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Solar panels are being installed at Orinda Intermediate School, above, as well as at all OUSD elementary schools and at Lamorinda high schools.

Photo Andy Scheck

Solar Installations Sprouting at Lamorinda Schools

By Victor Ryerson

Looking like overgrown carports, large solar panel arrays are cropping up on all of Lamorinda's high school campuses this summer, and on all of the lower schools in Orinda as well.

They are designed to generate power from the sun to meet some or all of the schools' energy needs, but they will also

lessen the schools' carbon footprint, provide covered parking areas for teachers and students, aid the installation of air conditioning for a more comfortable learning environment, and even serve as a valuable teaching tool for students inheriting a world that must rely on cleaner sources of energy.

Most residents seem to agree that installing solar generat-

ing facilities is the right thing to do, and all of the Lamorinda districts expect that their schools will have solar generating systems. Lafayette Elementary School District was the first to install them, and has been using solar power since 2010. Moraga is hoping to join the solar club if a bond issue on the upcoming November ballot provides funding. ... continued on page A10

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Fighting Drug and Alcohol Abuse Among Lamorinda Teens

By Sora O'Doherty

Summer is here, and with it comes an unwanted and dangerous element: More teenage partying.

Have you ever wondered why teens drink themselves to oblivion? The answer is very simple: they don't know that's what they are doing. They don't know that the next drink will push them into unconsciousness, that the amount of alcohol that goes quickly into the stomach causes the blood alcohol to continue to rise after they stop drinking, that alcohol is toxic and can lead to death. This is the kind of information that Jaime Rich of the Center for Human Development is trying to get out to the public, and particularly to Lamorinda teens.

Rich has been in the world of prevention for some 30 years; she lived in Orinda for more than 20 years and volunteered in school alcohol and drug abuse prevention programs. She coordinated the programs at Wagner Ranch, and now is the director of the Alcohol Drug Abuse Prevention Team (ADAPT), funded by Contra Costa County for the past seven years since the alcohol-



Jaime Rich is director of ADAPT, the local agency that is fighting alcohol and drug abuse in Lamorinda teens. Photo Sora O'Doherty

related death of Orinda student Joe Loudon, which caused the county to fund a prevention program in Lamorinda.

Rich has been the person in charge from the beginning. At first she was solely responsible for the program, but now she has been promoted to director and coordinates the ADAPT Lamorinda, an east county coalition, and also Friday Night Live, a statewide youth development program.

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Originally Denied, Moraga Secures Federal Funding for Sinkhole

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga is eligible to receive federal funding for sinkhole repair after all, thanks to a successful appeal of the original decision to deny support.

Moraga Town Engineer and Public Works Director Edric Kwan was successful in appealing the original decision, announced last month, that denied funding for the sinkhole that formed on Rheem Boulevard near Center Street last March.

It is good news for the town's finance since the cost of still-needed repairs is estimated at \$3 million. However, federal funding means federal processes and guidelines, and town staff warns residents that the initial plan to repair the culvert and the street might be thrown off, and that the deadline of Oct. 15 — the beginning of the rainy season — might not be met.

The Federal Highway Administration has agreed to reimburse the town more than \$500,000 for the work it has done, including the emergency response, road closure, erosion protection, fencing, traffic signal repair and other work associated with the sinkhole that

formed when the Rancho Laguna Creek culvert failed under the intersection, causing a gas line rupture and collapse of the driveway. The town is also eligible to receive 88.5 percent of the estimated \$2.9 million for future repair costs, leaving the town with a \$338,150 bill.

Kwan had initially targeted the date of Oct. 15 to complete the culvert repairs with a new concrete structure replacing the corrupted metal section, as well as the road reconstruction. As the town's first appeal to federal funding was denied, he planned to at least repair the culvert before the rainy season, leaving the road for the next construction cycle. Now that federal funding is granted, delays might increase further.

In a press release, staff warned that, "The Town's original plan to award a contract for construction will now be delayed to meet the FHWA guidelines." To deal with the eventuality of being unable to repair the culvert before the rainy season, staff will be ready to divert the stormwater until the construction can resume. It is likely that driving at the crossing will continue to be disrupted into 2017.

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