiency

Moraga to look into Climate Action Plan strategies

By Sophie Braccini

At its Feb. 11 meeting, the Moraga Town Council authorized the launch of a small farm animal ordinance study and accepted the participation of the town in a free energy efficiency assessment program for homeowners. Council also authorized staff to look into streamlining the permit process for solar panels and research possible participation in the Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) loan program, a funding mechanism for homeowners to finance energy investments.

The topics were brought to the council as a result of the Climate Action Plan accepted by the town at the end of last year.

PACE programs allow homeowners to invest in energy or water saving equipment and pay the loan back over time as a voluntary property tax assessment. A representative of the Home Energy Renovation Opportunity program – one of the companies offering PACE programs locally – attended the council meeting. “There would be no cost and no

risk to the town,” she said. “We have funded 25,000 projects so far that represent \$481,000 and created 4,000 jobs.” The majority of Contra Costa County cities participate in the program.

The town of Moraga decided to participate in the California Youth Energy Services (CYES) program in partnership with the city of Lafayette. The program trains young adults ages 16 to 22 to conduct free energy audits in homes, propose measures to improve performance and inform owners of possible actions and available rebates. Assistant Planner Ella Samonsky, who presented the information, said she talked to the city of Martinez, which has been using the program for a year and is enthusiastically signing up for another year.

Lafayette and Moraga are partnering to pool resources. Lafayette will provide the electronic equipment for CYES youth, while Moraga will give them access to office space at the Hacienda de las Flores. A \$20,000 grant from East Bay Energy Watch

will pay for the cities' contribution to the program. The council unanimously approved the town's participation for the summer of 2015, after Councilmember Teresa Onoda made sure that CYES would exclude homes of sex offenders from those being visited by the youth.

On the topic of small farm animals, council members recommended that staff review the Lafayette ordinance that allows homeowners to raise a small number of chickens, rabbits or bees on their property, and the Pleasant Hill ordinance that categorizes chickens (not roosters) and rabbits as pets and allows people to have a small number of them. At this time Moraga residents need to have an acre of land in order to keep any kind of farm animal.

Staff will return sometime this year with a proposal to council about this, the potential streamlined solar panel process and the possibility for Moraga residents to participate in the PACE program.

What is the PACE program?

PACE is a State Assembly-authorized program to finance energy efficiency, water efficiency and renewable energy projects with little or no up-front costs. It is available for commercial, municipal and residential owners. The project is paid back over time as a voluntary property tax assessment through the existing property tax bill. The idea is to keep the monthly payments low enough that the utility savings may exceed payments. Examples of eligible investments include attic insulation, heating, ventilation and air conditioning replacements, solar photovoltaic and thermal systems, and low-flow toilets.

Source: <http://energycenter.org>

Historic Preservation Adopted After Tense Debate

By Sophie Braccini

The second and final reading of a new ordinance is often a formality, since the Town Council has usually finalized and approved the ordinance during the first reading. But at the Feb. 11 second reading of the Moraga Historic Preservation Ordinance, strong words were exchanged, including the threat of a lawsuit. The text was finally adopted with two of the five council members opposed.

in cash, a passport and a work visa. The Mercedes was last seen traveling south on Camino Ricardo.

Grand theft, 2/15/15 Sometime between 2 p.m. on Feb. 15 and 8:30 a.m. on Feb. 16 an unknown suspect entered a car parked on Miramonte Drive and removed two sets of aviator headphones, valued at \$1,100. The reporting person said there were no signs of forced entry and nothing else appeared to have been taken.

Other crimes in Moraga that occurred from Feb. 15-17:

Outside Agency Assist – Canyon post office

Vehicle Tampering – Alta Mesa

Auto Theft – Camino Ricardo

False Alarm – Moraga Way, School Street, Brookfield Drive, Del Rio Way, Kingsford Drive,

Identity Theft – Donald Drive

Traffic Incident – Moraga Road

Noise Complaint – Donald Drive

Petty Theft – Sanders Drive

Suspicious Circumstances –

Draeger Drive, Donald Drive, Wal-ford Drive

Runaway Juvenile – Calle La Mon-tana

Vice-Mayor Mike Metcalf and Councilmember Phil Arth asked that their names be precisely cited on the record as the opposing parties to the ordinance. The two men sided with property owners and residents who voiced their opposition to the text stating that the support of an owner is not required to designate a piece of property as historic.

Dave Bruzzone, whose family owns most of the Moraga Center Specific Plan area, reiterated his concerns about the risks carried by the text. “Anybody, on a whim, could make the findings ... to designate any property as a historical landmark,” he said. The Moraga Ranch area is of particular concern to him.

Bruzzone was not the only resident to voice his opposition to the text. Longtime Moraga resident Bar-

bara Simpson was one of the most explicit. “The issue for me is property rights,” she said. “I am appalled ... that property rights have to take second fiddle to what the town wants. There is such a thing as property rights in the Constitution. ... You can expect a really nasty lawsuit ... and I'll be one of the people behind it.” She said she believes that the target of the ordinance is the Rheem Theatre, which is currently for sale, adding that if the town wants to preserve the building it should buy it.

Judy Dinkle from the Hacienda Foundation indicated that there are pros and cons for the Hacienda to be declared a historical landmark and asked the council to delay its decision.

Metcalf was absent during the first debate. He tried to convince his fellow councilmembers by demon-

strating that the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) has enough teeth to protect the historical character of buildings. He added that he was concerned about the addition of orchards as a feature that could be declared worthy of historic preservation. Councilmember Arth added that he found it unfair to impose a designation on a property owner, and reminded his colleagues of the compounding factor the designation carries of maintaining the structure at the owner's expense.

Mayor Roger Wykle, councilmembers Teresa Onoda and Dave Trotter remained convinced that this text was the best tool to protect Moraga's heritage and the text was approved. It will go into effect after March 13.




DAVID PIERCE PRESENTS

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Hacienda de las Flores



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Facelift for the Moraga Library

By Sophie Braccini



The new garden in front of the library

Photo Sophie Braccini

Simply drive along St. Mary's Road and you'll notice new landscaping that will make the Moraga Library even more appealing this spring. Revitalizing the library's large front garden was overdue. A few years back the strip along the road was re-done after a fire scorched the juniper, but a large portion of the front garden still needed work.

The library grounds belong to the town of Moraga, while Contra Costa County Library operates the facility. The Friends of the Moraga Library contributes handsomely to operations by funding the Sunday hours and all the activities, but generous donors Mark and Dustie

Robeson and Joan Bruzzone financed the new garden. Hundreds of plants and tens of trees create a pleasing atmosphere for the popular venue.

The second improvement planned for the library is located in more private areas. At its Feb. 11 meeting, the Town Council approved the replacement of the 40-plus-year-old bathroom to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The projected estimate jumped from the original \$100,000 to \$300,000, so the decision to pick up the cost did not come easily.

Architect Gray Dougherty presented the plan he developed after consulting with different stake-

holders. He reminded council members that ADA compliance was a legal requirement and that the existing bathroom is non-compliant. The new design was kept simple and functional, and largely within the existing footprint, with water wise and energy smart appliances, but since walls will have to be moved the cost estimate jumped.

"Staff looked at other funding options to keep the project moving forward," Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram said. Ingram could not get contributions from town service groups and the county library did not show much interest either, adding that there were not a lot of grants out there for library infrastructure. One option would have been to delay the work and wait for the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) cycle in 2016.

Resident Dale Walwark urged the council to do what he sees as the right thing. "Why can't we nail that down now since we have to do it to obey the law?" he asked. "This is a basic asset of the town. Since we do not have enough money in the asset replacement fund, we should look into using some of the Palos Colorado's money (developer's fund

worth \$1.8 million) to do this."

Vice-Mayor Mike Metcalf led the argument on the dais supporting immediate action. "We should have done this a lot time ago, (and) this is the place where we should spend Palos money. It is a one-time expense and is a recreation town asset," he said. Councilmember Dave Trotter preferred to wait for a grant cycle and solicit the Friends for some funding. Council agreed to use the town's asset re-

placement fund and to tap the Palos fund for additional money, while applying for a grant to replenish that fund if some of it is spent. Construction is anticipated to start in the fall.

Councilmember Teresa Onoda, who said that there was nothing "Moraga" in the design, was put in charge of a local contest to adorn the new amenity with an emblematic mural.

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CalBRE#01259271

3607 Powell Dr, Lafayette

PENDING



Classic Woodlands neighborhood home features four bedrooms, plus a large office with full bathroom. The private yard with pool and spa is on .60 acres with lawns and terraces. Offered at \$1,595,000 by Jim Colhoun, 925.200.2795 www.3607PowellDr.com

CalBRE 01029160

7 Carey Court, Moraga

PENDING



This lovely home is in the coveted Sanders Ranch community. Its 2543sqft includes 3 bedrooms plus a den and 3 full bathrooms. Offered at \$1,120,000 by Adam Hamalian 925.708.5630.

CalBRE#01313819

2 Green Acres Court, Lafayette

PENDING



Charming turn of the century home was recently remodeled. It also has a basement and a 2nd bldg/cottage on a large yard with mature landscaping. Offered at \$220,000 by Tina Van Arsdale, 925.640.2355

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Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

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

Planning Commission

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

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, March 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. Feb. 1-14:

- Alarms** 103
- Armed Robbery**
10 block Bates Blvd/Muth Dr
- Burglary, Auto**
100 block Meadow View Rd
20 block Bates Blvd
Wilder Park
10 block Wanda Ln
- Burglary, Residential**
20 block Scenic Dr
- 911 calls** 13
- Disturbance**
St. Mark's Church
Miramonte High School
400 block Moraga Wy
- DUI**
Safeway
Moraga Wy/Stein Wy
- Fire/Ambulance Call**
10 block Cresta Blanca (2)
70 block Claremont Av
- Harassment**
10 block Camino Encinas
- Health & Safety Violation**
Safeway
- Loud Party**
Donald Dr/Hall Dr
50 block Cedar Ln
- Missing Adult**
200 block Orchard Rd
- Found Adult**
100 block Coral Dr
- Theft, Petty**
10 block Ranch Rd
Safeway
80 block Muth Dr
20 block Bates Bl
10 block Wanfleete Ct
- Theft, Grand**
300 block Miller Ct (2)
500 block Dalewood
10 block Bobolink Rd
- Panhandling**
Camino Pablo/Hwy 24
- Promiscuous Shooting**
Brookside/Moraga Wy
- Public Nuisance**
10 block Lombardy Ln
Camino Pablo/El Toyonal
- Reckless Driving**
Moraga Wy/Ivy Dr
Moraga Wy/Overhill Rd
Camino Pablo/Ardilla Rd
San Pablo Cr/Orinda Wy
Moraga Wy/Glorietta Bl
Moraga Wy/Orchard Rd (2)
Camino Pablo/San Pablo Dam Rd
- Shoplifting**
20 block Orinda Wy
- Suspicious Circum.** 8
- Suspicious Subject** 12
- Suspicious Vehicle** 18
- Trespass**
100 block Camino Sobrante
- Traffic Stops** 143

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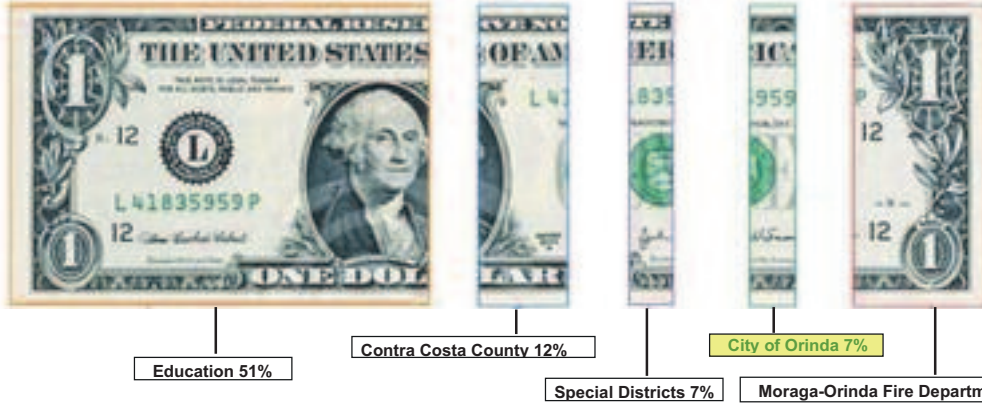
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Orinda City Council Approves Mid-Year Budget Corrections

By Laurie Snyder

Where does my property tax dollar go?



The City of Orinda's General Fund Operating Budget is a small one – just \$13,312,542. This graphic illustrates what happens with each Orinda property tax dollar.

Orinda's conservative fiscal management is working, according to a Feb. 3 staff report to the Orinda City Council. The city's operating budget remains in the black despite the Manzanita Bridge replacement, the revenue-sapping

Tarabrook sinkhole emergency and other recent big-ticket outlays. Before they heard the news that both expenses and revenues are up, though, council members entertained a request by Pacific Municipal Consultants for roughly \$35,000 more to

cover unexpected work on the city's Housing Element update and its related Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

In response to probing questions by all five council members regarding the disparity between PMC's initial

and revised workload estimates, planning director Emmanuel Ursu explained that Orinda held more public meetings and produced more drafts of the element than expected due to the intense public debate over the matter. In addition, PMC's projections were made before the city agreed, as part of its settlement with Advocates for Lawful Environmental Review Today (ALERT), to create an EIR for the fifth cycle Housing Element update. (See "Orinda Settles Housing Element Lawsuit" in the Lamorinda Weekly's online archives: www.lamorindaweekly.com.)

PMC representative Jennifer Gastelum added that, based on its experience with other cities' housing elements and EIRs, PMC anticipated it would need to address just 30 public comment letters.

... continued on page A9

Orinda's Aging Storm Drains May Need \$13.5 Million Fix

By Laurie Snyder



In December 2012, a pipe failure led to the formation of a sinkhole on Tarabrook Drive at Evergreen. Adopting humor in the face of adversity, some Orindans christened the area "Tarabrook Lake" during the worst moments of the emergency. Photo courtesy the city of Orinda

Drain failures are ugly, they're expensive, and they can upend the lives of those they impact for years as cities struggle to move from emergency response to cleanup and complete system overhaul. Just ask Orindans who live in the city's Glori-

etta or Tarabrook neighborhoods. Both areas experienced drain pains requiring multi-million dollar solutions.

To try to predict and head off future emergencies along Orinda's roughly 100,000 linear feet of pipe

with its 1,552 manholes and inlets, the city's Public Works Department began reviewing proposals in August 2013 from five firms hoping to perform a Master Storm Drain Study for the city. The study and resulting proposed Storm Drain Master Plan (SDMP) were completed by Schaaf & Wheeler. That plan is currently working its way through public reviews, including two recent Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission meetings.

According to the report, the objective was to examine flood risks within the city limits, and recommend the actions needed for the city to achieve an "appropriate level of service of those portions of the storm drain system that are owned by the City." The consultants collected data to build a conditions model of Orinda's storm drain network, assessed the performance of existing systems for capacity and condition, identified and prioritized capital improvements to reduce the risk of nuisance and catastrophic flooding, and

forecast costs for system improvements.

Schaaf & Wheeler reported that Orinda's major contributors to 100-year flooding "are flows from San Pablo Creek at the Village Square and Theatre Square along with Lauterwasser Creek near its confluence with San Pablo." While the consultants noted corrosion, debris, sedimentation and damage in Orinda's drainage network, their highest priorities among the \$13.5 million in recommended initiatives are projects that would address capacity shortcomings.

The highest priority of all was given to the North Lane Storm Drain system, a two-time problem child that overflowed twice, damaging the East Bay Municipal Utility District's water treatment plant and neighboring residential properties. Repairing the section from Ardilla Road to San Pablo Creek could cost the city \$2.9 million. The SDMP and its full list of potential projects is available on the city's website: www.cityoforinda.org.

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Texting and Driving Not Just a Teen Issue

Special community event at Miramonte focuses on distracted driving March 5

By Laurie Snyder

“Sending or reading a text takes your eyes off the road for 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that’s like driving the length of an entire football field, blindfolded.” – National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

The danger of distracted driving became all too clear one day in April 2014 when an Orinda father of two young children was seriously injured by a car driven by a local teen. The teen, also an Orindan, was al-

legedly texting while driving on San Pablo Dam Road near Wagner Ranch Elementary School. The injured man is still working on his recovery.

Viewing that accident as a wake-up call, Orinda Traffic Safety Advisory Committee members David Libby and Mark Roberts advised the Orinda City Council Feb. 17 that they’ve been talking with other Orindans about ways to prevent similar accidents from ever happening again.

The end result is “Impact Teen Drivers,” an educational event for the entire community that will be held at 7 p.m. March 5 in the Miramonte High School auditorium. Funded by the state’s Office of Traffic Safety and the California Highway Patrol, it also has the backing of the California Teachers Association.

“We’re really happy to be able to partner with the city on this,” says Miramonte High School Principal Julie

Parks. Although MHS already has a program that addresses the dangers of drinking and driving, she believes that it isn’t comprehensive enough. Texting is so ingrained for so many teens and adults now that not responding to a text message is perceived as a faux pas – a belief that often leads to risky behaviors. In recent studies, 20 to 25 percent of teens admitted that they respond to text messages every time they drive.

“We sent a team of students to watch one of the Impacts events,” says Parks. They gave the program solid marks, but felt that adults also really needed to hear the information. So it was changed from a daytime assembly to an evening program for the general public.

“Distracted driving affects everyone – whether you’re a driver or not,” she observes. “This truly is a community-wide issue.”

Orinda City Council Approves Mid-Year Budget Corrections

... continued from page A6

Orinda received 63 – including one anonymous, 72-page letter demanding the city respond to 330 separate points. That letter alone “was several days’ worth of work,” and “basically blew everything out of the water,” she said. Council tabled PMC’s request, pending receipt of additional documentation, and will reconsider it March 3.

During its annual mid-fiscal year budget review Feb. 3, council learned that city administrative expenses rose above projections by \$290,000: \$50,000 in added costs for the city attorney’s work on the Housing Element update and “an unusually high level of litigation” – active and threatened – and the resulting “negotiation, implementation or modification of

multiple settlement agreements;” \$79,000 in Public Works costs for road and street sweeper repairs; \$15,000 for 2015 election costs; and \$46,000 to fix Pine Grove Park field damage, purchase Parks and Recreation supplies and meet the transportation and facilities demands of campers flocking to Orinda’s programs. Plus, planning staff needed \$100,000 to cover rising development applications and study alternatives to the current county delivery of building department services.

That latter \$100,000 will likely be a wash due to a corresponding \$100,000 revenue boost from added development activity, as will Parks’ outlays with added spring and summer class revenues. But the big news

was the county’s projection that an estimated \$200,000 in additional property tax revenue is headed to Orinda.

Then, at its Feb. 17 meeting, council considered staff requests to replace Public Works’ 1997 bobcat skid-steer loader and two “undercover” police cars (non-black and whites with concealed emergency lights). All three are near or past the end of their useful lives. The replacement SUVs could also make it easier for police to navigate Orinda’s hilly terrain.

Council also debated whether to use \$453,000 of the roughly \$800,000 available from the East Bay Regional Park District’s Measure WW parcel tax in order to increase the allocation for Orinda Grove Park improve-

ments. City staff made the request to compensate for inflation caused by construction delays plus enhancements to pedestrian lighting, drainage and irrigation systems, site furnishings and tot lot surfacing requested by the city after its 2008 agreement with the developer, Pulte Homes, was signed. Measure WW funds are restricted to parkland acquisition or park and recreation-related capital project development, and must be used by December 2018. According to the staff report, Pulte will cover 60 percent of the project’s total cost.

On Feb. 3, council accepted the staff and second quarter financial reports, and amended the Fiscal Year 2014-15 budget. On Feb. 17, council increased the Oak Grove allocation

and approved, via consent calendar, replacement of the bobcat with a new loader with backhoe and bucket accessories at a cost not to exceed \$55,000 plus two Ford Edge police vehicles at a total cost not to exceed \$60,000. All three will be paid for from funds already budgeted under the city’s Vehicle Replacement Fund. Council also increased the Oak Grove allocation.

Horizon events which could further siphon city dollars include a resident request that the city purchase security cameras for public right-of-way installation at \$750 each, partial transfer of unassigned general fund monies to slope emergency stabilization and a potential parking study.

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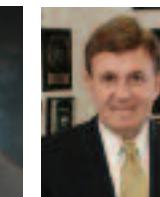
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Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire

District Board of Directors
Wednesday, March 4, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library Community Room
1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga
For meeting times and agendas,
visit 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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Retired Firefighter Continues to Serve

By Nick Marnell



ConFire's Clive Savacool, center, is honored by the Board of Supervisors Feb. 10.

Photo provided

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Chief Jeff Carman grabbed his captains and shot out of the room in the middle of a 2014 Lafayette Emergency Services Task Force meeting. "One of my battalion chiefs has been injured," he said. Fire-

fighters had been battling a vegetation fire in Pittsburg most of the day, and that evening battalion chief Clive Savacool collapsed on the scene and was rushed to John Muir Hospital. It was the last fire that Savacool would fight, but it was not his last act of service to the firefighting community.

"Lying in my hospital bed, I knew the writing was on the wall and my time was limited," said Savacool. He had been hospitalized three times in his fire service career, and the cumulative effect of the consistent exposure to the smoke and flames resulted in a

serious respiratory ailment, forcing his retirement in July at age 36.

"I knew that there was a direct correlation between lung cancer and fire exposure," said Savacool. He questioned how his own injuries could have been avoided, and he determined that if there was a way to track firefighters' exposures to toxic materials, careers could be lengthened and lives may be saved. So he and a business partner formed Exposure Tracker, an Internet-based system that allows firefighters to monitor their exposures to those

toxins, which Savacool expects will result in much healthier firefighters.

"You can't hold these guys down," said Carman, speaking of his retired firefighters. "They continue to provide a positive impact for the fire service even though they're not here with the district today."

Savacool was assigned as a rookie firefighter to Lafayette station 15. He later covered Lafayette as a battalion chief and he recalled one of his first fires as the Lafayette commander. The incident involved a young woman who was doing yard work and noticed that a neighbor's house was on fire. She jumped a fence into the neighbor's yard, she ran into the bedroom and she carried out the disabled resident, saving his life.

"In my whole career this was the first time I'd ever seen anything like that, and it gave me a great introduction to the Lamorinda community," said Savacool.

The Board of Supervisors honored Savacool with a proclamation at its Feb. 10 meeting. Exuding the poise and confidence of a political candidate, Savacool thanked the board and his ConFire peers. Could a career in politics lie ahead?

"Nope. It's a thankless job, and it's too stressful," said the man who fought fires for 18 years.

Non-Competitive Compensation Package Plagues MOFD Recruiting Efforts

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District is struggling to recruit and retain qualified firefighter-paramedics, and both management and the rank and file have expressed concern that increasing staffing to handle this year's fire season will be a challenge.

Moraga and Orinda are two of the gold standard communities in Contra Costa County. The 35,000 residents, whose median home value exceeds \$1.2 million and who earn some of the highest incomes in the Bay Area, allocate over 20 percent of their property taxes to their fire district, helping provide it with annual revenue of more than \$18 million. The revenue funds the operation of five fire stations, above the National Fire Protection Agency 2013 fire department survey average of 3.3 stations for districts the size of MOFD. The residents have paid for this enhanced level of service since the district's 1997 inception.

Despite serving such wealthy communities, MOFD firefighters do not keep pace financially with their peers. "They are one of the lowest paid and they have the worst health and retirement benefit package of the paid firefighters in the county," said Vince Wells, president of firefighters union Local 1230.

The plight of the MOFD firefighters evokes little sympathy from many, who cite the firefighters' high average salaries and benefits; 36 MOFD firefighters earned total compensation of over \$200,000 in 2014. But firefighters have recently departed the district for more lucrative

deals, potentially leaving MOFD as a veritable training ground and feeder system – likely not the scenario that residents envisioned 18 years ago. "It's a valid concern," said Fire Chief Stephen Healy. "It's a challenge for us because we compete in a regional job market, and other agencies offer better benefits than we do."

To aid in employee recruitment and retention, the district recently increased its health care premium contribution for firefighters. But its contribution for retiree medical insurance for new hires remains at the California Public Employees' Retirement System minimum, compared with the contribution of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, which pays the same amount in health care premiums for its retirees as it does for its active members. Most of the MOFD firefighters also pay a 9 percent subvention of the employer share of the district's pension contribution, while ConFire negotiated out the employee subvention in its latest contract. "No doubt, the ConFire deal added pressure to our district," said Healy.

The district employs 51 firefighters to cover its basic 51 weekly shifts, and to cover the shifts missed by those on vacation, sick, on disability or on a strike team. Last year MOFD increased its daily staffing from 17 to 19 firefighters during the height of the fire season. "We are concerned the district does not have the capacity to go to 19 this summer," said Mark DeWeese, MOFD union representative.

Healy agreed that increasing the staffing for fire season will be a challenge, but he said that MOFD has the capacity to staff at 19 by using overtime. Overtime is a fact of firefighting life, and paying overtime is less expensive than hiring additional firefighters. But it can exact a high human toll. Last year, as ConFire coped with its own overtime crisis, Wells said, "... I get concerned when overtime is so excessive that the firefighters don't want to work it and you're forcing them to."

As provided in the latest labor contract, MOFD has the right to hire single role paramedics to fill current vacancies. Either the district or the union can request other adjustments. "You can always renegotiate a contract," said district union representative Anthony Perry – like eliminating the firefighters' subvention of district pension costs or increasing the amount of the district contribution to cover retiree health care. "Those would be public policy decisions for the board to make," said Healy.

"Maintaining competitive wages and benefits for our employees is important to the district," said Alex Evans, MOFD board president, who would not elaborate.

The chief said that he does not expect the size of the current staff to impede district firefighting efforts. "We'll be looking at this every day through the summer, and it will have some impact on our ability to provide statewide mutual aid. But our first duty is to protect our own citizens."

State Senate Special Primary Election Registration Deadline March 2

Submitted by Joseph E. Canciamilla, county clerk-recorder and registrar of voters

Monday, March 2 is the voter registration deadline for the 7th State Senatorial District Special Primary Election to be held March 17. New voters must register and anyone who has moved or has had a name change must re-register.

Voters may register online at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/register-to-vote/>. Voters may also obtain registration forms at government offices including City or County Offices and DMV locations. The completed form must be delivered to the Contra Costa County Elections Office at 555 Escobar Street in Martinez no later than 5 p.m. March 2 or be postmarked by March 2.

To be eligible to vote, a person must be a U.S. citizen who will be at least 18 years old by March 17 and not imprisoned or on parole for the conviction of a felony. Anyone who becomes a newly naturalized citizen after the March 2 deadline may register and vote between March 3 and March 17. New citizens may register at the Contra Costa County Elections Office at 555 Escobar Street in Martinez and must present his or her Certificate of Naturalization.

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Letters to the Editor

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; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570



Editor:

I voted for a Trotter, but I think I got a "can't-er." (Sorry, Dave; 'couldn't rein-in the horseplay.) Of course, Dave isn't the problem. He is simply one of tens of thousands of elected and selected officials across the country who (a) can't see the connection between the problems they deal with and America's perpetual population growth or (b) can't admit they see it, because they (c) can't see what they can do about it.

When we moved to Lamorinda in 1966, the population of the U.S., California, and Contra Costa County were approximately 197 million, 19 million, and 0.5 million, respectively. Today, the corresponding numbers are approximately 320 million, 34 million, and 1.1 million. In other words, Contra Costa County's population has grown approximately 55 percent in that period and Lamorinda's population is over 60 thousand and growing. Any wonder why Lamorinda

commute times might be getting longer, parking spaces might be getting costlier, buildings might be getting bigger, open space might be getting smaller, water supplies might be getting tighter, and so on and on and on?

Perhaps it's time for all the "can't-ers" across the country -- and in Lamorinda -- to become "can-do-ers." They might begin by (1) thinking about the effects of perpetual population growth upon their respective areas of responsibility, (2) talking about the effects of perpetual population growth with others across the country with similar responsibilities, and (3) stating openly in appropriate documents that perpetually growing populations throughout the U.S. create perpetually growing problems for cities, counties, and states, as well as for the U.S. as a whole.

I think you can-do, Dave!

Edward C. Hartman
Moraga

Combined City Councils Ponder Public Safety in Lamorinda

... continued from page A1

Running data obtained from high resolution cameras through ALPR devices, some Lafayette businesses can now "actually go through and record license plates themselves for vehicles that come up to their business or go by their business out on the roadway."

Finally, said Christensen, are the "neighborhood camera systems which create that third layer of security, which are what you've heard about -- the motion-activated cameras or the Reconyx cameras themselves. Every month we report to our Crime Prevention Commission about the use of the cameras, about the data we're using, about problems we've seen, about crimes that we've solved with it."

After early testing, said Christensen, it was easier to identify areas where crimes were occurring. In February 2014, they bought enough cameras to go through and surround those specific neighborhoods. "No one could get into and out of that neighborhood without us knowing," he said.

"It seems to be enormously effective," said Moraga Vice Mayor Mike Metcalf, who asked about the expense. Christensen estimated that Lafayette has used roughly \$70,000 for one portable and three mounted ALPR systems and \$30,000 for the 40 Reconyx cameras scattered throughout Lafayette, plus the student worker who maintains those. In response to Orinda Vice Mayor Victoria Smith's query about cameras as deterrents, Christensen said he believes arrestees tell each other about the crime photos they're seeing in Lafayette's booking area.

But some residents are concerned about Lamorinda's growing camera use. "Any information captured by Orinda ALPR readers, if we were to get them, would be shared, according to our police chief, with NCRIC -- the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center," said Jack Paulus. "They then share this data with 15 surrounding counties who have a

great many municipalities that have no privacy policies at all regarding this data.

"And the technology is prone to error," he said. "Because images are not always clear of obstructions -- like fences and poles which appear like the number 1 in the scans. And false positives have led to innocent people being dragged out of their cars at gun point, such as Denise Green in San Francisco, which led to a huge lawsuit there -- and to our own Ninth Circuit Court ruling that ALPR hits are insufficient evidence to even pull someone over."

When asked by Karl Richtenberg how many innocent people had been pulled over and whether there had been any false arrests or any kind of physical inconvenience suffered by citizens due to the ALPRs, Christensen answered obliquely. He explained that when the inside-car ALPR activates, the police officer receives an auditory alert with a picture of a vehicle that the machine just scanned. "In our department in the sheriff's office, that doesn't create probable cause to stop the vehicle -- and our policy's very clear about that. And so what the officer then has to do is go through and then to take and run the license plate itself, do a registration check, have dispatch come back and tell them that there is a reason to stop the vehicle." On redirect by Orinda Mayor Steve Glazer, Christensen added that ALPR devices are mounted only on city parking enforcement vehicles, which are not allowed to stop cars or detain people.

Council members took no action since the Tri-Cities meeting was scheduled for informational purposes only. The Orinda City Council is tentatively scheduled to review the crime cam matter again at its first meeting in March.

The reports and meeting recordings are available on the City of Orinda's website: www.city-oforinda.org.

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Business

Intuitive Writing Project Empowers Young Women

By Sophie Braccini



Elizabeth Perlman at her new location in Orinda's Theatre Square

Photo Sophie Braccini

The first thing you see when entering the new Intuitive Writing Project location in Orinda's Theatre Square is a wall filled with pictures of women who have made a mark in history. The message above the picture mosaic is clear: "Heroines write their own story."

The Intuitive Writing Project is a place for girls to be empowered as they find their own voice. The program and its curriculum are the creation of Elizabeth Perlman, who draws on her training and experiences as a writer and art director. She has passionately developed a 12-week module to empower teen girls. The newly opened location in Theatre Square is the manifestation of her dream.

"Arts enable us to understand ourselves, develop as people, and find our answers," Perlman says. Pulling on the work of Professor James Pennebaker (University of Texas), Perlman explains that the most effective expressive art form is writing because the human brain is wired to look for and receive stories. "When we are able to take our experiences and write them down, we form a narrative, and when we have that narrative, the mind is able to understand and let go of things," she says.

During her teens and formative years, Perlman experienced pressure to conform to her surroundings. It took her years to discover who she really was, to find her unique strengths

and to value herself. "I wanted to extract what had been the most helpful to me in my 20 years of self-development and build a 12-week program creating a way for young women to access their own wisdom, find their own answers and realize their own worth," she says.

Perlman set up her program as a nonprofit. "I believe that she chose (to become a nonprofit) because her heart is in the service of those girls," says Maureen Brown, treasurer of Intuitive Writing Project. Brown who is the mother of an eighth grader at Orinda Intermediate School has experienced how the Amherst Artists and Writers method that Perlman uses with the girls can transform someone. As a mother, Brown is aware of the pressures the girls are under and how important a program like this is for them.

The first module focuses on accessing the right part of the brain and intuition. "There is something unique about the female brain," says Perlman, citing work by neuropsychiatrist Louann Brizendine, "because we have more bridges between the right and left hemispheres." Puberty is the time when self-esteem goes down, Perlman says, and this is the best time to remind girls of their inner wisdom/intuition, and that trusting it gives them power.

Veronika Pister, a sophomore at Miramonte High School, says that Perlman has showed her how to tap

into the right side of her brain. "School is so left side intensive," says Pister, who loves mathematics and has now learned to be in touch with her emotions. "It is such a challenge in high school to figure out who you are and what you stand for. Putting it into words gives it strength." She reports being happier and more balanced since she started the program six months ago. She has also developed a close bond with the four other girls in her group (six is a maximum for Perlman). "My writing has also improved incomparably," she says. She attributes it to the weekly practice and the confidence built through the positive reinforcement of the Amherst method.

The students also have a module on media literacy, and another about body image. They learn about non-violent communication, "a more direct, but from-the-heart way to speak your truth and get what you want," says Perlman. The girls work on building healthy relationships as well.

Perlman also works one-on-one with students, helping them list their strengths and passions. "Life's work is where your strengths and passions overlap," she says. "The first part of the work is to realize your value, then to recognize that you are part of something bigger."

At the end of the program, the girls do a visual self-portrait and put together a book of their writings that

they can draw from in the future, possibly for their college essays.

Pister says that she will continue to work with Perlman as long as she can. There is a continuing writing program for the girls who have graduated. Pister plans to intern for Perlman in the future.

"Now I can find beauty in everything," she says.

For more information about the program, visit intuitivewritingproject.org.

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

Moraga Produce Changes Ownership and Adds New Choices
576 Center Street, Moraga, (925) 377-1000



Shelly and Dennis shop in the new Moraga Produce Photo Sophie Braccini

Changes are happening at Moraga Produce, which opened in 2012 in the Rheem Shopping Center, next to CVS. "We are adding new grocery products, more variety, more organics," says Christy Soronz, the daughter of the family that now owns the store. The Soronzes live in Berkeley and Moraga Produce is their first grocery store. They have plans to open another store next summer. "We immediately liked this produce center and thought it had great potential," says Soronz. Shelly and Dennis, two Moraga residents and regular customers of the store said they immediately noticed that there were changes in the air when the market was bought. "As long as the prices stay good, we are very happy to see new groceries, meats, nuts and dairy," they say. Soronz adds that if people would like them to have some of their favorite items available, they should just ask for it. "We want to tailor our offerings to what people here want," she adds.

Whole Foods Grant

Whole Foods started accepting applications Feb. 17 for its Small Producer Grant. Last year, Moraga-based Hollie's Homegrown, an herb business, won the competition for the Lafayette Whole Foods location and received 5 percent of a day's sales from that store, which she used to purchase a greenhouse. The deadline for the application is March 4. The application is open to producers of food, body care, makeup, supplements and lifestyle products (books, toys, fitness equipment, etc.). Products must be made and sold in the region to qualify. For specific information, visit smallproducergrant.com.

Aegis of Moraga Celebrates 16th Anniversary

950 Country Club Drive, Moraga, aegisofmoraga.com

Aegis of Moraga will celebrate its 16th anniversary in style and with local flare at its Art and Wine Celebration from 4 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26. The event includes wine tasting by Captain Vineyards, music by Lafayette Gold Coast Chamber Players, artwork by Lamorinda artists, chocolates from Powell's Candies and Aegis' executive chef's selections of fruit and cheeses. Aegis Living is an assisted living and memory care community.

Moraga Employee of the Month



From left: Kevin Reneau, Jessica McCormick and Dianne Wilson Photo provided

The Moraga Employee of the Month for January is Jessica McCormick, the assistant director of the Moraga Royale retirement community. McCormick began working at Moraga Royale as a part-time receptionist in 2010 and rapidly worked her way up through many different roles at the facility, including office manager, activity director and director of marketing before assuming her current position. "Jessica excels at every job she undertakes and does them with enthusiasm and perfection," said Moraga Royale Executive Director Dianne Wilson. "She has the innate ability of letting our residents know they are valued and important." McCormick will receive gift cards to Safeway and Chef Chao in Moraga at an upcoming Moraga Rotary luncheon.

News from the Three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

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

Young Professionals Group 'Meatup' at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25 at La Finestra Ristorante, 100 Lafayette Cir #101, Lafayette. RSVP at www.Meetup.com. Must be under 40 for this gathering.

Nominations for the Lafayette 2014 Green Awards can be submitted until Feb. 28. Complete the nomination form on the city's website at lovelafayette.org/GreenAwards if you know a resident, student, teacher, local business, community organization, or architect/builder that took impressive steps to become more environmentally friendly and sustainable in 2014.

Orinda

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 available on the chamber website at www.orindachamber.org.

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

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Lafayette

Homes at Deer Hill Start Review Process

By Cathy Tyson



Overall illustrative site plan Gates + Associates

Image courtesy City of Lafayette Staff Report

The Design Review Commission had its first opportunity to review the proposed Homes at Deer Hill – 44 contemporary, craftsman-style single-family homes, along with public park facilities that include a multi-sport field, a public parking area, a tot lot and a pedestrian/bike path around the southern perimeter near Acalanes High

School. Due to size constraints, the popular dog park has been tentatively moved to a 3-acre parcel on Deer Hill Road across from the proposed development.

The project originally was introduced as the Terraces of Lafayette, a 315-unit apartment complex that received a tsunami of negative feedback. In January

2014, the city of Lafayette and the developer, O'Brien Land Company, entered into a Process Agreement that spells out the parameters of this new version. The Homes at Deer Hill will go through the usual public review process that includes the Circulation Commission, Parks Trails and Recreation Commission, Planning Commission and ul-

timately the City Council, which will approve or deny the project.

After presentations by the architect and landscape architect, Allan Moore, attorney for the landowner and developer, set the tone for the meeting. "We're here to listen, and take notes" gathering input and suggestions for improvements in the plans, he said. Design review commissioners were happy to comply and offered constructive comments. In general, many were pleased with the overall vision, but expressed concern over specific components and how they relate to each other.

This first look focused on macro features, to help the developer's design professionals further refine the project. Because the 22-acre site has significant elevation changes, there are challenges with topography, architecture, landscaping, spaces between buildings and retaining walls.

Comments included concern about clarity and integration of parking as well as the walkway from the parking lot to the soccer field; the staircase that connects the two is almost straight up. Andre Ptaszynski complimented the de-

veloper on bringing a really good team together, and noted that he is "wholeheartedly in favor of greenways" but was uncertain about the primary access to residences. Garages are located in alleyways with the front doors and porches facing the greenways. "To me, it's not clear," he said. He asked to see a three dimensional study to see how the terraces fit together, to get a better sense of the look and feel of the project.

One of many issues the developer will have to tackle is the requirement to substantially conceal the homes. Approximately 600 trees are slated to be planted around the perimeter of the site, and an additional 210 trees along the residential streets, with 98 more in the proposed community park. The very large valley oak on the site, considered one of the largest trees of its kind in Lafayette, will remain. The Design Review Commission will have additional opportunities to review the project going forward. Those interested in attending should check the city website for future meetings at www.lovelafayette.org.

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Giving Dreams an Address

From front page

Lafayette Reservoir Walking Group's Focus on Fitness

... continued from page A1

"Of course I said yes," said Scala. "I'm always in favor of that."

As a former adjunct professor, fellow in the American College of Nutrition and consultant for two U.S. Olympic ski teams, Scala is well acquainted with the benefits of activity. According to WebMD, the social support that comes from walking with others can help to increase stress resilience, lower cortisol and decrease blood pressure.

"I've always been a person who not only respects physical fitness but understands how important it is, right down to the roots," Scala remarked. "It's a part of me and what I do."

The reservoir walking group has been meeting since January, every Thursday from 10 to 11:30 a.m. At the end of the walk, Scala leads group members through

"easy yoga" poses and breathing exercises on the band stage overlooking the water. Afterward, many of the group members stay to share a brown bag lunch at the reservoir picnic tables. It's an added time of fellowship that Scala thinks will stick. The group is even talking about adding a second day to provide more options for those who want to walk.

"My ambition is that they will slowly but surely recognize the importance of keeping in shape and understand the importance that fitness can play in their health and longevity," Scala said of his fellow walkers. He noted that as people get older they tend to sit back more and get out less. It is his goal to help others see the importance and ease of being active.

"There's nothing difficult about any of this," he said.

An added benefit of walking with a group (as opposed to walking alone) is the accountability and conversation that goes with it. "What do we discuss? You name it," said Scala. "We talk about a lot of things ranging from relatively mundane stuff all the way through politics."

Scala is pleased with the direction the group is taking and grateful for the chance to share one of his great loves. "From my point of view it's one of the most beautiful places in the world," he said. "And it's right here for everybody."

Anyone interested in joining the reservoir walkers can call Lafayette Senior Services at (925) 284-5050 to add their name to the email notification list. They can also contact Scala at jscala2@comcast.net.

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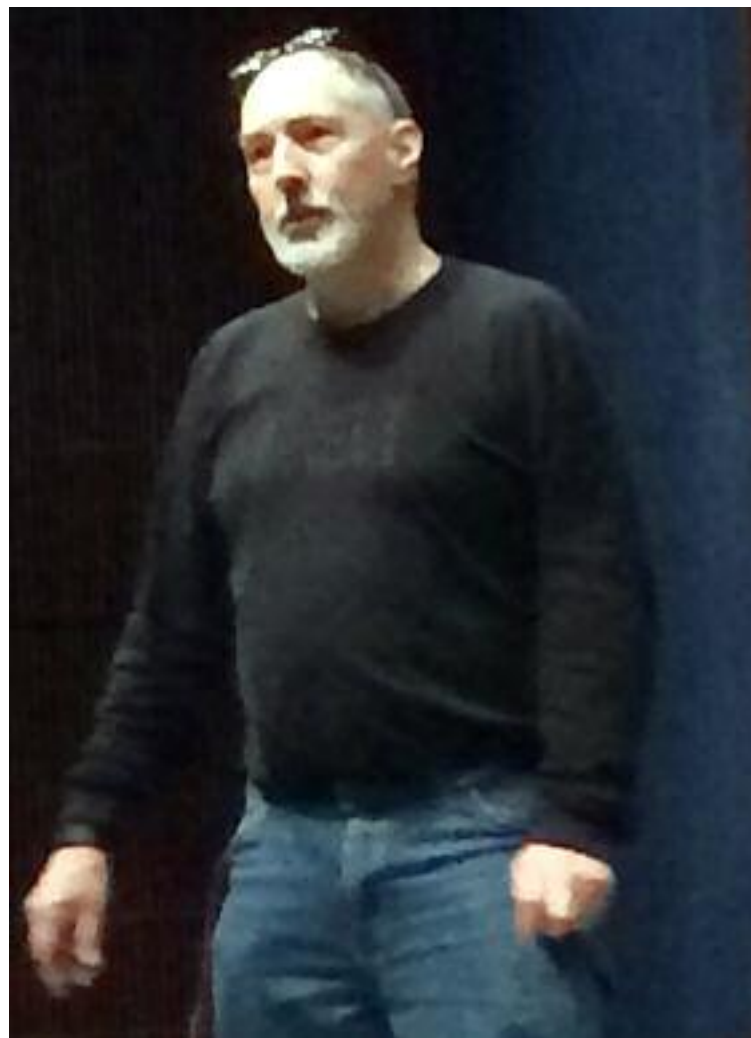
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Campo Stage Director Living the Dream

By Diane Claytor



Dave Pinkham works with the 2015 "Les Miserables" cast at Campolindo High School. Photo Diane Claytor

Several years ago, following another very successful Campolindo High School musical production, Stage Director Dave Pinkham was called on stage and introduced to the audience as a "man who was living a dream he never even knew he had." According to the Moraga native and longtime Lafayette resident, that introduction was absolutely right on.

When the curtain rises next month on "Les Miserables," Campo's 2015 musical production, Pinkham will be celebrating his 12th year as stage director – and loving every minute of it. "It is so much fun in so many ways," he said. "I love working with the kids. I love the whole progression that I get to see. I love seeing the students blossom and come into themselves."

But Pinkham, who has directed both classic high school musicals and those slightly less familiar to Campo students and audiences, wasn't always a fan. In fact, he says, as a student at Miramonte, he was a "drama geek." When a friend suggested he audition for Miramonte's musical, Pinkham, then a senior, claims he was "completely unfamiliar with American musical theater. I didn't really know what a musical was." But he got the part. "It was a blast. I loved everything about it," he remembers fondly. That was the beginning – and end – of his musical theater career, at least for a while.

changed directions, moving into the tech world as an IT services solution director. Performing arts were still in his heart and he occasionally performed in community theater productions, "but never very seriously," he said.

Then things changed. His son, Bryce (nominated for a 2014 Tony), then in elementary school, was attending a summer theater program at Diablo Valley College (DVC), culminating in a production of "The Music Man." Pinkham picked him up one day, started talking with the director who "handed me a script and said 'Here, read this.' I don't know what I said," Pinkham reports, "but apparently he could tell I had done some acting." Again, he got the part and again, he had a fabulous time. "I just picked up where I had left off 15 years earlier and it was so much fun," he said.

Pinkham continued performing locally. But as his "day job" responsibilities grew, he realized that he was unable to commit to long-term productions. So, with his son becoming more involved in theater, Pinkham started helping out with "behind-the-scenes stuff like technical directing, set building, lighting." His daughter, Jenna, was dancing at CAPA so Pinkham became involved there too, helping with sets, lighting, technical directing. Even now, with Jenna long gone, Pinkham still has that job.

... continued on page B4

With Animal Science degrees in hand, Pinkham and his wife, Mary Alice, went into horse ranch management, first in California and then Texas. After several years, they returned to Lamorinda and Pinkham

Alumni Night – "Les Miserables" 11 Years Later



The 2004 cast of "Les Miserables" Photo Barbara Brady-Smith

In 2004, Campolindo High School, with David Pinkham serving as stage director, presented "Les Miserables" – a big, grand production. Now, 11 years later, Pinkham is still stage director and Campo is bringing back this acclaimed musical. In celebration of this revival, a Les Miz Alumni Night will be held on Saturday, March 14. All who were involved in the 2004 production – cast, crew, builders, orchestra, designers, volunteers – are invited to be part of the audience on this very special night. "Alumni will be invited up on stage for a reprise of at least one of the numbers from the show (and we'll even provide some music to refresh the memory). And we may organize some other 'reunion-ish' event as well," Pinkham reports. "We also have it on good authority that Gene Peterson (Campo's former choral director) will be there as well."

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Dark and Thought-Provoking Film ‘The Verdict’ Opens Feb. 27 in Orinda

By Sophie Braccini



Photo provided

This month in Orinda, the International Film Showcase presents “The Verdict” – a courtroom drama from Belgium not for the faint of heart. The film deftly raises issues about the legislative system, the power of individuals and of grief.

Luc Segers is a successful executive, happy husband and father. But an evening stop at a gas station abruptly shatters his life. His wife is attacked and killed by Kenny De Groot, who beats Segers unconscious. Segers’ young daughter also dies at the scene. The murderer is quickly found and incarcerated, but due to a procedural mistake the charges are dismissed and the man is released. After awaking from a coma, Segers takes justice into his own hands and is now the guilty party, on trial for murder.

the book and who collapses when justice eludes him. His lawyer, a veteran, is tough, but his heart is in the right place. De Groot’s young female lawyer is also interesting, ambitious and sharp.

When the trial begins, the focus is not about whether vigilantism is right or wrong, but is about what to do with a justice system designed in such a way that terrible individuals can fall through the legal cracks.

The tone of the movie is measured and precise, without caricature; the heartfelt performance by Koen De Bouw as Segers has a lot to do with it. The actor carries the despair and tension of the broken man with depth, but without excessive pathos. As he confronts the judicial system, the audience understands his motivations, but the movie still presents a balanced perspective about justice in a civilized world where the law must prevail over one’s desire for revenge.

The senseless acts of violence at the beginning of the film may be difficult to watch, but the brutality is a necessary dynamic of the story and does not continue for the remainder of the film.

The movie will open Feb. 27 at the Orinda Theatre and will run for a full week. The International Film Showcase movies are often presented in the venue’s smaller theater and can quickly sell out, so arrive early. For information, visit <http://international-showcase.org>.

The bulk of the movie centers on the trial. Writer/director Jan Verheyen takes his time developing the characters before reaching the courthouse. Segers is a good man who played by

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Local Hyperrealist Photographer Presents ‘California Oaks’ at the Moraga Library



Photo provided

Renowned Lafayette photographer Dave Dondero’s exhibit, “California Oaks,” showcasing the many oak varieties in Northern California and the plight of the imperiled trees will be on display at the Moraga Library through the end of the month. Dondero’s unique imagery is created by taking multiple images of the exact same scene at different light exposures and later rendering them to-

gether – a photographic sandwich of sorts, to create a photograph that sees more than what can be seen by the naked eye. The technique reveals a hyperrealistic image, full of detail and luminescence that is largely new in the 150-year history of photography. The work is not digitally enhanced. Other works can be viewed at davedonderophotography.com. S. Braccini

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Looking to the Sky

Sometimes only clouds, other times, raptors

By Chris Lavin



Scott Hill and Bill Swearingen discuss what they saw the previous year.

Photo Chris Lavin

Tooling around Lamorinda on any given day, one might stop and see a bigger bird than usual perched atop a power line, a telephone pole or at the apex of a big tree. If it's not a crow or a raven, it's most likely a raptor. In our area, that usually means identifying one of roughly 24 species, not counting the various kinds of owls.

"Raptors are not hard to spot," said Bill Swearingen, a lifelong master falconer in Bollinger Canyon who has kept the winged hunters off and on at his Lafayette home. Swearingen is modest. On a hike in the middle of a valley he can spot what looks like a pimple on a power pole a quarter-mile out. "There's a young golden eagle," he will say, and sure enough, the holder of good binoculars will say that yes, indeed, that is a golden eagle.

In an effort to keep tabs on the raptor population, the East Bay Municipal Utility District conducts an annual "eagle count," and tallies other raptors, too. Manned with a multitude of count sheets and graphs in a manila folder, a team from EBMUD went out one day in January to record what they saw around Briones Reservoir. Other teams handled the other reservoirs in the local watershed, including San Pablo, Lafayette and San Leandro.

Swearingen was part of the team. "I don't know why they do the survey at this time of year," he said. "It's not the best time to see eagles, or anything else." He turned out to be right: After a three-hour Gilligan's Island tour of Briones, the results were disappointing. At the end of the day: one osprey, one red-tailed hawk. Zero eagles.

Needless to say, it didn't take long to fill out the paperwork.

"Last year we saw goldens (golden eagles), otters, and all kinds of wildlife," Swearingen said. Briones hosts a healthy population of otters, it turns out. After the cruise, taken on a balmy and sunny day, the attending EBMUD biologist was asked if he



Biologist Jonathan Price isn't concerned about the lack of raptor sightings in one day on Briones. Photo Chris Lavin

was worried about the lack of sightings.

"Not at all," said Jonathan Price, who works out of the office off San Pablo Dam Road. "We see the populations. They're good."

Survey results were submitted to the California Department of Fish and Game in Sacramento, where the office is still calculating the results from similar surveys throughout the state. Results should be available in March, when the raptor population is more active and another survey is planned.

Throughout the Lamorinda watershed, it's not uncommon to see more than a dozen different raptors. "Most often, you're going to see either a turkey vulture or a red-tailed hawk, nine times out of ten," Swearingen said. But kestrels are also common, as are Cooper's, sharp-shinned and red-shouldered hawks. "And merlins. Merlins migrate through here, but if there's food, they'll stick around," said Swearingen. Add to that rough-legged hawks, and even the occasional peregrine, and you've got yourself a menagerie.

"What we missed were the goldens," Swearingen said after getting off the boat. One pair of golden eagles has been known to nest at Briones for several years, and fledglings have been documented taking flight and

moving elsewhere over the course of the last decade. "We don't know where (the fledglings went) but I'm sure it's nearby. It depends on the food supply." Indeed, a few days after the official survey, bald eagles, several ospreys and multiple red-tailed hawks were sighted at San Pablo Reservoir, just a few miles off.

After the official survey in January, EBMUD Supervisor Scott Hill ran into one of the spotting team in the parking lot. "What did you see?" he asked.

"One osprey," she said. "That's probably the same osprey they saw on San Pablo," Hill said. "They must be keeping a low profile."



Osprey at Lafayette Reservoir Photo Steve Hobbs

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Finding Beauty, Complexity and Meaning in Art

New art exhibit at Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery

By Sophie Braccini



Elizabeth Jameson in front of her painting "Valentine" Photo Sophie Braccini

"I pursue an art practice that engages my fascination for the disease . . . the beauty and the ugliness. You can look at the art and see something human, so the human narrative is not lost in the technology," she explains.

The images she creates are strikingly vibrant and beautiful. It could be considered abstract art to the non-medical professional, because it is sometimes hard to recognize what is being presented, but it always engages a deep emotional response. Jameson says that neurosurgeons love their MRI images and the fact that she adds more dimensionality makes them proud. Other physicians who spend all day looking at the scans find that the etching adds incredible meaning.

Jameson's work is recognized internationally and is in permanent collections in the United States, Spain and Canada. The woman who is now in a wheelchair is nonetheless brimming with new projects, including using diffusion tensor imaging (DTI) in her art.

She will have a solo show at Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery in June. The current exhibit runs through March 21 at 3620 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. For information, visit jenniferperlmuttergallery.com or Jameson Fine Art at jamesonfineart.com.

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The new "Flesh and Mind" art exhibit opened Feb. 21 at Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery in Lafayette. The three exhibiting artists share a mix of intellectual, technical and sensitive approaches that lead them to create unique and powerful pieces. Among them is Lafayette artist Elizabeth Jameson, who uses MRIs (magnetic resonance imaging scans) of her own nervous system attacked by multiple sclerosis to create beautiful pieces that are displayed all over the world.

The story of Jameson is one of passion and transcendence. A young lawyer who specialized in health care advocacy for the underprivileged, she was diagnosed with MS almost 25 years ago. The disease first affected her speech, but she regained it later. "I was very disturbed by my lack of fluidity with words," she remembers. "I went to a local art class . . . and after one class I knew I wanted to become an artist. I felt I could change the

world through art." Jameson took every art class she could find. "I knew it was where I was supposed to be," she says. Early on her love of colors developed and she produced mostly floral/abstract art.

But a part of her was thinking that her art was selfish and, for an activist like herself, she needed a cause. "(I realized) that the only thing that makes sense to me (are) my MRIs," she says. "What is the symbol of MS? The technology of MRIs is so profound, the images are so disturbing." Jameson looked at these black and white images and thought: "Maybe if I took these images and made something meaningful from it, maybe that would be my contribution to finding beauty, complexity and art in the most graphic symbol of MS."

Jameson feels that technology has a profound effect on people. "When people saw me, they would ask, 'How is your MRI?' instead of 'How are you?' We trust technology more than our personal narrative."

Jameson does solar etching on the MRI's photographic paper, taking parts of the images before making a print using Charbonnel etching inks.

Two Other Artists Featured in the "Flesh and Mind" Exhibit

Kerry Sorrenson paints abstract landscapes and figures in oils by color mapping digital images to create a topographical effect of shape and contrast that is uniquely beautiful.

Polly Frizzell uses shadow to explore the convergence of intangible and material bodies. "The surfaces I create look the way they do because I'm interested in the way materials have been 'brutalized' - clay in the fire of the kiln, dirt and plants torn apart by floodplains, urban decay."

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Campo Stage Director Living the Dream

... continued from page B1

When his kids went to Campo, Pinkham continued doing the technical work there. Then things changed again. In 2003, Gene Peterson, Campo's choral director, acknowledged that he wasn't a musical theater director and eventually asked Pinkham to take on the role. "I was reluctant at first," Pinkham admits. But he gave it a try. "We did 'Bye Bye Birdie' and I had a ball." And the rest, as they say, is theatrical history. "Gene opened the door to something I might not have done otherwise and I've never looked back."

As stage director, Pinkham has numerous responsibilities. He and current choral director, Campo graduate Mark Roberts, first choose the show. "Once we complete one production, I'm working on what we'll do next," Pinkham stated. "I think about the students coming in - what's the pool for lead parts, are there more sopranos or altos? What's available, is it accessible and is it big enough for the approximately 100 students who participate every year?" He also considers costume and set requirements, what the other schools have done recently, and, perhaps most significantly, "is it something we can achieve with the quality I want?" He and Roberts audition and select the cast, often with help from an outside choreographer and vocal director; and then Pinkham "takes the overall artis-

tic vision of the show and pulls everything together. The program has grown so much," Pinkham continued. "It's pretty much a year-long project for me."

Roberts is thrilled to have Pinkham working by his side. "Dave is an irreplaceable member of the Campo Musical Theater staff. He has . . . overseen the expansion of the program from . . . around 60 students to an extracurricular endeavor annually involving over 100 students. He is a rare mix of visionary, artist and coach as he designs and builds sets while simultaneously educating actors and singers on stage presence and movement. He is relentless in the pursuit of perfection, taking on so many responsibilities within the show that no one is even entirely aware of all he does to bring the show to the stage."

Pinkham would love to return to performing and keeps reminding himself that "it's never too late. One day, I'll get back to it." Until then, he said, "I'm just having so much fun doing what I'm doing. It's an absolute pleasure in every respect."

"Les Miserables" opens March 12 and runs through March 22 at Campolindo High School. For tickets, visit <http://www.campochoir.com/spring-musicals/ticket-ordering-information>.

Donating My Brain to Science

Actually, more like a loan ...

By Cathy Tyson



A view of Ms. Tyson's brain with normal frontotemporal lobes.

Image courtesy UCSF

Turns out the most difficult part of getting my head examined was not lying still in a snug MRI cave for an hour, but the traffic getting to the impressive facility at UCSF and back. To be fair though, I did decline the less than tempting and possibly painful option of the lumbar puncture that would have topped the difficulty list.

Looking to participate in some kind of meaningful community service, I happened to see an advertisement in the *San Francisco Chronicle* seeking volunteers to help out with a brain research study. The initial requirements were easy – being in the right age group of 45 to 55, having no significant deficits in memory or cognition, and perhaps most importantly, not being claustrophobic.

Kind of a mouthful, the Neuroimaging in Frontotemporal Dementia study tracks the progression of a type of dementia that causes the devastating loss of social and cognitive functions as the frontal and temporal lobes of the brain – critical for behavior, emotions and language – atrophy or shrink.

Frontotemporal dementia is the most common cause of dementia and affects as many people as Alzheimer's disease in those under age 60. Head Researcher Dr. Howard Rosen from the UCSF Department of Neurology is evaluating several different tests to guide diagnosis and treatment of frontotemporal lobe degeneration, or FTLD.

Scientists have made advances in understanding the biological causes of this type of dementia, but

at the moment there's no cure and no way to slow its progression. Treatment involves managing the symptoms. As these lobes of the brain gradually shrink, changes in behavior and personality become apparent; those with the disease may become socially inappropriate, impulsive or emotionally indifferent and may lose language skills.

Developing specific biological measurements or biomarkers are needed to provide precise and direct measurements of the state of the brain which will improve clinical trials for eventual treatments. The real heartbreak of the disease is that it tends to occur at a younger age than does Alzheimer's disease – generally between ages 40-75. The other interesting wrinkle to the disease is that more than half the people have no family history of dementia.

I had a total of three field trips, two to UCSF and one to the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, for a PET (positron emission tomography) scan. At the very new Mission Bay campus of UCSF in their Memory and Aging Center in June and again in December, I gave blood and urine samples, completed extensive cognitive testing that really made me think, had a neurological exam and of course a full hour in their noisy MRI, or magnetic resonance imaging machine. Fitting into the 22-inch-wide opening wasn't a problem. It was basically an opportunity to focus on breathing and listen to music interrupted only by the loud thumping of the machine.

In Berkeley, there was tight se-

curity getting into the lab, but the PET scan was a piece of cake, blissfully quiet. The radioactive tracer injected into my arm that showed brain function didn't cause any problems. The biggest issue of the day was skipping breakfast, taking a pregnancy test – pregnant women definitely not wanted – and making sure I was metal free, with no zip-pers or jewelry.

My brain is one of a total 240 that will be examined at three facilities: UCSF, the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., and Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston with sponsorship from the National Institutes of Health. Rosen said they are still looking for additional control group members with no apparent memory problems.

Having volunteered for a number of worthy causes over the years, getting my brain examined for a research study was actually interesting and clearly way more effective than my lame construction attempts at a Habitat for Humanity site. Those interested in more information can visit memory.ucsf.edu or call Aly Caplan, research coordinator at UCSF's Memory and Aging Center, at (415) 476-0670.

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Miramonte Senior Wins Oratorical Contest



Photo provided

On Feb. 15 in Pacifica, Miramonte High School senior Sean McFeely, pictured with coach Sandra Maguire, won the Area 2 American Legion Oratorical Contest,

which is designed to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. He advances to the State Finals March 8 in Los Angeles.

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In Memory

Ethel Wentworth Lazaroff May 15, 1921 – Dec. 25, 2014



Ethel Wentworth Lazaroff, beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, and friend, died peacefully on Dec. 25, 2014, in Tucson, Ariz.

Ethel was born in Gardiner, Maine, on May 15, 1921. Her mother, Ethel Kelsey Wentworth, an artist, was a great-granddaughter of Cadwallader C. Washburn, who served as a Major-General in the Union Army and as Governor of Wisconsin. Ethel's father, Bertrand Hebron Wentworth, was a fervent naturalist and a nature photographer who traveled in the west with William Henry Jackson. From her parents, the Maine woods, and the rocky coast, Ethel learned a love of nature that lasted throughout her life.

After graduating from Smith College in 1942, Ethel studied statistics at Columbia University. She worked for the National War Labor Board in Washington, D.C.; as Chief Statistician for the Richmond, Va., Army Depot; and later as a freelance writer and editor.

Ethel married Louis Lazaroff in 1943, and Lou's career in foreign aid eventually took them around the world. They lived for a time in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and in New Delhi, India. When not overseas they made their home in Orinda, Calif., where Ethel was active in the American Association of University Women, the League of Woman Voters, and other organizations, as well as an English Reader for Del Valle High School.

Ethel and Lou remained a devoted couple for more than 60 years, until Lou's death in 2004. Together they reared five children, all of whom have survived them: David W. Lazaroff of Tucson, Ariz.; Judith L. Bouyxou of Grenoble, France; Ann M. Lazaroff of Bothell, Wash.; Deborah L. Alpi of Laguna Hills, Calif.; and Michael J. Lazaroff of Trumbull, Conn. They are also survived by seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Ethel's ashes have been scattered in the Pacific, as were those of her beloved husband. No public memorial is planned.

Jean Denoyer

Dec. 5 1928-Feb. 10, 2015



Jean Denoyer, (Margaret Jean Cavanaugh), who resided in Tahoe Pines, Calif., and who was a former resident of Moraga, Calif., passed away on Feb. 10, 2015.

Jean was born in Ottawa, Ill., to Margaret and Floyd Cavanaugh on Dec. 5, 1928, and was one of seven children. She married Louis Alexander Denoyer (Louie) in 1952. They moved to Moraga in 1970 where Jean went to work at

Wells Fargo Bank. She was a longtime member of St. Monica's Catholic Church and belonged to P.E.O. for many years.

After the death of her husband, Jean met retired Rear Adm. Ernest William (Bill) Dobie, Jr., and they enjoyed life together. She also enjoyed getting away to her cabin in Lake Tahoe and spending time with her children, the Dobie family and grandchildren.

She enjoyed her last Christmas season surrounded by family and passed away peacefully at home in Tahoe Pines with Jim and Rebecca.

Jean is survived by her sister, Isabelle Smith (Pete), daughter DeAnne Denoyer Scriptor (Mark), son, James Louis Denoyer (Rebecca Warda), daughter Jeaninne Denoyer, granddaughters Lindsay Denoyer Durbin (Robert) and Arrow Denoyer, greatgrandsons James and Logan Durbin, and many nieces and nephews. She is also survived by the children of William Dobie, Jr.: Bob (Chris), Sharon, Chris, and Donna (Monroe), and their children Pam, Monica, Bill, Matt, Nick, Corey, Alex, and Brett, and grandchildren Pam and Fischer's three sons.

Memorial services will be held at 10:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 27 at St. Monica's Catholic Church, 1001 Camino Pablo, Moraga. Reception to follow at Hacienda de las Flores, 2100 Donald Drive. Memorial donations may be made to St. Monica's Catholic Church (925) 376-6900 or ARC (925) 370-1818.

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 with the subject header In Service to the Community.

Troop 303 Honors Five New Eagle Scouts

Submitted by Kate Hayner



From left: Razmin Riahi, Nicholas Latimer, Alex Levin and Kyle Kirk

Photo Kate Hayner

Five Boy Scouts, Razmin Riahi, Nicholas Latimer, Kyle Kirk, Alex Levin and Ben Hoxie from Troop 303 of Orinda have achieved Scouting's highest rank of Eagle Scout and will be celebrating their Eagle Court of Honor at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 15 at Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church in Orinda. All five Scouts are currently seniors at Miramonte High School.

To become an Eagle Scout, the candidate must earn a minimum of 21 merit badges, including 13 Eagle-required badges, demonstrate leadership and Scout spirit, and successfully complete an Eagle service project that benefits the community.

Razmin Riahi's Eagle Project built a cabinet for the numerous lost and found items at Glorietta Elementary School, which had often overflowed on hanging racks and bins in the entrance of the gym.

Nick Latimer completed fundraising to make emergency pre-

paredness kits for the clients of Shelter Inc., an independent nonprofit organization serving Contra Costa County to help prevent homelessness, end the cycle of homelessness and provide affordable housing. Additionally, Nick led a bilingual class on emergency preparedness.

Alex Levin renovated the horseshoe pit and restored the benches at Orinda Oaks Park. He weeded the area, dug out the old sand from the two pits, placed fiberglass cloth and then filled them back up with new sand, removing the old deteriorating backboards and replacing them with redwood planks as well as adding a 4 by 4 foot redwood cross beam to each side for extra support. Lastly, he sanded and stained the nearby bench and planks and laid gravel over the middle area.

Kyle Kirk, in cooperation with Principal Langer from Glorietta Elementary School, renovated numerous picnic tables and benches at his

former school. The project, which consisted of just under 200 hours of work, helped restore the benches and repaint them to match Glorietta's light blue color.

Ben Hoxie painted a map of California on the Wagner Ranch Elementary School playground, showing the regions of our great state. He also built nine folding signs that can be used by Wagner Ranch staff to convey messages at various points on campus. The signs are easy to set up, store, and can be marked like a white board when conveying temporary messages.



Ben Hoxie Photo John Wolfe

New Eagle Scouts in Troop 204

Submitted by Sara Regan



From left: Aaron Harman, Devin Regan, Patrick Walker and Alexander Glavin

Photo provided

Lafayette Boy Scout Troop 204 will honor four young men who have achieved the Eagle Scout Award, the highest rank in the Boys Scouts of America from 2 to 4 p.m. March 14 at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church. To attain Eagle Scout, a Scout must earn his way up the scouting ranks from Tenderfoot to Life

Scout. As a Life Scout, he must be active in the troop for at least six months, earn at least 21 required badges, serve in a Leadership position, show Scout Spirit, and plan develop and give leadership to others in an approved Eagle service project helpful to any religious institution, school, nonprofit organization or the

community. In addition to requirements listed above, each of these Troop 204 Eagle Scouts has attended annual 50-mile backpacking trips, planned and led a trek on the nine-day hiking trip, hiked over 500 miles and actively participated in annual Camporees.

The following is a list of their community service projects: Alexander Glavin organized a drive to gather camping gear for an organization in Oakland that helps underprivileged kids by exposing them to the outdoors; Aaron Harman collected over 1,000 children's books for East Bay Children's Book Project in Oakland that provides books to low income kids throughout the East Bay; Devin Regan rebuilt benches with recycled wood, repaved and resurfaced a children's area at the Lafayette Community Center for the local preschool children; Patrick Walker designed and organized a training exercise for Contra Costa County Search and Rescue that simulated a plane crash in the foothills of Mt. Diablo.

Kiwanis Crab Feed a Huge Success

Submitted by Claire Roth



Moraga Town Council member Phil Arth and his wife, Gretchen, enjoy a special cake at the Moraga Valley Kiwanis Valentine's Day Crab Feed.

Photo Stan Holcenberg

The Valentine's Day Crab Feed, presented by Moraga Valley Kiwanis, was a resounding success by any measure. A sell-out crowd at Saint Mary's College Soda Center

first engaged in an active silent auction and then enjoyed an unlimited supply of fresh crab and Caesar salad for dinner. Before dessert local celebrity Dick Callahan led a spirited

live auction of cakes donated by Gayle Somers and Aly Dean Miller of Home/Made Kitchen Café & Bakery. Other major sponsors who contributed generously to the evening's success included Alamo Capital Investment Services, Bay Alarm, Fenton's Creamery, Neighborhood Computers and Saint Mary's College.

Celebrity tables were headed by Mayor Roger Wykle, Police Chief Bob Priebe, Assembly member Catharine Baker, former Assembly member Joan Buchanan, Brother Mel of Saint Mary's College, and sports announcer Callahan.

The annual Crab Feed is one of two major fundraisers for Moraga Valley Kiwanis. All proceeds from the events are donated to local charities that focus their activities on children's needs, including the educational foundations of our three local communities. The club donates close to \$50,000 annually to these charities.

Campolindo High School Named 2015 East County Regional Academic Decathlon Champion

Submitted by Jonathan Lance



Campolindo High School's Academic Decathlon Team, first place
Photos Diane Morrell, CCCOE



Acalanes High School's Academic Decathlon Team, second place

At the recent energy-filled Academic Decathlon Awards Reception, Campolindo High School won the 2015 East County Regional Academic Decathlon for the fifth straight year. Along with being the Regional winner, the team will also represent Contra Costa County in the California State Academic Decathlon competition. Following Campolindo,

were Acalanes High School, second place, and Las Lomas High School, third place.

Directed by the Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE) and with the assistance of 180 community volunteers, the county's Academic Decathlon provides an opportunity for high school students to compete as individuals

and teams in a series of 10 academic tests and demonstrations. The subjects in the competition include art, economics, language and literature, mathematics, music, science, social science, essay, interview, and speech (prepared and impromptu), plus the popular SuperQuiz™, a Jeopardy style team competition that brought the program to a close.

Approximately 140 participating high school students have been studying and preparing for this event with their coaches since September. This year's Academic Decathlon theme was "New Alternatives in Energy: Ingenuity and Innovation."

High school teams are made up of nine students, grades 9-12, with a maximum of three students in each of the following divisions: Honors (3.75-4.00 GPA), Scholastic (3.00-3.74 GPA) and Varsity (2.99 GPA and below).

Campolindo was last year's national winner in the Medium School Category. The Campolindo High School team will represent Contra Costa County at the California State Academic Decathlon, to be held in Sacramento, March 19-22. Campolindo High School also won this year's East Bay Regional Academic Decathlon SuperQuiz™, held Saturday, Feb. 7. This year's National Academic Decathlon will be held in Garden Grove, Calif., April 16-18.

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Community Service

Orinda Community Foundation Celebrates 5 Years

Submitted by Richard Westin



Photo provided

The Orinda Community Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the life of all Orinda residents, will celebrate its fifth anniversary at 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26 at the Heggie

Plaza on the upper floor of the Orinda Library. The Orinda Community Foundation supports numerous local initiatives such as the Fourth of July parade, Lamorinda Idol and the purchase of outdoor art

found in various parts of town. Over the past five years, more than \$150,000 from the Orinda Community Foundation has gone to support children's writing classes, all four Orinda garden clubs, Music in the Park and Opera in the Park programs, and much more. This year OCF is taking on the lead role of raising several hundred thousand dollars to create a new entry to Orinda with a tasteful, yet impactful welcome into the city as you get off of the eastbound exit of Highway 24. The foundation hopes it will say "Welcome home" to all citizens, and "Welcome to the second friendliest city in America" to all visitors. For information about the Orinda Community Foundation and to learn how you can help, visit www.orindafoundation.org.

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- MOFD to Consider Citizens' Committee
- Big Changes in Trash Collection Begins March 1
- New Orinda Study Hangout Dazzles and Draws Teens
- From the Runway to Directing Moraga Royale Dianne Wilson is Moraga's Business Person of the Year
- Sustainable Lafayette: New Board, New Energy, New Projects
- Winter Bounty at the Moraga Farmers' Market
- Back to the Drawing Board for Moraga Center Homes Project

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

Theater View Veterinary Clinic



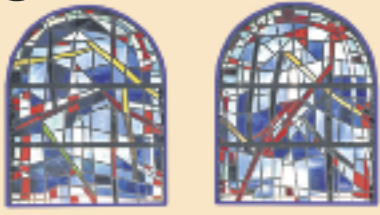
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ART

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.

Bedford Gallery's next exhibition, "The Object and the Void: West Coast Metal Sculpture," will run through April 12. 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.

Orinda Library Art Gallery Exhibitors 2015 - March: High School Art Competition. For info, contact Natalie Wheeler at ns.wheeler@gmail.com.

Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery will present a special, one-day-only exhibit entitled "Exploring Tibet through Photographs and Paintings" from 2 to 7 p.m. on March 14. This event will feature photographs by Martin Newman and paintings by Marcella Adamski alongside traditional Tibetan thangka paintings. All proceeds from the sale of their artwork at this event will be donated to the Tibet Oral History Project in order to sponsor the videotaping of 50 elderly Tibetan refugees' oral histories in Nepal. For more info, call (925) 284-1485 or email jp@jenniferperlmuttergallery.com.

The Glover Plein Air Group presents "Reflections" opening at the UC Botanical Garden in the Julia Morgan Building from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Feb. 28 to March 13. The UC Botanical Gardens invited the award winning Glover Group, all former students of late Pam Glover, to paint, during this past year in the Garden for this show.

The exhibit "Lamorinda Under Glass," featuring watercolor landscapes by Moraga resident George Ehrenhaft, opens at the Moraga Library on March 3. Painted on location in Lamorinda, Ehrenhaft's works depict local sites, including Saint Mary's College, Mt. Diablo, the Lafayette Reservoir, Orinda's Lake Cascade, scenes along the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail, and several surprising lesser-known local places. The exhibit will be open during library hours March 3-31. For details, call (925) 376-6852.

The exhibit "Art Appassionata," featuring the light-washed landscapes and portraits by Lisa Gunn of Orinda and oil paintings of the California coastline by Carol Tarzier, continues at the Moraga Art Gallery at 522 Center Street in Moraga's Rheem Shopping Center until March 24. The 15 member artists of the gallery also have paintings, photographs, ceramics, jewelry, gorgeous silk scarves, and finely crafted woodware on display. For more info, go to www.moragaartgallery.com or call (925) 376-5407.

MUSIC

Acclaimed classical pianists, Dale Tsang and Hye Yeong Min will be joined by fellow Contra Costa Performing Arts Society (CCPAS) colleagues in their performance of works by Beethoven, Chopin, Raphael and Ginastera at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 28 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center on Mt. Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette. The hour-long program of beautiful instrumental music features the cello and clarinet as well as the piano, and ranges from the Classical and Romantic eras to the 20th century. This free event is sponsored by the Friends of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center as well as CCPAS.

The Gold Coast Chamber Players are proud to present their fourth concert of the 2014-15 Season, "Czech Mix." The concert will be held at 7:30

p.m. Saturday, March 14 at the Lafayette Library Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. A pre-concert talk with musicologist Kai Christiansen will start the evening at 7 p.m. Tickets: \$37.50 general; \$32.50 senior; \$10 student. Tickets are available at www.gcplayers.org and by phone at (925) 283-3728. Limited seating, please reserve early.

Tanya Gabrielian benefit concert for Trust in Education from 7 to 9:30 p.m. March 20 at Acalanes High School Theatre. Lauded by the Washington Post for her "strikingly poised nobility" and "commanding presence," the brilliant, young pianist Tanya Gabrielian has risen to international acclaim. Donation: \$35 adult; \$20 student.

THEATER

Winner of the 1993 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, "Angels in America: Millennium Approaches" by Tony Kushner and directed by Joel Roster, will be presented at Lafayette's Town Hall Theatre through Feb. 28. For tickets and show times, visit www.townhalltheatre.com.

DVC Drama presents the Steve Martin comedy, "Picasso" at the Lapin Agile from March 13-29. On an October evening in 1904, Albert Einstein and Pablo Picasso end up at the same small bar in Paris—the Lapin Agile. The two young geniuses, joined by an eccentric cast of characters, spar over art and science, their respective libidos, where inspiration comes from, and the promise and dreams of the 20th century. For tickets and show times call (925) 969-2358 or visit www.dvc-drama.net. Free parking for all performances.

"Les Miserables" at Campolindo High School opens March 12. (See story page B1)

Acalanes High School will present "Pippin" at 7 p.m. March 5-7 in the Performing Arts Theater.

LECTURE & LITERATURE

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.

"Science and Religion: A Cosmic Perspective on Matter, Life, Mind and Spirit," a talk by Ron Olowin, Saint Mary's College professor of Astronomy and Physics at 6:45 p.m. Feb. 28, March 4 and March 11 at St. Anselm's Church, 682 Michael Lane, Lafayette. Olowin will discuss divine creation, the Big Bang, evolution, and how faith and belief systems respond to scientific and technological advances. Free.

The Lafayette Library and Learning Center's Science Café presents: "The Future of Manned Missions to Mars" from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, March 4 in the Library's Community Hall. Dr. Pascal Lee of Mountain View's SETI Institute, and Andy Weir, author of "The Martian," will discuss the science of future Mars missions. Free. Registration required at tinyurl.com/TheMartianLLLC.

"Behind Enemy Lines: The True Story of a French Jewish Spy in Nazi Germany, A Historic Evening with Marthe Cohn." Marthe Cohn will be sharing her story at 7 p.m. Sunday, March 15 in the Orinda Theatre as part of her first Bay Area tour. For more information and to RSVP, visit www.JewishContraCosta.com or call (925) 937-4101.

Orinda Community Church Theological Book Club: "My Bright Abyss, by Christian Wiman," at 4:30 on March 15. Wine and snacks provided. Location: Orinda Community Church (Fire-side Room), 10 Irwin Way, Orinda. For info, call (925) 254-4906, email office@orindachurch.org or visit www.orindachurch.org.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

Orinda Recreation and 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 in-

structors 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.city-of-orinda.org or call (925) 254-2445.

OTHER

Aegis of Moraga's 16th Anniversary Art and Wine Celebration from 4 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26 at 950 Country Club Drive, Moraga, will feature 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.

An evening of thought-provoking discussion on the topic of "Women in Science and Engineering" comes to Bentley School on its third annual Science Thought Leaders Night at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 26. The event is not limited to just Bentley School students, parents and faculty, and it is hoped that the wider East Bay community will join in a discussion to help foster a societal conversation about greater gender equity in science, engineering and all aspects of life. The panel discussion will be held in the Student Performing Arts Center (SPAC) on the Lafayette campus and admission is free. RSVP on the Eventbrite page.

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@mclatchie.com. Applications are due by 7 p.m. March 2.

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for the Orinda Library's newly redesigned Teen Area at 4:30 p.m. Monday, March 2. Refreshments to follow. RSVP to Beth Girshman at bgirshma@ccclib.org or (925) 254-2184, ext 15.

Orinda Rotary Club Supports Hospice Thrift Shoppes Donation Drive March 4 through April 1. Support Rotary Club of Orinda and Hospice Thrift Shoppes by donating new or gently used items. No electronics please. Items can be dropped off in Orinda at: Mechanics Bank, 77 Moraga Way or Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante Road. For info, call Sue Breedlove at (925) 254-6262 or Steve Paddock (925) 254-0393.

The American Red Cross and Be The Match encourage eligible donors to become hometown heroes and answer the call of patients in need by donating blood and registering to be a potential bone marrow donor. Together these two organizations are hosting a blood drive and bone marrow registry from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, March 14 at Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church, 10 Moraga Valley Lane. To register, visit redcross.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) to make an appointment or for more information.

The Friends of the Moraga Library will hold their semi-annual book sale at the Moraga Library from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 14. There will be a \$5 Bag Sale from 1 to 2 p.m. when a large paper grocery bag can be purchased and filled with as many books as the bag will hold. The money raised goes to fund library material and programs, and to staff Sunday hours at the library.

... continued on next page

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OTHER ... continued

St. Patrick's Evening of Dinner, Music, and Show with Silent Auction emceed by Dick Callahan, 5:30 to 10 p.m., Sunday, March 15 at the Soda Center at Saint Mary's College. Traditional corned beef and cabbage (chicken fettuccine) dinner. Wine included at dinner. \$45 per person – inclusive. Musical review: Beach Blanket Babylon. Sponsored by Saint Mary's College Guild (scholarship fundraiser). Call Cynthia Kelly (925) 388-0437 for reservations.

Moraga Women's Society will feature a speaker from Eldercare Services, who will discuss "Safety in the

◆ **Not to be missed** ◆

Home" at 10:45 a.m. Monday, March 16. All are welcome to attend this free event. The Society is also holding an Antique Appraisal Event by Michaan's Auctions from 3 to 7 p.m. Friday, March 20 at Holy Trinity Cultural Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. Hours by appointment. Cost: \$20 for two appraisals or \$25 for three. Receive a verbal appraisal by one of their certified appraisers for fine art, Asian art, coins and stamps, furniture and decorative arts, and miscellaneous. For info, call Jean Glaser: (925) 376-7961. Appraisers donate their services. All proceeds benefit Moraga Schools.

SENIORS

Lafayette Reservoir Walking Group led by author and columnist Jim Scala. 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. (See story page A1)

Sons In Retirement Lamorinda Branch 171 meets the first Wednesday each month at 11 a.m. at Holy Trinity Culture Center, 1700 School St., Moraga. The March 4 after lunch speaker will be Dr. Valery Uhl, who specializes in treatment of prostate and breast cancers. She will discuss today's treatment options for prostate cancer. For membership information, call Larry at (925) 631-9528 or Tom Lenz at (925) 278-1717.

Sons In Retirement - Branch 116 welcomes guests to socialize at monthly luncheon beginning at 11 a.m. on Monday, March 16 held at the

Walnut Creek Elks Lodge, 1475 Creekside Drive. The speaker will be Bernat Rosner, author of "An Uncommon Friendship," which tells the unique story of two youths trapped on opposite sides of the Holocaust. For lunch reservations, call (925) 322-1160. Cost: \$15.

GARDEN

The Walnut Creek Garden Club will hold its general meeting at 9:30 a.m. on Monday, March 9 at the Gardens at Heather Farm located at 1540 Marchbanks Road in Walnut Creek. The topic of the program is "Irises – The Works!" by Stan Morgan, president of the Mt. Diablo Iris Society. For more info, visit mslittle44@gmail.com.

Get Your Garden Growing from 1 to 3 p.m. Sunday, March 15 at the Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center, 3932 Mt Diablo Blvd. Topics include building raised beds and prepping your edible garden for spring. This class is free; however, a \$5 donation is appreciated to support education programs. To register for classes or for more info, visit www.lafayettecommunitygarden.org.

Montelindo Garden Club will meet at 9 a.m. Friday, March 20 at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephens Drive, Orinda. Featuring Howard Arendtson, owner of H. Julien Designs, Berkeley. Visitors welcome. For info, visit www.montelindogarden.com.

Please submit events to:
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www.rotarylafayette.org

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MOVIE REVIEW

Vincent Price Day at the Rheem Theatre March 7

By Derek Zemrak



Image provided

Mark your calendar for an all-day event celebrating the career of actor Vincent Price to be held Saturday, March 7 at the Rheem Theatre in Moraga. The program includes some of Price's most popular films, a lecture by his daughter, Victoria Price, wine tasting and his induction into the Classic Film Hall of Fame.

Schedule:

1 p.m. – "Edward Scissorhands" (1990) – A modern day fairy tale that tells the story of Edward (Johnny Depp), a man created by an inventor (Vincent Price) who died before finishing him and left Edward with scissors for hands. One day the local Avon lady checks around the old house and meets Edward. She takes him home and introduces him to the pastel world of the town called Suburbia. Edward gains fame around the town by cutting hedges and giving the neighbors and their dogs unusual haircuts. This is Director Tim Burton's personal favorite film. "Edward Scissorhands" was Vincent Price's last film role.

3 p.m. – "House of Wax" (1953) – A wax sculptor for a museum (Vincent Price) is horrified when his partner sets fire to the unpopular museum in order to collect the insurance money. As the wax figures melt amid the blaze, the two men have a fight. The sculptor is knocked out in the scuffle and left to "perish" among the flames. He resurfaces many years later to launch his own wax museum.

5 p.m. – Vincent Price's daughter, Victoria, will

give a lecture on her famous father that includes family home movies, appetizers from the world famous Vincent Price Cook Book, wine tasting from the Vincent Price Wine label, plus the induction ceremony of Mr. Price into the Classic Film Hall of Fame and Museum.

7:30 p.m. – "House on Haunted Hill" (1959) – Millionaire Fredrick Loren (Vincent Price) and his fourth wife invite five random guests for a haunted house party at the notorious House on Haunted Hill. He offers \$10,000 to each surviving guest. However, the house lives up to its murderous and haunted past. Weird things happen – but does Loren or the house cause them? Directed by gimmick master William Castle.

9 p.m. – "Last Man on Earth" (1964) – A deadly plague wipes out all but one man – Dr. Robert Morgan (Vincent Price). He is immune to the plague, as he stands alone against the living dead. "Last Man on Earth" is based on Richard Matheson's novel "I Am Legend." The film has been retold twice: "The Omega Man" in 1971, starring Charlton Heston, and "I Am Legend" in 2007 starring Will Smith.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.lamorindatheatres.com or at the Rheem Theatre box office. An All Day Pass is \$50 and includes all events: films, the Victoria Price lecture, wine tasting and the Classic Film Hall of Fame induction ceremony. Victoria Price lecture, wine tasting, appetizers and induction ceremony: \$30; individual movie tickets: \$8.

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Roasted Mushroom Orzo: The Perfect Accompaniment

By Susie Iventosch



Roasted Mushroom Orzo on a bed of arugula with a side of glazed carrots Photo Susie Iventosch

We were all set to grill pheasant one night, but I was struggling with what to serve with it. We had just done potatoes the night before, but still, I wanted some kind of starch to go along with the pheasant. So, I was thinking of making our Mexican-style orzo casserole, but it didn't seem to be a good fit. Then the lightbulb went on as I was looking at a package of mushrooms in the vegetable drawer. Why not make an orzo casserole with roasted mushrooms and

caramelized shallots instead? And I had some of that amazing Trader Joe's triple cream, soft ripened cheese, which was almost jumping out of the refrigerator, saying, "Pick me! Pick me!" So I did. This dish turned out to be the perfect accompaniment to the pheasant and then, the next night, we had the leftovers as our main meal along with some delicious rosemary bread. Though I didn't add it, a little grated Gruyere would be a nice touch to this dish, too!

INGREDIENTS

1 16-ounce package of Orzo
1 yellow onion, coarsely chopped
1 shallot, coarsely chopped
1 clove garlic, minced
2-3 cups sliced cremini mushrooms
6-8 dried porcini mushrooms, reconstituted in boiling water, drained and cut into bite-sized pieces
½ cup Trader Joe's Le Delice De Bourgogne Triple Cream Soft Ripened Cheese (Use about ½ of the package; save some to use with crackers another time. I used the skin and all.)
½ cup plain low-fat Greek yogurt or sour cream
½ cup freshly-grated Parmesan cheese

DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 425 F. Toss sliced mushrooms and pieces of reconstituted porcini mushrooms with 1-2 tablespoons olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Place on a sprayed or oiled baking sheet. Roast in hot oven until just beginning to brown, approximately 7-8 minutes. Remove from oven. Lower oven temperature to 350 F.

In a sauté pan, caramelize chopped onions, shallots and garlic in 2 tablespoons olive oil. Set aside.

Cook orzo according to directions. Drain and place in a large bowl. Add caramelized onion mixture, roasted mushrooms, Trader Joe's Le Delice De Bourgogne Triple Cream Cheese and Greek yogurt. Mix well.

Turn out into well-greased baking dish. You can choose either a 9-by-13 or 9-by-9 inch dish. It will be taller in the 9-by-9, and be a bit moister, but the 9-by-9 offers a crunchier cheesy topping. Sprinkle top with grated Parmesan or Gruyere, and bake at 350 F for approximately 25 minutes, or until top is nicely browned and cheese is bubbly. Bon appetite!

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.



Lynn's Top Five

Savvy Tips When Helping Your Parents Financially

By Lynn Ballou, CFP®

Most parents hope to avoid becoming a financial burden to their children. But increasingly, adult children are being called upon to help not just organize their parents' affairs and hire care managers, but also to

step up with real financial support as well. There are ways you can provide this assistance while being government benefits aware as well as tax and estate planning adept. Here are five for your consideration:

1) Check available assistance opportunities. You're busy so it's tempting to just write a check to help Mom and Dad. But before you do that, get up to speed on the current laws, regulations and government assistance benefits and programs that your parent's might find advantageous but not qualify for if you increase their income by providing financial support. Your Certified Financial Planner professional can work with you to find the most knowledgeable care manager, benefits specialist, and/or attorney who specializes in elder law, and who are a good fit in your family's unique situation.

2) Buy long term care insurance for your parents, or set up a sibling/family member funded trust. If you and your siblings see that your folks have limited means and won't have enough assets if they need care later in life, perhaps you pitch in and purchase a long-term care policy while they are in good health to protect your assets later on. If that's not a viable option for you, and you and other family members who are providing assistance have the means, you may wish to consider setting up a mutually funded trust for your parents' benefit. Paula Goodwin, a tax and estate law attorney who lives in Orinda and practices law with Schiff Hardin in San Francisco, believes in the importance of protecting the assets for future possible need while at the same time ensuring that if you or other donors pass away before your parents do, any unused assets are returned to your family or other appropriate heirs, and do not become part of your parents' estate (and thus be distributed via the terms of their will or trust).

3) Consult with a tax advisor. If you are providing income support, it

might be a high enough amount that you can claim one or both as a dependent. Also, if you have choices of how to provide support, think about paying their medical expenses so that you aren't limited to the \$14,000 annual gifting rules. Paula also notes that when monetary support for parents is needed "a great planning tip is to gift appreciated assets to your parents and let them sell in their tax bracket, if lower than your own."

4) What if your parents live out of state? Paula also reminded me that parents often reside in different states of residence than their adult children. While you may be very knowledgeable about benefits available to California residents and California tax laws, consult with pros where your parents live before making financial planning decisions. And these long-distance relationships really lend themselves to care managers, since you aren't local enough to really supervise the actual care providers who are helping in your parent's daily lives.

5) Protect what your parents own. Sometimes the best advice is the simplest: Be sure copies (if not the originals) of all of your parents' financial statements come to you, and review them in detail! Of course, being the trustee or co-trustee with your parents and/or siblings may be the approach you use. But if you are not a listed trustee, your parents can still request that institutions send you copies of statements.

As you can imagine, this column just scratches the surface of the complex issues that come into play when we step in to assist our aging parents financially. The best advice is to communicate with your parents and

other family members as much as possible to learn what your folks really need and what resources the family has available. Bring pros who specialize in these areas of planning into the conversation as early on as possible. As you go forward and implement your parental assistance plans, be sure to review regularly how things are unfolding, how resources and needs may be changing, and the ever evolving tax and estate planning laws. From my own experiences and my heart, I wish you the very best on this challenging journey.

Paula Goodwin and Schiff Hardin are not affiliated with or endorsed by LPL Financial or Ballou Plum Wealth Advisors, LLC.



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LAMORINDA SPORTS

All Three Girls' Soccer Programs Advance

Acalanes and Miramonte to Meet in NCS Semifinals

By Karl Buscheck



Kierra Krawec had five goals in the first round.



Caroline Clark

Photos Gint Federas

As soon as the seeds for the NCS Division II girls' soccer playoffs were announced, a matchup between No. 1 Acalanes and No. 5 Miramonte seemed inevitable. On the other side of the bracket, No. 3 Campolindo also advanced to the semifinals.

On Feb. 25, Acalanes and Miramonte are slated to face off in the semifinals after both teams cruised through the opening rounds of the playoffs.

"I knew we'd see them again," said Acalanes head coach Evan Sassano. "This is the stage where we want to perform. When you play a team like Miramonte, you want to step up your game."

Mohamed Mohamed, the head coach of the Mats, shares the same sentiment.

"I strongly feel we are peaking at the right moment, and everything is coming together," said Mohamed. "We feel that we should be a contender for the title and we look forward to it."

For Acalanes, the playoff journey began on Feb. 18 with an 8-1 beat down on El Cerrito. In that rout, freshman Kierra Krawec collected five goals, while sophomore Caroline

Clark added a couple of strikes and sophomore Katharine Larson also got on the score sheet.

On Feb. 21, Acalanes took down Las Lomas 4-1. Clark and senior Katharine Torchio both scored while Krawec once again had a big night as she grabbed a pair of goals and also contributed an assist.

"She's very, for a lack of a better word, 'industrious,'" said Sassano. "She works hard. She has a nose for the goal, and she's not flashy but she scores a lot of goals."

Miramonte has a goal-scoring machine of its own in Cecilia Gee. The senior was responsible for all four goals in the Mats' 4-1 win over Northgate on Feb. 18.

"She was exceptional in that game," said Mohamed. "We had an exceptional game against Northgate. We controlled the game very well and we created a lot of chances and we scored some beautiful goals."

On Feb. 21, Miramonte topped Alhambra 2-0 on the road, sending the team on to the semifinals.

Campolindo is also still alive in the NCS playoffs and could end up facing one of its Lamorinda neighbors in the finals. First, the Cougars will have to get past St. Mary's on Feb. 25.

On Feb. 18, Campolindo stormed past Concord 5-0, as junior Bailey Yuen and senior AJ Morgan both chipped in a couple of goals.

"I think that's every coach's dream start—to be able to come put up with a good performance and set the tone for what's about to come," said head coach Ernesto Silva.

The Cougars followed up that showing by defeating Piedmont 2-0 on Feb. 21 in the semifinals. Morgan once again found the back of the net, while sophomore Melissa Wilson also scored in the first half.

"I feel we dominated the game," said Silva. "So I think we handled it the way we planned it."

With either a win or a tie in nine of the team's past 11 contests, Silva knows the Cougars are trending in the right direction as crunch time approaches.

"The second half of the season we have really come alive. We have scored more goals in the last few games than we did pretty much the entire first three-quarters of the season. So, we like where we're at. We're getting better and better and I think it's the right time."



Katharine Larson



Cecilia Gee had four goals against Northgate.

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Campolindo to NCS Semifinals, Miramonte Knocked Out

By Karl Buscheck



Jeremy Raine Photo Gint Federas

Campolindo's boys' soccer team has advanced to the semifinals of the NCS Division II Soccer Championship. The other program to qualify for the playoffs, Miramonte, lost in the opening round.

The NCS Championship almost came to a quick end for Campolindo. On Feb. 18, the Cougars (10-1-1), overcame an early 2-1 deficit to get past Concord 4-2 thanks to a hat trick from senior Jeremy Raine.

Raine handed Campolindo a 1-0 edge just five minutes into the game, as he headed home off of a corner kick. However, Concord answered back quickly, pouring in a pair of goals in the next 15 minutes.

"Honestly there was a bit of nerves on the bench," said head coach Shane Carney after his team went into the locker room down 2-1. "Even though we've had a good season, we're still really young and an inexperienced team."

A quick talk got the Cougars back on track. "Half time was a nice way to kind of sit down and talk with the boys, get the nerves calmed down and just get them focused on working hard, which I think was really the difference," Carney explained. "We didn't change much between the first half and the second half, the guys just stepped it up and worked harder."

As Carney noted, the plan for the final 40 minutes was simple: "At halftime, we said the goal was to win the second half 3-0. So we went out and did it."

The Cougars dominated possession early on

after the break, and in the 54th minute senior Sam Larson crashed in the deflection off a free kick to level the score at 2-2. In the 71st minute, Raine gave Campolindo the lead as he dragged his shot just inside the right post. Just two minutes later, Raine sealed the win and completed his hat trick with a close-range shot.

In the quarterfinals, the Cougars needed an extra-time strike from senior Skip Buchanan to beat Ygnacio Valley 2-1 on Feb. 21. Senior Seth Kofman supplied Campolindo's first goal, connecting on a penalty kick in the 23rd minute.

Up next for Campolindo will be a trip to face No. 1 Richmond on Feb. 25.

In the opening round, the Mats, who were the No. 14 seed, lost 2-0 to the No. 3 seed De Anza on Feb. 18. Even though the Mats ended up on the wrong side of the score line, head coach Billal Samy praised the team's performance.

"[They] were not too afraid of the top-ranked seeds. They have a fighting mentality, they always want to compete. For us, it didn't matter who we played. We felt that we could compete with any of these teams and on any given day we could get the result."

Against De Anza, it was a couple of second-half strikes from the home team that determined the result.

"In the end, I think we gave up two goals that should have been better handled by our defense, but that's the way the game is," said Samy.

For the Mats, the 2014-15 season was the program's most successful campaign in nearly a decade. "We made a huge accomplishment in getting to the playoffs for the first time after eight years," said Samy, whose team landed in third place in the DFAL standings after going 5-3-4. "It was quite the achievement for the players."



Sam Larson

All In

By Conrad Bassett



Sabrina Ionescu Photo Gint Federas

The Diablo Foothill Athletic League girls' basketball season finished last week and the NCS playoffs began last night. All three Lamorinda girls' programs earned playoff spots.

Miramonte completed their DFAL season on Feb. 18, beating Campolindo 76-26. With the win, the Mats recorded a perfect 12-0 DFAL record and improved to 24-2 overall. The combination of winning the DFAL championship along with a strong showing in difficult non-league games earned the Mats the No. 1 seed in the NCS Division III tournament.

Miramonte is predicted to reach the finals. Rival Campolindo head coach Art Thoms pointed to the Mats' star player Sabrina Ionescu as the key to their success. "Miramonte is the heavy favorite in the bracket," Thoms explained. "Sabrina Ionescu is the best player I have ever seen in girls' high school basketball."

On Feb. 24, they hosted No. 16 Del Norte (Crescent City).

The third place Acalanes Dons finished the regular season with an outstanding 20-6 record (7-5 DFAL) and captured the No. 3 seed and a home game against San Rafael in the first round.

"The girls are very excited to be part of NCS this year after falling short last year of a

post season berth," said head coach Chad Wellon.

Wellon pointed to the team's chemistry and focused energy as reasons for the team's success. "We have a very close group and there isn't much concern with stats on this team," he explained. "Everyone just has a common goal to play as hard as they can in order for the team to be successful."

After a solid regular season, Wellon is very happy with how his team has improved throughout the year. "I felt we ended the season on a really positive note with three consecutive wins in the DFAL. The playoffs should be a lot of fun," he added.

Right behind Acalanes, Campolindo finished tied for fourth in the DFAL with a 5-7 record. The Cougars' 13-13 overall record put them in the top half of the NCS bracket at the No. 8 spot. They hosted No. 9 Petaluma on Feb. 24.

Thoms also pointed to the continued improvement of his team this year. "Our late season success has come from our two distinct groupings. The starters are a more deliberate and a physical group," noted Thoms. "They run plays well and don't give up easy baskets."

Thoms specifically pointed to the leadership of junior Emily Lyall and senior Julie Meng. He also noted that the long season has helped the freshmen adapt.

"They are followed by five freshmen who press, fast break and fly around the court," he explained. "The freshmen led the comeback from 13 points down in our must win game against Dougherty Valley."

The division III bracket is competitive again this year. In addition to Miramonte, Bishop O'Dowd (18-8) has the No. 2 seed. A year ago, Bishop O'Dowd was excluded from the NCS and NorCal playoffs for having played an extra game during the season. The Dragons have won 15 of their last 16 and are anxious to return to the championship game—they won the title five years in a row, from 2009 through 2013.



Roni Marrone



Emily Lyall

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Lost Dog



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Campo, Mats Qualify for NCS Playoffs

By Spencer Silva



Matt O'Reilly



Jackson Wegener

Lamorinda is sending two basketball programs to the NCS Division III playoffs. Campolindo (23-3) is the No. 4 seed and Miramonte (13-13) the No. 7 seed. The Cougars hosted De Anza Feb. 24, while the Mats traveled to Santa Rosa and squared off against Sonoma County League champion Elsie Allen.

MaxPreps recently ranked Campo the No. 20 team in Northern California. Other than a tough 55-50 loss to El Cerrito on Feb. 14, the Cougars have been stellar — the loss snapped a 16-game winning streak. They put an exclamation point on the regular season with a convincing 76-65 win over Dublin on Feb. 20.

In January, head coach Matt Watson predicted his team would reach their peak performance in mid-to-late February.

They share a bracket with the Bay Area's top team, Bishop O' Dowd, so in all likelihood they will have to face the Dragons to reach the NCS finals.

Miramonte ended their season with a tough 57-50 loss to Campo. Before that, however, they managed close wins over Dublin and Alhambra. Those were crucial wins for a team that was 1-6 in its previous seven games. Head coach Drew McDonald believes his team has exited its mid-season slump and is playing its best basketball of the season. "Last year's team came together around this time and got in a rhythm," he explained. "The same thing is happening this year. We're playing better defense especially."

Defense will play a crucial role in how far the Mats go in the postseason. "Playing defense and taking care of the ball, especially the latter, becomes more and more important down the stretch," McDonald said.

The Mats reached the NorCal semifinals for the first time in school history last season, despite being eliminated from the NCS by Campo. The team will count on senior leadership from Jackson Wegener, Jake Linares and Moneer Mujaddidi for its success this season.

Acalanes' season ended with a tough loss to Las Lomas.

The good news is that the Dons return 11 players to next year's squad, including standout point guard Andrew McKendle and forward Alex Kinnear. Coach Dave Goldman believes that those two players along with Matt Bostik could be the backbone of a strong team. There's a chance they will become a Division II team based on their enrollment. They would remain in the DFAL even if they change divisions.



Andrew McKendell

Gaels Number "13" Retired



From left: San Antonio Spurs stars Manu Ginobili, Boris Diaw, Patty Mills, and Tiago Splitter
Photo Tod Fierner

Saint Mary's honored former guard Patrick Mills by retiring his number "13" in a half-time ceremony on Feb. 21. In front of a packed house, college president James Donahue and athletic director Mark Orr presented Mills with a framed jersey to commemorate the honor.

Mills played at Saint Mary's from 2007-

2009. In his two years with the Gaels, Mills garnered many accolades, including the SMC record for most points in a single season.

In his sixth NBA season, Mills is the only former Gael to win an NBA championship. The guard won the title with the San Antonio Spurs last season.

Game Within a Game

Submitted by Amber Thiselton-Dyer



St. Perpetua's seventh grade girls' national team scrimmaged at the halftime of the St. Mary's women's basketball game against BYU on Feb. 12. The Gaels beat the Cougars 76-71.

Training with the National Team

Submitted by Mary Staff



Photo Kelley L Cox-KLC fotos

Samantha DeVecchi of Orinda went to Florida to train with U.S. Youth Soccer Olympic Developmental Program (ODP) National Team from Jan. 22-26. DeVecchi was one of four chosen from Northern California in an age group of 60 participants.

DeVecchi, a Miramonte sophomore,

talked about her experience at the camp. "This was a great opportunity for me," she explained.

She also said the six days of immersion was an educational experience. "The training was intense, fast, physical and grueling, but fun at the same time."

St. Monica's Wins Again

Submitted by Lyn Schmidt



From left: Chase Bennett, Isaiah Lawrie, Ben Jules, Emmanuel Callas, Cade Bennett, coach Bruce Lawrie, Daniel Wheeler, coach Marcus Schroeder, Maxwell Weaver, and Joey Schmidt

St. Monica's sixth grade boys' basketball team defeated St. Mary's of Walnut Creek 41-22 on Feb. 15 to win the CYO American League Championship. The group

of boys has won the championship in their age group five years in a row, beginning in the second grade. They played for their third diocese title in Hayward on Feb. 21-22.

Big Celebration

Submitted by Cathleen Huston



From left, back row: Coach Tague, Grace Younger, Catie Foley, Claire McCormick, Andie Cohen, Ashleigh Miller, Bridget Tague, Dara Kazmierowski (in spirit), and coach Huston; front row: Emily Huston and Kaitlyn Miller.

The Santa Maria eighth grade American girls' team celebrated their qualification for the playoffs after a recent victory over St.

Perpetua. Santa Maria won 36-14 on Jan. 31. Santa Maria qualified for the upcoming diocese playoffs on Feb. 28-29.

Lamorinda Cheers on Cal Rugby

Submitted by Steve Peterson



Lamorinda players and coach Clark gather under the goalposts.
Photo provided

Lamorinda Rugby, with over 10 former Cal Rugby players in its coaching ranks, attended the 109th Cal-Stanford Scrum Axe Rugby Match on Feb. 11. After watching former Lamorinda players Will Fuller, Miles Honen, Jamie Howells, and Karl Thorton help lead the Bears to a 78-3 victory, more than 100 Lamorinda rugby players, coaches and parents were greeted and welcomed by long time Cal rugby coach Jack Clark.

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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 08 Issue 26 Wednesday, February 25, 2015



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian ...read on page D12

Curb Appeal

The path of least resistance

By Cathy Dausman



This round garden gate window echoes a Sleepy Hollow house front theme.

Photo Cathy Dausman

Beauty, it is said, is in the eye of the beholder – and a good first impression is priceless. But when it comes to a home's curb appeal, a little fresh paint, new plantings and a bit of bark dust can often work magic. Homeowners may take on a front-yard revision to freshen up an outdated look, to reduce water consumption, to

list the home for sale or a combination of these. Some prefer to the do-it-yourself method; others enlist a landscaper.

Tom Reuter of Reuter Landscaping Contractors suggests reimagining a front yard design “after 10 to 15 years.” Reuter has worked with clients in the Lamorinda area for decades; he formed his

company after first working at a local nursery. He recommends homeowners spend at least one week annually going through their yards to clean, trim and re-plant, ensuring that there is a reason for every flower and shrub.

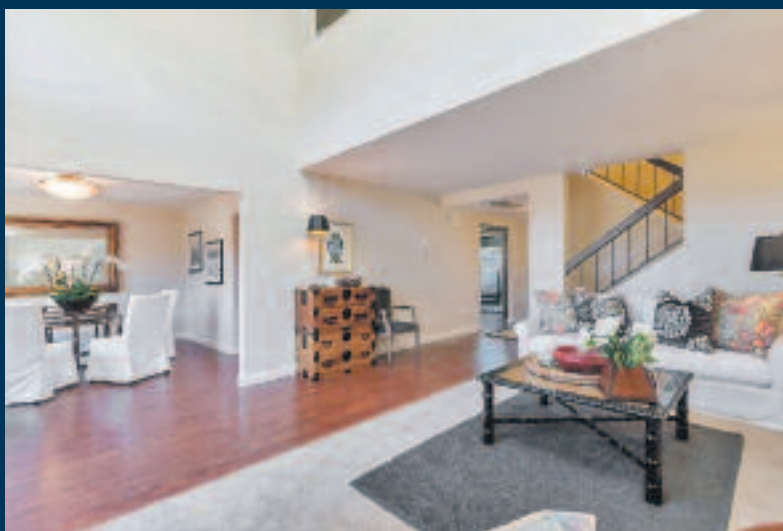
Even though juniper is drought and deer resistant, Reuter has moved away from planting it. Tam Juniper, a popular choice 30 or 40 years ago, can become “a rat’s nest” when it overtakes a yard, he says, while a line of Italian Cypress grows “obnoxious” over time. Michael Saputo knows just how juniper gets out of hand. His Orinda neighbors once nicknamed his place “the juniper house” because his aunt and uncle, who bought the house in 1953, blanketed their entire giant front yard with it.

“It was just awful,” he says. Saputo had it removed by a landscaper about six years ago, replacing it with a unique, drought-friendly design, with a flagstone entry, lighting and drip irrigation to carefully ration water. The irrigation system is being reworked with Mondo grass installed. “It’s a look that [water supplier EBMUD] likes,” Saputo says with pride. Although his plants are not in their prime during winter months he thinks his front yard is “the best landscaped yard in Sleepy Hollow.”

Realtors will tell you that landscaping is an integral part of the home-for-sale formula. “It usually looks best when it looks established and natural,” says Tom Stack of Orinda’s Coldwell Banker office. “Does the paint merge with the landscaping? Does the home sit well on its lot?” he asks.

... continued on page D4

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| City | Last reported: | LOWEST AMOUNT: | HIGHEST AMOUNT: |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| LAFAYETTE | 4 | \$797,000 | \$1,699,000 |
| MORAGA | 3 | \$748,000 | \$995,000 |
| ORINDA | 12 | \$699,000 | \$1,537,000 |

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

LAFAYETTE

2 Green Acres Court, \$1,150,000, 4 Bdrms, 2085 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 1-2-15
 389 Hermosa Court, \$1,699,000, 3 Bdrms, 1294 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 12-30-14;
 Previous Sale: \$710,000, 07-17-13
 1114 Laurel Drive, \$1,520,000, 3 Bdrms, 2262 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 1-7-15;
 Previous Sale: \$750,000, 12-04-03
 701 Wee Donegal, \$797,000, 3 Bdrms, 1876 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 12-29-14;
 Previous Sale: \$225,000, 07-23-86

MORAGA

911 Augusta Drive, \$850,000, 4 Bdrms, 2828 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 12-30-14;
 Previous Sale: \$850,000, 02-05-10
 1106 Larch Avenue, \$995,000, 4 Bdrms, 2403 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 1-5-15
 238 Paseo Bernal, \$748,000, 3 Bdrms, 2044 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 12-30-14;
 Previous Sale: \$575,000, 03-11-10

ORINDA

2 Alder Walk, \$1,286,500, 12-24-14
 6 Alder Walk, \$1,295,000, 1-5-15
 74 Bates Boulevard, \$1,350,500, 3 Bdrms, 3021 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 1-7-15

continued on page D13



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Curb Appeal

... continued from page D1



A "before" front yard, and do-it-yourself project for Moraga's Lau family. Removing 40-year-old juniper takes work!
Photo Ted Lau

"At a minimum, weed, plant [and] invigorate the garden," he says, and arrange "pots with flowers on the porch. Perhaps [add] some bark in the planting area to give it a uniform color." Stack's chore list also includes pruning trees and removing dead limbs. He says the path to the door should be clear.

There's an added safety benefit to decluttering vegetation out front. "Front door visibility and exposure minimizes risk of front door intrusion from burglars," says Moraga Chief of Police Robert Priebe. "Anything providing cover from passersby on the street helps anyone trying to get in your home via the front door."

"I tell my sellers you only have one chance to make a first impression," emphasizes Diane Reilly of Alain Pinel Realtors. "I can't tell you how many times I've pulled up to a home that meets all the buyer needs but when they see an unattractive or cluttered front yard they say, 'We don't need to go inside this one.'" Reilly explains that most yard work can be accomplished with more elbow grease than cash. "Keep grass cut, edges trimmed and trees pruned. Remove old woody shrubs like junipers.

Plant colorful seasonal plants – all one vibrant color clustered in a spot that will draw the eye to the front door. Use dark bark to fill in unplanted spaces," she says.

Reilly suggests painting home exteriors every seven or eight years. "If not the whole house, at least paint the trim and the front door," she says, adding that a fresh coat of paint in a neutral color is money well spent. The home should look "crisp, clean and uncluttered," Reilly says. "Even if a homeowner is not selling, these affordable improvements can be done over time to make the home one of the nicest on the block."

Cindy Glover of Moraga understands the time commitment for her do-it-yourself yard project. Glover spent two years discussing the look she wanted for her former front yard. The original landscaping was "lawn and path-oriented" with a "cookie-cutter" look.

The first piece she tackled was the pathway and its surrounding hardscape; it would become "the bones" of the project. Glover envisioned a wide path leading straight to her front door with a low, curved "eyebrow" wall and a built-in mailbox of stone to match the stone on the house. Spots for manzanita and maple trees were reserved. The remaining spaces were filled in mostly with drought resistant flowers and grasses, ensuring that "any mistakes made were small." A new roof with a mix of colors and bright metal trim was installed, and a new front door completed the look Glover calls "timeless."

Roger and Patti Witalice's 1950s Orinda home had changed hands once or twice before they bought it in 1979, but the view from the street was the same, consisting of "a flat porch, hidden doorway and concrete walkway," says Patti Witalice. "There were three huge pine trees, a briar bush of pyracantha and wild roses," while the front door was "smashed into a corner." They hired a landscaper in 2006. The new look focuses on the front door, with a curved walkway, an earthen berm to shield the street view and a mix of plant color and textures. The New Zealand flax plantings create "a visual barrier" with a "comforting sense of privacy." The round window in the gate echoes the Sleepy Hollow practice of a round window on the front of the house, she says.

In short, curb appeal means keeping things fresh, simple and clean. After all, the goal is "to show off the home," Stack says.

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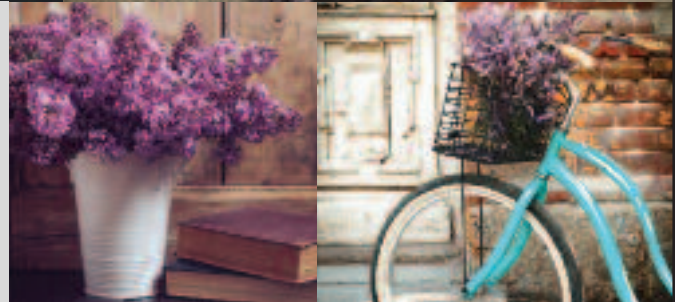


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Chinese New Year and Feng Shui

By Michele Duffy



A tidy entrance with an activated red door allows for Chinese New Year's prosperity to flourish at this Moraga home. Photos provided

More people are celebrating Chinese New Year, which began Feb. 19, than ever before. This is the year of the Female Wood Sheep/Ram, which will help to usher in a peaceful, calm, artistic, creative and kind energy. Attention to feng shui is the best way to prepare your home for the blessings of this year.

First, clean your home thoroughly and completely. Move any piece of furniture that has not been moved during the year to clean behind and all around. This first step is the most important of all preparations. It is most auspicious to start a new year and a new cycle in anything but a messy or dirty home environment. Remove any items you no longer use. Clear out all closets, drawers and storage areas if they have clutter. Focus on organization and tidiness. ... continued on page D10

Feng Shui Basics

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

"Front Door"

Feng shui (or Wind and Water) is the practice of arranging your environment so that energy or "Qi" flows gently and smoothly through your home or business. The principles of feng shui are founded on traditional Chinese medicine, which is based on the dynamic opposites of yin and yang, together with the five elements (water, wood, fire, earth and metal) as well as form, landscape, space orientation and time. Feng shui is about creating a natural equilibrium, while promoting health, harmony, stability and prosperity. Feng shui is not a meditation practice, a religion or a New Age cult. In fact, its origins are thousands of years old. Feng shui is based on the concept that everything in your environment has a life force or energy called "Qi." Just as Qi flows through your body, Qi also flows your through living environment. When the energy flow is stagnant, stuck, obstructed or moves too quickly, unbalanced Qi may lead to ill health, domestic strife or financial concerns. Professional feng shui advice, adjustments and blessings help create nurturing energy in the spaces and places we spend the most time – our homes and offices. The goal are sustainable good luck, good health, harmonious relationships and prosperity.



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This sought after Orinda neighborhood is located close to twelve years of top rated Orinda schools and offers popular walking routes within the friendly neighborhood.

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Included are sloped wood and wood beamed ceilings, random plank hardwood floors, fireplace in living room, formal dining room, updated kitchen with stainless appliances including Dacor gas cook-top, large adjoining family room, walls of glass in all living areas, updated baths, separate laundry room, master with large walk-in closet.

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*per Plans, **per Public Records, ***per Appraisal



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Call for Price and More Details



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Chinese New Year and Feng Shui

... continued from page D8

Spruce up your front entrance with lively plants, paint the door red to activate this powerful area of your home and rid this area of clutter, too. Also, make sure you throw away broken furniture or china, and repair what needs repairing around your home and yard.

Next, fill your home with an abundance of fresh fruit and flowers. It is a special time of year, so treat it like a special occasion.

A large bowl of oranges placed prominently in the kitchen welcomes wealth blessings into our homes. A home that has an abundance of healthy whole foods attracts more nourishment and abundance for all who live there. Since 2015 is the Wood Ram year, plants carry an especially lucky energy. As we activate wood, we activate the new year with prosperity and abundance. Many flock to markets to prepare gifts and decorate the house with traditional "lucky plants," such as:

- Orange trees
- Mandarin or kumquat trees
- Lucky bamboo
- Money trees
- Branches of cherry blossoms
- Stalks of pussy willow



Oranges properly displayed in a Moraga kitchen

Consider painting a room. The Self-Knowledge, Contemplation and Wisdom area (the near left area from the front entrance) is a great room to paint to welcome the more reflective Sheep/Ram energy. Use shades of blue or pair with bluish green to create an environment for contemplative growth. Add the imagery of mountains, which symbolize knowledge, to activate this area for greater success in 2015.

Last year was the Horse's year to gallop and take off. The 2015 Sheep/Ram year will be one of contemplation and appreciation of what has already been accomplished. Think about bringing goodness to others. Take a deep breath and calmly look at what's ahead. Focus on the mantra of forging a steady path, of healing, generosity, nurturing relationships and keeping the peace.

Wishing you much health, prosperity and success for the Year of the Female Wood Sheep/Ram.



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



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SATURDAY, MARCH 14TH
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Lynda Catlin, Catlin Design, Interior Designer

SATURDAY, MAY 16TH
William & Melissa Thorn, Thorn Architects
Bob Cleaver, Landscape Architect

SATURDAY, MAY 23RD
Stephen Elbert, Elbert Associates
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Digging Deep - Gardening with Cynthia Brian

Why We Garden, Part 2

"In the depth of winter I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer." ~ Albert Camus

After zero precipitation in January, we reveled in the rains of early February. Soon thereafter, the sun shone brightly again and spring appears to be arriving a month early. My flowering peach, plum, and pear trees have all completed their burst of color and my landscape is alive with blooming daffodils, tulips, iris, freesia, magnolia stellata and periwinkle. Somehow we've managed to skip the normal dreariness of February and jump right into Camus' invincible summer. A reader in Norway was shocked to read that bergenia blooms here in California in January while it doesn't show its pretty petals in Northern Europe until May. Which brings me to more reasons why I love to garden ...

Surprises

As gardeners we know that we are not in charge. No matter how much we attempt to control the outside forces, Mother Nature rules. We can no longer say that daffodils bloom in March or gladioli in summer. Our climate is changing, and we are constantly surprised at what pops up – and when. Gardeners are stewards of the earth and we must adapt to her unpredictability.

Love

Gardens evoke love. The birds and bees are making love and passion is in the garden air. How many of us chose a beautiful garden for our wedding nuptials or as the setting for birthdays, showers, graduations and other celebrations? Since I was a child, our family gatherings were always held in a garden, weather permitting. My husband and I, as well as all of my siblings, held our wedding receptions in the spectacular gardens of our ranch. My mother planted for months creating an artistic palette using the colors each of us had chosen for our special day. Now that is love!

Responsibility

After several decades of marriage, whenever I am asked how to maintain a relationship, my advice has always been to become a gardener. It takes responsibility to be a gardener. We have to be attentive to the needs of each individual specimen. We need to know when to water, when to prune, when to fertilize, when to transplant. This is responsibility. If you want to grow a relationship, start with a plant. For first timers, I recommend a spider plant. They don't demand much, and they prosper with neglect. Or, if you prefer a colorful connection, orchids are not fussy prima donnas, yet they are radiantly beautiful.

... continued on page D13



Fragrant Daphne adds color to the shade garden.

Photos Cynthia Brian

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Orchids are beautiful and easy to grow.

Patience

A tomato can't be rushed. Nor can a carrot, or a rose, or a petunia. We could stand on top of the vine all day long shouting, prodding, encouraging, but our efforts will not yield a faster growth. Every plant is going to grow in the time it takes to do so. Patience is the keystone of a gardener's life. Gardening is an especially good way to teach children the value of patience. For every time, every season, there is a purpose and it is worth waiting for.

Spontaneity

Seeds fly through the air and grow where they fall. Vegetables, weeds and flowers are bedmates. No matter how carefully we curate our creations, the birds, bees, butterflies and wildlife always have something else in store for us. Just today I found holly growing under my camellia tree. I didn't put it there, and it will need to be transplanted, but I was so excited I kicked up my heels and wanted to fly a kite!

Curiosity

The garden is a world of wonder and exploration. Discovering the tiny salamander or croaking frog by the pond, or the odd color in the parsnip is exciting. Get down on your knees to investigate the insects or take a closer look at the stamen in the calla lily. Stick your nose in a Daphne bloom and inhale the perfume. Be curious. There is so much to learn.

... continued on page D14

Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

...continued from Page D2

ORINDA ... continued

- 51 Hazel Tree Ridge, \$1,046,000, 12-29-14
- 65 Hillcrest Drive, \$1,580,000, 3 Bdrms, 1760 SqFt, 1950 YrBlT, 1-6-15;
Previous Sale: \$740,000, 07-19-13
- 54 La Campana Road, \$985,000, 3 Bdrms, 1531 SqFt, 1938 YrBlT, 12-31-14;
Previous Sale: \$915,000, 09-06-02
- 14 Las Palomas, \$1,500,000, 5 Bdrms, 2831 SqFt, 1956 YrBlT, 1-6-15;
Previous Sale: \$1,350,000, 08-01-12
- 87 Loma Vista Drive, \$699,000, 3 Bdrms, 1715 SqFt, 1928 YrBlT, 12-24-14;
Previous Sale: \$675,000, 03-15-00
- 253 Manzanita Drive, \$1,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 2591 SqFt, 1952 YrBlT, 12-30-14;
Previous Sale: \$1,352,500, 05-25-07
- 84 Tarry Lane, \$1,300,000, 3 Bdrms, 1782 SqFt, 1963 YrBlT, 12-30-14;
Previous Sale: \$161,500, 04-21-78
- Quince Terrace, \$1,447,000, 12-24-14
- 12 Wild Plun Way, \$1,537,000, 1-2-15

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Digging Deep - Gardening with Cynthia Brian

Why We Garden, Part 2

... continued from page D13

Spirituality

We don't have to be religious to be spiritual. The greatest cathedral in the world cannot match the temple of Mother Nature. I am forever in awe and wonder at the miracle of our natural world. When I am in the garden I feel as one with all living creatures. I understand that we are all connected – the rocks, the water, the plants, the sky, the animals. We are all living, breathing, magical creations united in a giant prayer of glory.

Mistakes

Perhaps one of the most important lessons from the garden is that there are no mistakes. Failure is fertilizer. We heap our failures on the compost pile to grow a new garden. Gardens give us permission to be human, to make mistakes and to grow stronger and smarter from our errors. Life is never quiet or dull, and everything is a blessing and a lesson in the garden.

May you discover love in the garden and appreciate the spontaneity and generosity that nature offers.

Happy gardening, happy growing.

Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Reminders

- **PURCHASE** summer bulbs of your choice, but don't be tempted to plant until the ground warms.
- **AERATE** lawns while the ground is wet to allow for moisture to sink to the roots.
- **FERTILIZE** citrus (specifically our beloved Meyer lemons) by the end of the month.
- **PLANT** bare root roses and bare root fruit trees through the end of February. Many are now on sale so make sure to check the plant carefully for damage or dryness before purchasing. Prune back any damaged or dry roots. Soak in water for at least a day before planting.
- **SHARPEN** tools in preparation for spring.
- **CONTINUE** to pick up or rake fallen camellia blooms to keep your bush healthy.



A bed of Italian kale.

Cynthia Brian in the February vegetable garden.



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When you have a tree under a power line that requires frequent reduction by the utility co. it's important to have proper pruning before, or have the tree removed, and plant a tree with the criteria (i.e. size and placement) that should be determined by an arborist, so that a tree's health and appearance will never be compromised by the need for utility pruning. So don't wait until it's too late, call your local ISA Arborist at Advance Tree Service and Landscaping to help you determine your choice for the perfect tree.

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Gardening for Bees

Easy ways to make your garden a honeybee haven

By Janet Kaidantzis



A honeybee heads for a mustard flower. Photo Andy Scheck

With the warmer winter weather, spring is in the air. And so are the honeybees – out flying, gathering pollen, nectar and water to bring back to the hive. Warmer weather also brings us out to our gardens. As you look around and make plans for the sunny days ahead, do a few simple things to help the honeybee. She will reward your efforts by pollinating the flowers to make your fruit trees and vegetable gardens more abundant. And her honey will surely find its way to your local farmers' market and onto your table.

If you have a sunny spot in your yard, plant lavender or rosemary. These attractive shrubs are easy to grow, drought tolerant and long blooming. If you have part shade, plant spearmint, hummingbird sage, campanula or bee balm. Other bee friendly plants that flourish in our region are ceanothus, wisteria, asters, sunflowers, borage, many salvias and thyme.

Honeybees practice “flower fidelity,” foraging on one plant species at a time. Where possible, grow a single type of plant in a patch of at least one square meter. You'll be reducing the distance the honeybee must fly from flower to flower letting her work more efficiently.

Here's another simple thing you can do right now, as soon as you put down this paper. Place an old dinner plate or pie tin beneath one of your drip lines or sprinkler heads so it will refill regularly. Honeybees need a reliable source of clean water all year long. They will remember and return to your improvised water feeder every day, just like a bird, so keep it in the same place and keep it flowing. Place a mound of pebbles on the plate so the bees can take a sip of water without falling in.

It has been a tough year on honeybees. Colony

losses among my beekeeping friends exceeded 50 percent. There are many reasons for honeybee mortality; chemical poisonings are one factor. Please avoid using herbicides and pesticides. Instead, trap the yellow jackets (they attack honeybees, too). Use ladybugs to go after aphids. Dump standing water to prevent mosquitoes. If you must spray for pests, choose a product that is non-lethal to honeybees. At the very least, spray at dusk when the honeybee has returned to her hive.

Mother Nature does her part to help the honeybee.

Outside your garden walls, the rains bring up the mustard that blooms across our open hillsides providing good forage for bees. More wildflowers will follow. The honeybee knows no boundaries and will fly to wherever nutritious flowers bloom. With very little effort, you can invite her into your garden helping both your plants and the honeybees to thrive.

Meanwhile, pray for rain. How easy is that?

Janet Kaidantzis is a backyard beekeeper in Lafayette and a member of the Mt. Diablo Beekeepers Association.

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