

Flag Brigade to Mark 15th Anniversary of 9/11

By Pippa Fisher



The Flag Brigade will mark 15 years since 9/11. Photo Gint Federas

As it has done unfailingly since the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, the Lafayette Flag Brigade will mark this year's 15th anniversary with a remembrance and candlelight vigil on the El Curtola Bridge overcrossing, high above Highway 24.

This is a family oriented, educational and nonpolitical event. This year particularly its emphasis is on educating those younger than 20 years old who would have been too young to remember the events of 9/11. The bridge will feature educational displays, including a Sept. 11 and Sept. 12, 2001, newspaper headlines display booth. Free commemorative flags will be available for children.

The largest overpass flag display in the state is fully sanctioned by the California Highway Patrol as it has been for many years.

The remembrance starts at 4 p.m. and includes local Blue Star Moms, a special patriotic musical program and Lafayette Boy Scouts Troop 243, who will be presenting the colors. Local speakers will reflect on 9/11 and how it personally

affected them. This will include an open mic for those in attendance wishing to speak. As before, residents are encouraged to join in and to bring their special flag to display. The participants fly the flags in honor of those who died but also rally around the flag that unites all and defines us as Americans.

At dusk the candlelight vigil will begin. Since it is the 15th anniversary, the organizers are hoping to "pack the bridge." They anticipate this will be the largest candlelight vigil to date.

Jim Minder is the Lafayette Flag Brigade founder. "The words, 'never forget' are a reminder that history repeats itself, but they also represent a battle cry, much the same as 'remember Pearl Harbor' or 'remember the Alamo' were calls to arms," he says.

He says that over the years they have relied on volunteers to help and this year is no exception. If you would like to help, contact Patty O'Day at 925-209-5250.

To find out more, visit the website www.nevereverforget911.com.

Local Dads Helping Others

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The board meets on a monthly basis, with the mission to provide social outreach around Lamorinda.

Brian Britton is president of the board, which consists of 14 members who come from a variety of backgrounds, from high-tech to law enforcement. This variety of background and talent is key to the huge potential for success of the new group. As Britton reflected on their first meetings he said they realized that, "Collectively, we can do more."

Britton said the board had identified the three main veins for their focus: education, battered women and children, and the under-privileged. While not governed by city limits, LGB benefits organizations mostly located in Contra Costa County. It is not affiliated with just one single charity and members have a direct influence on where resources are focused.

One of its first philanthropic activities was a clothing drive, collecting professional clothes to donate to Wardrobe for Opportunity, a nonprofit dedicated to assisting low-income individuals in their efforts to find employment. Lamorinda Gives Back collected over 250 articles of clothing from the one drive, providing clothing for 25 low-income people for job interviews.

Most recently in July LGB held its First Annual Summer Field Party with the fun theme of

"Bluegrass. Barbecue. Bourbon." Attended by 160 people and sponsored by several local businesses, they raised over \$20,000 for Shelter Inc., a local nonprofit focusing on housing. Future philanthropic events are in the planning stages.

"The need is not just financial," said board member Ryan Harley. He made the point that the group has plenty of manpower available and are prepared to give time also, for example painting, fixing and generally helping where needed. He said that there is a wealth of talent among the 75 members.

The organization even has its own mascot – a llama that named LAMA (derived from "Lamorinda").

There has been significant interest in Lamorinda Gives Back, especially since it opened up a "suggestions" section on its website giving people the opportunity to suggest recommendations on where to focus efforts.

Residents can sign up for its newsletter and find out more about upcoming activities and events on its website at www.lamorindagivesback.org.

Meanwhile, the group is planning a holiday event, which will be an opportunity to get together with friends and the community while benefitting a good cause.

These dads know what they're doing.

Update on Roundabout Financing

While the lowest bid came in higher than expected at \$1.7 million, the roundabout currently under construction at the intersection of Pleasant Hill Road and Olympic Boulevard is entirely funded by the Contra Costa Transportation Authority Measure J sales tax, according to Transportation Planner James Hinkamp. Voters overwhelmingly approved Measure J in 2004. It is a continuation of the county's half-cent sales tax that funds transportation projects. — C. Tyson

Lafayette School District Board to See New Faces

This coming November sees three candidates running for two vacant seats on the Lafayette School District board of trustees. Incumbents Jean Follmer and Nancy Wallace opted not to run again.

Candidates:

- Meredith Meade
- Robert Sturm
- Mark Kindhouse

Look for candidate interviews in the Oct. 5 Lamorinda Weekly.

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