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Shirly Siegel and Neshe Ganch getting ready for Valentine's Day orders.

Photo Andy Scheck

The Cost of Convenience

Local florists impacted by Internet orders

By Nick Marnell

A stressed-out consumer, not knowing much about flowers and feeling the extra pressure of Valentine's Day, makes for an easy mark in the floral industry, and plenty of operators are ready to pounce, many promoting online with a toll-free phone number. "You're taking your chances," said Neshe Ganch,

owner of Floral Arts in Lafayette. "When you call one of those 800 numbers, you may not be calling a flower shop." You may be dealing with a call center, which charges service, handling, shipping or convenience fees to forward your order to a local florist. And you often have no idea whom you are dealing with.

"We call them sending florists," said Arlene Kahn, owner of King Florist and Gifts in Moraga. "They're order takers, and they are not necessarily florists. They take your order, then they come to a florist, asking it to fill the order for more than they will pay to do it."

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New Community Choice Aggregation program considered in Lafayette and Moraga – see stories on pages A3 and A5.

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MOFD plans to redraft its strategic plan – page A8.

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Acalanes girls' soccer team continues forward push – page C2.



Our Homes D1-D16

The importance of balance in proper Feng Shui – page D4.



Open Thursday, 2/11 5-7pm
 Open Saturday, 2/13 1-4pm
 Open Sunday, 2/14 1-4pm

Lafayette Trail Neighborhood home!

Featuring 4 bedrooms and 3 bathrooms, this home has a swimming pool with solar heat, hardwood floors throughout, and is just a short walk from both Lafayette Elementary and Stanley Middle School.

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Of Life and Limb

Trees are falling, but not just from El Nino

By Cathy Dausman



A downed tree on Rancho Road in Lafayette is removed. Photo Cathy Dausman

Local trees, including mature oaks and pines, are falling and in need of removal, but the recent El Nino rain storms are only partly to blame. It is more apt to be a combination of events – call it the perfect storm – causing their demise. Recent Lamorinda examples reported by Nixle, a government emergency notification system, include downed power lines on LaCintella in Orinda and along Orchard Road due to collapsed trees, a road closure in Canyon due to a fallen tree on Pinehurst, and Miner Road closed near Camino Pablo because of a downed tree.

The World Meteorological Organization called the years 2011-2015 the warmest five-year period on record, and "trees suffered during the drought," said Jim Turner of Bruce Maciver Company. Turner should know – he's made his living climbing trees for 34 years, the last 28 working for Maciver.

... continued on page A11

Moraga Town Hall Scheduled

State Sen. Steve Glazer and Assemblywoman Catherine Baker will provide an update on legislative priorities in 2016 and listen to thoughts on issues facing the community at the Moraga Town Hall from 7 to 8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11 at the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium. For information, contact Sen. Glazer's Walnut Creek office at (925) 942-6082.



Lafayette

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Feb. 22, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 16, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Feb. 22, 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. 17, 7:30 p.m.
AUHSD Board Room
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
www.aacalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Feb. 10, 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 Jan 17-23

Alarms	31
911 Calls (incl hang-ups)	18
Noise Complaints	1
Traffic Stops	43
Suspicious Circumstances	5
Suspicious Subjects	15
Suspicious Vehicles	13
Abandoned Vehicle	
Hanson Dr/St Marys Rd	
Burglary, Auto	
10 block Ruth Ct	
Lafayette Park Hotel	
3400 block Mt Diablo Blvd	
900 block Risa Rd (3)	
Burglary, Residential	
3500 block Springhill Rd	
3400 block Shangri La Rd	
Burglary, Miscellaneous	
1700 block Reliez Valley Rd	
Counterfeit	
Diablo Foods	
Drunk in Public	
Reported to police	
DUI	
3600 block Mt Diablo Blvd	
Harassment	
500 block McBride Dr	
1000 block Carol Ln	
1000 block Oak Hill Rd	
Health & Safety Violation	
3600 block Mt Diablo Blvd	
Hit & Run	
Wells Fargo	
Panhandling	
Trader Joe's	
Post Office	
Police/Fire/EMS Response	
10 block Ruth Ct	
3500 Brook St	
Prescription Fraud	
3600 block Mt Diablo Blvd	

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Rent Moratorium Shelved for Troubled Complex

By Cathy Tyson



At the playground structure at the 1038 on Second apartment complex, management would prefer that bikes and skateboards stay off the walkways. Photo C. Tyson

Noting the recent improvement in discussions between tenants and management of the 1038 on Second apartment complex, Lafayette City Council members, at their Jan. 25 meeting, wished them well and opted to continue to table the rent increase moratorium they had been considering. After taking over ownership of the aging development in February 2015, many long-term tenants faced steep rent increases along with additional new

charges for water, sewer and garbage, and were continually frustrated by unresponsive property management staff.

Angry tenants brought their case to the city council in May 2015, asking them to intercede on their behalf because management appeared to be tone deaf to their complaints. While the city has never gotten involved in tenant-landlord disputes before, tenants' pleas spurred them to take action, calling the situation "abusive." While discussions of a rent moratorium ultimately brought Sack representatives to the bargaining table, it became clear that actually establishing a rent increase moratorium could adversely affect many of the reputable mom and pop landlords in Lafayette.

Acknowledging that since the complex changed hands, there have been three property managers, Nancy Wierdsma, director

of property management, thanked residents for meaningful feedback, and outlined the following compromises agreed to by Sack Properties: limiting rent increases to no more than 10 percent annually and honoring grandfathered pet rent and parking agreements; and not changing Section 8 agreements made by the previous owner. "Our goal is to continue to build trust," she said, explaining that the firm is "committed to working directly with residents."

Trust-building may take some time. Resident Karen Kern lamented the poor level of Sack Properties' customer service. "It's a little disheartening that it took all that effort just to get a meeting with them," she said. "We shouldn't have to come to the city council multiple times in 10 months to advocate for help."

"We don't have a whole lot of faith when they come up and say this is what we are doing - because we haven't seen it yet," said tenant Peggy Pricco. Reviews for the complex as well as the property management team could not be any lower on social media.

Wierdsma called the newly imposed utility fees "industry standard" at a recent community meeting; Sack Properties had arranged for a representative from the third-party billing organization to clarify at the holiday meet-and-greet community meeting exactly how water and garbage rates were set for each unit. The buildings are not individually metered.

There was a substantial amount

of deferred maintenance at the complex, which the new owner is now addressing. Seismic improvements have been made, and there is now a fitness center, a lounge, barbecues and better landscaping. Although physical improvements have been made, and communication is heading in the right direction, there is still a reluctance by management to recognize the tenants' association.

Council member Don Tatzin pointed out that newly billed utility charges, when added to the base rent that has been increased a maximum of 10 percent per year, has the tenants paying more than just the 10 percent bump.

Wierdsma told the city council that more clarification on some topics that had caused friction in the past has been discussed. "We are not endeavoring to evict tenants for not cleaning their toilets." She emphasized current efforts at open communication, with senior team members participating in the community meeting to show their resolve.

Although many city council members have had discussions with Sack Properties personnel, this was the first public meeting where an actual representative showed up. Vice Mayor Mike Anderson appreciated everyone's effort in attending and acknowledged that the housing situation in the Bay Area in general is very difficult. He has seen that many local "landlords are not interested in pushing out their tenants," but that clearly this situation improved only after threat of a rent moratorium. His advice? "You need to talk to each other."

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- Sardines Insalata:** calamata olives, green beans, potato, feta cheese, balsamic olive oil9
- Niman Flat Iron Steak:** potato gratin, green beans, chimichurri sauce18
- Fresh Seafood Cioppino:** in a rich tomato-basil sauce, parmesan, garlic toast..19
- Roasted Scallops:** spinach, salciccia sugo19
- Roasted Wild Salmon:** white wine, capers, braised greens, and potato gratin..17
- Veal Scallopini:** mushrooms, garlic, marsala wine17

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2016 Citizen of the Year Nominations Requested

Do you have a person in mind for the City of Lafayette to honor as 2016 Citizen of the Year?

Criteria are as follows:

- Must NOT be a current elected or paid member of any city council, school board or commission;
- Must be a current Lafayette resident;
- Must be someone who has given of their time, money or energy to help make Lafayette a healthy community, where people will want to live, work and shop;
- Must be someone who models excellence in everything they do;
- Must be someone who brings this community together and/or makes us proud to be a member of the community.

A celebration dinner will be held on Friday, March 18 at the Lafayette Park Hotel and Spa to honor the winner. The deadline for submitting nominations is Friday, Feb. 12. The 2016 Lafayette Citizen of the Year Award is co-sponsored by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and Lamorinda Weekly. Please email your nomination to Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson at jay@lafayettechamber.org or send your nomination to the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, attention Lafayette Citizen of Year nomination, 100 Lafayette Circle, Suite 103, Lafayette, CA 94549. – C. Tyson

Greener Power Likely Coming to Lafayette

By Cathy Tyson



City leaders want residents to have a choice of where their electricity comes from.

After weighing all the options, Lafayette City Council members voted to move forward with Marin Clean Energy – a nonprofit that procures electricity from renewable sources such as solar, wind, bioenergy, geothermal, and small hydro, then partners with PG&E to deliver it – so that they can conduct a membership analysis. Assuming the analysis is positive in terms of rates and environmental impact, the city will join MCE.

The energy used in homes, businesses and municipal buildings is now provided solely by PG&E, which currently reports that 27 percent of its energy production comes from renewable sources. The utility is working toward one-third of its energy portfolio from renewables by 2020.

By going with MCE, residents will have a choice of power options: stay with PG&E, or pick from MCE's power options: "light green" with 56 percent renewable energy, "deep green" 100 percent renewable, or "Local Sol" with 100 percent local solar.

With a unanimous affirmative vote, Ordinance 644 was officially introduced, and continued to March 14 for its second reading and adoption. The ordinance approves the Marin Clean Energy Joint Powers Agreement and authorizes the implementation of a Community Choice Aggregation program.

"Today we don't have a choice," said Mark Higgins, Environmental Task Force member. "Joining a CCE (community choice energy) provider enables more competition where there currently is none – two competing entities that have to compete for customers. At the end of the day it's the market that wins."

By offering service with Marin Clean Energy, Lafayette joins a Community Choice Aggregation program, or CCA, which enables local governments to acquire cleaner renewable power on behalf of residents and businesses, and creates a partnership with local utilities – in this case, PG&E – to deliver it through its power lines, benefitting customers with affordable rates, local control and greener energy. PG&E would continue to provide consolidated billing, still owns the grid, provides customer service and maintains power lines.

Since 2002, when the state of California passed AB 117, public agencies and joint power authorities

are able to pool the electricity demands of their constituents to provide a local power choice.

Residents can expect to see a robust outreach campaign by MCE to help customers make an informed decision later this year, with actual electricity service starting in late summer or fall 2016, if the membership analysis is positive. Additional outreach will include local events and workshops, as well as presentations to clubs and organizations. Customers will have the choice of opting out of the MCE arrangement and can return to PG&E service at any time.

Offering this option has no fiscal impact on the city. In addition, this move coincides with the city's Environmental Strategy that was adopted in 2006 to encourage a more environmentally sustainable community.

Although Contra Costa County is in the initial phase of creating its own CCE, it is unknown how long that may take and there is uncertainty about start-up costs, rate competitiveness, timing and risk.

City leaders chose to go with MCE, an existing provider that was formed in 2008, serving customers since 2010, with a proven track record. According to the City of Lafayette Staff Report, MCE currently serves 165,000 customers in all of the cities and unincorporated areas of Marin County. The organization is addressing climate change by reducing energy related greenhouse gas emissions through a range of renewable energy sources, providing 50 to 100 percent of their electricity through renewable sources: solar, wind and waste-to-energy. So far MCE reports that it has reduced more than 131 million pounds of greenhouse gas emissions, and in the process, is saving its customers more than \$5.9 million via lower electricity rates.

The environmental task force has been actively investigating energy options since 2014. It evaluated a long list of considerations before making its recommendation to the city council to join MCE, including rate volatility, financial liability, the impact of greenhouse gas emissions, control over governance and more. The group concluded that taking no action would limit customer choice.

Acknowledging that it's unfortunate that Contra Costa County is not further along the CCE path, Council Member Mike Anderson said, "This is something that is available now that we can take advantage of – we get a choice to our residents quickly."

Mayor Mark Mitchell agreed: "Who doesn't like choice?"

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ALAIN PINEL



Moraga

Public Meetings

Town Council

Wednesday, Feb. 10, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 24, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, March 7, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Feb. 22, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meeting

Moraga School District
Tuesday, March 8, 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

My home is my Castle 1/25/16 A homeowner on Cypress Point Way got the better of a 26-year-old who thought it wise to verbally and physically threaten the homeowner. It was unwise. The subject was being physically restrained (unclear whether by the homeowner, but one would hope...) as police arrived on scene. Subject was arrested for attempted assault with a deadly weapon and transported to lockup in Martinez.

Fast but costly meal 1/21/16 A diner told police his antique money clip and the approximately \$200 in cash it contained went missing after he ate at a local burger shop. The case is being treated as a lost or stolen property report.

No fingerprints here 1/26/16 Police responded to the report of a residential alarm triggered in the 200 block of Draeger Drive. They discovered only housecleaners, who had permission to be on premises, cleaning up ... not cleaning out.

Elder abuse? Only on a technicality 1/26/16 A 67-year-old was the victim of ID theft after contracting with

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Gary Bernie & Ken Ryerson

Implementing the Moraga Center Specific Plan

By Sophie Braccini



Creating space along the creek

Rendering provided

Recent controversy over developments in the Moraga Center Specific Plan (MCSP) area has shown that land use regulation without implementation rules can lead to projects that are compliant and hard to challenge, even if the residents disapprove of them. The town has decided to involve Moragans in correcting that by defining the feel and look that they want implemented in their downtown.

The implementation rules, or zoning of the MCSP, will not change the plan itself, but it will define such things as the setbacks, the height, and the ways buildings address the streets, how parking should be hidden, and how cars, pedestrians and bicycles will circulate. On Jan. 25 residents were invited to see possible first renderings of the proposed new zoning; the

Planning Commission and the Design Review Board also met to start discussing this new approach. Final regulation is not expected before the second part of the year.

Large boards were propped up in the town chamber at 335 Rheem showing schematics and pictures of what Moraga Center, the larger area around the Safeway shopping center, would look like. The town chose consultant Opticos Design to develop the zoning. The study is funded by a grant from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority.

The renderings included the definition of eight different zoning areas, each with its own set of rules, following guiding principles. A town square will be created at the intersection of the extension of School Street and another street crossing the creek. That relatively

dense commercial mixed-use area will have pedestrian access, will include a large public space and will connect the different zones. Along the creek, a bike and/or walking path will be designed and the retail and housing will be smaller scale and detached. The proposed new zoning also addresses how the existing shopping center would be remodeled, adding retail space with defined setbacks along Moraga Way and Moraga Road, and locating parking behind these new buildings.

The public was able to look at the drawings for a half hour before the commissioners started their discussion. Members of the Bruzzone family, the main property owner of that area, came to see the plan, since they were not formerly consulted during the zoning study. When the Moraga Center Specific Plan was approved, with their active participation, the town was not able to reach a development agreement with the property owners.

As the discussions started, Planning Commissioner Ferenc Kovac asked if Opticos was taking public transportation into account and where commuters taking the bus would leave their cars. More than one person addressed the issue of whether there is adequate parking, noting that there is no parking problem in Moraga so far, and that no one wants to create one. Design Review Board Vice-Chair John Glover also asked if ac-

cess for delivery vehicles was included in the plan, since it did not seem to be the case. And Commissioner Steve Woehleke asked if any consideration to cost and economic optimization had been given while drafting these plans. The answer was no.

Dave Bruzzone said parts of this plan made sense, but he asked where all the money would come from to remodel and create the new infrastructure envisioned. His mother, Joan Bruzzone, added that they, too, had dreams and that she did not like the fact that this was proceeding as if they did not have any rights.

The board members and commissioners indicated that they liked the direction the consultant was going, the creation of a real town center, addressing the look along the scenic corridor, matching zoning with the topography, but that more work needed to be done to get this right. All noted that the consultant should pay attention to issues of traffic and parking.

As longtime resident Dale Walwark noted, many studies have been done in Moraga and nothing ever happens. The consultant concluded that this plan was there for the long-term guidance of future developments.

A review of the MCSP implementation project will be discussed at 7 p.m. Feb. 10 at the Moraga Town Council Chambers.

a disreputable computer repair company located in New York. The company attempted to transfer money from the victim's bank account. She was hacked, and is (rightfully) hacked about it. She has since taken preventative steps.

Pet sounds 1/26/16 A triggered alarm probably wasn't music to the owner's or nearby neighbors' ears. After being dispatched to investigate the Via Granada event, the homeowner told police a pet was likely to blame.

Party parity 1/27/16 Police were dispatched to Ascot Drive after receiving complaints about a loud

party. They went again ... twice ... on Jan. 29. Twenty people were whooping it up at the first stop; 30 at the second location and just a "small" gathering of partiers at the third stop. The partiers were told to party politely each time.

Falsely alarmed 1/28/16 Police took the report of a parking lot armed robbery from an individual who said he had been held up at gunpoint while getting in his car, but the underage "victim" couldn't keep his story straight, and authorities determined he wasn't telling the truth. The case has been referred to the district attorney - and that is the truth.

To the left ... 1/27/16 A jilted boyfriend apparently couldn't be trusted even after the locks on the subject's residence had been changed. Former girlfriend said she had placed her ex's belongings inside the attached garage and thoughtfully changed the locks leading inside. She went out of town and noticed he had been inside the premises without her permission while she was gone. He maintains he needed his cash and two other items from inside, but promised never to return without an invitation. That will likely not be forthcoming.

With pursed lips 1/31/16 Police responded to a local shopping center to investigate an auto burglary after a woman reported her car window smashed and her purse missing from inside. Police contacted two subjects acting suspiciously in the area but no stolen property was recovered.

In addition, the following occurred in Moraga between Jan 25-31:

False alarms - Walford Drive, Larch Avenue, Wakefield Drive
Domestic dispute - Williams Drive
Mental health evaluation - location withheld
Larceny - Ascot Drive
Coroner's case - Augusta Drive

Open House on February 6th 1 to 4 PM, and February 7th 12 to 3:00 PM



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Moraga Inches Toward Enrolling in Community Choice Aggregation

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Town Council agreed to send a non-binding letter to Marin Clean Energy (MCE), indicating its preliminary interest in having Moraga join the nonprofit structure that competes with PG&E for generating electricity. Other nearby cities, such as Lafayette, are moving forward with MCE (see related story on page A3), while the county is looking into forming an East Bay structure that would generate and/or procure its own renewable energy. The ultimate goal is to give residents the option to either get electricity generated by PG&E or by one alternate structure that secures renewable power at a competitive rate.

"We are proposing to send a non-binding letter of intent of exploring possible membership," said Assistant Planner Coleman Frick at the Jan. 27

council meeting. MCE proposes what is called a CCA, or Community Choice Aggregation, a nonprofit organization that provides electricity from renewable sources. In this scenario, PG&E continues to transport and deliver the electricity, and bills clients for that part of the service; the CCA includes the electric generation cost to the monthly PG&E bill. "Joining would give consumers a choice and increase the competition. It can benefit all consumers including PG&E's," added Frick. "It would also add a level of local control as a member of the town would be appointed to the CCA board."

Mayor Metcalf asked MCE representative Alex Digiorgio how his company provided electricity to users, even when the wind does not blow and the sun does not shine. Digiorgio

explained that it does not really provide individual users with electricity during day and night; what it does is feed the global system the equivalent of what its customers consume, coming from renewable sources, averaging during a one-year period. The electricity sources include wind, solar, geothermal and biomass energy providers in California.

The mayor also asked MCE what the consequences would be for the town if a more interesting solution would be offered by another CCA that would cause the town to want to exit its contract with MCE. The young man made it clear that Moraga signing into MCE would trigger investments from the nonprofit and that if the town would want to exit the contract it would be extremely expensive for Moraga. ... continued on page A8

Chief of Police Becomes Interim Town Manager

By Sophie Braccini



Moraga Chief of Police Robert Priebe with outgoing Town Manager Jill Keimach
 Photo Clinton Calkins

Chief of Police Bob Priebe turned in his uniform Feb. 1 to fill the position of Moraga town manager until a replacement for Jill Keimach can be found. Priebe, who has served on the police force for the past 38 years, welcomes the new challenge. Jon King will serve as acting police chief during this interim period, and Priebe will return as chief of police when a new manager is hired. But Priebe says if enjoys the new responsibilities, he might throw his hat in the ring for the permanent position.

Priebe was surprised when Keimach approached him before she left and suggested he become her interim replacement. "At first I said 'no way' because I did not know enough about planning," he says. But he realized that he could count on planning director Ellen Clark to hold her own and give him time to ramp up. Other department heads such as Edric Kwan (Public Works) and Jay Ingram (Parks and Recreation) approached him and encouraged him to accept.

... continued on page A12

Moraga Community Foundation Seeks Applicants for Board Positions

The newly formed Moraga Community Foundation – a philanthropic organization that works with the community to build a vibrant future for Moraga – is seeking applicants to serve on its board of directors. Individuals residing in the Moraga area or with their principal place of business in the Moraga area are eligible to apply. Terms are for two years. Applicants must be willing to fulfill the responsibilities of directors as explained on the MCF website. For information, go to www.moragacommunityfoundation.org and click on the tab, "Board of Directors."

Letters of interest must be received no later than Friday, March 11 and emailed to applicants@moragacommunityfoundation.org. For additional information, call MCF Director Bob Fritzky at (925) 247-0171.

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Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Feb. 16, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 23, 7 p.m.
Auditorium, Orinda Library,
26 Orinda Way

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, Feb. 10, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way

School Board Meeting Orinda Union School District

Monday, March 14, 6 p.m.
OUSD Office, 8 Altarinda Road,
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org
Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report Jan. 17-30

Alarms	51
Noise Complaints	4
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	7
Traffic stops	35
Suspicious Circumstances	10
Suspicious Subjects	11
Suspicious Vehicles	19
Barking Dog	
100 block Las Vegas Rd	
20 block Woodacres Ct	
Civil Problem	
70 block Rheem Blvd	
Credit Fraud	
50 block Valley Dr	
DUI	
Safeway	
St Stephens/El Nido Ranch Rds	
Dispute	
10 block Manzanita	
Harassment	
10 block La Bolsita Way	
Health & Safety Violation	
200 block Canon Dr	
Hit & Run	
Miramonte High School	
ID Theft	
reported to police (2)	
20 block Normandy Ln	
40 block La Encinal	
10 block Broadview Terr (2)	
40 block La Vuelta	
Loitering	
Wagner Ranch Elementary	
Police/Fire/ EMS	
Moraga Way/Camino Pablo	
10 block Hall Dr	
10 block Nobi Ln	
Promiscuous Shooting	
Glorietta Ct/Glorietta Blvd	
10 block Mira Monte Rd	
30 block Oak Rd	
Prowler	
10 block Lost Valley Dr	
Public Nuisance	
Orinda Theater	
Reckless Driving	
Altarinda/Orindawoods	
Moraga Way/Hall Dr	
La Espiral/El Gavilan	
San Pablo Dam/Bear Creek Rds	
Miramonte High School	
Miner Rd/Oak Arbor Rd	
Donna Maria Way/El Camino	
Hwy 24/St Stephens Dr	
Moraga Way/Camino Encino	
Wagner Ranch Elementary	
Shoplift	
Safeway	
Theft, Grand	
30 block Southwood Dr	
100 block Moraga Way	
Moraga/Stein Ways	
Reported to police	
10 block Sally Ann Rd	
Theft, Petty	
10 block El Castillo	
100 block Overhill Rd	



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Community Outreach Meeting Kicks Off Downtown Parking Study

By Victor Ryerson



These six discrete downtown and adjacent residential areas will be analyzed

Orinda's parking study consultant, TJKM, began public outreach efforts on its parking study of Orinda's downtown area by conducting a public meeting for the city on

Jan. 27. At that meeting the methodology for conducting the study was explained with a slide presentation, and public comments were received.

Among the highlights of the slide

Image provided

presentation, which may be viewed on Orinda's website, www.cityoforinda.org, were the parking needs identified by TJKM. These include the needs of visitors, employ-

ees and business owners, commuters, service providers, and persons with special needs, as well as residents. The consultant has defined six discrete downtown and adjacent residential areas for analysis, three on the Village side, and three on the Crossroads side. Existing conditions will be analyzed and operational solutions will be identified, and the public will have further opportunities to contribute as the study progresses to the point where the city can consider a proposed action plan.

Various operational solutions under consideration include time limits, loading zones and curb restrictions, wayfinding signs, event-specific measures and enforcement. Selection of specific solutions will be governed by the parking policies defined by the city, such as pricing of parking, benefit districts, and availability of special permits.

The six-month study is expected to provide a clearer path for the City Council to follow in addressing Orinda's burgeoning parking problems, and the council has emphasized that it wants the study to produce an actionable plan that it can implement.

Survey Results Create Dilemma for Council

By Victor Ryerson

An evenly split Orinda City Council struggled with the question of whether to approach voters with a proposal to fund just another piece of the city's ongoing Road Maintenance and Improvement Project, or shoot for the moon and seek the voter support necessary to cover the entire \$47 million cost to complete the job.

Working against a tight deadline to put the matter before voters on the June 16 ballot, the four council members struggled to reach a consensus at their Feb. 2 meeting. All agreed that the repair job must be done, but not necessarily how to fund it, because the stakes are so high: A wrong call could substantially delay the needed work as it has in the past if the voters turn it down, leaving roads crumbling and Orinda residents fuming.

In a presentation of results of the public opinion poll recently commissioned by the council, David Metz, president of survey firm FM3, reported that voters are generally happy with city services and satisfied with the work of the council, but somewhat skeptical about the job the city has done spending tax dollars, an obvious concern for a city that is on the cusp of spending an awful lot of them.

Voters are most dissatisfied with road maintenance, but they worry about the price tag for accomplishing the full repair job. Given the choice between doing some or all of it, nearly half of the 346 registered voters contacted by telephone between Jan. 16

and 24 of this year prefer a measure that would solve all of the city's \$47 million in road repair needs – but any such measure would require approval by a supermajority of two-thirds of the voters in order to succeed.

The poll focused on the two

funding methods previously identified by the council as the most desirable, a general obligation bond and a parcel tax. Of these two options, voters more consistently supported the bond approach by a slight margin, but the “no” responses were consistently far higher – 28 versus 16 per-

cent – for the parcel tax. However, this still resulted in a 31 percent “swing” category for the bond option, and half of that group would need to be persuaded to vote “yes” in order to reach the necessary supermajority for approval.

... continued on next page

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Survey Results

The survey concludes that although a total of 75 percent of Orinda voters are willing to pay something additional to fix the worst streets, repair potholes, and address safety issues (especially for children), among other street maintenance priorities, there is uncertainty about whether enough support can be mustered to pay for it all at once. Experience in the past has demonstrated that an incremental approach is probably more palatable, but this piecemeal option clearly caused council members Dean Orr and Darlene Gee considerable discomfort as they discussed the sur-

vey results. In short, they expressed a desire to take the greater risk of failure and approach the voters with a proposal to fund the repairs fully and, hopefully, get it over with. Mayor Victoria Smith and Vice Mayor Eve Phillips were not so sure this would be a good idea.

On the basis of the survey results, FM3's Metz recommended that the city approach the voters with a proposal for a general obligation bond in an amount less than the full \$47 million, "maybe in the range of \$20 million."

The council readily accepted the

first recommendation, but hesitated at the second, setting the stage for a possible stalemate at this critical moment. To the rescue came the former mayor, now state Sen. Steve Glazer, who had arrived too late to participate in the public hearing, but was granted leave to speak on the issue.

Having been chastened by the results of earlier efforts to approach voters to pay the full tab during his administration, he expressed the opinion that "we do have a path forward in the \$20 to \$25 million range." His remarks apparently broke the deadlock, and in short order city staff was

instructed to bring back a \$25 million general obligation bond proposal for the council to consider on Feb. 16.

Putting the issue on the upcoming

... continued from page A6

ballot promises to be a cliffhanger, but the prospect of achieving a final resolution of Orinda's vexing road repair problem appears to be at hand. Or not.

New Planning Director Named

By Victor Ryerson

Orinda has selected Drummond Buckley as its permanent planning director, filling a vacancy that has existed since last September. Buckley succeeds Interim Planning Director Victor Carniglia. He will officially assume office on Feb. 29.

Buckley worked as a Senior Planner in Orinda from 1996 to 1999. His other planning experience in the public sector includes

planning director for Sausalito, and he has held various private sector planning positions. He returns to Orinda from Worley Parsons Corporation, a global engineering design and large scale project implementation company, where he served as an urban management and economics expert.

Buckley holds a bachelor's degree from the University of California at Santa Cruz, and a

master's in Urban Planning from UCLA.

"Drummond has a profile blend of experience, education and skills that is well suited to meeting our organizational needs in the Planning Department and the Orinda community," says Orinda City Manager Janet Keeter. "I look forward to having Drummond join our organization and ... welcome him to our Orinda family."



Orinda Union School District Seeking Applicants to Serve on Parcel Tax Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee

The Orinda Union School District seeks applicants to serve on its Parcel Tax Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee. Currently there are two openings: one two-year term and one four-year term. The committee meets twice annually during normal business hours. The primary objective and purpose of the Committee is to ensure that the parcel tax proceeds are spent for their authorized purpose and to report annually to the Board of Trustees and the public regarding the expenditure of such funds.



If you are interested in serving on the committee, please submit an application to the Superintendent's Office, Orinda Union School District, 8 Altarinda Road, Orinda, CA 94563, via email to kfrenklach@orinda.k12.ca.us, or by fax to (925) 254-5261.


Applications are available on the district website: www.orindaschools.org or by email from kfrenklach@orinda.k12.ca.us

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Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, Feb. 17, 7 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room
22 Orinda Way, Orinda
For meeting times and agendas,
visit www.mofd.org

ConFire

Board of Directors
Tuesday, March 1, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107,
Administration Building,
651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and agendas,
visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

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MOFD Revives Sophisticated Planning Tool

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District survived the Great Recession, a labor contract is in place and the station 46 negotiations have ended, and though the district is on its third fire chief since 2009, this one gives no indication that he is about to leave. So the district has committed to redraft its strategic plan, last updated seven years ago, at the time expected to posit as a vision and guideline for two years.

"The timing is right," said Fire Chief Stephen Healy.

The 2009 plan identified five areas of focus for the district: operational readiness, human resources, community partnerships and outreach, fire prevention and education, and fiscal responsibility. Healy noted that two of the areas cause him concern, starting with human resources.

"We have opportunities for coaching, mentoring and preparation for advancement," said the chief. "What are the leaders of the organization doing for each other? This is an area I felt we

were lacking."

Healy admitted that he has been remiss in this area. "It all starts with me," he said. "I haven't spent as much time with my chiefs as I should have, providing them career advice and career counseling. I want to help the employee who wants to be a fire chief."

He expects the same performance out of his battalion chiefs. "Once a week, at least monthly, I want them to meet with their captains on a regular basis," he said. And not only with captains who aspire to become chief officers; Healy wants as much consideration given to those who wish to remain captains, to keep their skills sharp through cutting-edge training.

"You've got to always be thinking about your own people," said the chief.

Fire prevention is another area that requires Healy's immediate attention. "This division is very stressed," he said. MOFD eliminated the assistant fire marshal

position in 2013 and shifted much of the fire prevention work to outside contractors and district aides. Field work, weed abatements, plan reviews and the updating of the district codes and ordinances are all under the purview of the fire marshal, whose responsibility is to keep the public safe. Healy described the duties as technical and tedious, and with the population growth expected in the district, the work will become even more of a challenge and a concern.

"Take plan reviews alone," the chief explained. "Each structure, each neighborhood requires a specific plan review. The design of the houses, how wide are the streets, how close is each house to a fire station? This is very time-consuming work, which falls directly upon our fire marshal."

The other three areas of strategic plan focus, while always subject to improvement, Healy deemed in better shape today. Operationally, he said that the station 46 negotiations forced him to

learn intricate details of the MOFD coverage area. "That was a very enlightening process for me," said the chief.

Great strides have been made in rebuilding community relationships, "particularly through the community exercises and drills we have conducted, including at Saint Mary's," he said.

And the district finances appear to be stabilized, with two straight Comprehensive Annual Financial Reports under its belt, and a 10 percent reserve reported in the district general fund. The district updates its long-range financial plan twice a year.

The chief said that work on the plan will continue through the spring, and he expects to present a draft to the board this summer.

"It will be a high quality document that will focus on things that I think we should focus on, aligned with our core values and our district mission statement," he said.

Moraga

Moraga Inches Toward Enrolling

... continued from page A5

Conversely, if residents decide to exit the MCE contract to go back to PG&E it does not cost them anything. To re-enter the renewable energy contract, the residents have to wait a year, a condition imposed by PG&E.

Reached after the meeting, Linda Staaf, a member of the Lafayette Environmental Task Force, indicated that her city had also been grappling with not knowing what is down the road and being locked in a long-term contract. "On Monday (Jan. 25) the council unanimously adopted the first reading of the resolution requesting membership in Marin Clean Energy," she says. "The council members had discussed the Contra Costa County's plan to put a CCA together and didn't want to turn their back on that, but they also realized it would be far more expensive to join a new CCA." The fact that MCE is waiving the \$15,000 joining fee for new cities until the end of March also played a role in Lafayette's decision to join, she says.

The Moraga council members noted that many variables are in the hands of PG&E since the utility company has the monopoly for the transport and delivery of the electricity. Recently the company has increased the surcharge it taxes CCA members from \$5.5 to \$11 per month. MCE is challenging



Where does MCE energy come from this decision, but they confirmed that they cannot guarantee that they will remain less expensive than PG&E. There are two levels of residential rate plans for users when a city is an MCE member: "light green" that includes 56 percent of renewable energy, and "deep green" that includes 100 percent of renewable. That second op-

tion costs about \$5 more a month. There are two CCAs active in the PG&E service area, MCE and Sonoma Clean Power. MCE city members all have one voice on its board as long as decisions are a consensus; when it is not the case, city votes are weighted according to the amount of electricity the city uses. The councilmembers were

quick to note that Moraga would not be very powerful compared to a city like Richmond.

The councilmembers unanimously agreed to send the letter of intent, but councilmember Wykle recused himself since his company contracts with PG&E. More discussion between MCE and staff will develop.

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Kevin Reneau: Moraga's 2015 Business Person of the Year

By Sophie Braccini



Kevin Reneau, right, with client Dick Cummings, who became a friend.

Photo provided

Kevin Reneau would probably have been Moraga Business Person of the year much sooner if he had not also been the president of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. A successful local entrepreneur, Reneau has built with his wife, Pam, one of the fastest growing Senior Helpers in-home care agencies in the East Bay. Reneau, who was trained as a journalist at Cal and worked in sports marketing for the first part of his career, has made his consistent involvement with the community a cornerstone of his success.

"The reality of the situation is that the caregivers (working for Senior Helpers) should have this award; they are the real heroes," says Reneau. He knows how demanding this 24/7 job can be, and also how incredibly rewarding. "We are doing something that has to do with people's lives," he says. "The quality of the care we give them is extremely important." Reneau is personally in touch with the clients and sometimes has even had the opportunity to become friends with them. "I still have Dick Cummings' picture on my desk," he says. "We used to bet on football games together. He had such dignity."

Senior Helpers serves 50 to 60 clients in a given period, people who wish to stay in their own homes while getting support they might need. "Some people may require someone continuously, while others just a few hours a week," says Reneau. "Some are regular ongoing clients, while we sometimes also respond to temporary needs, such as after a surgery."

Finding the right caregivers and trying to make sure that the same person comes back time after time for a specific client is one of Reneau's challenges in an

industry where high turnover is common. "I have the privilege of being able to walk from home to work," says Reneau, who lives in Moraga, "but many of our caregivers live in Concord, Antioch, Oakland or Pittsburg. It is difficult for them." Reneau believes that local active retirees looking for the opportunity to do good in the community could find it very rewarding to work with him a few hours a week, being a companion, helping with chores and running errands. The care Senior Helpers provide is non-medical, and only long-term care insurance covers it.

The Business Person of the Year award was also bestowed upon Reneau due to his volunteer efforts in the community. Reneau started a Senior Fair five years ago, which brings vendors and services useful to seniors to one place for one day, and includes additional entertainment and fun activities.

He also started a senior discount card that offers 10 to 20 percent off at 35 local restaurants, hair salons, bakeries and hardware stores. The card can be picked up for free at the Senior Helpers office at 1550 Viader Drive, Suite D in Moraga.

The very active and creative Reneau also started the Moraga Employee of the Month program. "We worked with Cliff Dochterman of the Moraga Rotary club to start this program four years ago," explains Reneau, who is the president-elect of the local Rotary. "So far we have recognized 47 employees with an accolade and also \$100 value in gift cards."

Reneau will be honored at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23 at the Moraga Country Club. Tickets are \$55. Reservations are required. For more information, visit Moragachamber.org.

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Business

Lafayette Pack and Ship Brings Boutique Feel to Mail

By A. K. Carroll



Owners Ian and Sue McKinlay at Lafayette Pack and Ship Photos A.K. Carroll

“It has always been in the cards,” said Sue McKinlay, when I asked why she and her husband, Ian, moved from Denver to California, where they run the new Lafayette Pack and Ship, located on Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Originally from London, the McKinlays had long been planning to pack up their Colorado shipping business (which they sold last February) in order to spend more time with their daughter and her family, who live in Orinda.

After 25 years in the shipping industry, opening a local independent pack and ship was a natural next step for the couple to take in their new home. They had been looking for

something suitable for some time before the space on Mt. Diablo Boulevard in the former home of Novina Jewelry, next to Amarin Thai, became available last May. The McKinlay’s signed for the location in May and moved in September. The build out of the shop, which has been totally transformed, took nearly four months and opened Dec. 14. The McKinlays run the shop single (or rather dual) handedly.

“What we’ve always tried to do is concentrate on good service,” said McKinlay. “It’s how far you’re prepared to go to help people [that really makes a difference].” Working in the heart of downtown Denver, the

McKinlays learned best practices in accommodating to the specific needs of busy customers. They hope to offer a more personalized “boutique” sort of experience in a fast-paced business where lines abound and service can be less than cheery.

Pack and Ship’s special services include custom gift-wrapping and curbside drop off. The store also prides itself on being a “one stop shop” that can pack and ship “almost anything” to “almost anywhere.”

By offering overnight, two-day, three-day and ground delivery through FedEx, USPS and DHL, the McKinlays are able to help their customers determine the best and cheapest delivery option. The store also offers copy, print and document services, provides passport photos and sells greeting cards, gift wrap, stamps, mailers and office supplies.

When the McKinlays were developing their business in Denver, they tried to come up with services that would make shipping as simple and convenient as possible and developed the concept of curb-side drop off. Busy customers can call from the (free) parking lot behind the shop or pull right up to the curb outside the door. The McKinlays will take the packages directly, process them that day, and make follow-up calls to swap credit card information for tracking information. It requires an element of trust on both sides, which apparently is the price of convenience.

“It saves people the hassle,” said McKinlay, recounting scenarios of babies and strollers and rushing to make meetings. When I asked about payment, she was pleasantly optimistic. “People love to be trusted,” said McKinlay. “Keep in mind we’ve got their box. When we take their things, process them and call them, they’ve got their credit card in hand. They wouldn’t dream of not paying.



There are 84 mailboxes located at the Lafayette store.

We’ve never ever had anyone not pay.”

This personal attention and desire to go the extra mile are what McKinlay feels sets independent stores like hers apart from the chains, and are a big component of what she and Ian hope to offer at Lafayette Pack and Ship. When there’s no franchise governance, it’s easier to be accommodating and creative. “We’ve always been in our stores,” said McKinlay. “I feel that’s what sets us apart.”

In addition to dropping off mail at Lafayette Pack and Ship, you can also pick up mail. Targeted at small and home-based businesses, the store offers mailbox rental for roughly 60 cents a day. A Pack and Ship mailbox is attached to a street address, rather than a standard PO box, which can legitimize a company and give a stronger sense of security. In keeping with the boutique concept of providing every convenience possible, the store offers to receive all parcels and packages and will even call the mo-

ment they are delivered.

That also has an added layer of security both in terms of location anonymity and the protection of mail and parcels. In their interactions with locals, the McKinlays have learned that stolen mail is a local issue. Pack and Ship has 84 mailboxes with ample availability (as opposed to the UPS down the street where there is a waitlist for box rental). They also accept large packages from UPS and FedEx as one-off deliveries.

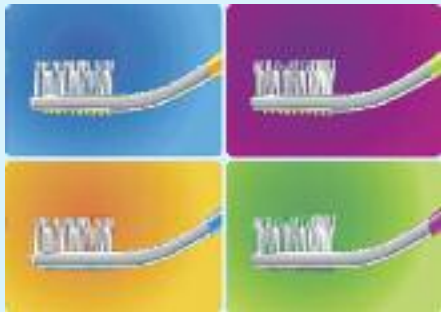
With a colorful décor, a myriad of services and cheery attentive experts waiting on your every need and ready to answer any question, Lafayette Pack and Ship hopes to put some of the fun back into shipping.

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business briefs

Lafayette German Car Repair Expands Operations, Celebrates 20 Years

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Celebrating 20 years in business, Lafayette German Car Repair recently expanded its operation in Lafayette. Founded in 1996 by Master BMW Certified Technician Juan Lara, Lafayette German Car Repair specializes in the repair and maintenance of all European cars including Porsche, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, Audi, Jaguar, Volkswagen, Range Rover, Land Rover, Mini Cooper, Alfa Romeo, Volvo, Peugeot, Fiat and Saab, and also works on imports and domestic models.

Lafayette Green Awards Nominations Requested

The annual Lafayette Awards of Environmental Excellence, more commonly known as the Lafayette Green Awards, recognize outstanding efforts that contribute to a more sustainable community and help the City achieve its environmental goals. Winners are announced at the Joint Meeting of City Council and Environmental Task Force in April. Awards are chosen across five different categories: residents, local businesses, schools, community organizations, and green building. Winners are selected by Lafayette’s Environmental Task Force using the following criteria: How successfully does the candidate’s activities reduce their footprint (current and future)? How much has the candidate’s activities helped achieve the city’s environmental goals? How much has the candidate’s activities inspired others in the community? Can it be replicated? The nomination form can be downloaded from the city of Lafayette website, filled in and submitted online at www.lovelafayette.org. Deadline March 9.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

Ribbon Cutting for Farmyard Darlings at 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11 at 20 Lafayette Circle.

The kickoff event of the Lamorinda Business Forum (formerly Entrepreneur’s Club) will be held at 5:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11 at the Bank of the West, 3583 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Attorney Asha Wilkerson will discuss “Small Business Law – What You Need to Know.”

Monthly Mixer at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 24 at Las Trampas, 3460 Lana Lane.

Coffee with the Mayor, Mark Mitchell, at 8 a.m. Friday, Feb. 26 in the Chamber Conference Room.

Moraga

Kevin Reneau of Senior Helpers, Moraga’s 2016 Business Person of the Year, will be honored at a dinner at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23 at the Moraga Country Club. Cost: \$55 per person. For information, email Kathe Nelson at kathe@moragachamber.org.

March Entrepreneur’s Lunch. Attorney Asha B. Wilkerson will discuss “Key Laws to Know as you Launch and Grow your Business” from noon to 1 p.m. on Monday, March 14 at Home/made kitchen café & bakery located at 337 Rheem Blvd. in Moraga. Members and non-members welcome. Meet and mingle with other local business owners. \$10 includes lunch. Reservations are required at kathe@moragachamber.org.



Ribbon Cutting ceremony at Natasha Grasso Jewelry on Feb. 4 in the Rheem Shopping Center. Photo provided

Orinda

Outgoing president Sylvia Jorgensen, and retiring executive director Candy Kattenburg will be recognized at the Awards and Recognition Luncheon at noon on Friday, Feb. 12 at the Orinda Country Club. Five chamber awards will be presented to the Business Person of the Year, the Small Business of the Year, the New Business of the Year, the Chamber Member of the Year and the Ambassador of the Year. For reservations, visit Orindachamber.org.

Save the date for “A Night of Comedy,” featuring headliner Brad Williams from Showtime’s highest rated comedy special, “Fun Size,” and Ben Feldman at 7:30 p.m. Friday, March 4 at the Orinda Theatre. For ticket and event information, visit www.orindachamber.org, or call (925) 254-3909.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

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No Room at the Shelter

Increase in agency save rate results in congestion at county animal shelters

By Nick Marnell



Mike Kotin with his dog, Ollie

Photo Nick Marnell

Due to an overload of animals, the Contra Costa County Animal Services Department temporarily stopped accepting owner surrendered animals at the Martinez and Pinole shelters Feb. 3. The agency also indefinitely closed its night surrender boxes.

The policy change comes as the department live release rate climbed

from 46 percent in 2011 to over 75 percent last year, according to agency representative Steve Bardo. "When you do that, you're going to run into space issues," he said.

The more animals that are surrendered, the more overpopulated the shelters become and the more likely the animals will experience medical and behavioral problems, noted Beth

Ward, county animal services director. The healthier the shelter inventories, the better the likelihood the animals will find a good home.

The freeze will remain in effect for approximately one month. "After 30 days, we plan to have a stronger intervention program in place," said Ward. A key element of the intervention strategy was the hiring of Kathy Anderson as the new adoption and intake coordinator in January. Anderson will help develop a program to help families keep their animals in their homes.

Ward gave an example of a department intervention. "An owner of an unruly dog may not be able to afford to send it to obedience school," she said. "Using our donation funds, we would be able to provide a schol-

arship for the dog's training."

In addition to implementing the intervention program, the department is pushing to speed up the spay and neutering process, which should also alleviate kennel congestion. "It used to take three or four days of waiting before you could take home your animal," said Ward. "We are working to complete the spay and neuter process so people can take their pets home immediately."

Folks at the Moraga Dog Park questioned the temporary policy change and its desired outcome. "I hate to see that," said Joe Udliner, Orinda owner of an adopted German shepherd. "They should make room, maybe rent extra space."

Erin Kalvass of Lafayette, exercising her German shepherd, sounded

even more skeptical. "I don't think it's going to change anything," she said. "Sadly, the animals will probably be abandoned on the street."

"Their vision is more advanced than mine is," said Chris Seeger of Orinda, implying that the department goal to increase public education and awareness is accurate. Mike Kotin of Lafayette said that he was in favor of any policy that will result in the killing of fewer animals.

"We're trying to do everything we can to save lives," said Ward.

Despite the unprecedented intake freeze on owner surrendered animals, the agency will continue to accept sick, injured or abandoned animals, as well as strays and confiscated or impounded animals.

Of Life and Limb

... continued from page A1



A damaged power pole after recent storms

Photo Cathy Dausman

Combine heavy winds with rain saturated ground and affected trees can easily be blown over, he said. "Pines and eucalyptus are evergreens; they just get so wet and heavy," they end up falling over, Turner said.

He's noticed a lot of dead pine as well as major die back on birch trees. The non-native birch trees, Turner said, are usually planted in the middle of a resident's lawn and become "spoiled" expecting the amount of water needed to keep the lawn green.

When homeowners start cutting back on keeping their lawns green, the trees suffered. Turner says it's more likely that trees have been improperly cared for over time. Oak trees suffering from crown rot fungus, for example, will decay over a period of 20 years. If a pine tree has red needles on it, though, Turner says the tree must come down. Business is "crazy" right now, but some of that is just seasonal work - arborists generally tackle dormant pruning during the winter season.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Battalion Chief Sean Perkins agrees with Turner.

Perkins says he's seen "nothing out of the ordinary," when it comes to falling trees, weather and

rain notwithstanding. If a fallen tree has taken a power line down with it, Perkins reminds Lamorindans to "stay away and call PG&E," and never assume the lines are dead. If the lines are arcing, call 911. "We'll send an engine out to isolate the area and leave a crew at the site until PG&E arrives. If there's a big storm with multiple (downed trees and power line) calls, we'll flag the area with caution tape," he says.

Trees and power lines can be a dangerous combination, says PG&E spokesperson Tamar Sarkissian. "We see the most uprooting when there's not much time between storms," she says, especially when conditions are windy. "On any given day, 650 contract tree crews are working ... to clear vegetation from around lines and identify hazardous trees that could come into contact with overhead power lines and potentially cause outages or spark fires," she says. PG&E uses aerial mounted technology to identify dead or dying trees for removal, Sarkissian says; she reminds everyone "if you see damaged power lines and electric equipment, call 911 and then notify PG&E at 1-800-743- 5002."

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Giving Dreams an Address

The Cost of Convenience

... continued from page A1



Flowers sit in vases, awaiting orders at King Florist and Gifts in Moraga. Photo Andy Scheck

If the florist turns them down, they call the customer and say they can't fill the order." That would not be a pleasant phone call for a customer to receive on Feb. 14.

Many of the online companies present themselves as full-service florists, posting an extensive list of beautiful floral displays. "No florist could possibly have all of those arrangements," said Ganch. "They're wire services, with employees and overhead. They cannot respond to your special requests. The quality of the flowers you get may not match what is shown in those photos." Kahn added that if the online company insists that she deliver the arrangement for free, she will not do it.

Los Angeles-based JustFlowers.com, an online broker,

and Teleflora, a delivery service out of Los Angeles, did not return calls or emails seeking comment.

So, you may not be talking with a florist when you order flowers by phone, and you may not be getting what you think you are getting, or when you expect it. That does not sound like the basis for a successful business model. Jennifer Sparks, vice president of marketing for the Society of American Florists, the Alexandria, Va.-based industry trade association, explained how to stay a step ahead of the rogue operators.

"When you ask about scams, the main concern is the issue of deceptive listings where companies list themselves under a variety of fictitious florist names with a local phone number," she said. It is unlawful in Cali-

fornia to advertise a fictitious shop name that includes, say, an Orinda geographic reference, or a phone number that consumers perceive as being local but is forwarded to a business in another state.

But not only national companies operate this way. "Many are also local florists who decided to become aggressive by reaching consumers on a nationwide level through toll-free numbers and the Internet," said Sparks.

Then what can you do to avoid being taken?

"Deal only with shops that list a street address with their phone number," she said. "When you call the florist, ask for directions to the shop. If they hesitate, consider that a red flag. And ask the florist to itemize charges. Most charge a delivery fee and sales tax in the state where the order is being taken, in addition to the price of the arrangement."

The one suggestion that all three agreed upon: deal directly with a local florist, with a local business address.

"A lot of the time, consumers want to support a local floral business but don't know where to go," said Sparks. "Florists need to focus on catering to the local customer to make sure they know the shop is there to serve them."

"You can question us about the details of your order," said Ganch. You know you are talking to a real, local person. You know us.

"And you can hold us accountable."



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Lamorinda Weekly ordered flowers online and received them on time. Though the arrangement looked similar to what was ordered, it contained fewer roses than shown online, and the \$88 final cost included a \$14.99 service charge.

Interim Town Manager

... continued from page A5

Priebe realized this was the type of challenge he was interested in at this point in his career. "There are a lot of skills that can be transferred," he said, "such as team management, or dealing with people and community issues." He compares his approach to that of a coach watching all his incredible players doing what they do well, "and making sure we are all moving in the same direction to achieve the vision of the council," adds Priebe.

The interim manager knows he will need to learn a lot of technical elements, but on the people side, his many years managing the Moraga police department has been good training. "I know what I don't know, and I also know who knows. So I rely on those people with trust and confidence." Priebe says he will continue

to keep his door open and encourages residents to contact him if they want to talk.

Priebe says he will make what the council decides happen, whether it is regarding the Rheem Theatre, the Hacienda de las Flores, hillside and ridgeline regulations, infrastructure maintenance, or the purchase of video cameras for the town. When the camera discussion started about a year ago, then Chief Priebe was not completely sold on the idea.

"I have always seen them as a tool to solve crimes but until now have not felt the interest to invest funds for them," he said. "I am thrilled the town wants to give MPD more tools and I am anxious to have it completely vetted in public discussion. MPD has always provided police services at the lowest cost per

capita on the County and is consistently one of the safest communities in the state, so selling the idea of more officers or new technology has always been difficult. The council and public support for cameras is appreciated and will be brought forward with my full support."

Keimach warned Priebe that the hardest part will be letting go of his former department. When she "passed the baton" to him, instead of a police baton, she gave him a thin wooden conductor's rod. But the police department is still close to Priebe's heart. He says that he still has his radio and gun accessible and a police jacket in the back of his car. "In case of a police emergency and if reinforcement is needed, I am available."

Lamorinda Music Teacher Recognized for Life of Achievement

By Daniel Smith



Rick Meyer at a recent Acalanes High School band rehearsal

Photo Ohlen Alexander

It's strange to hear longtime music teacher Rick Meyer say he feels embarrassed about receiving the California Music Educators Association (CMEA) Hall of Fame Award. After four decades teaching in Lamorinda, he's more than used to a little recognition.

Meyer, who taught at Miramonte High School from 1973 to 1984 and Acalanes High School from 1984 to 2008, continues to be recognized by parents, colleagues, and students of past and present (he's now a sub at Miramonte). While their appreciation is nice, privacy has its advantages. Meyer had to give up the Round Up years ago to avoid knocking back drinks with former students. And when he does his local shopping, Meyer much prefers Moraga. It's worth noting that Meyer doesn't seem to be exaggerating – several former students and a trombonist colleague made an appearance at Lafayette's Papillon cafe during our interview.

Even if you've never personally seen Meyer, chances are you have heard his music – it's been the soundtrack for Lamorinda civic life. Among his greatest hits is the Orinda Volunteer Marching Band – famous for ad-

mitting anyone with an instrument – cooked up in collaboration with former Orinda mayor Bobbie Landers in year zero of the city's cherished Fourth of July parade. Over the years, Meyer and his ever-changing iterations of high school bands played countless other Lamorinda venues, too. "Halftimes on Friday night, concerts, music festivals, Rossmoor, all kinds of stuff," he said. "Somebody calls and says 'Rotary needs something done, get down there and take care of that.'"

Meyer also took his students on the road, entering them in competitions across the state. Meyer's bands won yearly "unanimous superior" ratings at the CMEA's music festival, proving that public practice makes perfect.

Meyer built the success of his programs through a commitment to improvement, or as he calls it "keeping your chops up." He embodies this commitment, practicing the clarinet – his preferred instrument – an hour and a half daily. Meyer also practiced instruments with which he wasn't so familiar, a reminder of what commitment to improvement means to beginners like his students.

"You forget how hard it is, how hard they have to work to get it," he said. If Meyer assigned music, he practiced that, too. To do otherwise, in Meyer's view, would be "like an English teacher who never read a book after college. You (would) lose track of what the kids are going through."

The real trick to a successful music program, though, said Meyer, is that "your program has to be so good, it'll succeed in spite of you." Meyer's statement is more than a self-deprecating deflection of credit. It's a nod to the fact that an inspired teacher is only part of the recipe; a successful music program also needs community support and quality equipment. Meyer worked tirelessly to secure both. A prime example: 1994 found Acalanes' instruments worn down. Meyer, tired of the old bake sale model of fundraising or "selling light bulbs" as he facetiously calls it, decided to let the kids and the music make the money. He rented out Walnut Creek's Regional Center for the Arts and let the band do its thing. In two years the ticket sales earned them \$80,000 – enough to replace every instrument at Acalanes.

... continued on page B7

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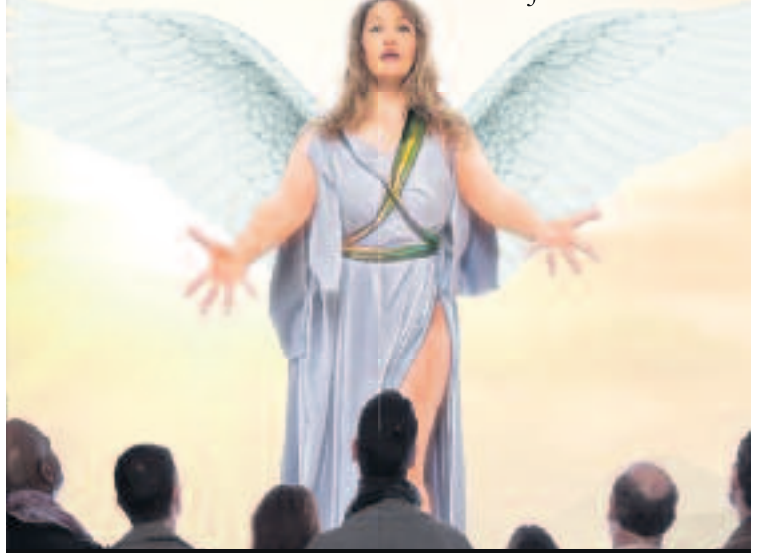


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Young Pearl Vet Shares Memories

By Cathy Dausman



From left: Renee Fleming, Tom Marnane, Diana Van Gilder and Victoria Christensen

Photo provided

Tom Marnane is a Pearl Harbor survivor who was in uniform awaiting his bus at Oahu's Wheeler Army Airfield Dec. 7, 1941. He and his friends were strafed by enemy airplane fire. Fortunately, they all survived, although no one had any idea what was going on. Marnane was 7 years old at the time; his "uniform" was a child's costume. His father was a U.S. Army captain, and his family lived on base near Wheeler.

Marnane spoke to seventh-graders at The Saklan School in January before the class of 17 traveled to Hawaii to study World War II history firsthand. The trip included a tour of Pearl Harbor. "It's an experience worth thinking about, but not worth repeating," he said. "I was alive waiting for a school bus to come and they shot up my street and my house and I watched all the airplanes get blown up. I say that because there aren't very many of us (Pearl Harbor survivors) hanging around these days."

This year's students felt more personally connected to the events at Pearl Harbor after hearing Marnane talk, wrote Saklan middle school Dean Kim Parks. Seventh-grader Victoria Christensen was "touched by the sheer amount of destruction" and "most impressed by his [Marnane's] feelings today towards the Japanese forces."

"It was a fast in and out," Marnane said of the Japanese attack, but "there were always airplanes around," so he was not really afraid. He did notice the rising sun symbol on the fuselage, and noted a "line of planes" flying in formation. The boys ran to collect spent cartridges until Marnane's father dragged him back to his house.

The family (father, mother and Marnane's younger brother) and everyone else on his street were spared. In the hours after the attack, the army evacuated its civilian population to pineapple and sugar fields in the center of Oahu where they remained for three or four days.

It was "great fun" being there with the other children, Marnane said, because they didn't have school. When they returned to Wheeler, it was a Wheeler with fox holes and air raid drills. "Dad took my brother and I on a (Pearl Harbor) tour, where we saw battleships burning, and (damaged) planes and midget subs," he said.

The family boarded a ship bound for San Francisco's Fort Mason on Christmas Day and relocated to Oklahoma for the duration of the war while Marnane's father stayed behind. When asked by the students how he felt about the Japanese, Marnane said he was mad then, only because the war necessitated his father living away from his family for four years.

"It's all gone by the board (now)," he said, noting that since then he has lived in Japan and worked with and for Japanese firms.

Marnane became a career naval officer, and returned as commander of the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard (which oddly, was never bombed) in 1980 for his final posting. Marnane said when a foreign ship entered the harbor at dawn that ship would play its country's national anthem and the shipyard would answer with "The Star Spangled Banner."

He admits to having felt "a little tug" when the exchange involved a Japanese ship.

You Want to Become a Filmmaker?

ShortDocs Film Fest helps young and older test their talent

By Sophie Braccini



Jason Friedman about to start filming his documentary
Photo Kal Deutsch

The Lamorinda ShortDocs Film Fest was born from the imagination of an 8-year-old Lamorinda child, and it is nicely taking shape through the leadership of the Lamorinda Arts Council (LAC). Amateur documentary filmmakers of all ages have the opportunity to be trained this month and partake in a friendly competition that will culminate with a festival presentation and awards ceremony in May.

Meredith Friedman was driving with her son, Jason, in the car one afternoon when he asked why there was not a program for children to compete in filmmaking. "I responded that this was something I may be able to help make happen," she remembers answering. Friedman is on the board of LAC, the local nonprofit that facilitates community events such as the Art of Mixology, Lamorinda Idol, and the Visual Arts Competition. "We already have a lot of programs for children," says Friedman, "so as we talked with fellow board member Kal Deutsch, who has filmmaking experience; we thought that it would be a good idea to have all ages engaged in this new program."

The LAC board and its president, Lawrence Kohl, immediately embraced the idea and decided this would be a worthwhile project for the nonprofit to fund.

"We decided on short documentaries, maximum six minutes, because we thought that would be easier for beginners to master, and also because we did not want to compete with the Iron Filmmakers competition put on by the California Independent Film Festival," says Deutsch. The Orinda resident believes that with today's tools, such as the iPhone and iMovie, and some basic training, anyone can start creating interesting documentaries. "You can say a lot in a very short time," adds Friedman. "Just take a look at the news and you'll see some powerful stories told in just a few minutes."

The competition's unique element is beginner training offered by LAC. "Creating a good documentary is about telling a compelling story; it is not just running a camera," says Deutsch. "There are fundamental techniques that will

empower kids and adults to make better films, such as composition, editing, how to get music, how to do narration, that we will teach and that will raise the bar of what will be produced."

LAC has planned a free educational seminar that covers the basics of producing a documentary film at 1 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28 for elementary and middle school filmmakers and at 2 p.m. for high school and adult filmmakers. The seminar will be at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.

The four competition categories are based on age: Elementary School, Middle School, High School and Adult. "The competition is open to anyone aged 5 and older who lives, attends school or works in Orinda, Lafayette, or Moraga," says Friedman. "Submissions will be accepted March 1 until April 24 and be judged by a panel of professionals."

LAC asks that films be G-rated and it reserves the right to not consider a movie that would be considered inappropriate. Two to four films will be selected in each category and presented at the festival on May 15. After the screening, winners in each category will be announced, and the audience will be invited to vote to select the public award winner.

Lamorinda filmmakers Vicki Abeles ("Race to Nowhere," "Beyond Measure") and Julie Rubio ("East Side Sushi," "Too Perfect"), and film editor David Santamaria (Early Man Productions; Instructor, Bay Area Video Coalition) will be on the judging panel as well as Los Angeles filmmaker Jon Gun ("My Date with Drew," "Like Dandelion Dust").

"I'm looking forward to being one of the judges," says Rubio. "I hope this festival will help guide the filmmakers on to a special new path of new discoveries, of self awareness and creativity." She adds that in judging the movies she will be looking for films that tell a heartfelt story. "This is, ultimately, what this is all about - storytelling," she says.

"This is our first year and we do not know what to expect," concludes Friedman, "but I am pretty sure that we are going to be blown away by the creativity of the people in the community."

Other LAC volunteers are supporting the project, such as Susan Garell and Lois Mead, who are reaching out to schools and are spreading the word about the competition. More information and registration can be found online at lamorindaarts.org.

LAC free educational seminar on Sunday, Feb. 28 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center:
1 p.m. (elementary and middle school filmmakers)
2 p.m. (high school and adult filmmakers)

Orinda Author Turns 'Trumpisms' into Compilation of Quotes

By Lou Fancher



Carol Pogash talks about her book

Photo provided

Whatever your politics – whether you consider him a populist or eye-popping – there's no question presidential candidate Donald Trump has Americans flipping out.

Which made the arrival at Orinda Books of 50 upside-down copies of writer Carol Pogash's new book, "Quotations from Chairman Trump" (Rossetta Books), somehow unsurprising – and transformed the manufacturing mistake into a must-have commodity at a Jan. 30 book launch.

"People are saying they'd prefer an upside-down copy," said bookstore owner Maria Roden. "It's a phenomenon!"

Roden could have been applying the term to Trump, the misassembled books, or indirectly admitting that when Pogash told her about the book one year ago, she wondered if Trump would still be an active player in the campaign by the time the book was published. "Silly me," Roden said.

Pogash, a longtime Orinda resident, writes frequently for The New York Times. The celebrated reporter and columnist has published two previous books, including the Pulitzer Prize-nominated "Seduced by Madness: The True Story of the Susan Polk Murder Case." Her just-released "little red book" is modeled on "Quotations from Chairman Mao" and offers a pithy introduction, Trump quotations with identifying date and location – and full credit to her husband, Dan Detzner, for inventing her favorite term for the candidate's unbelievable terrain, "Trumplandia."

Even Pogash said she was initially surprised by Trump having turned a centuries-old political process on its metaphoric head. "When I started coming across Trump's daily cull of quotes, I was taken aback. It was the unadulterated 'id' coming out," Pogash said.

Soon enough, her mind went to Mao and the small red book that put in print the Chinese leader's grandiose, authoritarian voice. About Trump's words, she said, "They're not poetry, but they're mesmerizing."

With Mao as her model and comedians/television hosts Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert as her inspiration, Pogash said she "channeled that curmudgeon's perspec-

tive." Compiling what would be Trump's oratorio, if it was set to music, she realized, "He wakes up every day, ready to go to war. He only feels good if he can go to war. Then, he wants to go a step further. He wants to humiliate his opponents."

Proving she can come up with sound bites as potent as her subject's, Pogash added, "He's the only person he listens to. He's his own consultant."

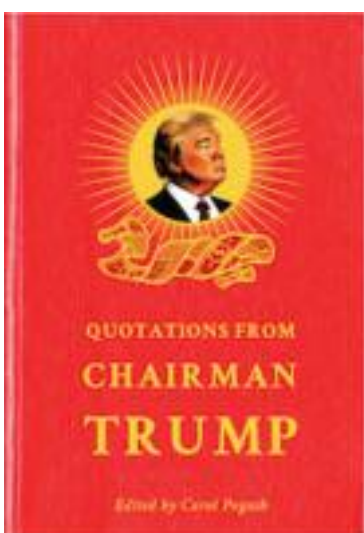
The quotes, collected over six months but not held to strict chronology, are redistributed to tell a story, according to Pogash. Moving through a progression – categories from his self-proclaimed talent talk to candidate stump tweets to "President Trump" proclamations and others – she said the book is obvious satire, but that satire illuminates truth. During her research, she read Trump's every debate, tweet, speech and almost every article written about him up to December 2015. "He's speaking to a latent part of people's feelings and fears about this country. When he says he wants to make America great again, it's as if he wants to return us to the 1950s. But he can't do that; we're a global economy now."

Asking herself and the intimate group of readers at the store what will be left behind, if Trump is not the eventual victor in the presidential race, Pogash gave her answer: "There'll be a crassness to future debates, the push to the right will become pronounced in the Republican party. That party will be left with remorse and need for reconstruction; Latinos, women, Muslims and others will need to be brought back into their party."

Annette O'Connor of Orinda called Trump "a brilliant entertainer" but said his campaign and anger directed at specific communities is dangerous. "It ill behoves a nation of immigrants to denigrate immigrants," she said.

Pogash said in separate comments that the book has not been out long enough to have drawn direct response from readers and reviewers. She has friends who are Trump supporters and despite not aligning her political preference alongside their positions, she has a measure of respect for Trump's devotion to his family. "He has kids who turned out OK, so there's that," she said.

Still waiting for the first reviews, she said an early indication of the book's future might be learned from Amazon. After speaking in late January with "Hardball" television show host Chris Matthews for a 90-second spot, he called her book, "Friday night dessert." Amazon's reaction? "Quotations from Chairman Trump" went overnight from the 28,000 ranking to 400. "There are enthusiasts and those who don't want to hear more from him, but everyone has an opinion," Pogash said.



Upcoming Events at Orinda Books

Poet authors Cynthia-Leslie Bole, who wrote "The Luminous In-Between," a collection of graceful and lyrical poems that invite us to celebrate the radiance of our everyday lives, and Karen Mireau, founder of Azalea Art Press who has helped authors manifest their literary vision for over 30 years and author of "Matzu.Kaze," as well as artist Carol Van Zandt, will speak about their works from 4 to 6 p.m. Monday, March 7 at Orinda Books.

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Chester Arnold, Holding Pond

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February 14 - April 24

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Aubrey Williams, Instagael

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February 14 - April 24

David Maxim: Points of View



David Maxim, The Signal

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William Keith, Collection of the SMCMAA

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Middle School Girls Step into STEM Experience at Conference

By Sophie Braccini



Middle school girls have fun with science at last year's Tech Trek conference.

Photo provided

Middle school girls will have the opportunity to dig into science and mathematics at a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) day offered by the American Association of University Women March 19, with the support of Saint Mary's College and the nonprofit, Expanding Your Horizons. The conference offers a large variety of hands-on workshops for girls to choose from, each led by top scientists.

"The purpose is to capture the interest of the girls, show them the diversity of the scientific world and encourage them to pursue scientific careers," says AAUW member Stacia Cragholm, who originally thought of offering the workshops, open to all interested.

"For years now we have been sending a selected group of middle school girls to Tech Trek, a weeklong science camp," explains Cragholm. "Every year I was thinking about the girls who had applied and had not been selected, and to all the other ones that had not been recommended by their teachers but could still have cu-

riosity and an interest in sciences. This day is an attempt to reach all the middle school girls."

Cragholm needed allies to take on this project and reached out to Saint Mary's College. "I met Dr. Kristen Beck, who teaches Differential Calculus and The Art and Practice of Mathematics at Saint Mary's," says Cragholm. "We had monthly meetings, she was so encouraging and a great resource." Cragholm also brought Expanding Your Horizons on board. The nonprofit has vast experience designing programs to interest young girls in the study of science and mathematics.

"The girls can learn about FBI techniques in investigating a crime scene, how to take apart a computer and put it back together, what it takes to build a strong bridge, what a marshmallow would do in the vacuum that is also used to make integrated circuits, how to build a Star Wars galaxy with code, or how to find exo-planets and discover what powers a star, and much more," says Cragholm. The girls can attend three

of the 12 different workshops offered that day.

The conference will begin with keynote speaker Danielle Feinberg, director of photography for lighting at Pixar Animation Studios, who will discuss how she uses computers for movies. She will share film clips from Pixar films and explain how the films are developed. The workshops are scheduled throughout the rest of the morning and afternoon. The conference will close with a motivational presentation by MJ Marggraff, mission support representative for Virgin Galactic's South Bay space agency.

Parents are invited to stay for a morning presentation by representatives from the Saint Mary's School of Science to learn how to foster their daughters' interest in STEM studies and careers.

The choice of workshops is on a first come, first served basis. Registration is \$20, opened to all middle school girls at <http://www.expandingyourhorizons.org/conferences/AAUWSAINTMARYS/>.

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Lynn's Top Five

Investing in Volatile Times

By Lynn Ballou, CFP®

I have come to believe that market volatility is the new normal. Ever since public access to the Internet connected us in profound and irreversible ways, so too has more information been available to investors than we can perhaps, given our nature, immediately process. This phenomenon can certainly contribute to some sleepless nights. To help you regain some sense of calm and control, here are some ideas for you to consider as you manage your portfolios in these challenging times.

1) Systematic investing: Since we won't know what day investment markets reach their lowest until it's a historical fact, it is helpful to invest specific amounts of money over an appropriate period of time and not all at once. This is also known as dollar cost averaging. If you are contributing to a retirement plan at work, you are engaging in this investment process. If you are reinvesting your dividends and capital gains back into fund holdings, you are also in a small fashion doing the same. This approach can keep you from investing too much all at once when you are not clear where market valuations are headed in the short run, but you want to be invested for the long term.

2) Portfolio design ideas before retirement: Today you might be a full-time worker, perhaps raising a family, with retirement a distant idea. If you are still working, figure out how much you might need over the next year in the way of cash flow for upcoming projects, a possible job loss, or an extra expense such as college or a car. Keep an amount that's equivalent to that need out of markets that experience volatility, for example the stock market, or are illiquid, for example real estate. Having an appropriate amount of money set aside for

short-term needs during volatile times should allow you to still enjoy your life with less worry.

3) Portfolio design ideas during retirement: If you are about to retire, or have already, you need to think differently. Your assets need to be able to weather down market cycles while still benefiting from growth times. In addition to the idea of setting up reserves for short-term expenses, you also must create a dependable income stream. One approach is to think about the number of years markets can take to recover when they experience difficulties, and build a portfolio that produces enough income to help you through. You want to avoid selling assets when markets are low. You also need to be tactical about what assets you spend and in which order with respect to tax matters. Additionally you might decide to begin pensions or social security payments earlier in order to defer the need to withdraw as much from your investments.

4) What's your risk tolerance? Can you handle down markets? If so, in what ways and how much? Some of you love the ride and are okay with volatility. Others would rather avoid portfolio bounce, preferring to experience fewer market pops in return for mitigating the impact of market drops. There are some great online tools for you to use to assess your tolerance for risk. Take them during good times and bad to keep it real. Your trusted advisors can assist you with this as well.

5) Have an honest look at your personal investment resources. Even the most logical portfolio can only do so much. You need to make sure you don't count on your portfolio to perform unrealistic tasks for you during your life. If you have limited

resources, what you can control are spending, increasing savings or maybe even delaying retirement. If you are retired, perhaps there is part-time, enjoyable work you could take up. Volunteer at the theatre to see shows for free. Work as a customer service driver for an auto service shop if you miss people. Work for Uber or Lyft, even! Do whatever you can to take some amount of spending stress off your assets' shoulders.

So what's the bottom line here? You and I cannot control markets, but we can control our investor behavior. Think about your core values and investment needs both short and long-term and don't ignore your risk tolerance factor. A good night's sleep can be an asset, too!



Lynn Ballou is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional and Regional Director with EP Wealth Advisors, a Registered Investment Advisory Firm in Lafayette. Information used in the writing of this column is believed to be factual and up-to-date, however, we do not guarantee its accuracy. This column does not involve the rendering of personalized investment advice and is not intended to supplement individualized professional advice. A financial, tax and/or legal professional should be consulted before implementing any of the strategies directly or indirectly suggested and discussed. All investment strategies have the potential for profit or loss.



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Free Film Screening Focuses on Anti-Bullying Movement

Submitted by Eric Andresen



Image provided

The Moraga iKind Project, a community-based anti-bullying program that is an extension of the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School iKind program, is sponsoring the movie "A Brave Heart, the Lizzie Velasquez Story." The documentary, which chronicles the inspiring journey of 26-year-old, 58-pound Velasquez, as she goes from cyber-bullying victim to anti-bullying activist, will be shown at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11 at the Campolindo High School Performing Arts Center. Following the free screening – which is open to parents and students in fourth to 12th grades, as well as teachers and local leaders – a student panel will respond to the film and to audience questions. The goal of the Mor-

aga iKind Project is to promote kindness and courtesy, and to foster courage, bravery and inclusion beyond the schools. The Campolindo Leadership Committee and the Acalanes High School Diversity Committee are also sponsoring this event. To RSVP, visit moragaikind.org.

**Submit stories and story ideas to
storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com**

'Facing Life and Death'

A film and discussion at the Orinda Library

Submitted by Beth Girshman



Dr. Michelle Peticolas Photo provided

Garden Room.

Peticolas is a sociologist and longtime student of Sufism. She teaches seminars on end-of-life and leads loss support groups around the Bay Area. She has been working in the field of death and loss for over 17 years. Producer of the award-winning documentary "Secret of Life and Death," she also presents at hospitals, hospices and community groups around northern California.

Death is a subject that much of modern western society prefers to avoid. Following the 26-minute film screening Peticolas will lead a moderated discussion where participants may share stories and listen to the stories of others. For information, visit www.secretsoflifeanddeath.com or call the Orinda Library at (925) 254-2184.

The Orinda library is hosting a free screening of the film, "Facing Life and Death," by East Bay filmmaker, Michelle Peticolas at 6: 30 p.m. in the Orinda Library

Community Service

Miramonte Student Wins Lions' Speakers Contest

Submitted by Fred George



Winning contestant, Aaron Baum, from Miramonte High School, and Fred George, chair of the contest Photo provided

The Lamorinda Lions Club Student Speakers Contest was held Feb. 2 at the Moraga Public Library. Miramonte High School student Aaron Baum won this year's contest, speaking on the topic: "Liberty and Justice for All – what does it mean to you?" Baum will go on to compete at the Zone level contest to be held at 7 p.m. March 9 at the Peacock Theatre in Rossmore. The contest has a number of levels, but the winner of all can win up to \$22,000 in scholarship money. The Lamorinda Lions Club has done very well in the past with its contestants, getting one to the finals and two to the semi-finals. Much of this credit belongs to the Miramonte High School Speech teacher Kristen Plant who does a wonderful job of preparing these young people for the contest. The public is invited to the March 9 event.

Senior Girl Scout Troop 30072 Helps Feed Those in Need

Submitted by Kim Jinnett



Photo provided

Continuing in their long tradition of community service, Campolindo High School Girl Scouts from Troop 30072 in Moraga organized and packed food supplies on Jan. 31 at the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano for needy individuals. Every year thousands of seniors, families, children and adults need food assistance and the Food Bank provides just such a resource with help from community volun-

teers. The Girl Scouts sorted donated bread, tossing out the moldy and the mushed, and boxed up fresh pears to be distributed to schools with children in need throughout Contra Costa County. As always, the girls felt very satisfied after helping and look forward to assisting more in the community. Look for information about Troop 30072 annual Spring Garage Sale coming soon.

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

CAPA Fundraiser for Special Camp

Submitted by Rebecca Oczkus

California Academy of Performing Arts
Senior Ensemble

Team GLADIATOR

Proudly Presents A Benefit Dance Performance for Camp Okizu

Gladiator in a Tutu

February 26, 2016
7:30-8:15 pm

All proceeds benefit Camp Okizu, a camp for children with cancer and their families!

Bentley School
1000 Upper Happy Valley Rd
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Inspired by our own brave dancer, 6 year old Finley Brown!

Tickets available at the door
\$15.00 adults, \$12.00 students
Cash or Check

For more information or to donate go to
www.facebook.com/gladiatorinatutu

The senior ensemble at the California Academy of Performing Arts in Moraga is holding a benefit dance show at 7:30 p.m. Feb. 26 at Bentley school. Proceeds go to raise money for Camp Okizu, a camp for kids with cancer.

A featured guest will be Finley Brown, a 6-year-old CAPA dancer who gained international fame thanks to the kindness and generosity of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, which escorted Finley to her final chemotherapy treatment in December, and raised money to send her and the Brown family to Disneyland later this year.

The benefit hopes to raise \$5,000 to send the kids and their families to the camp. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$12 for children. Search "Gladiator in a Tutu" on Facebook for more information.

Lamorinda Village Receives Generous Donation for Orinda Membership Subsidies

Submitted by Anne Ornelas

To start off the New Year, Lamorinda Village received a welcome gift from the Orinda Community Foundation – a \$2,000 donation.

The Foundation's mission – "Enhancing the Quality of Life in Orinda" – correlates with the Village mission of supporting Lamorinda residents who wish to remain safe and independent in their homes. From its earliest months of development, the Village has aimed to provide membership opportunities to all, including those who may not be able to afford the standard membership fees. The OCF funding will support Orinda residents who meet the criteria for subsidies.

"We are delighted to receive this grant from the Foundation," said Village founder and president Ruth McCahan. "As we approach the end of our first year in operation, we want to be sure that all members of our community have the opportunity to benefit from the connections and services we offer."

The Subsidized Membership Program is confidential and offered to individuals and couples with an income less than 60 percent of the Average Median Income of Contra Costa County. Without the support that the Village provides, seniors with low income or without local family support are at risk of isolation, lack of medical care, and other assistance.

Lamorinda Village membership is open to residents over age 55 who are living in Lafayette, Moraga, or Orinda. The Village is pursuing grants for subsidized membership for residents of all three communities, in addition to funding to support the growing portfolio of programs and services offered to members. In December the Village was fortunate to receive matching funds from two generous donors, so that donations received in that period were doubled.

For more information about membership to the Village, visit www.lamorindavillage.org or contact the office at (925) 253-2300.

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, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

'Accused'

International thriller opens Feb. 19 at Orinda Theatre

By Sophie Braccini



Photo provided

This month's International Film Showcase selection, "Accused," is a well-done criminal mystery, harsh, thrilling, nerve racking—a tough film, based on a true story. It denounces the abuse and collusion between justice and economic interest, the complacency of some magistrates and the difficulties to bring truth forth once verdicts have been rendered. The film from the Netherlands is a must-see for all those interested in the courts and in justice.

Lucia De Berk's story began in the Netherlands in 2001. She was a nurse in a hospital where a baby in her care died. First toxicology reports showed poison in the baby's blood that caused his death. De Berk was accused of murder. A somewhat arrogant loner, she attracted suspicion. The prosecution scrutinized her past and started collecting data on deaths that had happened while she was working. Statistical and circumstantial evidence was enough to convict

her of seven murders and four attempted murders. She was sentenced to life in prison. Only a few people believed in her and tried to fight the judicial system for years to free her. This case is said to have been the most blatant miscarriage of justice in modern Netherlands.

Kudos go to director Paula Van der Oest. There is no lag time as the scenario is effectively set and the audience quickly senses the inescapable trap De Berk is going to fall into, and how she becomes prisoner of a terrible grinding machine with no rewind button. In this role Ariane Schuller, who plays De Berk, found a way to express human despair with class. The rest of the cast also offer solid and touching performances. All of them look real—normal people from everyday life thrown into a turmoil that threatens to crush them all.

A part of the movie takes place in Netherlands' prisons, which is not a pretty sight. The scenario does not

dwell on some of the worst things that happened to De Berk, such as the stroke she suffered after one of her judicial setbacks or her detention in an asylum. There are other ways the movie is not true to the facts; the eager young prosecutor who builds the case against her is an invention. The film only barely touches on the hysteria that developed in the press and the public against De Berk, who was called "The Angel of Death." The role of public opinion in a case with such media coverage could have been explored when it worked against the nurse, and then later, for her.

"Accused" is opening Feb. 19 for a one-week United States commercial premiere engagement at the Orinda Theatre. It was shortlisted for an Oscar in the Best Foreign Film category. This is the second time that a film directed by Van Der Oest has represented its country at the Academy Awards. For information, visit www.lamorindatheatre.com.

International Film Festival at Pleasant Hill March 5-13

Submitted by Riva Gambert

The East Bay International Jewish Film Festival kicks off its 21st season on Saturday, March 5 at the Century 16 Theatres in Pleasant Hill with the Best Foreign Film Oscar nominee "Labyrinth of Lies." It will conclude with another Oscar submission in the foreign language category, "Baba Joon," on March 13.

"We're delighted that our 21st year will bring many award-winning films to our community that speak to a broad audience," says chair Margaret Winter, a Contra Costa resident originally from London. "And while many of our films embrace serious issues, festival-goers will also be able to enjoy lighter fare such as the romantic French comedy 'Serial Bad Weddings' and the American romance '5 to 7' co-starring Glenn Close and Frank Langella."

The closing night film "Baba Joon" has received much press because it is Israel's first film in the Iranian language Farsi. It tells a universal story of intergenerational conflict and father and son relations. Veteran actor Navid Negahban, best known in the United States as mastermind Abu Nazir in Showtime's Homeland, stars as Yitzhak, the tough father who demands that his son Moti follow in his footsteps. The international cast is made up of almost all Iranian-born actors.

The Festival includes films from Spain, France, Canada, Germany, Morocco, New Zealand, Poland and Israel. Based on a true incident, the Spanish World War II thriller "Dirty Wolves" follows the heroic exploits of two women who sabotaged a Nazi mining operation. "The Canadian drama, Remember, stars two legendary actors, Christopher Plummer and Martin Landau. It is a must see," adds Margaret. "You will remember this film long after the credits roll."

The entire nine-day schedule can be viewed online at eastbayjewishfilm.org.

Lamorinda Music Teacher ... continued from page B1

Meyer's service extends beyond the classroom. From 1969 to 1975 he served as a clarinetist in the National Guard's 59th Army Band. For Meyer, joining the National Guard was no small miracle, and was quite possibly a lifesaver. He had been given a 1-A classification by the Selective Service and a week out of college he was preparing to report for service—and a likely tour of Vietnam. Then a friend called with the offer to audition for the Guard.

Shortly after joining the 59th Army Band, Meyer took his first teaching position in Yuba City and so began his double life. "I'd work all day at school, jump in the car, go up to Sacramento. I played for the governor, I played for Reagan's inauguration, I played for big time social events for senators," he said. "It was just a hoot, we really had a good time." It wasn't uncommon for him to get home at 2 a.m.

Meyer devoted the same time and

energy to the CMEA starting in the '80s. He served two terms as a CMEA Bay Section Band Representative and one term as president of the regional Bay Section.

Meyer figures to be surrounded by CMEA colleagues, as well as friends and family, when he's inducted into the CMEA Hall of Fame at the Feb. 12 Awards Gala. No doubt Meyer will want to find somewhere to celebrate afterward, so long as it isn't the Round Up.

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ART

"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 Pyman, 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 through March 19.

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@sbc-global.net.

"Two Painters" - An Exhibit featuring Deborah Kirklin and Robert Poplack at the Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery. Husband and wife, both professors of art and artists themselves, in their first show together - still life and abstract, separate in subject but joined by a lifelong partnership. The exhibit runs Feb. 13 through March 19, with an opening reception from 6 to 8 p.m. on Feb. 13 and an Artist Talk and Q&A at 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 20.

Opening Feb. 14 and continuing through April, the Saint Mary's College Museum of Art will feature the following exhibits: "Environmental Impact," William Keith, and "The Battle for Hetch Hetchy." In addition, "Instagaeals," a student Instagram exhibition, displays the best photographs the student community has to offer, but also provokes fundamental discussions about the identity of art, while David Maxim's "Points of View" explores the eternal mysteries of metaphorical meaning and ambiguity. The museum is open from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. For info, visit www.stmarys-ca.edu/museum.

Valley Art Gallery "Water Works" exhibit runs through Feb 16. Water in all its moods and forms, from drips and drops, rain, rivulets, streams, rivers and oceans, has always attracted the attention of artists. For info, visit www.valleyartgallery.org or call (925) 935-4311.

MUSIC

Discovering Opera: Bizet's "Carmen," presented by Bradford Wade, opera lover for 35 years from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 11 at the Lafayette Library, Arts and Science Room. Lecturer Bradford Wade will give a guided tour of Carmen, with a description of the plot interspersed with musical examples. This lecture is given in conjunction with Opera San Jose's Feb. 13-28 production of "Carmen." Members: free; non-Members: \$10.

Enjoy another musically innovative and thrilling evening presented by the Piano Composers group of the Contra Costa Performing Arts Society at 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 12 at the Lafayette Library, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. The event is co-sponsored by Friends of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Parking is easy and there is no charge. For info, visit www.ccpas.org.

Soprano Litz Plummer will sing the greatest opera arias of all time, live at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 13 at the Rheem Theatre in Moraga. She will be performing music from Gianni Schicchi, Madama Butterfly, La Boheme, Le Nozze di Figaro by Mozart and Carmen by Bizet, among others. Tickets (\$20) are limited and recommended to purchase online at www.lamorindatheatres.com.

The senior ensemble at California Academy of Performing Arts (CAPA) is holding a benefit dance show "Gladia in a Tutu" to raise money for Camp Okizu (a camp for kids with cancer) from 7:30 to 8:15 p.m. Friday, Feb. 26 at Bentley school. Tickets are available at the door: \$15 adults; \$12 students.

Love jazz music, like "Cantaloupe Island" by Herbie Hancock or "There Will Never Be Another You" by Harry Warren? Can't get enough classical? Local community members can listen to the musical styling's of award-winning student jazz combos, a string quartet and a "little big band" as part of the second annual "Orchestra and Band on the Run" event at 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 27 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Lafayette. The event includes dinner, an auction and dancing afterward to music provided by D.J. Scott Haney. Tickets are \$50 and can be purchased at Brown Paper Tickets, www.2016orchestraandbandontherun.brownpapertickets.com.

The Welsh-American Society of Northern California will hold its annual Gymanfa Ganu - Hymn-Singing Festival - at Lafayette United Methodist Church from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28. Everyone who loves music is invited to attend. A Te Bach (Little Tea) will follow the singing.

THEATER

Role Players Ensemble presents "Good People" by David Lindsay-Abaire. Quirky, unpredictable and grounded in a genuine humor that comes from hitting rock bottom, "Good People" will have you laughing one moment and crying the next as it explores the nature of our loyalties and our hopes. The show through Feb. 14 - 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 2 p.m. on Sunday at Village Theatre, 233 Front Street, Danville. Tickets: \$20-28; online at www.RolePlayersEnsemble.com; at Danville Community Center, 420 Front St, Danville; or call (925) 314-3400.

Tony Kushner's Pulitzer-winning magnum opus comes to its jaw-dropping conclusion on the Town Hall Theatre stage this February, as the entire cast of last season's critically-acclaimed "Angels In America: Millennium Approaches" returns to finish what they began, beginning work on Part II: "Perestroika." The show will run from Feb. 27 through March 19. Check online for show times and ticket prices. For info, contact the Town Hall Theatre Box Office at (925) 283-1557 or visit www.TownHallTheatre.com.

Solo Opera's "The Computer Kid's Magic Night" is a great show for the entire family! The show runs at the Lesh Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek at 7:30 p.m. March 4 and 2 p.m. March 5. Seating is reserved, group discounts are available. Tickets \$25-\$35. For tickets call (925) 943-7469; or visit the Lesh Center box office, or online at <https://lesherartscenter.showare.com/eventperformances.asp?evt=412>. For more info, visit www.SoloOpera.org.

LECTURE & LITERATURE

Moraga Movers and the Moraga Library present "Book Talking" at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10. This program will take place in the Mosaic Room at the Hacienda de Las Flores, 2100 Donald Drive. Joann Reid will discuss "In the Kingdom of Ice" by Hampton Sides. This hour-long program will consist of a brief book review, including critical viewpoints and key components of the book as well as time for discussion.

Lafayette author Jil Plummer will discuss and sign her new book, "Remember to Remember," at 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 14 at Papillon cafe in Lafayette. The book is a fictionalized story of Brenda Oum, Papillon's owner, who as a 5-year-old survived the horrors of the killing fields in Cambodia.

"Auschwitz: A Survivor's Tale." The Lafayette Library welcomes 94-year-old Auschwitz survivor, retired physician and lecturer Dora Sorell, author of "Tell the Children: Letters to Miriam," told in the form of letters to her granddaughter about her experiences during World War II and losses during the Holocaust. This free program will be held at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 20 in the Community Hall. Register online at tinyurl.com/DoraSorell.

Zulu nurse and healthcare activist Sister Abigail Ntleko, author of "Empty Hands" and a recipient of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama's Unsung Heroes of Compassion Award will be visiting from South Africa to share her incredible story of overcoming poverty, racism, and sexism to earn her education, and live a life in service to her community by adopting dozens of children orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic over the course of her 80 years. This free program will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 24 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center in the Community Hall. Register online at tinyurl.com/EmptyHandsLAF.

Berkeley Repertory Theatre Docent Lecture of the world premiere of Aubergine by Julia Cho at 1 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25. This program will take place in the Mosaic Room at the Hacienda de Las Flores, 2100 Donald Drive.

"Facing Life and Death: a film and discussion" at the Orinda Library at 6:30 p.m. on Feb. 25 in the Garden Room. Death is a subject that much of modern western society prefers to avoid. Following the 26-minute film screening Dr. Peticolos will lead a moderated discussion where participants may share stories and listen to the stories of others. For info, visit www.secretsoflifeanddeath.com. Free. For more information, call the Orinda Library at (925) 254-2184. (See story page B6)

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

Lafayette Library and Learning Center presents Operation Gratitude from 4 to 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 18 in the Arts and Science room. Share the love from Valentine's Day! Make paracord bracelets and write letters for our United States Military serving abroad. Register online at tinyurl.com/LAF-gratitude.

Magical Zoology Collage from 4 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 20 at uBe Art, 2507 San Pablo Ave, Berkeley. Create Magical Creatures using magazines and paper. What's more fun than creating 'Art' while sipping wine with friends? All materials included. Cost: \$29. For more info, visit <http://www.ube-art.com> or call (415) 515-8094 or email info@ube-art.com.

Practice SAT - The American Association of University Women (AAUW) Scholarship Committee has scheduled the second test for 8:30 a.m. check-in 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. Registration required. 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/.

Contra Costa Camp and School Fair - fourth annual free event with booths for camps, schools, preschool, daycare, STEM and STEAM programs, sports, martial arts, gymnastics, enrichment, performing arts, scouts and family vacations from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb 21 at Acalanes High School, 1200 Pleasant Hill Rd., Lafayette. Free admission and parking. For info, visit www.ContraCostaCampFair.com.

Moraga Summer Camp Expo from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, March 5 at the Hacienda de las Flores, 2100 Donald Drive in Moraga.

The 30th session of the California State Summer School for the Arts seeks teen artists, writers and performers for summer 2016 (July 9 through Aug. 5 - four weeks of embracing creativity). Applications must be completed by Feb. 29. Financial aid available. For info, visit CSSSA.ca.gov.

... continued on next page

Please submit events to:
calendar@lamorindaweekly.com

MOVIE REVIEW

'Hail, Caesar!'

By Derek Zemrak



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The Coen brothers are back with their latest movie, "Hail, Caesar!" Joel and Ethan Coen have brought audiences many great films over the years, including but not limited to, "No Country for Old Men," which won four Oscars, including Best Picture in 2008, "The Big Lebowski" in 1998, which will be the Free Movie next month on Thursday, March 10 at the Orinda Theatre and one of my favorite films of all time, "Fargo" in 1996. This time the brother-directing team makes fun of the industry that made them household names. "Hail, Caesar!" takes place in the 1950s and is centered on a Hollywood "fixer," Eddie Mannix (Josh Brolin). In Hollywood at this time, the "fixer" was the one who would make sure the gossip columnists did not print any scandals that would damage the actors or studio in any way.

When Eddie, a family man, takes the job at Capitol Pictures he soon finds out it is a whole new world, as he must deal with the kidnapping of Capi-

to Pictures' biggest star, Baird Whitlock (George Clooney). The Coen brothers like kidnapping storylines, as we have seen in their previous films, "The Big Lebowski," "Raising Arizona" and "Fargo." As if kidnapping is not enough to deal with, Eddie is faced with DeeAnna Moran (Scarlett Johansson) as the "Esther Williams" synchronized swimming star who is pregnant. The studio wants her to marry the dad-to-be, Hobie Doyle (Alden Ehrenreich), who plays a spaghetti western star. Add to the mix, the studio's highest paid musical dance star, Burt Gurney (Channing Tatum), who is also hiding a few big secrets. Sounds like a normal day in Hollywood!

Is "Hail Caesar!" the Coen brothers' best movie? No, but their movie meter is far higher than most Hollywood standards. "Hail, Caesar!" is worth the price of admission and the 1 hour and 46 minutes TRT. It is rated PG-13.

Live Opera at the Rheem



Soprano Litz Plummer

Are you looking for something different to do at 7 p.m. in Lamorinda this Saturday, Feb. 13? How does a live opera concert sound? The Rheem Theatre is presenting Soprano Litz Plummer as she sings the greatest opera arias of all time, live at the Rheem. She will be performing music from Gianni Schicchi, Madama Butterfly, La Boheme, Le Nozze di Figaro by Mozart and Carmen by Bizet, among others. Hari Bayani will be Plummer's accompanist. Come experience Plummer's glorious vocal gift. Tickets are limited and recommended to purchase online at www.lamorindatheatres.com.

◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆

OTHER

Free Tax Preparation for the 2016 tax season is available starting February 2016 from AARP's Tax-Aide and United Way's Earn It, Keep It, Save It (EKS) programs. All tax preparers are trained and certified by the IRS. While both programs serve taxpayers of any age, Tax-Aide does not have an income limit in whom they can serve but EKS can only serve individuals whose incomes do not exceed \$50,000. For general information and site locations, call: (925) 726-3199. For information on EKS sites call 211 or visit www.earnit-keepitsaveit.org.

Get Your Ashes Downtown (Lafayette and Orinda BART stations) on Ash Wednesday from noon to 2 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10. Call Pastor Marylee (925) 789-7794 for the station/time most convenient for you.

The Valentine Kitties R Coming! Take a chance on love at Community Concern for Cats Special Valentine Adoption Weekend, Feb. 13-14. All kittens and cats are only \$75, down from the usual price of \$125, at Pet Food Express in Lafayette and Pleasant Hill, Petco in Walnut Creek. Hours are 1 to 4 p.m. except Saturday in Lafayette when it's noon to 3 p.m. For more info, visit www.communityconcernforcats.org.

On the Bayou/New Orleans Style dinner and silent auction at 6 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 14 on the Saint Mary's College campus in Moraga. Music will be provided by the "and that's jazz" band from Alameda. The price for dinner and entertainment is \$45 per person. For info, call (925) 254-3645.

Black History Month: freedom quilt craft and stories from 4 to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 16, at the Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Road. For more info, call (925) 376-6852 or visit ccclib.org.

Celebrate Chinese New Year: Lion Dance performed by Contra Costa Chinese School at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 23 at the Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Road. This free program is open to all ages, no registration necessary. For more info, call (925) 376-6852 or visit ccclib.org.

Contra Costa Living presents Solar Energy Seminar - Top 10 things to

know before you install solar from 4 to 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25 at Lafayette Veteran's Memorial Center, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. You will learn about the top 10 things you must know before you invest in a solar energy system for your home. Free. For more info, visit <https://10thingstoknowbeforeyoubuysolar.eventbrite.com> or call (925) 297-5335 or email Pete@Contra-CostaLiving.com.

Lafayette resident, Papa John Kiefer, will offer workshops on "How to Raise Your Own Chickens." Topics will include raising young chicks, laying hen maintenance, and sustainable coop construction. Workshops are free and will be held in Lafayette from 1 to 3:30 p.m., on Sundays, Feb. 14 and 28. Reservations are required. For info, contact jhkiefer@comcast.net.

Men "of a certain age" (semi- or fully-retired) are invited to hear a presentation from Linus Eukel who is the Director of the John Muir Land Trust during the SIRs regular lunch meeting at 11 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 10, Holy Trinity Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga. SIRs welcomes new members. For details, visit www.branch174.sirinc2.org or call Tyler at (925) 284-5561.

Sons In Retirement - Las Trampas Branch 116 welcomes guests to socialize at its monthly luncheon beginning at 11 a.m. Monday, Feb. 15 at the Walnut Creek Elks Lodge, 1475 Creekside Drive. The speaker will be SIR Joel White, physician, who will explore the concept of shared-decision making in medicine in his presentation entitled, "What you need to know and do unless you are certain you will live forever." The presentation will help attendees create better options and make choices that can comfort and enhance our experience even to the end, providing not only a good life but also a good end. Please call (925) 322-1160 to make lunch reservations. Cost for lunch: \$15.

Ready to give your brain a boost? Join author of "Strengthen Your Mind," Kristin Einberger, for a workshop on the benefits of stimulating your brain and ways to strengthen your mind on Friday, Feb. 19 in Lafayette. You'll be engaged in brain games and activities that will stimulate your mind,

memories and senses. Workshop is open only to individuals with Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), early stage Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia, and their care partners. Cost: \$15 per participant. Pre-screening is required. Exact time and location will be provided upon complete registration. For more information or to register, please contact Lan Trinh at 1-800-272-3900 or ltrinh@alz.org.

Mindful Aging at the Moraga Library: Aging in Place and Universal Design at 11 a.m. Saturday, Feb. 20. Robineve Cole, Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) will share how to remodel and prepare homes so they can be beautiful and practical as we age, as well as for family members of all sizes and abilities. Learn how to make changes big and small, on your own or with the assistance of a designer or builder, using Universal Design concepts.

GARDEN

The Moraga Garden Club meeting will be held at the Holy Trinity Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga, at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, Feb. 18. The speaker will be Linda Mizes, who will be giving a presentation entitled, "Habitat, It's for the Birds, the Bees and It's for Us." Interested parties are welcome for the 9:30 a.m. social time, marketplace table and meeting at 10 a.m.

Montelindo Garden Club meeting will be at 9 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 19 at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephens Drive, Orinda. Visitors welcome. Presentation: "Incorporating Succulents Into Everyday Garden" by Rebecca Sweet, owner of the garden design company Harmony in the Garden, author, and speaker.

Registration for the Sunday, May 1 Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour is now open! This year's tour will fill; register now to reserve your place. A variety of bird- and butterfly-friendly, pesticide-free, water conserving, low maintenance gardens that contain 60 percent or more native plants will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, May 1 at various locations throughout Alameda and Contra Costa counties. More than 40 garden talks will be scheduled throughout the day. For info, visit <http://www.bringingbackthenatives.net/registration-p1>.

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Service Clubs Announcements

Rotary

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

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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

February 12: A visiting New Zealand Rotary couple describe life on a "small" stage	February 19: Ron Olwin, St. Mary's professor of Astronomy/Astro Physics, back by popular demand
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New Zealand Wine Exploration, exquisite hors d'oeuvres, \$50 Sunday March 6, 4 PM, Lafayette Library...to benefit Families Without Borders

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.

February 18: John Coleman from East Bay MUD will be speaking about the drought situation.	February 25: Peter Brooks will talk about the White Pony Express
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We are dark on February 11.
www.rotarylafayette.org

Lamorinda Weekly
is an independent publication, produced by and for the residents of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, CA
26,600 printed copies; delivered to homes & businesses in Lamorinda.

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Hearty Soup made with Perfect Hominy

By Susie Iventosch

My sister has been making posole for years, but it never occurred to me to try it until I encountered a shelf in the grocery store boasting both blue and white bags of posole. I pondered over which way to go, and decided that since it was going to be a preliminary attempt, I would go for the white variety. What



Chicken Posole (also Pozole)

Photo Susie Iventosch

is posole anyway? Basically, it is hominy, but sometimes the word posole, which is actually the name of a Mexican soup, is also used for the hominy itself. So, what is hominy? It is corn kernels that have undergone a process called nixtamalization, which is a soaking in an alkaline solution, usually a mineral lime bath. This process loosens the hulls and softens the kernel, allowing the kernels to nearly double in size. But, remember, when you buy dried hominy, the kernels are very, very hard, so don't try biting into them ... yet!

Now, keeping in mind that my sister uses canned hominy in her posole, I began to wonder if perhaps I was a little crazy, because the

process takes a lot more time than opening a can. First, you rinse the kernels, and then you soak them in water overnight, before boiling them in salted water or broth for a couple of hours to get them to the desired, al dente texture. All of this is before you begin any of the other soup fixings. After making, eating and enjoying this posole very much, I would say that the time spent was well worth it. The texture of the hominy is delightful and so flavorful, too. This is a delicious and very hearty soup, one that, along with a salad, makes a fine meal. Also, you can prepare the hominy and chicken a day or two ahead of time and refrigerate them until you are ready to make the soup.

INGREDIENTS

Hominy

- 6 ounces dried hominy (posole)
- 4 cups water (approximately)
- 4 cups chicken broth (approximately)
- ½ Ortega chili (use the other half in soup)
- ½ Poblano pepper (use the other half in the rest of the soup)

Chicken

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- ½ red onion, chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
- ½ cup dry white wine

Soup

- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ red onion, chopped (chop the whole onion and save half for the chicken)
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- ½ Ortega chili, chopped (the other half is cooked with the hominy)
- ½ Poblano pepper, chopped (the other half is cooked with the hominy)
- 3 tomatoes, chopped
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons oregano
- 1 14-ounce can pinto beans, drained
- 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes in juices
- 2 cups chicken broth
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Garnishes

- Lime slices or wedges
- Radishes, thinly sliced
- Avocado, sliced
- Cilantro leaves
- Sharp cheddar, grated

DIRECTIONS

Hominy

Rinse hominy in a colander and place in a glass or plastic bowl. Cover with water, and allow to sit overnight. In the morning, drain the water from the hominy and place it in a pot with a tight-fitting lid. Add about 4 cups of chicken broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium, but continue to cook at a low boil for approximately two hours, or until hominy kernels have blossomed in size and have an al dente texture. Set aside. (Can make a day or more ahead of time.)

Chicken

Preheat oven to 350F. Spray a baking dish, and place chicken breasts in bottom of dish. Sprinkle oregano, paprika and cumin on chicken breasts and rub into the meat. Mince garlic over chicken and scatter chopped onions and sliced jalapeno on and around chicken. Pour white wine over the chicken and cover the dish tightly with foil. Bake for approximately 45 minutes, or until chicken is cooked through. Remove from oven, reserve onions, peppers and juices, but place chicken on a cutting board and shred (or pull) with two forks. Place shredded chicken back into juices and cool to room temperature. Refrigerate until ready to use. (Can also make a day or two ahead of time.)

Soup

In a large soup pot, sauté onion and garlic in olive oil until translucent. Add spices and the reserved chopped Ortega and Poblano peppers and continue to cook for another few minutes. Stir in chopped fresh tomatoes. When heated, add canned tomatoes and all of the juices, drained pinto beans, reserved cooked hominy and 2 cups of chicken broth. Bring to a rolling boil, reduce heat, and simmer for another 20 to 30 minutes. Add chicken about five or 10 minutes before ready to serve, and cook until chicken is heated through. Serve in bowls and garnish with grated cheddar, sliced radishes, sliced avocado and cilantro leaves. Pass lime wedges for each person to squeeze over their soup.



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.

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Mats Hunt for DFAL Title, Cougars and Dons in NCS Mix

By Karl Buscheck



Eddy Ionescu (4) and Madison Young (24)

Miramonte dished out some revenge against Campolindo on Feb. 2, claiming round two of the rivalry matchup 60-48. The victory also positioned the Mats to make a play for the DFAL boys basketball crown.

After beating their neighbors in Orinda, the Mats topped Alhambra 65-49 at home on Feb. 5 and have now reeled off four consecutive wins.

"I think that we're taking some strides towards being the best team

that we can and I think that we've gotten stronger as the season's progressed," head coach Drew McDonald said, as his Mats sit in second place (7-2 in league and 17-6 overall). "We still have a chance to win the league and once that's over we'll start thinking about postseason."

If Miramonte does manage to catch the front-runners, Dougherty Valley (8-1), the lion's share of the credit will go to senior Eddy Ionescu.

"Quite frankly, I think that Eddy Ionescu has been the best player in the league," McDonald declared. "Offensively he's been the dominant player - scoring in the mid-20s game in and game out."

It hasn't just been a one-man show, as the Mats have called upon a deep supporting cast.

"It's really been a team effort because the rest of the guys compete as a group," McDonald said. "I could name individuals but I would be listing six to eight after Eddy."

The Mats have just two league games left - including a crucial tilt against Dougherty Valley on Feb. 11. But in the stacked DFAL, the team can't afford to look ahead to the NCS Division III playoffs.

"The league season has been competitive and it's a challenge to win game in and game out, regardless of the opponent," McDonald said. "It's very difficult to win consistently in our league."

Kearey Smith, the head coach of the fourth-place Cougars, echoed McDonald's sentiment.

"I'll be honest with you, this year [in] DFAL, the parity is pretty amazing," Smith said.

Campo's record stands at 4-5 in league (11-12 overall), but it would be even better if not for a couple of January losses to Dougherty Valley and third-place Dublin by a combined eight points. As the Cougars close out the DFAL slate, Smith has a simple message for his players: "effort and consistency."

"That's the consistent thing that I say each and every practice - each and every game," Smith explained.

Like the Mats, the Cougars have benefited from having a talented corps of role players, but the team has also leaned heavily on a trio of senior stars. ... continued on page C3

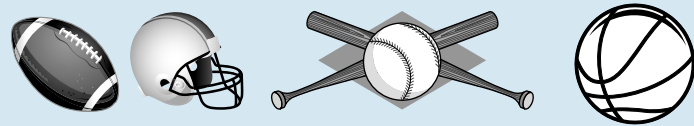


Austin Clarke (24) and Aaron Hill (24)



Andrew McKendell (5) and Trevin Kroichick

Youth Sports Registration



Lamorinda Lacrosse

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Acalanes Girls Continue Hunt for Elusive NCS Title

By Emily Dugdale



Callie Ericksen (19) moved from offense to defense this winter because of injuries. "She's a true two-way player," according to coach Evan Sassano.



Regan McQuain and twin sister Kyle have played big roles in the Lady Dons' success this winter.

"You have a target on your back," head coach Evan Sassano told his huddled players before last Wednesday's soccer match against Las Lomas.

The Lady Dons (8-2-2) are having another strong season. However, they hit a rough patch last week. On Wednesday, the Lady Dons were felled 3-1 by Las Lomas – their first regular-season loss in two years – and then suffered another loss Friday night to Dublin 2-1.

"On both ends it was sloppy," Sassano said after the Las Lomas match. "We're a lot better on the attack than we showed tonight."

Despite the heart-wrenching losses, Acalanes still finds themselves near the top of the DFAL standings. The team must win their final two league matches to have a chance at a winning consecutive league titles. It's a tall order, but Sassano isn't fazed.

"When I first started coaching at Acalanes, it was definitely a rebuilding time," Sassano said. "Last season and this season we definitely turned things around and were able to set clear goals for ourselves," he said.

Deep in his third year coaching the Lady Dons, Sassano has seen his fair share of ups and downs. He credits a team culture of constant improvement, "getting serious," and a strong senior class that mentored younger players as key components to the team's winning efforts this year.

Their success is also noteworthy for the way they have shouldered a handful of key losses. Top defender Lexi Silva was out most of the season due to an ankle injury sustained in their first game, leaving team captain and senior midfielder Regan McQuain the lone senior starter for the early season play.

Kyle McQuain – Regan's twin sister – later stepped up from the reserves as a fill-in for starting goalie Sophia Giordano, who broke her hand during an early season match against Dublin. She's turned out to be a key component in the team's winning record, boasting 41 season saves. (Sassano expects both Silva and Giordano back for NCS.)

"She's playing great," Sassano said of his newest goalie. "She's saved balls that could have easily

been goals in every single game."

But injuries were not the only obstacles to Acalanes' lineup. A handful of seasoned Lamorinda Soccer Club (LMSC) players from all three local high schools decided to forgo the high school soccer season this year, leaving key positions vacant. Sassano counted five of his best players from Acalanes alone.

Instead of falling apart at a diminishing lineup, Sassano's team took a different approach – treating the change as a chance to start something new. "Let's do something that's never been done here before," are words frequently heard on the Acalanes pitch.

The Lady Dons don't rely on a single player to score – their lineup is impressively deep. In their first game of the season, a 4-1 win over College Park, each of the team's goals was scored and assisted by a different girl.

"Players believe in trying to start something here," Sassano said.

On a team where underclassmen are also encouraged to stand out and step up, Acalanes witnessed some incredible talent rise through their ranks this season. "Sasha Sadoff and

Keirra Krawec in particular are two younger players who have already had a strong impact," Sassano said. Sadoff, a freshman, currently leads the Lady Dons in goals (8), despite often appearing as a super-sub.

Seniors McQuain, Silva and Callie Ericksen have been especially instrumental in "taking players under their wings," Sassano said.

"That's a culture we try to bring out – allowing the younger players to be a big part of the team," Sassano said.

It's also a group with years of joint playing time. Several key members of the team – including McQuain, Ericksen, and Sadoff – have spent time together with LMSC, though Sassano pointed out this coincidence isn't necessarily a calculated part of their success.

"They have good chemistry together," Sassano agreed. "But one of the things we try and get the point across is when you're playing high school you have to keep yourself open to new relationships and be willing to work with players you've never played with before."

With just a handful of games

left in the regular season, the team is moving onward from their recent losses to Las Lomas and Dublin.

"Every player on the field needs to come out with a leading mentality," Ericksen said. "We need to come back strong from this."

Despite the recent speed bumps, the Lady Dons remain strong contenders for the NCS title, a prize that has eluded Acalanes for years. Local rivals Miramonte (5-5-4) and Campolindo (6-9-3) have won eight championships in the last 15 years, with the Mats taking home the most recent title. This year, however, both have middling records.

Last year, the Lady Dons won the DFAL title on the back of a perfect regular season, but ultimately lost to the Mats in sudden death in the NCS semifinals.

"We've shown that we can compete with everyone and this is definitely a good year for us," Sassano said. "We're taking it one game at a time, trying to get better, and hopefully we'll continue to improve the way that we are playing."

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Miramonte Baseball Gives Back Through Partnership With Grateful Gatherings

By Emily Dugdale



Miramonte baseball players spent a Saturday helping a family in need. Photo provided

When Jocelyn walked into her new two-bedroom apartment last Saturday afternoon, she was speechless. Her kitchen was fully stocked. Bunk beds were already set up for her young daughters. There was even laundry detergent, curtains on the windows, and fresh towels – all thanks to a partnership between a local nonprofit and the Miramonte baseball team.

Grateful Gatherings, an Oakland-based organization that provides donated goods to people transitioning out of homelessness, received help from the Mats players and their families last weekend in collecting furniture and setting up a new apartment for Jocelyn (who asked that her last name not be used) and her young family, who were transitioning out of a local shelter.

“I’m still in that phase where I’m full of joy,” Jocelyn said a few days after the big move. “After six months in the shelter, it’s like taking that final breath and saying ‘this is what I’ve been waiting for.’”

Grateful Gatherings was notified by Shelter Inc. that Jocelyn’s family needed help gathering household items for their new apartment. The family – Jocelyn, her husband, Rigo, and three young daughters – entered Shelter Inc.’s Emergency Family Shelter in Martinez last July, when they lost their affordable housing last year due to a family medical crisis.

Rigo recently received a small salary increase in his position as a janitor at Diablo Valley Community College, and Jocelyn’s family was eligible to move into Shelter’s transitional apartments in Antioch.

Partnering with Grateful Gatherings, the Mats sprung into action by sending out a list of household needs a few weeks before the family’s move-in date.

“The baseball team worked really hard this weekend,” Chris Flitter, Grateful Gatherings’ co-founder, said of the Mats. She detailed how the team picked up donated furniture on last Friday, and was up again for Saturday’s move-in to vacuum rugs, set up furniture, and meet and

greet the family as they tearfully entered their new home.

Sterling Kasslea, a 16-year-old sophomore second baseman on the Mats, described taking breaks during the day to play football and meet some of the neighborhood kids. “They were so energetic and they never stopped talking or moving around.”

Kassela especially loved the family’s overjoyed reaction to their new apartment, and hopes to return. “Grateful Gathering is a great idea and I was lucky to be able to help out,” he said. “We were all sad when we had to go. I really hope we get to go back soon.”

According to Miramonte parent Anna Tague, the service project was the first for the baseball team in recent years, and she hopes it will become a trend.

She also underscored the wider point that socioeconomic divisions in the area can make meetings like that witnessed on Saturday a rarity. “I really liked the crossover between boys of all grades as well as adults from families that otherwise would not have a chance to meet,” she said. “I haven’t stopped thinking about it since Saturday.”

“It’s a model for children to see that it doesn’t matter what society you’re from, you can still come together,” Jocelyn said.

Jocelyn’s story is all too common in the Bay Area, Flitter explained.

“It’s important to get local groups involved because sadly, there is a steady stream of people moving out of shelters with no personal belongings, a foster child aging of the system, [or] a family faced with an unbearable tragedy that they cannot work,” she said.

Inspired by their weekend of service, the Mats are actively looking for more local volunteer opportunities. “I think that this work is a great way to get a community together as well as help a family in need,” Kassela said. “I believe our team will get involved with more service activities, and I really hope we do.”

Super Bowl 50 A Homecoming for Miramonte Legend Dorsey



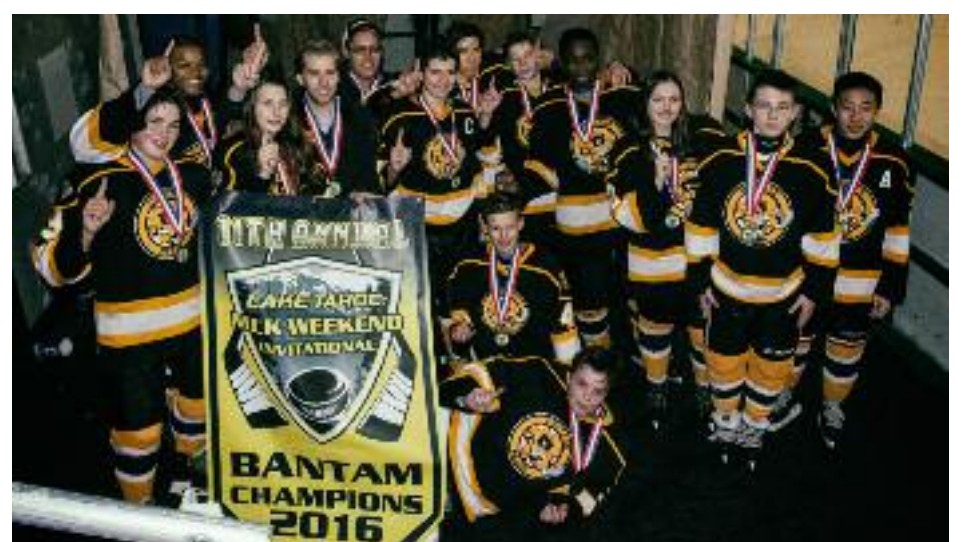
Ken Dorsey, left, poses with Moraga resident and 49ers’ beat reporter Matt Maiocco. Photo Tod Fierner

Ken Dorsey, the former All-American quarterback for Miramonte, who led the Mats to consecutive NCS Championship games in 1997 and 1998, was at Super Bowl 50 in a professional capacity on Sunday. The Orinda native, who became famous for his 38-2 run as a

starter at the University of Miami (Fla.) and winning the NCAA national championship, now works as the quarterbacks coach for the Carolina Panthers – the 2015-2016 NFC Champions. The Panthers lost to the Denver Broncos 24-10. - S. Silva

Bantam Bears Capture Unlikely Overtime Victory

Submitted by Jennifer Koziel



Nolan Koziel, second from right Photo Andrew Sohn

The Oakland Bears Bantam division ice hockey team won the Lake Tahoe Tournament over Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, despite having half as many players as a typical team. They sealed the championship by coming back from a 0-3

deficit, beating a team from San Diego 6-5 in the last two seconds of overtime. The Bears include players from Oakland and East Bay communities. Nolan Koziel is a freshman at Campolindo High School.

Cal Magic U11 Girls Runners Up

Submitted by Jon Zuber



Photo provided

The Cal Magic U11 East Girls team was the runner-up in the State Cup Red Division Seeds 1-8. The team battled through eight tough games in the State Cup Tournament before dropping the final to Mustangs.

The girls’ fast-paced, possession-style soccer was on display throughout tournament. Their hustle and determination was seen and admired by all teams.

Santa Maria 3rd Grade CYO Team Wins Diocese Championship

Submitted by Stephanie Barmmer



From left: Jessica Smith, Julia Q, Franny G, Sophie C, Katie B, Jocelyn G, Jossie S, Ava O, Charlie S, Kimya K, Maren T, Brian Chinn Photo provided

Santa Maria’s third grade CYO Warriers finished an encouraging (12-0) season by winning the Diocese Champi-

onship, beating a tough Christ the King basketball team. Coaches Brian Chinn and Jessica Smith led the team effort courtside.

Hunt for DFAL Title ... continued from page C1

“Austin Clarke is primarily our number one scorer and he’s a guy that can really get things going,” Smith said. “And when we have a balanced scoring attack, it usually follows up with both Will Hicks and Sterling Strothers. When those three guys are filling it up, it’s pretty tough for teams to compete against us.”

Acalanes will be competing with Campo on Feb. 11 when they travel to Moraga to clash with the Cougars. As Dons head coach Dave Goldman explained, the team will be looking to put to rest an unfortunate streak.

Goldman admitted that Acalanes rarely beats Campolindo. “To my knowledge, neither the football nor basketball team has won a game in over six years.”

Goldman pointed to his team’s encouraging showing in their 63-51 loss to Campo on Jan. 21 as a reason for optimism.

“We played them last time very close,” Goldman said. “So, we hope we can pull off an upset at their gym.”

Edging the Cougars will be a necessity for the Dons if the team is going to accomplish the first of its two remaining goals.

“We’d like to be a .500 team,” Goldman said. “We’d have to win out the last four games to do that.”

The second objective for the sixth-place Dons (2-6 in DFAL and 9-13 overall) is to sneak into the NCS Division II postseason bracket.

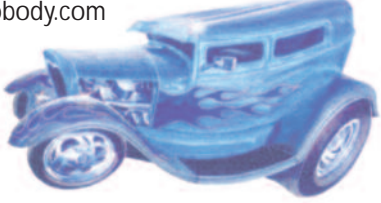
“We are actually 2-2 against Division II schools, which does qualify us potentially for the playoffs,” Goldman said. “So, we’ve really just been focused in practice on getting better every day and raising the level of intensity to a game level so that the boys are improving at that game speed.”

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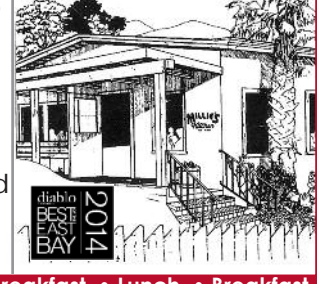
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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 09 Issue 25 Wednesday, February 10, 2016



Feng Shui

...read on page D8

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for February

By Cynthia Brian

"It is Nature that causes all movement." – Veda Vyasa, The Bhagavadgita



Fuchsia colored cyclamen mixed with sky blue pansies adds cheer to a window box. Pansy flowers are edible, too. Photos Cynthia Brian

The creeks are rushing, hillsides are saturated, lawns are green, and rain is in the forecast for the month. Our H2O dances and prayers resulted in an El Nino winter, much to our delight. People with swimming pools find themselves draining the overflows. If only we as individuals could save all this extra water! I no longer have buckets in my shower nor am I dumping dishwashing water in my potted plants. We are not wasting water in our household, but there is no need to collect every droplet as there was this past autumn as I have nowhere to toss the excess. In fact, I am diligent about making sure my outside container plants are not drowning. What a difference a month makes!

Narcissus, bergenia and daffodils are already spreading their sweet joy in our slumbering gardens. The cold of this winter will help trigger flower formation in peonies. If you are lucky enough to have a home in the snow country, peonies benefit from a thick blanket of snow. Camellias are blooming and rhododendrons are budding. Loquat and pear trees boast blossoms. Begonias, pansies and cyclamen add color and texture to our beds. Nature is on the move and we are the beneficiaries.

... continued on page D12



A field of narcissi sweeten the air with their fragrance.

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded



City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	9	\$665,000	\$1,620,000
MORAGA	2	\$800,000	\$1,050,000
ORINDA	4	\$846,000	\$1,415,000

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

1703 Chapparal Lane, \$2,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 5301 SqFt, 1990 YrBl, 1-8-16;
Previous Sale: \$242,500, 05-24-88

1000 Hawthorne Drive, \$1,285,000, 4 Bdrms, 1655 SqFt, 1941 YrBl, 1-6-16;
Previous Sale: \$937,500, 09-29-15

843 Las Trampas Road, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 2637 SqFt, 2007 YrBl, 12-24-15
33 Pidgeon Court, \$858,000, 2 Bdrms, 1248 SqFt, 1941 YrBl, 12-29-15;
Previous Sale: \$800,000, 03-07-07

950 Raintree Place, \$2,100,000, 7 Bdrms, 4237 SqFt, 1985 YrBl, 1-8-16;
Previous Sale: \$485,000, 10-23-86

1820 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,435,000, 4 Bdrms, 2242 SqFt, 1952 YrBl, 12-29-15;
Previous Sale: \$1,000,000, 08-25-04

1154 Robles Court, \$665,000, 3 Bdrms, 1639 SqFt, 1955 YrBl, 12-29-15;
Previous Sale: \$974,000, 04-20-05

1274 Sunrise Ridge Drive, \$1,442,000, 4 Bdrms, 3813 SqFt, 1999 YrBl, 12-30-15;
Previous Sale: \$1,075,000, 03-26-02

1001 Woodbury Road #201, \$1,498,000, 12-29-15

MORAGA

76 Corliss Drive, \$1,050,000, 4 Bdrms, 2030 SqFt, 1965 YrBl, 12-29-15

1172 Larch Avenue, \$800,000, 4 Bdrms, 2358 SqFt, 1964 YrBl, 12-28-15;
Previous Sale: \$56,000, 04-16-73

ORINDA

35 Ardor Drive, \$1,620,000, 4 Bdrms, 2551 SqFt, 1954 YrBl, 1-8-16;
Previous Sale: \$1,470,000, 06-13-06

221 La Espiral, \$1,415,000, 4 Bdrms, 2087 SqFt, 1946 YrBl, 12-24-15;
Previous Sale: \$750,000, 01-14-11

36 Las Vegas Road, \$846,000, 3 Bdrms, 1444 SqFt, 1950 YrBl, 12-24-15;
Previous Sale: \$835,000, 09-29-06

3 South Trail, \$1,114,000, 3 Bdrms, 1685 SqFt, 1925 YrBl, 1-6-16;
Previous Sale: \$320,000, 06-26-12

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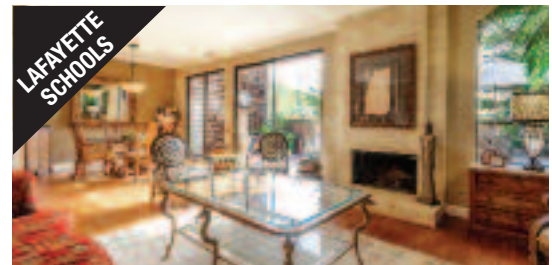


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Taylor Morrison Returns to Walnut Creek with Collection of Townhomes

Submitted by Sarah Andrews



Taylor Morrison's new Silver Trail community in Walnut Creek is now open for sales. Offering a brand new collection of two-story townhomes, Silver Trail homes range in size from 1,474 – 1,724 square feet. Pricing starts from the high \$700,000s. *Photo provided*

Continuing the momentum from the success of its 3rd & Main community, Taylor Morrison has returned to Walnut Creek with Silver Trail, a unique community of just 13 two-story finished townhomes located right in the heart of downtown. With sales starting in mid-January, the community has achieved great success selling five homes within the first two weeks.

“We couldn’t be more excited to be back in Walnut Creek,” said Pierrette Tierney, president of Taylor Morrison’s Bay Area division. “Silver Trail offers homebuyers many of the benefits of Bay Area living and the location is ideal – it’s within walking distance to local shopping and dining, part of a desirable school district and close to public transportation.”

Located a mile and a half from the nearest Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station, this collection of townhomes is built with an appreciation for design and function. Each home features three bedrooms and two-and-one-half bathrooms within 1,474 to 1,724 square feet of living space. Included in each townhome is an attached two-car garage with an open floorplan layout of the kitchen, living and dining areas.

Selected by Taylor Morrison’s in-house design team, the interiors have been graciously appointed throughout and feature everything from stainless steel appliances to granite or quartz kitchen countertops and the latest trends in cabinet styles, including stone and slate colors.

Silver Trail showcases many of the energy efficient features that Taylor Morrison has become known for including tankless water heaters, jump ducts and dual pane windows and energy efficient appliances.

“When designing Silver Trail we tried to anticipate the needs of our buyers,” said Tierney. “We knew that we needed to look beyond the aesthetics of two-tone paint and sleek countertops, and made sure to incorporate features such as USB outlets in the kitchen and LED recessed lighting throughout.”

Pricing at Silver Trail starts from the high \$700,000s and homes are currently available for viewing by appointment only.

To learn more about this new community or any Taylor Morrison Bay Area community, please visit TaylorMorrison.com.



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 74 Van Tassel Lane, Orinda
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 246 Overhill Road, Orinda
 9 La Sombra Court, Orinda
 3719 Highland Court, Lafayette
 3830 Palo Alto Drive, Lafayette
 115 Coral Drive, Orinda
 17 Charles Hill Road, Orinda
 2 Hartford Road, Orinda
 11 Blackwood Court, Walnut Creek
 3 Charles Hill Place, Orinda
 137 Creekdale Road, Walnut Creek
 431 Woodminster, Moraga
 621 Augusta Drive, Moraga
 5 Estates Drive, Orinda
 33 La Noria, Orinda
 9 Broadview Terrace, Orinda
 37 Underhill Road, Orinda
 121 Meadow View Road, Orinda
 18 Charles Hill Road, Orinda
 88 Sunnyside Lane, Orinda
 9 Ranch Road, Orinda
 11 Daryl Drive, Orinda
 4 Las Cascadas, Orinda
 102 Orchard Road, Orinda
 102 Orchard Road, Orinda
 171 Camino Pablo, Orinda
 25 Estates Drive, Orinda
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Giving Dreams an Address

Understanding the Balance of Feng Shui

By Michele Duffy



Note the location of the bed and nightstands, away from the door, in this "commanding position."
Photo Bigstock

Our environment influences our health, outlook, personal energy, and all of these influence our ability to be healthy, happy and prosperous. Feng Shui is the arrangement of your physical space with deeply symbolic objects so that they are in alignment with healthy Qi (energy) flow. We are continually influenced by the energy that is around us.

This energetic influence includes the land our home is located on or the street our business resides on and the shape of our buildings, none of which we can necessarily change even if we wanted to. Professional Feng Shui allows for "adjusting" even difficult "Qi" with the addition of specific "cures" so that we can live or work where we do, knowing that we have restored balance. Many people know that Feng Shui applies the five element theory to environments and that we can expertly represent those five elements in our spaces using wood, metal, earth, fire and water, colors and shapes (see diagram on page D11).

Another aspect of Feng Shui you might not be familiar with or associate with the art and science of placement is safety and security. Feng Shui has survived for thousands of years because it offers so much more than energetically sound decorating tips. Feng Shui's greatest strength, which is often overlooked or not acknowledged, is that it helps you to be safe and secure in your space and frees you up to concentrate more on the priorities of your life. ... continued on page D10



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They say you are known for the company you keep. We are fortunate to be known for the agents that distinguish us in communities all over the world. We are pleased to announce that **David Pierce** has joined our Bay Sotheby's International Realty **Lafayette Office**.

Integrating corporate achievement with 29 years of excellence as a real estate broker, David Pierce markets and sells fine homes in the Bay Area as well as small and large tracts of residential and agricultural lands, which included the 1,000+ acre Gateway Valley in Orinda known as Wilder. David brokered the 1,100 acre sale of Curry Canyon Ranch to the land conservancy organization, SAVE MT DIABLO.

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Understanding the Balance of Feng Shui

... continued from page D8



The desk in this home office shows the proper "commanding position."

Photo Bigstock

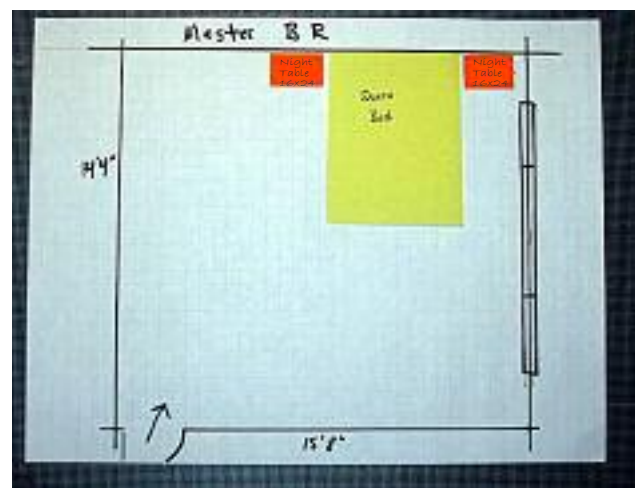
Why is this important? If we feel safe and secure we also can relax in our home or workspaces, thus allowing us to think clearly, solve life problems, and lead fuller lives. Here are some Feng Shui examples we can apply to create environments that allow more life to happen:

Floorplan Analysis. The Bagua map ancient topography is laid out for maximization and protection of key areas in our lives and is designed to safeguard our life paths, health and wealth, and relationship intimacy. On the Bagua map diagram, you will notice the three lower areas closest to the front door and the outside world

are Self Knowledge/Wisdom, Career, and Helpful People/Travel. We need all three to move forward in our public lives. The center of the Bagua map focuses on health and family and children and these areas are the bridge between the inner/outer, Ying/yang, private/public. The outside world nourishes these areas, which due to their position also offers some protection.

The private areas of your life are located on the top line or back of your home. Your wealth, reputation and relationships are offered the most protection, and help you to take the best care of yourself in these most secure areas of your home.

The "Commanding Position." The commanding position is a recurring



theme in Feng Shui and we apply it to master beds, kids beds, desks, and stoves. The idea is that when you take charge of your space, you take charge of your life.

The commanding position in a bedroom is where you sit in the bed and face the door without being in direct

line with the door. You are positioned to have the best visual control over the room, respond to whatever comes your way or whoever enters the room and this correlates to better being able to be in control of your life. You know you are in the power spot in any room when you feel most comfortably positioned in the room, in the coziest spot, facing and away from the door.

The most important concept is to try to place your bed, desk, stove in the commanding position and then make room for the other items or furniture in each room. When you cannot place these powerful symbols of personal power in the commanding position due to limitations of the space, the expertise of a professional can help adjust your specific space, even if the commanding position isn't possible.

Sounds can be used as a cure, such as bells on the front door to alert us to the comings and goings in our spaces. Many businesses effectively use a "shop keepers" bell to know when someone has entered their space. Lighting is another way we can introduce safety and utility into our spaces, including outdoor lighting for easy access to our homes and offices at any time of the day and also to discourage theft.

Finally, a headboard and footboard for your bed is paramount to making you feel secure while you sleep. Our personal Qi needs a container for restful sleep and more creativity by day, but a headboard can also give a sense of having a strong, supportive backing, something to lean on – hence you sleep better.

I hope these tips will allow you to take immediate action to improve the Feng Shui in your environments for the start of a happy, healthy and safe new year.

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

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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.



Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for February

... continued from page D1



A begonia cascades over the container on the patio.

Photos Cynthia Brian

PICK navel oranges as they are ripening. Twist the orange and when it comes off the limb easily it's ready to eat. If the orange resists, let it stay on the tree a bit longer.

PROTECT lettuce from aphids naturally by planting alyssum as a border.

GROW pansies, cyclamen, and violets as a winter pick-me-up and to attract butterflies. Pick the edible flowers to adorn salads and desserts.

SPRINKLE a granular organic fertilizer around fruit trees. The rainy weather will aid with the absorption of the grains.

PROTECT frost tender plants from the cold, especially those in containers. We have at least 45 days more of possible freezes. Frost blankets, canvas, tarps or cloth



It will be a great harvest for loquats this season based on the abundance of the blooms.

sheets will do the trick. Don't use plastic and be especially diligent with citrus.

DIG a ditch to divert water from rain gutters to your garden. It's best to line the swale with pebbles, gravel, or rocks to help filter the runoff and protect against flooding. These swales look great as dry creeks during the summer months.

HARVEST cabbage, chard, lettuces, arugula, and other greens as needed. Snip the tops of greens to encourage more growth.

PERUSE seed catalogues curled up on the couch with a cup of hot tea on a chilly, rainy day. You'll get ideas for new plants and learn a bit more about the growing seasons.

... continued on page D14



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Did you know bees pollinate 1 in 4 foods we eat?

Learn more at: www.helpabee.org



Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for February ... continued from page D12

PLAN on planting a patch of wildflowers at the end of our rainy season. Wildflowers are easy and rewarding plus they come back year after year.

PRUNE your roses, vines and berry bushes through mid-February.

DESIGN your dream garden while the weather is wet in preparation for April and May planting.

PLAY in the mud. New research shows that when you dig in the soil, beneficial bacteria in the environment repopulate the community of bacteria on your skin, boosting your immune system. Get dirty. It's good for you!

SHOWER your beloved with red roses and baby's breath for Valentine's Day.

HIBERNATE. Our gardens are sleeping and so should we. Take time for yourself this February. Rest, relax, rejuvenate and replenish yourself. Move with Mother Nature.

NEED ideas to help you choose the right plants for your garden? Consider these four selections for four different areas of your yard:



Cabbages, chard, and leafy greens are harvested all winter.



This crop of navel oranges is ready for picking. Protect citrus from frost for at least 45 more days.



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Winter Pruning

Winter is the best time to start pruning deciduous plants and trees, such as maples, shrubs, roses, most fruit trees and most of all your Monterey pines. They go dormant in the winter and some lose their leaves.

Deciduous plants are best pruned in the winter because that's when they're dormant and less prone to disease.

Before you start hacking away at your yard, you may want to call in a professional Arborist from Advance Tree Service to give you their advice on what should be done, the proper handling during pruning is essential to ensure a healthy future for your trees and shrubs.

So don't wait until it's too late, call your local Arborist at Advance Tree Service to help make your yard its very best.

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Plants for a Shady Area

- Hosta
- Foxglove
- Ajuga
- Hydrangea

Plants to Attract Butterflies and Hummingbirds

- Coreopsis
- Hibiscus
- Creeping Phlox
- Agastache

Plants that the Deer Don't Usually Eat

- Bleeding Heart
- Lavender
- Iris
- Naked Ladies

Plants for Sunny Areas

- Daylily
- Sage
- Roses
- Echinacea

If you want one-to-one assistance, email me to set up a garden consultation with hourly rates. I'll help your garden shine this spring.

Sending you love, blessings and virtual rose bouquets for a warm, romantic Valentine's celebration.



Cynthia Brian in the garden

Happy Gardening! Happy Growing! Happy Love Day!

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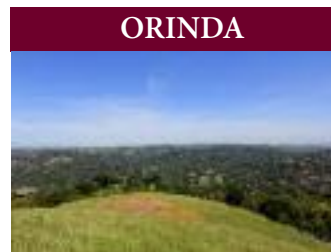
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