

# Lafayette Couple Hosts Community Sing-along

By Cathy Dausman



Mike Zampa leads a sing-along with friend Dash Footman. Photo C. Isaacs

Oh come, all ye faithful — as well as those who may be slightly less so — to the Holiday Sing-along, at 7 p.m. Dec. 22, rain or shine, at Lafayette Plaza Park.

Organizer Michael Zampa was inspired by the song “Christmas Eve in my Home Town,” with its lyrics of “carols in the square, laughter everywhere.”

“It’s the one time a year you get the whole community out there to feel good,” he says. And when Zampa says “community” he means all of Lamorinda. The Lafayette man and his wife Lynn began the tradition when their children were little; not even a five-year stint in Asia kept them from their song leading, as they returned to the U.S. at Christmas each year just in time to pull the sing-along together.

“It started with people we knew,” Zampa says, and at one time grew to as many as 100 participants. The younger generation, some of whom sang in choirs at Campolindo or Acalanes high schools, now returns to meet friends. One year Lafayette’s police chief led a chorus of “Jingle Bells.” And rain does not deter the crowd. When 50 singers were forced to huddle in the rain under the Park Theater marquee one year,

the overflow gathered under a golf umbrella generously held aloft by a cowboy hat-wearing participant.

Another year, after “continuous days of rain,” the skies cleared for the sing-along, which was followed with a rowdy game of mud football.

Zampa once sang lead in a San Francisco based barbershop quartet, but he sets the musical bar at “enthusiastic and casual” for this holiday song fest. He supplies the lyrics, and starts in a key he thinks makes the high notes accessible. One year an accompanist with a ukulele was consistently off-key. “It was the most discordant singing ever,” he admits. But Lafayette Chamber of Commerce director Jay Lifson says “you don’t need to be a member of the Vienna Boys’ Choir (to join in)”

Lifson, who has attended several times, calls Zampa “a natural-born leader and a ham.”

Dress code is “whatever feels comfortable and warm,” Zampa says, adding that he’s performed variously in shorts or pajamas.

While Zampa can’t pinpoint the year the event started, he thinks it was 12 to 15 years ago. “For the last eight years it’s been the “10th Annual” event,” he laughs.

# Lafayette’s Leland Reservoir Project is in the Pipeline

By Pippa Fisher



Photo Pippa Fisher

It is a long way off but the East Bay Municipal Utility District plans to reconstruct Lafayette’s Leland Reservoir.

John Coleman, EBMUD director and Jeni McGregor, EBMUD senior engineer, updated the Lafayette City Council on the Leland Reservoir Project at the Nov. 28 council meeting.

Following an environmental impact report next year, the \$30 million project will go to design from 2020-2022, with construction planned for 2022-2024. Coleman made the initial ob-

servation that the Leland Reservoir is at its breaking point. Smaller capacity tanks are needed to replace the current 18-million-gallon, 60-year-old storage infrastructure at 1040 Leland Drive.

McGregor said that at present the 36-inch diameter critical transmission pipeline runs from the Lafayette Water Treatment Plant to the Leland Reservoir via Old Tunnel Road and then to the EBMUD property by way of a narrow 15-foot, unpaved and hard-to-maintain right of way. ... continued on page A9