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Life, Interrupted for Moraga First Responders at Gas Leak

By Cathy Dausman

March 13 was just another rainy Sunday in Moraga, until it wasn't.

Water had eroded an underground portion of the corner of Rheem Boulevard and Center Street near Moraga Road. That afternoon the pavement collapsed, forming a sinkhole. The sinkhole grew, swallowing a signal light; the falling light post and concrete punctured a four inch natural gas pipeline.

Police evacuated Rheem Valley Shopping Center, including those watching a new Disney animated release at the theater. Shortly before 5:30 p.m. Sunday the call went out to police, fire, town staff and local volunteer emergency responders. "This is Dennis [Rein, Lamorinda's Emergency Preparedness Coordinator]. We are activating an Emergency Operations Center [to manage the sinkhole issues] at the Town Council Chambers."

Rein had been working from home filing paperwork on another local storm related inci-

dent - a hillside slide affecting Moraga's Augusta Drive (see related story, page A4). Moraga interim Town Manager Robert Priebe was celebrating a family friend's birthday when he got called in at 2 p.m. Sunday.

"We'd been there about 10 minutes," Priebe said, adding "they were just putting out hors d'oeuvres." It was to be his second Moraga trip; Priebe had already conferred with East Bay Municipal Utility District officials "at the (Augusta Drive) landslide site." He was just bringing portable radios down from the administrative offices when he heard a police officer screaming on his radio about the gas leak. Priebe said the noise sounded "like a jet engine."

"There are things in your life that you'll never forget," he said. He ran outside, relieved to see no flames. Still Priebe feared the gas might ignite. "Everybody saw visuals of San Bruno," he said, referring to that city's pipeline explosion. Priebe worked overnight, only slip-

ping away to nap for an hour about 11 a.m. Monday evening at 7:30 p.m.," he said.

Monday. "I didn't see my wife again until

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Photo Cathy Dausman

Rheem Blvd. to Close for Three Months for Long-needed Repairs

By Sophie Braccini

In good news for commuters using Rheem Boulevard between St Mary's Road and Moraga Road: A new plan to repair the failed part of the roadway will disrupt traffic for only three months instead of the six previously forecast.

At the Moraga Town Council meeting March 9, the engineering team selected by SummerHill homes,

Engeo Inc., assured council members that this proposed engineering of the roadway would stabilize it for the long term; they were clear that it would not, however, remediate an entire hillside that's prone to landslides.

This section of Rheem Blvd. between Moraga Road and St. Mary's Road has been a bumpy one for years. It was not maintained when the town

resurfaced the rest of Rheem Boulevard. Engeo President Uri Eliahu explained that for decades two landslides from above the road have been shifting the roadway horizontally and downward. Vice Mayor Dave Trotter added that this section of road started failing within weeks of its construction by the county in 1948.

SummerHill owns the 179 acres

of the Rancho Laguna II property, now called Bella Vista, that abuts that section of Rheem Boulevard. One of the conditions of approval for that company to build 27 homes there was their participation in the cost of reconstruction of that portion of the roadway, as well as its management of the project.

"In the first approach (approved

last year) the entire roadbed and landslide beneath the road would have been removed and replaced with a geogrid reinforcing, such as a Polystyrene Mesh," Eliahu told the council. "It would arrest the lateral movement of the roadway." This option required EBMUD to relocate the water main and PG&E to either move or secure its poles.

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934 Cheyenne Drive, Walnut Creek



Beautiful home in the center of Northgate within walking distance to K-12 schools. It has 4 bedrooms and 2.5 bath with 2296 sq.ft. Hardwood floors, spacious floor plan and gorgeous solar-heated swimming pool in the backyard. Listed at \$1,025,000 by Jim Colhoun, 925.200.2795

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823 Bethany Lane, Concord



4BR home located on a quiet private lane with 2480 sq.ft. Large bonus room upstairs. Vaulted ceilings, modern open kitchen, & lovely backyard patio and gardens. Listed at \$795,000 by Jim Colhoun, 925.200.2795.

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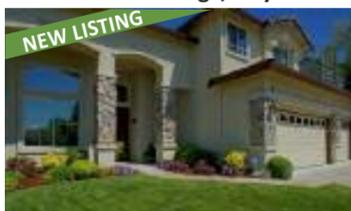
1930 Ascot Drive, Moraga



2BR plus den in desirable Ascot Highlands neighborhood. The largest model with gorgeous views and in immaculate condition. Open Saturday, March 26 1-4pm. Call Jim Colhoun for a private showing, 925.200.2795

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5183 Keller Ridge, Clayton



Stunning home with 5 BR, 3 baths, 2873 SF. Open floor plan with formal living & dining room, walls of windows and high ceilings, oversized eat-in kitchen plus 3-car garage. Listed at \$849,000 by Ruth Eddy 925.788.5449

CalBRE#01313819

1673 Countrywood Ct., Walnut Creek



Beautifully updated townhouse within walking distance to Pleasant Hill BART and Countrywood Shopping Center has 3 bedrooms and 2.5 bathroom. Includes private courtyard, laundry room and two-car garage. HOA includes clubhouse and pool. For more information, please call

Adam Hamalian 925-708-5630

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3216 Bavarian Lane, Lafayette



Amazing Burton Valley home on quiet cul-de-sac. Light-filled home with large living areas and open floor plan. Remodeled backyard that backs up to open space/Laf. Community Fields and hiking trails. Offered at \$1,575,000 by Dana Fillingner 925.588.6409

CalBRE# 01731662

The East Bay market is heating up! Here is a sampling of our recent sales:

- 2160 Alice Avenue, Walnut Creek, \$950,000 - Jim Colhoun
- 11 Carolyn Court, Lafayette, \$764,000 - Ruth Eddy
- 2617 Cole Street, Oakland, \$720,000 - Maureen Caldwell-Meurer
- 2607 Brookshire Street, Brentwood, \$650,000 - Melody Shahid
- 285 Gladys Drive, Pleasant Hill, \$585,000 - Jim Colhoun
- 3416 Morningside Drive, El Sobrante, \$450,000 - Tania DeGroot
- 4302 Alcosta Place, Pittsburg, \$440,000 - Adam Hamalian
- 2866 Esmond Avenue, Richmond, 400,000 - Janine Hunt
- 1455 Latour Lane, Concord, \$300,000 - Jim Colhoun

Meet our Featured Agents ...



Ruth Eddy
925.788.5449
CalBRE#01313819



Melody Shahid
925.270.9580
CalBRE#01922669



Rachel Ledermen
925.628.2191
CalBRE#01875286



Tania DeGroot
510.367.1422
CalBRE # 01094898



Adam Hamalian
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Maureen Caldwell-Meurer
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