

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

Independent, locally owned and operated!

925-377-0977

www.lamorindaweekly.com

FREE

East Bay Eclipse 2016 Soccer Tryouts!
 Developing Players, Developing People

Competitive and developmental teams for boys and girls ages 5-18

MEMBER: SINGLE PRACTICE TEAMS
 MONTHLY PRACTICES AND TISSOT TRAINING

For schedules, registration and questions:
 Visit www.eastbayeclipse.com, or
 Email Director Shane Carney at director@eastbayeclipsesoccer.com



Photo courtesy Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Clearance a Necessity on Lamorinda Roads

Poorly managed vegetation on private roads invites disaster

By Nick Marnell

Kathy Leonard returned from a field trip at the site of the Valley Fire and she was jolted by how similar that area is to Orinda, with its private roads, narrow thoroughfares and heavy tree vegetation. “Then, you add a sustained drought, with a lot of those trees near the end of their life cycle, and we could have a serious public safety problem,” said the fire marshal of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District.

Though unmaintained private roads in Orinda rank atop Leonard’s public safety concerns, areas in Bollinger Canyon and Canyon pose similar perils. Nor does Lafayette get off the hook, with its share of troublesome private roads. “For example, the Hunsacker Canyon area,” said Contra Costa County Fire Protection District captain George Laing. Leonard’s goal is to improve public safety through education, to help the fire engines get to an incident

quicker. “It’s a challenge for the fire district. It’s a challenge for the city of Orinda. It’s a challenge for the homeowner,” she said.

While public roads are maintained by the Lamorinda municipalities, private roads are maintained by the property owners, who must clear away unruly vegetation. “We need a vertical clearance of 15 feet, and if possible, 3 feet from the sides of each roadway,” said Leonard. ... continued on page A11

Advertising

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

News	A2 - A12
Life in Lamorinda	B1 - B10
Not to be Missed	B8-B9
HOW TO CONTACT US	B9
Food	B10
Service Directory	B10
Sports	C1 - C3
Classified	C2
Love Lafayette	C4
Our Homes	D1 -D8
This Week Read About:	
Tatzin’s 30 years of service	A3
Lafayette’s new mayor	A2
Moraga’s new mayor	A4
Orinda’s new mayor	A6
Moraga bicycle and pedestrian plan	A5
CERT training course	A8
A year in sports pics	C3

Happy New Year

AG REALTY

We represent 29 ready buyers!

Consider listing your home with Alex Gailas team



99 Tappan Lane, Orinda \$3,750,000



15 years Certified Residential Specialist
 30 years ORINDA Resident



925-254-7600
 Alex@AGRealty.com

DA Sends Shockwaves Through Water Polo Community

By Spencer Silva

Water polo is one of Lamorinda’s most enduring legacies. Over the last few weeks, however, an incident involving a broken nose during a junior varsity match has swelled into a national news item, sending shockwaves through the local water polo community.

According to the San Francisco Chronicle, the Contra Costa County District Attorney’s office filed felonious assault and battery charges earlier this month against a 15-year-old Acalanes student who allegedly broke a Bellarmine Prep (San Jose, Calif.) player’s nose during a back-court tussle – in the midst of a turnover and subsequent counter attack – during a tournament at Las Lomas High School on Sept. 19.

Neither the coaches nor the referees saw the incident – in fact, the alleged perpetrator wasn’t penalized or removed from the game. Acalanes JV head coach Russ Stryker admitted he didn’t think much of the incident until later, when he received a phone call explaining the Bellarmine player not only suffered a broken nose, but the

incident was also recorded on video.

The student in question was handed a one-day suspension from school, and was suspended a total of 18 days from the water polo team.

“We feel bad about the Bellarmine boy getting hurt, and our athlete was suspended from school, from the team and was required to take counseling,” Stryker said. “The bottom line is we have rules within the schools and within the leagues that take care of these kinds of disciplinary things. In my opinion, it’s not something the courts should be dealing with. I would think the DA would look at the totality of the situation, including the student athletes’ exemplary school record, great character or at the least the entire game film.”

Because the case involves juveniles, the extent of the injury and other crucial facts are sealed. In a brief interview with Lamorinda Weekly, senior deputy district attorney Mary Knox expressed concern over the case’s publicity. “Juveniles are entitled to have the entire thing

sealed, so that, theoretically, they can move forward with their reputation untarnished,” she said. “But when others, unauthorized, publicize this, then forever more, this is in the press.”

To those to who have played water polo, the incident itself isn’t surprising. In the email that catalyzed the event’s subsequent publicity, USA Water Polo pacific zone chair Andrew Morris noted such events happen “hundreds of times per year.” He also expressed worry over “the dangerous precedent it would set for high school sports in general.” (USA Water Polo later said Morris’s views weren’t necessarily shared by the organization).

The outrage many in the water polo community feel stems from the district attorney’s decision to proceed with criminal charges, and felonious ones, which is nearly unprecedented. Now, a broader debate stirs: should the arm of the law extend to school-sanctioned sports activities, and at what point does a sports action become criminal? ... continued on page A10

Civic News A1-A12

Clutter in Moraga creeks continues – page A5.

Fire Districts A8

A conversation with the new MOFD board president – page A8.

Life in Lamorinda B1-B10

Authors of Grateful Dead oral history to speak at LLLC – page B3.



Sports C1-C3

Campo football heartbreaker – page C1.



Our Homes D1-D8

Gardening tips for the New Year – page D1.

