



Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, April 6, 7 p.m.
New Meeting Room:
Sarge Littlehale Community Room
22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563
For meeting times and
agendas, visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors

Tuesday, April 12, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107,
Administration Building,
651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and
agendas, visit
<http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

Emergency response information
and training:

Lamorinda Community
Emergency Response Team
(CERT)
www.lamorindacert.org.

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Letters to the Editor

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

Thanks to Moraga Leaders for Swift Response

Dear Editor,

We are so fortunate to have both Bob Priebe as our Town Manager and Lt. Jon King as our Chief of Police. Their leadership of the town staff and mutual aid from around the area [during the sinkhole and gas line breaks] helped prevent an event that could have easily turned into what happened in San Bruno, California. All this occurred with the additional problem of the homes sliding off the hillside.

I am sure there will be a formal debriefing to see what could have gone more smoothly and proper steps will be taken to incorporate the ideas in future events.

I feel they should be recognized for their professional response which prevented the loss of many lives. As a citizen of the Town of Moraga, I want to thank them and their staff.

Barry Behr
Moraga

Fix Orinda Roads

Dear Editor,

We were excited to move to Orinda a few years ago and get to know this great city with its beautiful scenery and active community. However, as we began driving around Orinda we were not so excited to discover the terrible condition of some roads. While our new home

is on a newly renovated street, we were surprised that many of the local roads are in such poor condition. We did not expect to need a four wheel drive vehicle to maneuver some of the awful streets.

Good Orinda roads are critical to every Orinda resident, not just for access to our homes, but also for safety and long term community health. We understand a road repair plan is in place and are glad to see that some of the Orinda roads are being repaired. We agree Measure L is needed to continue the work and reach our goal of good public roads throughout Orinda. We urge you to vote YES on Measure L to fix Orinda roads and keep our community moving in the future.

Jeremy and Laura Tieman
Orinda
Vote Yes on L for Orinda Roads

Vote Yes on L

Dear Editor,

For decades, Orindans, in fits and starts, have been trying to find a solution to its roads problem. How does an affluent but small community with 93 miles of public roads in poor condition execute a fix?

It took 10 years and three tries at the ballot box before the community came together and agreed on a phased approach to bring all roads to at least "good" condition. Phases 1 and 2 have gone well, El Niño notwithstand-

ing. Twenty-nine of these 93 miles have been either repaired, are under construction, or have been specifically identified and placed in the repair queue.

Now we need to approve Phase 3, the \$25 million bond proposal known as Measure L. These funds are necessary to continue beyond the 29 miles. Without Measure L, progress will stop when these 29 miles are complete.

But the nattering naysayers, who have no plan of their own fix the roads, want Orinda voters to turn down Phase 3 financing and simply walk away from a job only partially complete. Why? None of their reasons are sound.

Don't be fooled. Vote to continue the excellent start to fixing our roads. Vote to support the road repair project to completion. On June 7, vote YES on Measure L!

Carol Penskar
Orinda

Thank You, PG&E

Dear Editor

Thanks to PG&E for their prompt response to our gas outage last week. The service representatives were very courteous and explained what was happening. We had our gas back on the next day.

Gordon Steele
Moraga

Costs to Repair Sinkhole May Soar

Nearly 23 feet below the broken 27-inch storm drain is the 96-inch culvert that carries Laguna Creek, the same creek that comes above ground at the Hacienda de las Flores and feeds into Moraga Creek.

"We observed deformation of the culvert, offsets at the joints and scouring at the bottom," Kwan said. Water is still running in the pipe and street runoffs and water from the 27-inch broken storm drain have been redirected to the culvert at this time.

Repair costs will far exceed town resources so it is critical that the state recognize the State of Emergency the town declared soon after the sinkhole appeared on March 13, and provide additional funding.

"We have sent a letter to the governor and are expecting state representatives to come soon," Kwan

said. "They will investigate the incident. We will also provide them with our forensic study results."

Kwan explains that this inquiry will study soil samples and the damaged infrastructure, seeking to put together a picture of how it all occurred. Causes of the failure and sinkhole cannot be determined until this is completed.

"Our objective is to bring alternatives (for repair) to the town council on April 27," said Kwan, knowing that this will be a challenge. Many different aspects will have to be taken into account, such as environmental impacts — this is a freshwater creek that ultimately ends into the San Leandro reservoir for drinking water — timeline, cost and other technical factors.

Last August, when Kwan pre-

sented the storm drain master plan to the council, creek culverts were clearly identified as the weakest link in the system. The report evaluated the total cost of delayed maintenance at \$26 million, with \$8.9 million of high priority work. The culvert in the sinkhole was part of that list of hot spots.

At the time the town council decided that there were no funds available to address the problem. The 2016 town goals include studying financing strategies to maintain the antiquated storm drain system. A study is underway to determine responsibilities, since landowners are responsible for what runs under their property unless the town owns an easement.

The council also decided to include the storm drain repairs in

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a townwide community preference survey. "There are a lot of competing needs," Kwan said. "I have more concerns about infrastructure, but that's just one perspective. The council wants the community to tell the town what needs to be addressed first."

Even as Kwan refuses to be tied to a repair deadline, he wants residents to be assured that the town's team and its consultants are very experienced in managing such problems. He himself was Richmond's City Engineer in 2010 when a 120-foot-long and a 20- to 30-foot deep sinkhole swallowed Via Verdi in that city, costing Richmond \$12 million and taking three years to repair. A 30-year-old culvert carrying San Pablo Creek was the culprit there.

New Editor Doesn't Get Swallowed by Sinkhole

By Peggy Spear



you may remember that this is not my first swing through Lamorinda, as I was editor of the Contra Costa (now Lamorinda) Sun from 2002-2005. I loved those years, getting to know Lamorinda, its civic communities, the schools, and the residents who weave the fabric of this unique place.

Since leaving the Contra Costa Times in 2006 — when my oldest child started high school — I have been editor of two parenting magazines, *Bay Area Parent* and *Parents' Press*. I wrote for local Patch sites and launched Concord Patch in 2010.

My family moved to New Orleans for nearly a year, where I wrote for local papers and parenting magazines, but we missed California and the Bay Area so much we moved back. Since then I have spent my time as a freelance writer and editor for many local publications, most notably the *Weekly's* "cousin" publications, the Concord and Clayton Pioneer. I have been covering Concord civic issues since 2013.

But now I'm back where I feel I belong, and I look forward to meeting — and reacquainting myself — with all of you who make this area one of the best places in the country to live. Sinkholes and all.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at peggy@lamorindaweekly.com with story ideas, civic gripes, business topics, good news, bad news and bragging about your kids. That's what local news is all about.

It was a crazy first issue for me, but it reminded me how much I love covering this community. Some of

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