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Photo Craig Nelson

We Are the Champions! Dons Take State

Move over Golden State Warriors and Oakland Raiders — there are other top-notch sports teams in the East Bay. In what coach Ernie Rodriguez called “an instant classic,” the Acalanes High School Lady Dons volleyball squad won the State Championship match against Crossroads of Santa Monica, in a game that saw the Acalanes team go up 2-0, only to lose the next two sets. But the plucky Dons kept

their cool and went on to win, keeping a smile on their faces as well as Rodriguez’s. “It was a lot of fun to just watch these girls really grow up in front of your eyes,” he said. For the full story, see page C2. And if one state champion wasn’t enough, the Campolindo High School Cougars football team goes for the gold Dec. 17 against Bakersfield Christian in the CIF State

Division 4-AA Championship, to be held in Bakersfield. The Cougars beat Palma Dec. 9, 30-21 to claim the NorCal Division 4-AA Championship. For more on the Cougars title game, see page C1. Maybe Lamorinda is the sports capital of the West. — Peggy Spear

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Local Volunteers Offer Warm Respite Through Winter Nights

By Jennifer Wake
When you are homeless, having a warm place to sleep on a cold winter night is a worry. When you are a parent of young children and are homeless, that worry becomes profound. Thousands of volunteers have signed up to help approximately 20 families at local churches and synagogues in Contra Costa County during two-week rotations between October and May as part of the Winter Nights Shelter, a project of the Social Justice Alliance of the Interfaith Council of

Contra Costa County. Twelve of the 42 participating congregations are in Lamorinda, with six of those serving as host congregations, according to Winter Nights Executive Director Judy Stillman. The main goal is to provide a safe shelter with nutritious meals and a welcoming environment, said Christine Ayers, who chaired the program at St. Monica Catholic Church in Moraga. ... continued on page A12

Santa Makes Annual Appearance in Lafayette to Usher in Holidays



Hark! It wasn’t exactly the herald angels singing, but the next best thing: angelic children from a variety of local venues entertaining a park full of families for the annual Wonderful Life in Lafayette event at Plaza Park earlier this month. Between the charming music, the enticing aroma of complimentary popcorn and other goodies, and kids giddy with anticipation of Santa rolling in on historic “Old Betsy,” the downtown park was ground zero for the best block party of the holiday season. ... continued on page A12

Photo Gint Federas

A Note About Our Newspaper Carrier
 Blackhawk Enterprise (email –mailblackhawk@gmail.com) has been delivering the Lamorinda Weekly to all homes in Orinda, Lafayette and Moraga since January 2011. The team of eight drivers works hard to make sure you get your newspaper every other Wednesday. Blackhawk Enterprise and its team members would like to wish our readers a joyous holiday season and a very happy new year. You will also see a flyer from them in this week’s issue. Thank you, Lamorinda Weekly

Civic News A1-A12	Life in Lamorinda B1-B8	Sports C1-C4	Our Homes D1-D16
Metcalf has some tough farewell words for Moraga. — A4. Fire Districts A8 MOFD: Firefighter recalls Ghost Ship fire — page A8.	Orinda Theater to throw itself a 75th Anniversary party — page B1.	Girls Soccer gets a leg up on the new season — C2	Take the stress out of holiday get-togethers — page D1.



Lafayette

Public Meetings

City Council Special Meetings

Monday, Dec. 19, 7 p.m.
 Tuesday, Dec. 20, 10 a.m.
 Lafayette City Offices, Conference Room #265, 3675 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 19, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Jan. 9, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Arts & Science Discovery Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District
 Wednesday, Jan. 11, 7:30 p.m.
 AUHSD Board Room
 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
 www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Jan. 11, 7 p.m.
 Regular Board Meeting
 District Office Board Room
 3477 School St., Lafayette
 www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

www.ci.lafayette.ca.us
 Phone: (925) 284-1968

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County Animal Services Has Many Pet Projects

By Pippa Fisher

African lions, alligators, alpacas...in which county government offices might one stand the best chance of meeting one of these? The Lafayette City Council heard where when Contra Costa Animal Services Director Beth Ward gave it a detailed presentation on Nov. 28.

Ward, who has been in the position of director for a little over a year, said she was talking to various communities in the area about its program for informational purposes and to give updates on its work.

Admittedly she stuck to more mundane details of running the department during her presentation

than exotic animals. She explained that the department is split in six basic groups:

- Field services – protecting public health and safety through enforcement of the County’s Animal Ordinance, rabies control, field patrols and dead animal impounds.
- Shelter Operations – adoptions, transfers, intake and daily care, behavior assessment and maintenance of animals and kennels within their two shelters at Pinole and Martinez.
- Medical Services – care and treatment of animals, spay/neuter surgeries, low-cost vaccination clinic.
- Clerical Division – dispatch and frontline support staff who take in excess of 600 calls some days.
- Volunteers – for animal socialization, adoption counseling, lost and found, mobile adoptions, transfer partner coordination.
- Administration – those who keep all the above running smoothly.

Ward explained that the biggest activity in Lafayette continues to be the removal of deceased animals – 229 over the past year, most usually deer and cats. During the same time period there were 183 stray animal impounds, 48 noise and/or animal ordinance investigations, 44 rabies exposure investigations, 13 inhumane investigations and 13 local agency assists (when animal services are called to assist police or fire in cases where animals are involved) in Lafayette.

Steve Burdo, community and media relations manager, said that there are times when it can be challenging to get to all the cases of deceased animals when they are prioritizing more urgent incidents in Lafayette, such as aggressive animals, or are responding to abuse and neglect cases or health and safety related issues, although over the last year they have dedicated two staff position solely for the purpose of addressing the issue of neglect.

Burdo pointed out that Lafayette is a relatively lower volume community for their department in



A staff member of CCAS and a friend.

Photo provided

terms of activity when compared to the other cities in the county. “By way of reference, in 2015, CCAS handled over 4,500 activities in Richmond, over 4,400 in Concord and 1,400 in Lafayette.” He continued, “In terms of cost, cities pay based on a per capita rate, with each city paying \$5.74 per capita. Equating cost to population, Lafayette pays less than a more populated area such as Richmond or Concord.”

As a municipal shelter CCAS is mandated to take in all dogs and cats as well as other animals that are sick injured, dangerous or potentially dangerous and under 12 weeks of age. Because of this, Burdo says that CCAS is not and will likely never be a “no kill” shelter. Some of the animals are not always prime candidates for adoption so CCAS works with hundreds of transfer partners, also referred to as animal rescue groups, that require a more experienced pet owner, rather than the casual adopter. “Our motto is, rather than saying no euthanasia, we prefer to say yes to saving lives.”

Given its challenges, the figures for the last few years are impressive. In 2011 the CCAS live release rate (percentage of animals that leave the shelter alive) was 46 percent. It is currently up to 80 percent.

When asked about the depart-

ment’s most bizarre case, Burdo says one that comes to the minds of some of the longest serving officers and employees was the time in 1987 that the department impounded over 150 chihuahuas from a home in El Sobrante. “It was a hoarding case where the department sent two officers under cover to investigate and bust. The dogs were in extremely poor condition. That is the largest dog impound that the department has ever had to handle. However, over the years, the department has handled calls regarding some pretty rare animals, including an African lion, alligators and we currently have an alpaca in our Martinez barn stables. Getting to experience amazing animals is a nice perk of the job.”

Burdo says the most frustrating part of his job is seeing neglect, abuse and injured animals. But, of the most enjoyable part of his work, he said, is, “Helping to create happy endings for the animals that enter our shelters, seeing the smiles on people’s faces when they adopt their new family member and witnessing the everyday miracles and acts of compassion from our amazing staff and volunteers.”

CCAS has a Twelve Days of Adoption promotion beginning on Dec. 15 and running through Dec. 27. The cost for all animal adoptions will be an all-inclusive \$12 fee.



Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report Nov. 20 - Dec. 3

Alarms	92
911 Calls (incl hang-ups)	6
Noise complaints	5
Traffic stops	92
Suspicious Circumstances	7
Suspicious Subjects	14
Suspicious Vehicles	29
Welfare Check	20
Abandoned Vehicle	
900 Block Moon Ct.	
10 Block Topper Ct.	
Marlene Dr./Carol Ln.	
900 Block Risa Rd.	
Animal Cruelty	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./1st St.	
900 Block Leland Dr.	
Auto Burglary	
3300 Block Angelo St.	
1300 Block El Curtola Blvd.	
1400 Block Reliez Valley Rd.	
3600 Block Nordstrom Ln.	
1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3700 Block St Francis Dr.	
1300 Block El Curtola Blvd.	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Commercial Burglary	
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3200 Block Mt Diablo Ct.	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Disturbing The Peace	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Drunk In Public	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Dui Misd	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Village Center	
St. Marys Rd./N. Silverado Dr.	
Fire/ems Response	
4100 Block Happy Valley Rd.	
500 Block Silverado Dr.	
1300 Block Reliez Valley Rd.	
Fireworks	
10 Block My Rd.	
Fraud Credit Card	
1100 Block Palomares Ct.	
Grand Theft	
60 Block Silverwood Dr.	
Deer Trail/Happy Valley Rd.	
Hailed By Citizen	
Golden Gate Way/1st St.	
Harassment	
1000 Block 2nd St.	
Laf. Police Department	
3600 Block Bickerstaff St.	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Dewing Ave.	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Eb Sr 24	
Butler Dr./Acalanes Rd.	
Old Tunnel Rd./Pleasant Hill Rd.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Bl	
1600 Block Springbrook Rd.	
1300 Block Reliez Valley Rd.	
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
900 Block Reliez Station Rd.	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./2nd St.	
Identity Theft	
900 Block Carol Ln.	
900 Block Mountain View Dr.	

10 Block Cabernet Ct.
Laf. Police Department
Illegal Entry
1400 Block Reliez Valley Rd.
Intoxicated Subj
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Juvenile Disturbance
Topper Ln./Topper Ct.
Silver Dell Rd./Shangri La Rd.
Misc. Burglary
1000 Block Carol Ln.
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Missing Adult
3900 Block S. Peardale Dr.
Missing Juvenile
3200 Block Marlene Dr.
Neighbor Dispute
1200 Block Warner Ct.
Panhandling
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Petty Theft
4000 Block Natasha Dr.
900 Block Hawthorn Dr.
1000 Block Via Baja
1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.
3300 Block McGraw Ln.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Prowler Seen
1100 Block Glen Rd.
Public Nuisance
Marlene Dr./Carol Ln.
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Reckless Driving
Pleasant Hill Rd./Eb Sr 24
Pleasant Hill Rd./Reliez Station Rd.
St. Marys Rd./Rohrer Dr.
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Lafayette Cr.
Deer Hill Rd./Oak Hill Rd.
3800 Block Happy Valley Rd.
St. Marys Rd./Glenside Dr.
Glenside Dr./Reliez Station Rd.
Lucas Dr./Huntleigh Dr.
Residential Burglary
800 Block Broadmoor Ct.
Run Away Juvenile
900 Block East St.
Shoplift
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Theft Access Card
3200 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Threats
100 Block Peaceful Ln.
3200 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Trespass
3600 Block Bickerstaff St.
Unwanted Guest
3200 Block Acalanes Ave.
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Vandalism
3300 Block Rossi St.
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Lafayette Cr.
Vehicle Theft
800 Block Hope Ln.
1000 Block Carol Ln.
Warrant Arrest
600 Block Doreen Way
20 Block Sanford Ln.

End is in Sight for Mt. Diablo Roadwork

By Pippa Fisher

The east end of Mount Diablo Boulevard in Lafayette will soon be smooth sailing for motorists who have been bumping over steel plates and avoiding countless orange cones.

The 30-inch diameter pipeline that will connect to the new Diablo Vista Pumping Plant is now completely installed under Mount Diablo Boulevard. The

pipeline was pressure tested and connected to the water distribution system. The road is being patched currently, after which there will be a break in roadwork on the busy street.

Additional median island work will be completed in early 2017. It will require limited traffic control followed by final paving and striping.

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Photo by Megan Allen

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-

servaion 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



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Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, Dec. 14, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 19, 7 p.m., cancelled
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Tuesday, Dec. 27, 7 p.m., cancelled
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Moraga School District

Thursday, Jan. 10, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Library
1010 Camino Pablo, Moraga
www.moraga.k12.ca.us
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

Town of Moraga:

www.moraga.ca.us
Phone: (925) 888-7022

Chamber of Commerce:

www.moragachamber.org

Moraga Citizens' Network:

www.moragacitizensnetwork.org

Moraga Police Report



Nov. 1 to Nov. 15

11/15 Civil Dispute

Children, children—who's got the children? A concerned citizen on La Salle Drive reported two small children missed a child exchange. The separated adults haven't obtained child custody orders, but police found the children well cared for.

11/15 Speeding/false license

Police found the driver of a speeding Jeep Patriot (57 mph in a 35 zone) doubly patriotic when they discovered he held a second, illegal driver's license. He was arrested and released at the scene.

11/16 Burglary

A neighbor notified police about an open door/window at a vacant house on Cedarwood Drive. It was ransacked and burgled.

11/17 Letter

A resident of Hardie Place received a letter regarding the outcome of a recent election and wanted it documented. She's unsure who sent it. Considering the recent elections, that's not unusual...

11/18 Warrant arrest

Some days it just doesn't pay to go to work. Subject shows up, triggers the alarm, police arrive – and find said subject was the subject herself of a \$6,000 outstanding Santa Clara County warrant. Subject transported to Martinez Detention Facility. Sorry boss – the police ate (up) my work day!

11/22 Unresponsive victim

Police and paramedics responded to a Birchwood Drive residence where an unresponsive subject was found inside. The subject was pronounced deceased at the scene.

11/24 Assault

An apparently slow-to-anger man transporting his father to Canyon suffered verbal abuse which escalated to pushing and punching from a male none too happy about the first man's car door allegedly bumping his truck. The victim declined to press battery charges even after the truck driver followed the subject home.

11/26 Recovered Vehicle

An ex-boyfriend said to have stolen a vehicle must have had a change of heart; police found the vehicle parked near the owner's house less than 24 hours after it was taken. Wonder if the carjacker topped off the tank first.

11/27 Robbery

Police suspect the person reporting a carjacking incident was actually

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Landslide Pushes Rheem Closure into Late January

By Sophie Braccini

As Moraga Public Works Director Edric Kwan puts it, Moraga and Orinda are known in the region for their active earth movements that can become quite disruptive to construction projects.

That is what happened in the Bellavista development (formerly known as Rancho Laguna II), the site that borders Rheem Boulevard between St. Mary's Road and Moraga Road: a landslide was activated close enough to a home site that repairs on the boulevard had to be interrupted to free resources to mediate the slide. As a result, that portion of the roadway that was supposed to reopen at the beginning of December will stay closed until January, if the weather cooperates.

Kwan says that the Bellavista site contains a significant number of old landslides, most of them in open spaces that will not be built on by developer SummerHill Homes. The project proposes 27 homes, 10 along Rheem Boulevard and the 17 others up the hill. The slide that got activated recently was located behind lot 11, which is located along Rheem Boulevard. Kwan said that when the project was adopted, the city and developer were aware of the existence of the dormant landslide that was recently activated behind lot 11.

"It would have been a burden on the Bellavista Home Owner Association if the landslide had activated after the homes were built and



A landslide is slowing work at Bellavista.

Photo Andy Schreck

made," Kwan said, who adds that in that regard, he is very satisfied that it happened now and is being fixed by the developer. He confirms that the other slides on the 179-acre property are located in open space, away from the new proposed homes.

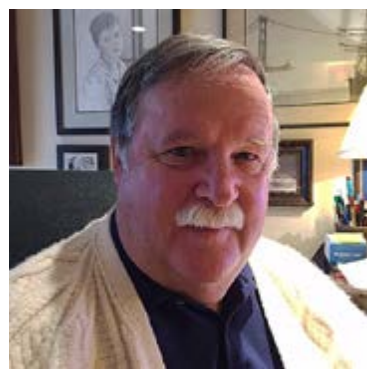
Since it was part of SummerHill conditions of approval to repair Rheem Boulevard, it was that company's resources that were on-site and were shifted from the road repair to address the slide. The town staff added in a written communication that "the ground, as

would be expected, is now quite wet, and the contractor's efforts to keep the roadway area dry by covering the entire roadway with plastic sheeting was of limited success. The project requires a forecast for dry weather for at least five consecutive days in order for state and federal environmental regulatory agencies to allow the developer to work on the project."

The date to reopen the boulevard on Jan. 20 includes 15 days of delay, but will be pushed further into January if continuous rain delays the repairs further.

Moraga's Departing Mayor Has Some Regrets

By Sophie Braccini



Mike Metcalf Photo Sophie Braccini

This year is the last of Mike Metcalf's service to the town of Moraga as an elected official.

For 12 years he has volunteered as a council member, including three terms as mayor. He had served an additional six years on the planning commission prior to the council. Eighteen years in the life of the retired Chevron engineer have been dedicated to

making Moraga a better place to live. He leaves with several gratifications: the approval of Measure K — the 1-percent add-on sales tax for the roads; and a shift to the perception that Moraga does not have a spending problem, but a revenue problem. Yet there were too many regrets and disappointments to compel him to continue in office. It was time to retire. He feels now free to speak about it.

"Twelve years has been quite long," says the retiring mayor. "There have been too many disappointments, and the same issues keep coming back." Looking at the last 18 years, he notes how little has been accomplished over so long a period, and how resistant to change and close-minded some people can be. He envisages Moraga remaining a small town with great potential for enhanced charm, yet entangled in old issues that no one seems able to unravel.

He vividly remembers one of the first very first meetings he attended as planning commissioner 18 years ago. The topic was the approval of the vesting map for the country club extension, some 50 homes, which to this day remain unbuilt. He remembers a visibly unhappy man sitting in the front row of the auditorium, who stood up after the staff report and made it clear to the commission that the hearing was a waste of time, since the project was a done deal. This was Metcalf's first encounter with Russell Bruzzone, the property owner. Apparently Bruzzone resented the town having any say over what he was planning to do with his property, Metcalf says.

Bruzzone passed away in June of 2001. Since then, the resentment of the Bruzzone family toward the town has been hard to mistake, Metcalf believes. Bitterness and distrust have continued between the town and this major property owner, resulting in stagnation in the town center, Metcalf says.

The Moraga Center Specific

Plan area is owned almost entirely by this family. Metcalf recalls that it took eight years to develop the Specific Plan, "easily two years of that was senseless argument, sometimes the fault the town," recalls Metcalf. He regrets that the Bruzzone family refused to negotiate a development agreement with the town. "What we were trying to do was to put an apparatus in place to develop the public infrastructure that goes with the plan (such as the extension of School Street), but for them it seemed more about control," he says. To him, it remains very sad.

His fellow residents in some instances have also disappointed Metcalf.

In his view the attempt to get a referendum against the City Ventures project was disingenuous and cynical. "It was not at all legal, and the petitioners probably knew it, evidently trying to make the approval process so difficult that the developer would simply walk away," he says. He personally believes that this development along Moraga Way, next to the fire station, will turn out just fine once the construction is complete and the landscaping fills in. "It will be so much better than the vacant lot it is now," he says.

Another of Metcalf's major regrets has to do with the Hacienda de las Flores. His wife, Sharon, is an architect by training, who was a volunteer for the Hacienda Foundation for years with her friend Judy Dinkle and several other volunteers. Metcalf truly supported and liked the work that was done by the architect firm Gould Evans, and the concept of a public/private partnership to develop the property. This work represented a great beginning to establishing a business plan for what he calls a public treasure, providing some much-needed amenities for the town. The mayor was disheartened when the project was abruptly derailed and died. "It was like watching a train wreck in slow motion," he

remembers.

Metcalf can take credit for the process that led to the adoption of Measure K. It started with getting the town's finances on the right track, hiring quality auditors, forming an audit and finance committee, and hiring real professionals to manage the town finances. He is proud that town staff continues to receive peer awards for superlative financial reporting, and that the town enjoys a high credit rating. He supported the 2009 study by the revenue enhancement committee that showed that the city was not overspending and needed new sources of revenue to take care of its infrastructure. He involved himself in the outreach that followed and led to passage of Measure K — remarkably, by over 70 percent voter approval. He believes that this instructive approach is necessary to build residents' trust and support for any project. He hopes that such a process will be used for funding the needed storm drain repair.

Over the years Metcalf has formed several meaningful friendships, including with the long-standing town staff. He remembers fondly John Carey on the planning commission: "the brightest and most enjoyable man I worked with." He also very much appreciated Howard Harpham, who was council member for four years, for his intelligence, wit and integrity. For many years he has worked alongside Dave Trotter. "We are very different people, but we understand each other pretty well, and get things done," he says.

Metcalf is not concerned at all about having nothing to do as he steps down. He says that from his now long life, much remains yet to be done. He has a lot of things going on and a long bucket list he wants to get to. It is likely that he will continue to contribute to the town of Moraga, if only as a part of the Kiwanis Club of Moraga Valley, in which he has been involved with for about 12 years.

driving a stolen vehicle. The case remains under investigation.

11/28 Vehicle Tampering

You're a mean one, Mr. Grinch, for messing with my car. You entered during darkness and you tampered with my (ignition) switch; still I won't have to hitch... Max to my car (it still works).

Alarms:

11/16 300 block Rheem Blvd.
11/16 1600 block School Street
11/18 400 block Donald Drive
11/23 100 block Hardie Drive
11/25 600 block Augusta Drive
11/25 100 block Fairfield Place
11/26 100 blockj San Pablo Court

Burglaries:

11/24 100 block Miramonte Drive (auto and storage unit)
11/26 1900 block Ascot Drive; car window smashed
11/28 400 block Center Street; car window smashed
11/28 recovered vehicle missing camper shell and stereo
11/29 car keyed at Safeway lot

11/16 ID theft:

Fraudulent charges of \$2,500 were reversed.

11/29 Phone fraud:

Several thousand dollars lost when "family member" claimed arrest.

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Moraga Drive-Through: From Burger King to Starbucks

By Sophie Braccini

Don't line up just yet to get your Chestnut Praline Latte at the drive-through Starbucks: the building is still Burger King. But the Seattle-based coffee company has plans to take over the stand-alone building at Moraga's Rheem Center...

pany plans to add seven to 10 employees to the 14 they already employ in Moraga.

However, commissioner Kymberleigh Korpus appealed the decision because of one sticking point: The new Starbucks calls for gender-neutral, family restrooms, and Korpus wants women-only and men-only ones.

"Though I was very impressed with the project overall, I view Starbucks' reliance upon only a single 'gender neutral' communal bathroom for restrooms as a safety issue that cannot be ignored," she wrote in a letter to attorney Ellen Rosenbluth and town planner Kelly Clancy.

Korpus said she hopes the current town council can decide the issue before the new town council takes over, so there as not to cause any unnecessary delay for the applicant." ... continued on page A11



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Moraga residents and visitors gathered at The Commons on a cool but dry December evening for the annual lighting of the town Christmas tree. Carols provided by Lamorinda Theater Academy and hot chocolate and cookies by Moraga Youth Involvement. Ho ho ho's supplied by Santa himself. —C. Dausman



Photos Eric Dausman

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Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Dec. 20, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Jan. 10, 7 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
Orinda Library

Citizens' Infrastructure

Oversight Commission
Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2016, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
City Hall, 22 Orinda Way, Orinda

School Board Meetings

Orinda Unified School District
Monday, Jan. 9, 6 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
8 Altarinda Rd., Orinda
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org
Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report Nov. 20 to Dec. 3

Alarms	38
Noise complaints	4
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	3
Traffic stops	60
Suspicious Circumstances	10
Suspicious Subjects	10
Suspicious Vehicles	10
Abandoned Vehicle	
200 block Holly Ln.	
Assault/deadly weapon	
CVS	
Barking Dog	
40 block Overhill Road	
Burglary	
Wilder/Wild Lilac	
300 block Camino Sobrante	
Burglary, Commercial	
50 block Washell Way	
10 block Theatre Square	
Burglary, Residential	
300 block La Espiral	
Dependent Adult abuse	
100 block Camino Sobrante	
Dispute	
40 block Lost Valley Dr.	
40 block Underhill Rd. (2)	
Civil	
10 block Theatre Square	
Holy Shepherd	
Disturbance	
Donald Dr./Hall Blvd.	
Moraga Valley Swim/Tennis	
60 block Via Farallon	
Donald Dr./Alice Ln. (2)	
Safeway	
DUI	
St Stephens/Tahos Rd. (2)	
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.	
Field Training	
Miramonte High School	
Hit & Run	
80 block Davis Rd	
Health & Safety violation	
Theatre Square	
ID Theft	
10 block El Sueno	
10 block Sanborn Rd.	
Illegal Entry	
100 block El Toyonal	
Missing Adult	
20 block Peppertree Terrace	
Police/Fire/ EMS	
40 block Underhill Rd.	
Public Nuisance	
Hall Dr./Easton Ct.	
Starbucks	
Reckless Driving	
Hwy 24/Orinda	
Camino Pablo/Claremont Ave.	
Hwy 24/Camino Pablo (3)	
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.	
Village Square	
Camino Pablo/Bear Creek	
Via Las Cruces/St Stephens	
Orinda Way/Camino Sobrante	
San Pablo Dam Rd./Camino Pablo	
Shoplift	
Safeway	
Theft, Petty	
Rite Aid	
Safeway	
Library	
100 block Camino Sobrante	
Theft, Vehicle	
100 block Moraga Way	
Unwanted Guest	
20 block Orinda Way	
Vandalism	
20 block East Altarinda	
Northwood Dr./Southwood	
Warrant Service/Arrest	
60 block Oak Road	



Maureen Wilbur

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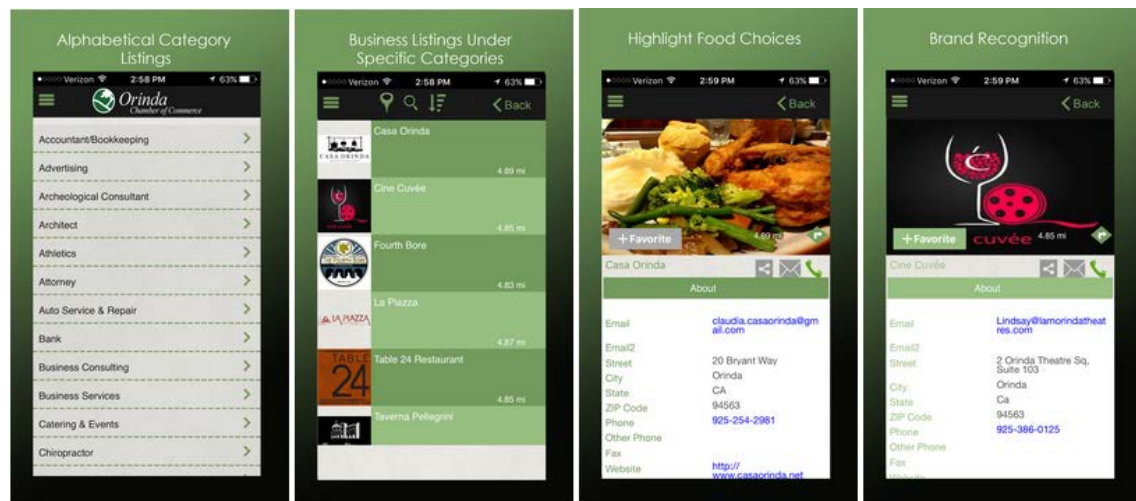
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Find Local Businesses with New Explore Orinda App

By Sora O'Doherty



Sample screen shots of the Orinda App

Courtesy Orinda Chamber of Commerce

Did you know that the Orinda Chamber of Commerce membership list includes a zoo?

The Orinda Chamber of Commerce recently unveiled a new smart phone application that allows users to easily locate all of the Chamber businesses — including a zoo — by member category. All Chamber of Commerce member businesses automatically receive a listing in the new Explore Orinda app, which will be updated in real time whenever members update their information with the Chamber. Businesses are listed by approximately 60 categories from accountants to zoos, including auto repair, banks, books, caterers, florists, government, jewelers and mortgages.

The development of the Explore Orinda app was a collabora-

tive effort between the Chamber and Champagne Design, according to Champagne Design owner Lynn McAuliffe. McAuliffe said that her company worked closely with current Orinda Chamber President Roy Hodgkinson, who was instrumental in defining what the app was to accomplish and how it would function. It took nearly a year to define and refine the final product with the app developers. McAuliffe added that they are still working on improvements which they plan to implement soon. Chamber Executive Director Sophie Braccini said that the project was initially funded by a grant from the Orinda Community Foundation and that the Chamber is seeking a further grant for future improvements to the app.

Approximately 90 percent of the businesses included on the app are located in Orinda; the other 10 percent are located in Lamorinda and the surrounding area. Any business may choose to be a member of the Orinda Chamber, like the Oakland Zoo, which has the zoo category all to itself. As soon as a new business joins the Chamber, Braccini adds that business to the Website Member Directory and it will then also be available on the app.

Chamber members are responsible for updating the specific information about their business on the website, including logo, social media links, description and most of all, images that support their business. The app has a built-in slide show for each business. Clicking on a business in the app

brings up a detailed landing page that may include a slideshow of images loaded by the business owner. So, for example, Casa Orinda offers photos of the restaurant interior and a picture of its famous fried chicken.

There is no additional cost to Chamber members to be listed on the mobile app, as it one of the resources that the Chamber has developed to help Chamber businesses expand their marketing reach to the community and visitors to Orinda. The Chamber's strategy to counter the negative effects of online shopping on downtown businesses is to remind people about the benefits of doing business locally and to make local businesses easier to locate.

The Explore Orinda app is now available for download on the Apple App Store and Google Play; however Champagne Design is still working out some bugs and planning enhancements. Future improvements may include push notifications for businesses to get the word out to their followers about special events, promotions and sales. Examples of push notifications would be for real estate agents to send out a new home-for-sale listing to their audience as soon as they have the listing available or for a restaurant to announce the details of an event it will be hosting.

The BEST Way for Local Businesses to Go Green

By Sora O'Doherty

Orinda is turning green, not just for the holidays but all year long, by availing itself of programs designed to lower utility costs and greenhouse gasses at its businesses.

A new California law, SB 32, requires cities to reduce their greenhouse gasses. Gov. Brown signed SB 32 in September, the landmark energy and climate change legislation that requires California to reduce emissions to well below 1990 levels.

Business are trying to reduce their costs and so are looking at increasing energy efficiency. Until recently, however, cities were unaware that businesses within their borders were helping them meet their goals, and businesses were unaware that their efforts are helping the cities.

According to Lynda Deschambault, former Moraga mayor and executive director of Contra Costa County Climate Leaders (4CL), businesses are "low hanging fruit" for cities trying to improve their numbers.

In an effort to bring together businesses and city governments, 4CL held a workshop recently on Cities and Businesses: Working Together to Meet SB 32 and Community-wide Climate Action Plan Goals. One of the presenters at that workshop was Stephen Wolcott, program manager for sustainable energy use at DNV-GL, an

Oakland-based firm. He explained about the Business Energy Services Team (BEST) program offered to small- and medium-sized businesses located in select cities in the East Bay area. The primary focus of this program is to help businesses reduce their electricity cost by increasing their facility's energy efficiency. The BEST program promotes the installation and use of cost-effective, high-efficiency lighting, refrigeration and customized technologies through program incentives.

There are many programs aimed at big business, but not so many that try to help small businesses, like mom and pop shops with under \$1 million profits annually that consume under 200 peak kilowatt hours. That's the majority of Orinda businesses.

Wolcott has been working with Lafayette, Orinda and Moraga to help businesses that have fewer than 10 employees, or whose owners are perhaps non-English speakers, to access energy efficient incentive programs. He notes that there has been a significant uptick in local businesses availing themselves of improvements that may lower their energy consumption while at the same time creating a more pleasant environment for both customers and employees. The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce has been particularly active, and Orinda is also showing increased interest, he says. Orinda has a high number of businesses making use of BEST, according to Jency James, senior consultant for 4CL.

There is a pool of money made available by PG&E, mandated by the California Public Utilities Commission, to be used to provide incentives for California businesses to become more energy efficient. Businesses who undertake im-

provements may find that between 20 and 100 percent of their costs can be offset. BEST is one of the many rebate programs available.

The program has many positive benefits, according to Wolcott. The contractors working on energy efficient installations are local businesses serving their own communities. Cities have to achieve energy goals to increase energy efficiency and reduce carbon dioxide emissions. This proves to be good for the environment without giving anything up, so it is a win-win situation.

For example, a gas station could lower its energy costs by 70 percent by switching to more efficient refrigeration and LED lighting. Since DNV-GL began providing services to this community in 2002, their work has saved on 100 million kilowatt hours.

Wolcott explained that some businesses are hard to reach with

energy efficient solutions, which is why DNV-GL is working with PG&E and municipalities in Contra Costa and Alameda Counties to reach small businesses that might not otherwise be aware of the opportunities open to them.

The programs for 2016 have concluded, but in late January, small businesses can apply for no-cost audits where an auditor will come to the business and assess what the business is capable of doing and advise what it should do. DNV-GL works with nonprofit partners including Sustainable Contra Costa County. If the work required for the energy efficient installation is over \$5,000, there is a program where the work can be financed by a 0 percent loan from PG&E which is then repaid from the energy savings per month. Project costs range from \$75 to \$60,000; most are between \$1,500 and \$10,000.

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Wishing all of my clients, friends and neighbors joyful holidays and best wishes for a healthy and prosperous new year! Frank Woodward



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Making the Season Bright



The Orinda Children's Choir performed on Dec. 3

Photos Sora O'Doherty



Orinda welcomes the holiday season with the annual lighting of the East Bay Hospice Tree of Lights. This year marks the 30th year that Trees of Lights have been lit, to comfort members of the community who have incurred a loss of a loved one, and to raise funds to support Hospice East Bay's patient care services. The young voices of the Orinda Children's Choir, directed by Ron Pickett, with students from all four Orinda elementary school and Orinda Intermediate School, graced the welcoming of the holiday season prior to the lighting of the Tree of Lights and the arrival of Santa on a fire engine. —S. O'Doherty

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Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors
 Wednesday, Dec. 14, 5:30 p.m.
 Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors
 Tuesday, Jan. 17, 1:30 p.m.
 Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez
 For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

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MOFD Officials Jump Right into Water Flow Project

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District wasted no time tackling one of the critical goals of its recently approved Strategic Plan when Fire Chief Stephen Healy and director Brad Barber met with East Bay Municipal Utility District officials requesting the upgrade of the water supply to district fire hydrants.

Barber noted that the water district had given MOFD a \$50 million estimate in 1997 to bring all of the pipes in the fire district up to the highest standard of water flow. Since then, while some of the pipes have been upgraded, inflation has

eaten up the money saved and the cost today would very likely approach the same number. "It would be a number beyond EBMUD's capacity to repair," Barber said at the Dec. 7 district meeting.

Instead, the district will look at a tiered approach to piping infrastructure replacement. Step one may include the upgrade of the inadequate water flow from "red top" hydrants - those barely pumping 500 gallons of water per minute - to a marginally adequate rate of up to 1,000 gallons per minute - "orange top" hydrants. Green caps indicate good flow, be-

tween 1,000 and 1,500 GPM, with blue yielding superior flow at more than 1,500 GPM. Approximately 40 red top and 250 orange top hydrants exist in the district, out of a total of more than 1,400.

Other variables include concentrations of inadequate hydrants, possibly obviating the need to fix all of the problem hydrants in one location as long as at least one hydrant pumps an adequate water supply. "Like in the Charles Hill area," said Division 5 director Craig Jorgens, on the board at his first MOFD district meeting. "Maybe in some areas

it's more critical for an orange hydrant to be brought up to the green level rather than a red to an orange."

In addition, timing for the water flow improvements is paramount: The district would like to coordinate the piping upgrades with Orinda as the city continues its road paving project.

Barber said that EBMUD plans to report to MOFD early next year on the costs of the various upgrade tiers, possibly at a fire district meeting. "If they are willing to come," Barber said.

MOFD Firefighter Reflects on the Ghost Ship Fire

By Nick Marnell

Lucas Lambert got the call at 10:30 a.m. Sunday. Of course he knew why. The Oakland Fire Department needed help, and as a member of the East Bay Incident Management Team, an inter-agency all-risk firefighting unit, Lambert took off to International Boulevard and 31st Ave. — the Ghost Ship fire.

"We are an all-risk team that responds to incidents that go beyond a 24-hour period," said the Moraga-Orinda Fire District firefighter-paramedic, who reported to the incident command post at the Wendy's Restaurant across the street from the live-work space fire that killed 36 people.

The three-alarm blaze began late on the night of Dec. 2, and the fire had been extinguished long before Sunday morning. What OFD needed was a safety officer, an officer to provide for the care of the firefighters, and that became Lambert's assignment. "Someone to stare back and take in the big picture," he said. "As firefighters we often get so focused and so task oriented, we need to keep everything in balance."

So he had to go into what was left of the building and learn the details of the operation, which at that point had phased into recovery mode. Lambert had to confirm that all firefighters' personal protective equipment was functioning properly and not compromised by the high amount of particulate matter still in the air. He



Firefighter Lucas Lambert surveys the remnants of the Ghost Ship.

Photo courtesy Lt. Mark Tait, East Bay Regional Park District

checked the structural integrity of the building with the structural engineers who removed drooping material from the walls that was in danger of collapsing onto the firefighters. "The walls looked like a wet cracker," said one of the engineers.

Lambert also participated in firefighter stress debriefings.

Right about the time Lambert arrived at the building, firefighters were removing the dead from the rubble. One of the firefighters told Lambert that he knows that he pulled bodies from the building, but he remembered nothing of the specifics.

"Anyone who entered that building would be lying if they say it didn't affect them," Lambert said. "Every time that you respond to something like this, it takes a little bit out of you." Out of respect for those affected, Lambert would not go into detail of what he witnessed.

"Personally, it wasn't something that I wanted to see, but I feel comfortable with the work that we did for the victims and their families," he said.

And also for the responders. The industry has progressed far from the tough-guy culture and recognizes the needs of the fire-

fighters who often have difficulty after, and sometimes during, the fact. Assistance programs are available at the county level for long-term stress and psychological issues, but Lambert said that the firefighters still feel most comfortable talking with each other.

"No human being should have to witness this," commented one of the first responders. But human beings do exist who are not only able to witness a tragedy like this but able to mitigate the disaster.

Those human beings are called to the firefighting profession.

During Fire, Officials Say Know Your Exit Strategy

By Nick Marnell

Often it takes an incident like the Oakland Ghost Ship fire to jolt people into action to prevent a similar tragedy. As such, officials of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District emphasized the importance of adhering to fire codes and heeding fire prevention

advice in order to stay safe in an emergency situation.

"The fire prevention bureau is often overlooked as a valuable part of the fire district," said ConFire Chief Jeff Carman. Indeed, most revere the fire suppression teams and the firefighters as heroes who put themselves at risk to save lives and property, with the fire prevention division looked on as a nuisance and a symbol of government bureaucracy.

But fire inspectors and code enforcers indirectly save many lives, probably more lives than do the firefighters, Carman said. Fire prevention work is often contentious, dealing with developers, contractors and private parties in an attempt to apply the fire and building codes. Lives potentially saved include not only civilians but firefighters as well.

"The number one source of our code violations is exiting," said Robert Marshall, ConFire fire

marshal. "Lights burnt out, the exit sign turned the wrong way, blocked exits." He stressed the need for education at home, especially for children: Teach the kids exit drills. Know two ways out of the house at all times. Before enjoying a feature at the Rheem Theatre, scope out the exits. Tell visitors staying at the Lafayette Park Hotel to be sure to locate the exit stairway. Stay alert at the Bruns Amphitheater.

"Focus on that exit sign. Walk toward it. It will lead you to the way out," Marshall said. "If you can't see a way out, your life is in danger." He noted that the 36 people killed in the Ghost Ship fire could not escape in under five minutes, yet at no time were they more than 50 feet from an exit.

As there are no crowded live-work warehouse-type structures in the district, MOFD fire marshal Kathy Leonard said that the larger concern in the Lamorinda area is a devastating wildfire, and

that providing defensible space around your property is critical for your protection. "We do code inspections for a reason," she said. ConFire does about 12,000 code inspections per year, MOFD about 1,100.

"Had the fire code been adhered to it would not have resulted in the high number of fatalities we saw there," Carman said of the Ghost Ship tragedy. "Unfortunately, the Oakland fire is a stark reminder that the codes are there for a reason and if followed they will ultimately reduce the loss of life and property."

Fire officials recommend this action plan: If you intend to put on an event, call the district. The fire prevention bureau will inspect the venue and walk you through the necessary safety requirements.

Marshall sounded more hopeful than convinced that the public will heed the districts' exhortations. "We'd love to say that it's never going to happen here," he said.

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Letters to the Editor

Opinions in Letters to the Editor are the express views of the writer and not necessarily those of the Lamorinda Weekly. All published letters will include the writer's name and city/town of residence -- we will only accept letters from those who live in, or own a business in, the communities comprising Lamorinda (please give us your phone number for verification purposes only). Letters should be 350 words or less; letters of up to 500 words will be accepted on a space-available basis. Visit www.lamorindaweekly.com for submission guidelines. Email: letters@lamorindaweekly.com; Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O. Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

'Thoughtful Food' Even Tasty in Texas

Dear Editor,

I had it up to my cackled neck trying to use chicken for another sit-down dinner party until I came across an old recipe from your food writer, Susie Iventosch. Her Baked Chicken Breast with Goat Cheese and Tarragon-Watercress Vinaigrette from Jan. 15, 2014, is good enough to make a chicken cross the road. As if that weren't enough, I then had the audacity to try her Mocha and Kahlua Cheesecake from her Aug. 10, 2016 "Thoughtful Food" column which was not only easy, but damn, it was good! What next? Pistachio-Crusted Cremini Mushrooms Stuffed with Goat Cheese? (July 27, 2016) As her direct and down to earth directions from the Mocha Cheesecake recipe states, "or until top is a little bit jiggly"...well my top is a bit jiggly and it's going to get worse if she keeps this up!

Mary MacDowell
Colleyville, Texas

[Editor's Note: It is not normally our policy to publish letters from

outside our coverage area of Lamorinda, but this one was so delicious, we had to share.]

Charging for Bags Too Early?

Dear Editor,

Just a heads-up to all residents who might shop at Safeway. They're ripping you off.

The day after the election I was there and saw that they were charging shoppers for grocery bags — 10 cents each.

Yes, the ballot measure passed the day before BUT it doesn't become effective until late December when the vote is certified by the state.

The manager told me he was following orders. I contacted the Attorney General and the Secretary of State by e-mail but neither responded.

I talked to Safeway corporate in Idaho and was referred to local corporate and was told that what they were doing was okay, although the information they provided showed that is not the case.

So Safeway (and every one of their stores statewide) decided to cash in immediately on all that money. Just think how fast those 10-cents per bag will add up be-

fore the measure even becomes official.

Barbara Simpson
Moraga

Local Term Limits?

Dear Editor, Kudos to Brant Anderson on knowing when it is time to leave. All over Lamorinda there are people on the councils and the commissions that are there too long. Lafayette has commissioners who have been moving from one commission to another for well over 20 years. Too long! Maybe we need some local term limits. It isn't healthy. New blood and new ideas are needed.

Leonard Dorin
Lafayette

Takes Issue at Crosses Criticism

Dear Editor,

The Crosses of Lafayette is a 'tacky eyesore' according to a recent letter from Shane Palmer. And after that introduction he really lays it on. The Crosses are "loud, rude and garish, an annoying selfish display to near

level of the Westboro Baptist Church," that bunch that celebrates the death of U.S. service men and women with placards at roadsides and even at their funerals.

How he arrives to that conclusion for a local testament to American dead in the unending wars we've become engaged and most would like to forget in is a mystery to me. It's a needed reminder to what these wars have and continue to cost.

I bet Mr. Palmer would be happy if the field of Crosses was leveled and a fast food franchise was erected in its place.

J. Sherrill Grogan
Orinda

Join our Public Forum

If you have significant knowledge about an issue facing Lamorinda or one of its cities that requires more than the 350 words to which we must limit Letters to the Editor, don't despair! You can submit your letter to our Public Forum section. Just send your letter to letters@lamorindaweekly.com and let us know you'd like to be considered for the Public Forum.

Leland Reservoir Project is in the Pipeline

... continued from page A3

Since Old Tunnel Road is at a higher elevation than the reservoir the pipes are currently very deep and hard to access.

The project would start with construction of 2,700 feet of 36-inch main pipeline through Condit Road and Windsor Drive. Once that is in place the old main line between Old Tunnel Road and Leland Drive would be abandoned and the existing reservoir would be demolished to make way for two eight-million-gallon tanks in its place.

McGregor pointed out that the roof is unsafe and the structure does not meet seismic requirements. Aging pipes need to

be replaced and laid in a more accessible location.

She went on to describe the planned planting of native, drought-resistant grasses, wildflowers and trees. She said that as a result of three separate meetings, one with city staff in June and two others with residents and neighbors in August and September, concerns about tree removal and replacements were being addressed. Changes to the project's plans for staging and storage for materials and vehicles resulted in another 30 trees saved and more replanted. Further saving of trees will be address in the E.I.R.

Other concerns that came

out of those meetings included impacts on traffic, parking, pedestrian safety, truck routes and sewer laterals.

Vice Mayor Mike Anderson asked how long the disruption would continue on local streets and McGregor estimated about six months. However, both McGregor and Coleman recognized the impact to the public.

Council member Don Tatzin encouraged saving even more trees and stressed the need to make the public aware of the potential disruptions of this project ahead of the start.

"Communication is critical," said Mayor Mark Mitchell.

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Babies Coming for the Holidays? Try Renting Equipment To Make Stay Easy

By Paula King



“She is so easy to work with and seems to love helping people,” Simpson said of McDermott. “I can’t imagine ever going anywhere else after service and equipment like she offers.”

McDermott said that she enjoys helping her clients make traveling and hosting easier and less hectic. One of her favorite things is creating fun play spaces in grandparents’ homes.

“For grandparents who may not be familiar with the latest gear, I also demonstrate how gear works,” McDermott said.

Safety of children is a top priority, according to the company’s website. They register equipment and act quickly to fix any recall or safety issues. They clean the items after each rental with natural-based cleaners that are safe for babies, and launder and wash all linens in chemical and fragrant-free detergent.

So far, Simpson’s favorite pieces of rental equipment were an exersaucer and an activity chair. At seven months, she said that her grandchildren needed more stimulating and active toys that spin, twist and turn and they loved them during the visit.

According to McDermott, Babierge is a growing collaborative economy marketplace and not a franchise. She added that it is similar to “gig economy work.”

For more information, visit www.babierge.com/trish742/about or call 707-529-1509 for more details.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

Baby bouncers similar to this one are offered to rent through Babierge East Bay. Photo provided

When Sharon Simpson first had her twin infant grandchildren visit at four months old, she knew they needed all of the baby gear essentials in the home. But the Orinda resident did not want the expense of buying two cribs, two bouncy chairs, two swings and two sets of bedding or the hassle of storing it when they were gone.

The proud and practical grandma found Babierge East Bay and has been renting baby equipment from them ever since. Recently during Thanksgiving, Simpson ordered doubles of everything in anticipation of the twin’s arrival for the holiday from the local service, which delivers, sets gear up and then returns to pick up the rented items on the departure day.

“It’s wonderful to have this service in our area,” Simpson said.

Simpson noted that Babierge Independent Trusted Partner Trish McDermott was very helpful in delivering the baby gear and putting it all together and was also punctual and professional. During the last few weeks, McDermott has been busy delivering and setting up cribs, infant swings, changing pads, play mats, baby monitors, bouncy chairs and exersaucers in the homes of Lamorinda grandparents and extended families who are hosting infants and toddlers for the holidays.

The Orinda mom of four also has grandparents and clients who pick items up from her home. Delivery fees in the East Bay range from \$10 in Lamorinda to \$25 in San Ramon, Dublin and Pleasanton and she travels to the Oakland airport, East Bay hotels and other locations.

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Business Bites

By Paula King

Lafayette Businesspersons of the Year



Brenda and Tom Om Photo Jay Lifson

Congratulations to Brenda and Tom Om, owners of Papillion Quality Gourmet Coffees, who have been named the Lafayette Businesspersons of the Year by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce.

Eatery Earns High Honor

Open Table, the free online reservation service recently awarded Lafayette’s La Finestra as Best Value Restaurant in the East Bay. Nestled in a quiet area of Lafayette’s downtown, La Finestra consistently draws glowing reviews on Open Table’s website for its pleasant ambiance and tasty options at affordable prices. La Finestra is located at 100 Lafayette Circle, Suite 101. For more details, check out www.lafines-traristorante.com or call 925-284-5282.

Raising awareness for workplace diversity

Futures Explored is now involved in a public awareness campaign, HireAble, to increase employment rates among those with intellectual and developmental disabilities like autism, Down syndrome and cerebral palsy and they are partnering with two other

non-profit agencies, Contra Costa ARC and East Bay Innovations.

In Lafayette, Futures Explored helps adults with disabilities to gain life and work skills through its thrift shop and other programs.

For more details, check out www.HireAble.org.

Changing Spas

Who doesn’t need a good spa treatment this time of year?

Lavande Spa in Lafayette is now Marilyn Monroe Spas. It’s located at 3589 Mt. Diablo Blvd. For more information email info.lafayette@marilynmonroespas.com.

Meanwhile, Orinda’s Entourage Spa is on the move and changing its name. Now known as Entourage on Brookwood, its new location is just across the street from Theater Square at 232 Brookwood Road. The spa offers hair cuts and color, skincare, massage, waxing, airbrush tanning, plus manicures and pedicures. For more information, call (925) 254-9721

Chamber Music

For announcements of more business-related events and nonprofit fundraisers, be sure to check the chamber of commerce websites.

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce
www.lafayettechamber.org (925) 284-7404

Moraga Chamber of Commerce
www.moragachamber.org (925) 323-6524

Orinda Chamber of Commerce
www.orindachamber.org (925) 254-3909

If you have a business brief to share, please contact storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com.

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AUHSD Board Members Sworn in



Incumbent Kathy Coppersmith and Common Sense Kids Action co-director Craig Cheslog were sworn in as members of the Acalanes Union High School District governing board Dec. 7. Both were appointed in lieu of election.

“Helping children and students thrive is one of my life’s passions,” says Cheslog. “This is an exciting time to be involved in education and doing what is necessary to help ensure all of our students have the tools and support they need to succeed. I’m looking forward to serving the district’s students, families, teachers and staff to the best of my ability.”

Also at the meeting, Nancy Kendzierski was elected board president. —N. Marnell.

Photo Gint Federas

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Why Did Lamorinda Voters Reject Nearly Every Tax Increase on the Ballot?

By Nick Marnell

Unless you were the Moraga School District, you did not fare well asking Lamorindans for money in the 2016 general election. Lamorinda voters displayed no appetite for tax increases, voting against two transportation measures that sought either a property tax increase or a higher sales tax and defeating a Lafayette general sales tax.

What happened? Why did a measure seeking to improve a critical transportation system pass overall but fail in Lamorinda? How did a sales tax increase sought by the organization that delivered the Fourth Bore on time and under budget not pass? And what caused a requested sales tax hike from a municipality widely recognized for its prudent fiscal management to lose so stunningly?

A postmortem of each measure follows, in order of the amount of dollars sought, with vote totals provided by the Contra Costa County Elections Division.

Measure RR

The Bay Area Rapid Transit system placed a \$3.5 billion bond measure on the ballot in San Francisco, Alameda and Contra Costa counties, with the money earmarked to improve the system infrastructure. Needing a two-thirds vote for passage, the measure was handily approved with over 70 percent. But if the measure were left up to voters in Contra Costa County, it would have lost, as there it garnered only 60.4 percent of the vote.

"There is clearly room to build stronger support for BART in Contra Costa County," said District 3 director Rebecca Saltzman.

Lamorinda voted almost exactly in step with the county on the BART measure: 59.3 percent yes in Lamorinda, with Lafayette at 58.5, Moraga 58.2 and Orinda 61.2.

Measure RR will be funded through a property tax increase, and that method highlighted lifestyle differences among the three counties. Alameda and San Francisco counties report homeownership rates at well under 50 percent, with Contra Costa County more than 65 percent. According to data supplied by Frank Woodward of Coldwell Banker, Orinda, Lamorinda home ownership rates

span from 75 percent in Lafayette to 82 percent in Moraga to nearly 90 percent in Orinda. As property tax increases do not directly affect renters, it may have contributed to the higher number of yes votes in Alameda and San Francisco counties.

Jason Bezis, a Lafayette lawyer and one of the supporters of No on RR, said the proponents of the measure could have used a more targeted property assessment, based on proximity to BART stations. The slight edge in yes votes from Orinda supports that theory.

Comments from high-profile public officials may also have helped doom the measure in Lamorinda, as State Senator Steve Glazer of Orinda and Assemblywoman Catharine Baker railed strongly against RR.

Some fret that the infrastructure projects targeted for Lamorinda, like upgrades to the Orinda station, will be stonewalled by the agency because of the local voting results. "BART would never 'punish' one part of the system based on political outcomes," said BART spokesman Taylor Huckaby. "Capital improvement projects are initiated and prioritized by a variety of criteria, namely safety and reliability needs, and are affected by staff availability and resource allocation."

Measure X

The Contra Costa Transportation Authority, the public entity that spearheaded the Caldecott Tunnel expansion, asked voters for \$2.9 billion through Measure X, which sought a half-cent sales tax increase over 30 years for county transportation funding, including roads, transit and increased bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Voters said no.

Lamorinda sported a slightly less inclined electorate here, with 61.1 percent yes against 63.5 percent countywide, but Measure X required a two-thirds vote for passage. Orinda again led the pack with 66.1 percent yes, Moraga 61.1 and Lafayette 57.2.

"I was flabbergasted," said Don Tatzin, transportation authority commissioner and Lafayette city council member, when asked to explain the defeat. "It might have been ballot fatigue, it might have been BART. I'm not sure."

EMC Research conducted opinion surveys for the transportation authority, and company president Alex Evans agreed that ballot fatigue may have played a role in the outcome. "Our advice was that 2016 potentially was a good opportunity because of higher voter turnout. It would have been a true test of the county's will. The risk was the crowded ballot, where the measure could not get the proper attention," Evans said. He also agreed that the presence of BART as a recipient of a portion of the Measure X funds may have contributed to the measure's downfall.

The Contra Costa Taxpayers Association, an organization that opposes wasteful government spending, supported Measure X. "There is no perfect government, but the transportation authority is as good as it gets," said Jack Weir, taxpayers association president, who posited that voters balked at paying for something that they already pay for — transportation — through highway tolls.

Tatzin offered another possibility for the defeat, saying that maybe the organizers could have pushed harder the success of the Caldecott Tunnel Fourth Bore project, but he added that it could be simply that Contra Costa County is more conservative than Alameda or San Francisco and less prone to support a tax.

Measure C

This may have been the most startling defeat of the three. Not only did Lafayette voters reject the city-proposed 1-cent sales tax with 58 percent against, they cast fewer yes votes for the sales tax than they did for either Measure RR or Measure X.

"It was surprising to me that it

didn't pass," Mayor Mark Mitchell said. "We responded to requests from three community sessions, we listened to the output. It was all similar. We thought we were there." Mitchell said that the length of the tax polled evenly, at nine, 19 or 29 years, as did various percentages, with the city settling on 1 percent over 29 years.

Brian Godbe of Godbe Research evaluated public opinion of Measure C for the city, and he blamed the lack of campaigning for the defeat of the tax. "There was only one piece, plus the ballot language," Godbe said. "Tax campaigns need a preponderance of effort on the yes side. It needs to be 4-to-1 when there is a visible no campaign." Godbe said that the main issue, though, was the question of how the city would use the tax proceeds.

"What does the city need with \$100 million? Why would voters give that sum of money to

people they don't trust anyway?" said Guy Atwood of the No on C campaign, which thrust the knife in deeper by holding its victory celebration in the same complex that Lafayette conducts its city council meetings. "It was just too much money."

Mitchell indicated that the city could have run a better organized campaign with more direct voter contact, but he said that the message from the public was that the city budget already accomplishes its goals. "It was a quality of life issue, and that's how we presented it," Tatzin said. "People are happy with the way things are."

"Lafayette is a well run city, the citizens have faith in their council and likely aren't seeing things deteriorating to the point that they feel like they need to infuse more money," added County Supervisor and Board Chair Candace Andersen.



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Moraga

Starbucks Plans to Relocate

... continued from page A5

The new plans call for the addition of the drive-through. In a 2014 article Bloomberg.com reported, "Drive-throughs account for more than 40 percent of company-operated stores and have a higher-than-average sales growth compared with non-drive-through locations." However, the coffee giant has experienced difficulty with its operations and according to Quick Service Restaurant Magazine, "Starbucks ranked last in drive-thru speed of service and in the bottom half with order accuracy" last year. The company has since started to add video communication with baristas to improve the experience.

The planning commission did not concern itself with the private company's operations but had questions regarding the queuing of cars in the early hours of the day, especially just before Campolindo High school starts and students want to be caffeinated before class. Town planner Coleman Frick explained that a peer review was conducted with Starbucks engineers and that there is a risk to see the queue overflow the parking area where it will form. The staff recommendation was to evaluate traffic after three months and after one year to make sure the coffee queue would not affect other parts of the shopping center.

Starbucks made an enticing presentation of its project, indicating that the purpose was to create a real community experience with this larger new space and outdoor patio where music could be allowed. Wendy Scheck, president of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, asked the town to support this use that is in line with what the community wants to see at the Rheem Center.

The business operator indicated that alcohol was not part of the application at this time, but that beer and wine could be offered in the future. This addition would require an Alcohol and Beverage Control license. The commissioners made sure that Starbucks would limit alcohol consumption to the premises, that it would not be a drive-through item and that staff was trained not to sell it without proper age verification.

While the other commissioners did not agree with Korpus' concerns about the restrooms, they did support another of her proposals: the addition of a new pedestrian crosswalk in front of the new cafe.

The project will have to be reviewed by the Design Review Board to fine-tune the visual impact of the remodel along the scenic corridor before work can start. There is no indication yet of what the existing Starbucks location will become.

Happy Holidays

What a fabulous time of year to be thankful for what we have and how blessed we are to live in the Lamorinda area. To see old friends, gather with family and hopefully get a little down time to enjoy the season. Billy and I wish you the very best and hope you create new memories that last forever.

If you are thinking of selling in 2017, the Spring market has been the strongest season over the last several years and should be again.

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2000 - 2014
Giving Dreams an Address

Wonderful Life in Lafayette

... continued from page A1



Local youth groups performed at It's A Wonderful Life in Lafayette.

Photo Gint Federas

It's amazing how much good cheer one city block can hold. The patch of grass in the center of town, along with overflow onto Golden Gate Way was chock full of holiday spirit and friendly neighbors, lots of little ones ready to whisper their wishes to Santa, police officers giving out pencils and candy canes, and the first ever very cool snow globe that families could step into and have their picture taken.

Donica Katayanagi was lined up with son Rocky, 4 and daughter Penny, 6, waiting to chat with the bearded man in red. Apparently the kids are smitten with all things related to the Disney film "Moana." Rocky is planning to ask Santa for a Moana Lego set and Penny would like a Moana princess dress.

This year, the stage was front and center for the Stanley Middle School Chorus, which kicked

things off at 4 p.m.; they were followed by the Lafayette Nursery School, Lamorinda Theatre Academy, Town Hall Theatre and finally the White Horse Youth Corale. Parents, grandparents, and kids found it hard to resist the sing-a-long to classic Christmas tunes that accompanied the tree lighting.

It took a lot of TLC to get the 1922 firetruck up and running to be Santa's special sleigh from its usual home at the Library to Plaza Park, reports Santa's chauffeur, John Kallio. To keep the ruffraff at bay, Santa and Kallio had a police motorcycle escort complete with blaring siren to announce the big man's visit. Right on cue, Bing Crosby crooned "Here Comes Santa Claus" to welcome his arrival.

This festive evening tradition is sponsored by the Dana Green Team and Branagh Development, along

with the Lafayette Chamber, and made possible with the assistance of many volunteers, including Boy Scouts, National Charity League folks, and expert master of ceremonies, Julia Glyde. Thirsty attendees enjoyed complimentary coffee, hot chocolate and apple cider care of Double Perks in Lafayette, and since it was right around dinner time, Mangia had pizza available, and the Chamber sponsored the always-welcome bar. The Green Team and Branagh also generously underwrite the sparkling twinkle lights that add a glowing ambience to the downtown throughout December. It really is a wonderful life in Lafayette, when residents can be grateful for supportive families, Santa comes to town, and there's hot chocolate for everyone.

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Local Volunteers Offer Warm Respite Through Winter Nights

... continued from page A1



Photo provided

"We shopped for, cooked, served and cleaned up breakfast and dinners every day, and also provided food for guests to pack their lunches during the week."

In addition to providing meals, St. Monica volunteers provided tutoring support, playtime and reading for the younger kids, and weekend activities like basketball and kickball. Other congregations have organized trips to places like the Exploratorium. One volunteer from a synagogue in Lafayette takes kids out horseback riding every year.

This year was special for St. Monica because Winter Nights' guests were in Moraga during Halloween. "We were able to get adults and children costumes they liked and have volunteers take them trick-or-treating locally," Stillman said.

"It's all about the kids," said Joanne Peterson, who is a Winter Nights co-chair at a Lafayette synagogue. "Sandy Anderson and Cindy Coleman started the program here and did it for 10 or 11 years. We try to involve as many

congregates as we can, and break down jobs into small pieces so everyone can get involved. We have a huge Christmas Eve party and have Santa in the sanctuary, depending on the age of the kids. One year seven kids were under the age of 5, so we had the preschool host the party."

A program manager works with Winter Nights' families on their goals to help them become self-sustaining and there is a volunteer life coach who helps individuals make plans to remove obstacles that keep them from success, said Stillman. "We have a group called the Traveling Tutors who make sure students get their homework done, encourage reading through reading incentives and communicate with parents about the progress of their children."

Each family sleeps inside their own pop-up tent set up in reception halls, an area off-limits to Winter Nights' volunteers. This allows guests a sense of privacy and a place they can call their own.

"These are people like you and

me that have just fallen on hard times," said Robin Freeberg, who is involved in Winter Nights at her Lamorinda church. "Many of the clients have jobs that pay minimum wage and are unable to sustain themselves in our affluent community."

Since several Winter Nights' clients come from abusive situations, some participant locations in Lamorinda were omitted from this story to ensure client safety.

"People in need do not necessarily come from the poorest of communities," added a Lafayette congregational co-leader, Rick Silvani. "People who previously would be classified as 'middle class' suddenly due to life circumstances can find themselves in need of the support of a program like Winter Nights provides."

"The most challenging aspect," explained Stillman, "is helping folks find housing because there is so little available that is affordable for people with very low incomes." Last year of the 20 families, which totaled 75 individuals, 15 found

housing or shelter, she said.

Jim Reiter, another Winter Nights co-leader at the Lafayette church said, "For many, a lost job, illness, or family separation can result in the need for community assistance."

"All people want is a home, a place where they can rest their head at night and feel safe," added Freeberg.

Reiter believes guests benefit most from the support provided during this very trying time in their lives.

"We set the tone," said Peterson, who partners with Neal Modelsky and Sarah Landes at the synagogue. "This is respite for them. They may have moved eight times by the time they get to the temple.

The first Monday, they're exhausted. We reinforce that this is their space and give the commitment to make them comfortable. We've had evenings when we sent (volunteers) home because it can all be so overwhelming (for guests)."

The good news is the kids, said Peterson. "Those kids don't care that their parents are stressed out or overwhelmed. They pop out of the tent area and are ready to play. The kids pick up on the genuineness of our volunteers."

None of the drama surrounding the guests surprises Peterson. "It's the human heart stuff that surprises me, and these families' endurance surprises me," she said.

"These people are survivors."

Winter Nights' Wish List

There are several ways the community can help Winter Nights' families. Clients who have cars use gas cards, and the ones who don't often need BART and bus cards. Target and WalMart cards are used as parent incentives (such as a good report card or a child doing extra cleaning in the shelter). And Winter Nights uses movie tickets as incentive for the kids' reading program.

Other needs include:

- Tents, 10 by 10 feet, new or gently used;
- AA batteries, flashlights;
- Umbrellas;
- Automobiles;
- Packing or duct tape, and industrial dispenser for packing tape;
- Sleeping bags;
- Umbrella strollers (single and double);
- Car seats and booster seats;
- Pillows, twin size plastic mattress covers;
- Non-zipper, fitted single sheets;
- Sanitary wipes; and
- Wardrobe boxes (24 by 21 by 48 inches).

For information, contact Judith Stillman at (925) 933-9351.

Orinda Theater Celebrates its 75th Anniversary With A Night To Remember

By Sophie Braccini



The Orinda Crossroad in 1946.

Photo provided by the Orinda historical society:

On Dec. 29 there will be a unique opportunity in Orinda to step back in time 75 years and find oneself magically transported to the inauguration of the Orinda Theater on Dec. 29 1941. The theater is the beloved landmark that signals Orinda as much as the Eiffel Tower symbolizes Paris, and to celebrate in style, Derek Zemrak and Leonard Pirkle, owners of the theater, are offering the community a party to remember, with a ticket price of 50 cents, just like 75 years ago!

Zemrak and Pirkle love a good show, on the silver screen or live, and they are making sure that everything on that evening will feel 1941. "Our purpose is to create something unique where everyone can come, step back in time and celebrate this beautiful art deco icon," says Zemrak.

Some research to recreate the real opening night was made considerably easier by Ann O'Connell-Nye, a woman who's been part of the efforts to save the theater from destruction in the '80s and has collected significant historical information about the theater.

The Orinda Theater was built by Donald Rheem. With his brother, he had started a galvanizing company in 1925 in Oakland; he was the son of William S. Rheem, President of Standard Oil Company, and friend of William Randolph Hearst. He was also a developer and in 1937, he bought land at the Orinda Crossroads. A movie buff, he started the construction of the Orinda Theater that opened on Dec. 29, 1941, 22 days after Pearl Harbor. At the time, there was nothing there, besides the building across the road where the restaurant Casa Orinda moved a few months after the theater opened. Other retail was developed around the theater and in January 1982 then owner Clark Wallace proposed to demolish the theater to build a shopping center; the owner closed it pending approval.

The Friends of the Orinda Theater formed to preserve the city

landmark and several years of fight between the developer and the Friends concluded in a compromise that included the creation of Theater Square and the preservation of the historic site. It reopened in 1989. It has operated continuously since, and quite successfully now according to Zemrak.

People today are able to enjoy the original decor that was commissioned by Rheem. The original murals representing "air, fire, water and earth" were by Anthony Heinsbergen, a famous muralist who created both the heroic murals that decorate the theater walls and the ceiling of the foyer. These murals were part of the 1972-74 Smithsonian traveling exhibition of Heinsbergen's works, and they were one of the reasons the theater became part of the National Registry of Historic Places in 1982. The State of California's declaration of the theater as a classic example of art modern style led the preservation of the building. It has not yet been designated an Orinda historic landmark.

Zemrak and his team will present that night a very similar program to the one that was offered on the first night: the main feature film was the then new George Marshall's movie "Texas" with William Holden, Glenn Ford and Claire Trevor. "Texas" is a good Western movie, action packed, with humor at times, with Holden and Ford still in the early years of their stardom. In 1941, an evening at the movie was more than the main feature, and the 2016 version will also have more to offer: the newsreel of the time, the shorts, a ventriloquist - just like Paul Winchell 75 years ago, and Zemrak has also invited an opera singer to be a part of the fun.

In the lobby elements of O'Connell-Nye's historical collection will be on display for those interested to learn more, usherettes in period costumes will add to the festive atmosphere, and patrons are encouraged to also come in 40s attire. "At the time the tickets were 40 and 45 cents," says Zemrak.

"We made it 50 cents to make it simple." Tickets can be purchased at the theater or online. Local sponsors can support the event with a "\$75-for-75-years" donation.

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Find the True Meaning of Christmas: by Spending Time Together

By Diane Claytor

If only the holidays were like those portrayed on television commercials: happy families in their matching pajamas joyfully opening beautifully wrapped gifts around a brightly lit Christmas tree; or large, extended families sitting around an elegantly decorated dining table, feasting on that perfectly cooked turkey or ham, laughing and lovingly sharing wonderful stories. Unfortunately, for most of us, the holidays are nothing like that. They're often stressful, complicated, exhausting and even sad.

Whether it's baking the best cookies, finding the just-right gift or sharing the day with that uncle you never liked, the holidays can be far more difficult than expected. And if your family is split due to divorce or separation, the time can be even more stressful, particularly when children are involved. Decisions must be made: where, how and when will the children celebrate with each parent; how will you make it to see all the grandparents, especially when so many miles separate each set.

With all the demands, complications and craziness, perhaps it's time to stop and ask one very important question suggests Lee Marchesani, a licensed marriage and family therapist: How much are we really enjoying the holiday season? The answer may be eye-opening and may be just the impetus needed to make some changes.

"Instead of thinking 'I've got to drive here and cook this and buy that and take the kids to this,'" Marchesani says, think about ways to get off the merry-go-round. "Think about what's really important and how can that be shared with your children. The main purpose of the holidays is really just being together," Marchesani says.

"We have to be more in the moment," the Orinda therapist continues. And that often takes a real conscious effort, she acknowledges. "It may require standing in front of the mirror," asking yourself what the holidays really mean and allowing yourself to not feel pressured to do everything. The time that we spend together is what really matters, Marchesani notes.

"Times when families are together, not running around, those are the beautiful moments of connection and making memories." You may have to deliberately build those times into your schedule, agreeing that for a specific time, "we're just going to be us, together," she says. But it can – and should – be done.

The message we get from all those ads is that we must create the perfect holiday. But what is that? Marchesani asks. "The perfect holiday is about being with one another. It's not about the perfect gingerbread house or the flawless meal."

Harder for Separated or Divorced Families

For divorced families, the stress can be far greater. Sharing the holiday with an ex-spouse can be filled with both anxiety and sadness. Marchesani suggests starting the holiday planning with your ex-partner as early as possible and letting your children know what the plans are.

"The closer we get to the holidays, the more heightened our emotions become," she says. Communication can often break down between parents. Remember that this is about the children and make every effort to keep any resentment or anger out of the mix. "If there's anything formerly married parents can do together for the sake of their children, I encourage it," Marchesani says. "We need to make it less stressful on the kids. If mom has the kids Christmas morning, maybe invite dad over to watch them open gifts. Then it's about the children, not about the adults."

When sending the kids off to be with their other parent, Marchesani emphasizes the importance of giving them permission to not worry and enjoy their time away. "Be sure to tell them to have a great time and that you can't wait to hear all about it when they get back," she says. And reassure them that you, too, have plans and will be fine while they're gone. The important thing is minimizing any stress the children may feel.

It's Just a Date

Another suggestion Marchesani has for split families: think outside the box. "We get so hung up on the specific date," she explains. "It's just a date. So what if we celebrate together on Dec. 23 or Dec. 26. What's really important here? Is it the date or being together?" she asks, adding that enjoying each other on whatever day works best. "Believe me," Marchesani assures, "the kids don't care what day they open their presents."

If there are certain customs you had as a family before the separation, Marchesani recommends that, for the sake of the children, you continue them as a single parent. "And then craft new ones," she adds. "Be creative, get input from the kids. That let them own it and makes the new tradition feel special." As families change, new rituals will emerge.

As the years go on, the holidays will inevitably change. Children grow up, go off on their own and create their own traditions; parents divorce and remarry; new children enter the picture; grandparents pass away. Families grow and shrink. But the important thing remains, Marchesani says. And that's remembering what the holidays are really about: spending quality time with those we love.



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As Seen in Moraga...

Five-months-old Moraga resident Raymond gets his first photo with Santa!
Photo Sophie Braccini



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Sora O'Doherty

Kids Sell Cookies for Cancer Research

By Cathy Tyson



Kristen Beckwith, in back, helps neighborhood kids with their cookie sale.

Photo Cathy Tyson

Who knew a one-day-only neighborhood cookie sale could raise \$3,209.73 and counting, for pediatric cancer research?

Donations are still coming in, says one of the thrilled organizers, Moraga's Kristen Beckwith, the day after the sale – Thanksgiving. She reports roughly \$1,000 in actual cookie sales and over \$2,000 in donations at the moment.

The Beckwith kids, along with neighborhood pals, were making the most of sale day, enthusiastically encouraging drivers on their quiet residential street to pull over and support the cause. Any cookies not sold by the end of the day went to doctors, nurses and staff at several local hospitals along with fire departments and police the following morning.

Beckwith, a busy mother of

four, has been actively supporting local hospitals for years with friend and fellow mom Lisa Anderson through cookie deliveries to spread cheer to families with sick kids as well as to the doctors and nurses taking care of them on Thanksgiving, along with fundraising efforts for "Cookies for Kids' Cancer." Last year they delivered almost 7,000 Grateful Cookies to hospitals.

This year they wanted to do even more, so they hosted epic cookie sales in Lafayette and Moraga to raise money for the nonprofit organization.

Beckwith and husband Paul Beckwith have four kids close in age, two being a set of twins, all who have had serious health issues. Looking to spread some holiday cheer, "and teach my kids the im-

portance of gratitude and helping others in need" they partnered with Anderson five years ago and rallied friends and neighbors to contribute cookies, that were sold on November 23 with every tax-deductible dollar going to the nonprofit organization which funds pediatric cancer research. Through Dec. 31, all donations will be matched, up to \$250,000 thanks to a very generous gift.

Beckwith says she has so much to be thankful for. She gets emotional talking about the Thanksgiving her family spent in the hospital when son Jake was very ill and nurses and doctors brought a Thanksgiving meal for their family to enjoy together. She knew then that she wanted to contribute to that Thanksgiving table the following year.

Less than four percent of cancer research funding is directed toward pediatric cancer issues, the number one cause of death of children in the U.S. A couple who sadly lost their young son to cancer started Cookies for Kids' Cancer in 2008 to support research for safer, more effective treatments. For more information, visit www.cookiesforkidscancer.org/fundraiser/gratefulcookies.

Daughters of the Goddess Celebrate Winter Solstice

By Sora O'Doherty



A peace symbol made of candles.

Photo provided

On Dec. 21, the Daughters of the Goddess, based in Lafayette, will gather in Concord to celebrate the winter solstice, and members of the public are invited to attend. The event is open to females only, of all ages, with the exception of boys under the age of 5.

The celebration of the winter solstice, the shortest day of year, marks the continual survival of the cold months and remembers that summer is on its way. After the solstice, the days get longer, as the season heads towards spring (despite that's it's the first day of winter) and as they celebrate the return of the light, a peace candle will be exchanged, says Patrice Erickson, High Guardian Priestess. Attendees purchase tall candles in glass jars and decorate them by gluing on pictures or signs. The candles are brought to the celebration and exchanged.

The ritual lasts about two hours, and includes chanting,

singing, dancing, prayers for peace, as well as the candle exchange. According to Erickson, the time seems to fly and the event is a lot of fun.

The Daughters of the Goddess is this year celebrating its 20th anniversary, having been established in 1996, and has been holding ceremonies for 20 years, many in Orinda. Thousands of women have come through the organization, which draws from a wide area of Northern California from Santa Cruz to Sacramento.

Check-in will be at 7:30 p.m. and the event will get going around 7:45, Erickson says, and continue until about 10:30 p.m. For those wishing to attend, RSVP to Kahuna Leilani at (925) 787 9247, who will provide more information, including the address of the gathering.

If you plan to go, you might want to bring a pillow to sit on; most people sit on a rug.

Lynn's Top Five

The Impact of the 2016 Elections on Year-end Planning

By Lynn Ballou

Usually my year-end column focuses on last minute tax planning considerations. And this year is no different — but with a twist. And that twist is to think about year-end tax and other planning moves you should consider in light of the election, with the legislative and executive branches under the control of one party — a party which proposes major change. So here are some tax and other year-end planning thoughts in light of what may lie ahead.

1) Defer income, accelerate deductions: Classic year-end advice, right? Well this year it may be more important than ever. A major platform for the Republicans was tax reform and all the proposals involve some sort of lower taxation in 2017. If you feel that your tax rates will in fact decrease next year, you may want to consider moving any income you can to 2017. You would then want to realize all the tax losses this year that you intelligently can to offset income, as this may prove to be the higher tax rate year.

2) Refinancing and Other Debt Moves: U.S. interest rates may rise soon and quickly, so if you've been meaning to refinance your home, don't delay. Similarly if you have been considering borrowing money for other purposes such as expanding your business or refinancing other debt, your window to today's historically low rates may be closing soon. Some tax reform proposals involve reducing the amount of debt you can deduct

under different scenarios. If you are going to be stuck with interest on loans which under potential new laws won't be deductible, at least refinance that debt now to the lowest possible cost you can so you aren't adding insult to injury.

3) Debt Instruments in my Portfolio: Spend time reviewing your holdings. Indications from the Federal Reserve are that rates will be increased in December and possibly again multiple times next year. If rates go up rapidly, the value of some holdings in your current income generating portfolio might be negatively impacted. Pay attention to the credit quality and duration of your portfolio holdings. Just as with equities, a diversified, laddered portfolio of very high quality debt instruments may be attractive.

4) Year-end Gifting of Appreciated Assets: Since a sale of appreciated assets might be taxed at higher rates this year than next, you should consider gifting mutual funds, stocks or other assets which, if sold, would cause you to pay sizable tax on gains. You have time before year-end to work with the current custodian of your publicly traded assets to gift these to qualified charities. Even as little as \$1,000 donation to a food bank, for example, if done with low basis stock or mutual fund holdings, will have an impact.

5) What's YOUR AGI?: The amount of your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) can affect many calculations on your tax return including various itemized de-

duction thresholds. Take a look at each line on your 1040 page 1 to see what you might be able to impact to get that AGI lower. A few to think about include deferring bonus income, increasing deferred compensation, billing next year instead of this year, fully funding your retirement accounts, taking your RMD as a charitable contribution and increasing year-end spending for business equipment.

Many things can be said about the election and what's to come, but boring isn't one of them. Stay tuned in and on top of change as it's bound to impact you in one form or another. Being informed and collaborating with your trusted professionals will matter more now than ever.



Lynn Ballou is a Certified Financial Planner. The review, assessment, and/or opinions expressed in this column are limited to and in association with general financial planning subjects. They are intended to introduce the reader to a general financial planning topics. This column should serve as a tool that should assist readers in the development of subsequent discussions with a financial planning professional. Always consult an accountant and/or attorney to assess your individual situation prior to implementing any financial planning strategy, including any strategy directly or indirectly referenced in this column.



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Families Can Dip into San Francisco for a Classic and Fun Holiday Excursion

By A. K. Carroll



Check out the many holiday activities in San Francisco. Photos A.K. Carroll

Sexy. Sleek. Innovative. Progressive. San Francisco is a city at the forefront of all that is new and now. Yet even this cutting-edge city with its myriad startups and high tech toys, has an older, softer, more romantic side, and it comes out more boldly as Christmas draws near. Lamorindans can give into their longings for a slower, softer season with a trip to historic Nob Hill and a holiday weekend in nostalgic San Francisco.

Let this list be a guide to indulging a desire for an old-fashioned Christmas.

1. Though it would be quicker and cheaper to order an Uber, if you've time to spare, opt to ride the Powell Street cable car to the top of Nob Hill. Sit or stand beside fellow travelers out purchasing parcels and exploring the sites. You may even decide to detour through the fee-free Cable Car Museum.

2. Indulge in an elegant three-tiered afternoon tea on the 21st floor of the historic Mark Hopkins (Top of the Mark). Snack on savory finger sandwiches, homemade scones and decadent sweets served on 90-year-old china while taking in elevated views of city by the bay.

3. Summon your inner child as you enter the lobby of the elegant Fairmont hotel and admire the construction of a whimsical edible two-story gingerbread house. Put on your holiday best and Instagram a photo in front of the stunning lobby tree, or purchase a flute of bubbly from the lobby champagne bar and sit back on an ottoman as you gaze in admiration.

4. Venture downhill and finish all of your offline shopping in one go with a trip to the Westfield Centre and the shops near Union Square. Browse the racks at Saks, gush over glitter at Tiffany's, snag a cappuccino from Nespresso, and even if you don't make a purchase, be sure to check out the holiday décor in north-facing windows of

with a killer wine list and cocktails to boot. Adventurous eaters may favor the ocean trout crudo, served with warm cumin crème and tender mustard seeds.

8. For a truly special occasion, don suits and skirts and make reservations at Michelin notable Acquerello, an intimate family-owned restaurant that marries Old World Italian with classic culinary flair, serving prix fixe and tasting menus alongside an extensive library of wines.

9. Pause from the rush of holiday activity and seek respite within the walls of imposing Grace Cathedral, a "house of prayer for all people" and marvel of French Gothic architecture. Meander along indoor and outdoor labyrinths, enjoy choral evensong, or simply wonder and ponder the art and aesthetic.

10. Stop by Davies Symphony Hall for a holiday performance of classic seasonal favorites, from the formidable Handel's Messiah to a live musical performance of "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

11. Encounter the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future at A.C.T.'s annual production of "A Christmas Carol." Adapted from Charles Dickens's 1843 novella, the story of Scrooge is arguably the least commercial and most inclusive of modern Christmas creations.

12. No need to stay up all night waiting for Santa, you can spy him and his sleigh in the rotunda of the Westfield Centre or the lobby of the Intercontinental, along with complimentary hot apple cider and cookies.

Holiday options abound. Whether you're making new memories or drawing on time-honored traditions, celebrate the season in which older and better can coincide.

Macy's.

5. Put down your parcels, pick up your ice skates, and spin holiday circles around iconic Union Square beside its epic annual tree. Fees vary for rental and skate time. Reservations can be made morning, noon, and nightly now through mid-January.

6. San Francisco has been lauded the foodie capital of the country, so don't miss your opportunity for delicious dining at any price point, starting with a savory sandwich, gorgeous fresh salad or comforting cup of soup from Café de la Presse, an authentic French bistro mere blocks from Union Square.

7. Sample a smattering of savvy small plates from 1760, a sleek chic Polk Street eating space



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Moraga Junior Women's Club gives \$10,000 to MEF and PTAs

Submitted by Jamie Patterson



From left, Christine Hammond, Moraga Juniors President, Heather Davis MEF President, and Diane Bode, Annie Browne and Jennifer McCollum, event chairs. Not pictured: event chair Shannon Collins.

Thanks to all those who broke out their best cowboy hats, boots and plaid shirts to wear to the Moraga Juniors Women Club's second annual Hometown Hoedown at Campana Farm on Oct. 1, benefiting MEF.

A great time was had by all for a great cause. The event included a BBQ dinner,

dancing, field games, photo booth and silent auction.

Heather Davis, president of the Moraga Education Foundation, was presented a \$10,000 check at the Moraga Juniors' November meeting. The funds will go to both the MEF and Moraga school district PTAs.

Lafayette Rotary Gives Donation to All-Access Playground

Submitted by Matthew M. Pease



From left, Norma Evens, Matt Pease, Kevin Reneau, John Erickson and Buddy Brodwin Photo provided

The Lafayette Rotary Club recently made a \$5,000 donation to support the construction of an All Access Playground in the Moraga Commons Park.

The Lamorinda All-Access playground is being designed to fill the need for outdoor recreational opportunities for children throughout Contra Costa County who have physical or developmental disabilities, allowing them to play side-by-side with family members or friends who might not have any disabilities. The plan calls for 24 pieces of equipment that will focus on sensory stimulation including tactile, visual, auditory skills and provide safe access for those who have mobility issues.

The development of the playground is being headed by the Moraga Rotary Club and is being supported by the Town of Moraga. "There is a population of over 100,000 resi-

dents that have been underserved in outdoor recreational experiences and this playground will open up an opportunity for all children to develop physical, cognitive, sensory and social skills," according to Kevin Reneau, the president of Moraga Rotary.

"We are delighted to be an early supporter of this playground and are excited about the impact it can make in the communities surrounding Lamorinda" said Norma Evens, the president of Lafayette Rotary. The playground will cost approximately \$450,000 to build and individuals or organizations can direct inquiries about support to Reneau at kreneau@seniorhelper.com.

Lafayette Rotary meets at 12:15 p.m. on Thursdays at Oakwood Athletic Club and visitors are welcome to join them for lunch. You can get additional information about Lafayette Rotary at info@rotarylafayette.org.

Youth Ink 2017: A Middle-School Writing Contest to Support Literary Arts

Submitted by Chantal Valentine

The Orinda Junior Women's Club (Orinda Juniors) presents Youth Ink 2017, the annual creative writing contest open to all sixth-, seventh- and eighth-grade students who live in or attend school in Orinda.

The Youth Ink 2017 prompt is "60 Seconds." This prompt was chosen because it encompasses almost limitless potential for subject matter, thereby encouraging young writers to personalize their pieces.

Organizers say the first rule is to write about anything you like: real or imaginary. There is no limit to the imagination, and entrants do not have to adhere to the prompt. Whatever you write about, just remember to have fun!

"We eagerly await the results of how Orinda's talented young writers approach this year's prompt, although they can write about anything they choose," said Amy Stuffmann, president of Orinda Juniors.

Co-sponsors of Youth Ink 2017, including The Orinda Association, Friends of the Orinda Library and The Orinda Community Foundation, make it possible to provide priz-

es of \$250 for first place, \$125 for second place, \$75 for third place, and gift certificates for 10 honorable mentions.

A panel of several local professional writers, including reporters and best-selling novelists, will evaluate Youth Ink 2017 submissions and choose winners. The judges' names will be shared when the winners are announced at an awards ceremony at the Orinda Public Library at 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 20. The public is welcome to attend.

Youth Ink 2017 submissions will be accepted on an ongoing basis once the competition opens, but must be hand-delivered to a designated school representative or post-marked by Wednesday, Feb. 15 and mailed to Orinda Junior Women's Club, Post Office Box 40, Orinda, CA 94563 in order to be considered for an award. Youth Ink 2017 submission forms are available through the administrative offices and English departments at Orinda Intermediate School, the Orinda Public Library, Orinda Academy, Athenian School, or online at www.orinda-juniors.org.

Moraga Movers Gives Thanks to Safety Personnel this Holiday Season

Submitted By Phillip Arth



Members of Moraga's safety community were honored at a holiday dinner, courtesy of Moraga Movers.

On Nov. 14, Moraga Movers treated members of the Moraga Police Department, Moraga-Orinda Fire District, and the town manager to a scrumptiously yummy Thanksgiving Dinner with all the fixings and pumpkin pie topped with whipped cream. Included in the attendance of 170 there was the entire police department along with many members of MOFD.

The theme for the evening was to give thanks to those who put themselves at risk on a daily basis to keep all of Lamorinda safe in our community. And Moraga Movers also recognized Town Manager Bob Priebe for his 37 years of service on the police force.

At the beginning of the evening Fire Chief Stephen Healy offered a few words of thanks followed by Police Chief Jon King introducing each member of his department. Then Battalion Chief Jerry Lee did the same

for each member of the MOFD.

After the meal Priebe briefly addressed the crowd, which was followed by King offering a short power-point presentation on safety and pleading for everyone to lock their cars and houses and generally be vigilant. Then King raffled off a home security system that was contributed by the police department. Finally, Phillip Arth, president of Moraga Movers, who emceed the event, brought the evening to a close, again thanking all the safety personnel for their service.

Moraga Movers offers activities for adults aged 55-plus by keeping them engaged and active. On Dec. 5 the membership gathered at the Soda Center for celebration and a fine meal followed with entertainment by the world-renowned Saint Mary's choir.

Assistance League of Diablo Valley Schedules Prospective Member Coffee in January

Submitted by Betty Miller



Find out why the Assistance League is so proud of the Way Side Inn Thrift Shop and be a part of its success. Photo provided

Since 1967, Assistance League of Diablo Valley, a nonprofit member volunteer organization, has improved lives in our community through hands-on programs. Its primary fundraiser is the Assistance League Way Side Inn Thrift Shop, a well-known landmark located at 3521 Golden Gate Way, in Lafayette.

In response to the needs of its client base, Assistance League of Diablo Valley is reaching out to residents who would enjoy clothing elementary schoolchildren for a more successful educational experience, performing educational puppet shows for schoolchildren, reading to second grade students, or helping in supplying emergency

clothing, food and supplies to those in crisis. Two recently formed philanthropic programs concern implementing art in the classroom and staffing the Listen Program, which helps identify students with verbal expression. Two other programs address the needs of seniors.

Residents interested in spending quality time and meeting energetic and upbeat people while helping those who are vulnerable, phone 925-934-0901 to inquire about a Prospective Member Coffee scheduled for early January. For more information, please visit the website at www.diablovalley.assistanceleague.org.

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

If you would like to share an announcement about a special event or achievement, such as a wedding, engagement, scholarship or graduation of a local resident, or about a special person from Lamorinda who has passed, send a photo along with your text (up to 250 words) to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com, and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.

Community Service: We are pleased to make space available whenever possible for some of Lamorinda's dedicated community service organizations to submit news and information about their activities. Submissions may be sent to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com with the subject header In Service to the Community.

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Children Learn the Twists and Turns of Making Challah

By Cathy Dausman



"We want to teach the children the mitzvah (good deed) of making bread," Labowski explained. "Today, there is no temple." Tzipora explained to the crowd, "but we do have the bread."

Participants donned plastic aprons, gloves and paper hats, combined wet and dry ingredients and began to stir. The wooden spatula was abandoned when the stirring got tough and sticky fingers took up the kneading. The dough was allowed to rise before each baker separated and rolled pieces. One participant observed the bread braiding process was not unlike braiding her sister's hair.

The braided loaf was taken home where it would be coated with egg whites, perhaps decorated with poppy or sesame seeds, then baked and served after recit-

ing a blessing. Those too timid to bake can find Challah loaves at Trader Joe's and Whole Foods, Lafayette, and Oakland's Grand Bakery (through Dec. 23) or adorning someone's Hanukkah ta-

ble. Hanukkah begins at sundown December 24 this year.

There will be a Mega Challah Bake at 7 p.m. Dec. 15 at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building.

MEGA CHALLAH Bake

Tonight's Challah Recipe

(for groups of 2)

Ingredients:

- 1 ¼ tablespoons yeast
- 3 cups water
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 4 egg yolks
- 1/2 cup oil
- 1 tablespoon + pinch salt
- Approx. 9 cups flour

Yields 4 medium sized Challot

In bowl, dissolve yeast in warm water. Add sugar, let stand 2 minutes, until it starts slightly bubbling.

Crack eggs (check to ensure no blood spots). Add yolks & mix.

Add oil and salt, mix well.

Gradually add flour 1-2 cups at a time, mixing well after each addition. As mixture becomes stiff, flour your hands and begin kneading until dough is smooth & elastic, not sticky.

Orinda's Charlee Spence adds the proper twist to her Challah loaf.

Photos Cathy Dausman

A standard Challah bread recipe calls for oil, salt, flour, yeast, eggs and water, but a child-specific Challah bake includes an abundance of flour dust, sticky fingers and laughter.

Twenty-seven children and 14 adults recently dove wrist deep into Chabad of Lamorinda's Kids Mega Challah Bake at Lafayette Library and Learning Center. The list of those wish-

ing to participate had simply outgrown its original site, Rabbi Yisroel Labowski's home.

In the simplest form Challah is a loaf of bread, but its significance dates back two millennia, the Rabbi and his wife Tzipora explained. Challah is special Jewish braided bread eaten on Sabbath and during holidays. Jewish families making bread two thousand years ago were commanded to offer a small piece of their dough to the priest in the Holy Temple.



Front, from left, Rebecca Johnson, Kayla Smith, Tamar Links, Max Freeman; rear, from left, Rachel Valentine, Charlee Spence, Julia Johnson, Beatrice Hearey, Alyssa Smith

Thoughtful Food

Terrific Toffee for the Holidays

By Susie Iventosch



Delicious holiday toffee doesn't have to be difficult to make.

Photos Susie Iventosch

I usually shy away from making toffee at home because I've failed at it numerous times. It has turned out chewy, or burned, or even completely separated by cooking it to the point of no return. I usually just wait for my neighbor, Paula, to make her annual holiday trek bearing tins of her awesome toffee. I heed the warning: Don't try this at home. So, when my son asked me to teach him how to make toffee this year, I was reluctant, nervous really. How about making croissants, like your sister wanted to do?

But, when the next gens ask you to teach them how to cook something, I believe you have to give it your best shot. Well, try we did, and although I was skeptical to the very end, we were both extremely pleased

with the outcome. Maybe it was his magic touch, or perhaps the marble slab we used, or maybe even the fact this recipe does not call for water, but our toffee turned out to be one of the best either of us had ever tasted. It was crunchy just like it's supposed to be, and the dark chocolate and toasted nuts were a great compliment.

I hope you have as much luck as we did on our batch. It may really just have been pure luck this time, but it has given me hope to try it again!

If you plan to make this toffee, be sure to have an accurate candy thermometer and the patience to try again, if at first you don't succeed.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups salted butter
- 2 cups white sugar
- Dash salt
- 2 cups dark or bittersweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup chopped pecans, toasted
- ½ cup sliced or chopped almonds, toasted

DIRECTIONS

Prepare a large baking sheet by lining it with either parchment paper or foil, or better yet, if you have a marble slab, that is a fantastic surface for letting the toffee set up after it's cooked.

Toast both the pecans and almonds on a baking sheet in a 400-degree oven, or in a dry frying pan over medium-high heat, until they are browned and become fragrant, approximately 5-7 minutes. Set aside. (We toasted them separately, so we could use one kind of nut on each half of the toffee, but you could certainly mix the two nuts, if you'd like to.)

Place butter, sugar and salt in a heavy large pot. Cook over medium heat, stirring with a wooden spoon until the butter melts. Then, bring the mixture to a boil and continue to cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally and gently, until the temperature reaches 285 degrees and it turns to a dark amber color. This may take a while, especially if your burner is on the lower side of medium. We checked the temperature frequently with the candy thermometer. Once our candy reached 285 degrees, we cooked it just another minute or so to get the right color, but here is where you and run the risk of overcooking and burning it or separating it, so tread lightly at this point. You want to cook until it reaches the right temperature and the right color, but without separating or burning.

Once you've reached the right color and temperature, pour the mixture out onto your prepared surface. Evenly sprinkle the chocolate chips over the toffee and as they melt, spread with a spatula to cover entire surface. Immediately sprinkle with nuts and press nuts into the chocolate, using your hand or a spatula.

Cool toffee completely, and then break into pieces. Store in an airtight container. Actually, you might not have to worry about storing ... it will be gone before you know it!

Have fun and good luck!



Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com. This recipe can be found on our website: www.lamorindaweekly.com. If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at (925) 377-0977.

Lamorinda's Religious Services

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Christmas at St. Stephen's

Sunday 18 Christmas Pageant: 10am service
Sunday 18 Festival of Lessons & Carols @ 5pm
Saturday 24 Christmas Eve Services:
4pm (family service), 8pm, and 11pm
Sunday 25 Christmas Day: One service at 10am



Lamorinda Theatre Company performers at It's a Wonderful Life Holiday Celebration in Lafayette

Photo Gint Federas

◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆

HOLIDAY ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

A no-cost present wrapping room with everything you need to wrap gifts will be open again this year through Dec. 24 at 5A Rent-A-Space, 455 Moraga Road in Moraga. Free.

"How Can I Keep From Singing," WomenSing's holiday concert, is from 8 to 10 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 14 at Church of Santa Maria, 40 Santa Maria Way, Orinda. The concert offers an eclectic mix of carols, classical favorites, and new works, for a joyful and comforting holiday musical event. Cost: \$28 general admission; \$10 for students. For more info see www.womensing.org/content/how-can-i-keep-singing, call (925) 798-4875 or email info@womensing.org.

Acalanes Choral Department presents "Winter Wind, Winter Moon." Come to Acalanes to enjoy a winter choral concert in the Performing Arts Center at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 15. Chorale, Women's Ensemble, Bella Voce and special guests Nothing But Treble and 2Pitchy4U will perform, as well as Women's Octet, Harmonix and the Innuendoes. Students are free, seniors are \$5 and adults are \$10. Go to http://bit.ly/choral-tickets to purchase tickets.

The Contra Costa Mega Challah Bake is at 7 p.m. Dec. 15 at the Lafayette Veterans' Memorial, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. Registration begins at 6:30 p.m. Discover the art of challah making from scratch and the mystique of the time-honored tradition. \$18 with advanced registration. RSVP required at www.Jewishcontracosta.com/ChallahBake.

"A Child's Christmas in Wales" — An illustrated history and reading is at 6 p.m. on Dec 15 in the Lafayette Library Community Hall. Explore the wonder, nostalgia, and Welsh charm of Dylan Thomas's holiday poem in this special celebration and reading by guest presenter Dulais Rhys. Please register for this free event at www.tinyurl.com/LAFwales.

Santa will be in Moraga from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 17 for photos at 5A Rent-a-Space, 455 Moraga Road. Come by to get a free photo with a frame, cookies, cocoa and arts and crafts.

"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever," presented by Town Hall Theatre, runs through Dec. 17 in Lafayette. For show times and tickets, call 925.283.1557 or see www.TownHallTheatre.com.

Daughters of the Goddess, a Bay Area women-only Goddess Temple, will be holding its yearly Winter Solstice Ritual starting at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 21. Location: East Bay address given upon RSVP. Newcomers \$15.

Jennifer Permutter Gallery presents **It's the Small Things** holiday small works exhibit through 23. Enjoy wine and refreshments, art by Bay Area artists, priced for gift giving. Original Oils, mixed media, photographs, Pit fired and Raku ceramics. 3620 Mt Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. jenniferpermuttergallery.com.

The Valley Art Gallery's 51st annual Holiday Collection for Artful Giving runs through Dec. 24. It includes a wide variety of beautifully crafted ceramic, wood and glass pieces, original designer jewelry, small paintings, textile holiday decorations and other one-of-a-kind gifts, all handcrafted by our local artists. Plus join them for the new event: "Trunk Shows," on Dec. 15, featuring Nancy Meaden (hand painted silk scarves) and Gila Sagy (fused glass.) 1661 Botelho Dr. # 110, Walnut Creek. www.valleyartgallery.org.

Community Concern for Cats is hosting its second annual Giving Tree through Dec. 24 at its upscale thrift shop, Rescued Treasures, 1270 Newell Ave. in Walnut Creek. All proceeds go toward life-saving procedures for homeless cats and kittens in local neighborhoods. You can also bring joy and peace into your life this holiday season: open your home to a new kitten or cat. Visit their kitties at adoption events from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 17 and 18. Our locations are Pet Food Express in Lafayette and Pleasant Hill, and Petco in Walnut Creek. For more information, see www.communityconcernforcats.org.

Come together with family and friends to celebrate the festival of Hanukkah! Chabad of Lamorinda presents the Grand Menorah Lighting at 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 25 at Lafayette Plaza Park. Children and adults alike will enjoy latkes, donuts, dreidels, coins, music, dancing, Hanukkah gifts and Hanukkah Gelt. For more information contact Chabadoflamorinda.com/Menorah, (925) 384-7242.

ART

Lamorinda Arts Alliance announces a new show at the Orinda Library, People, Places and Things, running through Jan. 2. This show represents all media and many styles from realism to abstraction. Many of the paintings and photographs are scenes that will be familiar to Bay Area residents.

The City of Lafayette Public Art Committee welcomes its latest art exhibit featuring the Bay Area Studio Artists (BASA). The exhibit is on display in the Library Gallery adjacent to the Community Hall at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center (LLLC) now through Feb. 13. www.bayareastudioartists.com.

Moraga Art Gallery's new exhibit Beauty Near and Far features oil landscapes by Walnut Creek artist Kerima Swain, whose vibrant colors and sun-dappled landscapes transport viewers to sites around the world, from Saint Mary's College and the Golden Gate to the Greek isle of Hydra and beyond. Also featured is a boldly-hued collection of pit and saggar-fired ceramics by guest artist Lesley Jensen. The show runs through Jan. 7. For more information, visit www.moragaartgallery.com or call (925) 376-5407.

OTHER

Welcome to Medicare is a free class presented by the Contra Costa Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HI-CAP). You will learn when and how to enroll, about Medicare costs and benefits, prescription coverage, Medicare Advantage plans (HMOs), Medicare Supplements and how Medicare coordinates with other coverage. 7 to 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 14 at John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek. See www.cchicap.org or call (925) 602-4163 for more information.

The Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center is hosting an evening potluck and presentation by tour guides Seema Dajani and Judith Gussman of Mejdji Tours who will discuss an upcoming tour to Israel and Palestine they have planned, at 6 p.m. on Dec 15 in the Owl Room, MDUUC, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek. More info on the tour at www.mejdjitours.com/open-tour/rays-of-hope-tour/. Tickets are \$10 in advance / \$15 at the door, FREE for Students / half-price for MT-DPC members. For more info call (925) 933-7850. Pre-register at www.ourpeacecenter.org.

The 75 Anniversary Celebration for the Orinda Theatre is at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 29. Step back in time to Dec. 29, 1941 – the Grand Opening of the Orinda Theatre. They will re-create that celebration with a ventriloquist, short films, movie reels, and the feature film "Texas" starring Glen Ford and William Holden. There will be a spotlight, a red carpet, and the staff will be wearing 1940s uniforms. Attendees are encouraged to dress in 1940s attire. Tickets are 50 cents. See story page B1)

Join Tony La Russa and ARF for a hilarious night of comedy benefiting ARF's programs at 7:30 p.m. on Jan. 6 at the Leshner Center for the Arts in Walnut Creek. Comedy Night features acclaimed comedians Larry "Bubbles" Brown, Maureen Langan, Kabir "Kabezy" Singh, Patrick McDermott, Jill Maragos, and Johnny Steele. Tickets are on sale now at (925) 943-SHOW or www.lesherartscenter.org, priced from \$25 to \$60. Order today — this event will sell out quickly! Visit www.arflife.org for ongoing show updates.

Please submit:

Events: calendar@lamorindaweekly.com
Stories: storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com
Letters: letters@lamorindaweekly.com
Opinion: letters@lamorindaweekly.com

MOVIE REVIEW

Film Clips

Powerful 'Manchester By the Sea' Will Swim in Oscar Nominations

By Derek Zemrak



The Oscar Nominations will be announced on Jan. 24 and I guarantee you will be hearing "Manchester By the Sea" several times. It has already won best film honors of 2016 from the National Board of Review and nominated for eight Broadcast Film Critics Association Awards.

"Manchester By the Sea" is directed by two-time Oscar Nominee Kenneth Lonergan. Lonergan was first nominated for an Oscar in 2001 for Best Writing, Screenplay Written Directly for the Screen, for "You Can Count on Me" and again in 2003 for Best Writing, Original Screenplay, for "Gangs of New York." Lonergan knows how to write a compelling story and his direction will make you think of your own life and how precious that truly is.

Lee Chandler (Casey Affleck) is an apartment complex maintenance man for several buildings in the Boston area who enjoys the simple things, including small talk with the tenants. In the evenings, everything changes. Lee is a barfly who seems to relish getting into fights. Lonergan quickly shows that the past is destroying Lee from the inside out.

Lee's life takes a tragic turn when his brother dies of congestive heart failure and Lee must return to his hometown. If the death of a sibling is not enough to turn one's world upside down, Lee learns that he is the guardian to his 16-year-old nephew, Patrick (Lucas Hedges). Going back home with a troubled past complicates the situation for Lee, who must face his ex-wife, Randi, portrayed by three-time Oscar nominee Michelle Williams ("Brokeback Mountain," "Blue Valentine," "My Week with Marilyn").

Affleck has played this Boston-type charac-



Kyle Chandler and Casey Affleck in "Manchester By the Sea."

Photo credit: Claire Folger, Courtesy of Amazon Studios and Roadside Attractions in previous films like "Good Will Hunting," but never at this level of performance. Affleck will be the front-runner for the Oscar with a close second by Denzel Washington for his role in "Fences," which will be in theaters on Christmas Day. Look for Oscar nods as well for Williams, Hedges and Lonergan.

"Manchester By the Sea" is a raw, real-life drama. It is my favorite film so far this year. Lonergan has the talent to balance all kinds of emotions and even finds humor in the darkest periods. It is a movie that will pull you in and demand your fullest attention. The subject matter is not easy, but then again life is not easy.

"Manchester By the Sea" is rated R for strong use of language and some sexual content. TRT (Total Running Time) is two hours and 17 minutes.

www.Lamorindaweekly.com

Most Frequently Viewed Stories From Our Last Issue:

Summary of website content including navigation, news articles, and a list of frequently viewed stories.

- List of frequently viewed stories: Roundabout New Lights will Aid in Fixing Traffic Woes, Acalanes Volleyball Advance to D3 CIF State Title Game, Lafayette Identifies New Home for Police, etc.

If you wish to view any of the stories above go to www.lamorindaweekly.com and click the link below the story.

Service Clubs Announcements



We meet Friday mornings at 7:00 am at The Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa, Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. For more info, please email us at lamorindasunrise@gmail.com

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Campo Football Wins Third Consecutive NCS Title, Advances to State Championship

By Karl Buscheck



An ecstatic Cougar football team will return to the State title game.

Photos Gint Federas

Back in the middle of September, when the Campolindo football team was sitting at 2-2, head coach Kevin Macy never could have imagined that the Cougars were on the way to an NCS trifecta and a state championship appearance.

"We never thought we'd get to this point," admitted Macy, whose Cougars will face Bakersfield Christian in the CIF State Division 4-AA Championship on Dec. 17 in Bakersfield. "We had so many injuries early in the year (and to) some of our better kids."

The injuries began to mount – even before the Cougars lost to San Jose-powerhouse Valley Christian, 21-7, on Aug. 26 in the first game of the season.

"Chris Brahney broke his ankle. He's our heart and soul kid," Macy said of the junior lineman. "That happened in our intrasquad scrimmage."

The Cougars lost four more players during the defeat to Valley Christian.

"At that point, we're going, 'We're not going to make it through the season,'" Macy recalled.

Playing in the NCS Division 2 bracket for the first time, Campolindo overcame the injuries and found a way. Brahney was one of the Cougars who returned to the field during the team's run to a third consecutive NCS title, which concluded when the team dismantled Windsor, 40-20, at DVC on Dec. 2.

"They did it all through determination more than anything else," Macy said. "So, I think this (NCS title) stands out pretty highly in terms of the others ones just because all the limitations that this team had going into the year and throughout the year."

Throughout the season, the right arm of Jacob Westphal – the

team's senior quarterback – has been the primary reason why the team has advanced as far as it has. Against Windsor, Westphal threw for 289 yards (20-for-36) while slinging four touchdowns. Junior wide receiver John Torchio added on a 53-yard strike.

"Our receivers have been pretty solid all year," Marcy said. "So we count on them."

Against Windsor, seniors Lev Garcia and Raymond Berzins along with junior Vincent Mossotti all caught touchdowns. Torchio hauled in a pair.

The Cougars also received an unexpected boost from the stable of running backs – even with the team sporting a makeshift offensive line.

"We didn't think we were going to have much success running the ball. It hasn't been a strength of ours. But Matthew Ringquist, who's a solid receiver, he had a great game running the ball," Macy said of the senior who led the way with 75 yards. "And (junior) Shun Ishida has helped, giving us somebody else who can carry the ball in the playoffs."

Facing off against Palma at Rabobank Stadium in Salinas on Dec. 9, the Cougars won 30-21 to claim the NorCal Division 4-AA Championship.

In Campolindo's second state bowl appearance in as many seasons, Westphal went for 402 yards (29-for-42), connecting on touchdowns to Garcia and senior Kannah Cruickshank. Senior running back Branden Boboco added a touchdown on the ground on a night when the Cougars overcame four turnovers to secure the win.

"Oh, no doubt we feel proud about it," Macy said about making back-to-back bowl trips. "And I don't think it's (like) we didn't think we could do it. At

this point we're just thinking, 'How long can we endure?'"

The victory over Palma gave Campo an 11-3 record, marking the team's 14th game of the year after playing 16 in 2015 and 16 the season before that.

"It's more than 16 games on our bodies when you think about it because we don't have depth, we don't have size, we don't have backups," Macy said. "So, really, for us, a 16-game season is more like a 24-game season on our bodies compared to the big schools with big kids and depth."

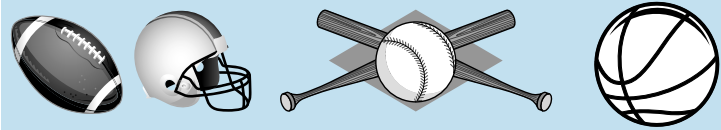
Now, the showdown with Bakersfield is the lone remaining game on the Cougars' schedule.

"We're proud," Macy said. "We're excited that we now have a legacy of going to state games."



John Torchio

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Acalanes Girls Volleyball Team Wins 'Instant Classic' to Claim First State Title

By Karl Buscheck

As Ernie Rodriguez stood on the sideline at Santiago Canyon College, the head coach of the Acalanes girls volleyball team was just trying to smile.

After building up a 2-0 lead over Crossroads of Santa Monica in the CIF State Division 3 championship, the Dons had just dropped back-to-back sets. A decisive fifth set awaited.

"It was one of the things my assistant coach, my wife (Shari), kept talking about in between timeouts," Rodriguez explained. "We kept talking during the match and one of the things she kept telling me is, 'Keep smiling. Make sure the girls see that.'"

While Rodriguez did his best to follow that advice, the coach was riding an emotional roller coaster.

"Oh no. Absolutely not," Rodriguez admitted when asked if his external demeanor reflected his internal feelings.

"Inside I'm actually talking to myself and (saying), 'Hey, watch yourself. Watch how you say things.' Things like that. As a coach, you're sort of talking to yourself and say things to yourself before you say them out loud. But there are a couple instances there where I try to rev them up a little, raise my voice a little and get them going."

The strategy worked, as the second-seeded Dons topped the No. 11 seed Crossroads 16-14 to claim the first state title in program history.

"I can only imagine the way that Acalanes and Acalanes students feel," Rodriguez said. "This is such a huge accomplishment. Not only for what they've done as a team, but as a school and against the schools that they compete against in our league - Campolindo and Miramonte are unbelievable programs."

The final set against Crossroads in Orange featured seven lead changes and four ties.

"It was an instant classic," Rodriguez said. "From the

beginning to the end, from us getting to the gym to us leaving the gym, it was a phenomenal day."

The title-winning match marked the second week in a row that the Dons had to rally to extend their postseason run.

"It was Sonora all over again," Rodriguez said, referring to the team's 3-2 comeback over Sonora in the NorCal State Championship on Nov. 26.

"The one thing that I told the girls is, 'Just keep battling. Just keep after it. We've been here before. We were just here a week ago,'" Rodriguez said. "I actually believe that was a really comfortable feeling for us that we had been there just a week before in the exact same setting."

Against Crossroads senior Parker Jones, who's heading to University of Pennsylvania next fall, led both teams with 18 kills.

"Obviously, she's our big-game hunter," Rodriguez said. "She shows up for every game - whether it's a league game or a big title match like the state championship - Parker Jones always shows up."

The coach also praised the performances of the team's two setters - (freshman) Lane Webster and (junior) Maddie Kalil - who combined for 57 assists, while singling out one of the team's unexpected stars.

"The one that I don't think anybody's talking about is (sophomore) Roxy Cummings," Rodriguez said. "She had, I would say, her season high kills in the biggest match of her life. She had 15 kills in this match and I don't think she's ever had over five the entire season."

In Rodriguez's first year in charge of the team, the state-winning Dons ended the season 31-9 (7-3 in league).

"They did a phenomenal job of keeping their mind, keeping mentally prepared and just going after it," Rodriguez said. "It was a lot of fun to just watch these girls really grow up in front of your eyes."



Parker Jones

Photos Craig Nelson



The proud Acalanes volleyball team and coach Ernie Rodriguez with the trophy. The Lady Dons defeated Crossroads of Santa Monica in an emotional 3-2 match.

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Girls Soccer Teams Harbor High Hopes as DAL Season Approaches

By Karl Buscheck



The Acalanes Dons

Photos Gint Federas



The Campolindo Cougars



The Miramonte Matadors

Embarking on his first season as the head coach of the Miramonte girls soccer team, Barry McQuain wasn't on the sideline back in February when the Mats lost out in the NCS Division 3 title game.

Even still, the new coach can feel the impact of that runner-up finish on his new squad.

"I think it makes you want it," said McQuain, whose Mats are off to a 3-0-1 start. "It makes you want it even more."

The Mats, who open up the Diablo Athletic League slate with a trip to Campolindo on Jan. 6, beat Albany on the road, 2-1, on Nov. 30, tied Bishop O'Dowd, 1-1, in Oakland on Dec. 3, hammered St. Mary's, 5-0, in Albany on Dec. 6 and cruised past Oakland Tech, 5-0, on the road on Dec. 9.

"Our No. 1 goal is to have a successful season and we're going to try to have a lot of fun," McQuain said before stopping to correct himself. "That's actually No. 1 (to have fun). That's what we talk about first. Then we have specific goals. We want to win our league and we want to win NCS."

As the Mats chase those goals, the team will be relying on a quartet of seniors to set the tone. Tessa Viola has emerged as the de-facto team manager, as she works her way back from an ACL tear last season. McQuain is targeting a Senior Night return for Viola.

The other three seniors are Morgan Johnson, Mia Grillo and Samantha DeVecchi. McQuain called Johnson the defensive "rock," credits Grillo with directing the offense and dubbed DeVecchi the "on-field captain" who runs the game.

"There are three captains and they're really guiding the team," McQuain said. "They're the heart of the team."

The Cougars, who begin the league campaign with a showdown against the Mats next month, are angling to rebound from a 2015-16 season that saw them left out of the NCS postseason picture.

"Last year, we were unlucky, but at the same time, we didn't perform at the same level I thought we would," said head coach Ernesto Silva.

"Our league is extremely competitive. All the teams we play are extremely good," Silva added. "Right now, we're just focusing on being able to play at the level that I know

we can."

To achieve that goal, Silva emphasized the importance of having all his players buy into his coaching philosophy, which he admitted could be a different message from what the players are used to hearing while playing for their respective club teams.

The message is resonating so far, as the Cougars own a 3-0-1 record in nonleague play. The team tied Mt. Eden, 1-1, in Hayward on Nov. 17, crushed Pittsburg, 7-0, at home on Nov. 30, dispatched Hayward, 6-2, on the road on Dec. 2 and topped Ygnacio Valley, 3-0, in Concord on Dec. 9.

"I think what is very positive about what I've seen from these girls is that they're very close," Silva said. "There's not one player that stands out. It's a collective effort right now."

Acalanes has spent the opening weeks of the season studying up on the offensive system of new head coach Anthony Rascon. While the coach has been putting his players through classroom sessions as part of the learning process, the crash course isn't just about strategy and technique.

"The most important thing is building team chemistry," Rascon said. "And that's what we're doing right now in order to get ourselves in a position where we can be contenders for the championship of NCS."

After losing to San Ramon Valley on the road 2-0 on Nov. 29, beating St. Patrick St. Vincent by forfeit at home on Dec. 2 and losing to Monte Vista, 2-1, in Danville on Dec. 9, the Dons are 1-2 in nonleague play.

Throughout the nonconference and DAL schedule, the Dons will be leaning on a crew of established contributors. Senior Molly Davis anchors the defense as the center back, senior Callie Ericksen and junior Emily Smith operate in the midfield and junior target striker Kierra Krawec has a "cannon-like" shot. Krawec is joined up top by star senior striker Caroline Clark.

"She has a great left foot and she's a very promising player. She reminds me a little of myself," Rascon said with a chuckle. "That's why she caught my eye. I think she's a very effective offensive player and I am assuming she's going to have lots and lots of goals this season and hopefully going to be voted (league) MVP."

Campo Cross Country Runners Reach State Podium

Submitted by Eric Yabu



Campolindo boys first row, from left, coach Chuck Woolridge, Ethan Sauerberg, Ray Diaz, Andrew Tseng, Kyle Flett, Navid Boozarpour. Second row, from left, coach Andy Lindquist, Niki Moore, Teddy Buckley, JJ Yabu, Richard Gong, coach Joey Woolridge and coach Jeff Thomas.



Campolindo girls runners Hannah Ruane (#228) and Isabella Chao (#223) lead the pack at the start of the Division 3 girls race.

On Nov. 26 at Woodward Park in Fresno, the Campolindo boys and girls competed at the California State Meet. For the first time since 2008, the Campolindo boys team claimed a spot on the podium with a third place finish in the Division 3 race.

They were the only Northern California boys team to finish in the top three. Joining them as medalists were their teammates Isabella Chao and Hannah Ruane, who finished in sixth and ninth, respectively, to claim individual awards.

St. Perpetua Girls Basketball Team Goes Undefeated

Submitted by Rhodora Del Rosario



Back row, from left, coach Brian Frechman, Carolyn Colachico, Violet Martin, Dulci Vail, Addi Ames, Campbell Evans and coach Mark Del Rosario; front row, from left, Mylie Jacquet, Natalie Frechman, Ella Del Rosario and Leila Hamadi.

The Saint Perpetua fourth-grade American girl's basketball team went undefeated and won the 2016 Thanksgiving Turkey tournament.

Correction:

In the Nov. 30 issue of the paper, the article "Campo Boys Cross Country Team Finishes 3rd at State" incorrectly listed Navid Boozarpour as the Cougars' fifth-place finisher at the NCS Championships. Edward Buckley was Campolindo's fifth finisher at the race.

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4th Grade Girls, ENGLAND



Back Row (L-R) Coach Joelle Shinaman, Edith Palmer, Hannah Friedman, Avery Robb, Maya Shinaman, Kayla Lurie, Coach Brian Houston. Bottom Row, Stella Byrne, Avery Pepper, Esa Orman. (Not pictured, Paige Dorward, Katelyn Forschler, Sienna Houston)

4th Grade Boys, LIVERPOOL



Front Row: Blake Hutchinson, Luke Martinez, Tyler Galloway, Ben Whipple, Blaise Clancy. Back Row: Matthew Bacon, Anthony Sanguinetti, Rocco Fraioli, John Kemner, Niko Tzorbatazakis, Dashiell Strotman. Coaches, (L) Dave Sanguinetti and (R) Chuck Strotman

5-6 Grade Girls, IRELAND



Back Row (L-R): Hanna Glasky, Natalie Aikeen, Madison McGhee, Carolina Wachowski, Katie Kostolansky, Addie Miles, Ellie Sheberies, Maddie Jerge, Front Row: Annelise Motto, Tatum Haggerty, Anna Mollohan, Alexis Suer, Kennedy Shea Coaches, Zion Jerge, Stephen Shea (not pictured)

5-6 Grade Boys, SOUNDERS



Bottom Row (L-R) Grady Conrad, Ethan Freeby, Tim Widyono, Arik Shehter Middle Row: Nick Mitroll, Christian Davis, Blake Webster, Charlie Murrin, Casey Dow, Charlie Cooper, Britain Ellis, Charlie Hill. Coaches: Gary Hill, Derrick Webster, Charley Murrin

7-8 Grade Girls BLAZE



Top row, left to right: Alex, Anna, Leliah, Libby, Scarlet, Macey, Bottom row: Annie, Aia, Reese, Shannon and Danielle, Coaches: Jack Mosher and April Murphy (not pictured)

7-8 Grade Boys QUAKES



Back row (left to right): Chandler Peatross, Lewis Collinson, Coach Tim Collinson, Isaiah Orlando, Luke Watson, Coach Trig Gullbert. Middle row Samuel Bequette, Thomas Bequette, Sam Hafner, Matthew Koo, Jason Sabbadini, Harry David, Will Stetic, Ethan Gullbert. Front row: Nicholas Crosby, James Crosby, James Trainer, John Halstead (not pictured)

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 10 Issue 21 Wednesday, December 14, 2016



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

...read on page D12

Snuff Out Holiday Entertaining Stress

By Kara Navolio



Holiday entertaining can be elegant or eclectic, and let friends bring food to the party.



Photos provided

It seems as if we just weathered Thanksgiving, and now it's time to do it all again: dress up the house, don our finest clothes and best behavior, and plan for those Christmas, Hanukkah and New Year's celebrations.

Certainly the Holidays mean looking forward to spending time with our families; but they also bring stress like no other time of the year. Not only is it the stress of entertaining, but also in those interpersonal relationships with family members —

you know the ones — with whom you may not see eye to eye. Sometimes even the best of friends or family members may snap under the pressure of a Santa-sized bag of expectations.

Here are some sure-fire ways to reduce stress so you can enjoy holiday entertaining:

1. Pre-planning. "Planning is essential; the earlier, the better," says Margie Reyerson, an Orinda-based marriage and family therapist. Thinking ahead and making lists can reduce stress. By writ-

ing it all down you can release some of the thoughts that keep you from relaxing and sleeping.

That pre-planning is essential if you are entertaining or hosting events in your home, says Lisa Cecconi, brand manager for Lafayette's Misto Lino. "I sometimes like to take a day off work when I can, just to focus on buying groceries when no one else is shopping."

... continued on page D4





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MORAGA	11	\$725,000	\$1,445,000
ORINDA	7	\$1,065,000	\$1,730,000

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- 10 Kelly Ann Court, \$930,000, 4 Bdrms, 1884 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 11-9-16;
Previous Sale: \$805,000, 07-15-04
- 3146 Maryola Court, \$1,425,000, 4 Bdrms, 2202 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 11-8-16;
Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 11-05-15
- 557 Merriewood Drive, \$1,405,000, 3 Bdrms, 2270 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 11-16-16;
Previous Sale: \$345,000, 12-15-93
- 1450 Rancho View Drive, \$1,665,000, 4 Bdrms, 4105 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 11-10-16;
Previous Sale: \$1,251,000, 04-30-08
- 3326 Ridge Road, \$1,654,500, 4 Bdrms, 3101 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 11-10-16;
Previous Sale: \$950,000, 04-12-04
- 1620 Shangri La Court, \$1,975,000, 4 Bdrms, 3292 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 11-18-16
- 3160 Somerset Place, \$1,350,000, 3 Bdrms, 2717 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 11-9-16;
Previous Sale: \$1,410,000, 07-24-15
- 1281 Sunrise Ridge Drive, \$1,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 3905 SqFt, 1999 YrBlt, 11-9-16;
Previous Sale: \$940,500, 12-03-99
- 3713 West Road, \$525,000, 1 Bdrms, 832 SqFt, 1977 YrBlt, 11-18-16

... continued on page D11

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from all of us at



We would like to thank the Lamorinda community for another amazing year, and we look forward to being your preferred real estate brokerage for years to come. Wishing you and your loved ones great joy and many blessings this holiday season.

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Snuff Out Holiday Entertaining Stress

... continued from page D1



2. Simplify. “It’s important to remember that the purpose of the holidays is the joy, the celebration, and family time,” Reyerson says.

Consider using beautiful paper products instead of china to simplify clean-up. Or maybe you can use paper plates just for dessert and simple table decorations. “I like to decorate with things from nature for the Holiday table,” adds June Santoro of Misto Lino. “Things you have in your own yard, like fall leaves, branches, acorns, lemons all arranged on a simple table runner with votive candles interspersed.”

3. Set a tone of serenity. Reyerson suggests lighting candles all around your home. You can add music that is calming too. If your family enjoys football, try to negotiate in advance which one game you will watch, modeling moderation and family time for the

children. Keep electronics and TVs off during meals and present opening.

4. Get outside. If you are hosting, try to get in a walk or some exercise in the morning before guests arrive, or before the madness of digging beneath the Christmas tree.

5. Set tables in advance. If you are hosting a brunch or dinner, Santoro suggests getting the table ready two days in advance. This gives you the time to make sure your infrequently used dishes and glasses are clean and eliminates another chore on the day of the event.

Cecconi agrees — it goes back to that early preparation thing. “The less you have to do right before an event, the better.”

... continued on page D6



Happy Holidays!



Paul & Virginia Ratto

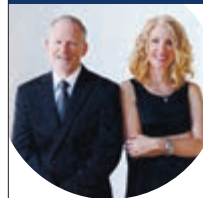
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Snuff Out Holiday Entertaining Stress

... continued from page D4



Lafayette's Misto Lino offers tips for easy holiday entertaining and decorating.

6. Let others prepare or bring food. Ask guests to bring a dish already prepared. This keeps the kitchen free of too many people trying to use limited space. Or consider purchasing part of the meal or the entire dinner. Stores like Lafayette's Diablo Foods offer a complete holiday meals for a reasonable price.

7. Enlist help. Kids can set the table. Family members can take shifts with the clean-up duties. If it's too hard for you to ask for help, get your spouse or a sibling to ask for you. "It's important for men and boys to help too. Boys need to see men helping in the kitchen," says Reyerson.

8. Vent. If you need to vent your frustrations, find a trusted friend or family member and do it. As

Reyerson says, "Get it off your chest; discharge it instead of keeping it in. You don't want it to come out later in another form."

9. Have a plan for dealing with conflict if it arises. "If you are concerned about divisive political opinions or a family member's drinking issues, think of ways to change the subject and redirect the conversation," Ryerson says. "Remind your guests that we are all here to appreciate each other. Don't give attention to bad behavior." You can also use place cards if you feel the need to keep certain family members separated.

10. Remember to enjoy the day. Cherish the time to be with your family. Sit down. Relax. It doesn't



send a good message to children when they see mom and dad stressed out or running around the entire day.

Cecconi suggests setting time aside right before guests arrive to relax, sip some sparkly and enjoy the fruits of your labor. "Getting in the right frame of mind before a party will set the tone for the whole event," she says.

Finally, try to see the Holidays through the children's eyes. Perfect gravy or elaborate decorations don't matter; the relationships and the tone of the day do.

Happy Holidays!

[Peggy Spear contributed to this article.]



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Winter is Coming is Here

By Andi Peterson Brown

Winter is upon us, and there is no better time than now to spend a few hours preparing your home for continued cold and wet weather. In fact, now that we have a few storms under our belt, it's a logical time to inspect and see what is and isn't working on our properties. These easy tips can prevent future costly repairs, lower your utility bills, and ultimately protect your largest investment.

- Clean your gutters. It's so easy and yet so hard. But failing to clean your gutters will cause long term water damage to your siding, roofing, and wood trim.
- Inspect your roof and flashing. Been some time since anyone's been up there? For minimal cost, a roofer can inspect, diagnose, and perform basic repairs.
- Turn off or greatly reduce landscape irrigation. With our automated systems and in-ground drip systems, it's easy to forget about.
- Extend downspouts. Water should drain a few feet away from your foundation, not flow right onto it.
- Inspect your heating system. For minimal cost, and HVAC technician can tune up, clean, and perform basic repairs to ensure your system is running at maximum efficiency.
- Reverse your ceiling fans to push warm air down.
- Caulk around windows and doors. And those foam and fabric front door draft stoppers—yes, those, the ones on late night infomercials for twelve bucks—they work wonders.



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Stylish Solutions

Tie up Your Holiday Decorating With Decorative Pine Cone Garlands

By Ann McDonald



Photos provided

Merry, merry! December is always a magical time of year, but oh so busy. This month I wanted to share some helpful tips for your holiday home that are perfectly easy to implement last minute.

If you are running a tad behind on your decorating, go natural. I love the strong sentiment for décor inspired by nature. The simplest way to embrace the look is with pine cones, simple twigs and sticks. It may sound fundamental, but let me share how these three simple items can be used in your home and still look like you made an effort and planned.

A reminder about design: sometimes less is more. I love lavish to be sure, but the repeat of a simple element can bring a strong sense of design to any space. No apologies if you are overbooked this season and need to go this route. It's your home and your space. Beauty is in your eye.

The Pine Cone Garland:

It's always nice in raw state, but if you have three hours to give to actual labor and about 24 hours overall (paint drying) to give to the process, this simple craft project (note: I am not a crafter by nature, so if I can do this, you can too)

can have a huge impact on your home. Go overboard with a simple element and the strong design statement will make people think you planned this look from the midsummer. You will have garland for miles, some with lights, as well as arrangements for bowls, book shelves and coffee tables

How: We are dipping the bottom half of the pine cone in paint, potentially adding some flocking on the tips where painted and using these as elements everywhere. These are easy to source on your morning walk in Lamorinda, or at the local hardware store or craft store. If you gather them, make certain to soap and soak, so uninvited critters aren't part of your celebration!

I am loving the all-white look this year, but you can substitute any color that works in your home. We did one home in Reno this season in a deep red wine. It looks incredible! This is an easy and elegant approach. I like to use chalk paint due to the thick, matte look, paint can size (no transfer of paint needed) and coverage (no double dipping).

Dip your washed and dried pine cones into the paint about half way up. Let them hang to dry, rolling on newspaper to get any drips out from the center section. Apply a thin coat of spray sealer if you think you may use them next year, so paint doesn't end up all over your storage boxes.

... continued on page D10



Homes that Found the Right Fit *in 2016*

Sellers

53 E. Altarinda, Orinda \$2,117,000
3790A Happy Valley, Lafayette \$3,900,000
42 Haciendas, Orinda \$1,675,000
125 Alta Haciendas, Orinda \$3,600,000
858 Mt. View, Lafayette \$1,780,000
395 Fernwood, Moraga \$1,482,500
213 Overhill, Orinda \$1,787,000
54 E. Altarinda, Orinda \$1,650,000
97 Meadow View, Orinda \$1,435,000
61 St. Stephens, Orinda \$1,850,000
621 Augusta, Moraga \$875,000

Buyers

125 Alta Haciendas, Orinda \$3,600,000
4 Via Floreado, Orind \$955,000
48 Rheem, Orinda \$2,425,000
199 Crestview, Orinda \$1,637,000
230 Glorietta Blvd, Orinda \$1,620,000
108 Overhill, Orinda \$3,205,000
630 Tahos Road, Orinda \$1,750,000
90 Hillcrest, Orinda \$880,000
2026 Belford Drive, Walnut Creek \$1,100,000
6 Carey Court, Moraga \$1,145,000
35 Candle Terrace, Orinda \$3,600,000
30 Sea Pines, Moraga \$1,450,000



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Stylish Solutions

Tie up Your Holiday Decorating

... continued from page D8



only thing holding you back is the number of pine cones and length of your rope. If you need to string light sets together, tape the battery packs to the back of a pine cone on the garland. A heavy dose of double-sided tape works well, but do use enough to hold. For large battery packs, you may need to hack off the back side of one pinecone to hide. Did I say hack off? I meant cut off carefully.

This simple garland is easy to make with all sizes of pine cones. For our Tahoe clients, we walk their properties and locate the biggest cones possible, dip them in paint, add a touch of "spray snow" (aka flocking) on the tips, and voila, a simple, natural, inspired décor.

For bookends, bowl displays and inserts for trees, consider dipping the tops instead of the bottoms. Add some gathered sticks and twigs and call it a day.

Let me know how your holiday home is coming along, and remember – no stress! This is about you and yours celebrating the holiday as best serves you and yours.

For additional information or to engage our course, Stress Free Holiday Home, visit: www.stressfreeholidayhome.com.

Shalom, from my home to yours!

Wait 24 to 36 hours to use. Make sure paint is dry before placing on furniture!

For the garland: About two rows down from the top, wrap and knot tie the pine cones so they don't move, using a strong but simple rope. Be careful that the rope you use doesn't break easily. Some brands are less hardy than others. Vary the spacing according to your design eye. We have gone as narrow as 4 inches for an almost solid look and as wide as 24 inches for an oversized, contemporary look. For a festive touch, add fairy lights that are battery operated.

I like this garland because it can be as long as needed. No 6-foot limits! The

Ann McDonald, IIDA, NAPO, is the Founder/CEO of Couture Chateau, a luxury interior design firm in Orinda. For a complete blog post including other design ideas, visit www.couturechateau.com/blog.



Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

... continued from page D2

MORAGA

601 Augusta Drive, \$725,000, 2 Bdrms, 1262 SqFt, 1976 YrBlt, 11-18-16;
 735 Augusta Drive, \$1,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 2680 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 11-15-16
 1001 Carter Drive, \$1,148,000, 4 Bdrms, 2064 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 11-10-16
 163 Corliss Drive, \$1,175,000, 4 Bdrms, 2228 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 11-8-16;
 782 Crossbrook Drive, \$1,320,000, 4 Bdrms, 2140 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 11-8-16
 17 Mayfield Place, \$1,445,000, 4 Bdrms, 2112 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 11-18-16;
 40 Merrill Circle #S, \$1,250,000, 3 Bdrms, 2946 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 11-10-16;
 1186 Moraga Road, \$810,000, 4 Bdrms, 1802 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 11-8-16;
 4005 Paseo Grande, \$1,265,000, 4 Bdrms, 2083 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 11-17-16;
 397 Springfield Place, \$1,115,000, 4 Bdrms, 2072 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 11-18-16;
 Previous Sale: \$944,000, 09-06-13
 10 Williams Drive, \$1,425,000, 4 Bdrms, 2557 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 11-16-16;
 Previous Sale: \$620,000, 11-04-99

Previous Sale: \$585,000, 08-28-13

Previous Sale: \$139,000, 10-04-77

Previous Sale: \$1,198,500, 06-09-08

Previous Sale: \$1,210,000, 06-05-14

Previous Sale: \$810,000, 11-08-16

Previous Sale: \$264,500, 05-08-85

ORINDA

10 Descanso Drive, \$1,527,000, 4 Bdrms, 2808 SqFt, 1992 YrBlt, 11-14-16;
 Previous Sale: \$195,000, 01-22-90
 41 Hillcrest Drive, \$1,200,000, 3 Bdrms, 1380 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 11-15-16
 205 Holly Lane, \$1,065,000, 2 Bdrms, 1955 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 11-18-16;
 Previous Sale: \$800,000, 03-30-07
 61 Muth Drive, \$1,183,000, 4 Bdrms, 2659 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 11-10-16
 4 Nobi Lane, \$1,730,000, 4 Bdrms, 3162 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 11-15-16;
 Previous Sale: \$1,400,000, 08-12-09
 31 Parkway Court, \$1,415,000, 4 Bdrms, 1797 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 11-18-16;
 Previous Sale: \$840,000, 07-19-04
 22 South Trail, \$1,350,000, 2 Bdrms, 2709 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 11-10-16;
 Previous Sale: \$594,000, 08-13-03



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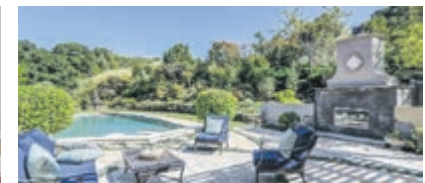
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CALBRE 00616156

Digging Deep

Pace Be With You This Season

By Cynthia Brian

“Adopt the pace of nature. Her secret is patience.” — Ralph Waldo Emerson



Fiddle leaf fig is decorated for the holidays.

Photos Cynthia Brian

No, the title “Pace Be With You” is not a typo. Halloween was a few weeks away when retail stores began showcasing Christmas goods. The day after Thanksgiving, Christmas carols were ubiquitous with garlands, wreaths, Santa statues and twinkling lights adorned every space. As much as I love the Holidays, I detest the commercialization. My sanctuary during this chaotic period is to spend quality time in a garden where the flora and fauna abide by the terms of Mother Nature. Here, there is a natural rhythm to life. When we adopt an attitude of patience and pace ourselves, peace is the result. Being in nature will help you achieve these secrets of living mindfully.

I recently rested and rejuvenated on the verdant Caribbean island of St. Lucia, where life operates at slower pace. The lush rainforests surrounded by sparkling aqua seas envelope this tiny oasis, providing a prescription for mindful meditation focused on nature. The wonders of marine life with reefs vibrant and alive with coral and fish compliment the rich tropical jungles filled with the sounds and sights of birds, reptiles, and exotic creatures. Walking through the botanical gardens is a sensory experience, definitely a sublime forest-bathing experience in the Japanese practice of shinrin-yoku. Everywhere I looked I witnessed what we refer to as “houseplants” growing naturally in the rainforest and on the Pitons. Peace lilies, anthuriums, poinsettias, pothos, ferns, tillandsia air plants, gingers, philodendrons and palms—all happily communed in this natural setting. To see the symbiotic relationship between vines, trees, shrubs and other plants assured me that planet Earth has a will to survive. Whether the weather was monsoon raining or brilliant sunshine, being in such a pristine environment far removed from the maddening crowd gave me reason to pause, pace and peace out!

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Bird of Paradise grows in our environment.

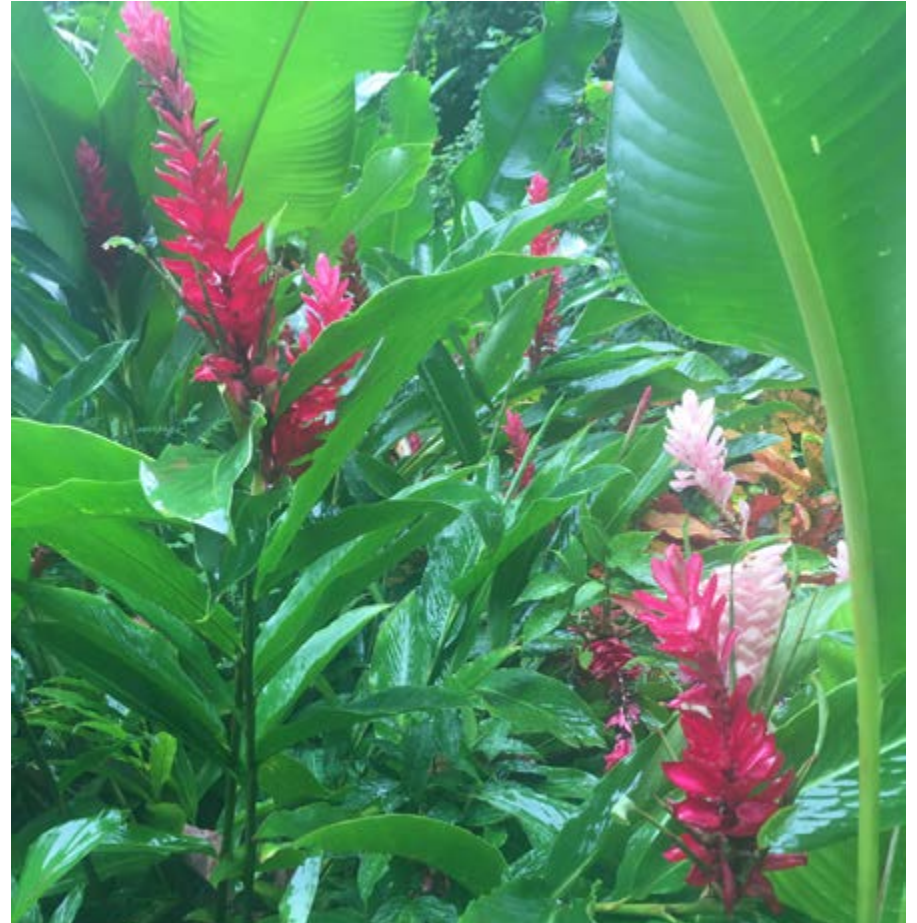
Now that the chilly days and colder nights have halted any successful outdoor planting project, it's time to bring a festive and healthy touch to your indoor décor with living tropicals. The plants from the rain forest will remove toxins, improve the air quality, and add beauty as colorful accents since during winter months when more time is spent inside. On the larger specimens like the fiddle leaf fig, you can wrap Christmas lights and sprinkle ornaments, pinecones, garlands or toppers to celebrate the season.

Staying healthy this season:

Gearing up for holiday meals may cause you to think of your waistline, but by considering the nutritional values of the foods, you'll be able to devour with delight.

Roasting butternut squash brings out its natural sweetness. It can be paired with garlic, rosemary, cumin, coriander seeds and peppers for a healthy savory dish or, for a sweeter rendition, add nutmeg and cinnamon. (In St. Lucia, every time I asked a waiter what made a particular dish so delicious, the answer would be "the secret ingredient is nutmeg!" I came home with the nuts to grate.) Squash is a no-cholesterol fruit packed with fiber and is a major source of vitamin A, providing benefits for your heart, eyes and skin.

If you grew garlic, leeks and onions this year, you are enjoying the cancer-fighting properties of the chopping, smashing and dicing. These tasty



Ginger plants in a variety of colors.

alliums contain prebiotics (not to be confused with probiotics) that keep friendly bacteria in your intestines, help you absorb calcium, ward off colds, flu and heart disease, while lowering blood pressure. Add fresh garlic to your salads and sides for an extra health boost.

Beans are nutritional powerhouses loaded with vitamin K for bone health, fiber for digestion, folate for energy and magnesium for brains. Eat fresh green beans (never canned, unless you canned your fresh produce) and you'll be fired up with antioxidants.

Sweet potatoes are very easy to grow and just one cup fulfills your daily ration of vitamin A necessary for vision and bone growth. If you are concerned about combating wrinkles, the vitamins in sweet potatoes decrease creases while hydrating and repairing your skin.

Eat your spuds cold because when potatoes are cooked and cooled, they release "resistant starch", a fiber that actually aids in burning fat.

The antioxidants in red wine decrease heart disease and protect against cancer. Share a bottle of Lamorinda wine at your holiday feast to extend your life and your relationships!

Pumpkin pie is not only delicious. It is good for your complexion with its commanding antioxidants. One slice delivers four grams of fiber. Go ahead and have a second slice.

... continued on page D14

Cynthia Brian's Mid-month Gardening Tips

BUY bulbs on sale. Many nurseries and garden centers are selling bulbs 50-75 percent off retail because it is generally accepted that the planting is over. However, I plant bulbs through the end of January because our Mediterranean climate seems to keep the soil a bit warmer. Tulips are always a special treat, although we usually only get one to two years from a bulb. Alliums are a great choice because the deer won't eat them and the blooms are terrific as a cut flower. For the fragrant scent, nothing beats hyacinth; however always wear gloves when planting these bulbs as many people exhibit skin allergies to hyacinth. **MOW** your lawn only every two weeks in the winter with the mower at 3.5-inches.

SPREAD seeds of a cover crop to add nitrogen and nutrients to a vegetable plot.

DECORATE with tropical plants in varying sizes to dazzle and sparkle. The great thing about tropicals is how easy they are to grow and how long the blooms last. Read the instructions and enjoy the rainforest benefits.

SPRAY-paint end-of-season gourds and pumpkins with gold, silver or bronze for an entry arrangement with pinecones and evergreen branches.

DONATE to your favorite nonprofit for an end of year tax deduction while making the life of someone else more pleasant. Please consider our local youth 501(c)(3) charity, Be the Star You Are!®, www.BetheStarYouAre.org.

STAY healthy by eating fresh fruits and vegetables in season such as pomegranate, persimmon, oranges, tangerines, lemons, winter squash, kale, potatoes and lots of lettuces and herbs.

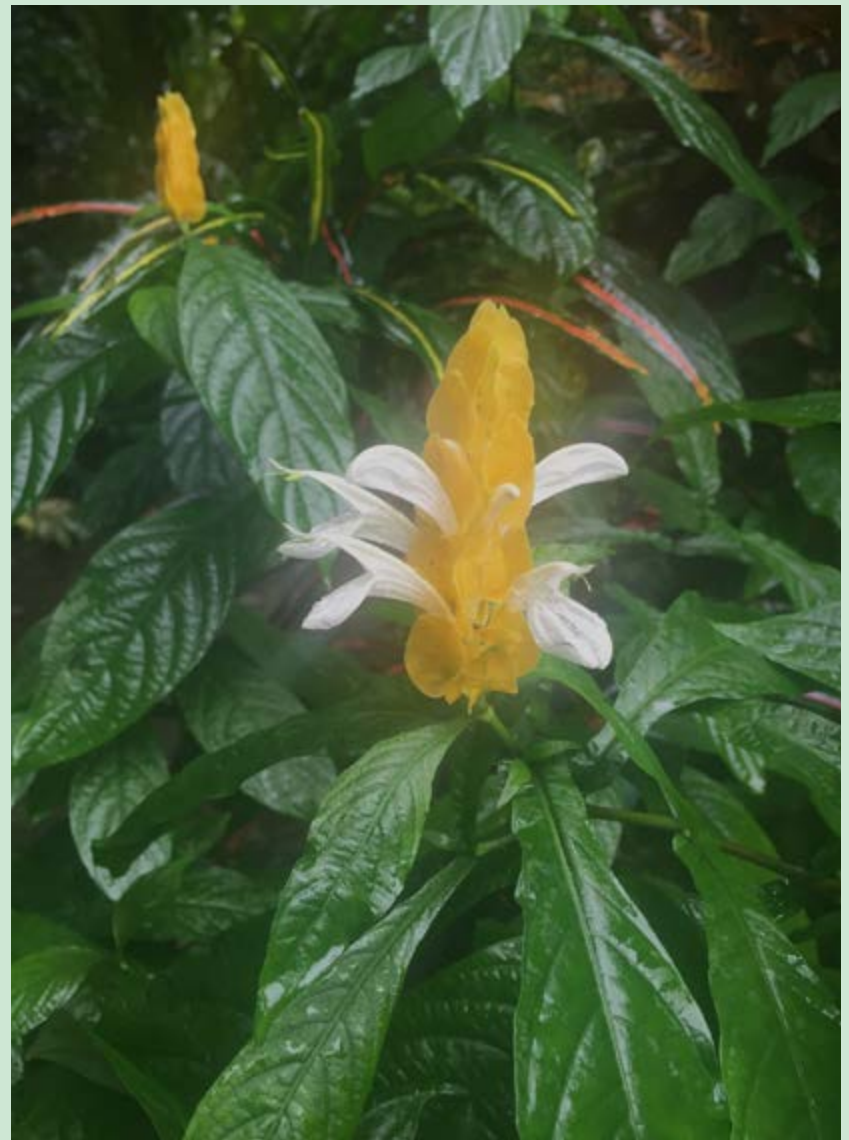
PACE yourself. Nature is slowly going to sleep and this gives gardeners a chance to revitalize, refresh, restore and renew. You've worked hard all year. Give yourself the gift of peace.

Wishing you a happy, healthy, and hallowed holiday month. Patience and peace be with you!

Happy growing! Happy gardening!



Spray painted gourds and mini pumpkins with pinecones inside a child's wheelbarrow.



The exotic golden shrimp plant can be found as an indoor tropical.



Heliconia blossoms make spectacular, long lasting cut flowers.



Cynthia Brian paces in paradise.

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Cynthia Brian
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68 Loma Vista

Beautifully updated mid-century modern lease. Exceptional details throughout. Walls of glass, integrated indoor/ outdoor living. Yard features drought tolerant planting. Serene loc. close to town, BART & schools. **\$6,500/month**

ORINDA



For Lease

407 Miner Road

Contemporary Estate for lease in OCC with 3 beds, 3 baths, 4213 sq. ft. on amazing 1+ acre lot. High ceilings, spacious rooms, walls of glass. Pool/ spa, tennis court, gardens, redwoods & views! **\$8,500/month**

ORINDA



4 Quail Ridge Lane

This 2.87 acre lot enjoys spectacular valley views, filled with mature trees. Complete with approved plans to built 3276 sq. ft. home. Great loc. not far from downtown, BART & award winning schools. **\$590,000**

ORINDA



220 Camino Sobrante

Special location on the lake. Classic, wood crafted 4bd/4ba home has great use of space on two levels, ideal for comfortable living & entertaining. Bonus sports court. Alluring setting of beauty & privacy. **\$1,695,000**

ORINDA



105 Crane Terrace

Exceptional 4.87 acre gated estate traditional of incredible appeal on alluring knoll, private setting of pano views. Custom craftsmanship. Lovely grounds w/ lawns, gardens, mature trees. **\$2,950,000**

MORAGA



For Lease

1996 D Ascot Drive

Enjoy this picturesque setting of this 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo in Moraga. All rooms provide a light bright open feeling, and a serene view of the hills. Includes a covered parking area, pool, and other amenities. **\$2,200/month**

MORAGA



For Lease

1 Harrington Road

Turnkey exclusive rental with new carpet, new paint & refinished hardwood floors. Open eat-in kitchen/ family room combo. Cathedral ceilings, pool & spa. Desirable Sanders Ranch gated community. **\$6,300/month**

OAKLAND



2601 Chelsea Drive

Located in quiet Piedmont Pines this tastefully updated contemporary 1988 sq. ft. home on .28 acre has 3 beds, 2 baths, 2 car garage, spacious light filled rooms, beautiful master suite & epic views of the SF bay. **\$899,000**

PLEASANT HILL



20 Whitfield Court

Great parcel at top of knoll with views of Mount Diablo and ideal privacy. Truly special setting sites for development zoned R-10 & R-15. Wonderful opportunity for investment. **\$1,495,000**

RICHMOND



3507 Stewarton Drive

Great 3 bedroom home in May Valley area. Dual panes, new carpets, hardwood floors & just painted. Huge living room with brick fireplace, & 2nd fireplace in family room/ kitchen. Close to schools, parks. **\$574,900**

RICHMOND



1810 Ralston Avenue

Great opportunity in desirable Richmond View! Spacious home with 4 beds/ 2.5 baths plus family room downstairs with brick fireplace. Updated kitchen, living room adjoins dining room with wall of windows. Amazing Bay & SF skyline views! **\$649,000**

ROSSMOOR



1443 Roackledge Lane, #1,

Light and bright vintage Sequoia wrap model with 2 beds/1 bath. The home flows beautifully with enclosed sun-room creating additional living space. The deck provides extra outdoor space to take in the views. **\$285,000**



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