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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

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## 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

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



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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 Dec. 6-12

<b>Alarms</b>	43
<b>911 Calls (includes hang-ups)</b>	14
<b>Noise Complaints</b>	3
<b>Traffic Stops</b>	104
<b>Suspicious Circumstances</b>	7
<b>Suspicious Subjects</b>	11
<b>Suspicious Vehicles</b>	20
<b>Abandoned Vehicle</b>	
3200 block Stanley Blvd	
<b>Burglary, Auto</b>	
80 block Lafayette Cir	
4000 block Mt Diablo Blvd	
Bentley Upper School (2)	
Oakwood Athletic Club	
<b>Burglary, Residential</b>	
1700 block Toyon Rd	
<b>Civil Problem</b>	
900 block Sunnybrook Dr (2)	
10 block Northridge Ln	
<b>Defraud Innkeeper</b>	
1000 block Blackwood Ln	
3800 Palo Alto Dr	
<b>Drunk in Public</b>	
Roundup	
<b>Found Adult</b>	
3400 block Springhill Rd	
<b>Harassment</b>	
1200 block Sunset Loop	
20 block Northridge Ln	
3200 block Lucas Cr	
(by phone)	
<b>Health &amp; Safety Violation</b>	
3300 block Orchard Valley Ln	
3200 block Mt Diablo Blvd	
Saranap/El Curtola Blvd	
<b>Hit &amp; Run</b>	
Oak Hill Rd/Mt Diablo Blvd	
Happy Valley School	
Oak Hill/Deer Hill Rds	
Mt Diablo Blvd/Moraga Rd	
900 block Hough Ave	
3500 block Brook St	
<b>Indecent Exposure</b>	
Mt Diablo Blvd/1st St	
<b>Missing Adult</b>	
900 block Hough Ave	
3700 block Highland Rd	
<b>Police/Fire/EMS Response</b>	
Dolores Dr/Mt Diablo Blvd	
<b>Public Nuisance</b>	
Beechwood/Hawthorn Drives	
Condit/Pleasant Hill Rd	
3600 block Mt Diablo Blvd	
St Mary's Rd/Avalon Ave	
Hidden Valley/Acalanes Rds	
3500 block Hamlin Rd	
700 block John Way	
<b>Promiscuous Shooting</b>	
10 block Leeward Glen Rd	
Glen Rd/Nordstrom Ln	
Walnut/Dewing	
1000 block Oak Hill Rd	
Monson Ln/Dolores Dr	
Dewing Ave/Brook St	

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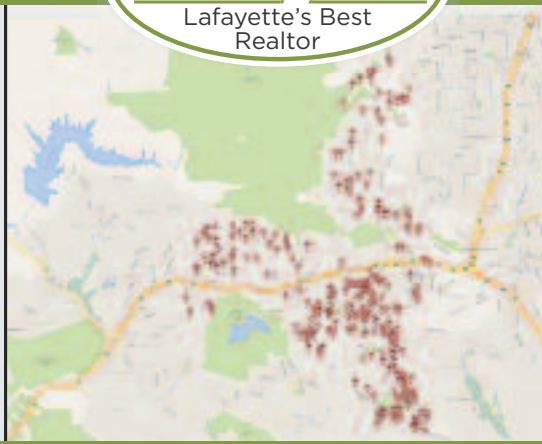
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## Home Grown Mayor for 2016

By Cathy Tyson



Mark Mitchell at a recent council meeting with daughter, Lauren Photo C. Tyson

**M**ark Mitchell, brand new mayor for 2016, brings special meaning to the phrase "local son." His parents came to Lafayette in 1957 when he was just a few months old, "an outstanding move," said Mitchell at his swearing in on Dec. 14. He attended Springhill Elementary School, Stanley Middle School and Acalanes High School. Then he left town – heading all the way to UC Berkeley for college, obtaining a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration.

Mitchell takes the gavel from outgoing mayor Brandt Andersson, who resumes his duties as council member. Mike Anderson will serve as vice mayor in 2016. Residents don't vote for the mayor. Instead, the five sitting council members elect the mayor.

Although elected to the city council in 2012, this isn't Mitchell's first civic stint. Prior to that, he served on the Planning Commission for many years, reviewing projects around the city. He has also been active volunteering with Our Saviors Lutheran Church and has coached 11 sports teams over the years, spurred by the activities of his two kids, Lauren and Ryan, who are now both in college. One of his favorites was indoor floor hockey. "Amazingly fun," he says.

He and wife, Anne, are officially empty nesters. Lauren is attending George Washington University; Ryan attends San Diego State University.

Mitchell sees a number of challenges facing the city in the coming year, but one of them will not be the budget. At the last city council meet-

ing of the year, the final municipal budget and workplan for fiscal year 2015-16 was presented, which highlighted a robust financial picture. Actual expenses came in \$1.2 million less than anticipated and revenue was \$1.3 million more than budgeted – the best of both worlds, due primarily to a healthy increase in property tax and sales tax revenue. Although the fiscal picture for the city is rosy, he plans to continue the ongoing theme of conservative budgeting.

One area that needs to be addressed is the downtown landscaping and lighting budget, which is running a deficit. Mitchell sees discussion and a funding decision on that in 2016.

When he is not busy at city council meetings, he can be found at his day job since 1982 in real estate and property management, or playing

tennis and golf, weather permitting. Competitive ongoing bridge games are a focus of vacations with extended family members. He recently completed the Citizen's Police Academy in his spare time, which included many evening classes and a two-hour ride-along with an officer in a patrol car, and was impressed at the job the police department does.

He is looking forward to the results of several studies that will be completed this year: one biggie is the downtown congestion study; along with a study to improve traffic flow on Pleasant Hill Road; a comprehensive parking strategy for downtown; a downtown creeks plan, and the sales tax revenue study, which is slated to give a recommendation on whether or not to consider a sales tax measure for 2016 in January or February.

...continued on page A11

## A Comment from Council Member Traci Reilly

Normally, the person serving as vice mayor rotates into the mayor position the following year. A working mother of three boys, Traci Reilly was elected to the Lafayette City Council in 2012, served as vice mayor in 2015, and was slated to become mayor in 2016. "I opted not to be mayor this year due to some additional commitments that would make it difficult for me to handle all the extra responsibilities that come along with the title of mayor. Due to the extra time required, I felt that it was in the best interest of the city and for myself, not to be over committed at this time," said Reilly.

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# Citizen Group Legal Challenge to Deer Hill Project Found Invalid

By Cathy Tyson

The legal challenge orchestrated by Save Lafayette – a group of Lafayette citizens who petitioned to repeal Ordinance 641, affecting the Homes at Deer Hill project near Acalanes High School – was found to be legally invalid by the Lafayette city attorney.

The grassroots group sought to slow down growth in the city, asserting that the city's roads, schools and public transportation capacities are already strained and that the town's semi-rural character is suffering from

excessive development.

Although a sufficient number of signatures were collected – over 1,800 registered voters signed the petition, which met the statutory requirement – it wasn't enough to change the overriding legal situation. Proponents were seeking to put the legality of multi-faceted Ordinance 641, which amends Lafayette's zoning ordinance to be consistent with the city's General Plan, on the ballot for the voters to decide on the issue.

... continued on page A11

# Celebrating Don Tatzin's 30 Years on the City Council

By Cathy Tyson



State Senator Steve Glazer presents Don Tatzin a proclamation honoring his years of service Photo courtesy Teresa Gerringner

Local luminaries and statewide government representatives came together to honor Don Tatzin for his unprecedented three decades of volunteer service on the Lafayette City Council. Everyone in the packed Community Hall was affected in some way by Tatzin's indefatigable efforts. Each speaker expressed heartfelt gratitude for the many key roles that he has played, all at the princely pay rate of zero dollars; the best return on investment the city ever made.

It was a special night, and a first for the city – never has someone served for so long. Kicking off the

festivities, Bob Athayde, music director at Stanley Middle School, performed on a grand piano prior to dashing out for another performance at Stanley. The night's honoree plays the euphonium, or baritone horn, multiple times per week with one of the school's bands.

Tatzin has quite a fan club, receiving proclamations from District II Supervisor Candace Andersen, Contra Costa LAFCO (the Local Agency Formation Commission), and U.S. Rep. Mark DeSaulnier, and of course the outgoing mayor, Brandt Anderson.

... continued on page A11

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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

**DUI 12/16/15** After a number of traffic violations on Moraga Way, police finally pulled over a driver who seemed to be confused and showed objective signs of intoxication on Ascot Drive. The 21-year-old driver was arrested for DUI and booked into county jail in Martinez after refusing to take a breath or blood test.

**Missing jewelry 12/18/15** An Augusta Drive resident last saw jewelry on Dec. 11 and discovered it had vanished on Dec. 16. No signs of forced entry – the homeowner believes her housekeeper may be responsible. Jewelry valued at over \$8,000. The incident is under investigation.

**Loud party 12/19/15** Ten, count 'em, 10 people were inside a residence drinking alcoholic beverages at 11:08 p.m. Loud noise and music could be heard from the street. The sole resident was issued a Loud or Unruly Party Warning Notice.

**Violation of restraining order 12/21/15** A former tenant had been served a restraining order prohibiting him from being on the property. Cops determined that he was, indeed, on the property, so he was arrested for violating the court order and was taken to the Martinez Detention Facility. No address given.

**Car stolen 12/22/15** A Westchester Drive resident parked his car just down the street from his house over the weekend. At some point over the two days, an unknown suspect stole his car. All the keys were accounted for and no one was given permission to drive it.

**Traffic accident 12/22/15** A 91-year-old driver of a silver Honda became distracted and failed to stop at a stop sign before rear-ending a white Honda, causing minor damage to the white car and moderate damage to the silver car. The elderly gentleman's silver car was towed from the scene.

### Other crimes occurring in Moraga from Dec. 15-23:

**False Alarm** – Rimer Drive, Moraga Way, Augusta Drive, Birchwood Drive, Betlin Place  
**Civil Disturbance** – Kent Court  
**Lost Keys** – Center Street  
**Identity Theft** – Moraga Road

# Moraga's New Mayor Discusses Town Goals and Development

By Sophie Braccini



Mike Metcalf

Photo Andy Scheck

This is the third time that Mike Metcalf will hold the gavel on the Moraga council dais when discussing important issues in 2016, such as the rules for hillside and ridgeline development, the Moraga Center Specific Plan zoning, the Hacienda de las Flores development plan, finding revenue sources for the millions of dollars in delayed maintenance, or partnering with the school district for recreation facilities usage. But there is one thing the new mayor does not want to hear about: a moratorium on development in town. In Metcalf's view, current development plans are not excessive, especially considering that Moraga has been quasi stagnant for the past several years.

One of Metcalf's many characteristics is that he calls a spade a spade. "When I hear Lafayette blaming Moraga's development for their downtown traffic, I ask, what development?" he says. According to the town's 2015-23 Housing Element, only 10 new homes were built in Moraga between 2007 and 2014. His opinion is that Moraga has long been overdue for building some new housing units, and that the 74 that will be completed in 2016 (Rancho Laguna II off Rheem Boulevard, the Camino Ricardo subdivision, and Via Moraga across from the Rheem Shopping Center)

is not an excessive number. "Some people say that we have 600 units planned in the (Moraga Center) Specific Plan area," he adds. "Let's be serious about this." The new mayor notes that the Camino Ricardo and the Town Center Homes developments (both part of that plan) were supposed to have 100 units, and that the actual number is only 72. Metcalf thus deduces that the maximum build-up of the MCSP will be much less than 600 units, and says it is likely to take years.

Metcalf believes that the best way for residents to have an impact on what will be coming next in this area is to participate in the discussion of its zoning. "The process that has started with an advisory committee is hugely important," he says. He hopes that the public will soon be involved and the outcome adopted in 2016 (see the Lamorinda Weekly Dec. 16 article, "Residents Can Weigh In on Defining Downtown Character" in the online archives).

As far as development rights are concerned, Metcalf's view is there needs to be a compromise made between property owners who have entitlements as stated in the fifth amendment of the Constitution, and the public interest. "There is tension between property rights and community interest," he

says. "The trick is to turn them toward each other for a complementary (result). There is a trade off. There is a negotiation. It can't be one way."

Another important goal for Metcalf is to move a transformation plan forward for the Hacienda de las Flores. "I went to a meeting there last week," he said, "and there was just one group of people in La Sala doing exercise. It was mostly empty and dark. It is so sad." Metcalf supports a public-private partnership that would bring the necessary money to update the building, and he is in favor of giving more time to the architect who has been working on the plans and a marketing study. "We have to be patient," says the new mayor. The architect's report was scheduled for October 2015 and should be made available in February.

Metcalf would also like to see the completion of the ridgeline and hillside regulation amendment that he has been working on with a committee for over a year. "We want to fill the holes in the existing regulations, clarifying rules and getting back to the spirit of MOSO (Moraga Open Space Ordinance that was adopted by the people),"

he says. The planning commission should begin discussing the text on Jan. 20.

When it comes to tackling the issue of delayed maintenance and storm drains, in particular, Metcalf is careful. "There is no revenue stream for that (\$8.9 million of high priority work)," he says. "If the voters don't want to vote for something, there is nothing you can do about it." He adds that at least the town government knows what has to be done technically. The challenge is to get the story out and convince people that it is needed. He recommends that the question be asked of residents as part of a community outreach preference survey.

Metcalf supports a new process that will involve residents more than ever to complete the list of the town's 2016 goals. An online town hall interface is open to residents to list the town goals in order of their priority and to add their own. Residents are also invited to a goal-setting workshop at 6 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 21 in the Council Chambers, 335 Rheem Blvd. To voice your opinion, visit moraga.ca.us/open-townhall.

## Ten goals proposed for 2016

- Develop a sustainable funding strategy for Town assets and infrastructure.
- Complete the Moraga Center Specific Plan implementation project form-based zoning, and streetscape and park consolidation standards.
- Complete an update of hillside and ridgeline regulations.
- Improve the interconnectedness and public awareness of Moraga's trail system.
- Re-open discussions with the school district for new and shared community recreation facilities.
- Adopt a balanced budget and continue high quality financial reporting.
- Develop a concept and plans for a financially sustainable Hacienda de las Flores.
- Work with Saint Mary's College to complete the design and financing plan for St. Mary's Road roundabouts.
- Install new streetlights in critical areas around town.
- Complete the community preferences survey and develop a revenue measure for the 2016 ballot.

## New Moraga School District Board Member Needed

The Moraga School District is currently accepting applications for an appointment on its governing board. The five-member board lost member Parker Colvin at the end of 2015, as the Moraga father and his family are leaving the town to pursue other adventures. The board decided to appoint a new volunteer by interviewing applicants, rather than call for an election. The person that will be chosen will sit on the school board for approximately one year, starting Jan. 26. Elections for school board members will be held in November as part of the general 2016 ballot and the new appointee will have the opportunity to decide whether to run or not at that time. An informational meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on Jan. 12 at the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School library for applicants who are interested in learning more about the appointment process and the roles and responsibilities of governing board members, according to the school district. Applicants are welcome to contact governing board members and the superintendent about the process, commitment, and responsibilities of board members. Applications need to be filed before noon on Jan. 19. Documents are available online on the Moraga School District's website at www.moraga.k12.ca.us/.

– S. Braccini

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# Rainy Season Preview

## Work still needed along Moraga creeks

By Sophie Braccini



Moraga Creek still cluttered as flow picks up as of Dec. 22

Photos Sophie Braccini

The first winter rains have started to soak the Bay Area and already a few incidents served as a wake-up call to residents to be prepared. The town of Moraga recently sent letters to all property owners residing next to creeks to remind them to clean up their sides of the creeks. But there is still work to be done – and deferring the maintenance has consequences outside of the property line.

“(When the rain started pouring) the Rheem Shopping Center was

flooded next to Starbucks. The problem was that the inlets were clogged with leaves that fell all at once,” said Moraga Public Works Director Edric Kwan. “We contacted the property owner, and once that was taken care of, the water drained normally.”

Cleaning up is part of a property owner’s responsibility to avoid flooding, but sometimes simply clearing debris is not enough. Linda Gilson in the Sanders Drive neighborhood had a sudden problem when water from

her neighbor’s driveway started running down into her front garden, flowing through her own driveway where there is no curb. The water overwhelmed her drainage system. “My daughter rushed to OSH and bought 12 sand bags,” she said. “We put them along our driveway entrance and fixed the problem; it was like having an instant wall blocking the flow.”

Kwan adds that the town has provided three cubic yards of self-serve sand and bags behind Fire Station 41 at 1280 Moraga Way (see related story on page A1, which notes where other sand and bags are available in Lamorinda). “People should get only what they anticipate they will need,” he said. The recommendation is to fill bags approximately one-half full for stacking. Kwan also indicates that there are now better tools available to project possible floods. “We can measure a soil’s saturation level, and we have better projection for duration and intensity of coming rains.” He and his team will keep monitoring conditions through the winter; at this time the soil is not yet saturated.

In a recent “About Town” newsletter, staff noted that the creeks

and drainage channels are susceptible to flooding with the potential to cause property damage. Walking on the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail between Country Club Drive and Canyon, along the Moraga Creek, it is clear that some property owners have not done their due diligence: debris, branches and tree trunks are still piling in the middle of the river bed, and are accumulating under the Canyon bridge. Kwan said that he did not know off hand who was re-

sponsible for cleaning up that portion of the creek, but that the owners of all properties adjacent to town creeks have been reminded of their responsibility to maintain their sections of creeks to prevent flooding.

The town also informed the residents that certain areas are designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) as 100-year flood zones. Visit FEMA’s website for flood zone designations at <https://msc.fema.gov/portal>.



More debris under the Canyon bridge

# Increased Safety For All

## Top recommendations to make Moraga pedestrian and bike friendly

By Sophie Braccini

A town where bicyclists and pedestrians can safely travel is the goal of the Moraga Citizens Advisory Committee. The passionate group of town residents, which discussed a map of improvements and paths at its last December meeting, has been working with consultant Niko Letunic of Eisen/Letunic, and plans to present a walk-bike plan to the public in February.

Letunic listed the results of two surveys that were proposed to the residents regarding the state of the streets. “Not surprisingly, the roads that are of most concern are the big ones,” said Letunic. He noted that the most often cited issue was the lack of continuity of sidewalks and bike lanes: “People cited gaps, obstacles, parts that are broken up, inadequate shoulders for bikes.” One of the residents’ major concerns is driver behavior, “specifically speeding and distracted driving,” he reported. Other issues frequently noted included pedestrian and bicyclist conflicts on the trails, difficulty of crossing some roads, and bicycle parking. “The biggest one was the need for an adequate, continuous facility (for both pedestrians and bicyclists) along Moraga Road,” said Letunic.

The consultant compiled all of the comments and proposed options for feedback from the committee. “In terms of walking, we propose filling up sidewalk gaps to create continuity, improving crosswalks at key locations, making them safer and more visible,” he said. He added that possibly the most important aspect would be to enforce the traffic laws. “That would be a policy recommendation the town council would have to decide on,” said Letunic.

On the bicycle side, Letunic said the most important item would be to create a town-wide continuous network of bikeways. “Depending on the available rights of way, it could be bike lanes, sharrows (an arrow on a paved street showing that bicycles can use that road), or just bike routes with signage,” he said. He added that at street light crossings, bike lanes

could be painted to avoid confusion, and he recommended the addition of bike parking on public land.

Letunic asked the committee members, all volunteer Moraga residents, for their opinions and suggestions regarding the proposed plan. The residents highlighted the importance of the school zones both for pedestrians and bicyclists, and they also noted that serious bikers would rather have a safe bike lane on St. Mary’s Road, rather than have to use

the trail where conflicts happen with other users. They indicated that School Street could be a safe alternative travel path, although the connection with the shopping center and the path going toward Orinda needed a lot of improvement. They also noted that the Rheem Shopping Center and Rheem Boulevard needed connectivity enhancements. The volunteers suggested additions to the proposed bike network, such as upper Corliss to reach Los Perales or Ascot Drive,

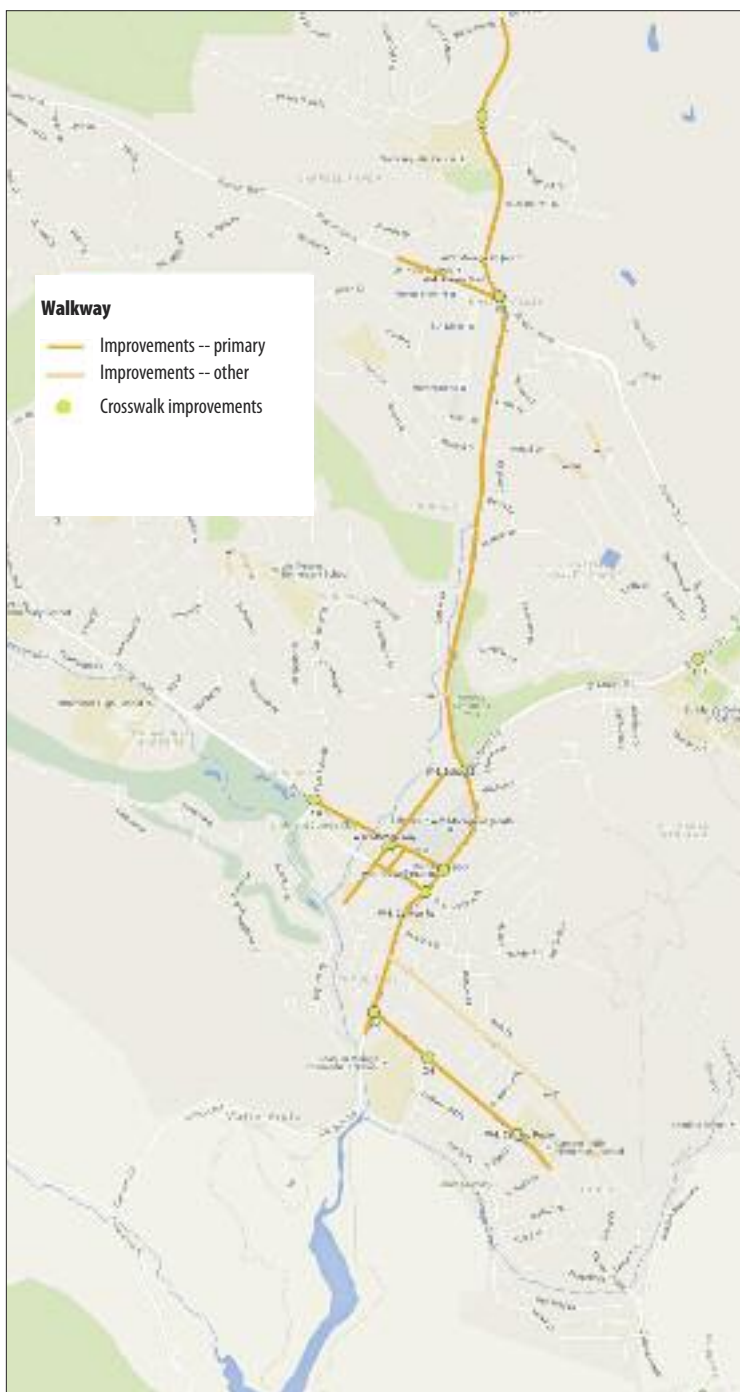
where a lot of parked cars can make it unsafe to bike.

The committee members unanimously agreed that enforcement should have a higher priority; they concurred that speed and distracted driving was recurrent and dangerous. They noted that the message needs to be positive and should get buy-in by proposing increased safety for all.

A public workshop is scheduled on Feb. 4 where residents will help prioritize the pedestrian and bicycle

improvements that will be included in the walk-bike plan. On Feb. 24 the town council is scheduled to discuss that list of priority improvements based on public input.

The consultant also introduced the way-finding plan proposed for the town. It proposes different signs for pedestrians, bicyclists and cars. A survey is available on the town’s website at <http://www.moraga.ca.us/open-townhall>.







# Orinda

## Public Meetings

### City Council

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

### Planning Commission

Tuesday, Jan. 12, 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 Dec. 6-12

Alarms	29
Noise Complaints	3
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	2
Traffic Stops	37
Suspicious Circumstances	6
Suspicious Subjects	11
Suspicious Vehicles	10
Armed Robbery	
10 block El Castillo	
Civil Problem	
100 block Stein Way	
Neighbor Dispute	
10 block Las Vegas	
100 block Moraga Way	
Harassment	
100 block Canon Dr	
ID Theft	
40 block Candle Terrace	
Uncontrollable Juvenile	
80 block Via Floreado	
Missing Adult	
Starbucks	
Panhandling	
Brookwood/Moraga Way	
Promiscuous Shooting	
100 block Camino Pablo (2)	
Manzanita/Acacia Drives	
900 block Mountain View Dr	
Public Nuisance	
Southwood Ct/Southwood	
Whitehall/Ardith Drives	
Safeway	
Barbara/Oak Roads	
Reckless Driving	
Moraga Way/Hall Dr	
Moraga Way/Overhill Rd	
Violation Restraining Order	
40 block Overhill Rd	
Theft, Petty	
300 block Tahos Rd	
Rite Aid	
20 block Hillcrest Dr	
400 block Tahos Rd	
Vandalism	
100 block Ivy Dr	

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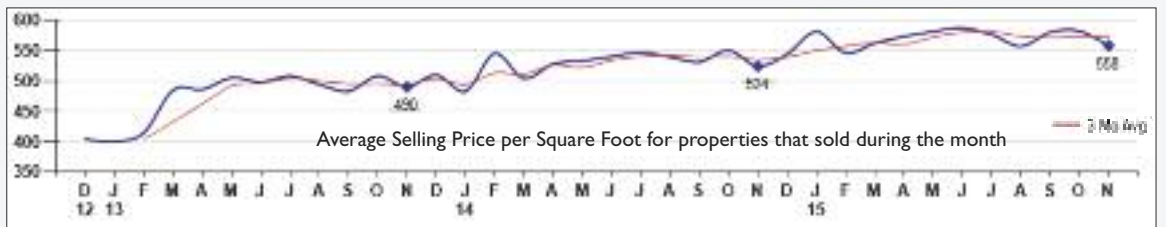


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## New Mayor Has High Hopes for Progress on Roads and Downtown during her 2016 Term

By Victor Ryerson



Victoria Smith

Photo Ohlen Alexander

This is not the first time at the rodeo, as the saying goes, for Victoria Smith, Orinda's new mayor. An 11-year veteran of the City Council, she served as mayor in 2008 and 2012 and has realistic expectations about what a mayor can and cannot accomplish. This time, she hopes to preside over the resolution of Orinda's ongoing road rebuilding problem and start a serious dialogue about rejuvenating the downtown during her year in office.

The job is "more about process than substantive change,"

she observed in a recent interview. The mayor does not have any greater power than the other council members, she explained, but in concert with other council members, the city manager, and the city staff, the mayor sets the agenda for meetings. The selection of agenda items depends upon the level of community interest in particular matters, and therefore guides the direction of the dialogue.

One important job of the mayor is conducting a monthly liaison meeting with representatives of various community

organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary, and Orinda Association to discuss their particular concerns. This provides her with the opportunity to express what she is interested in. As she sees it, the mayor is the "spokesperson for the City Council." But she emphasizes that the council is a policy making body, and the management of the city is left to the city manager and staff.

As for the substantive issues she hopes to advance during her term, her highest priority is clearly Orinda's roads, the major theme of her recent election campaign. She gives the impression that she will not rest until the last of the job is done in accordance with the desires of the community and, by extension, the council. At present, that means repairing all roads to a standard equating to "good," and making provision for keeping them that way, a policy selected from several options by the council. (See accompanying story on page A7.)

The other big ticket item she hopes to move during her watch is starting the conversation about what Orinda should do – if anything – about its downtown. With a new planning director coming on board early in 2016, she is hopeful that this will happen soon. She admits to having no vision of her own for the downtown, but stresses that whatever change takes place "needs to be an orderly process." It also needs to be economically feasible, she adds, which suggests that dreamers who are not realistic will have to tread with caution to get her attention. Finally, she feels that pro-

ponents on all sides will have to be willing to "meet in the middle." The process, she recognizes, will require a "long period of input," extending well beyond her current term as mayor.

Transportation issues are intertwined with parking and development, in Smith's view. For example, she believes that having BART in Orinda is both a benefit and a burden, enhancing residents' transportation options while creating a concomitant overflow parking problem as it becomes more popular. By the same token, she says that if residents want to see more restaurants or retail stores downtown, Orinda will need to accommodate people coming from elsewhere, because residents cannot support new businesses entirely on their own.

There are a couple of pieces of unfinished business Smith would like to conclude on her watch. One is establishing the rules governing smoking in public places. The other is that of the commercial use of plastic bags, which many neighboring communities now regulate.

Smith appears to be optimistic about Orinda's future, even if it evolves slowly. With a long history of service to the community, both as a council member and before, she has the realistic outlook of a veteran that dramatic changes will not occur overnight. On the other hand, she also has historical perspective, and has witnessed how steady increments of progress alter the face of the city over time.

Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community.  
Send a letter to the editor: letters@lamorindaweekly.com

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Council Mulls Road Funding Options and Directs Voter Poll

By Victor Ryerson

Faced with the imminent need to move Orinda's road repairs and maintenance forward to completion in a timely manner, the City Council has taken the next steps toward achieving that goal by reviewing five funding options and authorizing a public opinion poll to identify the best option to place before voters. There is no escaping the fact that finishing the work will require an increase in taxes, and the council is trying to determine how residents are most inclined to take their medicine.

The issue of what standard to achieve was settled by the council Nov. 17, when it considered road repair alternatives proposed by the Citizens Infrastructure Oversight Committee. Choosing the alternative that would require all roads in Orinda to meet a minimum Pavement Condition Index (PCI) standard of 50, insuring good roads for the entire community, the council then referred the matter to the Finance Advisory Committee (FAC) to identify funding options to accomplish that goal. Although it was not anticipated that the FAC would be able to report back to the council before January, it did so at the Dec. 15 meeting.

The FAC identified five potential funding sources, as well as the estimated tax rates and the pros and cons associated with each. Closely associated with the choice is the decision whether to accelerate the funding by issuing a bond, or to adopt a pay-as-you-

go approach with tax revenues. The possible sources of new funding identified by the FAC include sales tax, parcel tax, ad valorem tax, real estate transfer tax, and utility tax. A combination of these could be used, but the voter approval requirement varies among them, making the decision complicated. One approach, enacting a real estate transfer tax, would require Orinda to become a charter city.

Repeating a comment made by another FAC member, Chairman Bob Thompson told the council that the various options "all gore someone's ox, and the oxen are different for different people." He emphasized the need for significant public outreach and discussion, so that voters will understand the need for a tax and the attendant consequences. FAC member Bob Burt fleshed out the pros and cons of each for the council, and answered the council members' questions.

Discussion of the issue segued into the matter of public outreach when the council authorized city staff to contract with a public opinion polling firm to conduct a poll regarding infrastructure funding options, as well as satisfaction with city services generally. Because tight election deadlines must be met, in order to avoid delaying the road repairs, the survey questions will be presented to the council at its Jan. 12 meeting. The survey results are expected in February.

Clearance a Necessity on Lamorinda Roads

... continued from page A1



Photo courtesy Moraga-Orinda Fire District

She noted that the vegetation canopy over the roadway caused problems for evacuation at the Valley Fire. Plus the fact that the fire burned utility poles, leaving no cell coverage, no Internet access, and people couldn't receive the message to evacuate. Potential for such a disaster exists in the private enclaves of Lamorinda.

The unkempt vegetation also can damage the district apparatus. "But it's not about our equipment," said Leonard. "The engines will get there, regardless of the challenge, even if it means damaging the equipment. It's the delay in response."

Fire inspectors Kristian Balfour and Trent Willis drove a Ford F-250 along a narrow Orinda private road,

and pointed out a recent accident scene. An overhanging branch from a large tree impeded an MOFD engine, and as the engine tried to avoid trash cans on the side of the road, it wrecked into the tree.

"It's not about us trying to be difficult," said Willis, as he crept through North Road in Orinda, another spot the utility vehicle - let alone a fire engine - had trouble navigating. He repeated Leonard's words nearly verbatim, pounding home a consistent message. "The firefighters will risk injury, they'll rip the lights off the engine to get through, they'll do whatever they have to do to get there," he said. "It's all about the delay."

City manager Janet Keeter confirmed that Orinda has no jurisdiction over maintenance of private roads. Leonard said she hopes the maintenance efforts will be governed by common sense.

"We'd like to see this work completed by the beginning of the fire season, by early next spring," said Leonard. "In the winter, you don't have to worry about sparks causing fires, or worry about the low humidity. Now is the time to do it."

She fears that not doing it could bring dire consequences.

"The Valley Fire burned at six miles an hour. A lot of people can't run that fast," said Leonard. "If we don't act, we'll be in the same situation."

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# Fire Districts

## Public Meetings

### Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors  
Wednesday, Jan. 6, 7 p.m.  
Moraga Library Community Room  
1500 St. Mary's Road, Moraga  
For meeting times and agendas,  
visit [www.mofd.org](http://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>.

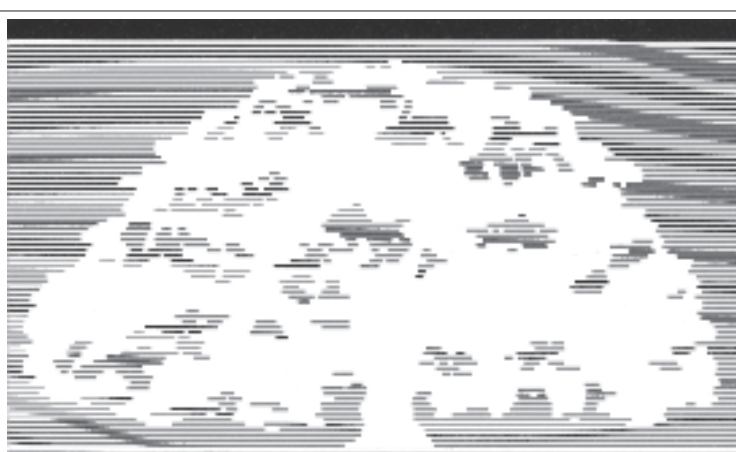
Emergency response information and training:  
Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Team (CERT)  
[www.lamorindacert.org](http://www.lamorindacert.org)

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# A Conversation with MOFD Director Steve Anderson

By Nick Marnell



Steve Anderson at his Orinda home. Photo Andy Scheck

Steve Anderson takes over as president of the board of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District in January. He shared his observations of his three years as a director, and his outlook for the upcoming year, with the Lamorinda Weekly.

**LW: Are you happy that you took this job?**

I am. I've learned a lot, especially about how local government functions. Or doesn't function.

**LW: What's been your biggest surprise?**

How ineffectual local government can be, especially at the county level.

**LW: An example?**

When Contra Costa County closed fire station 16, the fire chief presented a plan to his board and was excoriated by his directors. I was embarrassed for him. Nothing of value was accomplished that day. The board's efforts were counterproductive. If it were me as the chief, I would have walked out of that meeting.

**LW: What accomplishment are you proud of?**

When I got here, MOFD had little ability to do financial forecasts. It was the district's weak suit, and the board recognized this. Over three years, we've done a remarkable job of forecasting our finances.

**LW: So you're satisfied with the district financial condition?**

I didn't say I was satisfied with our financial condition. We're working to get fiscal viability. At least now, we have the ability to measure our finances. People will pick apart portions of our financials. Whether our unfunded pension liability is \$27 million or \$44 million or some other number people say it is, we're addressing it. We're putting out what our accountants and our actuaries tell us. Is it right? Probably not. Is it close? Probably.

**LW: Why do you think the station 46 project fell apart?**

It had a high probability of happening until revenue improved. It would have been a good deal for everyone. Why did it go off the rails? Frankly, I'm not sure.

But it was not because of MOFD. MOFD did not stall. We responded every time the ConFire attorney kept throwing changes back. It was never that we rejected outright any changes ConFire sent to us.

**LW: Could 46 still happen?**

From my perspective, I will try to keep 46 alive as long as possible. I'll be outvoted, but I think it's best for the community, and fiscally it's an excellent deal. And despite what the residents of Honey Hill say, 46 had more advantageous response times than not.

**LW: Even though you have gone on record as calling the county an "unreliable partner," you would re-enter into a joint venture with them?**

Yes, I still consider the county an unreliable partner. But the contract contained provisions to protect us against them, such as specific remedies if either party pulled out of the deal.

**LW: You have a very frustrated union membership.**

Our employees are our best asset, period. But we can't just give them everything they want.

We are in a tenuous economy; 2008 could happen in a flash. One Islamic State attack in San Francisco, and the rate of return on our assets would plummet. We would be back where we were in 2008-09.

Maybe compared to adjacent districts, our firefighters are slightly underpaid. But it's what we can afford. We have an agreement into 2018, and I will continue to adhere to it.

**LW: What do you foresee in 2016?**

In my role as director, to ensure that MOFD provides the service it is established to do. And to be fiscally responsible, by continuing our rigid financial analysis. Also, to maintain our relationship with the union.

**LW: Anything in particular you'd like to change?**

I'd like to push the county retirement board to do even more, such as the changes it made to no longer count certain items toward pension payouts.

**LW: A long-range goal?**

Orinda roads are still a priority. Poor roads affect our response time, and replacing ambulances because they take a beating on the roads affects our bottom line.

Remember, it's not MOFD's job to sit on the taxpayers' money. So, once the district creates fiscal viability and achieves a surplus, shouldn't that money go back to the community? Maybe, to fix the roads?

**LW: The district has taken a lot of grief - from the union, from residents, from the media, even from other public officials. How do you respond to the criticism?**

To the people who want to complain, I would ask them to answer these questions:

When a resident calls, do we respond? Do we respond in a timely manner? And have we saved lives?

If they answer "no" to any one of those, then they should recall me.

# El Nino Preparedness: Let's Bag It!

By Cathy Dausman

In some ways an El Nino winter of warm temperatures and plentiful rain spells a welcome relief to drought-weary Lamorindans. However, much depends on just where that rainfall goes, and where it should not go (see the Dec. 16 article "Water, Water Everywhere: A Cautionary Tale" in the Lamorinda Weekly archives). Perhaps high on every resident's list is the wish that outside water should remain just that: outside.

While an onslaught of water cannot be stopped, it can be diverted to an area where it does the least amount of damage. In this case, sandbags are important tools.

If your home is located in a known flood zone or on a hill, be prepared to deploy sandbags where needed 48 hours ahead of a major storm.

Each Lamorinda municipality will keep a cache of sand and sandbags for its residents' needs this winter, said Duncan Seibert, Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Team program manager. In Lafayette, sand will be available at the public works building; in Moraga and Orinda, sand will be available at Moraga-Orinda Fire District stations 41, 43 and 44.

While CERT does not teach sandbagging at its regular classes, Seibert says CERT volunteers would likely staff sandbag stations and offer "just-in-time training" for this skill.

A garage is a particularly vulnerable spot for water to gain entry into a residence, Seibert says. He suggests using 10 mil plastic sheeting held in place with heavy tape before setting out sandbags to divert the water flow. A one-bag-high sandbag wall constructed along a 30-foot-long garage door will take about an hour to make and offers up to four inches in height of water diversion.

Fill the sandbags only half full, fold the top of the bag over and tuck



CERT sandbag volunteers Tim Freeman, John Burgess, John Haffner and Gordon Nathan last December at fire station 41 in Moraga. Photo provided

it underneath the bag, facing into the direction of the water flow. Do not stack your pile over two sandbags high unless there is a building or backing to support it.

The sandbags will deteriorate over time so it is important not to

stage them too early. "Stack them when you get them where you need them," Seibert says.

Although not pretty when deployed, the ounce of prevention sandbags offer a homeowner is surely worth a pound of cure.

## Lamorinda Sand Bag Pickup Locations

(sand and bags available as needed):

### Lafayette

Public Works yard, 3001 Camino Diablo

### Moraga

MOFD station 41, 1280 Moraga Way

### Orinda

MOFD station 43, 20 Via Las Cruces

MOFD station 44, 295 Orchard Road

# Free CERT Training Class in January

By Cathy Dausman

Duncan Seibert believes in the motto "be prepared."

"With the constant threats of earthquake, wildfire and now El Niño, people need to know how to fend for themselves," he said.

Seibert, a longtime Lafayette resident, is program manager for Lamorinda's Community Emergency Response Team, a Federal Emergency Management Agency-backed all-risk, all hazards training course. He is anxious to promote the next CERT session starting Jan. 12 in Lafayette. The three-hour evening classes are free and open to anyone over 17 living or working

in Lamorinda.

"There are 60,000 residents in Lamorinda. There are normally six police patrol cars, seven fire engines and two ambulances on duty," he said, which translates to one first responder vehicle serving every 4,000 residents. "When a large-scale disaster strikes, you and your family could be on your own for quite a while."

Seibert says CERT is a positive and realistic approach to emergency and disaster preparedness. Over the course of seven weeks of lectures and hands-on training, participants learn about local disaster risks, managing hazardous materials and small fires

and receive training in basic first aid and triage. Instructors are local volunteers, firefighters or paramedics trained to FEMA standards.

CERT is a program of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and is organized under the California Volunteers program and the Department of Homeland Security. Lamorinda CERT is directed by a steering committee of volunteer members selected by the Citizen Corps Councils of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda. Students age 16 are welcome if accompanied by an adult. For details, call (925) 255-5143 or visit <http://www.lamorindacert.org>.

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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](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) for submission guidelines.  
**email:** [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com); Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570



# Letters to the Editor



Editor:

Viva Moraga!

2015 was an Extraordinary Year in our little Town of Moraga! Most of the important good things continued as hoped; our schools maintained their excellence, street repairs continued, people were safe (though there was a small uptick in property crimes), and as always, a large number of people volunteered for the betterment of the Town, everything from school fundraising to pruning orchards to throwing fiestas and festivals, to youth sports...and, and, and! Let's just say, there are a lot of great things going on in Moraga. We are blessed with wonderful geography and a great climate, and most would agree; brown lawns beat humid summers and snowy winters! I think it is fair to say, we've got it pretty good here in Moraga! Other than the grace of climate and geography, this has not happened by accident! From even before the founding of our Town, residents have worked hard, "moving mountains" to maintain the quality of our community. Freeways have been quashed, hilltops and open space have been protected, and urban crowding and other problems have been avoided. Property values have benefited. And, as a result, we continue to enjoy a high quality of living. Beautiful views, no parking meters, not much congestion...

So it is not surprising that Moraga residents rallied this year against a proposal for high density, 3-story urbanizing housing development right next to the Moraga Country Club and the Sonsara neighborhood. Despite widespread opposition, Town Staff and the Town Council approved the development, spurring a referendum campaign, highlighted by a very successful signature gathering petition to put the issue to a vote. Though 1,003 signatures were needed to qualify the petition, over 1,500 voter signatures were gathered in just three weeks. A developer lawsuit was able to suppress the referendum on technical issues, despite review and certification by the Moraga Town Clerk and the Contra Costa County Elections department.

Unfortunately, the Town, as directed by the Town Council, sided with the developers to avoid the opportunity for residents to decide the issue at the ballot box. At the moment, that is how things stand on this development; a judge has put the referendum aside. Possible next steps are being considered to maintain the semi-rural atmosphere that adds so much to the quality of our lives here in Moraga. We would like to thank the hundreds who have pitched in to our effort, from those who signed our petition, to those who gathered signatures, provided moral support, and those that provided legal help, financial assistance, and the thumbs-uppers, horn honkers, smilers, noddors and wavers...Thanks! And hold on, we'll be back...2016 is going to be quite a "Doozy"!

The Committee to Stop Moraga Town Center Homes  
 Scott Bowhay, Janet Dobbs, Steve Huxley and more...

*Editor's Note: Over the past several weeks, Lamorinda Weekly received the following Letters to the Editor from Miramonte High School seniors participating in a government class, with a focus on understanding the impact of world issues on government and lifestyle.*

Editor:

I would like to raise awareness of the problem of police brutality. Here are some facts about police brutality: More than 900 people are killed every year by policemen, black Americans are more than twice as likely to be unarmed when killed during police encounters than whites, excessive force is the most common form of police misconduct.

Thank You,  
 Pat Hallahan  
 Miramonte High School senior

Editor:

We have been working on a large collaborative research project for our government class. We have been specifically focused on the history of the Drug War and its effects both inside and outside our borders. The biggest issue currently presented by the War on Drugs is money in two different ways. One way is the fact that Mexican cartels can generate \$35-45 billion on the black market due to the fact that most recreational drugs are illegal and that the majority of their markets are in the US. The second way is that the amount of non-violent drug offenders in prison cause the cost of enforcing the drug war to be about \$48.7 billion. The issue of money is closely followed by the issue of people in terms of relevancy. A third of the state prison population consists of non-violent drug offenders that only harm themselves. Additionally the countries sponsored by the U.S. to combat drugs in South America often infringe on the rights of their people. The fact that so many people are affected by drugs, either by using them or wasting tax dollars on them, should cause it to affect every single citizen.

Alex Smith, Julian Cremer and Angie Moretti  
 Miramonte High School seniors

Editor:

I am fighting to provide more federal funding to embryonic stem cell research. As technology rapidly advances and the potential for scientific discovery is unlike anything we've ever seen before, the possibility of monumen-

tal benefits within the field of stem cell research is quickly becoming a reality. Embryonic stem cell research has an incredible opportunity to further the overall well being of the human race by developing treatments for a breadth of critical diseases from Alzheimer's, to diabetes, to arthritis. However, the time and resources that this promising research demands requires the support of federal funding and that, in turn, requires the support of the public. Fundamentally, I believe this is an issue that affects us all and its potential to change the world and save millions of lives cannot be ignored nor hindered by a corrupt political system any longer.

Sincerely,  
 Carolyn Brager  
 Miramonte High School senior

Editor:

We are writing to you in order to address the issue of climate change. From the research that we have collected we have found that changes in our lifestyle is a must in order to limit the effects of climate change. We have learned that many politicians and organizations are working to help change the effects of climate change. If you could publish an article talking about the importance of climate change and how it affects society today as well as informing people that regulation of the environment is a very tough and worthwhile task nationwide it would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,  
 Alexander Kao, Caleb Chen, Daniel Davis  
 Miramonte High School seniors

Editor:

I've been doing some research about Climate Change and have been disgusted with what is going on around the world. Pollution is a serious issue that affects everyone. A main cause of the pollution is CO2 from cars. America needs a way to try to reduce the amounts of CO2, whether it be finding a new resource, or making a law to restrict driving. In Mexico City, they have already made a stance. They have something called the Hoy No Circula, which restricts driving from certain vehicles a certain day of every week from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. If we did this, the results would be astonishing. If we don't protect the world, who will?

Sincerely,  
 Eva Shaw  
 Miramonte High School senior

Editor: Over the past fifty years police brutality has been an atrocity that Americans seem to notice, but have failed to take action on. With cases involving Michael Brown and Eric Garner publicity has risen to an all time high. People all across America from Ferguson, Missouri to Baltimore, Maryland riots have been raging. Police brutality has been shown in a new light and is an issue that the American government and people need to do something about. Although police brutality has gained a lot of attention in the past couple of years, we still haven't done anything significant to address the issue. In order to deter officers from committing such heinous crimes and in order to give officers a just punishment we should implement the use of body cameras. Body cameras will prevent deaths and brutality of innocent citizens in America.

Alex Harnett and Alex Zamanian  
 Miramonte High School seniors

Editor:

In our government class we were asked to choose a topic that seemed important to us to research for our semester project. We chose the topic, the war on drugs. This topic appealed to us because we believe that the war on drugs is not decreasing the use of drugs, it is just hurting our economy from all the spending that goes into it.

It is no secret that drugs are very common in our day and age, and people want to protect their children from the damages of them. In California, eleven people per day die from drug abuse. Though the use of drugs most definitely needs to decrease, this war on drugs and making them illegal is not helping anything. Making drugs illegal just means people have to be more sneaky about getting them, it does not stop them from using them at all. The rate of drug addiction has stayed about the same since 1970, whereas the amount of drug control spending has gone through the roof. Instead of imprisoning people in possession and making drugs illegal, drugs should be harder to access and cost more. This way people will not be able to get to them as easy and maybe that will draw them away from them. Rather than trying to defeat the problem, it is better to compromise with or come up with alternatives. So, in order to make our community and America great again, encourage the end to the war on drugs. Do it for you children and their children to make the world we live in safer from drug abuse.

Sincerely,  
 Karina Dulberg and Hailey Eberle  
 Miramonte High School seniors

Editor:

Having spent my childhood living in Oakland, I became familiar with the sound of sirens and alarms. Playing out-

side at my preschool, these sounds meant that something exciting was occurring. While sirens were a source of entertainment for my friends and me, this is not the case for everyone. Unfortunately, fear of the police has become more prevalent. Today's youth feel less that they can depend on the police to ensure their safety.

The black community has been disproportionately affected by police brutality. The prominence of the use of lethal force is concerning. There were more fatal shootings by police in the first five months of 2015 in Stockton, California, than have ever occurred in the entire country of Iceland. This is not to say that all law enforcement workers are "bad cops," but rather is indicative of a larger problem with American police practices. For this reason, we feel that it is important to bring attention to reform and accountability of police action.

Rachel Gamson and Dale Gemino  
 Miramonte High School seniors

Editor:

We are writing to address our concern for NSA spying on U.S. citizens. As high school seniors we feel domestic spying on US citizens violates the Constitution. The Fourth Amendment "prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures and requires any warrant to be judicially sanctioned and supported by probable cause" (The Bill of Rights). NSA Spying on US citizens is definitely classified as an unreasonable search and because the NSA doesn't use a warrant to complete its unsupervised spying it is judicially unconstitutional. In addition, the National Security Agency is supposedly "there to protect the Nation," and, "customers know they can count on [them] to provide what they need, when they need it, wherever they need it." While the NSA protects the US against foreign aggression through online surveillance, why does the agency feel the need to spy on it's own people? NSA spying is illegal. As active members of our community we believe this matter needs to be addressed in order to affirm citizens' right to privatize personal information.

Thank you,

Sophie Jacques and Hannah Sanders  
 Miramonte High School seniors

Editor:

We are writing to you regarding the recent increase of tuition costs at the Universities of California and the impact that it has on students. As we are soon to be freshman in college, the rising tuition cost in UC's and other colleges worry us. The UC's tuition costs will increase from \$12,804 to \$15,564 in fall of 2019. The current median income for families in California is \$61,933. That means that although some families make above this number, many families make much less than this. A family that makes \$61,933 would have to use their entire income for one year to pay for college. This does not include room and board, transportation, books and materials, or even food while in school. Of course this is not possible, as families have other necessary living expenses. Many students have to take out loans in order to pay for their college education, and as we have all heard, the interest rates on loans add up. When we surveyed students at our own school, 88% of them said the affordability of college is the main factor when deciding which college to attend. This clearly shows that the majority of students worry about being able to afford the college of their choice. Some college graduates spend their entire life paying off their student loans. We believe that college students should have the opportunity to succeed once they graduate from college. We are worried about the rising costs of higher education and the loan debt from that. We would like to see a decrease in the future costs, so that more students will be able to attend college, and have it be more affordable for them. College gives people a chance to find themselves and it gives students the resources they need to succeed after graduation. Since this is the case, we believe students should not be burdened by debt before they have the opportunity to succeed.

Thank you,

Lillian Hunter-Reay and Ali Fitch  
 Miramonte High School seniors

Editor:

We are writing to you in order to inform you of the issue of animal testing. According to the Humane Society International, animals used in experiments are commonly subjected to force feeding, forced inhalation, food and water deprivation, prolonged periods of physical restraint, the infliction of burns and other wounds to study the healing process, the infliction of pain to study its effects and remedies, and many other things. One specific company, Church and Dwight, that manufactures brands such as Oxi Clean, Arm and Hammer products, and Kaboom inhumanely treats their animals when testing their products. Our goal is to raise awareness of this issue so that we can further create laws that will protect the health, safety and well-being of these animals that are being used in labs.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Gee and Danielle Chan  
 Miramonte High School seniors



Business

# Agemark Senior Living and Memory Care Communities Managed From Orinda

By Sophie Braccini



Forrest and Richard Westin, right, in Agemark's Orinda office

Photo Sophie Braccini

Lamorinda does not just have retail or small business operations. Some larger companies are run from offices tucked away in commercial areas, like Agemark. Founded 36 years ago by Orinda resident Richard Westin, Agemark owns and operates assisted living and memory care residences across the country, employing 800 people.

"It's become my passion and mission in life," says Westin.

Throughout Westin's professional life, the lawyer, turned commercial property investor, turned assisted living community business owner was able to recognize and seize opportu-

nities when they came his way. When he was practicing law, a client asked him to lend him money to enter a real estate deal. Westin offered to partner instead, launching his career in commercial real estate. The assisted living opportunity came a few years later.

"I had bought a gorgeous building in Tacoma, Washington partnering with Jesse Pitore," remembers Westin. "It was an old YMCA built in 1906 and we had the project to leave the exterior intact and transform the inside into an office building. We went to the bank to get a loan and the banker said, 'I'm not going to give you a loan. We have too many office buildings

in Tacoma.' I asked if there would be another use he would give us a loan for and he answered, 'Have you ever heard of assisted living?'" This was in the 1980s, when these types of facilities were not being developed much, but Westin looked into it and decided to go for it with Pitore, who is still his Agemark partner today. "It was totally fortuitous, and I fell head over heels in love with the business," says Westin, "because unlike renting apartments to interchangeable renters, now I'm taking care of very frail elderly at the end of their lives and I have a chance to make a difference. I truly found my calling."

Westin's business philosophy came from his years as a young adult, when he worked with Club Med in Europe as a sailing and ski instructor. Gilbert Trigano, founder of Club Med, is one of his mentors and it was there that Westin learned about hospitality and dealing with large groups of people. "When it came time to design programing and lifestyle for the elderly in our various locations I tapped into this background. We truly do Club Med for the elderly." Westin is full of stories about his residents, whether it is about taking memory care residents bowling or boating, or offering other diverse experiences to assisted living clients, who he believes still want to have fun. "We had a lady who turned 102 in one of our Baltimore properties who said to me that she had never been to a Baltimore Orioles game. Ten days later, when the New York Yankees came to town to play the Orioles, she threw out the first pitch. That is the Club Med in us." Westin sees his business as social first, fully engaging residents. Westin believes that the multiple awards Agemark won are a result of this policy. His son, Forrest, has been involved for the last 12 years as well.

Agemark residences are either for assisted living, memory care or a combination of both. Today the partners own 15 properties, with an additional three under construction and five in the approval process. Many of the properties are old grand hotels that were built in railroad towns at the turn of the 20th century. "We have these gorgeous hotels that were very fancy, where a lot of social functions took place, that fell out of favor when the railroads fell out of favor," says Westin. "In the '80s we came along and bought them, and donated the air rights and facades to local historical societies so the buildings would stay forever." All kinds of important social events are taking place in the facilities again. "There is something charming in these older buildings filled with people who went to their high school proms in there, and then 60 or 70 years later the kids from this generation are coming back to celebrate their proms, filling the place with youthful energy. We become a serious part of the community. We do not warehouse or isolate people."

There is no Agemark community in Orinda, Lafayette or Moraga. But that might change in the future, says Westin, a longtime volunteer in the community who was named the 2012 Orinda Citizen of the Year. "We own a property next to the Wilder development site," he says, "and there is a need in Orinda for a first-class project." So far it has not worked, but Westin says that if all goes as planned an application will be filed with the city in the first quarter of 2016.

"If you're persistent and hopeful," he says, "something will happen."

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

From Front Page

## DA Sends Shockwaves Through Water Polo Community

... continued from page A1

"Generally the incident must be extreme, out of the ordinary and highly dangerous to be considered a criminal act," said Michael McCann, a law professor at the University of New Hampshire who heads the school's Sports and Entertainment Institute. "For that reason, I think the traditional answer is it is an extremely high threshold for when an incident becomes a criminal act, as sports incidents almost never lead to criminal charges."

During KQED's hour-long treatment of the issue on Dec. 22, Alan Milstein, an attorney who specializes in sports litigation, noted that most cases involving sports brutality and criminal proceedings have been in Canada in the sport of hockey. He also noted there are typically four considerations in cases like these: the nature of the game (is it a contact sport?), the nature of the act (was it inadvertent or purposeful?), the degree of force applied, and intent (was there an intent to do harm?).

Water polo is a notoriously difficult sport to referee, since most of the players' bodies are submerged in water.

"You only see the last five percent of the player's body," MAC Water Polo Referee Association

president Jeff Roy explained. "They're just floating heads."

Roy and others pointed out how the pervasiveness of video-recording devices, smart phones and cameras, are changing the game. The ubiquity of such devices have changed the way other realms of law are being prosecuted, perhaps most notably in the scourge of police brutality cases scattered across the country. If homemade videos become part of the fabric of sports and litigation, more cases like this could emerge and some worry there will be costly unintended consequences, like the need for more insurance.

Roy, who's been in the sport for 45 years, expressed this sentiment in a letter to the District Attorney:

"If this criminal case survives our judicial system, contact sports for high school athletics will need to be evaluated upon whether or not schools will continue to offer these athletic events." He continued, "The slope is very slippery if we head down this path, once we let a 'criminal action' of this sort take place. The cost to support high school athletics will probably skyrocket! Liability insurance for everyone who participates will be a costly result."

## business briefs

### New Addiction Recovery Classes at Earth and Sea Yoga

3400 Mt Diablo Blvd., Suite 209, Lafayette  
Karen.Y12SR@gmail.com, www.Y12SR.com

Karen Ann Richards is offering 12-Step Recovery Yoga classes that combine the practical tools of the 12-step program with the ancient wisdom of yoga at Earth and Sea Yoga in Lafayette Mondays at 1:30 p.m. and Fridays at 7 p.m. (Y12SR class). The class is a 12-step based discussion and yoga practice open to anyone and everyone dealing with their own addictive behavior or affected by the addictive behavior of others. It is an open and inclusive group and all are welcome. Suggested donation: \$10, but no one is turned away. A portion of the money collected goes to The Rectory Women's Recovery Center.

### Lafayette Car Wash Gets WaterSmart Business Award



Blake Wellen receives the WaterSmart Business Award  
Photo provided

The East Bay Municipal Utility District on Nov. 10 awarded Lafayette Car Wash and Detail Center the WaterSmart Certification award in recognition of its outstanding water management practices. "Through your efforts, you have helped preserve our valuable natural resources and improved your operation's bottom line," wrote EBMUD General Manager Alexander Coate in a letter to the Lafayette business.

### Large Portion of the Rheem Shopping Center Sold

www.usrpartners.com  
U.S. Realty Partners, a privately held real estate investment company specializing in the acquisition, asset management, development and redevelopment of retail properties located in the western United States, recently bought the largest part of the Rheem Shopping Center, from CVS to CAPA, that was owned by Kimco Realty.

### Police Officer Named Moraga Employee of the Month



From left: St. Brian South, Chief Bob Priebe, Moraga Chamber President Kevin Reneau  
Photo provided

Detective Sargent Brian South of the Moraga Police Department has been named the Moraga Employee of the Month for December. South has been with the town's police for the past 13 years, supervising the town's patrol activities and personnel as well as conducting investigations and serving as the liaison with the District Attorney's office. He is president of the Moraga Police Officers' Association and manages the department's annual Kid's Day at the Rheem Theatre to support Special Olympics. The Moraga Rotary and Chamber of Commerce will award South with gift cards from Safeway and the Home/Made Kitchen Cafe in Moraga at an upcoming Moraga Rotary lunch in January.

### News from the Three Chambers of Commerce

The Chambers of Commerce are closed until 2016. No events are scheduled during the first part of January.

#### Lafayette Chamber of Commerce

2016 Business Persons of the Year Dinner and State of the City Address. The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce will honor Andy and Wendy Scheck, owners of Lamorinda Weekly, as the 2016 Business Persons of the Year. The evening will also include the State of the City address by Mayor Mark Mitchell. Reception at 6 p.m. and dinner at 7 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 29 at the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa, 3287 Mt. Diablo Blvd. For reservations contact the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce at (925) 284-7404, or online at www.lafayettechamber.org under "important links" on the home page.

#### Moraga Chamber of Commerce

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.

## Celebrating an Anniversary?

If your business is celebrating a significant anniversary (5, 10, 20 years or more ...) send us a photo of your business, the owner(s) or the staff with specific information about your business and what you're celebrating, and we'll include it in an upcoming issue.

please...



...thanks!

If you have a business brief to share, please contact Sophie Braccini at [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)





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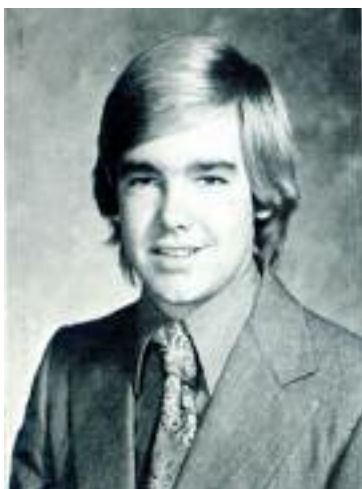
**Village REAL ESTATE**

Giving Dreams an Address

Lafayette

## Home Grown Mayor for 2016

... continued from page A2



Other challenges to address in the coming year include Community Choice Aggregation – what Mitchell calls “a pretty big deal.” CCA would provide Lafayette residents with a choice in where their energy comes from, giving the option of cleaner, greener energy. The mayor wants to gather extensive community input on the topic.

Living in Lafayette his entire adult life, Mitchell brings a keen understanding of traffic, congestion, and

semi-rural growing pains as the city continues to evolve from his days as a kid. Residents who want an up close look at local democracy are always welcome at city council meetings on the second and fourth Monday evenings every month, starting at 7 p.m. Jan. 11 in the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. The agenda is not out yet, but is easily accessible via the city website, www.lovelafayette.org.

Mark Mitchell graduated from Acalanes High School in 1975 Photo provided

Lafayette

## Citizen Group Legal Challenge to Deer Hill Project Found Invalid

... continued from page A3

Ordinance 641, adopted on Sept. 14, 2015, includes a number of items: a zoning amendment, a planned unit development, a development agreement, a land use permit and a hillside development permit for the Deer Hill project. The referendum petition could have repealed all of the acts in Ordinance 641.

“If the legislative act of Ordinance 641 were suspended or repealed, the City’s zoning ordinance would be inconsistent with its General Plan,” wrote city attorney Mala Subramanian. “Courts have consistently held that a referendum seeking to repeal a zoning amendment which would result in a zoning ordinance that is inconsistent with a General Plan is a legally invalid referendum.”

She points out that the California Supreme Court agrees; initiatives that create inconsistencies between a general plan and zoning are invalid.

The inconsistency that would have been created was the crux of the matter, Subramanian explained, citing

a court case that described it as “not merely a technical infirmity ... but as the linchpin of California’s land use and development laws.”

Attorney for the land owner, Allan Moore, as well as the developer, O’Brien Homes, also agreed: “We concur with the city attorney’s analysis.”

The current General Plan designation for the parcel in question is “Low Density Single Family Residential;” the referendum would have resulted in a zoning designation of “Administrative Profession Office.”

Faced with compelling reasoning by the city attorney, city council members unanimously opted to determine that the Save Lafayette Referendum is invalid and refused to repeal Ordinance 641, an action that is consistent with what the court recently determined in Moraga in the David Bruzzone and City Ventures, LLC against the Moraga Town Clerk and Town Council and also the deBottari versus City Council case.

Two speakers questioned the decision, asking about other options including perhaps changing the General Plan, and also respecting the point of view of the many residents who signed the petition.

Outgoing mayor Brandt Anderson, who is an attorney in his day job, rephrased the question. “Can this be fixed by a general plan amendment? The answer is no. The legal situation is clear: you can’t ‘after the fact’ change the General Plan,” he said. “Anything we would do would simply lose in court. There’s no question about it.”

Arguing against opponents’ claim of lack of leadership, council members countered that the project has changed significantly from 315 apartments to 44 single family homes with a great deal of amenities to the community; there has been a real effort made to improve the project.

Save Lafayette organizer Michael Griffiths, commenting on the decision, said the group is “weighing its options.”

Lafayette

## Celebrating Don Tatzin’s 30 Years on the City Council

... continued from page A3

Former Orinda city council member and mayor, now state Senator Steve Glazer complimented Tatzin as a mentor who brings insight to his many roles.

Because they represent low service, low tax cities, Moraga mayor Mike Metcalf and council member Dave Trotter and Orinda city council member Amy Worth joked, “We couldn’t afford a proclamation.”

Former Lafayette city council member Ann Grodin reminisced that Tatzin was the critical person to have the vision and to figure out the financing for the spectacular new library.

Ivor Samson, former Citizen of the Year, as well as mayor, put Tatzin’s length of service in a humorous context, comparing his 30 years to the Castro Brothers of Cuba, Zimbabwe’s President Robert Mugabe, among others.

Explaining that an official recognition usually occurs when someone steps down, City Manager Steven Falk quipped: “We’re concerned you’re not going to retire.” He pointed out that Tatzin leads by example, is very supportive of staff and that there is no job he is unwilling to do.

Avon Wilson served on Tatzin’s first city council many years ago; she

called him “the guiding light” who serves with grace, nuance, intelligence and capability.

“He’s the Cal Ripken of local politics,” said Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson.

Responding to the outpouring of support, Tatzin diplomatically credits persistence, not taking himself too seriously, striving to learn something and enjoying himself. He concluded that he has gained more than he has given to the city.

Reflecting on his civic career and many accomplishments, Tatzin first thanked his wife, Ellen Reintjes, and said there are many things he is proud of. Tops on the list is implementing a virtuous cycle, a chain of events that reinforce themselves through a feedback loop.

He praised a community of volunteers along with prudent planning to protect hillsides and ridgelines. “Thirty years ago people complained that we had a downtown with nowhere to go,” now the opposite is true as the city seeks to “manage its success.” He is also proud that the city has opened its arms to those less fortunate, built affordable housing and welcomed those with developmental disabilities.

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## Kindergarten Registration is Just Around the Corner

Will your child start kindergarten in 2016? Registration dates in Lamorinda’s school districts are just around the corner. To be eligible for kindergarten, a child must turn 5 years old by Sept. 1. To be eligible for the transitional kindergarten program, a child must have his or her fifth birthday between Sept. 2 and Dec. 2. Children currently enrolled in transitional kindergarten are not required to complete the kindergarten registration process for next year.

New immunization requirements for 2016, under a new law known as SB277 that begins Jan. 1, state that exemptions based on personal beliefs will no longer be an option for the vaccines that are currently required for entry into child care or school in California. For more detailed information, visit: <http://www.shotsforschool.org/laws/sb277faq/>.

### Lafayette

The Lafayette School District will offer its "Roadmap to Kindergarten" informational presentation for parents from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Thursday, Jan. 7 in the Multipurpose Room at Lafayette Elementary, 950 Moraga Road, Lafayette. Registration for kindergarten/transitional kindergarten will take place at the district’s four elementary schools on Tuesday, Jan. 19 and Wednesday, Jan. 20 at the following times:

**Burton Valley Elementary** 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m.  
561 Merriewood Drive  
(925) 927-3550

**Happy Valley Elementary** 9-11 a.m.  
3855 Happy Valley Road  
(925) 927-3560

**Lafayette Elementary** 9-11 a.m.  
950 Moraga Road  
(925) 927-3570

**Springhill Elementary** 9-11 a.m.  
3301 Springhill Road  
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Registration packets can be obtained from the schools beginning Jan. 5. For more information visit the district’s website, [www.lafsd.k12.ca.us](http://www.lafsd.k12.ca.us).

### Moraga

Online registration for incoming kindergarten/transitional kindergarten students in Moraga opens Tuesday, Jan. 5 – go to <https://moragaesd.asp.aeries.net/air> to begin the registration process. Specific registration dates at the district’s three elementary schools will be announced soon. For more information visit the district’s website, [www.moraga.k12.ca.us](http://www.moraga.k12.ca.us).

### Orinda

Orinda Union School District registration information was not available by press deadline; check the district’s website, [www.orindaschools.org](http://www.orindaschools.org), for information.





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# Friendly Drop-Offs at Local Fire Stations Keep Spirits Up

By Chris Lavin



Moraga firefighters Dave Iman, Mark DeWeese and Andrew Leach with goods dropped off during the week, including a box of See's candy, a Nation's pie and a mound of homemade muffins. Photo Chris Lavin

You never know what you might have to deal with as a firefighter: the proverbial cat in a tree, horrible things like car accidents, an unruly nursing home resident, then, of course, actual fires.

Yet something surprising that firefighters throughout Lamorinda often deal with is a ring at the door, to find a local resident holding a contribution – like a chicken, or a bicycle ... or grenades?

"We've had live grenades dropped off," said Moraga-Orinda Fire District Chief Stephen Healy in a voicemail. You have to think: Who keeps live grenades? "And m1000 fire-crackers," he added. Those are more than 10 times more powerful than an m80. Don't want to have too many of those lying around. Or even one.

While it turns out that some enterprising East Bay residents have figured out that the good old local fire department is a safe place to drop off things that might have become a nuisance, such as a rooster, or even a laying hen

that turns out to squawk a little more loudly than expected in the early morning hours, Lamorinda firefighters mostly receive good goods. A recent visit to Station 41 in Moraga revealed a table holding a box of See's candy, a pie from Nation's and a big stack of homemade muffins, all unsolicited.

Once a frantic resident rushing to the airport stopped by because he couldn't get the padlock open on his luggage. That is an unusual request, however. One firefighter website keeps a list of unusual things dropped to fire stations: a coral snake in a two-liter bottle, a pug in a dog carrier, leaking dynamite.

"Most of what we get are thank-you gifts," said Mark DeWeese of Station 41. The station used to receive a lot of "sharps" packages, those red medical waste containers full of things like syringes used by diabetics. "Most of those go to the police departments now. But we still get a lot of medications." The firefighters tote them to a big locker out back to wait for recycling time.

In recent years residents are becoming more aware that to dispose of medications by flushing them down the toilet or tossing them into a landfill pollutes the groundwater table and the Bay, so they are more likely to drop off bottles of old pills at a fire station. And years ago, all fire stations were made to be "safe drops" for unwanted babies. Ring the bell, hand over the child, no questions asked – a program that has been credited with cutting down on newborn child abandonment and mortality.

"Thankfully we haven't seen any babies dropped off in the Lamorinda area in more than a decade," said Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Operations Chief Lon Goetsch. A baby dropped off a couple of years ago in a Santa Ana station was recently reunited with the four firefighters who took her in. She was immediately adopted by a local family shortly after her birth and came back to re-meet her four "uncles."

"No, we don't get too many babies," DeWeese said. He looked thankful.

# This Is Not a New Year's Resolution Column

By Nick Marnell

Why bother writing about resolutions, when you know they will be broken? Like mine: I resolve to stop chewing gum in 2016. But why print that in a newspaper article? It makes much more sense to write: I predict that I will break my New Year's resolution to stop chewing gum by Jan. 5.

And to those of you who think I am not qualified to write a prediction column? Don't forget: for 2014, I predicted that Moraga real estate prices were going south. And last year, I predicted that I would keep this job through 2015. The jury is still out on that one.

So here we go. I predict that the San Francisco Giants will win the World Series in 2016. It's an even year, right? How far out on a limb am I going here? Besides, now that I am the first columnist to commit to this in print, I can be blamed if the Giants don't win it. It takes the heat off the team. "It's that darned newspaper reporter in the

East Bay who caused this. It's his fault!"

I predict that Candace Andersen will win re-election to the Board of Supervisors in 2016. Again, not a reach, considering that nobody has challenged her. And now you know the secret to writing prediction columns: Stick to the sure-things.

Here's another sure-thing. That every single male in Lamorinda (and planet earth), as soon as he hears an Adele song come on the radio, will change the station within two seconds. (That was too easy.)

I predict that, no matter how many new restaurants open in Lafayette next year, it will still be impossible to get a seat at Chow when you want one.

No matter how much rain we get this season, even if it is 400 percent of average, I predict that the East Bay Municipal Utility District will come up with new rationale to raise our water rates again in 2016.

With the failure of station 46,

and the renovation of fire station 16 and the rebuild of fire station 43 occurring simultaneously, I predict the residents of north Orinda and western Lafayette will secede from their districts and form their own volunteer fire department in 2016.

All of the nonsense about predicting the economy based on who wins the election, who wins the Super Bowl, whether the first baby born is a boy or girl, I say, go with my prediction, which has never failed me: if the S&P 500 rises over 15 percent, it will be a good year financially.

In the old days, before the Internet, it was much easier to get away with making outrageous predictions in the newspaper, because that newspaper would be thrown out within a week. Now, we've got to live with this column online for eternity. So, I close with a prediction that you can take to the bank: My editor will remove this column from our website on Dec. 31.

Happy New Year, everyone!



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## New Kid on the Block

*Orinda's Fourth Bore Brewpub offers tasty bites and a bevy of brews*

By A.K. Carroll



Photos A.K. Carroll

Few things satisfy quite like an order of nachos – crisp corn tortilla chips fused together by molten melted cheese and topped with corn, beans, and sundry sauces – so when I see them listed under the starters section of the menu, I order on impulse. They are gooey and crunchy, loaded with a generous serving of savory pulled pork that is drizzled in sweet barbecue sauce and garnished with fresh jalapeños. There is something familiar about this go-to bar food, but also something a bit different; like I've had it before, but never quite in this way.

That is much the feeling you will get when you set foot into The Fourth Bore Tap Room & Grill Pub, the latest project from restaurateur Michael Karp (of Forge Pizza and Table 24). Located in the corner pocket of Orinda's Theatre Square (the former digs of Karp's Barbacoa), the new brewpub was hand-crafted for locals, with a menu that features bar food favorites like fish 'n' chips, grass-fed burgers, mac 'n' cheese, and pulled pork nachos.

The taproom's name is taken from the latest addition to the Caldecott Tunnel, whose first two bores were started in 1929 and completed in 1937. Black and white photographs of the tunnel's construction are scattered across the pub's walls, giving a hint of history to a space that is far from old. The Fourth Bore is the second of Karp's concepts to take its name from East Bay transportation arterials, the first being sister restaurant Table 24, which is named after the nearby highway.

The restaurant retains its most noteworthy (and arguably its best) feature: a blazing outdoor fire pit with plenty of comfy contemporary patio chairs for those who are sipping drinks or waiting for a table, which you are likely to do until the pub's initial popularity settles into a steady rhythm.

Any new concept has some kinks to work out. The night I stopped by I was seated surprisingly quickly (having arrived a little later than my reservation), but then waited quite some time between interactions with my server. The service was great when it came, with friendly smiles and helpful recommendations, but it seemed to be spread too thin. Perhaps we Lamorindans are hitting The Fourth Bore harder than expected. My table was also uncomfortably drafty, with only a thin red curtain separating me from frequent bursts of outside air each time the door opened. A cozy corner table or bar-side seat would offer a much different experience.

Regardless of where you sit, you are likely to start with a beverage. Karp has partnered with brewmaster J.J. Phair (of E.J. Phair's Brewing Company) to create a brewpub that is as much about drinking as it is about eating, with a beer list that features over 30 craft beers from some 20 different breweries. The pub's 30-tap system was crafted from reclaimed lumber and built by Phair himself, who plans to brew a few select beers exclusively for The Fourth Bore. You



can also choose from a selection of local wines and cleverly crafted cocktails, like the Matchless Orinda or the Tunnel Vision.

The food menu was designed by executive chef Jonathan Williams, formerly of Table 24, and leans heavily toward comfort fare, with a portobello sandwich and mixed greens salad as the only straight-up vegetarian options. Though Williams' Boston roots are most clearly evidenced in the creamy house chowder, lobster mac 'n' cheese, and Fourth Bore Trifecta – a mini bread-bowl of clam chowder, lobster slider, and 4-ounce pour of beer – the chef's proudest items are the St. Louis ribs and the wood-fired chicken wings, which are smoky, spicy, and tender to the bone. The menu is varied without being overly ambitious, and includes three salads, four burgers, several sandwiches, four mains, and a selection of starters, some of which could be meals in themselves. Williams plans to make changes in the next couple of weeks, based on the initial response of his guests.

A bit of a nibbler myself, I was perfectly pleased to find The Trifecta,

which allowed me to try not only the house chowder, which was creamy and hearty without being overly rich, but also the lobster slider and a sampler of the Kolsch. The bread bowl was nothing to write home about, but the side salad I added was surprisingly large and fresh, with a creamy house vinaigrette that complimented thick chunks of cucumber and juicy baby tomatoes.

Any delusion I had of eating a "sensible" meal went out the window when I set eyes on The Fourth Bore brownie – an oozing square of just-baked batter sprinkled with sea salt and topped with a massive scoop of vanilla bean ice cream. Few things love each other like molten chocolate and slow-melting ice cream, both of which were gone before I knew it.

As a restaurant that's named after a tunnel, it is only fitting that the brewpub's biggest problem seems to be traffic. Given a little time and experience, that is almost certain to settle down. In the meantime, grab a beer or order some nachos. Make a visit to The Fourth Bore and find something familiar about the new kid in the neighborhood.

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# Bringing Art and Technology into the Spanish Classes at Acalanes

By Diane Claytor



One of the 35 replica paintings by Spanish-speaking artists, along with its QR codes, recently on display at the Acalanes High School library

Photo Diane Claytor

The library at Acalanes High School turned into a mini art gallery for several weeks recently, thanks to the work of the Spanish 3 students and their innovative teachers. A walk around the library gave visitors the opportunity to view replicas of 35 paintings by world-renowned Spanish-speaking artists such as Picasso, Dali, Diego Rivera, Diego Velazquez and Frida Kahlo. "We wanted to reinvigorate the art unit we typically do in Spanish 3 and teach the material in a new way," explained Spanish teacher Heidi Skvarna.

She and her colleagues, Elizabeth Gough and Monika Voellm, came up with the idea of incorporating technology to create an art gallery. "There's really no one place we could see an entire collection of Spanish artists like this," Skvarna continued, "so we developed the

idea of using technology to learn more about specific painters and their works. In the old days, before the surge of technology, this research would have been done using the encyclopedia," she laughingly noted.

The students were assigned specific artists and paintings to research and given certain websites to visit for their information. Once the students gathered their data, they wrote a paragraph, which was graded by their teacher. The students recorded their paragraph, in Spanish, of course, using an app on their iPads. The recording was then uploaded to YouTube. Using another app, students were able to insert an image of the painting, create a website and generate a QR (quick response) code – a square barcode that is readable by imaging devices, such as a camera, using a QR code reader app. Other students, teachers or visitors

could walk around the library, using their smart phone or iPad with a QR reader app, and focus it on the QR code that would take them to each student's website, where they could hear the student talking about the artist and painting being viewed, as if they were in a real museum being guided by a docent.

According to Skvarna, the students loved this assignment. "It was super fun, super successful," she stated. "It was an out-of-the-box assignment that allowed students to delve into the curriculum in a richer, real way. It was a team effort and it's projects like these that excite both the teachers and our students."

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# Sharing the Dream They Dreamed

*Authors of an oral history of the Grateful Dead speak at LLLC*

By Lou Fancher



**THIS IS ALL A DREAM WE DREAMED**

*An Oral History of the Grateful Dead*

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It takes a virtual orchestra of voices to tell the epic, 50-year history of the Grateful Dead. Stories about the legendary band have been told in books, autobiographies, anthologies, documentaries, television specials, fanzines and periodicals, by word-of-mouth and are once again delivered by this anniversary year's spate of authors and books tackling the hefty beast – David Browne's "So Many Roads;" drummer Bill Kreutzmann's memoir, "Deal;" and "The Complete Annotated Grateful Dead Lyrics" are just three

recommended among them.

So it's a distinct pleasure to discover fresh territory to explore and the perfect, comprehensive, near-3D-like coverage provided by "This is All a Dream We Dreamed: An Oral history of the Grateful Dead" (Flatiron Books), by Bay Area archivists and authors Blair Jackson and David Gans.

The authors will discuss and read from their new book at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 7 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

... continued on page B10

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Coldwell Banker, Orinda	Kim Fecteau-Elizabeth H	Norla Torres-Turney	The Crucible
College Money Pros	Kiwanis International, Moraga	Nurtury Preschool	The Hattersleys
College Prep School	Kress Hauri & Larry Jacobs	Oakland Strokes	The Kensington
Computers' Best Friend	Kristi L. Doberenz, D.D.S.	Oakland Zoo	The New Home Company
Concept Builders	Kurt Piper Group	Oakmont of Mariner Point	The Rothenbergs
Concord Antique Faire	Kyle Davis, Stonecastle	Old Firehouse School	The Saklan School
Cooking with Kids Foundation	Lace and Bustle Bridal	Orinda Academy	The Writing Studio
Cougar Football Camp	Lafayette Auto Body, Inc	Orinda Association	The Yarn Boutique
Countrywood Interiors	Lafayette Beauty Store	Orinda Books	Theater View Veterinary Clinic
Cris Maltzman	Lafayette Boy's Basketball	Orinda Chamber of Commerce	Thomas Corbett
Cristina Candelori	Lafayette Care Home	Orinda Classic Car Show	Thomas Romaneck Painting
Cuesta Antiques	Lafayette Chamber of Commerce	Orinda Community Church	Tick Tock Store
Curran & Woolsey	Lafayette Fashionista	Orinda Farmers' Market	Tina Van Arsdale
Dan Rider - Sculpture	Lafayette Homeowners Council	Orinda Junior Women's Club	Tom Stack
Dana Fillingier	Lafayette Motors	Orinda Motors	Total Clean
Dana Green	Lafayette Nursery School	Orinda Optometry Group	Total Integrity Insurance Services
Dana Reedy	Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church	Orinda Taxi	Town Hall Theatre
David Chang	Lafayette Painting	Orinda Theatre Square	Town of Moraga
David Collins Painting	Lafayette Partners in Education	Orinda Village Antiques	Trans Jeweler
David Hoover-Stifel	Lafayette Physical Therapy Inc.	Paddy Kehoe	Treasure Trove
David Pierce	Lafayette Rotary	Pamela Halloran	Tree Sculpture Group
Diablo Aesthetics	Lafayette United Methodist Church	Park Place Wealth Advisors, Inc.	Truitt & White
Diablo Fine Art Gallery	Lamorinda Comforts of Home	Patricia Ames	Trust in Education
Dignity Health	Lamorinda Dental	Patrizia Marrone	UC School of Optometry
Divine Consign	Lamorinda Floors	Patti Camras	UPS Store-Moraga
Don's Football Camp	Lamorinda Rugby	Paul Kephart Master Craftsman	Valerie Durantini
Dr. Do-Eun Lee, MD, FACE	Lamorinda Soccer Club	Perfect Services, LLC	Victoria's Salon
Dr. Mary Smith, DDS	Lamorinda Spirt Van	Piano Studio	Village Associates
Dudum Real Estate Group	Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary Club	Potomac Association	Vino Restaurant
East Bay Eclipse Soccer Club	Lamorinda Theatres	Professional Eyecare Optometry	Virginia Varni-Ratto
East Bay Tree Service	Lamorinda Village	Quinn Berg	Viva l' Espaniol
East Bay Waldorf School	Lamorinda Web	RE/MAX Accord	Vlatka Bathgate
EBMUD	Lana Fitzpatrick	Reflexion Skin Care	Ware Designs
Echo Grove	Land Home Financial	Regina Englehart	Willow Spring Church
Elena Hood	LARC	Reliable Window Cleaning	Zigenis Painting
Entourage Spa & Salon	Lavande	Republic of Cake	(partial list based on revenue /frequency)



# 'Through the Lens of an Artist' Exhibit at THT Gallery

Submitted by JoAnn Lieberman



"Oakland" by JoAnn Lieberman



"Gone" by Shelia Reid



"Spider Web at Night" by Kara Navolio

The Lamorinda Arts Alliance premier photography show, "Through the Lens of an Artist," will run through Feb. 20 at the Town Hall Theatre Gallery in Lafayette. Works by Bill Klaproth, Jan Lainoff, JoAnn Lieberman, Cynthia McLoughlin, Kara Navolio, and Shelia Reid include black and white and color photos inspired by nature, travel and nostalgia.

Klaproth's passion for preservation has taken him to six continents to

witness and photograph the flora, fauna and landscapes that are deemed fragile, threatened and worthy of preserving. Klaproth hopes the special moments he captures on film encourage others to become stewards of our threatened planet.

Lainoff uses photography for a variety of purposes – to capture an image that she will later use in a painting, as an unbiased lens to view the progress of a canvas and as a contemplative study of the faces, figures, tex-

tures and bold lines that dominate both her photographic and mixed-media work.

Lieberman is drawn to the abstract and the history that hides just beneath the surface in the world around her. Her paintings and her photography both celebrate the juxtaposition of old and new – the contrast between a smooth surface and a rough layer of rust and peeling paint, the effects of aging on wood, masonry and metal.

McLoughlin's nostalgic Ferris wheel photos strike a chord with those who fondly remember the county fairs and the amusement parks of youth. "Photography has often been the vehicle I use to capture a moment, composition or color combination as inspiration for my paintings," she says. "But sometimes the composition, quality of light and precise detail make a stronger presentation as a photograph than a painting."

Navolio looks to nature for inspiration in her work, whether it's for subject matter of just for the creative energy that comes from being in nature. "I often take a very close vantage point to zero in on the beauty I see," she says, "whether it's in the vibrant colors or the intricate details created by nature."

For Reid, photography is her way of connecting with the natural world that she loves: "It moves me to get closer, linger longer to simply stay present in that world as she reveals her photogenic wonders." Her passion for photographing the outdoors naturally leads her to travel through rural lands and towns, places she finds compelling to photograph.

The Lamorinda Arts Alliance has been providing art to Town Hall Theatre for over a decade. It is Contra Costa County's biggest venue for emerging artists, hosting between six and eight shows per year.

**Venue:** Town Hall Theatre Gallery, Lafayette  
**Dates:** Now through Feb. 20  
**Hours:** Monday through Friday, 3 to 6 p.m. and one hour before performances  
**Show:** "Through the Lens of an Artist"  
**Price:** Free

## Local Volunteer Business Advisors Boast of One Client's Success

By Sophie Braccini



Larry Tessler Photos provided



Jim Philpot

When Ciara Stockeland, a young entrepreneur from Fargo, North Dakota, was invited in October to the White House to hear President Obama speak and to testify in front of the Senate on behalf of small businesses, Moraga resident Larry Tessler felt like a proud grandfather. Not that the 30-year veteran in corporate retailing has any family relationship with the young mother. But for the past 10 years, he and fellow Score advisor Jim Philpot have been advising Stockeland – starting when she and her husband, Jim, opened their first retail store, then when she developed it into a franchise. Score is a nonprofit organization staffed with high profile, mostly-retired business people who volunteer to offer their expertise to serve others.

In September, prior to her D.C. adventure, Stockeland also received the Score Franchise of the Year award. Tessler feels that Score can offer great service for free to businesses like the Stockelands' across the nation.

"She first approached me via email in December of 2005," said Tessler of Ciara Stockeland. "She was a young mother with two children. She had no success in finding stylish maternity wear in Fargo; she had to go to Minneapolis to buy her clothing. She wanted to open a maternity store, but she had no retail experience." Tessler mentored her along the way as her business evolved into an off-price fashion clothing business.

As her business grew, she established herself as a franchisor. Then Jim Philpot, a Moraga resident as well as a Score colleague, came in and offered his franchising expertise. Mode, Stockeland's store, now has 12 units operating from North Dakota down to Kansas and over to North Carolina. "Jim and I continue to aid her when needed," adds Tessler.

In 2006, Stockeland opened her first retail store, Mama Mia, in Fargo. And in 2007, a company that had a lot of designer cloths overstocked that they needed to liquidate approached Jim Stockeland and Ciara decided to open a second store, Mode, next door to the original Mama Mia. "The consumers in Fargo really liked that outlet deal so in 2008 we decided to merge the two concepts, and bring the outlet into the boutique environment and created Mode as you see it today," Stockeland said in an interview for Score. Tessler says that what makes Stockeland successful is that she had a passion for what she does and the people she meets. Philpot explains her franchising achievement is due to the fact that she picked franchises that were in her image and stuck to the same game plan. "Ciara says that she will have 75 franchises in five years; I believe she can do it," adds Tessler.

The relationship that was set 10 years ago with the volunteer advisors continues today. Ciara Stockeland says that she can go back to Philpot and talk to him about digging into the unit level economics of each of her franchises, making sure that they can grow their businesses the same way they were able to grow the original Mode store. Today she advocates for the franchising model. That is why she testified in front of the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on Oct. 6, asking the committee to support legislation to reverse the National Labor Relations Board's decision to alter the "joint employer" standard for businesses, which will force the Stockelands to take more direct control over employees of the franchisees. This could make small businesses like theirs larger and jeopardize their ability to successfully operate as a franchise business.

For periodic business tips, go to the Score Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/ScoreEastBay/>. Tessler, a Score mentor, can be reached at [larryst39@comcast.net](mailto:larryst39@comcast.net).

## Strange and Silly Sightings on Lamorinda Rooftops and Beyond

By Cathy Dausman

Searching for something out of the ordinary as the year ends? Sometimes you need not look any farther than in Lamorinda's own backyards!



### Rooftop Homage to the Force

Colby Powell's family likes "Star Wars." A lot. Why else would the Lafayette residents have constructed a Death Star atop their house? The show-stopping light show became a media darling in the weeks leading up to the release of the newest installment about a galaxy far, far away.

Photo Cathy Dausman



### Insects on Steroids

Lamorinda Weekly writer Vic Ryerson spotted this overgrown caterpillar "off the beaten track" at the Pease home in Orinda. Perhaps it could be featured in a sequel to author Lewis Carroll's book called "Alice in Lamorinda Land." Another piece of art has a dragonfly adorning an oversized leaf in the Pease's backyard.

Photo Victor Ryerson



### Citrus Fingers

In this Moraga backyard, the art is of a more natural variety. This odd looking citrus looks as if someone gave a lemon a jolt of electricity. The Buddha's fingers, or fingered citron, is nearly all rind. It can be used simply as a good smelling decoration or the rind can be used in cooking or to flavor alcoholic drinks, says Moraga resident Thomas Delfino. Either way, it gives new meaning to ordering a drink with "a twist" of lemon!

Photo Cathy Dausman



## Community Service

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

### Rotary Club of Moraga Gives Christmas Stockings to Children at County Juvenile Hall

Submitted by Gary Irwin



Moraga Rotarians, spouses and friends in the Christmas stocking stuffing line, foreground, from left: Frank May, Mary Caburi, Pam Reneau, Tony Schoemehl, Al Simonsen, Herb Wehmeyer, Ron Mucovich, Rich Render, Kevin Reneau, and president Roger Gregory. Photos Carol Irwin

On Christmas Eve, 170 gift-filled and decorated stockings prepared and contributed by Rotary Club of Moraga were distributed to children confined at the county juvenile hall. The stockings were filled with presents such as candy, a pair of socks, a deck of cards, puzzle books, soaps, shampoos and other cosmetics.

This is the 19th year that Moraga Rotary has provided these stockings, which were cut and sewn by Moraga Rotarians, spouses and friends, and girls at Juvenile Hall participated in the dec-

orating of the stockings with original designs in glitter glue. In previous years, Rotary provided about 280-300 stockings each year, but was pleased to find that fewer children are confined this year.

Rotary Club of Moraga is a local service club within Rotary International, one of about 33,000 Rotary Clubs in about 200 countries. Regular meetings are held on most Tuesdays at the Soda Center at Saint Mary's College. For information, call Frank May at (925) 376-8195, or check out [moragarotary.org](http://moragarotary.org).



Moraga Rotarians, spouses and friends relax after stuffing gifts into the Christmas stockings to be given to children at the county juvenile hall.

### Gifts Collected for Foster Children

Submitted by Steve Maita



Photo provided

The Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage Orinda office geared up for its annual "Adopt-an-Angel!" Sales Associate Gift Drive, benefitting Contra Costa County foster children.

The office collected gifts for over 70 local foster kids ranging in age from 6 to 18. Tracey Fordahl, marketing coordinator at the Orinda office, is pictured with the gifts.

### Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to [storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com), and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

### Garden Club Members Share the Spirit of the Season

Submitted by Karin Biasotti



Moraga Garden Club members, from left: Elaine Frazel, Jane Magnani, Linda Foley, president Ginny Ruble, Karen Chin and Ginger Thompson. Photo Ute Kelly

The holiday spirit was in the air at the Moraga Garden Club's annual holiday luncheon Dec. 17 at Diablo Country Club, where guests were treated to a flower arranging demonstration by Baylor Chapman, owner of Lila B Design of San Francisco and author of "The Plant Recipe Book," whose creations were raffled off to lucky winners. The luncheon tables were decorated with beautiful centerpieces, each unique and made by Garden Club members.



Jane Magnani, winner of one of Baylor Chapman's flower arrangements.

### Orinda Academy Service Projects Benefit the Community

Submitted by Laura Turnbull



Smiles abounded following a successful Orinda Academy toy drive

Photos provided



Orinda Academy Environmental Science teacher Vicky Guarracino led students on a field trip Dec. 17 hosted by the East Bay Municipal Utility District to plant trees to help restore and rehabilitate the watershed.

the film "Girl Rising." Dylan explains, "To us a bottle is a piece of trash. To a girl in the developing world, money earned from recycling that single bottle can mean a step towards a brighter future."

The Orinda Academy Community Action Club conducted a shoe drive, collecting 108 pairs of shoes to benefit Soles4Souls ([soles4souls.org](http://soles4souls.org)), a global nonprofit that provides shoes for people in need in 127 countries. The club also collected 156 toys and \$160 in cash donations for the Central American Refugee Committee (CRECE). The toys will be distributed to children of refugee families from Central American countries living in Oakland.

On Dec. 17, Environmental Science teacher Vicky Guarracino led students on a field trip hosted by the East Bay Municipal Utility District where students planted buckeye and willow trees to help restore former pasturelands and rehabilitate the watershed along a creek. Freshman Emma summed up the experience: "It's so cool because we are actually helping to create a habitat and restoring it for animals that couldn't live there before." Freshman Alex added, "And we got to keep a cow skull that we found!"

On the last day of school before the holiday break, students and staff members created handmade holiday cards and baked and decorated cookies and delivered them to residents of the Orinda Rehabilitation and Convalescent Hospital, just down the street from the school. Students and staff visited with residents and had had a great time delivering goodies. Sophomore Joseph enthused, "It was great! It just makes me feel so good. It really wasn't much, but sometimes the littlest things can really make someone's day."

"I'm so proud of our students, and in particular, (of) their initiative and hard work," said Ron Graydon, head of school. "All of this charitable work is organized and carried out by students. There is such a strong spirit of giving and caring about others among our students and their families here at Orinda Academy. Their energy and hard work is really impressive."

Students and staff of Orinda Academy have demonstrated the spirit of the holiday season by participating in several service projects and activities during the months of November and December.

In November, students and staff donated non-perishable food items and filled large bins with 395 pounds of food donations and \$210 in cash that will benefit families in need in Contra Costa County. The food will be distributed by the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

For a community service project to benefit The Malala Fund ([www.malala.org](http://www.malala.org)), a nonprofit established by Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai, Orinda Academy senior Dylan created a bottle drive, Nickels4Knowledge ([www.nickels4knowledge.org](http://www.nickels4knowledge.org)), which benefits organizations that provide educational opportunities for girls. Each bottle collected throughout the school year represents a nickel for the organization, and has netted \$80 to date. Dylan was inspired to create this project after watching



# How to Know When You Don't Know

## New OLLI class at LLC traces evolution of knowledge and thought

By Franette Armstrong



From left: Didier de Fontaine, Ph.D., and Yan Linhart, Ph.D., teaching for OLLI

What does it mean that earth is not the center of the universe? That our universe is 14 billion years old? That the environment and its inhabitants are constantly changing? Why should we care?

According to Didier de Fontaine, professor emeritus in materials sciences at UC Berkeley, "90 percent of what the average person knows about any field of science is pure rubbish," and that, he says, is dangerous. "It leads to big mistakes we can't afford to make. None of us can know everything but we can know what makes sense and what doesn't. We can know how to find out and we can know what questions to ask."

In his new UC Berkeley Osher Lifelong Learning Institute course, "Scientific Revolution and Evolution," beginning Jan. 26 at Lafayette Library and Learning Center, participants examine the changing thinking in fields as far-flung as cosmology and evolutionary biology with the goal of understanding how any of it relates to problems facing human survival.

"What do new technologies like gene splicing mean to the individual? To society? To the human race?" Dr. de Fontaine asks. "And does knowing about it matter?"

In the class, co-taught with Yan Linhart, professor emeritus in biology at the University of Colorado, the simple processes of evolution of knowledge as well as species are examined to see their complicated consequences.

Dr. de Fontaine was born in

the Belgian embassy in Cairo and didn't go to school until he was 9, when he and his father came to Washington, D.C. Before that he was home-schooled, which gave him the freedom to explore his early bent toward science.

After returning to Belgium for high school, college and a master's degree in engineering, he realized he didn't enjoy engineering and wanted to do research. "I was never interested in building the better mousetrap," he said. "I was a theoretician, not an inventor. I believe if you know more, you can do more and understand more, which eventually might

lead to better mousetraps.

"A friend said, 'Come to the Congo. We need a metallurgy professor,' and off my wife and I went." There he learned of a position at Northwestern University in the brand-new field of materials science. "They replied to my letter with 'When can you start,'" and that gave him his Ph.D. and a 30-year career that spanned Bell Labs, Lawrence Berkeley Lab and teaching positions at UCLA and then UC Berkeley.

After he retired from teaching at UC Berkeley, de Fontaine found himself attending astronomy seminars "just for fun," and his OLLI lectures grew out of that fascination. He met Linhart at a French Club dinner in Berkeley and convinced him to collaborate. This will be their second OLLI course.

In addition to teaching, de Fontaine is writing a book on thermodynamics. He travels to Belgium each year to visit family and attend the Queen Elisabeth competition in classical music.

### New OLLI Classes in Lafayette

Four new six-week courses from UC Berkeley's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute begin Jan. 26 at Lafayette Library and Learning Center. There will be a free Info Session with faculty from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 7 in the Library's Community Room.

**Short Stories of Franz Kafka** analyzes and interprets the horrific and comic short stories of Franz Kafka, one of the most enigmatic writers of his time. Taught by poet and UC Berkeley professor John Campion. Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

**Scientific Revolution and Evolution** explores the revolutionary nature of what we know today using examples from astronomy (the notion of the multiverse), anthropology (human evolution), and evolutionary biology. Co-taught by professors Yan Linhart and Didier de Fontaine. Tuesdays from 1 to 3 p.m.

**How the Brain Works and When It Doesn't, Part 2** describes how nerve cells and neural networks affect both normal and diseased brain function and how new technologies are improving our understanding. No prerequisite. Taught by Peter Ralston, professor emeritus in anatomy at UCSF. Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon.

**Italy and Ideas** looks at great literary works from Syracuse, Florence, Ferrara, Venice, Milan, and Naples to understand their rich history and heritage as well as the cultural formation of individual Italians. Taught by author, playwright and professor Beverly Allen. Thursdays from 1:15 to 3:45 p.m.

For more information, visit [olli.berkeley.edu](http://olli.berkeley.edu) or call (510) 642-9934.

# Student Loans That Make Sense

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

Student loans are often viewed negatively because they are associated with the rising cost of higher education. Yet many students could not go to college without the help of a loan. If you choose and use a loan judiciously, it can build a sound credit history, add value to your life now and help you prepare for your future. It is common for many families who have the ability to pay full college costs to include a loan in their plan to fund college so the student can be a stakeholder in his or her own education. Other families do so to relieve the strain of high tuition payments, even if they do not qualify for need-based financial aid.

Federally-funded student loans come in two forms: Direct Subsidized Loans and Direct Unsubsidized Loans. Direct Subsidized Loans are available only to undergraduate students with "demonstrated financial need." Direct Unsubsidized Loans are available to all undergraduate students, regardless of need. With Direct Subsidized Loans, the federal government pays the interest while a student is in school. With Direct Unsubsidized Loans students and parents must pay the interest while the student is in school.

According to the U.S Department of Education, dependent undergraduate students and their families may not borrow more than \$31,000 in total in Direct Subsidized and Direct Unsubsidized Loans as they pursue their degree. No more than \$23,000 of this amount may be in Direct Subsidized Loans.

The interest rate on the Direct Student Loan Program is fixed for the

current year at 4.29 percent. Student loan interest rates are tied to the 10-year Treasury bill and are expected to rise in future years. A handy tool to estimate the annual salary one needs to pay back a specific amount of loan can be found at <http://www.finaid.org/calculators/loanpayments.phtml>. For example, if a student accrued a debt of \$27,000, he or she would have to earn just over \$33,000 annually to make a monthly payment of about \$280 over a 10-year time span.

The Department of Education provides very clear guidelines to the affordability of college and reasonable levels of college debt at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/loans/subsidized-unsubsidized%20-%20subsidized-vs-unsubsidized>.



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

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**mvpc**

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Sundays, January 3 & 10

10 Moraga Valley Lane | www.mvpc.today.org | 925.376.4800

**ORINDA CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH**  
24 Orinda Way (next to the Library) - 254-4212

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Informal Wednesday Meeting 7:30 - 8:30 pm  
Reading Room/Bookstore M - F 11 - 4; Sat 11 - 2

www.christianscienceorinda.org

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**Sundays:** 9:15am Adult Sunday School Classes  
10:15am Pre-Service Fellowship (Free Coffee & Bagels)  
10:45am Contemporary Worship Service

**Wednesdays:** 10:00am Community Bible Study  
1689 School Street, Moraga (925) 376-3550  
www.willowspringchurch.net

**Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church**  
433 Moraga Way, Orinda, 254-3422  
www.holyshepherd.org

**WORSHIP JANUARY 3, 2016**  
Single Service at 9:30 a.m.  
Childcare available for ages 5 and younger

**WORSHIP JANUARY 10, 2016**  
8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship  
9:40 a.m. Education for all ages  
10:45 a.m. Contemporary Worship  
Coffee Fellowship at 9:30 and 11:45 a.m.

**St Stephen's Episcopal Church**  
66 St. Stephen's Drive, Orinda  
254-3770. www.ststephensorinda.org  
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955 Moraga Rd., Lafayette  
284-4765, office@thelumc.org, thelumc.org

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**Children & Teen Faith Formation** Sunday 10 am  
**Teen Fellowship** Sunday 6 pm

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

### ART

**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.

**"Intercepting Light: The Mind's Eye" at the Moraga Art Gallery.** The Moraga Art Gallery kicks off the new year with an exhibit of eye-catching landscapes by photographer Wenda Pymman, whose work calls to mind such masters as Ansel Adams and Eliot Porter. The show, which includes paintings, ceramics, jewelry, and more by the gallery's 15 member artists and several guest artists, runs from Jan. 13 to March 19. The public is invited to an opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 16. "Yellowstone: Beauty, Beasts, and Boneyards," which runs through Jan. 9, 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. For more information, visit www.moragaart-gallery.com or call (925) 376-5407.

**The Lamorinda Arts Alliance invites you to its premier photography show at Town Hall Theatre Gallery in Lafayette.** The new show, which features six local photographers, will run through Feb. 20. Works include black and white and color photos inspired by nature, travel and nostalgia. For more information contact JoAnn Lieberman, THT Curator at olabambola@sbcglobal.net. (See story page B5)

### MUSIC

**Audition for WomenSing by appointment on Jan. 5.** All voice parts are welcome. Scholarships are available for qualified singers. Our 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 21-28, participating in the Alta Pusteria International Choral Festival. For info, email audition@womensing.org, or go to womensing.org.

**Under Arrest: Tales of Classical Music's Most Notorious Felons.** Although the connection between classical music and notorious crimes may seem obscure, Gold Coast Chamber Players' Crime and Punishment will expose the criminal lives of Bach, Gesualdo, and others. Soprano Christine Brandes will be highlighted in a program for strings, voice and harpsichord. The concert will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Jan. 23 (pre-concert talk at 7 p.m.) at the Lafayette Library Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. Tickets and information: www.gcplayers.org, (925) 283-3728

### THEATER

**"Beyond the Horizon" will be presented in a staged reading as part of the Eugene O'Neill Foundation's Playwrights' Theatre series at 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 9 and 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 10 at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, 205 Railroad Avenue, in Danville.** Reservations are available online at www.eugeneoneill.org, or by phone at (925) 820-1818. Tickets: \$25.

### LECTURE & LITERATURE

**Moraga Movers and the Moraga Library present Book Talking at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 13.** Author Christopher Gortner will discuss his novel, Mademoiselle Chanel, a creative reimagining of the life of iconic fashion designer Coco Chanel.

**An Educational Happy Hour. All teachers and librarians from public and private schools are invited to a special event just for them at 4 p.m.**

Thursday, Jan. 14 at Orinda Books. Orinda Books staff will feature some of the exciting new titles coming out this spring and will also discuss what the bookstore can do to help teachers and librarians in their programs – by arranging author visits to schools, for example. Also highlighted will be what Orinda Books offers in discounts for teachers and librarians when purchasing books for school use. Refreshments will be served. For info, visit www.orindabooks.com.

**A free lecture series, "Shared Humanity, Different Faiths" will be presented by Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, at 433 Moraga Way, Orinda from 7 to 8 p.m. Wednesday evenings beginning Jan. 6 with Dr. David Matsumoto (Buddhism), followed by Rabbi Mates-Mushin (Judaism) on Jan. 13; Professor Ali Ataie (Islam) on Jan. 20; Father Nicholas Borzghol (Orthodox) on Jan. 27; Dr. Kyle Schiefelbein (Lutheran) on Feb. 3.** Add to your understanding of current events. All are welcome.

**This is All a Dream We Dreamed: An Oral History of the Grateful Dead.** Authors Blair Jackson and David Gans, who chronicled oral history of the 50-year-old band using multiple perspectives to tell the story of a group that began as a San Francisco jug band of penniless hippies, morphed through multiple musical incarnations, and created a colorful psychedelic subculture, will speak at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 7 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. The more than 100 voices in the book include members of the Dead, including deceased guitarist/de facto leader Jerry Garcia, and keyboardists Ron Pigpen, McKernan and Brent Mydland and their collaborators as well as business partners and fans. Cost: \$15 general admission; \$10 current LLLCF donors (please call (925) 283-6513); \$35 reserved seat and a copy of "This is all a Dream We Dreamed." (See story page B3)

### 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. 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) 376-6852 with any questions.

**Acalanes High School Parent Education Event: Harmful Stress and Its Impact on Teen Health at 7 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 7 in the Acalanes Performing Arts Centre (PAC).** In conjunction with the first annual "Green Ribbon Day" for mental health awareness at school, the Acalanes Parent Club, Wellness Committee will host a panel discussion of presenters. Each presenter will give a brief introduction of their background and the work they do in the community to alleviate teen stress. This will then be followed by an interactive panel discussion with questions raised from the audience. Tickets are \$11.49 via Eventbrite and proceeds will support the work of the Acalanes Parents Club Wellness Committee. This event is open to all AUHSD High Schools, Stanley Middle School Parents/Teachers/Staff and interested members of the local Lamorinda and Walnut Creek community.

**Practice SAT - The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Scholarship Committee has scheduled two tests for 8:30 a.m. check-in, one on Jan. 30 at Miramonte High School in Orinda, and the other on Feb. 20 at Campolindo High School in Moraga.** A week or so later, parents and students return to receive their scores and participate in an interpretive discussion. Space is limited; register today! Cost: \$35. For more information and to register for the test, visit the website at Miramonte: oml-ca.aauw.net/mhs/ or at Campolindo: oml-ca.aauw.net/chs/.

### OTHER

**Valley Stitchers and Fiber Artists Guild will hold their first meeting of**

2016 at 9:30 a.m. Monday, Jan. 4 featuring guest speaker Susan Lane, a textile artist who uses fabric to create pictorial or abstract images, at Faith Lutheran Church, 50 Woodsworth Lane, Pleasant Hill. Texture, color and movement inspire her work. Visitors are always welcome. Admission: \$5/person.

**Pink Fitness Night Out from 6:30 to 8 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 6 at NextBarre Lafayette 3471 Mt. Diablo Blvd.** Learn about the benefits of exercise and healthy nutrition in decreasing breast cancer recurrence. Enjoy a demonstration of Pink Ribbon Pilates, a new exercise program specifically for women who have had breast cancer. Speakers will include Leslie Jerge, certified pilates instructor, Tiffany Svahn, MD, breast cancer specialist and Tinrin Chew, RD, oncology nutritionist. Space is limited, please RSVP to Leslie@nextbarre.com.

**Medical Qi Gong is an internal Chinese meditative practice that uses slow graceful movements and controlled breathing techniques to promote the circulation of Qi within the body and enhance overall health.** The exercises are not physically demanding and can be easily learned to achieve relaxation, concentration and breathing. Wear loose, comfortable clothing and supportive tennis shoes with smooth soles for this class. This class will be led by Dr. Alex Feng, PhD, OMD, LAC, a renowned Qi Gong Master and teacher. The classes run from 6:30 to 8 p.m. on Tuesdays at the Herrick Campus, Maffly Auditorium, 2001 Dwight Way in Berkeley. Please call (510) 204-4785 for information (free valet parking is available).

**The League of Women Voters of Diablo Valley presents its monthly Saturday program and discussion about Water – Our Precious Resource by watching and discussing the award winning film: "Last Call at the Oasis" from 3 to 4:30 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 16 in the Cedar Room, Lafayette Community Center.** This film examines current water availability and distribution systems and introduces viewers to individuals who are trying to improve access. Learn, discuss and share. Light refreshments served. League and non-League members welcome

### SENIORS

**Mindful Aging at the Moraga Library – Introduction to Tai Chi for Better Balance at 1 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 14.** Cynthia Black, trained in Tai Chi for better balance and certified in Chair Chi, a form of Tai Chi practiced from a chair, will show you how to improve your balance through Tai Chi.

**As this new year begins you may be thinking of activities you would like to pursue.** SIRs Las Trampas Branch 116 welcomes guest to socialize at 11 a.m. Monday, Jan. 18 at its monthly luncheon at the Walnut Creek Elks Lodge, 1475 Creekside Drive, and learn of membership activities, which include book discussions, bridge, computers, dine-outs, dominoes, fishing, golf, hiking/walking, investments, poker, travel, wine tastings and more fun things. For more information about these activities for retired men, visit www.Branch116.org. Call (925) 322-1160 for lunch reservations; cost for lunch is \$15.

**Cooking Basics: Soups and Chowders with Mike Weller, Byron Park Executive Chef and Former Le Cordon Bleu Director of Education from 2 to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 26 at Byron Park, 1700 Tice Valley Blvd, Walnut Creek.** Who doesn't love the smell of a hearty batch of soup simmering on the stovetop? These one-dish meals are the ultimate comfort food on a cold winter's night. Come taste Chef Mike's scrumptious recipes and watch as he demonstrates these easy-to-prepare soups and chowders. Space is limited; reservations required by Wednesday, Jan. 20. Call Lafayette Senior Services: (925) 284-5050. Cost: free for members; \$10 non-members.

... continued on next page



**MOVIE REVIEW**

# 'The Big Short'

By Curtis Medina



Photo Paramount Pictures all rights reserved © 2015

What's a Star Wars? Forget "Star Wars." Rush out and see "The Big Short," a behemoth of a modern disaster film, which depicts actual events that amazingly, unbelievably led to a group of regular financial sector individuals to get filthy rich by betting against the unlikely bubble burst that was inflating the U.S. economy.

One of the best films of the year, "The Big Short" is suspenseful, entertaining and speaks to a wide audience. When I saw the film, I was surprised to find that the audience was split between college age and retirement age, likely skewed by the hotness of the cast (take "hotness" to mean whatever you want). Steve Carell, Ryan Gosling, Christian Bale and one of Ocean's eleven himself, Brad Pitt, lead an all-star cast to show you how greed almost destroyed the world and how the best odds for gambling were not in Vegas robbing a casino. They were betting against powerful individuals and their stupidity.

The film brilliantly calls attention to its own flaws by having characters constantly breaking the fourth wall, talking to the camera and telling the audience, "No, this wasn't really how it happened," and then laughing at the fact you thought it did. By the end, however, when the really dystopian, end of days' stuff starts happening, the film subtly lets you know that this part of the story is 100 percent accurate, leaving the audience dumbstruck.

These guys saw the criminal activity. They saw the callous swindling at all levels. They saw the cover-up. And they did what any American would – they made themselves rich with it.

"The Big Short" is fresh filmmaking, with director Adam McKay not obsessed about being realistic – much of the dialogue is wooden and definitely did not happen – and often using cut-aways with absurd explanations of boring material, like a supermodel in a bubble bath talking "dirty" money with you. And then after the film has baited you with the expected "Oceans Eleven"-style familiar heist trope, it suddenly reveals itself as a serious, morally conscious, entertaining film with performances rising in power at the exact same rate.

Carell will get an Oscar nomination and perhaps a deserving win for playing the cynical, moral center of the film, making you forget he ever made you laugh as a "40 Year Old Virgin" or sitting in "The Office." He is instantly a classic and gives speeches that show off his tremendous growth as an actor over the years.

Others in the cast hold their own, but to a more subdued degree, including Bale, who gave up doing more superhero movies for a change up in roles like this one, where he plays a hot and bothered financial genius who saw it coming first.

Based on a true story, like the film proclaims "The Big Short" has a "bigger impact on your life than the iPhone." Most people were affected by the housing crisis in some way. As the world economies still try to recover, jobs start to rebound, and politicians on both sides of the aisle let those involved go scot-free, the film is a must see. It happened in our own galaxy. There is no sequel. End of franchise.

# Service Clubs Announcements



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

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



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

**January 1:**  
We are Dark.

**January 8:**  
**Jay Lifson**, Executive Director Lafayette Chamber of Commerce will bring us up to date on what's happening.

*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.*

## SOROPTIMIST OF 24/680



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

Please join us for our next meeting:

**WHEN:** Wednesday, January 6<sup>th</sup>  
Social 5:30-6:00 p.m.  
Meeting 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

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

CONTACT US regarding our Crab Feed.  
Saturday, January 23rd

For more information, contact:  
Regina Englehart @925-876-9076  
or go to: [soroptimist24-680.org](http://soroptimist24-680.org)

## Lafayette Rotary Club

**Step in on a Thursday and join us for our lunch meeting.**  
Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

**January 7:**  
Mark Mitchell, Lafayette City Council Member will be speaking about the state of Lafayette.

**January 14:**  
Lois Couch with the Central Contra Costa Waste Authority will be speaking.

[www.rotarylafayette.org](http://www.rotarylafayette.org)

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

### GARDEN

**The Walnut Creek Garden Club will hold its general meeting** at 9:30 a.m. Monday, Jan. 11 at the Gardens at Heather Farm located at 1540 Marchbanks Road in Walnut Creek. Program: "Gardens of Giverny, France." Michael Stehr, art historian and tour guide will take us on a trip to Giverny through his wonderful slide show and lecture on the gardens and Claude Monet's paintings.

**From the Ground Up - Enjoy your garden's bounty** around home and hearth. Reap the benefits of cultivating a garden with a series of inspired classes designed to make green thumbs blossom. The Gardens at Heather Farm's Adult Education series, From the Ground Up continues in 2016 featuring practical lessons on developing gardens, then using the garden's bounty to create table arrangements and specialties for the

home and body. The first class begins Wednesday, Jan. 13. Visit [www.gardensh.org](http://www.gardensh.org) or call (925) 947-1678 for more information. Classes typically range from \$15 to \$30.

**The Lafayette Garden Club monthly meeting** will feature speaker Shari Bashin-Sullivan, who will give a container planting demo/presentation and answer container gardening questions from 9:30 a.m. to noon Thursday, Jan. 14 in the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Hall, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd. To see some of Bashin-Sullivan's projects, visit [www.enchantingplanting.com](http://www.enchantingplanting.com). For info, email [cpoetzsch@gmail.com](mailto:cpoetzsch@gmail.com).

**Montelindo Garden Club's next meeting featuring** speaker Sarah Malone, who will discuss Form and Foliage at 9 a.m. Friday, Jan. 15 at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephens Drive, Orinda. Visitors welcome. For info, visit [www.montelindogarden.com](http://www.montelindogarden.com).

**Mt Diablo Nursery Winter Pruning Class** will provide an informative, interactive pruning demonstration of fruit trees, roses and perennials by an experienced nurseryman who will answer pruning questions from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 16 at 3295 Mt Diablo Blvd Lafayette. Free. For info, visit [mtdiablonursery.com](http://mtdiablonursery.com) or call (925) 283-3830.

**The Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center** is accepting applications for individual or family memberships for the 2016 season. The season opening is March 12. If you are interested in getting more information, visit [www.lafayettcommunitygarden.org](http://www.lafayettcommunitygarden.org). To apply for membership, download and fill out a membership form and send it to the address on the form. If membership is full, you will be put on a waiting list. For info, call (925) 946-0563.

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

## Lamorinda Weekly

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## In Memory

### John Sherry Resident of Lafayette, CA



John Sherman Sherry of Lafayette, Calif., loving husband, father and grandfather passed away on the morning of December 12 at the young age of 77 years.

John was married to his wife of 48 years, Arletta, with whom he had two boys, Erik and Kris. Always a family man, John looked forward to long weekends outdoors where he fished, hunted, camped and, most

importantly, spent time with family.

"Papa Sherry" took extreme pride in his two grandchildren – Addisyn, 3 years old, and Colton, 5 months – and took every opportunity to play silly games and to have fun with them.

John was passionate about life. He loved his family. He loved his friends. He never took a day for granted and managed to find the silver lining in every situation. John would not want us to cry because we are sad, but to laugh and remember all the wonderful memories we shared of him.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you make a donation of your time or money to your favorite charity or to the Lafayette Rotary Club where John was a past-president and active member.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 2 p.m. Friday, January 15 at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church. Reception will follow.

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



# A Warm and Welcome Fish Dish for the New Year

By Susie Iventosch



Mahi-mahi with an herb-macadamia nut panko crust, served with browned-butter butternut squash and roasted Brussels sprouts  
Photo Susie Iventosch

Over Thanksgiving weekend, we had the good fortune to visit dear friends whom we had not seen in years. It was a wonderful reunion and, as per usual, Bob and Prudy served us a delicious homemade meal for lunch. On the day's menu was a beautiful broccoli salad along with a very tasty dish of grouper, baked with a macadamia nut-panko crust. It was fabulous!

Prudy is an amazing and creative cook, always using herbs, fruits and vegetables from her garden. I must say, they have a

most unusual yard for Arizona, as it is filled with some 28 different types of citrus trees, a fig tree, as well as other fruit trees, herb gardens and plenty of rose bushes. I had never seen anything quite like it in all of my Arizona travels. And, because we were in Arizona, where the days are almost always filled with sunshine, we dined outside in this lush paradise. Prudy was happy to share the recipe for us to try and since I was not able to get grouper last week, Prudy suggested using mahi-mahi instead and it was perfect.

## Macadamia-nut panko-crusted Mahi-Mahi

(Serves 4)

### INGREDIENTS

#### Fish

4 mahi-mahi filets (about 1/2 pound each)  
1/3 cup fresh squeezed lemon juice  
1-2 tablespoons olive oil  
1/4 teaspoon granulated garlic  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
1/4 cup white wine

#### Crust

1 1/2 cups panko (bread crumbs)  
1/2 cup macadamia nuts, coarsely chopped (I used dry roasted)  
1/4 cup grated Parmesan  
3 tablespoons finely minced parsley  
3 basil leaves, finely minced  
2 springs thyme, minced  
2 springs rosemary, minced  
4 tablespoons butter, melted (browned butter is very good for this recipe, too)

### DIRECTIONS

Rinse fish and squeeze lemon juice over. Marinate about 20 minutes. Drain lemon juice from fish and pat dry. Line a baking dish with foil. Place fish, skin side down, on top of the foil. Brush tops of filets with olive oil and season with garlic, salt and pepper.

Meanwhile, mix panko with Parmesan, herbs, and macadamia nuts. Drizzle melted butter over panko mixture and mix well. (If you want to use browned butter, simply melt the butter over medium-low heat, and cook until bubbly and crystals begin to form and butter turns golden-brown in color.)

Distribute panko-nut mixture evenly over the top of each filet. Pour wine in the bottom of the baking dish.

Bake at 350F for approximately 30 minutes, or until fish is done and topping begins to brown. If it seems to be taking too long, seal foil over fish to steam, and then open foil and broil for a minute or two to brown crust.

## Roasted Butternut Squash with Browned Butter and Cranberries

### INGREDIENTS

1 large butternut squash, peeled, seeded and cut into approximately one-inch cubes  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
Salt and pepper, to taste  
1/2 cube browned butter  
1/2 cup Craisins or dried cranberries

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 425F. Toss butternut squash with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Spread squash out on a baking sheet (prepared with cooking spray) and bake for approximate 10 to 15 minutes until al dente and knife pierces easily. Remove from oven.

Meanwhile, melt butter in a sauce pan over medium-low heat and allow to continue to cook slowly for about 10 minutes, or until crystals form and butter turns golden brown in color. Remove from heat and set aside.

These two steps can be done ahead of time.

When ready to serve, sprinkle cranberries among squash pieces and toss all with browned butter. Heat in 425F oven for about 5-7 minutes longer, or until heated through, and serve.

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. **This recipe can be found on our website:** www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.



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

## Sharing the Dream They Dreamed

Not unlike stumbling upon a great, new indie band that stirs up insider memories related to your favorite 1960s or 70s rock 'n' roll band, the 512-page book delivers an oral history from within the Dead enclave. Capturing the band's essential aura through the words of band members and their collaborators is riveting, even for readers who don't claim to be Deadheads. The myths and magnetism that drew a dedicated fan base is illustrated through interviews with over 100 people, including unofficial leader Jerry Garcia, drummer Mickey Hart, concert promoter Bill Graham, Carolyn "Mountain Girl" Garcia, band member Bob Weir and others. Braided into the disparate, personal accounts with clarity and an admirable lack of hyperbole, given their backgrounds as Dead aficionados, Jackson and Gans insert fact-laden bridges to bolster an engrossing narrative.

Jackson ("Grateful Dead Gear; Garcia: An American Life," and others) covered the band for

over 25 years and co-wrote with his wife, Regan Jackson, "The Golden Road," a Dead fanzine published from 1984 to 1993. Gans, a musician and author ("Conversations with the Dead" and others), produces and hosts the nationally syndicated radio show, "The Grateful Dead Hour."

For readers of the new book, Dead fan or not, the band's influence on sound technology alone is fascinating. The introduction of 16-track demo tapes, noise-canceling headphones, a massive, 604-speaker "Wall of Sound" developed in 1974 that transformed stadium concerts, and more—reveal the impact that a group of motley (and mostly) guys in T-shirts have had on an art form.

For people who prefer drama, the internal tensions and traumas of a culture that included psychedelic drugs, radical improvisation, on-purpose "pirating" of concerts and big egos mixed with artists who just wanted to pick up guitars or drumsticks and do their thing are presented in a stew of a

story that never gets muddled. From a literary standpoint, Jackson and Gans have as fine an ear as members of a band. They are skilled at selecting the most potent voice to tell a story. Arranging the precise transitional phrase of one person's perspective to juxtapose the next voice, the underlying thread is never lost or ragged. The effect is similar to surround sound, causing history and "characters" to leap off the page in organic, believable fashion.

"As with every book I've written, it was too long at the start," says Jackson. "It was an ambitious canvas. At some point, it occurred to us that our editor wouldn't print an over-1,000-page book."

Winnowing the interviews was a smooth, yearlong process involving Google Docs. The two authors, who live only four doors apart near Lake Merritt in Oakland, sometimes worked simultaneously on the same document. "I'd be plugging things in and

see, oh, there's David," Jackson says. The final determinations were made sitting side-by-side and took approximately one month to complete. Jackson says the greatest challenge was "not thinking about everything we didn't cover or had to leave out." Candid inclusion of the darker, most tragic elements — band members' professional disputes, Garcia's addiction that ultimately ended his life Aug. 9, 1995, financial mismanagement and more — was guided by a philosophical approach he equates to "not glossing over history."

The most distinctive pruning adhered to one idea: keep the music central. For that reason, the chronicle picks up in 1965 and concludes in 1995. "We decided from the get-go, we weren't going into people's personal lives," says Jackson. "This is not the sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll history at all. This has nuance and shades of personal stories, but it's not designed to tell a linear story in a detailed way." The post-Gar-

... continued from page B3

cia history, he says, is equally sordid and strange. "It's a can of worms and doesn't have to do with the Grateful Dead except it's a part of their legacy. There's probably a book in that, but I'm not going to be the one to write it."

This year's "Fare Thee Well" anniversary tribute event bloomed from three performances planned for Chicago's Soldier Field into an additional two warm-up shows at Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara and a pay-per-view simulcast that dwarfed any music event to date. Estimated revenue was \$55 million, even before CDs and DVDs were released. All of which is to say that a 1995-to-now book, if handled with equal skill, would likely be a strong seller.

Asked what people can expect at the library event, Jackson answered as expected. "David will play a few songs. We'll talk about the book. After that, we'll wing it, in the Grateful Dead tradition."

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# LAMORINDA SPORTS



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## Campolindo Comes up Short in Bid to Repeat as State Champs

By Karl Buscheck



Campolindo fans braved the cold and rain to support their team.

Photo Gina Arico-Smith

The no names finally met their match, as La Mirada barged past Campolindo 27-3 in the CIF state Division III-AA title game on Dec. 19. It was a match that head coach Kevin Macy believed his squad never should have faced.

"We felt like we were just coming down here for their coronation," Macy said of the new CIF bowl system which pitted his no names – a reference to the Cougars' lack of star power compared to last season's state cham-

pion team – against a Division I opponent. "But we took our medicine. We came down. But there's just some realities that go with this."

Even though the DIII Cougars had to travel to Southern California to take on La Mirada on their home field on a rainy night, the game began in promising fashion for the visitors.

Near the end of the first quarter Campo snagged a 3-0 lead when senior Matthew Blair connected on a 22-yard field goal.

That early kick would not be indicative of what was to come, however, as La Mirada kept the Cougars off the board the rest of the night.

The rain didn't help either, as the early downpour waterlogged the team's footballs and bogged down the usually high-powered aerial attack.

"All of a sudden, it just changed the whole game," Macy said after Campo tallied just 100 yards in the air.

The rain wasn't nearly as

problematic for La Mirada, as the hosts – who only completed two passes – relied on a relentless running game. Entering the contest, the Matadores averaged 221 yards per game on the ground.

Overall, Macy was impressed with his team's efforts to stifle La Mirada's rushers.

"That's where we had some great success. I would say if they ran 50 times, we virtually stuffed 40 of them," Macy said. "And really, it just came down to the law of averages. They were finally going to break one on us. That's what happens when you're playing out of your class. Eventually, something's going to break."

That big break came on the first play of the second half. Trailing 7-3 at the time, Campo gave up a 75-yard rushing touchdown. It was the first of three second-half rushing scores that would seal La Mirada's win and spoil the Cougars' bid to become the fourth team to win back-to-back state titles since the bowl system was introduced in 2006.

Despite the staggering recent success of the program – the Cougars are in the midst of a 65-6 run – Macy deflected when asked about the topic.

"I don't look at like the overall record or things like that," Macy said. "I just look more at what these kids did as their group."

In the closing minutes of the bowl game, Macy took the opportunity to salute his seniors, subbing them off one at a time so that he could say goodbye to each player individually.

"I just wanted our seniors to get the proper tribute that they deserved," Macy said. "Those seniors, they fought so hard this year so I wanted to make sure everyone in those stands knew what this group of seniors meant to this community."

Ultimately, Macy had to call back-to-back timeouts to make sure everyone received the proper sendoff.

"Some of the kids didn't want to come off. Jack Cassidy and some of the kids did not want to come off. So I had to take another timeout to make sure that they did come off. So that they would be able to get the recognition from all their fans and the parents and everyone who came down and all the coaches."

"So it was just something we had to do at the end of the night."



Quarterback Jacob Westphal (12) rolls out of the pocket.

Photo Gina Arico-Smith



Seniors Sterling Strother (74) and Wyatt McNeil (64)

Photo Justin Targett

## LMSC U11 Boys Win NorCal State Cup

Submitted by Angelo Artale



Roster: Andrew Huchingson, Saylen Cardoni, Trevor Rogers, Aaron Alvira, Charlie Hill, Marco Green, Zack Donovan, Henry Souza, Cole Davidson, Adrian Artale, Jack Alcalay, Graham Ballantyne, Finn Lutton, Nasen Alm, Diego Heredia, and Luke Olsen. Coach: Alex Sanchez. Photo provided

On Dec. 6, 2015, the Lamorinda Soccer Club U11 Boys Navy team won the NorCal State Cup (Manteca, Calif.) for the second year in a row. They defeated Mill Valley Soccer Club Fusion Red 05 2-1. In

the championship match, the boys started with a strong first half, marked by a goal from Jack Alcalay, who put the ball in the net off an assist from Saylen Cardoni. Mill Valley then knotted it up at 1-1, giving their fans

hope for a comeback. In the second half, however, LMSC's Finn Lutton sealed the match with another goal. Winning the Diamond 3 Champion category is yet another sign of the growth and continuity of the team.



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## Cal Magic U10 East Win Tournament

Submitted by C. Joyce



Top, from left: Anjali Grimaud, Grace Imrie, Mira Patel, Delaney Joyce, Victoria Alessandrini and Coach Michael Jacobs. Bottom: Colette Toubba, Lola Kassela, Avery Ives, Christina McDonnell. Not pictured: Ainsley Johnson and Brooklyn McAlpin Photo provided

The California Magic U10 East soccer team finished their season with a tournament victory in the Flamingo Division at the Juventus Coppa D'Oro Tournament. The girls won their first game 4-0, tied the second

game 2-2, and won their third game 3-0 to clinch a spot in the finals (in very cold and rainy conditions). The final game went into overtime and a goal by Victoria Alessandrini clinched the tournament, a 2-1 victory.

## Pacific Rim Volleyball 14U Finish Third in Regional Championships

Submitted by Paula Pollock



Front row, from left: Justin Lineweaver, Miks Ramanis, Max Grigoriev, Josh Ewert Second Row: Jeremy Enriquez, Daniel Goncharov, Jarod Jatoft, Trevor Lau Third Row: Austin Kinnear, Ben Blakely, Erik Nilsson Back: Blake Pollock Photo Provided

It was a strong end to the NCVA season for the Pacific Rim Boys 14U team. Made up of boys from age 12-14, this young team came together in the end in San Mateo at the NCVA Regional Championships Dec. 19-20. They were seeded 7th going into the weekend and rose to take third place. They had the added motivation of some of last year's national champions cheering from their bench who were home from college. These boys have learned much from head coach Roger Worsely who has taken multiple teams to win National Championships. Most

of the 14U boys had club experience going into this season, but this year they learned to run advanced level plays, passing and positioning. Over winter break, they are preparing for the Far Western Bid Tournament in San Mateo Jan. 9-10 with their eye on a national bid. Many of this team's boys are Lamorinda residents and play for local middle schools, including: Blake Pollock, Ben Blakely, Justin Lineweaver, and Austin Kinnear. Both Campolindo and Acalanes boys' Volleyball teams will benefit from their talent in the coming years.

## Orinda Thunder 5-6 Grade Boys Win LMYA Commissioner's Cup

Submitted by Judy McNeil



From left: Alex Fordyce, Ben Torres, Inigo Barrutieta, Aaron Lee, Coach Andrew Lee, Kyle Harvey, Alex Kohr, Coach Chinh Vo, Dalai Vo, Clemens Van Dongen, Thomas Nelson, Wayne Jackson, Jack Lenny Not Pictured: Malcom Kiss, Siavash Mojaddidi, Steven Staelin Photo provided

## Eclipse Soccer: Coming to a High School Near You

Submitted by Luis Pinto



Eclipse players from Campolindo and Miramonte come together after battling in a high school game. Photo Luis Pinto

East Bay Eclipse Soccer Club players are competing with and against each other this winter on high school soccer fields. One hundred seven Eclipse players

will suit up for their high school soccer teams this fall, making it the most highly represented soccer club in Lamorinda high schools.

## Local Seniors Populate NorCal All-Star Game

Submitted by Noel Murphy



On Sunday, Dec. 13, several Lamorinda seniors competed in the annual Northern California Senior All Star Game. The boys' team, coached by Campo's Miles Price, won 23-17, while the girls, coached by Miramonte's Noel Murphy, suffered a narrow loss 10-9. Local players included: Max Murphy (Miramonte), Brendon Supple (Acalanes), Tommy Fellner (Acalanes), Jack Winther (Acalanes), Cole Stevens (Campolindo), Yuri Hanley (Campolindo), Alex Zamanian (Miramonte), Tomer Schmoisman (Miramonte), Nikhil Suri (Campolindo), Hannah Kresnak (Acalanes), Brooke Alsterland (Acalanes), Emma Myal (Acalanes), Hayley Eberle (Miramonte), Ellen Gerst (Campolindo). Photos provided

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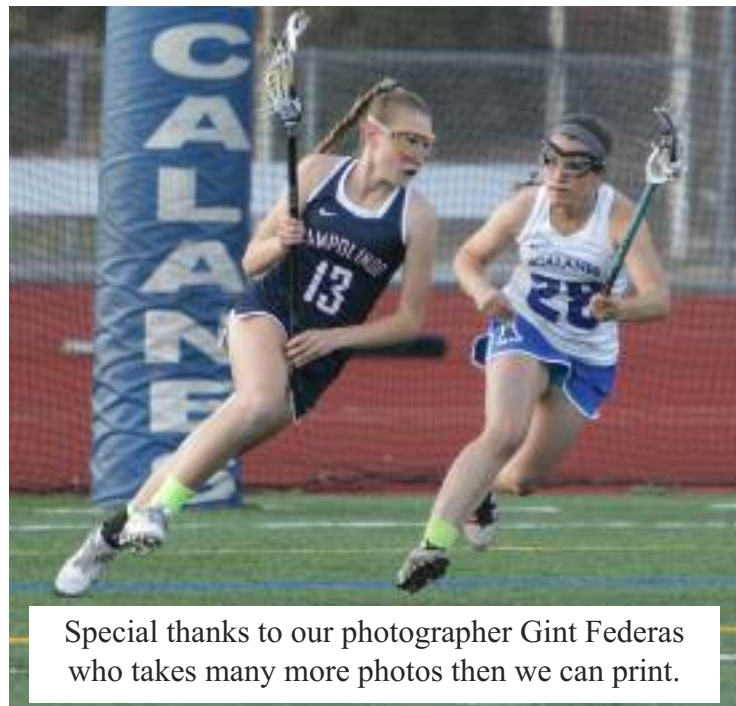
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# Best of 2015

With 2015 coming to a close, here are some of our favorite shots and memories from the past year

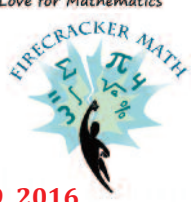


Special thanks to our photographer Gint Federas who takes many more photos than we can print.



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# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 09 Issue 22 Wednesday, December 30, 2015



*Feng Shui Reflections for the New Year ...read on page D4*

## Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for January

By Cynthia Brian

*"All I have seen teaches me to trust the creator for all I have not seen." ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson*



*Birds of Paradise bloom in January, even in the cold.*

*Photos Cynthia Brian*

**H**appy New Year! How many times have you voiced this well-versed exclamation in the past few days? After the Christmas holidays, we go straight into "New Year" mode with the excitement

of a rebirth. The first of January offers us an opportunity for a do-over, a fresh start, a new beginning, and 2016 is a milestone for several of us at Lamorinda Weekly as we are celebrating nine years of qual-

ity writing and publishing targeted with you in mind. It has been an honor and a privilege for me to bring you information that hopefully inspires, educates, entertains, and empowers you not only in your gardens but also in life. As you set your goals and write resolutions, I encourage you to make this the year that you drink in the beauty of nature and surround yourself with the connections of the earth. No matter what happens to us in our hectic lives, when we dig in the soil, we feel enriched in body, mind and soul. This year my commitment to you is to bring you the latest trends, tips, and topics to save resources while maintaining an outdoor space that will enliven your spirit and offer you sanctuary from the stresses of the world.

... continued on page D6



*All American Daylilies are ready to be planted.*







**Patti  
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*I* believe in the art of living well.

**2016**

**Happy New Year**



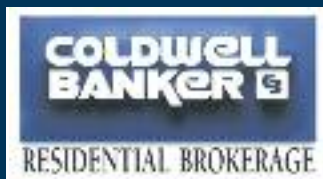
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## Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	15	\$313,000	\$2,369,000
MORAGA	5	\$555,000	\$1,600,000
ORINDA	7	\$985,000	\$1,575,000

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

### LAFAYETTE

894 Dewing Avenue, \$744,000, 3 Bdrms, 1403 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 11-6-15  
 1035 Dolores Drive, \$921,000, 3 Bdrms, 1726 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 11-12-15  
 4056 Fiora Place, \$1,275,000, 3 Bdrms, 1596 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 11-12-15  
 1139 Garden Lane, \$1,478,000, 4 Bdrms, 3520 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 11-13-15  
 800 Las Trampas Road, \$1,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 2426 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 11-10-15  
 3 Maloyan Lane, \$2,369,000, 5 Bdrms, 3537 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 11-12-15  
 3146 Maryola Court, \$1,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 2202 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 11-5-15  
 874 Mountain View Drive, \$1,210,000, 3 Bdrms, 1916 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 11-5-15  
 953 Oak View Circle, \$960,000, 2 Bdrms, 1354 SqFt, 1942 YrBlt, 11-6-15  
 3083 Rohrer Drive, \$1,080,000, 3 Bdrms, 1817 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 11-6-15  
 3 Shreve Lane, \$945,000, 4 Bdrms, 2031 SqFt, 2013 YrBlt, 11-18-15  
 1151 Sierra Vista Way, \$875,000, 4 Bdrms, 2143 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 11-13-15  
 867 Solana Drive, \$2,000,000, 4 Bdrms, 2555 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 11-10-15  
 1135 Upper Happy Valley Road, \$1,465,000, 4 Bdrms, 2382 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 11-18-15  
 3344 Victoria Avenue, \$313,000, 4 Bdrms, 1370 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 11-17-15;  
 Previous Sale: \$635,000, 09-03-03

### MORAGA

2135 Ascot Drive #27, \$575,000, 2 Bdrms, 1550 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 11-6-15  
 137 Cypress Point Way, \$900,000, 3 Bdrms, 1749 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 11-19-15;  
 Previous Sale: \$506,000, 10-20-00  
 6 Hanson Court, \$555,000, 1 Bdrms, 1042 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 11-5-15  
 257 Sandringham Drive, \$1,430,000, 4 Bdrms, 2484 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 11-6-15  
 9 Whiting Court, \$1,600,000, 3 Bdrms, 2643 SqFt, 1999 YrBlt, 11-17-15;  
 Previous Sale: \$960,000, 04-28-00

### ORINDA

3 Charles Hill Place, \$1,575,000, 11-18-15  
 50 Don Gabriel Way, \$995,000, 4 Bdrms, 2044 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 11-6-15  
 43 Ivy Drive, \$1,020,000, 3 Bdrms, 1523 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 11-18-15  
 19 La Campana Road, \$1,350,000, 2 Bdrms, 1825 SqFt, 1935 YrBlt, 11-10-15  
 1540 Lost Valley Drive, \$985,000, 3 Bdrms, 1744 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 11-17-15;  
 Previous Sale: \$740,000, 01-23-09  
 64 Muth Drive, \$1,100,000, 3 Bdrms, 2000 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 11-4-15  
 34 St. Stephens Drive, \$1,198,000, 4 Bdrms, 2705 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 11-13-15



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# Feng Shui Recommendations for the Coming New Year

By Michele Duffy



Photo provided

Many of us put festive touches in our homes to ignite the passionate blessings of the holiday season and to help express the love, generosity and gratitude we feel toward others, but you can also use this time to borrow from other traditions to keep focused on what is truly important in life. For example, my family teaches our children about a Yoga concept called Santosha. Why? Santosha means contentment and satisfaction. During this time of year, it is helpful to reflect on what we already have and what we are already blessed with, rather than what we do not have or what

we lack. Focusing on Santosha helps us to spark a conversation with our kids about expectations. If we all remember to reflect on what we already have, it is helpful to everyone.

As we enter the new year, remember to practice self care and make yourself a priority, rather than getting frayed around the edges. Give yourself a break and simplify, simplify, simplify. Life can still be elegantly well lived and less can absolutely be more. Make new traditions that center around being present with those you love. Unplug and relax. You have earned it.

As we put away the trappings of this holiday season, reflect on feng shui concepts from this past year and use space as medicine by infusing your environment with all of the five elements: wood, fire, metal, earth and water.

Clear clutter to make room for all of the new year's blessings. Burn sage and walk clockwise around your home, infusing it with calm in this very emotional time of the year. Arrange furniture in a conversational circle, the ancient symbol of unity and wholeness. Think of colors that empower and work within the feng shui bagua. While red is a popular color during the holiday season, for example, this powerful color can create aggressiveness if over done.

Be sure your front entrance – an important area for welcoming in good Qi or energy – is free of clutter, has abundant light, and includes a circular wreath, signifying unity, on the door. Consider placing a wreath

made of Eucalyptus, which symbolizes prudence. Fill your kitchen with bowls of fruits such as apples, which signify peace, loving, and good relationships in the home, pomegranates, which signify fertility due to their many seeds, or oranges and tangerines, which signify wealth, abundance, good luck, and protection.

May you deepen your intentions to spend time in a meaningful way with your family and friends, and in doing so, bring more festive life to your warm and reflective celebrations. Happy holidays!



Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating "Space as Medicine" Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, and spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. To schedule a professional 2015 Feng Shui Consultation, contact Michele at (520) 647-4887 or send an email to [spaceharmony@gmail.com](mailto:spaceharmony@gmail.com).

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*Happy New Year!*



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## Cynthia Brian's Garden Guide for January

- **COLLECTION** of your holiday trees is scheduled for the same day as your garbage pickup, but with a separate truck. Cut your tree in half or in pieces and place it in the yard waste cart or call (925) 935-8900 for an on-call recycling. Remove lights, ornaments, tinsel and trimmings. Leave trees at curbside. Cut all trees that are 10 feet or over in half. Do not leave stands. Also, no artificial or flocked trees will be collected as all trees are destined for composting.
- **DEEP ROOT FEED** your crape myrtles, magnolia, and Japanese maple trees if you have not already done this to give them a jump on spring.
- **PLANT** poinsettias outside as color accents. If you have several poinsettias, plant them along a pathway. Most will eventually die, but they will brighten the dark January days.
- **BARE ROOT** season is upon us. Fruit trees, berry bushes, perennials, vines and roses are readily available at your local garden centers and favorite nurseries.
- **TUNE** in to StarStyle® Radio from 4 to 5 p.m. Dec. 30 for a full hour of live garden talk with Britain's premiere rose expert from David Austin Roses. This program offers expert advice on bare root plantings as well as general rose care. Go to [www.StarStyleRadio.net](http://starstyleradio.net) and click on Dec. 30 or go to the direct link at [http://starstyleradio.net/Starstyle\\_Radio/Entries/2015/12/30\\_Toast\\_the\\_New\\_Year\\_with\\_David\\_Austin\\_Roses.html](http://starstyleradio.net/Starstyle_Radio/Entries/2015/12/30_Toast_the_New_Year_with_David_Austin_Roses.html).
- **HEAVY PRUNE** your roses any time this month. Remove any dead wood or diseased parts. Do not put these in the compost pile.
- **CUT** a bouquet of narcissus to perfume your bedrooms and baths.
- **SPRAY** an application of sulfur or organic dormant spray on fruit trees to kill overwintering insects.
- **MOVE** living Christmas trees outside. They can be planted in an area where they may grow to their natural height, or keep them in a container for next year.
- **MULCH** your flowerbeds with three inches of organic matter.
- **RAKE** the remaining fallen leaves from lawns to allow your grass to breathe. No need to mow in the winter.
- **CELEBRATE** the 12th day of Christmas on Jan. 6, known as the Epiphany and Three Wise Kings Day, by surprising your children with fresh oranges and tangerines plucked from your tree. It has been a family custom in our household for over a century. You can read my story in my book, *Be the Star You Are!* 99 Gifts for Living, Loving, Laughing, and Learning to Make a Difference available at <http://starstyleradio.net/Store.html>.
- **WRITE** in a garden journal starting this week or chronicle your garden escapades on your computer.
- **ADD** statuary to your landscape to bring art into the garden.
- **DIVIDE** and replant day lilies. All American Daylilies offer many different colors and varieties for all locations.
- **DONATE** at PayPal Giving Fund, which adds 1 percent to every contribution, and get that end of year tax write-off. Everyone wins. <http://bit.ly/1YuK44k>

May peace be with you as you make the best of this season. Welcome to a bright new shiny year, each day anew!



*Toadstools sprout in a potted plant during the darkest night hours.*



*Statuary adds artistic bling to your landscape.*





*Pistachio berries are food for the birds and décor for your table.*

## What's trending in the garden world for 2016, you ask?

- Gardeners across the nation are seeking larger plants that repeat bloom.
- Compact size plants for small patios, condominiums, apartments, and town homes are in big demand. These space savers include dwarf and compact varieties for containers.
- Fragrance tops the list for new purchases.
- Water-wise plants will become the norm in drought areas such as ours.
- Low maintenance is a priority as people have busy work and social schedules. Plants that are easy-care without too much pruning or deadheading are popular.
- Edible fruits and vegetables will be part of most households as we all embrace the plant to plate movement in our own kitchens. There really is nothing better than growing our own for freshness, flavors and nutrients.
- Earth matters most. Consumers crave plants that will survive and thrive in local conditions without harming our environment.



*Cynthia Brian wishes you a Happy New Year!*

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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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### ORINDA



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

**\$489,000**

### ORINDA



**46 Cedar Terrace** Excellent 3.93 acre property located at the end of Cedar Terrace, off of Cedar Lane. Views and Privacy!

**\$699,000**

### MORAGA



For Lease

**589 Augusta Drive** Fabulous Moraga Country Club. All member benefits. Single level detached home along 1st fairway. 3bd/2.5ba, 2687sf, family room off spacious kitchen. Excellent schools.

**\$6,000/month**

### MORAGA



Pending

**176 Calle La Mesa** Super opportunity in Campolindo. 4 bedroom, 2 bathroom home on .4 acre lot. Peaceful location with flat yard and views. Ready for your inspiration!

**\$895,000**

### LAFAYETTE



Pending

**1000 Hawthorn Drive** Wonderful 3 bed/2 updated bath traditional home in the heart of downtown Lafayette. Remodeled kitchen w/large island, marble/Corian countertops. Hardwood floors. Park-like yard.

**\$1,185,000**

### LAFAYETTE



**5 Burton Vista Court** Spectacular 7bd/9+ba, 8986sf Estate w/luxury amenities in grand oversized spaces. Premium 2.25ac parcel w/sport court, sun-drenched pool, pavilion w/kitchen, dressing rms & showers.

**\$6,595,000**

### PLEASANT HILL



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

**\$1,750,000**

### WALNUT CREEK



Pending

**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.

**\$365,000**

### WALNUT CREEK



Pending

**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



Pending

**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



Pending

**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**

### WALNUT CREEK



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**31 Hanson Lane** Beautiful Single Story New Construction in Walnut Heights ngrhbrhd. On .43 flat acre, 4 bd/3.5ba, den, chefs kitchen, hdwd flrs. Backs up to Shell Ridge Open Space & elementary school.

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