

Are Local Roads Ready for School to Start?

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the actual construction. Many roads in Orinda, Lafayette and Moraga have been getting a summer makeover. But the school bell waits for no one.

Orinda

"We are not concerned at all. It will be paved by Aug. 23," said city of Orinda engineer Daniel Chavarria, regarding the Ivy Drive reconstruction between Orinda Intermediate School and Miramonte High School. The paving will be completed, but the road may not be striped until 30 days later.

"It is too expensive to bring in the striper to mark one small street," he said. Though part of Ivy Drive lies in Moraga, Edric Kwan, Moraga public works director, said that Orinda is managing the project, and the town pays the city for its portion of the repairs.

Chavarria did warn that Ramona Drive, off of Ivy, may not be completed because of a work delay on a PG&E gas line. Tamar Sarkisian, PG&E spokeswoman, did not respond to questions about Lamorinda construction projects.

"Ten of our buses go to Orinda Intermediate School," said Juliet Hansen, manager of the Lamorinda School Bus Program. "It's a concern." Also, a few bus stops

may need to move, or equipment be rerouted, near Sleepy Hollow Elementary School while work continues at Charles Hill Circle and along Singingwood Lane.

Lafayette

The roundabout project at the Pleasant Hill Road-Olympic Boulevard intersection will impact three bus routes, according to Hansen.

"But the buses will still be able to run their routes," said Lafayette city engineer Tony Coe. "Intersection closures will be only on weekends, causing a detour." The city required that its contractor forbid weekday lane closures before 8:30 a.m., but Coe said there may be delays in the afternoons.

The East Bay Municipal Utility District forced no such requirement on its contractor working on the Mt. Diablo Boulevard pipe installation west of Pleasant Hill Road, but district spokeswoman Charlotte Sullivan promised drivers that more flaggers will be added once school begins. Lane switching will likely be required into October, as the eastbound lane is open now, but will change.

Moraga

Kwan warned that a paving project over a portion of Corliss



The road, sidewalk and parking lot at Miramonte High School are still under construction. Photo Andy Scheck

Drive in Moraga will disrupt the area near Los Perales Elementary School. The town is working out contract details with two utilities before it can complete the job.

School traffic will not be further impeded by the sinkhole, Kwan said, and though Rheem Boulevard will be closed until mid-October, the road will be opened for emergency vehicles when necessary. Hansen said that new bus route 5, from Burton Valley to Campolindo High School, will begin this year,

snaking through Fernwood and Draeger Drives and avoiding all but a tiny section of Rheem Boulevard.

The solar panel installations at each of the Lamorinda high schools will continue well into the fall, according to Jeff Arnold, a consultant to the Acalanes Union High School District. But, except for maybe a couple of exceptions near corners or poles, spaces in the school parking lots will not be eliminated. "None of this work will have any

effect on students or parents accessing the schools," Arnold said.

Chavarria noted that, in addition to frayed nerves during their construction, newly paved roads such as Ivy Drive elicit another emotional response: Drivers tend to speed up on the smooth surface.

"Be careful out there," he urged, undoubtedly speaking for all Lamorinda officials as the improved roads and other infrastructure repairs welcome drivers to a new school year.

Moraga

Public Art in Moraga

Its mission statement is to recognize artists as important cultural resources and to install artwork throughout the town to create vibrancy to broaden public awareness and encourage dialogue about public art. This definition is very close to the one crafted by Orinda Arts in Public Places. This more senior program is mirrored in Moraga, and Orindans are helping get the Moraga program off the ground.

At the July 12 meeting the commissioners looked at different pieces.

Town council member and committee chair Teresa Onoda had done the research and talked to the artists. She indicated when the sculptures would be available to be installed in October.

The idea would be to have a number mounted all at once to create a real buzz in town. The commissioners all agreed that the benches by Colin Selig would be very appropriate in the area surrounding the library. "He makes them with recycled propane tank,"

said Onoda, adding that they were attractive and functional for anyone of any age.

All liked the idea that the tall piece "The Drain" would be perfect in the bioswale in front of the community meeting room. They agreed that David Mudgett's "Radar Man" would be an attractive piece for children at the library. Onoda presented the two horse heads by Amy Evans McClure, saying they would be very intriguing for children. The commissioners agreed that ultimate placement should be done when pieces are on hand, and that it should fit the locations.

Onoda was the champion of this new public art activity in Moraga. An artist herself — she is a recognized plein air painter — she has invested a lot of energy in this program, meeting artists and Orinda residents such as Ted Urban to get the program going.

The other members of the commit-

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tee are Karl Davis, a builder and representative of the Design Review Board; Parks and Recreation Commission chair Jeannette Fritzky; Tia Kratter, a former Pixar art director, and teacher in Pixar university; Jamie Patterson, a stage artist who used to work with the California Musical Theater; photographer and teacher Grant Rusk; and Tina Saladino from the Parks and Recreation Foundation.

The town council gave the committee a yearly budget of \$5,000, which should cover marketing and installation cost. The artists enter in a loan agreement with the town for one or two years. Commissioners will discuss fundraising and appealing to local foundations to be able to purchase art when the people will want to keep specific pieces.

Come 2017, the committee will meet quarterly and continue to look for new pieces to be added at different places in Moraga.



David Mudgett's "The Drain" Photo provided

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Moraga Adobe

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The plans, which were finally approved late last year — having survived an appeal from neighbors concerned about traffic issues — call for the Adobe to be open to the public as a museum, where people, especially school children,

can come to learn more about the history of the building and the surrounding area. Public access will be limited to 30 days per year and additional days for maintenance of the building.

Old Adobe Inspires Young Entrepreneur

By Sora O'Doherty

Isabela Chow's light brown eyes light up when she speaks about the Moraga Adobe. She was in the third grade at Del Rey Elementary School when she learned from her teacher about the historic building. On a field trip, Isabela's class hiked to the Adobe, which sits on the hill overlooking the school, and Isabela was enthralled by the history of the people who had built the Adobe.

So inspired was Isabela that she raised money and donated \$360 to the Friends of the Moraga Adobe last year at their fundraising Fandango Fantastico. This year, Isabela, who is now going into the fifth grade, will be donating again at the Fandango on Aug. 27.

Isabela has found a number of ways to raise money for the Adobe: she sells eggs from her four chickens on Nextdoor.com. Buyers pay what they choose, which is usually around \$5 per dozen. She makes jewelry too, and sells it with her friends, sometimes at the Farmers Market. She makes beaded earrings, keychains and friendship bracelets. She looks after Kit Kit, a neighbor's cat, and adds her pay to her contribution.

Isabela also contributes from her allowance. Her mother, Ana, matches Isabela's contributions dollar for dollar. Her mother will accompany Isabela to the Fandango, and she hopes that some friends will join her as well. Last year Isabela loved the Spanish dancers with their beautiful costumes.



Isabela Chow Photo S. O'Doherty