

Lamorinda

WEEKLY

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State Senator and Orinda resident Steve Glazer inspects the sinkhole on Miner Road.

Photo Tod Fierner

Orinda Sinkhole Fix To Take Weeks

By Sora O'Doherty

Now it's Orinda's turn. Severe storms caused a large sinkhole on Miner Road at Camino Lanada, disrupting traffic on the busy thoroughfare. In fact, the damage was so bad that City Manager Janet Keeter recommended a local state of emergency on Jan. 12, and the city is looking at about four weeks for repairs.

The large sinkhole was the worst of the damage inflicted

on Orinda by a strong winter storm that also resulted in downed trees and utility poles, mudslides, power outages, and flooding. Further winter storms may worsen the condition of the sinkhole, and interfere with the progress of repair. While Moraga opted to wait out the rainy season before proceeding with repairs on its sinkhole, Orinda's serious situation precludes that option. Orinda hopes that a break in the weather

might allow repairs to be completed in around a month. It is possible that work may continue around-the-clock.

Miner Road, a heavily traveled road, had to be closed to pedestrian and vehicular traffic. In addition, utilities were impacted, including two Central Sanitary District sewer lines, a PG&E gas line, and an EBMUD water line that provides water to all of north-east Orinda. ... continued on page A12

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Joan Evans

Realtor
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CALIBRE# 01168111



Angie Evans Traxinger

Realtor
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CALIBRE# 01828901

www.angieandjoan.com

Online Purchases Rain on Some Local Merchants During Holiday Shopping

By Victor Ryerson



Sarah McDonnell of McDonnell's Nursery poses with her decorative offerings. Photo Victor Ryerson

With the Bay Area's economy running in high gear, retail businesses made a good showing in Lamorinda during the holiday period, but the allure of online sales nevertheless affected many shoppers. No one is claiming to have had a banner holiday shopping season, and some merchants are annoyed with what might be called bad internet etiquette as a source of lost sales. And they are gently pushing back.

Overall it appears that 2016 was a "pretty good year, better than the previous year, but the holidays were slow," says Jay Lifson, executive director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. A sampling of local business owners generally agrees. They offer many reasons for relatively lackluster holiday sales, ranging from the early holiday adjournment of schools to the gaping sinkhole at the intersection of the Rheem Valley Shopping Center's principal thoroughfares. But one thing most agree about is that internet selling poses a threat to small retailers in the community.

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Moraga Parents Rally to Defend Accused Los Perales Teacher

By Sophie Braccini

A Moraga family wanting to file criminal charges against a Los Perales Elementary School teacher for allegedly duct-taping their son last year in the classroom has riled the local community — but not in the way many such cases do.

Parents in the Moraga School District are rallying around teacher Millie Tang, a fifth grade teacher whom many of them call an exemplary educator.

Within two days of the news of a civil suit being brought against the MSD and Tang, over 60 families sent to the superintendent letters of support for the accused teacher. At the most recent MSD board meeting, parents publicly supported the teacher whom they call an extraordinary individual and remarkable educator. They asked the district not to settle the case if it was brought into legal channels, but defend the teacher's honor against what they call a "frivolous lawsuit."

The story that has been circulated in the media first came from the lawyer of the family of a young boy identified as "John Doe" to protect his privacy. He was in fifth grade last year in Tang's classroom.

The lawyer who represents John Doe's family, Larry E. Cook of Casper, Meadows, Schwartz & Cook, did not return repeated requests for interviews on this story. ... continued on page A8

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