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Judges Choice winners (from left) Lynn Wolfe, Lauren Stadt and Sophia Browne explain to the audience how their Rube Goldberg machine works.

Photo Cathy Dausman

## Students Fight off El Niño at Goldberg Fest

By Cathy Dausman

**E**l Niño struck with a vengeance in the gymnasium at Stanley Middle School in Lafayette, at one point even raining cats and dogs — albeit small plastic cats and dogs. The audience of approximately 200 was ecstatic. El Niño marked the return of the popular biannual Rube Goldberg competition where, as the students' T-shirts explained, they simply “don't do simple.”

This year's challenge, held March 30, was to open an umbrella in 12 steps. Part mental, part physical, with a dab of metaphysics tossed in, the event is a science, technology, engineering and math-laden enrichment opportunity sponsored by Lafayette Partners in Education.

By design, none of the steps were easy because Rube Goldberg, the program's namesake, was anything but a rube. The

Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist and Bay Area native was best known for his humorously complex multi-step “problems” that he solved on paper to his readers' unending delight.

Remember the board game Mousetrap? This is Mousetrap on steroids. Each year presents a new challenge. Past competitions have required students to assemble hamburgers, dispense hand sanitizer, pop balloons and zip zippers. ... continued on page A12

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### Miramonte Cheer Squad is No. 1



Photo provided by Gina Armstrong-Smith ney Smith, Jacqui Yuke, Jessie Musacchio and Emily Forkas.

**L**amorinda keeps turning out champions. In March the Miramonte Competitive Cheer Team took home the National Championship in the Varsity Small Show Cheer Division. The squad competed against 23 teams in their quest for the title.

Pictured here are (Back row from left): Kaylie Parr, Megan Melohn, Hannah Gunn, Lauren Kozicki, Hallie Pritchard and Mary Rockwood. (Front row, from left): Maddie Robinson, Syd-

Prior to the National Competition, cheer teams had to qualify at Regional levels and receive an invitation to compete. The USA National Cheerleading competition was held in Anaheim March 19-21. While at the competition each cheer team had to perform at preliminaries in order to qualify and compete on the final day. See accompanying story, page A11.

### Costs to Repair Sinkhole May Soar

By Sophie Braccini

**T**he massive sinkhole at the crossing of Center Street and Rheem Blvd. is going to be a very costly burden for the Town of Moraga.

Town Public Works Director Edric Kwan estimated last week that the sinkhole, which punctured gas lines, will cost \$3.5 million, and that's just a conservative preliminary analysis. The damage is extensive and includes fixing Laguna Creek's 96-foot-deep seeded culvert, an area that had been identified as “high risk” in the town's storm drain master plan.

The cause of the collapse is still under investigation and options for repair will be brought forward at the April 27 town council meeting. The intersection is likely to be disrupted for many more months.

“We are still investigating the reason why the sinkhole formed,” Kwan said. First workers had to stabilize the hole for safe access, and dig deep into the debris to uncover all the layers.

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