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Come join us at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church this Christmas Eve!

Family Services.....3:00 p.m. & 4:30 p.m.
 Traditional Services.....7:00 p.m. & 8:30 p.m.
 Homecoming Communion Service...11:00 p.m.

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 Questions? Email worship@LOPC.org

FREE



A 66-year-old water main on Reliez Station Road ruptured with a 15-foot-long break on Nov. 27. Photo courtesy East Bay Municipal Utility District

Do Aging Pipes Pose an Unseen Threat?

By Cathy Tyson

While residents in Lamorinda and beyond have been hammered with conservation messages during this historic drought, an estimated 2.6 million gallons of water went down the drain Nov. 27 when an East Bay Municipal Utility District water main broke on Reliez Station Road, flooding five backyards and affecting 35 EBMUD customers.

The break was reported at 4:30 p.m. and took just over six

hours until the water was finally shut off at 10:45 p.m. The water lost was the equivalent of the amount of water 19 homes would use in a year, according to figures from the California Single Family Water Use Efficiency Study, which estimates the average household uses 360 gallons of water per day.

When a major break releases water that impacts nearby waterways and creeks, the utility is required to send a report to the EPA's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System which

has regulatory standards for wastewater discharge. According to the EBMUD Potable Water Discharge Report that was filed with the Water Board, Fish and Wildlife, and the city of Lafayette, "The discharge lasted for six hours for several reasons including difficulty finding isolation valves in the dark under water and mud, the need for specialized equipment to close the larger valves, and one valve being broken open requiring alternative valves to be located and closed."

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LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Avoid Becoming a Victim of Fraud

Identity theft and fraud forum focuses on ways to protect yourself

By Cathy Tyson

The phone calls and emails are becoming all too familiar: A grandson is in jail in Peru, urgently needing bail money; you have won the Nigerian lottery and need to send funds to pay for taxes to claim your winnings; the Internal Revenue Service will arrest you if you do not send money owed for back taxes right now; a contractor calls to say he will be in your neighborhood soon.

Unfortunately, these calls and emails are all likely scams.

So how do you protect yourself? The Crime Prevention Commission recently hosted an Identity Theft – Fraud Forum with speakers including the Lafayette Chief of Police, and representatives from the Sheriff's Office, the District Attorney's Office, the IRS and the California Contractors Licensing Board, who gave specific information about best practices to avoid becoming a victim.

"Real estate fraud is a bonanza for criminals," said former Deputy District Attorney of Contra Costa County Ken McCormick to a standing room only crowd at the



Locked mailboxes Photo C. Tyson
 Veterans Memorial Hall.

Elders are often the target of real estate crimes, especially in Lamorinda's prosperous neighborhoods, because they usually have a larger net worth, and they can be subject to undue influence from both shady real estate professionals and family members, according to McCormick.

... continued on page A3

A Note About Our Newspaper Carrier

Blackhawk Enterprise (email – mailblackhawk@gmail.com) has been delivering the Lamorinda Weekly to all homes in Orinda, Lafayette and Moraga since January 2011. The team of eight drivers works hard to make sure you get your newspaper every other Wednesday. Blackhawk Enterprise and its team members would like to wish our readers a joyous holiday season and a very happy new year. You will also see a flyer from them in this week's issue.

Thank you,
 Lamorinda Weekly

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Residents can weight in on Moraga downtown design – page A4.

Fire Districts A8

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Lafayette

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Jan. 11, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Jan. 4, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Jan. 11, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Arts & Science Discovery Center,
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District
Wednesday, Feb. 3, 7:30 p.m.
AUHSD Board Room
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Jan 13, 7 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
District Office Board Room
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 Nov. 22-28

Alarms	92
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	10
Noise Complaints	4
Traffic Stops	119
Suspicious Circumstances	9
Suspicious Subjects	14
Suspicious Vehicles	19
Abandoned Vehicle	
3200 block Marlene Dr Mt Diablo Blvd/Acalanes	
Animal Cruelty	
Dewing Ave/Mt Diablo Blvd	
Battery	
3300 block Sweet Dr St Perpetua	
Bomb Threat	
3800 block Happy Valley Rd	
Burglary, Auto	
Mt Diablo Blvd/Pleasant Hill Rd	
4000 block Mt Diablo Blvd (2)	
1000 block Brown Ave (2)	
1300 block El Curtola	
30 block Barn Ln	
Lafayette Park Hotel	
Oakwood Athletic Club	
Orchard Nursery	
Acalanes High School	
Civil Problem	
900 block Sunnybrook Dr	
Burnt Oak/Rohrer Dr	
1000 block Aileen St	
Dispute, Verbal	
900 block Dewing Ave	
Disturbing the Peace	
Pleasant Hill Rd/Mt Diablo Blvd	
Roundup	
900 block Hough Ave	
DUI	
2nd St/Mt Diablo Blvd	
Roundup	
Fireworks	
10 block My Rd	
Fraud, Computer	
3600 block Bickerstaff St (2)	
3100 block Sweetbrier Cir	
Health & Safety Violation	
3500 block Little Ln	
Hit & Run	
Post Office	
Safeway (2)	
Oak Hill Rd/Mt Diablo Blvd	
School St/Moraga Rd	
Panhandling	
CVS	
Police/Fire/EMS Response	
4000 block Mt Diablo Blvd	
3200 block Vals Ln	
1300 block El Curtola Blvd	
Lafayette Reservoir	
3400 block Mt Diablo Blvd	
900 block Happy Valley Ct	
Hwy 24/1st St	
Silver Springs/Moraga Rds	
School St/Moraga Rd	

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Recommending New Rules for Pot

Delivery OK, cultivation and testing not

By Cathy Tyson

The six medical marijuana delivery firms that service Lafayette can rest easy: Abundant, Green Garden Delivery, Green Grizzly, Norcal Patients Collective, La Morinda Top Shelf, and Pure Cure Pharmacy will not be banned from delivering in the area, unless the City Council opposes the current recommendation by the Planning Commission.

Since 2011, the city has adopted ordinances banning marijuana dispensaries and cultivation in Lafayette. Responding to the California legisla-

ture's recent Medical Marijuana Regulation and Safety Act, enacted to comprehensively regulate medical marijuana, the city initiated an amendment that would update and expand the existing city ordinance to prohibit cannabis manufacture, delivery and testing laboratories.

At the Dec. 6 Planning Commission meeting, the majority of commissioners supported delivery services. Explaining that medical use of marijuana is legal in California, Commissioner Kathryn Lyddan sided

with patients, saying, "Those people that are ill are exactly the people who might use a delivery service."

"It's a merchandising issue," said Commissioner Tom Chastain.

Proposition 215, the California Compassionate Use Act, was passed by voters in 1996 legalizing the medical use of marijuana.

A motion to allow cultivation for personal use along with delivery service died, but a motion to allow delivery of medical marijuana passed. The planning commissioner's recommen-

dation will go to the City Council for a final decision in January.

City Attorney Mala Subramanian suggested in a memorandum that marijuana uses can become a nuisance: "The cultivation, transportation, and distribution of marijuana can create problems relating to public health and safety, crime, water and air quality, and energy consumption."

Her official recommendation is for the City Council to adopt a ban on marijuana transportation, testing laboratories and cultivation.

Bomb Threat at Happy Valley School Diffused

By Cathy Tyson

Despite the occasional car break in, many Lafayette residents feel that their little community is removed from big city problems. That bubble was promptly burst at approximately 6 p.m. on Dec. 1 when the Lafayette Police Department received a phoned-in bomb threat targeting Happy Valley Elementary School.

Lafayette police carefully inspected the campus following the threat. Children and their coaches participating in an after-school activity were evacuated. Nothing was found at this campus, or at other school locations in Lafayette.

According to police chief Eric

Christensen, an unidentified caller gave an erroneous school name to Walnut Creek dispatchers, but had the correct address for Happy Valley Elementary School. Superintendent of the Lafayette School District, Rachel Zinn, said that the current investigation has it narrowed down to a "robo" call that came from outside of the area. Zinn credits the district's partnership with Lafayette police as "wonderful" and praised the department for its immediate response.

Out of an abundance of caution, police were back early the next morning along with a bomb sniffing dog.

... continued on next page



Happy Valley Elementary School in Lafayette was the alleged target of phoned-in bomb threat Dec. 1. Photo C. Tyson

Ordinance Violation	30 block Diablo Cir
Public Nuisance	1300 block Sunset Loop Whole Foods
Promiscuous Shooting	3500 block Hamlin Rd 1000 block Oak Hill Rd
Reckless Driving	Pleasant Hill Rd/Tailor Blvd Mt Diablo Blvd/Pleasant Hill Rd Mt Diablo Blvd/2nd St Hidden Valley Rd/Diablo Cir Jackson's Wine & Spirits Deer Hill/Pleasant Hill Rds
Recovery Stolen Vehicle	1000 block Sierra Vista Way
Shoplifting	Safeway (3) Diablo Foods
Theft, Petty	Trader Joe's 900 block Acalanes Rd CVS 700 block Los Palos Manor 4000 block Legion Ct 1300 block Reliez Valley Rd 3400 Black Hawk Rd 900 block Sunnybrook Dr
Theft, ID	3500 block S Silver Springs Rd (2) 1000 block Lizann Dr 1100 block Sierra Vista Way 1100 block Via Media 10 block Mt View Ln
Theft, Vehicle	Acalanes High School Safeway (2) Whole Foods 1100 Vallecito Ct Mt Diablo Blvd/El Nido Ranch Rd 1000 block Blackwood Ln
Threats	900 block 1st St
Trespass	Quandt Rd/Stanley Blvd
Unwanted Guest	30 block Lafayette Cir 3500 block Mt Diablo Blvd 4000 block Happy Valley Rd 3300 block Mt Diablo Blvd 3600 block Mt Diablo Blvd
Vandalism	Acalanes High School 1st St/Moraga Blvd Sweet Dr/Carlyle Ter 4000 block Happy Valley Rd



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Bomb Threat at Happy Valley School Diffused

... continued from page A2

After scouring the classrooms and campus again, they found nothing. There was a police presence at the other schools in the district, as well as a school psychologist who was available to talk with students, staff and parents.

"We would never compromise student safety. We were absolutely confident there was nothing there," said Zinn. Although parents were understandably a bit anxious, school was in session the next day.

Zinn was quick to compliment

police training and preparedness, and noted the experience has definitely heightened safety awareness at the district.

The police chief responded to questions about why the bomb squad was not on campus in a recent online Crime Bulletin: "The bomb squad does not search for devices – they deactivate devices once they are found."

Both the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms are investigating the matter.

Avoid Becoming a Victim of Fraud

... continued from page A1

Because jail time is much shorter for real estate fraud than for bank robbery, he suggests these types of crimes are "so simple" for those familiar with the paperwork, often starting with forging a signature on a deed.

Home repair fraud is rampant and expensive, said Jane Kreidler from the Contractors State License Board. For homeowners with a home improvement project over \$500, a contractor with a valid license is required. Homeowners shopping for a contractor should get three bids, check references and make sure the contractor's license and driver's license names match up. Kreidler also strongly encouraged checking online to make sure the license is active and in good standing. Do not use a contractor who randomly calls, offering services.

A contract should contain specific information about the time-frame of the job and the payment schedule; the down payment cannot be more than \$1,000 or 10 percent of the contract price, whichever is less. Never pay in cash. "If you have a problem with a contractor, we want to know,"

said Kreidler.

A special IRS agent representing the law enforcement arm of the federal agency who does financial investigation dealing with tax evasion and money laundering addressed the group. She said a frequent scam is someone claiming to be an IRS agent on the phone who threatens to arrest a person unless back taxes due are paid immediately. She was clear: "The actual IRS will not call you."

Investigations have led to a call center in India as a source of the calls.

For those involved in identity theft fraud on a tax return, file an online complaint at the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration (www.tigta.gov).

Lafayette Chief of Police Eric Christensen also warned that "shoulder surfing" is occurring at local bank ATMs, and if the person behind you is quick, it is possible to make an additional transaction, usually a withdrawal, on your account. He recommends pausing for a few moments before walking away to ensure the transaction is fully complete.

Additional Tips from the Lafayette Chief of Police:

A raised red flag on a mailbox can be construed by bad guys to mean come steal the mail. Your postal carrier will understand if there is outgoing mail in the box.

- Protect your mail and packages – pick up as soon as possible. Also consider getting a locked mailbox. Christensen calls Upper Happy Valley Road the "speedway of mailbox theft."
- A shredder that does a crisscross cut is best. Shred all documents with personal, financial and medical information.
- Using a thin-tipped Sharpie pen is the easiest way to deter criminals from tampering with checks, as the ink saturates into the paper.
- Do not allow a random caller who says he or she is from Microsoft to gain remote access to your computer.
- Check your credit report every year. You have the right to a free credit report every 12 months.
- Protect valuables in your car, and don't leave items in plain sight.
- Be careful discarding used computers or cell phones. Be sure to wipe the hard drive – or remove it entirely.



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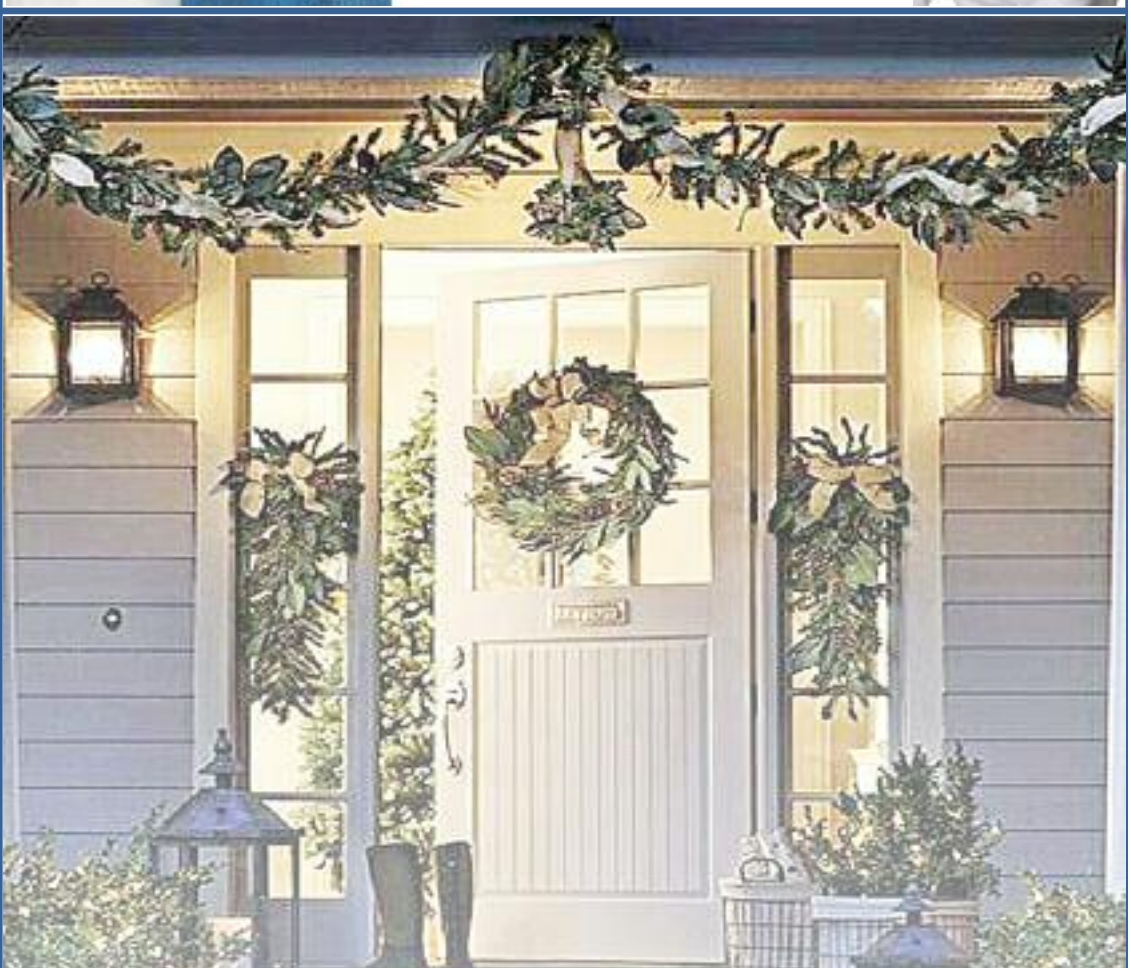
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Moraga

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Jan. 13, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School,
1010 Camino Pablo

Planning Commission

Monday, Jan. 4, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

Design Review

Monday, Jan. 11, 7 p.m.
Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Rd.

School Board Meeting Moraga School District

Tuesday, Jan. 12, 7 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

Gas hose a goner, 12/7/15 A customer at a Moraga Road gas station accidentally damaged the gas pump by attempting to drive away with the nozzle still in her car. It could have been much worse. Thankfully the hose has a break-away feature for this very reason and simply separated from the equipment. The customer did the right thing and stopped, then informed the service station owner about the incident.

Domestic violence, 12/6/15 Moraga cops responded to Kaiser Walnut Creek for a report of domestic violence that occurred at one of the shops in the Rheem Shopping Center. Police conducted an investigation and subsequently arrested the suspect who was charged with corporal injury and criminal threats.

Fancy phone vanishes at swim practice, 12/4/15 The reporting person stated that her \$850 cell phone was stolen from her backpack while at swim practice. No suspects or witnesses at this time. A stroke of bad luck.

Bad tenant, 12/3/15 An elderly person was concerned about the tenant in his attached in-law suite, due to his odd behavior. Cops called the tenant and asked him some questions; he did not meet the criteria for mental health hold and hung up on officers. Police advised the landlord to seek legal counsel about evicting the tenant. Officers later responded back to the home after the tenant was banging on the landlord's door after a three-day eviction notice was served. All parties were advised to stay away from each other until the civil issue could be sorted out.

License trouble, 12/3/15 It started with a busted tail light, but snow-balled from there. Cops pulled over a car on Canyon Road due to a "vehicle code lighting violation," but soon found that the driver had a suspended license for DUI, and failed to provide proof of insurance. The car was towed and placed on a 30-day impound hold. Driver was later released at the scene with a signed promise to appear. Looks like taking Uber would have been the better option.

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Happy Holidays



Gary Bernie & Ken Ryerson

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Size of New Home Construction Debate Continues

By Sophie Braccini

For years developers and residents in Moraga have been fighting over home sizes: whether to build new homes in size similar to existing homes in the neighborhood, or to maximize the size of new construction. The debate continued at the Dec. 7 Planning Commission meeting, which focused on a new home being proposed by Branagh Development at 68 Vista Encinos. Last October the Design Review Board approved the single 3,200-square-foot home proposed on lot No. 4. Larch residents appealed the decision to the Planning Commission.

The Vista Encinos project was approved in 2002 on seven acres of unoccupied land off Larch Avenue. The Planning Commission approved 10 lots on the uphill property, but at the

time no home size was specified, though it was recommended that some of the homes be limited in mass to serve as a transition with the existing smaller homes on Larch Avenue. Regulating bodies have often been unwilling to set house size limits, other than for the floor-area-ratio that is set for smaller parcels.

"We punted on multiple levels, including on setting house sizes," said Planning Commissioner Steve Woehleke, who was on the Planning Commission at the time, "and that was a major mistake."

Built on a steep slope from the Vista Encinos level toward Larch Avenue, the new home looks like a single-level residence from the street, but from Larch Avenue backyards, neighbors say they see 50 feet of home,

with a deck, looming over their houses with direct views into their bedrooms and bathrooms. When the development was approved in 2002, it was on the condition of planting trees and shrubs to block the view. The landscaping plan was approved in 2006, but many of the plants have since died and others were deciduous, offering no visual barrier in winter.

Planning Commission Chairperson Tom Marnane said he was ready to approve the project provided that the landscaping is updated, but other commissioners indicated that relying simply on trees and bushes to protect the neighbors' privacy was not enough. Commissioner Woehleke cited the town design guidelines that state that new developments need to fit the neighborhood and not ad-

versely impact neighbors. He said that looking at one project where five sites have been approved for development on the south side of Vista Encinos would not give the whole picture. Commissioner Christine Kuckuk recommended the developer increase the second story setback to minimize the massing as seen from Larch.

The commissioners reached a consensus and agreed to continue the hearing at a later date, asking the developer to return with a revised landscape plan reviewed by staff, and a new floor plan, reducing the visual impact to downslope neighbors. Branagh Development will work with staff to amend the plan and come back to the commission when ready.

Residents Can Weigh In on Defining Downtown Character

By Sophie Braccini

When story poles are erected on a new development site, it is often too late to make any changes since decisions have already been made. But Moraga residents can still weigh in on the draft "Vision Concept" created by a Town of Moraga steering committee at a public open house and discussion in January. A committee has been working with consultant Opticos Designs on defining the character of downtown Moraga through proposed zoning changes in the Moraga Center Specific Plan.

The steering committee was appointed six months ago to work with the consultant on proposals on such topics as road connectivity in the area, integrating new public space within that network of roads, requiring building fronts to face the streets and setting parking behind those buildings, creating bicycle and pedestrian networks, refining the transition between low and higher density residential by looking at topography to minimize the visual impact, and proposing housing types to fit the town's char-

acter. In 2007 the town of Moraga adopted a specific plan for its downtown area located around the crossing of Moraga Way and Moraga Road. In 2015, building in this area began, although the detailed regulation for doing so, the zoning, had not yet been determined. While decisions regarding zoning will not change elements such as allowed densities or types of use, it can shape what that area will look like, if and when the property owners decide they want to build.

"We are using a zoning method called form-based-zoning," explains Planning Director Ellen Clark who

secured grant money to conduct the process. "It is about what people want to see, and writing a code that will foster predictable built results." Right now an area might simply be defined by density and type of construction, but the specific plan says nothing about setbacks, visual impact, or style. The new code will address elements such as internal connecting roads, types of building along the creek, height, number of stories, and public and private open space.

These elements, aimed more at creating a vision for the future of Moraga, will be presented at the public open house in January. The exact

date has not been finalized, but will be posted on the Town of Moraga website at moraga.ca.us. "The open house will be followed by a special joint public meeting of the Design Review Board and Planning Commission to review and discuss the vision concept," said Clark.

Once the vision concept is approved by the community, the planning team will translate it into precise building standards that new developments will need to follow. Projects already approved, such as the City Ventures development along Moraga Way, will be exempt from the new zoning.

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A Fun Gift to Say Thanks For a Job Well Done



Jill Keimach and Roger Wykle, holding 'the shoes.'

Photo Sophie Braccini

Dec. 9 marked Roger Wykle's last day as mayor of the town of Moraga. His colleagues noted how much they enjoyed his mayorship, the firm and respectful way he conducted meetings and discussed issues with his colleagues, even when disagreeing, and the calm he was able to restore in the most heated moments. Town Manager Jill Keimach paid him the biggest homage that evening, saying how she appreciated how hard he worked behind the scenes. She also explained about a few of the mayor's pet peeves, including a pair of shoes that had been dangling on a wire over a street by the park. "We didn't have a cherry picker in town and had not been able to take care of it," said Keimach. "Jay Ingram (Parks and Recreation director) talked to one of our contractors who had a cherry picker, and we took the shoes down." Staff bronzed the shoes, mounted them on a piece of wood with a wire, and gave them in good fun to Wykle as a thank you gift. — Sophie Braccini

Moraga's 'First Lady' for the Third Time

By Sophie Braccini



Mike and Sharon Metcalf in their Moraga home

Photo Sophie Braccini

It was no surprise when council members elected Mike Metcalf for the third time as mayor of Moraga on Dec. 9. The unwritten local tradition that rotates the leader's seat according to the number of votes obtained was followed to the letter. His wife, Sharon, was in attendance, approving of her husband's long commitment to the town. After seeing her husband serving the town, free of charge, for almost 20 years, one would think that the former architect and engineer would be ready to see him cut back on his volunteer engagement, but Sharon Metcalf is happy to see Mike Metcalf happy. She says as long as he wants to serve, she will make the little life adjustments that make it possible and pleasurable for the two of them.

"Mike's engagement with the town started very shortly after he retired from Chevron," she says. "He was first on the planning

commission, then after he timed out, he ran for town council." This will be his 12th year at the dais. "I don't think that he has decided yet if he wants to run again or not." Sharon Metcalf knows that the newly elected mayor has transferred his passionate commitment to a job that took him all over the world, to the management of Moraga's affairs, and that he sometimes wonders what else he would be doing if he was not on the council. "He would not be one to sit around," she says. "We are always doing something, either together or separately. There is not much TV watching in this house."

Besides spending hours studying town documents and participating in meetings, Mike Metcalf and his wife make furniture for family and friends in his woodshop in Guerneville. "One of the differences the year he is the mayor is that there is much less furniture making," says Sharon Metcalf with a smile, acknowledging that during that year, the workload is much greater. She will also make sure that their trips are scheduled outside important meetings.

She says that the two of them do not discuss town politics a lot together, but she reckons that her perspective has changed on some topics because she sees the greater good. "When Rancho Laguna II project was proposed, I saw that it would have an impact on our view," she says, "but I also know that this town needs some development in order to revitalize its retail." When the Metcalf family moved to Moraga some 30 years ago, there were three grocery stores and a kids shoe store, she remembers. "Young families were moving in and were shopping in town."

Sharon Metcalf has had her share of volunteering for the town as well. She was on the board of the Hacienda Foundation for four years and worked with Judy Dinkle to complete many improvement projects; she also did her part to support the 1 percent sales tax measure, hosting meetings.

Now, as she prepares her home for the holidays and her children's visits, she knows that this year's responsibilities will not leave a lot of free time to her husband to give her a hand. But that does not faze her. She is used to it.

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Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Jan. 12, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Dec. 22, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, Jan. 13, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way

School Board Meeting Orinda Union School District

Monday, Jan. 11, 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 Nov. 22-28

Alarms	62
Noise Complaints	0
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	4
Traffic Stops	92
Suspicious Circumstances	12
Suspicious Subjects	14
Suspicious Vehicles	27

Abandoned Vehicle
10 block El Toyonal (2)
Davis Rd/Bryant Way
Arbolado Ct/Muth Dr
Knickerbocker/Stein Way (2)
Monte Vista/Marston Rds
Arbolado Ct/Muth Dr

Battery
10 block Overhill Rd

Barking Dog
10 block Rio Vista

Burglary, Auto
60 block Moraga Way
BevMo
200 block Camino Pablo

Burglary, Residential
100 block Camino don Miguel
200 block Monte Vista Ridge Rd
80 block Oak Rd

Civil Problem
100 block Estates Dr
10 block Tara Rd
100 block Scenic Dr

Dependent Child
Safeway

Disturbance
200 block Monte Vista Ridge
40 block Overhill Rd

Embezzlement
20 block Orinda Way

Excessive Speed
10 block Moraga Way

Fraud
200 block Orchard Rd

Harassment
Miramonte High School
40 block Underhill Rd

Hit & Run
20 block Altarinda
Safeway
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd
20 block Bryant Way
St Stephen's Church

Health & Safety Violation
Moraga Way/Ivy Dr

ID Theft
5400 block San Pablo Dam Rd
10 block Oak Dr
Reported to police

Litter
Camino Pablo/Ardilla Rd

Juvenile
600 block Moraga Way
Unocal station
500 block Dalewood Dr

Ordinance Violation
20 block Orinda Way (2)



Maureen Wilbur

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Selection of New Mayor and Vice Mayor Caps Lighthearted Year-End Council Meeting

By Victor Ryerson

No doubt about it: The Dec. 1 Orinda City Council Meeting was a love fest. Fulfilling outgoing Mayor Dean Orr's promise at the outset that it would be a "fun packed agenda," there were wine, women and song, not to mention flowers and lots of loving praise for those who have served the city over the years.

The wine came in the form of gifts to those honored during the course of evening. But it was the women and song that set the tone for the events that followed. Receiving a proclamation from the council on the occasion of its 50th anniversary, WomenSing – which started in 1969 as the Orinda Women's Chorale – treated the council members and audience to a beautiful a capella performance at the beginning of the meeting. "If we would start every meeting with a song, perhaps we would be in a better spot," quipped Orr.

The most serious business conducted at the meeting was the selection of the city's new mayor and vice mayor for the one-year term that started that evening. Following tradition, Vice Mayor Victoria Smith was selected as the new mayor by the other council members. Council



The Orinda City Council and staff smile with members of WomenSing at the Dec. 1 council meeting.

Photo Ohlen Alexander

Member Eve Phillips, the most recently elected member, was chosen to be the new vice mayor. (See the article on page A7; Smith will be highlighted in the Dec. 30 issue.)

Before that last bit of city business was accomplished, however, there were awards, proclamations, plaques, certificates, flowers and encomia bestowed on many of those in attendance. Kicking off the cele-

bration, Orr presented the 2016 Mayor's Award for Excellence to the city's Public Works and Engineering Services Department. Department head Chuck Swanson responded with thanks and a slide show of his employees doing the work for which they were being recognized.

Then there was a ceremony to recognize former mayor and council

member, now State Senator Steve Glazer's service to the city. Orr spoke about Glazer's many contributions to the city: roads, drains, the Monteverde project, and so on. A plaque was presented to him, and each council member offered remarks. Then Orr presented a gift (that's where the wine came in), and so did each council member.

... continued on page A12

Council to Discuss Road Repair Funding Options at Dec. 15 Meeting

The Orinda City Council will discuss how to fund the continued restoration and maintenance of Orinda's roads at its Dec. 15 meeting. The council's determination may have potential tax ramifications for Orinda residents. Members of the public will be permitted to offer comments during the public hearing on this matter.

The item is an outgrowth of a joint meeting held by the council and the Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Committee (CIOC) on June 10, 2015. At that meeting the two organizations discussed updating the current Road and Drain Repairs Plan previously approved by the council on April 22, 2014. Following the meeting, the

CIOC was tasked with updating the plan, and the city's Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) was tasked with calculating the tax rates required to fund the estimated cost of each option identified by the CIOC.

The CIOC presented its plan to the council on Nov. 17, and the CIOC, FAC and city staff were directed to

focus their efforts on Scenario C of the plan, which calls for all public roads in Orinda to be restored at a Pavement Condition Index (PCI) of 50 or better. The cost of implementation will vary according to the timeframe for completion of the repairs. Scenario C was presented with 8 year and 10 year alternative timeframes,

but the actual timeframe has not been determined.

The various tax rate types available to fund the work are discussed in the FAC report and will be considered by the council, which is expected to provide comment and direction to the staff at the meeting. For information, visit cityoforinda.org. – Victor Ryerson



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Eve Phillips: Lamorinda's Prodigal Daughter on the Orinda City Council

By Victor Ryerson



Newly appointed Orinda mayor Victoria Smith with Eve Phillips, the newly appointed vice mayor at the Dec. 1 City Council meeting. Photo Ohlen Alexander

Never one to sit still collecting proverbial moss, Orindan Eve Phillips decided to run for a City Council seat in 2014, two years after she returned to the fold from a peripatetic career in the tech world. She won the seat. And now she is Orinda's new vice mayor to boot.

A Moraga-raised graduate of Mira-

monte High School's class of 1995, she is clearly also Orinda's youngest council member. As such, she is the representative, willing or not, of the generation that will inherit the future of Orinda. She celebrated her most recent birthday by attending the Dec. 1 council meeting, at which she was chosen for her new office by her

fellow council members, a definite vote of confidence in her vision and governance skills.

Do not let Phillips' youth deceive you. She has packed more education and experience into her years to date than most people do in a lifetime. A successful entrepreneur and the CEO of her own Internet company (www.empower-interactive.com), she has the seasoning and self-assurance one would expect of someone far more senior in the business world. She is also an accomplished athlete who has successfully completed 30 marathons, including the Boston Marathon that was the target of the terrorist bombing two years ago. The pace of her life does not appear to have fazed her a bit.

After graduating from high school, Phillips earned bachelor's and master's degrees in computer science and engineering from MIT, doing internships on Wall Street and at a venture capital firm in England as part of her education. When she completed her work at MIT, she landed a job at Trilogy, a "very entrepreneurial" Texas-based company that joint ventured with Ford Motor Company on ways Ford could engage in e-commerce. She traveled extensively and worked with the fervor of an

Olympian. Then the dot-com bubble burst.

"I was ready to come home," she says – but apparently not all the way home. Joining a private equity firm in San Francisco, she moved to Palo Alto to earn an MBA at Stanford, then returned to San Francisco, and finally moved to Orinda in 2012, where she started her online mental health care company with a respected psychiatrist.

She started to become interested in local politics the following year. Her decision to run for the council seat was motivated by "what was and wasn't going on in the city," she says. She was troubled by specific decisions being made by the council about land use matters, as well as questions of "process transparency." Examples of the former included the way the Monteverde senior residence was approved with relaxed height limits and parking requirements, and the denial of permitting for a Montessori school in the Phair's Building. Her explanation of her concern about the city's approval process is that the council "forgot that people on the 'outside' were unaware" of how these decisions were made. "Decisions were made without (public) understanding of why," she says. ... continued on page A11

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Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, Jan. 6, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, Dec. 16, cancelled
Moraga Library Community Room
1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga
For meeting times and agendas,
visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors

Tuesday, Jan. 12, 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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lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com)

Executive Changes at MOFD and ConFire

By Nick Marnell



MOFD Director
Steve Anderson
Photo courtesy Moraga-Orinda
Fire District



ConFire Deputy Chief
Lewis Broschard
Photo courtesy Contra Costa County
Fire District

Director Steve Anderson could not make it to the Dec. 2 Moraga-Orinda Fire District board meeting, so he joined the proceedings via remote hookup.

"You know what happens when you don't

show up to a meeting," said Anderson. The board unanimously elected Anderson president effective Jan. 1.

"I am committed to continue to provide excellent service for our district residents and to maintain fiscal responsibility," he said later. Anderson will elaborate on the state of the district in the Dec. 30 issue of the Lamorinda Weekly.

Fire Chief Jeff Carman appointed Lewis Broschard as Deputy Chief of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District effective Dec. 1.

"We've been getting our reactive work done but not the proactive work," said Carman. Broschard will perform many of the ConFire executive level planning tasks, such as working with the nine cities that the district serves. "It's an honor to be appointed as the district's first Deputy Fire Chief," he said.

Broschard has been a member of the ConFire senior staff since 2012. "It is remarkable to see the progress we've made in such a short period of time to start the rebuilding process of the district," he said. "The projects we have recently initiated to invest in our capital needs – including purchasing new engines, ladder trucks and rescue apparatus, as well as providing facility improvements at fire station 17 and the rebuilding of fire station 16 – will directly benefit the city of Lafayette and all the communities we serve."

Carman expects to present his board a proposal for the station 16 rebuild in January. He also said that he plans to fill the assistant fire chief position that Broschard vacated, as well as hire an assistant chief to supervise the district emergency medical service operations, by the spring of next year.

Coming Soon to a Lafayette Medical Call



Beginning Jan. 1 the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District subcontracts with American Medical Response to provide emergency ambulance transport service in most of Contra Costa County. The district ambulances will be rebranded as pictured. "We started the branding in December," said fire chief Jeff Carman. "Our ambulances will say Contra Costa Fire - EMS, but state law requires that AMR

also be listed on the ambulance." The existing ambulance fleet will sport the white color scheme and as new ambulances join the fleet in 2016, they will be painted red, matching the color to be used in all district apparatus. Carman said that the reserve ambulances were painted first, and would be dispatched only in case of equipment failure prior to January. – Nick Marnell



Photos provided

Fire Station Feast for Finley



Top row, from left: Kimberly Pertel, Scott Pertel, and Aaron Brown; bottom row: Samantha Pertel, John Pertel, Finley Brown, Cooper Brown and Firefighter-paramedic Lucas Lambert
Photo Nick Marnell

The Pertel family of Moraga, winners of the Dinner for Finley raffle conducted by the Moraga-Orinda Fire District Professional Firefighters Association, joined Finley Brown, her father and brother for the feast at fire station 44 Saturday, Dec. 11. Firefighter-paramedic Lucas Lambert organized the event after meeting Finley, a cancer patient, at the Moraga Pear Festival in September. The raffle proceeds will pay for a trip to Disneyland Park for the Brown family after Finley completes her chemotherapy treatments this month.

"I was doing my food shopping and in came a call I didn't recognize. It was Lucas, who told me that we had won the raffle," said Kimberly Pertel. "It was so great, because our kids and the Browns are all school buddies."

Lambert said the association hoped to raise \$1,500 in contributions for the family. The final total exceeded \$3,400. – Nick Marnell

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SEASON'S GREETINGS!



Billy and I wish all of our friends and neighbors a safe and happy Holiday Season. It is such a special time of year to spend with the people close to you and create new memories that will last forever. We are so fortunate to live in this wonderful community. Here's looking forward to a healthy and prosperous New Year in 2016.

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

Letters to the Editor

Editor:

As an Orinda native and a mother of young children in our schools, I was pleased to see Lamorinda Weekly's coverage of the movement to improve our downtown ("Petition Highlights Burgeoning Demand to Improve Downtown Vitality"). Together with other young parents in Orinda, I have recently formed a group called What's Up Downtown (www.whatsupdowntownorinda.com) to help our peers stay informed and engaged in the public planning process.

We are a generation of Orindans, many of us who grew up here like myself, who would like to see an improved downtown that serves as the heart of our community. We'd like a restored, charming downtown where people get out of their cars, connect with each other and experience great local amenities: a gourmet market, buzzing coffee shops and restaurants, a pleasant walk where we can window shop and maybe buy something we didn't know we needed. Most of us leave Orinda for all of this, which is such a shame.

The public planning process that the Petition urges cannot come soon enough. Some of the key downtown parcels are now starting to change ownership. We would like to see our community come up with a plan for what should replace them. If we fail to take this on, we will be at the mercy of private developers who will do their own planning. Orinda can do better and we think it's possible with community support.

Laura McDowell
Orinda

Editor:

Lafayette was incorporated into a city in 1968 to keep it a semi-rural town. The town motto on the City web page says "Lafayette was incorporated for the preservation and enhancement of the semi-rural character of the community." So why did the Lafayette City Council decide to put stop lights at Reliez Station Road and Las Trampas Road when that signal will start a precedent of losing the semi-rural character of Burton Valley? After reviewing the report done by Stantec on May 15, 2015, here are some facts regarding the approved signals at Reliez Station Road and Las Trampas.

- 1) It will increase danger to the 14,806 daily drivers on Reliez by making vehicles stop and roll backwards while going up on Reliez Station Road. [On Item 5.4, Page 5.22, Stantec says there is a concern about trucks having difficulty making stops due to the steep grade. Their solution is to monitor the situation after installing signals to determine if there is difficulty for trucks due to grades. They then suggest as a solution to "include creation of an advanced signal for trucks to stop on a section of road with flatter grades." Are they kidding? There are no sections with flatter grades plus I have never heard of advanced signals for trucks.]
2) Emergency vehicles would not get past a string of cars stopped for a stop light as there is no safe way to go around stopped cars going south on Reliez Station Road. This is dangerous and the delay could cost a life.
3) It will impede the flow of traffic by making vehicles stop for cars entering from Las Trampas. [A report in the Lamorinda Weekly, of November 18, 2015 said a \$59,000 study by Arup Principal says that stop lights in Lafayette inhibit the flow of traffic.] Personally, I think stop lights stop traffic.
4) A simple solution was proposed at a meeting that would be inexpensive but was dismissed with a wave of the hand by the consultant working for Stantec. This solution would be inexpensive and above all.....safe. [Install a "No Left Turn" sign on Las Trampas was proposed by me but I was told the

residents of Las Trampas Road would not be interested in that solution and was told no further discussion was necessary.]

- 5) There have not been any accidents at this intersection in the past 5 years and most drivers do not exceed the speed limit by more than 5 mph. So why put in a possibly dangerous signal? [Stantec report, Item 3.4, page 3.9]
6) An online survey said the votes suggest that pavement markings and signage was preferred by the community. [Stantec report, Item 3.4, page 3.9]
7) The Stantec report said an alternative to signals would be to install speed feedback signs for both southbound and northbound traffic plus high visibility crosswalks and the addition of warning signs at a cost of \$45,000 rather than spend \$300,000 for signals. [Stantec Report, Item 3.4, page 3.9]
8) Many studies and several City Councils have looked at this problem in the past and come to the same conclusion. The conclusion is it is too dangerous to put a stop light at this location. [City of Lafayette & MTC study 8/31/2001, Dowling Associates study 5/2/2005]
So why does the City Council want to spend \$300,000, make an intersection that has had no collisions less safe, ruin the semi-rural character of Burton Valley, and inconvenience 14,000 cars a day?

It doesn't make any sense to me or a lot of the residents of this area.

John Briggs
Lafayette

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If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda or one of its cities that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don't despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section. Just send your letter to letters@lamorindaweekly.com and let us know you'd like to be considered for the Public Forum.

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Business

Natasha Grasso Jewelry in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



A display of a few of Natasha Grasso's jewelry pieces

Photo Sophie Braccini

What gave Natasha Grasso the desire to open a shop in Moraga? The young woman is a metal welder, an artist and a businesswoman. A success on Etsy, Instagram, and upscale boutiques and museums around the country, Grasso's creations have been featured in magazines including People. The young Orinda resident is also an archetypal Lamorindan, a creative go-getter who focuses on combining harmonious family life with successful enterprising. She recently moved her first retail shop from Burlingame to Moraga to engage with her clients locally.

Grasso exhibits a wide variety of

creations in her Rheem Shopping Center store, next to Tangelo. The intimate space stocks long and short necklaces in silver and gold with pyrite, fresh water pearls, quartz interlaced with black tourmaline, earrings, bracelets, pendants from the most simple gold drop to ancient coins or keys, infinity knots, and a creative horseshoe series. Prices range from \$65 to \$1,000, depending on type of metal, length and stones used. One of her best-selling creations is the love-knot series available as a necklace, earrings or a bracelet, in silver, yellow and rose gold. "It's been a very successful design," she says. "We sell it as bridal gifts, as birthday

presents, and in a cufflink version for men."

The idea behind Grasso's collections is for the pieces to look great with blue jeans or an evening dress. "These are not disposable pieces," says the jeweler, "but they are still affordable and will enhance your existing collection."

Grasso is a young entrepreneur, but is no novice. An interior designer by training, she worked for years in business development for Ethan Allen, learning the ropes of marketing and branding. But although that job was interesting, it did not fulfill her creative side. "I have a weakness for shoes, bags and jewelry," she says. "I

decided to try jewelry making and started by learning welding." She remembers the first welding class she went to: "When I came out, I told my husband I wanted to get my own torch. I was hooked."

The foundation of her creation is metalsmithing. "I wanted stylish pieces that I could mix with some fine jewelry pieces my husband gave me, and would not make my other jewelry look fake," she says. She started selling pieces from what she was wearing. "That was a little embarrassing," she says with a smile, "so I opened the Etsy site I could refer people to." She quickly started selling all over the world. "I would be working all day at Ethan Allen, then at night I would be making jewelry on my kitchen table," she remembers. The stress level became quite high, but the income from the jewelry was catching up with that of her regular job, so Grasso decided to take a plunge and start a company.

She has now been in business for eight years, expanding online, in upscale boutiques, resorts, as well as museums. "I am at the Getty," she says, "I do special exhibitions at the De Young, we do an exclusive auction at the Academy of Science Museum."

Grasso says her challenge is that

she wants her jewelry to be made in this country, while staying competitive. She is the one creating all the collections, four times a year, by hand. She then works with a network of artisan stay-at-home mothers living in the United States who hand-make each piece sold. "One of my biggest challenges as a small business is to maintain the integrity behind the business and still make money," she says.

The business owner wanted to open her own store to build a more direct rapport with her clientele. "It is important for me to engage with the people who wear my jewelry; it helps me evolve the line so it stays relevant to them," she says. "For a small business owner, it is also important to give a face to the business, since most of my revenue is wholesale."

The fact that her new baby daughter, now 18 months old, attends Child Day School next to the store is no doubt a big reason why Grasso chose that space. The boutique is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays. For information, visit

For information, visit natasha-grasso.com.

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

business briefs

Perfect Services Celebrates 25 years in Lamorinda

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Miki and Vivian Erez are celebrating the 25th anniversary of their business, Perfect Services, this year. Erez is a general contractor who prides himself on being able to do anything inside, around and even under the house with his team. "We were first located in Oakland, we moved to Orinda, then to Moraga and now we are back in Orinda," he said. Retired professor Phil Spector has been a customer of Perfect Services for over 10 years and Erez has managed many projects in his house. "He replaced the floors, redecorated the guest house and added a bathroom, repaired the fence, and built a wine cellar," he said. The wine cellar project had been Spector's dream for years; he just could not figure out where it would go. "One day I was talking with Miki in the garden and he said, 'We'll build the cellar under the deck.' And he did!" Spector says he appreciates that Erez takes care of everything, and will follow his customer's lead. For the wine cellar, he found a structural engineer, and the people to pour concrete and to finish the wood of the cave. "It works wonderfully, the temperature stays cool year round and the wine that has been sitting there is aging perfectly." Erez took four years off from construction to support the restaurant, Shish Kabab Show, his wife started in Moraga. "I loved the place and went there to eat," said Spector, "but I was happy when he came back full-time to contracting work."

Coldwell Banker Relocates to First Floor in Theatre Square

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New Coldwell Banker location on the first floor of Theatre Square

Photo provided

Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage relocated its Theatre Square office to a newly remodeled, state of the art facility in the complex. The new office is located at 2 Theatre Square, Suite 117, on the ground floor. Val Cook-Watkins, manager of Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage in Orinda, said the new office gives the company even greater visibility in the heart of downtown Orinda compared to its previous location on the second floor of Theatre Square. Coldwell Banker will continue to operate its main Orinda office across the street at 5 Moraga Way. Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage has 85 affiliated sales associates to serve the community.

News from the Three Chambers of Commerce

The three chambers of commerce celebrated the holidays with fun December mixers. No other events are scheduled until after New Year's Day.

Moraga

Save the date for the Chamber's Business and Community Symposium from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 19 at Saint Mary's Soda Center where panelists will discuss the "State of Moraga Business 2016 - Challenges and Opportunities for Businesses in Our Cul-de-Sac Community." Free and open to the community. Refreshments will be served.

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Antenna Donation Aids Emergency Communications

By Cathy Dausman



LARIG volunteers Dan Spisak, left, and Al Archangel install a multi-purpose antenna at 335 Rheem Blvd. Photo Cathy Dausman

Six antennas now sit atop Moraga's new Town Council Chambers at 335 Rheem Boulevard. The antennas and the two-way radios they are connected with link town employees or emergency communicators to police, public works and amateur radio operators across Lamorinda and throughout northern California. Moraga Rotary donated approximately \$1,700 a few years ago to purchase one of the antennas for Emergency Operations Center use, according to Rotarian Gary Irwin.

The radio setup allows the town of Moraga to connect with amateur radio operators across California and even around the world in event of an emergency. The donated antenna originally sat on the town hall roof; its signal was fed into the town's earlier Emergency Operations site, which was a small storage room in the planning department. Its recent placement atop the town chamber

building by Lamorinda Area Radio Interest Group volunteers finally gives the antenna a permanent place, Police Chief Robert Priebe said, adding that Rotary members have been very patient with the entire process, from the original installation, its removal and current installation.

In November, LARIG volunteers completed the installation of six new rooftop antennas on Moraga's town chamber building. Each antenna connects with a two-way radio inside the council chambers. The antennas will eventually be painted "sky grey" to minimize their visual impact. Priebe says the Rotary-donated radio and antenna, no longer waiting for a place to go, will become "a major communications tool for gathering and dispersing information in event of emergency when time is always of the essence."

Lafayette and Orinda have similar two-way radio systems and antennas in use as well. Orinda re-

Orinda Eve Phillips

... continued from page A7

She wanted to get more involved and improve the community, particularly its downtown center, and to improve communication with the public. "You can never communicate too much," she says.

On Phillips' want list is another downtown grocery outlet and more restaurants. She cites the petition recently presented to the council as a demonstration of the community's desire to bring in these services. She works out of her home office, and would like to see co-working spaces in Orinda, perhaps with associated daycare facilities. Recently married, she and her husband are expecting their first child in the coming year.

She is interested in transportation and parking issues, and serves as the council's liaison to BART. There are "multiple problems to talk about" in this arena, including an overflow parking issue and the need to optimize the parking situation, particularly with the capacity on the Village side. She also acknowledges the increasing push for four-hour parking zones on the Crossroads side, and although she is opposed to parking meters for Orinda, she concedes that they will very likely be reviewed as one of the options she will have to consider in the city's current parking study.

She also says Orindans "obviously have to raise more money for roads," but at the same time warns that the community should be looking very carefully at

whether it is exercising good stewardship of its finances.

An avid user and supporter of sports facilities and open space, Phillips believes that there is always a need for more ball fields, and is "glad some are coming in soon." She stresses the need to be sensitive in creating access to such community facilities as the Moraga Adobe, balancing the desire to preserve and protect buildings and open space with the interests of residents who live nearby.

Phillips wants to be a governmental leader, but not in a directive way. She says her governance philosophy is to be a facilitator, and to encourage business and property owners to resolve economic development issues while respecting their property rights. But within the parameters of the Orinda General Plan, it is really about what the community wants, she says. "There are a lot of places that have lost their soul. I wouldn't want to see that here."

With two years left in her current term of office and the strong possibility that she will serve as Orinda's next mayor, Phillips will have ample opportunity to test her approach to leadership and governance. Given her track record since she walked out of Miramonte High School 20 years ago, she appears well equipped to take on the new challenges of her office.

ceived a monetary donation from Orinda Rotary toward the purchase of an amateur radio to be used for emergency communications, said Rotary and LARIG member Gene Gottfried. Orinda's antennas are situated above Orinda City Hall. Lafayette public safety and amateur radio antennas are distributed atop the city office building, the public works building and atop the Lafayette Community Center, said Fred Lothrop, chair of Lafayette's Emergency Preparedness Commission.

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Aging Pipes

... continued from page A1



EBMUD has more than 900 main breaks per year, but EBMUD Public Information Representative Nelsy Rodriguez said the Reliez event was unique. "That was a bad break," she said of the 66-year-old pipe on Reliez, noting that it was "huge – 16 inches in diameter" and the break itself was 15 feet long. Rodriguez said it took crews "a while" to find out the exact location of the break, especially since it was dark and freezing cold that night.

Due to the size of the break, the crews had to shut off seven valves to turn the water off completely. "A job like that normally would have required us to shut off three valves, so that should help to explain how big this main break was," said Rodriguez in an email. Once the water was turned off around 11 p.m., crews dug through the night but did not finish the job until 11 a.m. the next day.

The pipes in Lamorinda are getting old. According to Rodriguez, the average pipe in Lafayette is 65 years old, average pipes in Orinda are 66 years old, and Moraga's pipes are, on average, 50 years old. With about 4,200 miles of aging water pipeline, EBMUD is currently replacing 10 miles of pipe each year, but is looking to quadruple that replacement rate to 40 miles per year in the future, according to EBMUD Senior Public In-

formation Representative Abby Figueroa. With a price tag of \$2.4 million to replace one mile of water pipe, the utility spends \$24 million annually replacing pipes.

The utility plans to replace an additional two to three miles of pipe in 2016, but at that rate, replacing 13 miles of pipe per year, it would take 323 years to replace everything. Even at the accelerated rate of 40 miles per year, it would take just over 100 years to replace all the pipes.

A pipe's lifespan has many nuances depending on the soil conditions, if it is in a slide zone, if there is earthquake movement and more. The oldest pipes in the area are cast iron, but post-World War II, cement pipe was used.

The good news for residents around the area of the break is that the pipe was repaired, they have clean running water, and the detour the repair caused is no longer causing congestion. The bad news for Lamorinda residents is that 11 percent of water EBMUD supplies disappears before it reaches your water meter, according to the 2010 Urban Water Management Plan, prepared by EBMUD – an unfortunate statistic to learn during current Stage 4 critical drought. In the report's last chapter, the utility describes the difference between the volume of water produced at the treat-

ment plant, and the sum of all billed and unbilled customers, called Distribution Water Losses.

All water systems have some losses, from a low of 1.4 percent for some utilities to a high of 25.7 percent for others, according to the Department of Water Resources. The "loss" amount comes from a number of sources: theft, inaccurate metering, data errors, but mostly main and service line breaks, along with background leakages.

With a network of vintage pipes covering a 331-square-mile area, responding quickly and efficiently to inevitable pipe breaks will be imperative, especially as EBMUD continues to require customers to conserve.

Knowing the infrastructure is at or nearing the end of its useful life, Figueroa said there are a number of reasons the utility does not take a more holistic approach to replacement: EBMUD has already identified areas most at risk, and also figures in critical use, for example, pipes connecting to a hospital, and there are budget limitations.

"Plumbing is expensive," she said, adding that installing pipe is a disruptive process, tearing up the street, causing congestion. EBMUD seeks to minimize inconvenience. "If it still works, it still works."



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Orinda

Selection of New Mayor and Vice Mayor

... continued from page A6



The Orinda City Council, Public Works and Engineering Services Department staff
Photos Ohlen Alexander

Then Council Member Worth presented a bouquet for Glazer's wife on behalf of the council to recognize the sacrifices she had made to enable him to be there. Then Glazer paid homage to City Manager Janet Keeter. And so it went.

Next, Mayor Orr received his

own proclamation and expressions of appreciation for his service. His family also received flowers for their sacrifices from the grateful council, and each council member individually expressed appreciation. Glazer spoke, and presented Orr with a certificate from the California State Senate hon-

oring his service, as well as a gift. Then Orr said a few words recognizing Glazer, the city's management and employees, and all of those in the community.

At the end of the evening there was no way anyone didn't feel good.

To witness the wine giving, see the women, listen to the song, and hear the encomia, you can find the video with a couple of mouse clicks on www.cityoforinda.org.



Steve Glazer and Dean Orr

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The Gift of Music

Ensemble Ari chamber group bridges a divide while benefiting others

By Lou Fancher



Ensemble Ari, from left: Sharon Lee, piano, Jaehee Jeong, viola, Sarah Hong, cello, Jean Ahn, composer, Jiwon Evelyn Kwark, violin, and Joowon Kang, baritone
Photo Rachel Lee

Having appeared in grand concert halls and on prestigious stages worldwide, Ensemble Ari co-founder and composer Jean Ahn has found the sweetest rewards performing in Lamorinda living rooms.

“Home concerts work well when there’s a strong community of people who appreciate music,” the 39-year-old Orinda resident says.

Ensemble Ari is a chamber group consisting of seven Bay Area-based Korean American professional musicians dedicated to bridging the divisions between Korean history and music and other cultures. Performing primarily on western or European instruments, but mingled on occasion with Korean or Asian instruments, the ensemble introduces audiences to traditional and contemporary music that crosses boundaries to reveal surprising commonalities. The group formed officially in 2014.

Ahn and co-founder pianist Sharon Lee Kim, a faculty member at Saint Mary’s College, became acquainted through their children, who attend Del Rey Elementary School. Ahn is a lecturer and assistant choir director at UC Berkeley and says she and her husband, Ryan Kim, moved to Orinda in 2007 “like many people – for my kids.”

Her compositions have been in-

cluded in the repertoire at Aspen New Music Festival, Oregon Bach Festival, Festival of Contemporary Music, Berkeley Symphony Under Construction and Pacific Korean Music Festival, among others. Attending a Saint Mary’s concert at which Kim performed and where Kim is also the assistant director of the College Choirs and Faculty Chamber Sundays Series, Ahn says the two musicians discussed working together and the idea “took flight that very day.”

The ideas underpinning the ensemble evolved organically, Ahn says, rather like the multiple meanings of the Korean word naming the group. “Ari” means many things: big river, wisdom and beauty, depending on the word’s context. “I knew these people and wanted to work with them. It emerged naturally,” says Ahn.

Ensemble Ari in addition to Ahn and Kim, includes Jiwon Evelyn Kwark (violin), Heeguen Song (violin), Jaehee Jeong (viola), Sarah Hong (cello) and Joowon Kang (Baritone).

Within the classical music repertoire that the members perform with groups including San Francisco Opera, Oakland Symphony, Marin Symphony, Berkeley Symphony, Korean Symphony Orchestra and others,

Ahn says their reach has boundaries. But free to set their own agendas, commission new works, or draw from Asian folk songs, electro-acoustic music and other musical forms, the ensemble’s audience is unlimited. “Each time we perform, we can introduce new music, not be relegated to contemporary or classical music, and bring out the beauty of Korean music. Because we are in America, where people from all countries live together, we’re not only reaching Korean audiences,” Ahn says.

Beyond the music and cultural heritage that connects them, the members of Ensemble Ari are united by a desire to give. “Each one of us has a heart for community. We believe music is a gift from God, a tool we were given to serve the community. It’s not for us, it’s for sharing,” she says.

The connection turns rehearsals into a time of unique fellowship. In a world often preoccupied with obtaining material goods, establishing financial security, looking out for self, it is almost quaint – hard to believe but oh, so attractive – to hear of professional men and women in hot pursuit of giving.

The home concerts have all been benefits for Del Rey.

... continued on page B4

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Giving Up the Hollywood Lifestyle

Lafayette native comes home to simpler roots

By Diane Claytor



Still of Michael Chiklis, Vinessa Shaw, Ivana Milicevic and Michael Wiseman in "Vegas" Photo celebrityimages.org

Michael Wiseman could not wait to leave Lafayette. His father was born and raised here. His grandfather was co-owner of a local restaurant. His mother taught at Burton Valley Elementary School for 35 years. But Wiseman wanted out. "I was just one of those kids that wanted to get out of the house," he explained. Shortly after his high school graduation, he left.

Fast forward 20 years. Wiseman, an actor living in Los Angeles, could not wait to move back. And now, five years later, Wiseman, who unabashedly talks about how happy he is to be back in his hometown, could easily be the poster child for the 'Love Lafayette' campaign. "There's something very special about this town," he said. "It has magic."

Wiseman is the grandson of Sol Wiseman, who owned Wiseman's Furniture and Appliance stores in the East Bay and, with Jay Bedsworth, owned The Tunnel Inn, a popular Lafayette steakhouse in the 1930s and '40s. The Mt. Diablo Boulevard restaurant (now Pet Food Express) is said to have attracted diners from as far away as San Francisco. In 1959, The Tunnel Inn was sold to Petar Jakovina, who changed its name to Petar's and eventually moved his restaurant to Lafayette Circle. Wiseman's father, raised on Wildwood Lane, graduated from Acalanes High School. Wiseman himself attended Burton Valley Elementary, Stanley Middle School and Campolindo High School.

The trail away from Lafayette proved to be successful, although hectic and stressful, which is what eventually brought Wiseman home, seeking a simpler life. He headed to Southern California and, determined to be an actor, began doing theater and seriously studying the art. He met the appropriate people, made the appropriate connections and soon began getting jobs.

One of his first roles was a cop in "Predator 2" (1990), starring Danny Glover and Gary Busey; his first TV role was portraying a ball player in a 1992 episode of "Cheers." Another 60 roles followed, all listed on Wiseman's imbd.com page, including stints in "Star Trek: Voyager," "The X-Files," "CSI: Miami," and "Scorpion." He had recurring roles in "NYPD Blue," "Boston Legal" and "The Closer." In 2012, Wiseman had

a "life changing" role: he played the main bad guy, Johnny Rizzo, in "Vegas," working with Dennis Quaid and Michael Chiklis.

Finding his old Burton Valley yearbook recently, Wiseman laughingly reported that his stated goal was becoming a famous actor. He admits there is no one way to get into acting and the road is certainly not easy. "I worked and worked, studied and studied," he said. "You think you'll get a job, be successful and then be able to live in your mansion at the beach." He kept getting jobs, although, he acknowledged, there were definitely lulls. "There was a two or three year period where I could barely get a role," he noted.

While at a party in Los Angeles, Wiseman met Caroline Keenan, a part-time actress and, to help support herself, a hairstylist. According to Wiseman, Keenan had studied with some of the best hairdressers in Hollywood and began getting celebrity clientele. She was soon working as a hair and makeup stylist for photo shoots and on TV and movie sets, winning both accolades and awards.

Wiseman and Keenan married and had two daughters, Dalilah and Olivia. With both parents working long and often erratic hours, the girls were basically being raised by their nanny – a fact that did not appeal to either parent. Keenan-Wiseman noted that they would visit Lafayette to see family every year and "it was always like a little dream. I often thought that maybe one day we could live in a place like that," she said.

That day came almost five years ago. Keenan-Wiseman found herself out of a job and within two weeks, not only was the decision made to leave LA but the car was packed and the family heading north. "Caroline's dream was always to be a mom, raise the kids, have a simple life. We finally decided that if we're going to do it, we just needed to stop thinking about it and do it," Wiseman explained.

They have never looked back. Wiseman commutes to Los Angeles on a regular basis. He just completed filming two independent films, one with Sharon Stone. Keenan-Wiseman continued as a hairdresser, initially renting a station at a local salon. When the salon went up for sale, the Wiseman's bought it and the very popular Caroline's Salon was born. Keenan-Wiseman was recently named best stylist and hair colorist in Diablo Magazine's 2015 Best of the East Bay. Needing more space, the "upscale salon with a neighborhood feel" recently moved above Chow in Lafayette.

Wiseman admits that although the hope was for a simpler life, that hasn't actually occurred. "But our family life is leaps and bounds better and far happier. And I've come full circle," Wiseman stated proudly. "I look out my office window and can see the neighborhood where my dad grew up. I can see the location where, conceptually, my grandfather worked. My daughters are attending the same schools I attended. I love every bit of being a local Lafayette resident."



"Vegas" stars Michael Wiseman, Jonathan Banks, Jimmy Russo and Michael Chiklis Photo provided



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The Pursuit of Inner Peace

Two new courses in Moraga focus on centuries-old Japanese art forms

By Sophie Braccini



Photos provided

More than ever, Lamorinda residents are participating in activities that foster inner peace, such as yoga, tai chi and meditation. Two courses offered at BDK America in Moraga this January will give local residents another opportunity to go within: "Discovering the Japanese Way of Tea" and "Learn Ikebana – the Japanese Art of Flower Arranging."

"Serving tea is a mindful practice, a way to remove oneself from the mundane affairs of day-to-day living and to respect others," says Yufuko Kurioka, who practices the Japanese tea ceremony for serenity and inner peace and will be teaching a six-week course beginning Jan. 20.

Jane Nato, a certified instructor in the art of Ikebana, or Japanese flower arranging, who began learning the craft from her grandmother as a child, will teach a six-week course at BDK beginning Jan. 14. "I learned to be able to sit and be in the moment," she says. "Ikebana is a way to forget about our busy life, take the time to reflect and be creative, and also be appreciative of nature."

The Japanese way of tea and Ikebana are centuries-old art forms linked to Zen Buddhist traditions.

Kurioka, the co-founder of No Gate Tea who teaches Japanese at Diablo Valley College, was born in Osaka and was raised in the countryside. "I grew up watching my mother practicing the tea ceremony a couple days a week," she says. Kurioka studied Japanese history and found a new tea mentor in college; she was invited to come to this country to teach Japanese culture and language.

When BDK opened its Moraga office in May, Kurioka was invited to perform an abbreviated version of the tea ceremony. Even this short session showed precision, complexity and grace.

"The tea ceremony is an art of hospitality and mindfulness," she says. Zen priest Murata Shukou (or Jukō) is considered the father of the ceremony. He developed the spiritual form still performed today over his lifetime at the Daitoku-ji Temple during the 15th century. "It is an art, but it is also a social event to invite people in and have fun," says Kurioka.

The course, which will include demonstrations, historic and social explanations, and discussions while sharing the tea and Japanese sweets, will take participants from the complete beginner level to being able to perform the ceremony themselves. "It is like dance or piano," explains Kurioka. "You will start practicing small sequences in context, before putting it all together."

Nato is a Japanese American whose family includes a number of

Buddhist priests on her mother's side. After learning Ikebana with her grandmother as a girl in Alameda, she moved away, started a career and had the typical busy life of young professionals. "I needed something to calm me down," she says. She started studying Ikebana again with Joan Suzuki, who studied Sogestu Ikebana with its founding headmaster, Sofu Teshigahara. Ikebana was used for religious offerings, but Nato says the religious content is no longer present. "Sogetsu was started in 1927 and added a modern twist to it. It also allows the artist to express his or her personality," she says.

Nato does not perceive her art as something difficult. "One has to learn the basic rules about line, mass, dimension and asymmetry as well as techniques for successfully using a kenzan/pinfrog," she explains. "Then all you need is to be creative." Students will be asked to complete an arrangement using specific containers, tools and materials chosen by Nato. "Students can come to the class whenever they can and will progress at their own pace," adds Nato. "At some point they will need to get their own tools, but at the beginning they can borrow some during class." Students will need gardening sheers and the textbook Nato will follow.

For years, Nato has regularly taught an Ikebana class in Alameda. "Some of my students have been with me for over a year," she says. "Each time is different, plus I teach Japanese traditions." Nato's students participate in exhibitions in the Bay Area, and Nato has shown some of her stunning bouquets at the Ikebana International exhibition that takes place in San Francisco every other year.

"Ikebana is a 'wabi-sabi' art," says Nato, referring to the acceptance of transience and imperfection. "Because of the impermanence of this art, it is a very Buddhist way of thinking. Nothing will ever last, we need to enjoy the moment."

Nato will be teaching from 10 to 11:30 a.m. the second and fourth Thursday of the month in Moraga beginning Jan. 14. To register, ideally before the end of the year, call (415) 937-8260 or email ikebana_now@icloud.com. For more information, visit <http://www.bdkamerica.org/blog/learn-ikebana-japanese-art-flower-arranging>.

The Way of Tea sessions will be held from 10:30 a.m. to noon Wednesdays beginning Jan. 20. The second session will start in March. To register, email Kurioka at thenogatetea@gmail.com. For course information, visit <http://www.bdkamerica.org/blog/discovering-japanese-way-tea>.



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Local Therapist Offers Suggestions to Help Fight Depression During the Holidays

By Sophie Braccini



Margie Ryerson Photo Sophie Braccini

Prevention. In 2013, white males accounted for 70 percent of all suicides and the highest suicide rate was among people 45 to 64 years old. It is the 10th leading cause of death for Americans.

"Women want support and compassion, and they confide in their friends," explains Ryerson. "Men typically don't have the same support system, they don't share and might not be in touch with their feelings. (Most of the time) they confide in their partner, and if something happens to that relationship, that is a contributing factor." She says that men are often more invested in their careers and their financial responsibilities to their families and if something goes wrong, it can be a trigger. "There is a lot of untreated anxiety and depression among men."

Reflecting on the recent incident, Ryerson says that our communities tend to have high expectations, and if people don't feel that they fit in, they will think that others might look down on them and will not feel accepted, whether or not it is true. "A lot of it is projection. If we think for example that we are not good enough parents, we will feel that everybody around us believes that we are not good parents," she says. "How we judge ourselves is really significant." This leads to high stress, anxiety and depression.

And people are able to mask depressed feelings very well. "Some people feel guilty because they did not see the warning signs, but certain individuals do not exhibit any warning signs and can't be stopped," explains Ryerson. The warning signs, if present, include drinking more heavily, having a low energy for life, secluding yourself and not wanting to interact, sudden anger, irregular sleep or eating patterns, unusual risky behaviors and, of course, sadness. Ryerson notes that for adolescents, acts

can be impulsive and difficult to foresee.

If there are warning signs, Ryerson says it is important to tune in and to also get help. "The best we can do is to pay close attention to our loved ones, to be an active part of their world. We need to express what difference they make in our lives, to show them how important they are," recommends Ryerson. "Ask questions, show affection, show caring, and find support for them if we see them floundering. We should not feel alone and we should reach out to professionals and urge our loved ones to get help." She suggests talking to a general practitioner as a good starting point, both for adults and teens. "Sometimes I've had a family member call their depressed relative's physician and ask them to check for depression when they come for their physical."

Police officers are often called into situations of acute crisis and many are trained in crisis intervention. "We train in recognizing mental illness as well as techniques and strategies to intervene if someone puts themselves or anyone else at risk," says Moraga Police Acting Corporal Will Davis. He adds that in a crisis situation, there is often a partnership that is set in place between law enforcement and emergency responders. He wants to remind people that the Contra Costa Crisis Center can be reached at (800) 833-2900, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It is available to people with suicidal thoughts and those living around them. The phone number 211 is the information and referral line that can also be called 24 hours a day, 365 days per year.

Margie Ryerson is a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. She can be reached at (925) 376-9323. Her website is <http://margieryerson.com/>.

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DIAMOND CERTIFIED

Orinda Junior Women's Club Announces Youth Ink 2016

Middle-school writing contest supports literary arts in the community

Submitted by Chantal Valentine

All sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students who live or attend school in Orinda are invited to participate in Youth Ink 2016, the annual creative writing contest sponsored by The Orinda Junior Women's Club, a local nonprofit service organization that supports a variety of organizations in the greater East Bay. The Youth Ink 2016 prompt is "Future," which was chosen because it encompasses almost limitless potential for subject matter, thereby encouraging young writers to personalize their pieces, according to Amy Stuffmann, president of Orinda Juniors.

Organizers say the first rule is to write about anything you like: real or imaginary. "There is no limit to the imagination. Whatever you write

about, just remember to have fun!"

"We eagerly await the results of how Orinda's talented young writers approach this year's prompt, although they can write about anything they choose," said Stuffmann.

Co-sponsors of Youth Ink 2016 include The Orinda Association, Friends of the Orinda Library, and The Orinda Community Foundation, which make providing the following prizes possible: \$250 for first place; \$125 for second place; and \$75 for third place.

A panel of several local professional writers, including reporters and best-selling novelists, will evaluate Youth Ink 2016 submissions and choose winners. The judges' names will be shared when the winners are

announced at an awards ceremony at 6 p.m. Thursday, April 21 at the Orinda Public Library.

Youth Ink 2016 submissions will be accepted on an ongoing basis but must be hand-delivered to a designated school representative or postmarked by Friday, Feb. 17 and mailed to Orinda Junior Women's Club, Post Office Box 40, Orinda, CA 94563 in order to be considered for an award. Youth Ink 2016 submission forms are available through the administrative offices and English departments at Orinda Intermediate School, the Orinda Public Library, Orinda Academy, Athenian School, School for Girls, or online at www.orindajuniors.org.

The Gift of Music

... continued from page B1



Jiwon Evelyn Kwark, violin, Heeguen Song, violin, Sarah Hong, cello, and Jaehae Jeong, viola Photo Eurus Kim

"I'll be honest, this is an affluent community and they can hold these concerts in their homes. What is great is that you have an audience that really wants to be there. It's so intimate, you can share the breathing with them. There can be discussions and afterwards, you can be friends with them." Ahn says people who find it difficult to travel to San Francisco for quality

concerts can find great value in having a "professional ensemble living room experience."

An upcoming 2016 Phos Benefit Concert Vol. 5 in Palo Alto is the groups' next public performance. The family-friendly "Phos" music series (translated from Greek the word is "radiance") created in 2014 by Ari member Hong benefits nonprofits

serving children in developing countries. The Jan. 30 concert features work by Antonin Dvořák and Korean Art song and supports a girls education fund in Niger, a country in West Africa.

To learn more about Ensemble Ari and listen to sample recordings, visit <http://jeanahn.com/ensemble-ari/>.

Submit stories and story ideas to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

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Local Breads and Pastries a Perfect Addition for the Holidays

By A.K. Carroll



Photos A.K. Carroll



This is the season for special meals, out-of-town guests and plenty of holiday gatherings. Though we would all like the time and energy to make our own baked goods from scratch, that isn't always an option. The best thing? Let someone else do it for you. Whether you are hosting extra mouths, supplementing a meal, or in search of a gourmet gift, these Lamorinda bakers have you covered.

The Perfect Pastry—Home/made Kitchen, Moraga

There is nothing large or industrial about the production of pastries at Home/made Kitchen Café and Bakery. Taking tips from such gastronomic masters as Ina Garten (The Barefoot Contessa) and Thomas Keller (Bouchon and The French Laundry), Home/made's daily selection of muffins and scones add just the right touch to breakfast, brunch, or a fireside chat over a hot cup of tea. Order in advance to be sure of flavor and quantity availabilities.

Muffins — Filled with carrots, coconut, raisins, walnuts and everything but the kitchen sink, the \$3 morning glory muffin is Home/made's best-seller, with the raspberry oat (\$3.50) following close behind. Lemon poppy seed and blueberry round out the usual flavor offerings, though seasonal specials like a pear ginger have also made guest appearances.

Scones — At \$3 a piece, these savory and sweet snacks beg for a hot beverage (or just a hungry appetite). Savory pastry fans will be tickled by Home/made's rendition of Bouchon's bacon cheddar scone, while aficionados of the more traditional sweet scone might be more inclined to favor the strawberries and cream scone. Orange currant is another popular seasonal offering.

Fresh-Baked Bread for any Occasion—The Rising Loafer, Lafayette

Have you ever stopped in for sandwich and thought to yourself, "This bread is so good, I wish I could take this home"? That's just what happened to Peru native Maria Gastelumendi when she first tasted the Country Oat Bread at Danville's Rising Loafer (which has since closed). Now part of the duo that owns The Rising Loafer Bakery and Café in Lafayette, Gastelumendi sells fresh-baked bread on a daily basis. Winner of environmental and green awards on all levels, The Rising Loafer is proud to use locally-sourced ingredients and hormone free eggs in each of their made-from-scratch breads. Priced at \$6 each and only available in their storefront near Trader Joe's, loaves can be ordered in advance and are available daily.

Country Oat — Maria's favorite, this slightly sweet bread is excellent toasted, even without butter or jam. It would be a great addition to a holiday meal.

New York Rye — Especially popular with Europeans and East coast natives, this rye offers a taste of home. It's perfect for sandwiches and also pairs well with creamy cheeses or artichoke dips.

Cinnamon Raisin — If French toast or bread pudding isn't a part of your holiday traditions, it should be, and this is the bread to use for it. Sweet swirls of cinna-

mon and plump raisins compliment the egg and milk batter of brunch-time favorites.

Banana Bread (\$7) — This sweet little loaf features big chunks of walnuts and simple spices. Toasted or sliced, it would be great as a gift or an afternoon snack.

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- Niman Flat Iron Steak:** potato gratin, green beans, chimichurri sauce18
- Fresh Seafood Cioppino:** in a rich tomato-basil sauce, parmesan, garlic toast..19
- Roasted Scallops:** spinach, saliccia sugo19
- Roasted Wild Salmon:** white wine, capers, braised greens, and potato gratin..17
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Community Service

Lafayette Juniors Win State Awards for Charity Work

Submitted by Elizabeth Siamas



From left, Tina Sebree, Teli Thayer, Ann Vervut, Rachel Blatt Photos provided



From left, Christine Kelly, Mia Kelly, Kari Trimble



Sharee Spence

The Lafayette Juniors were awarded first place from the state of California on behalf of the General Federation of Women's Clubs for their fundraising and membership programs for charity. The Lafayette Juniors are part of the GFWC, a 125-year-old international service organization made up of more than 500 clubs and 80,000 women who are dedicated to volunteering their time to make the lives of oth-

ers better. GFWC clubs including Lafayette Juniors routinely seek to raise awareness of issues from domestic violence to disaffected youth and homelessness through community service, fundraising, and participation in local, state and national legislation.

"The Lafayette Juniors won first place in their club category from both the Mount Diablo District and the state of California because of their creative, unique fundraising, and for their ability to attract and retain Juniors club members that care deeply about people in need and are called to act on their behalf," says Cary Farago, president-elect of GFWC's Mount Diablo District.

The Lafayette Juniors raised a record amount at its 22nd Annual Rummage Sale at Lafayette's Our Saviors Lutheran Church to benefit Youth Homes, Diablo Ballet, Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, and Lamorinda Spirit Van. "The sale's success was made possible because of the dedication of our members as well as the generosity of community members and local businesses who continually support our events," says Christy Mack, president of the Lafayette Juniors.

The Juniors next fundraising event will be their 17th Annual Kitchen Tour on May 14. For information, visit www.lafayettejuniors.org.

Lafayette Rotary Work Crew Cleans Up

Submitted by Matt Pease



Josiah Coy Photos provided



Beverlee Hajek

You might have thought you saw a convict work crew cleaning under the Highway 24 freeway overpasses on Dec. 6, but no, it was the Lafayette Rotary Club hard at work making the city a bit tidier. The team of Matt Pease, Mike Henn, Terry Ring, Josiah Coy, Beverlee Hajek, David Abrahams, Steve Falk, Maurice Williams, Tom Schnerr with his son Cooper, as well as five students from Acalanes High School, spruced up the areas at Brown Avenue, First Avenue and Oak Hill Road. The Rotarians collected over 60 bags of weeds, debris and litter

at these areas that connect north and south Lafayette. The Oak Hill Road area is a major entry point from Highway 24 into Lafayette and that area is now much neater and better represents our city. The City of Lafayette staff supplied garbage bags and picked up the filled bags. The Lafayette Rotary Club will revisit these areas several times a year to help maintain the area. If you would like to find out more about the Lafayette Rotary Club, visit <http://www.rotarylafayette.org/>.

Moraga Magnetics Wow Crowds at Moraga Royale and Aegis

Submitted by Joanne Home



Photos provided

Twenty-one well-rehearsed students entertained residents at Aegis and Moraga Royale in Moraga over the Thanksgiving weekend. Local denizen, Wei Barck, coordinated the winter concert community service event. Hosted and performed by fourth-through 12th-graders, the two-day one-and-a-half-hour-long programs consisted of voice, piano, clarinet, flute, cello, guitar, violin as well as the Chinese harp. Selections ranged from the classic to pop, jazz and holiday favorites.

Now known as the Moraga Magnetics, these future maestros from Lamorinda can add one more accomplishment to their lists. A round of applause to all participants: Emilia Barck, Henrik Barck, Jaden Chuang, Kyle Chuang, Alec Home, Elaine L., Julianna Meneses, Andrew N., Hannah Pan, Owen Pan, Justin Thorne, Michelle Thorne, Lucy Wang, Aislinn Welch, Katie Welch, Sarah Wu, Justin Xiao, Ashley Xu and Delu Zhao.

Lafayette Siblings Start Libraries in Botswana and Swaziland

Submitted by Linda Drucker



Nicole and Noah Prozan Photo provided

388 students from preschool to fourth grade and 17 teachers. According to the African Library Project, it will be the school's first library and the only library in the village of Dagwi, a rural community on the border with Zimbabwe. The book drive began as part of a community service project the siblings embarked upon as part of the celebration of Nicole's bat mitzvah in September, 2015.

"Here in Lafayette, children have an abundance of books but in Africa, most students don't have access to the books they need to learn," said Noah Prozan. "It's exciting to know children in Africa will be able to enjoy books that we once read and loved but no longer need," added Prozan's sister, Nicole.

Bat mitzvah guests were asked to donate books and the siblings also obtained donations from the Contra Costa library system and the Storyteller bookstore. The pair's book drive was so successful that they have collected over 500 additional books, which they will use to start a second library in Swaziland in 2016. The siblings are financing the costs of shipping the books through contributions, and by donating gift money they received from their bar and bat mitzvahs. Contributions can be made via PayPal to noahprozan@gmail.com.

Acalanes High School junior Noah Prozan and his sister, Nicole Prozan, an eighth-grader at Stanley Middle School, have collected and shipped 1,100 children's books to create a library at an elementary school in Botswana, Africa. The books are en route via freighter to Botswana's Dagwi Primary School, which has

Moraga Musician and Composer Honored with National YoungArts Foundation Merit Award

Submitted by Dejha Carrington



Lauren Grace Bare

Photo provided

Lauren Grace Bare of Moraga, who attends Valley View Charter Prep High School, has been named a 2016 National YoungArts Foundation Merit Winner in Music Instrumental/Composition. Selected out of more than 12,000 applications – the largest number to date – Bare has been recognized for her outstanding work and accomplishments and joins 819 young artists from 42 states across the literary, visual, design and performing arts who are being presented with this year’s honor. Winners receive cash awards of up to \$10,000, validation by renowned mentors, opportunities to participate in YoungArts programs, a strong professional network, and guidance in taking important steps toward achieving their goals.

“On behalf of everyone at YoungArts, I want to congratulate all of our winners and look forward to

welcoming the finalists to our campus in January,” stated Lisa Leone, Vice President of Artistic Programs for YoungArts.

Each YoungArts Winner is designated as a Finalist, Honorable Mention or Merit Winner through a blind adjudication process by an independent panel of highly accomplished artists. Some winners are awarded for excellence in multiple disciplines. All winners are eligible to participate in YoungArts’ regional programs, including YoungArts Los Angeles (Feb. 16-21), YoungArts Miami (March 8-13), and YoungArts New York (April 12-17), space permitting.

YoungArts Winners become part of the organization’s expansive alumni network of leading professionals, including visual artists Doug Aitken (1986 Winner in Visual Arts) and Daniel Arsham (1999 Winner in Visual Arts); musicians Conrad Tao

(2011 Winner in Music and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts) and Jennifer Koh (1994 Winner in Music and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts); filmmaker Doug Blush (1984 Winner in Cinematic Arts); recording artists Josh Groban (1999 Winner in Theater) and Chris Young (2003 Winner in Voice and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts); writers Jenji Kohan (1987 Winner in Writing) and Sam Lipsyte (1986 Winner in Writing and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts); actors Viola Davis (1983 Winner in Theater), Andrew Rannells (1997 Winner in Theater) and Kerry Washington (1994 Winner in Theater); renowned choreographer Desmond Richardson (1986 Winner in Modern Dance and U.S. Presidential Scholar in the Arts); and 2015 So You Think You Can Dance winner Gaby Diaz (2014 Winner in Dance).

YoungArts supports its alumni by providing opportunities to participate in the organization’s programming nationwide, including its annual YoungArts Awareness Day, a national advocacy campaign that promotes the arts as a rewarding and viable career path. The organization also seeks to support the artistry of its alumni and their projects throughout their careers; builds a community of YoungArts winners across generations; and establishes connections with partner institutions across the country, including the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, American Ballet Theater and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

For more information, visit youngarts.org, [facebook.com/YoungArts-Foundation](https://www.facebook.com/YoungArts-Foundation) or twitter.com/YoungArts.

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Lynn’s Top 5 The Gift of Financial Independence

Pay attention to these five points

By Lynn Ballou, CFP®

In just a few short weeks we will be celebrating the end of another busy and productive year, and welcoming 2016. As part of our shared experience, we use the changing of the calendar as a time for reflection and resolutions. If working toward (or retaining) financial independence is on your list, let me offer five ways to stay on track in pursuit of your goal.

1) It’s all about the details. I wish becoming financially independent was as easy as just saying it’s going to happen. But successful plans involve hard work and detail. The details you need to stay on top of are not just about your net worth and how it grows, but also about your spending habits now and in your future life. Envision your future self: what will you be doing 10, 20, 30 or more years from now? In today’s dollars, what will that cost? And don’t kid yourself – you will spend more than just a simple inflationary factor on some things such as travel, health care costs and family. Work with a Certified Financial Planner professional or take advantage of well-designed software available on trusted sites. Since details matter, be sure the process you use not only includes realistic potential rates of return on investments, but also inflation, the impact of taxation and a robust life expectancy. Update your plan no less than annually so that if mid-course adjustments are needed, you have time and the resources to make change happen.

2) Plan for rainy days. The saying “hope for the best but plan for the worst” is at the core of a planned rainy day fund that makes sense for you and your family. If you are at a loss as to how to go about this, setting aside four to six months of fixed overhead expenses that must be paid is an excellent first step. You can be more sophisticated in your approach by adding in other factors such as how long a job search in your industry can take, family members who need your

support, possible health challenges and the important “sleep at night” quotient personal to you.

3) Saying no is often better for you than saying yes. Things tug at our heartstrings and we truly want to say yes. Or we are so busy we say yes to many things that if we really thought about them, we would instead take a pass. Create think time by creating planning time for yourself. There are many great thinkers and researchers out there who share with us this thought: We cannot live at warp rate “think” speed 24/7 expecting to do our best. Allowing space in your own personal time warp continuum to think first is a huge gift. This can help you avoid making expedient but ultimately harmful spending decisions, and instead allow you to become informed about details that go with the decisions at hand. Saying an informed “no” from the start rather than an expedient “yes” keeps you from having to undo, retrace or retract poor choices later.

4) Keep some risk; insure the rest. We tend to insure for the small nuisances of life that we really don’t need to cover while ignoring the big ones that could wipe us out. Some matters are time consuming to research, but so worth it in the long run. An example of this could be our home insurance. Low deductibles abound in policies, whereas the real killer events are often ignored and we are left exposed to big potential costs. In this example a simple step of increasing your deductibles (it might hurt to write a \$5K deductible check, but it probably won’t devastate you) and use the savings to pay for the amount it will actually take to rebuild your home to current code, could help you avoid financial ruin. If you are underinsured, you might be writing a large part of that check yourself. Work with reputable advisors and agents to review your situation and look for potential land mines.

5) A solid plan is not achieved in a day. Many of us lack the patience gene, but together with persistence, patience is your best friend when planning for financial independence. Do have a plan, but don’t try to execute it all at once. If you have 10 actionable items you need to implement, figure out which are the most pressing (such as paying off high interest credit cards) and which are the least (maybe buying a new car). Prioritize and tackle those that have priority first, while still working on the others.

By reviewing your plan annually you can measure your success and be proud of what you have achieved. If you feel that you are treading water or losing traction, reach out to an independent qualified professional who can take the emotions out of the equation and provide you a professional perspective, guidance and potential solutions. A year from now, you will be proud and working on new resolutions.



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ART

50th Annual Holiday Collection for "Artful Giving" will be held through Dec. 23 at the Valley Art Gallery. The new gift exhibition includes a wide variety of beautifully crafted, ceramic, wood and glass pieces, original designer jewelry, holiday decorations, small paintings and many other unique, one-of-a-kind gift items. For info, visit www.valleyart-gallery.org.

Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery presents "A Visual Feast" – an exhibit featuring children's book illustrators through Dec. 31. Original art, reproductions and children's books for sale. For info, visit www.jenniferperlmutter-gallery.com.

The Lafayette Art Gallery presents "Artful Gifting" and its holiday boutique, which runs through Dec. 26. For info, call (925) 284-2788 or visit www.lafayetteartgallery.com.

The Moraga Art Gallery's new exhibit, "Yellowstone: Beauty, Beasts, and Boneyards," features oil landscapes by Orinda's Lisa Gunn, whose imaginative palette captures the primitive character and timelessness of Yellowstone National Park and its environs. Also featured is a boldly-hued collection of one-of-a-kind etched tableware, handmade by guest artist Lisa Neimeth. The show will run through Jan. 9. For more info, visit www.moragaart-gallery.com or call (925) 376-5407.

MUSIC

Audition for WomenSing by appointment on Jan. 5. All voice parts are welcome. Scholarships are available for qualified singers. Spring concerts will give voice to the variety of traditions that have shaped America and WomenSing, including works by William Billings, Aaron Copland, Alice Parker, Libby Larsen, and a world premiere by Marjorie Halloran. WomenSing will be touring Northern Italy June 21 through 28, 2016, participating in the Alta Pusteria International Choral Festival. For info, email audition@womensing.org, or go to womensing.org.

WomenSing presents Make Good Cheer, the first concert of our 50th season, celebrating the gift of choral music – singer to audience and back again from 8 to 10 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 16 at St. Mary's Chapel, 1928 St. Mary's Road, Moraga. Cost: \$28 general; \$10 under 18. For more info, visit http://womensing.org/concerts/current-season/holiday-concert/ or call (925) 798-4875 or email info@womensing.org.

Patti Leidecker will be singing and playing everyone's favorite holiday songs at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 19 on the baby grand piano

at the Rheem Theatre in Moraga. Leidecker has performed at Clint Eastwood's Mission Ranch Inn in Carmel on Wednesday nights for the past eight years. Come sing along with Leidecker and get into the holiday spirit. Tickets: \$15 general admission; \$12 seniors and children, includes holiday cookies and punch. This will be a great event for the youngest and the young at heart.

THEATER

"Harvey" by Mary Chase presented by Town Hall Theatre will run through Dec. 19. Gather the whole family for the magical tale of Elwood P. Dowd and his best friend – a 6-foot, 3-and-a-half-inch tall invisible rabbit named Harvey. What better way to warm up your holiday season, than with this imaginative classic! For more details and to purchase tickets go to www.townhalltheatre.com.

A fairytale adventure of a mystical forest, two lost children, an enticing gingerbread house, and a wicked witch, Solo Opera's "Hansel and Gretel" is a holiday "treat" for the entire family! The show runs at the Del Valle Theatre, 1963 Tice Valley Blvd, Walnut Creek at 7:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 18 and at 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 19 and 20. Seating is reserved, group discounts are available. For info, call (925) 943-7469, visit the Leshner Center box office, or go to https://lesherartscenter.showare.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=411. Tickets: \$25-\$40.

LECTURE & LITERATURE

"Eyewitness Report on Syria and Venezuela" presented by Rick Sterling at a Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center potluck dinner event with dinner starting at 6 p.m. and the presentation at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 17 at Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek, California. Pre-registered: \$10; \$15 at the door; free for students and Center Members tickets are half price. Go to www.ourpeacecenter.org to register or call the Center office at (925) 933-7850.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

Can't make it to midnight? Welcome the New Year early at the Moraga Library from 12:15 to 1:45 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 31. Countdown to 1 p.m. with balloons, time zones resolutions, crafts and sparkling cider. The library is located at 1500 St. Mary's Rd. Call (925) 37-6852 with any questions.

OTHER

Purrfect cats and kittens are waiting for you at Community Concern for Cats' weekend adoption from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec 19 and 1 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 20 at Pet Food Express in Lafayette. Pet Food Express in

Pleasant Hill and PETCO in Walnut Creek also have similar adoption hours the same weekend. For more info, visit www.communityconcernforcats.org.

Daughters of the Goddess, a Bay Area women-only Goddess Temple, will be holding its annual Winter Solstice Ritual at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 21. East Bay location given upon RSVP. Cost for newcomers: \$15. For info, contact Kahuna Leilani at (925) 787-9247 or visit www.Daughter-softheGoddess.com.

Join the National Park Service for a free winter solstice campfire program from 3 to 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 21 at John Muir National Historic Site at 4202 Alhambra Avenue, Martinez. The program begins at 3 p.m. with crafts and games in the park orchards and continues with a campfire from 5 to 7 p.m. Rangers will lead the group in songs, stories and activities. Reservations are not required. For more information, please visit the park website at www.nps.gov/jomu or call (925) 228-8860.

5A Rent-A-Space Santa's Secret Wrapping Room open to the public through Dec. 23, during business hours. This decorated area is set up with tables, chairs, wrapping paper, tape and ribbon – everything needed to get presents wrapped for free – especially handy if you need to wrap gifts without the watchful eyes of the recipients.

The first ever "Giving Tree" is being hosted by Community Concern for Cats' volunteers at their Rescued Treasures Thrift Shop in Walnut Creek through Dec. 24. Their goal is to give the gift of life to as many homeless street cats as they can by providing needed medicines and medical procedures. Come down, buy a special ornament, and put it in the holiday window display. Rescued Treasures Thrift Shop is located at 1270 Newell Ave., Walnut Creek. For info, call (925) 937-3201.

SENIORS

Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Programs (HICAP) provides free and objective counseling and advocacy services to Contra Costa Medicare beneficiaries and their families who need assistance with Medicare enrollment and issues involving Medicare and associated insurance programs, including prescription drug coverage. HICAP does not endorse or sell insurance products. For appointments, call Lafayette Senior Services at (925) 284-5050. Appointments are at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., or noon on the first Wednesday and third Tuesday monthly in the Alder Room of the Lafayette Community Center.

Please submit events to: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

MOVIE REVIEW

May the Force Be With You

By Derek Zemrak



“Star Wars: The Force Awakens” is the most highly anticipated movie in years. Presale tickets have been breaking records all over the world and the secrets around the movie have only increased the excitement for Star Wars fans. The only thing fans know is from the trailers released by Disney, which now owns the rights to Star Wars. Disney purchased LucasFilm for \$4 billion in 2012, which included the legendary Star Wars franchise. LucasFilm was 100 percent owned by George Lucas. Three of the original cast members are reprising their roles, which include Carrie Fisher as Princess Leia, Mark Hamill as Luke Skywalker, and Harrison Ford as Han Solo. How much are they in the movie? We will all just have to wait and see.

The belief synopsis Disney released is “Thirty years after defeating the Galactic Empire, Han Solo (Harrison Ford) and his allies face a new threat from the evil Kylo Ren (Adam Driver) and his army of Stormtroopers.”

“Star Wars: The Force Awakens” is directed by J.J. Abrams, who may be best known for producing and writing the popular television show “Lost,” but his movie directing credits are also quite impressive: “Mission Impossible III” (2006), “Star Trek” (2009), “Super 8” (2011) and “Mission Impossible – Rogue Nation” (2015). Abrams gave new life to the Star Trek movie franchise and has given moviegoers several exciting films over the past 10 years. As a fan of the Star Wars films, Abrams is the perfect director to revitalize the series that Lucas started in 1977.

So when can you see “Star Wars: The Force

Awakens”? The Orinda Theatre is having an early showing at 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 17. The theater is expecting a sellout, with over 550 tickets sold as of Dec. 10. The lines will be wrapped around Theatre Square so it is recommended that people purchase their tickets online at www.lamorindatheatre.com.

“Star Wars: The Force Awakens” opens nationwide on Dec. 18 and is rated PG-13 with a TRT (Total Running Time) of 2 hours and 15 minutes.



Images provided

Service Clubs Announcements



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



We meet Friday mornings at 7:00 am at **The Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa**, 3666 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. For more info, please email us at lamorindasunrise@gmail.com

December 18:

Josh Cooley is a featured Pixar speaker, and an original screenwriter for the award winning "Inside Out" smash success. Here's your opportunity to get a real insider's view of Pixar and the making of "Inside Out!"

Dec. 25 & Jan. 1, 2016:

We will be dark. Happy Holidays to all! We will meet again on January 8 at the regular time and place.

Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club sends a special thanks to the publishers and staff of Lamorinda Weekly, for an outstanding job of consistently providing real news about our wonderful Lamorinda Community.

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Donation Requests from the Community

'Tis the Season of Giving



Toys for Tots Donation Locations in Lamorinda

There are several Toys for Tots donation location in Lamorinda: The Moraga-Orinda Fire District will be collecting toys 24 hours a day through Dec. 21 at 1280 Moraga Way in Moraga. For information, visit toysfortots.org.

Community Concern for Cats Giving Tree

Community Concern for Cats, which serves Lamorinda residents, is hosting a Giving Tree through Dec. 24 at its upscale thrift store, Rescued Treasures, 1270 Newell Ave., in Walnut Creek. All the proceeds will go toward life-saving procedures for homeless cats and kittens in local neighborhoods.

The donations will go toward vaccinations, micro chipping, healing antibiotics, flea protections, leukemia/FIV tests, veterinarian office visits, neutering of male cats, spaying of female cats, surgery and emergency medical procedures and special holiday treats. So far this year, CC4C has neutered 1,800 and found homes for 600 cats and kittens. Thrift store hours are Monday through Saturday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 4 p.m. For information, call (925) 937-3201.

Community Concern for Cats is the oldest cat rescue organization in Contra Costa County. CC4C has three Saturday and Sunday afternoon adoptions sites: Pet Food Express, Lafayette and Pleasant Hill, and Petco Walnut Creek. Lafayette hours are noon to 3 p.m., while the others are 1 to 4 p.m.



In Memory

Suzanne and Robert Jones



Suzanne and Robert Jones on their 25th anniversary.

Suzanne and Robert Jones, longtime Lafayette residents, passed away in November. Suzanne and Robert moved to Lafayette in 1969 with their three children. Suzanne was an active volunteer. She started the safety patrol at Lafayette school in the 1970s and then became a commissioner on the traffic commission. She was active in both Camp Fire Girls and Girl Scouts. She served on the Contra Costa Grand Jury. In her later years she served as a commissioner with the Senior Services Commission. Sue loved teaching the AARP senior driving classes. Sue loved spoiling her grandchildren and taking them on special adventures. Sue passed away at home on November 10. Robert passed away a week later on November 17 at the Willows in Walnut Creek. Robert worked for PacBell in Oakland and then in Walnut Creek. Robert served in the Korean War and was the recipient of a Silver Star.

Robert and Suzanne are survived by their three children: Sharon (and John) Pagendarm, Debbie Jones and Glen Jones. They are also survived by five grandchildren and one great granddaughter.

A joint memorial service will be held at 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 2 at the Lafayette Community Center. There will be a buffet lunch after the service. All are welcome. Memorial donations may be made to the Hydrocephalus Association, 4340 East West Highway, Suite 905, Bethesda, MD 20814-4447.

Lamorinda Weekly

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A Mediterranean Medley of Color and Crunch

By Susie Iventosch



Garbanzo Bean Sun-dried Tomato Salad

Photo Susie Iventosch

Garbanzo Bean Sun-dried Tomato Salad

(Serves 6-8 as a side dish, or 3-4 as a luncheon course)

INGREDIENTS

1 can (15 oz.) garbanzo beans, drained
3 tablespoons sun-dried tomatoes, julienned and packed in oil, drained
2 stalks celery, finely sliced
½ cup marinated artichoke hearts, cut into bite-sized pieces
1 small clove garlic, crushed
¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
1-2 tablespoons red wine vinegar
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Place first four ingredients in a bowl. Mix olive oil, vinegar, and garlic and drizzle over salad. Toss well and season to taste with salt and pepper. Store in refrigerator and remove about 20 minutes before serving to allow dressing to warm up a bit.

I like to serve this over a bed of lettuce, and it makes an excellent accompaniment to eggplant or lamb dishes.

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.



Have a Cup of Cheer at Rustic Tavern

By A.K. Carroll



Photo A.K. Carroll

Burl Ives sang it best: “Have a holly jolly Christmas, it’s the best time of the year. I don’t know if there’ll be snow, but have a cup of cheer.” Here in Lamorinda, chances for a snow are scarce, but opportunities for cheer abound in bistros, bars and restaurants. This week make a slight diversion from the hunt for happy hour in order to sip on some seasonal cocktails and share a cozy moment in Lafayette’s Rustic Tavern.

The holiday season – that festive sweet spot between Thanksgiving and New Year’s – brings moments of merriment, bouts of busyness and an abundance of excuses to meet up for a drink. With a sparkling new libations menu featuring seasonal flavors and festive cocktails, Rustic Tavern is ready to accommodate for any occasion, and in a setting that invites you to sit back and sip slowly.

Intentional simplicity marks the

menu and the atmosphere at Rustic Tavern. Small details like the polished reclaimed wood, fresh cut flowers, flickering tea lights and parchment paper menus create an overall artisanal ambiance. Arrive just after sunset for dimly-lit drinking (and dining) that is cozy and romantic. Take your pick of seats from the dozen bar stools, plentiful two tops, family-sized table or space-heated outdoor options. Then make your libation selection.

Designed by newcomer and front of the house manager AJ Verzosa, Rustic Tavern’s fresh seasonal cocktail selections range from merry drinks to serious swills. The bright fuchsia Blood Moon Margartia looks (and tastes) like a party in a tumbler. Made with fresh-squeezed blood orange juice, lime, solerno and tequila blanco, this lush pick-me-up is served with a slice orange and a chile salt rim that provides just the right balance of

sweet, sour and spicy. Meanwhile, the Pear and Spice and everything iced provides more subtle sipping option in which notes of clove and rosemary muddle with sweet pear puree and botanical gin. For the wine enthusiast who has a hankering for something special, there’s the singular Grape Stomp Martini – a vodka-based beverage crafted with lemon, St. Germain and a reduction of Concord grapes, making for a jammy burgundy martini that dares you to describe it without using the term “tannic.” More serious swillers may opt for the straight-forward flavors of the refashioned old fashioned, made with Bulleit bourbon bitters, muddled orange and a smoked maple syrup that gives depth to a classic.

For the less complicated crowd, Rustic Tavern also offers a rotation of four draft beers (including the Racer 5 IPA, Trumer Pils, and an 8 Bridges brown ale), as well as standard well drinks and plentiful wine options, all of which are discounted during their 2:30 to 5 p.m. happy hour, which runs Tuesday through Friday afternoons. Drafts are priced at \$3 each, with house wines and wells going for \$5.

Whether it’s a holiday drink, a catch up with an old friend or an afternoon escape while the family is in town, with its new selection of seasonal cocktails, happy hour options and charming twinkle lights, Rustic Tavern has your cup of cheer covered.

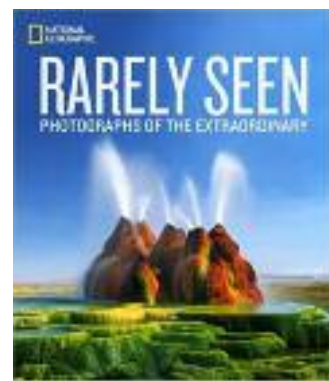
Rustic Tavern
3576 Mt Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
(925) 385-0559

Holiday Gift Ideas, Both Big and Small

By Lou Fancher



Hammacher handcrafted Hippopotamine sofa
Photos provided



So now it’s down to the wire. If you don’t have that spectacular gift for a special someone, you need to think simple. Recognizing the possibilities are infinite, hone the choices to big or small and stay local or go online. Why spend hours in bad traffic when you could be home, lounging on a hippo – which kicks off our last-minute something-for-anyone list.

Yes, count on Hammacher Schlemmer to come up with something “big” and unneeded for people with too much spare change. The 198-pound Handcrafted Hippopotamine Sofa made with “tufted full-grain leather” and covered in “pebbled leather-like polyurethane” is meant to simulate a hippo’s hairless skin and comes with a hefty price tag: \$95,000. Does that include shipping? We didn’t even ask, so stunned were we with the idea of also ordering a fleet of remote control snapping crocodiles, a bargain at \$39.95 apiece.

Should the hippo hangout ever disappoint you, it comes with the company’s lifetime guarantee and can be or returned for credit or exchanged. What, they have an elephantine bed?

OK, now for small – and local.

Moraga-based Hollie’s Homegrown company specializes in culinary and medicinal herbs, herbal teas, bath and body products, and herb-infused olive oils, vinegars and honey. Owner Hollie Lucas-Alcalay brings her extensive marketing know-how, three generations of farm family experience, herbs grown in her own backyard and a mother’s love to items that help you “take good care of yourself and your family.” From tiny lemon-scented candles to tall, slender bottles of Tuscan Rosemary Olive Oil, everything offered takes care of the large (sustainable farming practices protect the planet) and smaller needs: lips, throats, taste buds.

Conceding a strong bias toward books as best-of-all gifts, shopping at Orinda Books is a no-brainer. The independent bookstore stocks local art, photography, music and jewelry, but the main ingredient is books.

Speaking of ingredients, one “big” book of the year is a standout: the 6-pound, 9-ounce cookbook, “The Food Lab: Better Home Cooking Through Science” (W. W. Norton & Company). Serious Eats Culinary Director and Internet cooking guru J. Kenji López-Alt backs up everyday foods like mac’n’cheese, steak, cheeseburgers, risotto and roasted vegetables with rigorous science and over 1,000 full color images. The 960-page behemoth (29 copies equals 1 hippo couch) from the San Mateo-based author is in many ways a bargain at \$49.95 and a great gift for foodies. To discern its value, think

about how many times you will peek at its pages as you prepare the best boiled eggs, savory smashed turkey, or fried chicken with skin that’s nothing like pebbled polyurethane. With invaluable science-backed advice about knives, freezing foods, grass-fed versus grain-fed beef and how to make the best pancakes ever, get a doorstep to match that living room furniture – make a hippo happy.

The perfect counterpart to all that heft is Cheryl Strayed’s 135-page “Brave Enough” (Knopf). The roughly 5-by-7-inch edition, a collection of quotes from the New York Times best-selling author of “Wild” – the first selection of Oprah’s Book Club 2.0 and an Oscar-nominated film starring Reese Witherspoon – feeds the soul after Food Lab has taken care of the stomach. Including advice that Strayed followed on her Pacific Coast Trail journey and words to which we all aspire, the missives are scrubbed of pretense and introduced with brief essays that are in themselves truly brave enough. Parents note, this is for the plus-16 crowd.

Harmony often comes in threes so strike the perfect chord with National Geographic’s “Rarely Seen” (\$40). Pictures of wonders of the world captured by photojournalist Stephen Alvarez during his 20-year career as a National Geographic photographer are thematically organized around phenomena, life, places, objects and moments. Words pale when attempting to define the images, but suffice it to say that stars pinwheeling above granite arches, 650 zigzag steps resembling a corset up the face of the Rock of Guatapé, a worker resting on cauliflower-like bails of cotton in Côte d’Ivoire and red-jacketed ecotourists labeled as “Penguin Paparazzi” as they line up to document a lonely penguin are only a few of the book’s rarely seen splendors.

Of course, if you are really jammed for gifts, there is always cash. You can go big, like do a Zuckerberg/Chan and give \$45 billion in stock to a charitable foundation in your kid’s name – and watch them scream. Or go small. The younger generation will be wowed by the old-fashioned novelty – anecdotally proven by a teenager who, when handed a \$5 bill said, “Wow, paper money, how retro.”

But the one gift you can give that will never be refused, never be too silly, never get old and worn or smeared with potato chip grease (what else are you going to eat while sitting on that hippo lounger?) and will never cost a dime, is love.

Give some love. Get some love. Be grateful. It’s that easy.

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Campolindo Returns to State Title Game for Third Time in 5 Years

By Karl Buscheck



Photo Andrew Federas



Photo Gint Federas

Thanks to a late interception by Dante DeLuca, Campolindo toppled Milpitas 27-24 to claim the Northern California Division III-AA regional championship on Dec. 11 in Moraga.

"This was just nasty football," said head coach Kevin Macy, as he stood on the field at Bob Wilson Stadium, surrounded by cheering players, students and fans. "It wasn't pretty. This was not a pretty football game. But if you wanted a junkyard brawl, you got a junkyard brawl tonight. Our guys can fight as hard as anybody."

The next junkyard brawl comes against La Mirada on Dec. 19 in Southern California at 6 p.m., as the defending-champion Cougars advance to the state title game for the third time in five seasons. Campo wouldn't be going back to the championship clash if not for DeLuca's pick with 1:41 in the fourth quarter.

"I'm so shocked right now," DeLuca said after his interception slammed the door on a potential game-winning drive for Milpitas and paved the way for senior Matthew Blair's 32-yard field goal with 23 seconds to go. "I was in the perfect place at the right time."

DeLuca was only in the right place at the right time thanks to the insistence of Macy, who benched the senior for a game early in the campaign after he initially refused to switch from safety to cornerback.

It was only fitting that the interception would determine the outcome in a game in which neither team could hold onto the ball.

"It was turnovers back and forth," Macy said. "Each team all night long was throwing it back in the hands of the other team. Dante's (interception) was so huge."

On offense, the biggest play for Campo came on the opening drive of

the fourth quarter when Macy and his staff dialed up a brilliant trick play. Junior quarterback Jacob Westphal threw a lateral to sophomore John Torchio – the team's backup quarterback – who then connected with senior wide receiver Madison Young for a 59-yard strike, as the Cougars raced out to a 21-17 lead.

"It was just a night of gambling because we couldn't sit back," Macy said. "We just had to take risks."

Campo had to take risks on the defensive side of the ball, too. The Cougars had to entirely re-work their usual defensive game plan as the team was running up against Division I opponent in Milpitas who sported a mountain of an offensive line.

The Cougars arrived at the matchup with Milpitas after securing the NCS Division III crown by smashing past Analy 38-21 on Dec. 4 at Diablo Valley College. Following a sleepy start to the contest, the of-

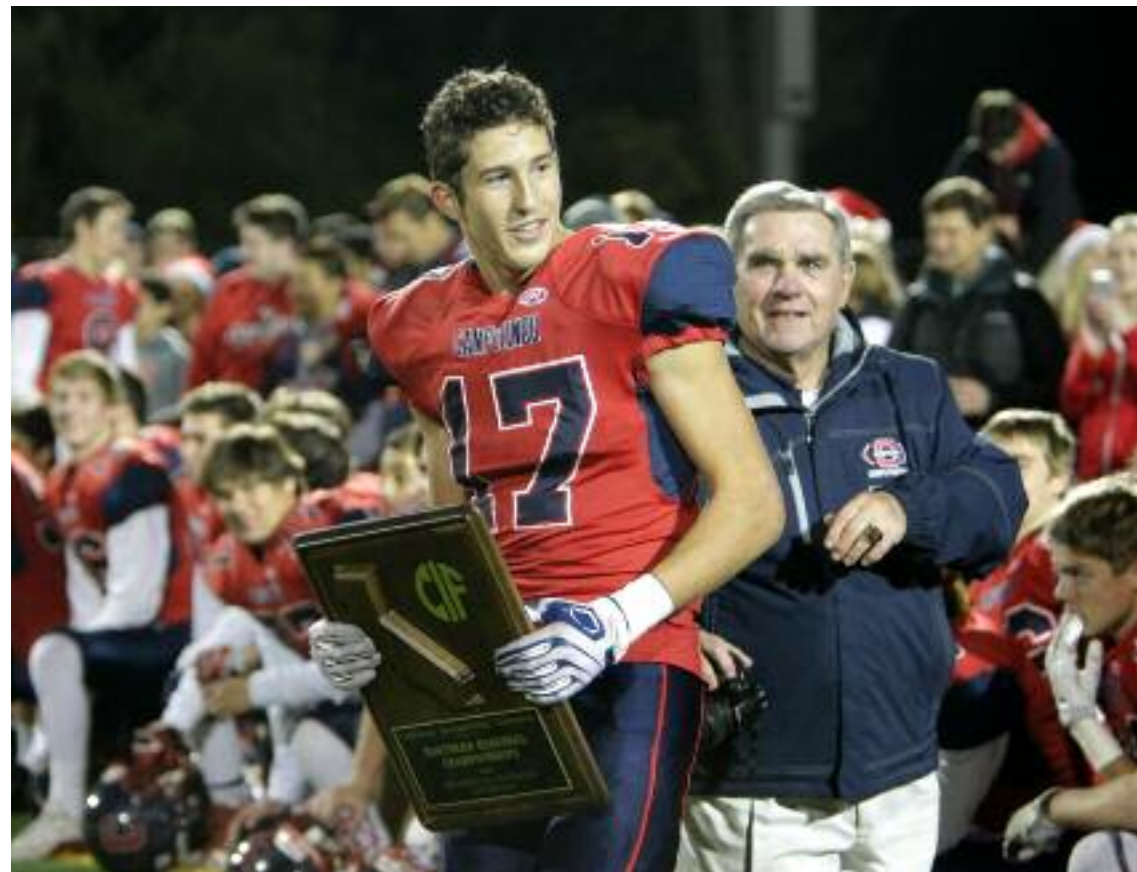
fense roared to life after junior Niki Moore blocked a first-quarter field-goal attempt by Analy.

"I think that was a huge momentum turn," said senior defensive/of-

fensive lineman Sterling Strother. "I think that was our first blocked field goal all year. It was a huge change in the tide."



Coach Macy assigned Travis Brainerd (51) to Milpitas' biggest player, Washington State commit Christian Haangana (77). Photo Gint Federas



Dante DeLuca (17) hoists the CIF regional championship plaque after making a game-clinching interception late in the fourth quarter. Photo Gint Federas

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Lamorinda Soccer Teams Begin DFAL Play

By Spencer Silva



Drew Wondolowski (17) and Mark Vonhacht (4)

Photo Gint Federas

On Friday Dec. 11, Miramonte (1-1-2) hosted Campolindo (2-1-2) in a sleepy rivalry match that ended in a 0-0 tie. In fact, the varsity match was moved from 6:15 to 4:15 to allow the Cougars players and coaches to support the football team in their bid for consecutive state titles.

Both teams emphasize possession-style soccer, and while each had their chances early, neither was able to put the ball in the back of the net. Senior goalkeeper Garret Johnson made two spectacular saves for the Mats, including a stop on a ball that looked destined for the far post well to his left.

"It was a quality match," said Campo head coach Shane Carney. "I think both teams would have preferred a winner/loser, but we do get to play again."

Carney and Mats' head coach Massood Ahmadi have also discussed scheduling a third match between the two toward the end of season, since the two teams will not meet in the playoffs -- the NCS re-aligned its soccer divisions, sending the Mats down to Division III while the Cougars remain in Division II.

The Mats are encouraged by their play so far, despite their so-so record. The team's lone victory came against a familiar opponent: De Anza, the team that eliminated them from the NCS playoffs last fall. Senior Coleman Fine delivered the game-winning goal in thrilling fashion, when he sent a left-footed shot from 15 yards to the far upper post to clinch the 2-1 victory.

The Mats are anchored by seniors Joe Wang -- who exited Friday's match with a pulled hamstring -- the aforementioned Fine, and attacker Clark Jordan. Ahmadi is pleased with his talent, though the first-year coach admits he's still figuring out how to best use his players.

"We have so much talent," Ahmadi explained. "It's just my job to put them in the right

spots and be creative."

The Cougars -- who have won the DFAL in consecutive seasons -- are dealing once again with hefty turnover. They bid farewell to 14 players from last year's championship team after losing 20 the year before. Adversity, it appears, is a way of life for Cougars soccer.

"A lot of coaches and programs make excuses and talk about how they are 'rebuilding,'" Carney said. "I don't like excuses and prefer to look at it as the opportunity to reload each year."

The team features 10 freshman, and the benefit of inexperience, as Carney noted, is quick improvement. Seniors Ryan Rossi, Shea Danforth, Amir Aliakbari, and Kyle O'Connell anchor the team. The team will also get a shot in the arm once junior Matt Renguist returns from outrunning defenders for the school's football team.

"We have a lot of young and/or very small guys, but we'll be scrappy and put a fight up against any opponent," Carney said.

The Acalanes Dons (3-2) lost to Concord High 0-2 this weekend, but remain confident heading into DFAL play. The team graduated 12 seniors, but veteran head coach Paul Curtis isn't concerned about the loss of talent.

"I think we'll be competitive."

The Dons are known for their unique playing style and formation, which extends from the freshman team all the way to varsity. In fact, the program emphasizes camaraderie and personal responsibility above all. It's not uncommon, for instance, to see juniors and seniors at a freshman match cheering on the youngest Dons.

Senior captain Ian Franklin, who has been on the team since his freshman year, leads the varsity team. The team is "getting organized" and polishing up its game before heading into DFAL play.

The Dons travel to Campolindo Dec. 16 for their first rivalry match of the fall.

Saint Mary's, Cal Rekindle Decades-Old Rivalry in Thrilling Fashion

By Dean Boerner



Joe Rahon's (25) 16 points led all scorers Saturday

Photo Tod Fierner

On Saturday Dec. 12 at Berkeley's Haas Pavilion, the Saint Mary's Gaels (6-1) and California Golden Bears (8-2) rekindled the dormant rivalry in thrilling fashion, with the Bears eventually handing the Gaels their first loss of the season 63-59. It was the first time the two schools, just 10 miles apart, had met in 11 years.

In the opening half, the Golden Bears dominated Saint Mary's on the boards, outrebounding them 19-12. With 7:00 left and the Gaels up 21-20, Cal embarked on a punishing 17-5 run to close out the half with a 37-26 lead.

Nevertheless, Gaels head coach Randy Bennett made the necessary adjustments at half-time and their offense came out in sync. Saint Mary's slowly crept back into the game thanks to an 8-0 push featuring two Evan Fitzner 3-pointers and what Bennett called an "inspiring" effort on the glass from junior forward Dane Pineau.

"We changed a couple things offensively," Bennett said. "We definitely got better shots in the second half."

By the eight-minute mark in the second half, the Gaels had outscored the Golden Bears 24-9, taking a 50-46 lead, quieting those in the Haas Pavilion crowd not wearing red.

Neither team could separate in the game's final minutes. A Calvin Hermanson 3-pointer gave Saint Mary's a 55-52 lead, which was promptly countervailed by a timely 3-point jumper by Jabari Bird with 3:30 left on the clock.

The last bucket for Saint Mary's came on a layup from Joe Rahon with 1:47 to play, putting Saint Mary's up 59-58. While the Gaels had several opportunities to bolster their lead thanks to the offensive rebounding of Pineau, a block by Cal forward Ivan Rabb secured possession for the Golden Bears and allowed Cal head coach Cuonzo Martin to draw a play up for Bird in a timeout.

With less than 20 seconds left, Cal down 59-58, Bird nailed his third 3-pointer of the afternoon, giving the Golden Bears a lead they wouldn't relinquish. Saint Mary's had a chance to extend the game into overtime, but a missed free throw by game-high scorer Rahon sealed the Gaels' fate.

"It was the first real close game we've played as a group this year," said Rahon. "We made a lot of mistakes down the stretch."

Both players and coaches alike expressed satisfaction at the thought of making Bay Area contests like this one more commonplace. The game was no doubt a reminder for Bay Area basketball fans of what they've been missing.

"This is what should be going on," said Bennett after the game. "It would be good to get some rivalries going in the Bay Area." Earlier this season, Bennett's squad had an impressive 78-61 victory against Stanford in front of a packed house at McKeon Pavilion.

Cuonzo Martin showered praise on the oft-overlooked Saint Mary's program. "This is probably the best team we've played on both ends of the floor," declared Martin. "They play hard. They play together. Great game for the Bay Area."

The Saint Mary's men's team isn't the only one embroiling itself in more Bay Area competition. The women's team upset No. 18 Cal on path to a Cal Tournament championship earlier this month. With Cal up one and only seconds left, Saint Mary's freshman Sydney Raggio hit a clutch jumper to give Saint Mary's a dramatic road victory.

The theatrics of Saturday afternoon's matchup is another episode in what might be a revived sense of competition in Bay Area college basketball. "You can see the fan support (Saint Mary's) had tonight and both teams really had a bunch of fans rooting for them," said Rabb, a Cal freshman. "We gave them a thriller."

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Orinda Soccer Player Takes Game to National Stage

Submitted by Mary Staff



Photo Kelley Cox

Orinda soccer player, Samantha DeVecchi, was invited to compete in an elite soccer tournament with some of the top players in the country.

The Miramonte junior was one of 18 players selected to represent Region IV in the 2015 US Youth Soccer Olympic Development Program (ODP) Girls Thanksgiving Interregional Tournament in Boca Raton, Fla. The Region IV team is made up of top players from the 15 Western States.

The weeklong tournament featured some of the best players in the country from each of the

four US Youth Soccer Regions. Players worked alongside some of the nation's top coaches to enhance their problem solving skills within the game, and further their technical and tactical abilities.

DeVecchi talked about her experience at the camp. "This was a great opportunity for me. I played with, roomed with, and became friends with some of the best players in the country. The training was intense, fast, physical, and grueling, but fun at the same time. We trained in the classroom, as well as on the fields."

US Soccer's ODP Interregional Tournament is a system in which players are identified, evaluated, and developed for possible inclusion on US Olympic and National Teams. US Youth Soccer ODP claims members of Major League Soccer, the National Women's Soccer League, and the majority of current and past national and youth national team members, as alumni.

At the conclusion of the camp, the coaches gave each player a written evaluation of their overall skills. DeVecchi said her evaluation was informative. "It showed me some things I do well and also gave me positive feedback on what I need to continue to work on."

"Playing against the Womens' National Team was awesome" DeVecchi said, when asked to summarize her experience. "They were so fast, so aggressive, and they were on you in a flash." She added, "When we had our chance to play against them, I felt like I played well and upped my game, but they were awesome."

Currently a member of the Danville Mustang ECNL U16 team, DeVecchi has been in the ODP Program for the past four years.

Lamorinda United 97 Finish 4-0 in Surf College Showcase

Submitted by Nicole Yuen



Photo provided

Lamorinda United 97 finished their first Surf College Showcase with a 4-0 record, outscoring their opponents 14-2 and bringing home the Swami Division Championship. Two of these victories were over Colorado's No. 1 team, Broomfield Blast and Washington's No. 1 team, PSPL Surf Academy. The girls show-

cased their possession-style of soccer for hundreds of college coaches during the Thanksgiving weekend. As the team heads into their winter break, they look forward to completing their final Spring season with Lamorinda United 97 in 2016.

Lamorinda U15 Boys Declared Champions of the 2015 NorCal Premier NPL2

Submitted by Vivian Alfaro



Photo provided

It was a phenomenal fall weekend for Lamorinda U15 Boys soccer at the 2015 NPL Fall College Showcase in Turlock, Calif. In order to secure first place, the boys needed two wins over the weekend. On Saturday, Nov. 21 they faced San Mateo County Star and won 4 to 1 win with goals scored by A. Cardenas, A. Alfaro, A. Sanchez, and A. Guzman. On Sunday, they won their final league match against PAC San Jose Academy, 2-1. Both goals were

by A. Guzman. PAC San Jose Academy gave Lamorinda a great fight that came down to the end. The boys played together, eliminating multiple offensive threats and were able to clinch the NPL2 Champions title. With a lot of sweat, some blood and plenty of hard work and training, the boys finished strong in 1st place with a 7-1-1 record and are NorCal Premier NPL2 Champions.

Spartans Win 5th Grade Girls Turkey Shootout Title

Submitted by Stephanie and Jay Williams



Back row, from left: coaches Jay Williams and Eric Yabu, Annie Coane, Kylie Williams, Julia Hirahara, Kalena King, coaches Sarah Garcia and Stephanie Williams
Front row: Ava Garcia, Camille Yabu, Mina Wang, Kristin Muraoka

Photo provided

St. Monica's fifth grade Spartans depended upon balanced scoring and team defense to prevail in the 15th annual Turkey Shootout in

Walnut Creek, a three-day tournament sponsored by MVP Flight basketball.

Advertising

LMYA 2015 SOCCER SEASON CLOSES WITH PANACHE

The Lafayette Moraga Youth Association's Soccer program is the biggest game in town. The season runs from early September until mid-November. On November 21, the top teams in each of the older age groups competed in the season finale "Commissioner's Cup"; an all-day event and festival at the Lafayette Community Fields. The LMYA Soccer program is headed by Joe Dougherty and Heidi Hambidge in Lafayette and Matt Helder in Moraga.

The winners are:

4th Grade Girls, NETHERLANDS



Left to right in the picture are: Coach Stuart Crumbaugh, Selma Ahmed, Romey Crumbaugh, Riley Regan, Katherine Yokomizo, Carley Hudson, Riley Markham, Lauren Anderson, Mia Damon-Espinas, Catelyn Cereghino and Coach David Cereghino. Not in the picture but also on the team, Ana Hays and Maddie O'Ball

4th Grade Boys, TIMBERS



Pictured: Bottom Row -Daniel Vasankari, Collin Malmquist, Evan Sverak, Blake Pepper, Caleb Sherman
Top Row - coach Jim Malmquist, Tobias Case, Colten Haas, Mason Lane, Nick Dietsch, Nate Lyons, Will Paulsen, Jack Steven, Coach Bob Sverak - Not Pictured Gavin Davidson

5th & 6th Grade Girls, USA



Pictured, back row, left to right: Coach Joe Dougherty, Coach Mark Poole. Middle row, left to right: Rylan Smith, Lila Waechter, Charlotte McKenzie, Sadie Burks. Front row, left to right: Julia Poole, Kaitlyn Keely, Sarah Gohres, Sara Archer, Krista Keely, Cate Condy, Kylie Siegel, Georgia Winkles, Gianna Giordano, Emily McDonsals, Sarah Bryn Owens, Riley Baker, Katie Dougherty.

5th & 6th Grade Boys, Orinda Thunder



Top Row (from Left): Palmer Hightower, Antonio Godwin, Cole Foster, Eliav Feiger, Oscar Rolfé, Aaron Lee, Tyler Bullock, Kenny Hilton, Coach Andrew Lee
Bottom Row (from Left): Cooper Womack, Michael Wen, Arik Shehter, Joshua Lee, Kevin Cunningham
Not in Picture: Soren Anderson, Tyler Singh

7th & 8th Grade Girls, England



Top row (L to R): Ciara Moses, Maxine D'Orazio, Natasha Malinovsky, Caitlin Smith, Sydney Zimmerman, Emma Phillips, Leah Macarewich, Kira Niyogi, Georgina Williams; bottom row: Angela Chavez, Hannah Goett, Brooke Stafford, Katherine Groszewski, Kennedy Merrion (not pictured Tallulah Clancy and Isabel Powell)

7th & 8th Grade Boys, Liverpool



Top row standing from left to right: Ismael Ali, Isaiah Coleman, Thomas Schrader, Eli Harper-Jorgenson, Bobby Nelson, Jared Steuber. Bottom row kneeling from left to right: Cooper Schnurr, Walter Workman, Brandon Gentry, Jackson Heglie, Alec Driver, Not Pictured: Sy Anderson, Ryan Brown, Forrest Butris, Lewis Collinson, Anthony Mirabito. Coach Will Workman

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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 09 Issue 21 Wednesday, December 16, 2015



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian
...read on page D8

Water, Water Everywhere: A Cautionary Tale

By Cathy Dausman



Water damage was extensive at Cynthia Brian's home.
Photos courtesy Cynthia Brian

Lamorinda Weekly writer Cynthia Brian left her house last February on a family vacation and returned to find “a nightmare.”

A relatively minor pipe repair gone awry upstairs leaked and then failed; the result was water cascading downstairs and throughout the 25-year-old house, affecting walls, ceiling and floors.

Brian was in shock when she first viewed the

damage. “I really loved the house the way it was before,” she said.

Brian tried to contain the damage herself, hauling out a hundred towels and sheets, but quickly realized she needed a professional restoration company. They trailered two portable storage units on site, boxed household belongings, removed standing water, the carpets and flooring and tore out sheetrock walls. Twelve fans were brought in to dry the structure.

For the next eight months the Brians walked on floors covered in plastic sheeting and lived with the smell of chemicals and the noise of construction. No room was untouched, Brian said. “Every time they exposed something, they’d find something new.”

Specifying and sourcing new materials, being available to the crews, dealing with insurance, then unpacking their stored household goods and setting the house to right was so incredibly time consuming, Brian said it became a second full-time job.

She estimates repair costs ran over \$200,000.

One bit of good news: the house tested negative for mold. Brian was very happy with the restoration company and construction crew, and recommends homeowners act quickly if something similar happens to them. She also urged homeowners to interview a reputable and licensed contractor, and to read their insurance policies now and check coverage.

Although Brian dealt with good adjusters when filing her claim, she cautions the overall experience can be really, really tough, adding they practically had to start over with the process when their insurance company was bought out by another.

As a precaution, the Brians now shut off their main water line before they travel. “I wasn’t expecting

this,” Brian said.

Moraga police lieutenant Jon King was not expecting it either when he endured a house flood caused by a water main break in 2007, saying he would like to avoid repeating the experience. “It’s no fun,” he said plainly. Still, he was willing to share the experience hoping that someone else can be better prepared before the predicted El Nino storms arrive this winter.

King’s Castro Valley hillside house was directly in the path of water from a 12-inch East Bay Municipal Utility District water main rupture in December 2007. “We had our (Christmas) tree up. My wife and I had gone to Walnut Creek for a dinner date when I got a call from a neighbor,” King said. “(The water) is kinda going by,” the neighbor told him, then added, “Oh, no. It’s in your garage!”

King and his wife rushed home in time to see water sluicing downhill, shooting a geyser 20 feet in the air when it hit a tire of his unmarked patrol car parked curbside. “There were flumes of water across driveways,” he said. The water “completely flooded the first two (hilltop) houses,” invaded a neighbor’s crawl space, dumped two to three inches of water in their garage, and even managed to infiltrate a closed refrigerator located inside.

... continued on page D4



Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	16	\$470,000	\$6,350,000
MORAGA	4	\$800,000	\$1,150,000
ORINDA	12	\$930,000	\$1,870,000

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

LAFAYETTE

- 1154 Camino Vallecito, \$1,710,000, 3 Bdrms, 4014 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 10-26-15
 1000 Circle Creek Drive #1002, \$900,000, 4 Bdrms, 1464 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 10-30-15;
 Previous Sale: \$283,000, 01-22-99
 1025 Dolores Drive, \$860,000, 3 Bdrms, 1181 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 10-16-15;
 Previous Sale: \$152,000, 12-18-85
 3124 Diablo View Road, \$815,000, 3 Bdrms, 1664 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 10-30-15;
 Previous Sale: \$359,000, 10-05-99
 1201 Franklin Lane, \$859,500, 10-21-15
 917 Hough Avenue #4, \$470,000, 2 Bdrms, 1038 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 10-27-15;
 Previous Sale: \$171,000, 09-09-92
 3619 Lincoln Way, \$1,132,000, 3 Bdrms, 1780 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 10-28-15;
 Previous Sale: \$727,000, 11-26-03
 3160 Plymouth Road, \$995,000, 3 Bdrms, 1495 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 10-28-15;
 Previous Sale: \$850,000, 10-19-05
 1630 Reliez Valley Road, \$2,362,000, 4 Bdrms, 4197 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 10-26-15;
 Previous Sale: \$975,000, 04-01-14
 3354 Reliez Highland Road, \$564,000, 3 Bdrms, 2607 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 10-30-15;
 Previous Sale: \$529,000, 09-15-14
 1236 Rose Lane, \$6,350,000, 2 Bdrms, 5647 SqFt, 1982 YrBlt, 10-23-15;
 Previous Sale: \$3,000,000, 01-12-09
 348 Shire Oaks Court, \$1,040,000, 4 Bdrms, 1545 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-30-15;
 Previous Sale: \$38,500, 08-04-70
 562 Silverado Drive, \$1,325,000, 4 Bdrms, 2132 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 10-16-15
 646 Sweet Court, \$1,035,000, 2 Bdrms, 1591 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 10-27-15;
 Previous Sale: \$265,000, 02-17-94
 3298 Sweet Drive, \$850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1375 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 10-22-15;
 Previous Sale: \$280,000, 01-11-00
 1001 Woodbury Road #202, \$1,438,500, 10-27-15

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- 923 Augusta Drive, \$1,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 2828 SqFt, 1989 YrBlt, 10-30-15
 1086 Bollinger Canyon, \$1,150,000, 2 Bdrms, 1618 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 10-30-15;
 Previous Sale: \$849,000, 04-21-10
 9 Josefa Place, \$800,000, 3 Bdrms, 2095 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 10-16-15;
 Previous Sale: \$335,000, 08-07-98
 9 Lucia Lane, \$1,070,000, 4 Bdrms, 1996 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 10-27-15;
 Previous Sale: \$1,080,000, 06-03-05

... continued on page D9

Clarification:

In the Dec. 2 Lamorinda Weekly article "Recent Rains Small Respite for Drought-Stressed Trees," East Bay Municipal Utility District staff believe the redwood tree featured in the photo showed an example of roadway herbicide spraying and not drought-related tree stress. Typically, drought related mortality occurs in the top of the tree, since branches are the last to get water, not in the lowest branches as shown in the photograph. Also, according to EBMUD spokeswoman Abby Figueroa, EBMUD does not have redwood trees dying on its watershed.



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PENDING



2582 Oak Rd #218, Walnut Creek \$489,000



97 Oak Rd, Orinda Rep. Seller and Buyer



503 Woodminster Dr, Moraga, Rep. Seller & Buyer



18 Bobolink Rd, Orinda Representing Seller



67 Buckingham Dr, Moraga, Rep. Seller



3523 Wild Flower Way, Concord, Rep. Seller



35 Canyon View Dr, Orinda, Rep. Seller



1002 Santa Monica Ct, Pleasant Hill, Rep. Seller



11 Muth Dr, Orinda Represented Seller



97 Bunce Meadows Dr, Alamo, Rep. Seller



4056 Fiora Pl, Lafayette Represented Seller



3980 Clark Rd, El Sobrante, Rep. Seller



5408 Heatherland Dr, San Ramon, Rep. Buyer



774 Crossbrook Dr, Moraga, Rep. Buyer



1635 Siskiyou Dr, Walnut Creek, Rep. Buyer



La Fond Ln, Orinda Represented Buyer

SOLD THIS YEAR



114 Lucille Way, Orinda Represented Landlord



1 Culver Ct, Orinda Represented Landlord and Tenant



117 Coral Dr, Orinda Represented Landlord and Tenant

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Warmest Holiday Wishes!

We would like to thank the Lamorinda community for another amazing year, and we look forward to being your preferred real estate brokerage for years to come. Wishing you and your loved ones great joy and many blessings this holiday season.

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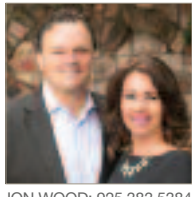
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Water, Water Everywhere

... continued from page D1

Water pooled near the front door was only an inch from the sill. It gained entry into their son's room through another door, soaking the carpet and sheetrock and depositing a "fine mud" throughout.

King shook his head and said: "You don't even want to think what is in that water."

The force of the water lifted the asphalt along his street's new paving and completely ruined the King's new front and back yard landscaping, as well as anything that was on the floors in the affected areas. King lost a digital movie camera he left in a backpack on the floor. All told the water damage caused an estimated \$25,000 to repair, which was relatively minor compared to his neighbor's \$100,000 in damages.

"I never thought that water could cause that much damage," King said, before adding gratefully that "EBMUD took care of business."

The Kings "hustled" through their repair work in a mere 30 days – the family planned to host a Christmas celebration. Their more seriously affected neighbors' houses took six months to repair. "And that was not even an El Nino event," King said.

"The moral of the story is be prepared," he said. "We know El Nino is coming. Pick up leaves from your gutters and clear out drains. Have first aid supplies and a box of candles handy," he said. "Be prepared for a power loss of 48 to 72 hours, and watch your distressed trees" for signs of uprooting. "There are only so many aid crews (available during a disaster), and we're not going to be the only ones affected."





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Thank you to all my clients
for a great year in 2015!



*Happy Holidays and
Best Wishes for a Happy
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RECENTLY SOLD



1018 Richard Lane, Danville - Listed at \$1,649,000
SOLD! Represented Buyer



371 Castello Road, Lafayette - Listed at \$1,425,000
SOLD! Represented Seller



5 Whiting Court, Moraga - Listed at \$1,485,000
SOLD! Represented Buyer



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The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

By Andi Peterson Brown

It's beginning to look a lot like the most wonderful time of the year. And if your home is still on the market, you might be contemplating pulling it for the winter. Hold that thought. Even though real estate activity tends to decline during December, the season can in fact be a great opportunity to showcase your home in its holiday best.

Buyers who are out looking during the holidays are usually more serious about their search. To capture their hearts and secure a sale, here are some quick and easy tips for holiday staging.

Keep it natural, keep it simple. While it might be tempting to display your cardboard cut-out Buddy the Elf or put your Clark Griswold skills to the test, it's best to keep things simple and natural at your front door. Beautiful wreaths, poinsettias, and tasteful, classic twinkle lights will put buyers in the spirit and make a lasting first impression.

Keep it natural, keep it neutral. It's important for buyers to see themselves living in your home, and universals such as winter greenery, decorative candles, pine cones, and glass jars of candy canes and marshmallows all invoke the warmth of the holidays and spread good cheer to the widest pool of buyers.

These tips, coupled with the fact that Lamorinda has a very low housing supply, might just make the difference for that one buyer. And remember: it only takes one.



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Stylish Solutions Decorative Holiday Card Displays

By Ann McDonald



Wreaths are still one of my favorite ways to handle the holiday cards. Why? Because you can change the ribbon and wreath style easily, and add ribbon to handle more cards as the season progresses. Photos courtesy Couture Chateau, llc

Since the holiday season is in full swing this month, I wanted to address the issue of cards: what to do with them, where to put them, how to display them, and most importantly, how to preserve and recycle them at the same time. Each season, I think the holiday card tradition will lose steam. And then the mailbox starts to fill.

The truth? I love the art of writing and receiving hand-written, or at the very least, hand-signed cards. A quick conversation with my 20-something progeny revealed he had no understanding of the value of holiday cards, even as we failed at our attempt at a nice family picture. I tried to explain “in the olden days” we didn’t have pictures of all our friends near and far 24/7 in various “feeds.” Rather, we eagerly awaited the holiday season to see braces on or braces off, hair long or hair short, growth spurts and more. It was a real delight to see the friends, relatives and pets in all of their holiday garb.

The truth is, we probably do not need the card, but we like

the card and its tradition of sorts. I still read the letters, and take time to sort and display cards for those quieter moments in between the hustle of business that can take over during this time of year.

My Top Holiday Card Quick Tips:

1. Get a beautiful letter opener. Yes, you can use a knife – or your fingers, or you can even rip the cards open – but the truth is, part of dressing the home for the holidays includes the subtle systems we allow ourselves to enjoy. Breathe in deep, set the pile of letters down and carefully, with style, use the letter opener. Besides, this way you will never be gluing together an envelope, trying to see the return address so you can send the forgotten card.

2. Sort immediately by follow up needed. Then contain. Do you need to send a card to that person? Did you forget and their card has just arrived? We all have those moments. Once you have a handle on reciprocating the seasonal greeting, it is time to immediately contain. ... continued on next page



We use micro strips and cross cut shredding to protect privacy and mix several batches to get colors fun. This is extremely easy and can be used for party décor (see the Dec. 17, 2014 Lamorinda Weekly article “Last Minute Holiday Décor Ideas” in the on-line archives).



This is a simple display trick for cards in tight quarters. Buy a pack of clothes pins and twine, attach with thumb tacks and voila – display!

One simple display trick is to attach close pins on twine draped on a pin board, tack onto ribbon tails from a hanging wreath, or display on mirrored trays and cookie trays to work piles of cards into your existing decor.

Once the holidays are over, set aside a day or section of hours to really go through things like addresses, names of children and relationship status updates. By taking the time in January to follow up on those things, next year won't seem so daunting. If you are the address label type, update and date your file so you know which is the latest version.

3. Curate the years. One of my favorite things to do is maintain copies of the cards that mean a great deal to us, and still recycle the

materials. You can scan, photocopy and photograph cards and notes. Scanning is the best, in my opinion, but it can take some time. Lining up the cards and snapping quick photos is much more efficient, but not as polished in the end.

You can then import into a file for rotating picture frames, which are particularly nice for relatives and elderly friends living in nursing homes or adult care facilities. They love to see the family and friends over the years. I have found, while I love the photo books, the frames are much easier to edit. You can even overlay the names of people on photos before uploading.

The photo book is nice, and I have sev-



Look for interesting letter openers all year round at antique fairs and home stores. I tend to collect them because they make great hostess gifts when wine isn't appropriate and I love displaying them on trays in the front hall or on my desk. Here is the classic Tiffany, which can be engraved.

eral friends who do this every year.

4. Recycle. These holiday cards generate a lot of potential waste. What do we do? We shred. And we use the shredding all year for shipping. Envelopes with foil are the best.

With Couture Chateau, there are times we ship out products to clients and you will find our artfully shredded cards in the box. It breaks my heart to simply throw them away, and this is a great, easy way to repurpose the materials.

For more ways to reuse the cards be sure to download the Holiday Card Helps. As always, my hope, stylish suburbanite, is that you find peace and joy this season, and that the new year brings you much happiness.

I source baskets at stores like Home Goods, Cost Plus and even OSH. Simply

change out bows

for the season. I like

this shape because it holds the large cards easily and doesn't take up too much counter space like a large flat basket does.



Ann McDonald, IIDA, NAPO, is the Founder/CEO of Couture Chateau, a

luxury interior design firm in Orinda. For a complete blog post including other design ideas, visit www.couturechateau.com/blog Do you want your holiday decor to make your home feel welcoming yet still look like a top designer did the finishing touches? Join me for Stress Free Holiday Home at www.stressfreeholidayhome.com.



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Digging Deep-Gardening With Cynthia Brian

By Cynthia Brian

"With our thoughts, we make the world." ~ Buddha



Drape burlap over tender plants to prevent frostbite.

Photo Cynthia Brian

My first gardening calendar was published in 1993. I had worked with a renowned photographer for over 18 months shooting fabulous photos from my garden throughout the seasons, taking copious notes of what to do and when to do it, traveling to numerous zones to note the monthly cycles. I wrote my copy on an Apple desktop, the photographs were transparencies, and the finished product was a beautiful, printed, shrink-wrapped gift of beautiful flowers with monthly tips worth saving. Over the years, people have shown me the tablemats, collages, and other creative things that were made with that calendar. Since the backup to all of my work was on floppy disks, I no longer have access to my unedited insights. Thankfully, I have the photos and the published calendar as a souvenir of my efforts. This loss of my creative writings caused me to ponder the digital mania that has descended upon humanity in our yearning to eliminate paper archiving. We tend to keep everything on our computers, designating Facebook, Instagram, and

Pinterest as our memory banks.

My fear is that our history will be relegated to oral rememberings as technology rapidly changes. Since computers became a household necessity, we have stored our data on floppies, CDs, DVDs, flash drives, portable hard drives, and now in the cloud, but will future generations ever be able to access any of this, as equipment evolves and changes? My iPhoto folder has now surpassed 20,000 jpegs. Digital photos from 2009 and earlier that were not printed are no longer accessible since I have upgraded computers multiple times and those earlier backup disks are not compatible.

Earlier this year, I made a book of my favorite garden photographs throughout the seasons accompanied by my favorite garden quotes. The book was a gift to myself as a reminder of my years of dedication, hard work and love of nature. As I perused snapshots from a quarter century of gardening bliss, I was able to see how much I had accomplished with the help of Mother Nature.

... continued on page D11

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WINTER TIPS

Cleaning and thinning your trees may reduce the potential storm hazards without compromising the shade. In some situations the risk of failure cannot be reduced without removal of branches. Remember that healthy structurally sound trees are generally wind fast even when mature.

Storm damage is usually, but not always, related to structural problems that could have been addressed with proper structural training when the tree was young. Co dominant (two trunks with a narrow angle of attachment) trunks account for many trees failures. The hazard of wind damage is higher on the regrowth of trees that have been "topped".

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

... continued from page D2

ORINDA

- 7 Casa Vieja, \$1,425,000, 4 Bdrms, 3083 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-16-15
- 9 Corte Bombero, \$1,585,000, 3 Bdrms, 2312 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 11-2-15;
Previous Sale: \$900,000, 06-11-13
- 476 Dalewood Drive, \$1,870,000, 4 Bdrms, 2856 SqFt, 1972 YrBlt, 10-22-15;
Previous Sale: \$405,000, 05-07-84
- 88 El Toyonal, \$1,600,000, 4 Bdrms, 4192 SqFt, 1930 YrBlt, 10-30-15;
Previous Sale: \$1,300,000, 08-27-13
- 2 Hartford Road, \$1,545,000, 3 Bdrms, 3062 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 10-20-15;
Previous Sale: \$2,550,000, 07-29-05
- 11 Kittiwake Road, \$1,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 1975 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-16-15
- 4 La Sombra Court, \$1,055,000, 4 Bdrms, 2348 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 10-20-15
- 20 La Vuelta, \$1,310,000, 3 Bdrms, 2392 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 10-27-15
- 19 Loma Vista Drive, \$1,040,000, 3 Bdrms, 1704 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 10-21-15
- 11 Muth Drive, \$930,000, 3 Bdrms, 1262 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 10-30-15;
Previous Sale: \$339,000, 04-23-98
- 29 Muth Drive, \$936,000, 4 Bdrms, 2047 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 10-29-15
- 27 St. Stephens Drive, \$1,410,000, 4 Bdrms, 3459 SqFt, 1983 YrBlt, 10-21-15;
Previous Sale: \$825,000, 04-27-00



Happy Holidays!



Paul & Virginia Ratto

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Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Reminders and Tips

- **REFRAIN** from collecting and eating mushrooms unless you are absolutely certain they are edible. A good friend recently collected a variety of mushrooms based on information she perused in a foraging guidebook. Fortunately she took them to a mycological expert for positive identification. Eighty-four of the 85 fungi she had in her basket were poisonous.
- **CLEAN** storm drains, gutters, and anywhere where water could clog or cause problems when the rains come.
- **DECORATE** for the holidays with branches, leaves, berries, twigs, pinecones and natural cuttings from your backyard. Utilize surprising colors, like purple – not just reds, greens and blues.
- **COVER** tender plants from frost and cold temperatures with burlap. Patio furniture can be protected from the elements with plastic, but use burlap or fabric on plants and shrubs. Citrus is especially susceptible to frostbite.
- **CREATE** a charming birdhouse with corks. With the festivities of the holidays, collect corks to make a home for your feathered friends.
- **SPRAYPAINT** the un-carved pumpkins and gourds silver, gold, or bronze to add pizzazz to a front porch or entrance. For recycling at its best, after the holidays, add to the compost pile.
- **BAIT** for snails and slugs during this wet season.
- **HARVEST** cabbages, Swiss chard and kale. Massage your kale to tenderize and eliminate bitterness.
- **TUNE** in to StarStyle® Radio from 4 to 5 p.m. Pacific Time on Dec. 30 for a full hour of live garden talk with Britain's rose expert from David Austin Roses. Bare-root plantings start in January and this show will give you lots of information.
http://starstyleradio.net/Starstyle_Radio/Entries/2015/12/30_Toast_the_New_Year_with_David_Austin_Roses.html
- **MAKE** a photo album of your garden pictures throughout the years as a gift to yourself and future family gardeners.

It is too late to seed or reseed your lawns. My new grass is coming in slowly because of the extreme changes in weather. In spring, we will revisit planting a waterless turf when soil temperatures rise to 50-70 degrees.

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing.



As tempting as it is to collect mushrooms, unless you are an expert, refrain. Photos Cynthia Brian



Rose hips can be twined into décor or made into teas for the holidays.



Plant pretty primroses for instant color all winter long.



A combination of ferns and poinsettias brighten a porch.



Surprise your guests with passionate purple ornaments.



Cynthia Brian in a wild garden.

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Tune into Cynthia's Radio show at www.StarStyleRadio.net
I am available as a speaker, designer, and consultant.

How happy I am that I had not only digitized photos, but also printed them for posterity. When we first moved to this area, our lot was a hillside of wild grasses, poison oak, and blackberry bushes. It is now an oasis filled with lush landscaping, orchards, vines, trees, fruits, herbs, flowers, birds, bees, butterflies and wildlife. One of the mottos I have always lived by is "what you think about and talk about comes about!" For me, I am always thinking about gardening. Today, all I have to do is look around to see that my personal world was created in my thoughts.

As the end of the year approaches, I encourage you to invest in archiving your precious memories of family, friends, pets, plants and places you love, not only on your apps and gadgets, but in the old fashioned way: printing. Don't allow your legacy of a life well lived become obsolete as technology races forward. Do some digital digging and store a hard copy of your treasures. Plant and grow your memoirs.

May you shine with happiness for the holidays. Thank you for a fabulous year of Digging Deep and Gardening with Cynthia Brian. I appreciate you.

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

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ORINDA



407 Ridge Gate Road Rarely available detached 1 story in Orindawoods. Open floor plan with dramatic vaulted ceilings. Stunning outdoor space including generous decks for the ultimate privacy.

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ORINDA



8 Camino Del Diablo Stunning Contemporary rebuilt in 2002 by MGHG Designs. Impeccable design & architectural finishes. Chef's kitchen w/top of the line appliances, Carrera marble counters, radiant flrs.

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1100 Rahara Drive Custom Upper Happy Valley home. 4 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, hardwood floors, resort-like yard, lush landscaping & beautiful views.

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LAFAYETTE



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\$6,595,000

WALNUT CREEK



1501 Canyonwood Court #2 Fabulous Sonoma Wrap w/2bd/2ba + washer/dryer in unit. Cultured marble countertops in kitchen/baths. Elec. chair lift at stairs. Rear veranda enclosed, side veranda open. Views.

\$395,000

WALNUT CREEK



3311 Rossmoor Pkwy #4 A rarity! Fantastic, level in (no steps) Cascade model on golf course w/views of hills & course from most living spaces. Granite kitchen w/breakfast nook, plantation shutters, view deck.

\$599,000

WALNUT CREEK



893 Amberwood Court Beautiful New Construction Single Story Home (one of five) in desirable cul-de-sac neighborhood. 4 Bed/3.5bath, den, chef's kitchen w/great room. Ideal location.

\$1,550,000

WALNUT CREEK



887 Amberwood Court Beautiful New Construction Single Story Home (one of five) in desirable cul-de-sac neighborhood. 4 Bed/3.5 bath, den, chef's kitchen w/great room. Corner lot. Ideal location.

\$1,570,000

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