

Lots of Eggs to be Found in Lamorinda

Sophie Braccini



Moraga held an egg hunt last Saturday.

Photo Andy Scheck

If it's spring, it can only mean that there are eggs hiding in Lamorinda. It's been a long tradition of the Orinda Rotary Club to sponsor an annual egg hunt to celebrate the season. This year the event will be held Saturday, March 26 at the Orinda Center playfield, with more than 1,000 eggs scattered around for children to find. "We recommend that people arrive early," says Orinda Rotary's Dick Burkhalter. "We open the access to the field at 11 a.m. and by 11:05 it's all gone!" He also reminded families not to forget to equip their children with a basket.

The volunteers set up tables in the park with games and prizes for those who arrive early. A white bunny will also be there to take pictures with the kids. Parking may be hard to find at the park, but families can park across the street. March 26 will also be the opening day of the farmers' market, next to the park, which will provide a great combination of activities for the whole family. That same afternoon, from 1 to 4 p.m., Theater Square is offering activities for kids. Included are a petting zoo, pony rides, a rock climbing wall

You're Invited To Take a Photo* with the Easter Bunny

So Bring Your Camera!

Saturday, March 26th ☘ Noon to 3:00 p.m.

In the suite next door to Starbucks

Easter Clowns ☘ Easter Fairy ☘ Balloon Art

With your Rheem Valley Shopping Center receipts totaling \$25 or more OR go online to www.rheemvalley.net to print out the coupon for a FREE photo session with the Easter Bunny. (While supplies last)

Visit us online at www.rheemvalley.net

Rheem Valley Shopping Center
...a Moraga tradition

Rheem Blvd. at Moraga Rd. in Moraga

for kids of all ages, and face painting. Meanwhile, on March 26 in Lafayette, The Community Egg Scramble starts at 10 a.m. at Lafayette Plaza Park (near the Park Theater). It is open to all kids up through second grade and is presented by the Rotary Club of Lafayette and E. Bunny. Afterwards, families can also enjoy the annual Bunny Brunch, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Lafayette Community Center's Live Oak Room, located at 480 St Mary's Rd. in Lafayette. Enjoy a complete pancake brunch, live show, egg hunt and more. Tickets are \$8 per person by

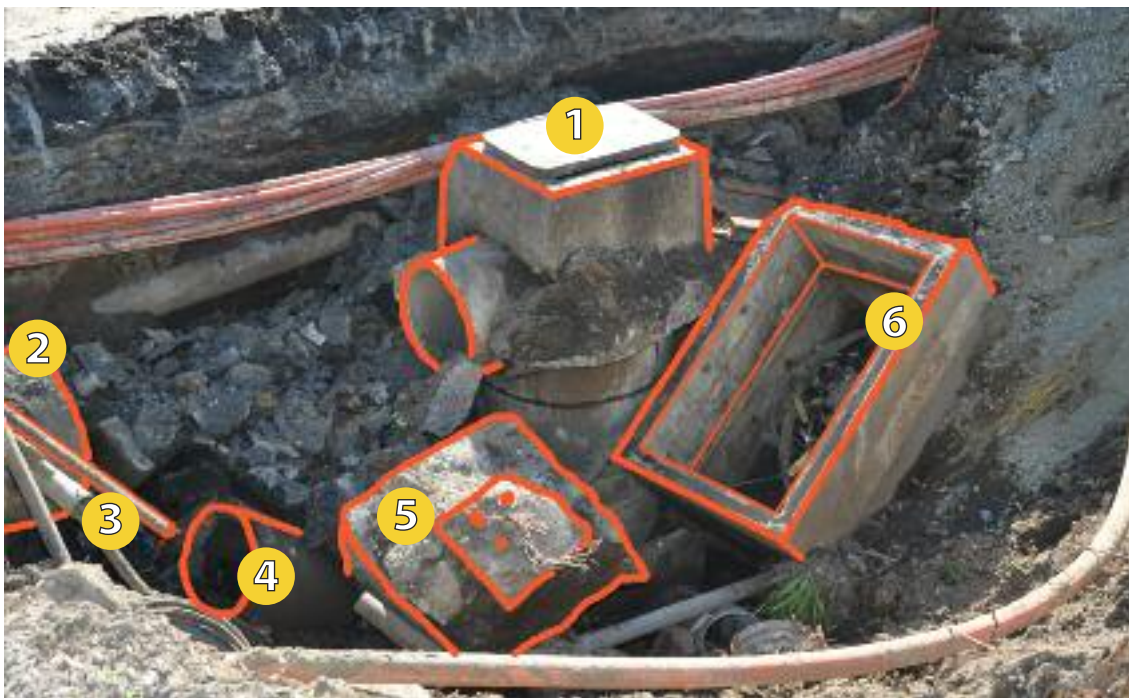
March 25; \$10 per person on day of event (unless sold out). Online ticket sales accepted until Friday March 25 at www.LafayetteRec.org. For more info, call (925) 284-2232. Moraga held an egg hunt on March 19, but another activity is planned this weekend, as kids can take a photo with the Easter Bunny from noon to 3 p.m. Saturday, March 26, in the suite next to Starbucks on Rheem Blvd and Moraga Road. They can also enjoy Easter clowns and Easter Fairy balloon art. For more information, visit www.rheemvalley.net for details.



A big Bunny says, "Hello!" Photo provided

Sinkhole

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- 1: Entrance to main storm drain
- 2: Broken parallel to Rheem Blvd. storm drain
- 3: Broken gas line
- 4: Part of #2 fell down in sinkhole
- 5: Foundation of the traffic light that sunk into the hole
- 6: Electrical box placed on sidewalk that fell into the hole

PG&E, which had mobilized 200 employees, had to shut off the gas line. "It took them quite a while to decide how to ultimately shut off the gas," said Priebe. A massive PG&E electric switch vault had to be deactivated before access could be granted. He said PG&E had to go to each of the 2,600 impacted homes and businesses to manually turn off the gas lines and then turn them back on (when gas service was restored). Some residents were without hot water and heat for more than 48 hours.

After the incident many people expressed their satisfaction at the way PG&E handled the situation. Edward Silicani said PG&E employees were "terrific, professional and courteous." Dave Diamond agreed and added that the PG&E employees not only re-lit all gas appliances, the water heater, stove, fireplace insert and furnace, they also checked the water heater for leaks and inspected the furnace. However, some residents were frustrated by the utility's performance. John Tarman, who lives on Goodfellow Drive, said his gas was off for a day and a half. "There was no information from PG&E at first, but we realized that our gas was off. The next morning, we received two calls from PG&E. Neither party seemed to have the information. They were inconsistent on the cause and the number of homes affected.

We were a little disappointed, but not surprised." Others tried to make an adventure of the ordeal. "It was interesting being without gas," said Sharon Metcalf, who lives on Birchwood Drive. "I cooked dinner on the barbecue, almost like camping out. We made hot water on the barbecue to wash up, it was rather fun. People should be prepared for when an earthquake comes, they will be without gas, hot water and maybe even electric." It was a similar incident, a broken gas line that resulted in the San Bruno fire in 2010. The Town confirmed on Friday, after staff, consultants and PG&E representatives had inspected the hole, that there was a "virtual spaghetti bowl" of utilities in the hole at this corner, including, but not limited to, a 96-inch storm drain corrugated metal pipe, a 27-inch reinforced concrete storm drain, a bank of Comcast conduits filled with fiber optic lines, traffic signal electrical lines, the four-inch PG&E natural gas pipe, and two unclaimed utility pipes. Adjacent to the hole are a 15-inch Central San sewer vitrified clay pipe and a 12-inch EBMUD water line. In plain sight appeared the severed storm drain, the PG&E electrical vault that had collapsed, cables and a lot of debris. According to a statement, the Town's contractor has made every effort to protect these utilities in place to ensure service is maintained. How-

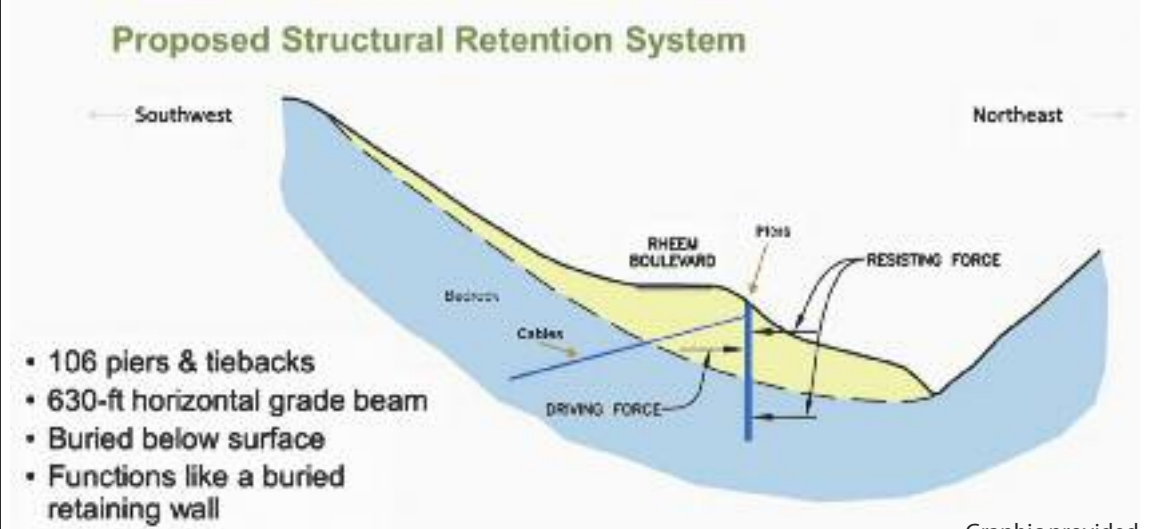
ever, the presence of the utilities will complicate the repair process as it moves forward. Crews also made preparations on Friday to protect the hole against runoff from impending rains. When asking for the State of Emergency on March 16, Moraga Public Works Director Edric Kwan also asked the town council for emergency funding to start the investigation of the incident and repairs. "We want to appropriate \$500,000 immediately," said Kwan. The State of Emergency will allow Kwan to bypass the normal procurement procedures and immediately assemble a team to work on investigation, then repairs, including hiring of Siteworks Construction, the contractor that had past experience working on a similar sinkhole that occurred in the vicinity.

Ten years ago, another sinkhole formed at the opposite corner of Rheem Blvd and Moraga Road. "It was one of the welding point of the 96-inch storm drain that broke off," remembered Jill Mercurio, who was the public works director at the time. Mercurio also declared a State of Emergency then, but she said that the funds allocated in such circumstance can only be used to repair the immediate cause of the incident. "We received funding to just repair that junction and repave over it," said Mercurio, "there was absolutely no funds for betterment of the situation." Although the March 13 incident occurred during a hard El Niño-driven rainstorm, Kwan was very cautious not to hypothesize the reason why this second incident happened. He wants the investigation to be completed before pointing to a culprit.

Moraga

Rheem Blvd. to Close

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Graphic provided

The difficulty to coordinate the work with the utility agencies and saturated soil conditions due to El Niño compelled SummerHill to look for an alternative. The new solution will consist of drilling 106 large diameter piers every six feet through the landslide debris, then horizontally supporting those with tension cables that will be drilled diagonally down into the bedrock beneath the slide to provide lateral restraint for those piers. The piers will also be connected together with a continuous grade beam. Eliahu added that with this plan there would be no need to relocate the utilities. The soil below the road would remain, but asphalt and the base underneath the asphalt will be removed and a new base and new asphalt surface reconstructed. "We have heard stories that there

might be garbage underneath that road and other debris," said Eliahu. "We have drilled 18 borings and didn't find anything. Whatever is under the road will stay under the road." He added that this new way of repairing the road would limit risks of reactivating the two landslides. "We were comforted that doing it the other way would be an effective solution for the road from slipping again," Trotter said. "Is this new solution going to be as effective?" Eliahu called this method "a tried and true approach." "The big geogrid buttress is like an open heart surgery," he said. "This (new approach) is a conservative design intended to handle very large loads, and it will definitely arrest the horizontal movement." Eliahu warned nonetheless that

there is an active landslide on that hill, and that the repair of the road is not going to stabilize the whole hill. "But by stabilizing the bottom it does add to the stability to the entire slope," he said. "Future failure could occur and if the slide mass wants to come down, it could come down on the road." Town staff will work with the developer to get the required permits and work could start as early as May or June. The total estimated cost of the project is \$2,585,000, \$100,000 less than was estimated for the options adopted last year. The developer will pay \$933,500. The town will contribute the rest. A waiver of development impact fee will provide \$390,000, Measure J will fund \$729,000 and \$359,000 is funded by the 1 percent tax measure.