

# LAMORINDA



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Thumbs up for the all-access playground. From left: Cliff Dochterman, Tony Schoemehl, John Erickson, Frank May, Kevin Reneau, Evie Michon, Jay Ingram and Ann Damaschino. Photo A. Scheck

## All-Access Playground is a sure thing

By Sophie Braccini

There are very few playgrounds in the Bay Area that offers kids, regardless of their abilities, the opportunity to play side by side. As a Lamorinda parent of a disabled child puts it, some of the hardest realities when raising a disabled child are the isolation created by the difference, the difficulty to find playmates and play opportunities, and the disruption to the other siblings.

But now, thanks to a group of Moraga Rotarians that did not believe their dream was too big for them, an accessible and inclusive playground will open this fall at the Moraga Commons Park. The club reached its \$250,000 goal this month and Moraga Parks and Recreation Director Jay Ingram plans to bring constructions bids to the town council in June

Moraga Rotary club members are justly proud of their achievement. Just over six months ago the group of passionate Rotarians started fundraising for the park. Some were skeptical, even within the club itself, that this would be feasible. Club president Kevin Reneau stresses that this was a group effort reaching out all over Lamorinda.

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Advertising

**LAMORINDA WEEKLY**

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## Goodness, gracious, snakes alive!

By Cathy Dausman



A rattler seen in Bollinger. Photo provided by Spring's arrival means longer, warmer and drier days — perfect for a hike in the Lamorinda hills. Enjoy the flowers and wildlife but give *Crotalus oreganus*,

or the western rattlesnake, a wide berth. “Steer clear,” counsels Lesa Johnston, marketing specialist for the California Department of Fish & Wildlife. Rattlesnakes are found throughout California and known to defend aggressively after presenting a series of warnings: rattling their tail, coiling their body and pre-strike posturing. “March was a busy month for rattlesnake encounters,” Johnston said, citing data from the California Poison Control System. Lamorindan Ginny Hair didn’t need those statistics when she came across a “big healthy guy” rattlesnake on a hike last month. “We were in Moraga at the end of Bollinger Canyon,” Hair said. Neither Hair nor her hiking companion were harmed, but they managed to take pictures. Some suggest that this year’s drastic change in weather is responsible for an increase in the rattlesnake population.

... continued on page A9

## 70 years of bean dip and margaritas at El Charro

By John T. Miller



Employees of El Charro beneath the signature sombrero. Photo J. Miller

It’s 7:30 on a Tuesday night and the parking lot at El Charro’s is virtually full. As one car backs out, another enters to take its place. El Charro has been packing in customers for Mexican food and margaritas for 70 years now, and to mark the occasion the Chamber of Commerce will sponsor a ribbon cutting and celebration at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, June 1, an event that will surely fill up its ample parking lot and then some. Since 1947, when Fidel “Frank” Garcia occupied the original log cabin on Mt. Diablo Boulevard, El Charro has been serving family-style Mexican food to satisfied customers. Dave Shields, the current owner, took over the business from his brother in 1993.

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**Public Meetings**

**City Council**

Monday, May 22, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,  
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**Planning Commission**

Monday, June 5, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,  
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**Design Review**

Monday, May 22, 7 p.m.  
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,  
Arts & Science Discovery Center,  
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

**School Board Meetings**

**Acalanes Union High School District**  
Wednesday, May 17, 7 p.m.  
AUHSD Board Room  
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette  
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

**Lafayette School District**

Wednesday, June 21, 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

**Chamber of Commerce:**

www.lafayettechamber.org



**Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report**

April 23 - May 6

<b>Alarms</b>	67
<b>911 Calls (incl hang-ups)</b>	4
<b>Noise complaints</b>	14
<b>Traffic stops</b>	173
<b>Suspicious Circumstances</b>	11
<b>Suspicious Subjects</b>	20
<b>Suspicious Vehicles</b>	23
<b>Auto Burglary</b>	
3300 Block La Caminita	
Upper Happy Valley Rd./El Nido Ranch Rd. (2)	
<b>Beat Info</b>	
Upper Happy Valley Rd./Los Arabis Dr. (2)	
<b>Checks Non Suff Funds</b>	
900 Block Moraga Rd.	
<b>Civil Disturbance</b>	
Police Department	
30 Block Lafayette Cr.	
<b>Civil Problem</b>	
3900 Block Cowan Rd.	
Reliez Station Rd./Olympic Blvd.	
<b>Civil Standby</b>	
1500 Block Rancho View Dr.	
<b>Excessive Speed</b>	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Rancho View Dr.	
<b>Fire/Ems Response Info</b>	
Old Tunnel Rd./El Curtola Blvd.	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Olympic Blvd.	
<b>Fireworks</b>	
Old Tunnel Rd./Leland Dr.	
<b>Forgery</b>	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
<b>Found Property</b>	
Police Department	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Condit Rd. (2)	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Police Department	
10 Block Silver Leaf Ct.	
4100 Block Happy Valley Rd.	
3700 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
<b>Fraud Credit Card</b>	
1200 Block Vacation Dr.	
1000 Block Stuart St.	
<b>Fraud False Pretenses</b>	
800 Block Avalon Ave.	
900 Block Condit Ct.	
70 Block Bacon Ct.	
900 Block Dewing Ave.	
<b>Grand Theft</b>	
30 Block Lafayette Cr.	
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
1000 Block Aileen St.	
<b>Hailed By Citizen</b>	
Camino Diablo/Springbrook Rd.	
Mt Diablo Blvd./Dewing Ave.	
1000 Block Via Roble	
<b>Harassment</b>	
1500 Block Rancho View Dr.	
Quandt Rd./Springhill Rd.	
3200 Block Marlene Dr.	
1700 Block Toyon Rd.	
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Moraga Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
<b>Hit And Run Misdemeanor</b>	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Reliez Station Rd./Dianne Ct.	
<b>Identity Theft</b>	
1000 Block Rahara Dr.	
3200 Block Amara Dr. (2)	
3500 Block Herman Dr.	
10 Block Middle Rd.	
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
<b>Litter</b>	
1000 Block Miller Dr.	
Deer Hill Rd./Pleasant Hill Rd.	

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**Controversy surrounds trees slated to be axed**

By Pippa Fisher

A growing number of vocal residents are pushing back against the PG&E proposal that would remove 272 trees in Lafayette.

Frustrated by the lack of communication from the utility company, a large number of concerned residents aired their opinions at a recent city council meeting, which in turn prompted PG&E to host a series of pop-up discussion opportunities at the Lafayette Reservoir and along the Lafayette-Moraga trail.

In March the city council gave the go-ahead to PG&E to remove the trees as part of the utility's Community Pipeline Safety Initiative put in place following the 2010 San Bruno pipeline failure and consequent disaster. According to the CPSI, the trees need to be removed to provide access for first responders in case of emergency. They

also claimed in a letter agreement with the city that "...tree roots may cause damage to pipes by exposing them to corrosion."

Although the item was not on the agenda for the May 8 city council meeting, about 20 speakers took advantage of the open comments to let the city know their feelings.

They addressed concerns ranging from loss of the semirural feel of Lafayette to loss of wildlife and habitat for birds, especially during nesting season, to loss of soil stability to concerns over the lack of dialog with PG&E.

Several residents questioned whether money wouldn't be better spent improving the safety features such as gas leak detection and shut-off valves.



A PG&E employee is ready to answer questions. Photo Pippa Fisher

The council heard from a first responder who works with PG&E on calls who made the point that the pipeline along the trail is already fully accessible in his opinion. He

also argued for replacing the aging pipes before a big earthquake hits, moving the pipe over a few feet away from houses.

... continued on page A11

**Lafayette shows 'Resolve' to bring artwork to new Pleasant Hill Road roundabout**

By Pippa Fisher

Drivers at the junction of Pleasant Hill Road and Olympic Boulevard will have new artwork to admire on their spin around the new roundabout by the end of the year in the shape of a new metal sculpture entitled "Resolve."

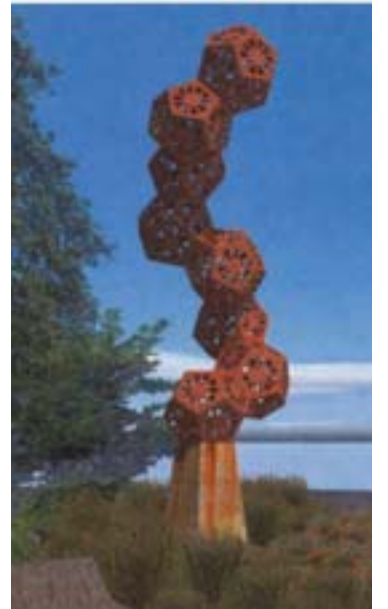
The installation is the work of Walnut Creek artist David Mudgett. He says that the sturdy structure of eight dodecahedrons will be dynamically balanced atop a pentagonal concrete pedestal reaching roughly 19 feet into the air. During the day natural light will filter through the cutouts and after dark strategically placed lights will give the sculpture a more dramatic feel.

The geometric shapes, which Mudgett says he chose to be sym-

bolic of Lafayette's policy to put education first, speak to math, science and nature. He says he chose the title to reflect the city's resolve in solving traffic issues.

The city council members recently heard from Staff Liaison to the Public Art Committee Juliet Hanson and from Public Art Committee chair Janice Peacock, who pointed out the benefits of the materials to be used. Mudgett will be using raw, Corten steel and stainless steel hardware, which is easy to clean if necessary. Peacock says that the installation fits with the whole city's art collection. It comes with the pre-approved price tag of \$125,000.

... continued on page A12



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\*per Public Records



# Implicit Bias workshop aids Lafayette police, residents

By Pippa Fisher



Residents and city staff listen to the presentation. Photo Pippa Fisher

Residents have an overall positive view of the Lafayette Police Department but there were still some people who felt that the concepts of implicit bias and all of its implications have not yet been embraced by members of the Lafayette community.

Those were the results of a survey of a recent workshop held on implicit bias, referring to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. Not a seat was empty at the event, "Implicit Bias and Procedural Justice Community Education and Engagement Night" presented by Christy Chandler and Shanti Brien of Daylight Justice and hosted by the Crime Prevention Commission and Lafayette Chief of Police Eric Christensen.

The program's objective was designed to increase public engagement and trust of local police. Through a series of slide shows, the leaders presented ideas for discussion in small groups. Based on the tenet that if you are human, you are biased, they tried to get conversation started to become aware of one's biases and to help come up with ways to counter them.

Christensen has said that "The more we talk about our difficult issues, the more likely we are to solve them." And the conversations at this workshop did indeed reflect how difficult the issues are with several heated exchanges.

A police officer made the point that, although he usually feels very supported, he has experienced bias against him and the uniform he wears, which in turn prompted a comment from a Lafayette resident that as a police officer he can go home and take the uniform off. As an African American, he cannot take off the color of his skin. The resident said he personally had had nothing but positive interactions with the Lafayette Police.

This was a sentiment shared by many, although not all. One resident reported being racially profiled on a couple of occasions within the city, which drew some defensive and heated dialog from others in the room.

One of the more interesting comments came from a resident who made the point that white people don't understand "white privilege" because they have never had to question it or think about it, and black people don't understand why white people don't understand white privilege – a comment that clearly demonstrated the complexity of the issues and the need for such a workshop.

Said Christensen, "It's a hard topic to talk about and you saw that in the interactions during the event. I think the critical thing for all of us is to listen to the perspective of others and appreciate what they felt, not try to impose our own perspective on them."

... continued on page A8

# Residents pull together for annual creek clean-up

By Pippa Fisher



From left: Will Elder and Jeff Gilman Photo Pippa Fisher

Lafayette Creekside Park — lately a place of controversy between neighbors — provided a great opportunity for residents to pull (weeds) together on a warm and pleasant day at a shady, beautiful stretch of the creek.

This was part of the fifth annual Lafayette Creek Day, where residents old and young gathered to help with the cleanup and learn more about the Las Trampas Creek.

Under blue, sunny skies, the volunteers dug, chopped, hacked and pulled at the invasive, non-native weeds that are choking out more desirable native plant growth to help maintain a stable creek bank.

Several members of the Lafayette Creeks Committee took part, joined by Lafayette residents and several Boy Scouts from troops 200 and 243, who used the opportunity to help as part of a service project

Although the many hands made for faster clearing, the day was also about education. Will Elder, Creeks

Committee Chairman and Jeff Gilman, creeks committee member had displays out depicting the creek's native plants.

Saint Mary's Aquatic Ecologist Michael Marchetti, himself a former creeks committee member, brought several tanks containing examples of the creek's native aquatic life, such as newts and encouraged residents to touch and examine the wildlife.

Stanley Middle School science teachers Jan Winter and Mandy Kush were also helping at the park.

Kush recognizes what a wonderful resource Lafayette has on its doorstep. She says that she brings her seventh-grade students down to the creek several times during the year to observe and take water samples for analysis during their year-long creek study.

Elder expects to present the commission's Downtown Creeks Preservation, Restoration and Development plan to the Lafayette City Council in June.

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## Moraga

### Public Meetings

#### City Council

Wednesday, May 24, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

#### Planning Commission

Monday, June 5, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

#### Design Review

Monday, May 22, 7 p.m.  
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

#### School Board Meetings

**Moraga School District**  
Thursday, June 6, 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



### April 25 to May 2 Alarms

4/27 Likely false alarm from cleaning service  
4/27 MBR glass break triggered alarm. Nothing vandalized or taken  
4/27 Key fob activation. Nothing unusual seen or heard.  
4/28 Garage door activation.  
5/1 400 block Fernwood Drive. Residence found secure.  
5/1 100 block Miramonte Drive. Nothing unusual seen/heard.

### 4/25 Bench Warrant

Police pulled over a vehicle for a driving violation and found its driver outstanding – having had two previous warrants issued, that is. Driver was cited and released on a signed promise to appear in court. Maybe someone else should drive that day.

### 4/25 ID Theft

Saint Mary's College — attempt to open checking account in Memphis.

### 4/26 Residential Burglary

Homeowner lost electronic items, jewelry and sports memorabilia. Burglar was not a good sport.

### 4/29 ID Theft

Fitness center guest lost his driver's license and several credit cards. The thief used the info to make \$4,000 in purchases. Police working out with surveillance tape.

### 4/27 Dispute

BFF? Not even close. It didn't turn out especially well for either of two intoxicated male roommates, one of whom suffered a minor scratch. The other got a courtesy lift to a nearby BART station likely until cooler heads prevailed.

### 4/27 Warrant arrest

Police gave a 41-year-old female on Rheem Boulevard who held an outstanding warrant a lift to Martinez Detention Facility.

### 4/27 Suspicious Circumstances

Police investigated a reported suspicious circumstance at Saint Mary's College. It was so suspicious we can't tell you what happened. Truthfully — we don't know.

### 4/28 Auto Burglary

Doors to a previously locked and unattended vehicle netted thief/ thieves \$100. The owner discovered two keys on the front driver seat.

### 4/28 Vehicle Larceny

A Prius parked on Miramonte Drive was relieved of an estimated \$50 in miscellaneous items. It might be old school, but there are no witnesses or leads.

### 4/28 Incident

Police retrieved three airsoft rifles from Saint Mary's College Public Safety. Zero shots in the dark later said rifles were headed for destruction.

### 4/28 Auto Burglary

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## Town-Gown relationship at an all-time high

By Sophie Braccini

Saint Mary's College has scored big with the Town of Moraga recently as it had its master plan approved — after five years of work — as well as banners that will welcome students downtown in the fall. Town-gown relationships are blossoming as commencement week, starting on May 27, gets near.

“Wednesday night was really a remarkable moment in the history of the Moraga-Saint Mary's town-gown relationship,” said Tim Farley, the college community and government relations director, at a public meeting following the May 10 town council meeting. He spoke of the five years of public outreach, environmental impact reviews, and multiple planning meetings that led to the seemingly effortless approval by the town council of a plan that will direct the college's development over the next 15 years.

Saint Mary's does not plan to

increase in any major way its number of students, as confirmed by college president Jim Donahue at the council meeting. The vision is to improve the services provided to the students on campus, including lodging, sports facilities, and student learning and recreation spaces.

The neighboring city of Lafayette was consulted during the process. Its concerns revolved around traffic generation during construction. With the number of students staying mostly the same, the traffic study did not show any additional everyday impact.

The only element that had been noted by the planning commission during its final review was the water usage impact. The college's environmental report showed a 19 percent increase in water use, and proposed the use of the use of a water well. Commissioners had asked at their April 10 meeting if Saint Mary's could improve their water

conservation practices. College's staff responded that the percentage increase had been calculated because facilities such as campus housing were added to the campus, but that it would be unlikely that water use would increase as much because the number of students and faculty would not change significantly.

The council, like the planning commission last month, approved the plan. Over the next five years the phase one projects should be completed, including a new roundabout at the crossing with St. Mary's Road to create a better entrance to the campus and improve bike circulation; a new library and learning commons; the construction of a second story for parking over the existing public parking area; the creation of a second emergency entrance/exit routes; the renovation of the McKeon pavilion; a new residence hall; repurposing the

Madigan gym; and a new student center for academic activities and food.

The college received town approval during the same council meeting for hanging about 20 pole banners around town when school starts again to welcome parents and students. One council member argued that these were commercial banners that should be restricted to the commercial areas, per town policy. But the majority approved the proposal as made by the college, asking that the content highlight an event, such as back-to-school, that would be of interest to the whole community, rather than displaying subjective content.

The banners were approved for 30 days. They should be displayed before and/or after the California Independent Film Festival banners that were approved to be hung from mid-August to mid-September.

## Moraga Community Foundation to pay for License Plate Recognition cameras for town entrances

By Sophie Braccini

Lafayette has them, Orinda has them, and soon Moraga will too: License Plate Recognition cameras.

These cameras that read cars' license plates when vehicles enter or exit town will be installed as soon as the Moraga Community Foundation has raised the necessary \$60,000. Residents are invited to contribute.

The town of Moraga approved the purchase of five video cameras in March of 2016, just one week before the sinkhole that collapsed under Rheem Boulevard threat-

I'll bet the woman whose car was burgled on Ascot Drive is less upset about losing \$260 in stolen goods than learning her vehicle master key was missing. Changing the vehicle locks sets her back \$1200.

### 4/28 Violation City Ordinance

These college students are slow learners. Residents hosting 15 loud and unruly guests had been cited once already for noise. Now they're repeating the lesson.

### 4/29 Violation City Ordinance

Police found 86 college-age revelers and alcoholic beverages in one apartment on a Saturday night. Clearly the elbow room was as tight as some guests. Police 86'd the group; the residents received a warning.

### 4/30 Vandalism

Another roommate tiff. Roomie one in the front yard, avoiding an extremely intoxicated second in the kitchen, who had broken several items. The inside subject beat a hasty retreat to a back bedroom when police arrived. They coaxed him out, but he pulled away, then slammed his head into the patrol car. He was arrested and deposited at Martinez Detox...er, Detention Center!

### 5/1 Larceny

How out of control are real estate prices in Lamorinda? It's so bad that someone just stole a “for sale” sign posted in the 2100 block of Ascot Drive.

### 5/1 Stolen property

2018 license plate tabs stolen from a Toyota.

### 5/1 ID Theft

Fraudulent use of an ATM card in Colorado. Bank notified; card closed.



Moraga Community Foundation members from left: Bob Fritzky, Edy Schwartz, Tom Schnurr and Hays Engelhardt answered questions about the video cameras last Saturday at the Moraga Community Faire. Photo A. Scheck

ened to dig a big gap in the town's coffers, and all non-essential expenses were put on hold. But one resident decided not to give up. Kristen Beckwith had lived through a scary experience that opened her eyes, and she decided to get the town to act.

The Moraga mom remembers how last year she saw on a private home camera two individuals stealing from her neighbor's mailbox in Moraga. She contacted the police. Moraga had no video camera to track their car, but Lafayette had and the next day Lafayette police sent her an image of a car that had been identified on video as belonging to suspects in another case, and she was able to confirm that it was the same car.

“I understood how these cameras were great tools to solve crime,” Beckwith says. Since then she has not stopped the campaign. She has been joined by Paul Cohune, who says that there is a perception in town that crime is on the rise.

Both Lafayette and Orinda have installed such cameras in the last few years. Lafayette Chief of Police Eric Christensen attributed the dramatic drop in residential burglaries in 2015 — 60 percent

— to prevention, that include residents' vigilance and security cameras installed in town. Both police chiefs in Orinda and Lafayette have said that not all crimes can be prevented or solved by video cameras, but both cities have examples of cases where the license plate reading devices were key in the capture of the bad guys.

Beckwith and Cohune are supported in their quest by the Moraga police department and Police Chief Jon King, who says he believes that the devices are both a deterrent and a crime solving tool.

Since the financial situation of Moraga is not improving, the residents decided to take the matter in their own hands. Beckwith, Cohune and King met with the Moraga Community Foundation and asked the nonprofit to support them.

MCF's president Renata Sos said that the board unanimously approved the project and decided to actively participate in the fundraising effort. The campaign was named the Community Watch Program; its objective is to raise \$60,000 to install the five systems that were approved over a year ago.

The whole structure will con-

sist of five license plate readers installed in conjunction with high definition overview cameras to be able to accurately identify the vehicles. Each unit will be installed at five high traffic entrances and exits of the town. The information collected will be accessed solely by police officers as part of a crime investigation. The data will not be transmitted over the internet.

Cohune and Beckwith quickly started reaching out to community groups in town and were present at the Moraga Community Faire. Beckwith says that some people are concerned about being “watched” but adds that the vast majority is supportive. The first number of donations was encouraging, but there is still a way to go.

Sos and other members of the MCF are also engaged in fundraising for the cameras. The foundation's president noted that the mission of the foundation is to invest in projects that are significant and for the benefit of the community as a whole. She and the board believe that the project is timely and encourages the project to go to the www.moragacommunityfoundation.org to donate.



# Free Outdoor Movie Back to the Future Friday, 5/19 – Commons Park



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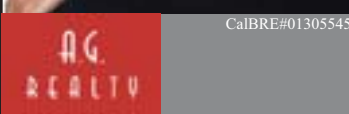
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## Cost of temporary Canyon bridge: \$2.6 million and possibly many months

By Sophie Braccini

The town of Moraga is moving toward the installation of a temporary bridge on Canyon road, depending on funding availability. But even this interim solution would take months to become a reality and reopening the link to Canyon will still have to wait.

Moraga Public Works is working on installing a 160-foot-long, one-lane bridge to temporarily replace the current bridge that was closed last month because a landslide jeopardized its foundation. The installation will require the stabilization of the nearby hill and the removal of the existing bridge; cost estimates came out at \$2.6 million. In the meantime the bridge is closed to all traffic, and circulation to and from the Canyon community is diverted through Orinda and the western hills.

Moraga residents who have children attending Canyon school came to the town council on May 10 to ask that the replacement of the bridge be made a town top priority. Bob Priebe, town manager,

responded that it was indeed that.

The temporary one-lane bridge would be installed west of the current bridge that would be removed. It would stay in place during the construction of a new bridge, something that had been already approved last year. The big question mark for the temporary solution is its high cost.

Resident Edy Schwartz said that some residents were shocked when hearing the cost announced by the city and asked Priebe if all solutions had been studied. The town manager answered that yes, every option had been looked at, including borrowing a bridge as a resident had suggested. "We could borrow it, but then if they have an emergency they will need their bridge back and we will be left with nothing."

Public Works Director Edric Kwan adds that Moraga is seeking emergency funding, and working with its insurance company, but needs to have a contingency plan if no funding possibilities are found.

He warns that the completion will take several months anyway. The council has to approve the plan, the hill will have to be stabilized and at this time a complete diagnostic of the condition of the hill and future possible consequences have not been completed. The town is co-operating with EBMUD to finalize the assessment of the site.

The financial consequences for Moraga are going to be quite profound no matter what. Amy Cunningham, the administrative director, said that the \$2.6 million price tag is the total of the town's reserves. Moraga could be reimbursed over time by federal agencies but will have to curtail spending in the meantime. She anticipates an operating budget in the red and that some tough decisions will have to be made by the council when discussing the budget in June.

The town has opened a specific page on its website at www.moraga.ca.us/Canyon-Bridge-Closure-2017 where the latest information is posted.

## And how about the sinkhole?

In some good news, Moraga town staff believe that the town is only days away from receiving the final approval from the Federal Highway Administration and being able to approve the bids and award the repair contract for the sinkhole near Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road. Public works director Edric Kwan says he is confident the repairs can be done during this construction season.

## Town of Moraga Community GARAGE SALE

Saturday, May 20, 2017

Come out to Moraga for a day of garage sale shopping! There will be over 25 sales in Town! Garage Sale Guides with a map and listings of each sale will be available at the Hacienda de las Flores, Moraga Library, Town Offices, and Online starting on May 17th.

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# Orinda

## Public Meetings

### City Council

Tuesday, June 6, 7 p.m.  
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library  
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

### Planning Commission

Tuesday, June 13, 7 p.m.  
Special Joint Meeting with City Council  
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library  
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

### Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, June 14, 6:30 p.m.  
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,  
22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

### School Board Meetings

**Orinda Union School District**  
Monday, June 5, 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



### April 23 to 29

- Alarms 23
- Noise complaints 0
- 911 Calls (includes hang-ups) 5
- Traffic stops 28
- Suspicious Circumstances 7
- Suspicious Subjects 5
- Suspicious Vehicles 14
- Burglary, Auto**  
20 block Evergreen Dr.
- Burglary, Residential**  
30 block Oak Dr.
- Civil**  
30 block Bobolink Rd.  
30 block Lost Valley Dr.  
10 block Vianne Ct.
- Credit fraud**  
20 block Bryant Way
- Death, non-criminal**  
50 block Brookwood Rd.
- Disturbance**  
10 block Lost Valley Dr.
- Dispute**  
60 block Brookwood Rd.  
10 block Ramona Dr.
- ID Theft**  
10 block Silverwood Ct.  
Reported to police  
200 block Sundown Terr
- Injury Accident**  
Moraga Way/Oak Dr.
- Ordinance violation**  
Manzanita Dr/Bobolink Rd.  
10 block La Campana Rd.
- Panhandling**  
Moraga Way/Brookwood Rd.
- Police/Fire/ EMS**  
10 block Keith Dr.
- Public Nuisance**  
90 block Brookwood Rd.  
Orinda Theater
- Reckless Driving**  
Ivy Dr./Coral Dr.  
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.  
San Pablo Dam Rd/Camino Pablo
- Runaway juvenile**  
Wilder Sports Fields
- Shoplift**  
Safeway
- Theft, Petty**  
100 block Overhill Rd.
- Tresspass**  
300 block Camino Sobrante
- Uncontrollable juvenile**  
50 block Scenic Dr.
- Vandalism**  
500 block Orindawoods Dr.
- Warrant Service/Arrest/Advise**  
300 block Glorietta Blvd.

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## Orinda to raise fees in some city departments

By Sora O'Doherty

In a budget cycle filled with uncertainty about costs as repairs begin to the Miner Road sinkhole, there are two positive financial developments for Orinda: two general obligations bonds were successfully brought to market and an increase in fees will keep pace with increased costs of providing services.

Stifel, the city's underwriter, has confirmed that the bonds were sold April 5 to a mix of individuals, financial institutions and professional asset managers. The

"all-in" costs of funds (akin to the "APR" on a home loan) is 3.17 percent, lower than the 3.8 percent estimated borrowing costs used for the Measure J and Measure L elections in 2014 and 2016. Thus Stifel estimates that the total tax levy will be at least \$5.4 million lower than the levels presented to the voters.

To offset rising costs of providing services, Orinda is increasing some development impact fees and fees for services provided by a number of city departments:

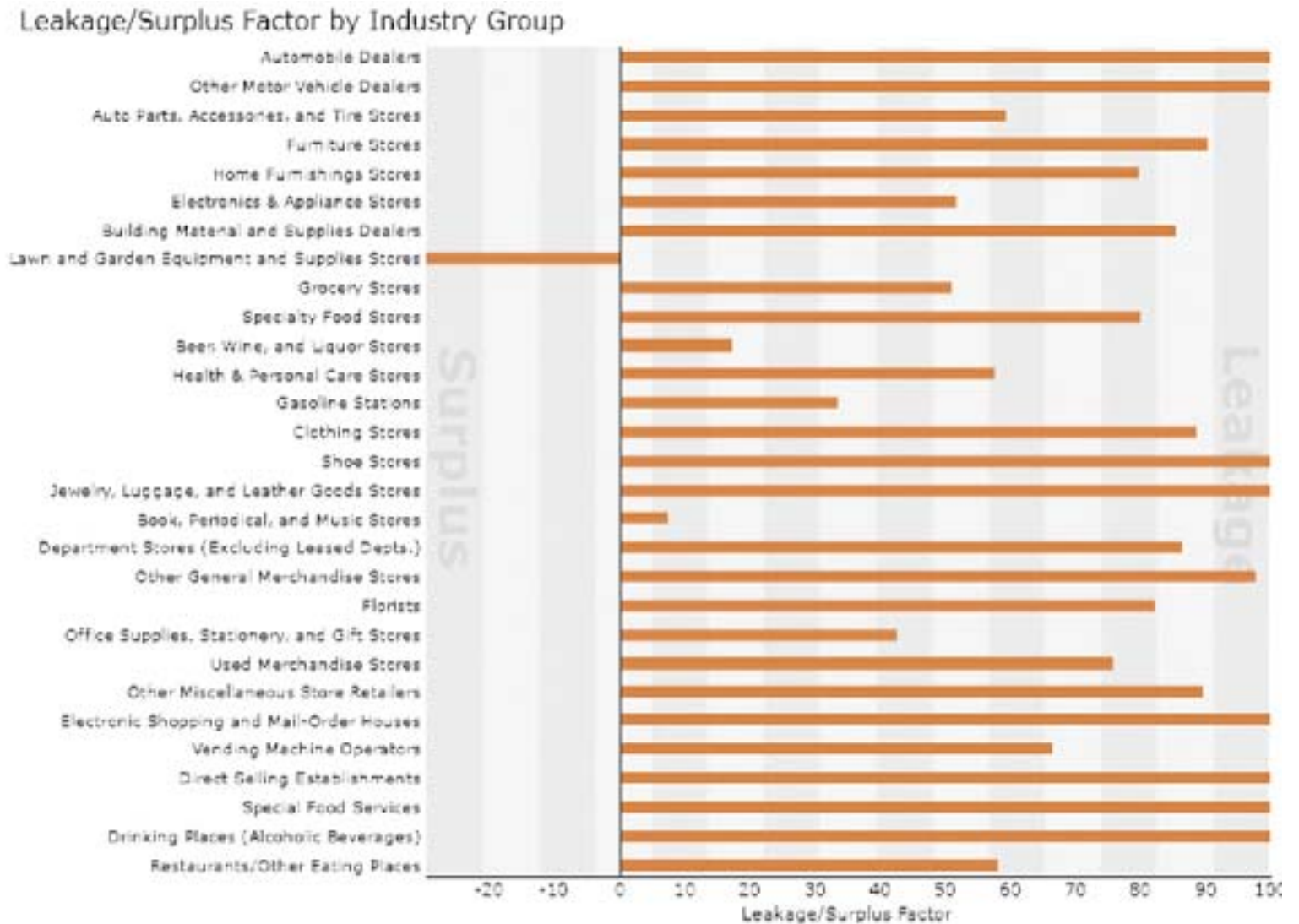
planning, public works and engineering services, parks and recreation, police and administrative services. Fee increases require a public hearing, and they passed unanimously at a recent Orinda City Council meeting. The fees, which take effect in July, include a new recreational facility charge and a 10 percent general plan update fee; the general plan has not been updated since 2007. Fees are being added for the new Wilder Art and Garden Center, scheduled to open in 2018.

The recreation facility preservation fee will be a three percent charge added to each parks and recreation transaction, except for sports facilities rentals and sports league registration. The funds raised, expected to be about \$40,000 annually, will be used exclusively for the maintenance and preservation of non-sports related recreation facilities.

City staff have also recommended that the city invest \$40,000 for a fee study, which the city council supported.

## Consultant identifies strategies for downtown

By Victor Ryerson



The above chart shows the percentage of business by residents of the Orinda zip code for each category that is done outside of Orinda. For instance, 60 percent of spending on food services and drinking places by Orindans is done outside of Orinda. Draft Findings: National Main Street Center/ City of Orinda

National Main Street Center presented 21 key learnings and observations about community attitudes for Orinda's existing features and needs, including that the restored Orinda Theater is a source of community pride; that a gourmet grocery store and more "health conscious" restaurants are downtown retail priorities; and that the primary draws to living in Orinda are its excellent schools and "semi-rural" character.

Dr. Michael Wagner, vice president of revitalization programs for the center, presented the the draft findings to the city council's Downtown Subcommittee, for feedback and public comment after meeting with members of the planning staff earlier in the day to discuss the report.

The members of the subcommittee, Mayor Eve Phillips and Council Member Inga Miller, listened to Wagner's hour-long Powerpoint presentation of the report on May 11, and expressed their desire for more information on health and wellness retail and entrepreneurship office opportunities. The final version of the report will be expanded and modified based upon input received from the Orinda community,

council subcommittee and full council, and other stakeholders, and will be presented at the June 20 council meeting.

The center is a unit of the nonprofit National Trust for Historic Preservation that studies the improvement of downtown areas at the request of cities. The Orinda council sought the center's assistance, as well as that of the Urban Land Institute, to identify how to bring change to the city's downtown. Orinda's downtown has remained largely unchanged for more than 30 years, and a call for change has become the major community development issue now that Orinda's road repairs are underway.

The center focuses its efforts on studying the economics of a city's downtown, and on how to implement change through what it calls transformation strategies. Its study seeks both quantitative and qualitative outcomes for questions of how to improve a city's downtown performance.

It developed its findings for Orinda by interviewing members of a wide range of governmental and other community organizations over a period of several months to identify what it calls "key learnings and observations" about the Orinda community.

It then matched these up with Orinda's demographic and psychographic characteristics (the latter being a measure of spending preferences based upon the community's specific cultural attitudes) to measure Orinda's retail performance. This analysis produced suggestions for strategies to improve the performance of the downtown economy, essentially by matching the availability of desired business activities to the level of community demand for those activities.

Notably, Wagner highlighted the observation that the approved retail and office development at 25A Orinda Way across from the library and community center "provides a strong example of new infill design and function with downtown." The prospective development "sets the precedent for future downtown design," he said.

Orinda's market characteristics suggest that there are potentially successful downtown retail opportunities, provided the strategies for pursuing them are a good fit, he explained.

The center identified "profound leakage" from Orinda (loss of retail business to other communities like Lafayette) in comparison to potential spending

levels because of the absence of certain retail activities, and the city could pursue these to improve its downtown retail performance. Its analysis suggests that improvement could come in the form of more convenience and retail services (restaurants, for example), entrepreneurship facilities (basically, small office spaces), and residential development on the Village side.

On the Crossroads side, health and wellness activities (which include medical offices, spas and beauty shops), and culinary activity (restaurants and retail food stores) could improve performance.

Wagner emphasized that it is important to have a standalone organization or dedicated staff person to manage downtown development, and recommended that the city initially embark on no more than two transformation strategies to be effective.

The full report of the center's findings is available on the city's website, www.cityoforinda.org, by following the link in the Orinda Outlook notice about the report. Public comment on the draft findings will be received up to and including the June 20 city council meeting.

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## Orinda Finance Director leaving; search for City Manager continues

By Sora O'Doherty



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Orinda's Finance Director Susan Mahoney is resigning, effective May 25.

Mahoney started as a consultant in July 2012, following the retirement of the city's previous finance director, and was hired on a permanent basis Jan. 1, 2013. Her department manages numerous funds, each operating like a separate business with its own separate set of books.

Interim City Manager Steve Salomon announced the news during the April 18 city council meeting. He expressed his appreciation of Ma-

honey's work, noting that she has been staying in a hotel three to four nights per week to do the job for four years. "I don't know how she does it," he said, but added that she has done a tremendous job. He said that she is taking another parttime position in a community much closer to her home. The plan is to bring the budget to the city council on May 2 and May 16 and at least have a proposed final budget. Staff is working on finding an interim finance director.

The executive search for a new city manager is also continuing. Bobby Peckham, president of Peckham & McKenny Executive Search, outlined for the city council in March plans for selecting Orinda's new city manager, including interviews by the city council, executive management team and community representatives. After the filing deadline June 5, Peckham will review resumes and set supplemental questions. She will narrow the field to 15 candidates and will report back to the city council on July 5. On July 14-15, the council will conduct interviews with each candidate. Each interview will consist of the same questions and will last one hour. On one of the days, yet to be determined, the candidates will also be interviewed by the city's executive management team and community stakeholders, who will be allowed to provide feedback on the pros and cons of each candidate but not a ranking by preference.

## Host family sought for 2017 visiting Czech student

By Sora O'Doherty



Marek Vybiral Photo provided

Marek Vybiral has won the competition to be the 16th Czech visiting student to attend Miramonte High School. Now he just needs to find a home-away-from-home.

Vybiral will arrive in Orinda in mid-August, with a little time to get acclimated before starting school. He will return to the Czech Republic at the beginning of February 2018.

Former mayor Bobbie Landers, one of the founders of the Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation, says that Vybiral is very happy that he will be in Orinda for the Year of the Czechs and plans to prepare a panel on past and present famous Czechs. He also plans

to do a "task sheet" for children and a short video recording telling the story of St. Wenceslaus.

The visiting student still needs a host family, ideally, one with a Miramonte student at home who could introduce Vybiral to the school community.

Vybiral loves swimming, skiing, cycling and hiking. He has played basketball but is currently on a badminton team in Tabor, Orinda's sister city in the Czech Republic. He has been a member of a scout troop and loves geography and history. Vybiral speaks English, French and Spanish, in addition to his native Czech. If you are interested and have a spare room for this 17-year-old, please contact Bobbie Landers at 925-254-8260 or bobbielanders@yahoo.com.

There are over 15 Orinda families who have hosted students from Tabor who would be happy to help with support, suggestions and recommendations. The Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation Board members also support the visiting students with excursions and events.

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## Fire Districts

### Public Meetings

#### Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors  
Wednesday, May 17, 6:30 p.m.  
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit [www.mofd.org](http://www.mofd.org)

#### ConFire Board of Directors

Tuesday, May 23, 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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# Inspiring outcome to an MOFD emergency call

By Nick Marnell



Robertson and firefighter Airola reunite in April. Photo provided

Reed Robertson left his friend's house in north Orinda the evening of Sept. 18, and as he biked home along La Espiral his bicycle hit a crack in the pavement, he rolled over the handlebars and he slammed into the street, banging his helmet, forehead and shoulder into the pavement. "I could feel something happening to my neck, and I knew it wasn't good," Robertson said.

He lay in the street, saw lights approaching and he tried to get out of the way of the traffic but he could not move. "My God, I hope I don't get run over right now," thought Robertson, who heard a neighbor frantically call 911.

Robertson could not move because the C4 and C5 vertebrae at the base of his neck had jammed together, and he lay paralyzed.

#### The Response

Capt. Adam Goodyear of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and his Station 43 engine company arrived at the scene at 8:55 p.m. "Right off the bat, we had a feeling this was significant," Goodyear said. "He was still, in the middle of the road, in an awkward position. He was tangled in his bike."

Less than 10 seconds later arrived the Station 44 ambulance. "When we see someone sprawled

out, in no pain, lying perfectly still and calm, it gets our attention," said firefighter-paramedic Jacob Airola, who immediately assessed a spinal cord injury.

"They kept poking me, but I felt nothing," Robertson said. "Where's your arm, they'd ask me, and I'd say it was by my side. But I couldn't locate it."

Keeping the body straight and immobile is critical with a spinal cord injury, and the firefighters stabilized Robertson's neck and placed him on a vacuum splint, a device that runs the entire length of the body and wraps around the patient. Onto a gurney they placed Robertson, and into the ambulance to John Muir Hospital.

"It was a somber ride," Airola said. Since Robertson never lost consciousness and was able to

speaking, Airola asked him about his day, his job, his love of biking. It was a subtle bit of investigative work, with Airola trying to ascertain if anything was going on in Robertson's life that might compromise his treatment.

#### The Rehab

On the way to the hospital, Robertson felt his right toe. He could not move it, but he felt it, and at that point he realized two things: that he was determined to relearn how to walk and that he would need a lot of therapy.

Robertson had surgery two days later. As he recovered, he lay strapped onto the hospital bed, screws and rods inserted into his neck, a ventilator down his throat. "It was like witnessing your own death," he said. "People are talking and crying, and you're just lying there and you can't move."

After five days in the intensive care unit, Robertson began his rehab. For four hours a day, Robertson pushed, kicked and pressed to the point of exhaustion, the toll on his body so severe so that he would pass out as his family and friends talked to him. In order to eat, he had to lean his head into his food, his arms of little use.

In October Robertson flew to Denver to Craig Hospital, one of the country's premier centers for spinal cord rehabilitation. Improvement came quickly. Robertson measured his progress as he wheeled into the elevator. At first, he pushed the floor buttons with his forehead, gradually working up to the use of his arms. On Nov. 2,

he abandoned his wheelchair completely.

"I was lucky," said Robertson, who experienced flashes of survivor's guilt as he regained use of his limbs while other patients made little or no progress. "I used my strong recovery to inspire the other people around me so that they could do better." He became the model of a patient who worked hard and came all the way back.

#### The Recovery

Robertson, 35, returned to Orinda in mid-December. He used a ride-booking service to continue his rehab and to work at his real estate business. On March 31, he regained his driver's license and he visited Station 44 to thank the firefighters. "I was surprised he walked into the station," Airola said. "I didn't think it was possible, but if anyone could do it, it would be Reed."

Only a medical professional might notice anything awry with Robertson today. He walks, he jogs, he rides his bicycle, he traveled to Macchu Pichu in April. He has trouble lifting his right arm above his shoulder, and he struggles to flex the fingers of his left hand, but otherwise he appears in excellent health.

"You can come back," Robertson said. "It's tricky, and it involves a lot of rehab and some luck. But, it can be done."

Robertson will speak at the May 17 MOFD board of directors meeting, 6:30 p.m. in the Mosaic Room at the Hacienda de las Flores in Moraga.

## Cal Fire Ready for Wildfire app now available

By Nick Marnell

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection released an app to help the public stay a step ahead of a potentially devastating fire season and offers those who download the app a chance to win a \$10,000 grand prize.

The Cal Fire Ready for Wildfire app includes checklists for taking charge of defensible space, assembling an emergency supply kit and creating an evacuation and family communication plan. One of its most popular features is notification of wildfire locations.

"You can set up a push notification for your home area or for areas where your loved ones live. Or, the location of a Tahoe cabin," said Mike Marcucci, Cal Fire battalion chief for Contra Costa County. "Use it for travel. If the Grapevine is closed because of a fire, it will

tell you."

Cal Fire maintains jurisdiction over State Responsibility Areas throughout California. Anything outside a city limit falls under a Cal Fire SRA. In addition, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District include mutual threat zones, where a fire will prompt automatic notification to Cal Fire.

"Areas like Wilder, Happy Valley, Sleepy Hollow," Marcucci said. "If there's a fire in those spots, we send a full-on response." The agency responds to Contra Costa County calls out of the Sunshine Station in Clayton.

"Fires don't observe jurisdictional boundaries," Marcucci said. "I stay up at night worrying about Lamorinda because there hasn't been a major fire there in years."

He's not the only one.

ConFire Chief Jeff Carman has repeatedly warned of the potential for a catastrophic fire in the Lafayette area, especially this year after a record-breaking rainy season that caused significant growth in annual grasses — fuel for incinerating wildfires.

"With the potentially challenging wildfire season ahead, you can never have too many tools to help you prepare," said MOFD Chief Stephen Healy, who praised the Cal Fire app for its timely alerts and accurate information.

The Ready for Wildfire app is available on Google Play and the Apple App Store. Those who download the app by May 21 will be eligible to win a \$10,000 grand prize that includes a \$7,500 home improvement gift certificate and \$2,500 cash. The Cal Fire website lists details and rules.

### Lafayette

## Implicit Bias workshop

Brien said that they expected different views would be expressed and that conversations might get emotional. She said, "These conversations are productive despite being uncomfortable at times because they bring to our awareness issues that we need to confront."

"Participants completed surveys, both before and following the presentation. As Chandler later commented, "For the most part our program was very well received with positive feedback."

City Manager Steven Falk said, "I'm just really proud of the progressive work our Police Department and Crime Prevention Commission are doing here. Rather than waiting for something bad to happen, they're trying to prevent it before it does."

Christensen said that the city invests in the training of its police officers. The entire police staff recently attended training at the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles on race and bias.

... continued from page A3

He is a strong believer in police and community working together at events such as this and also the Citizen's Police Academy, to foster trust and a sense of togetherness.

Christensen said the event was very successful. "In baseball parlance, the event was a home run. In fact, because of the comments from the audience during the event, the commission is likely to host a second community forum on the topic of racial profiling before the end of the year."

### Advertising

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## Letters to the Editor

### Did ULI do their homework about schools?

Dear Editor,  
As many now know, the Urban Land Institute's Technical Assistance Panel ("TAP") made a presentation to a joint session of the Orinda City Council and Planning Commission on April 11. One of the suggestions was that Orinda permit 240 new units of residential housing in the Village.

The TAP made this recommendation without even interviewing either the Orinda Union School District or the Acalanes Union High School District. Our schools were not considered to be "stakeholders" with respect to a proposal that would dramatically increase student enrollment in the schools. There was no discussion in the TAP presentation of the effect that the addition of 240 residential units might have on our schools.

The failure of the TAP to consider the effect on our schools of so many new residential units, and new residents, is troubling because the same TAP presentation listed, as the first asset Orinda has, our "outstanding schools." The extremely high quality of our schools was recently confirmed by published studies. The fact that the TAP overlooked our schools is even more troubling because this writer specifically asked TAP, in writing, well prior to the release of its report, to consider our schools.

Similarly, the TAP failed to explain how much worse our parking problems will be, and offered no suggestions to mitigate any of Orinda's many parking problems. One can only conclude that the TAP

either lacks the qualifications or objectivity to present the tradeoffs, drawbacks, and costs of any recommendations it may make in its final report.

Some Orindans feel it would be desirable to add housing downtown, so that empty-nesters could move there. But bear in mind that a couple moving out of a four or five bedroom home to a condo downtown will likely see their house purchased by a family with three or more children, adding to the overcrowding in our already crowded schools. And also bear in mind that there is no legal way to give priority to current Orinda residents when new housing units are offered for sale or lease downtown, should that ever come to pass.

Nick Waranoff  
Orinda

### Orinda should choose energy plan

Dear Editor,  
As a resident of Orinda, I am perplexed as to why the Orinda City Council refuses to consider community choice energy for the Orinda community. Moraga has approved MCE as has the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and other cities in Contra Costa.

Why the delay? What's stopping the council? What are their concerns? It's a no brainer in my opinion. It would be a shame for Orinda to be left behind in adopting clean energy while every other community moves forward.

Carolyn Knoll  
Orinda

## Snakes alive!

### ... continued from page A1

"I doubt it," says wildlife biologist Mike Cardwell. He admits that while this has been "an extraordinary winter" with "an abundant crop" of rattlesnakes it is too short a time to confirm a change. Baby rattlesnakes aren't born until August or September (the youngsters are pencil-sized), so they are pretty hard to find in spring. The rattlesnakes Cardwell has radio-tracked along the American River Parkway have been reproducing "like gangbusters" over the last four years, even amid drought conditions.

Cardwell says rattlesnakes produce only one brood per year and most females in his study have already been reproducing annually before this wet year. "They can't do better than that."

It's not just rattlesnakes that are thriving post-drought — there's been enough rain for lush vegetation, which feeds the insect population, which feeds lizards and rodents and ultimately the snakes. It is the food chain which is thriving, and "I suspect this (rattlesnake growth) is pretty stable," Cardwell says.

Lamorinda Weekly reporter Pippa Fisher recalls at least two local snake encounters she's had. Fisher and her dog ran past a rattlesnake two years ago while jogging the Briones Hills Loop Trail. "He didn't strike me, and my momentum carried me right past him," Fisher said, "but when I stopped and looked back he had reared up." She called to her collie mix dog, who was off leash and behind her.

Fortunately, he promptly obeyed and never spotted the snake. When her parents spotted a snake hiking in a similar area several years before that, her mother put an end to those hillside hikes, Fisher said. Because snakes are "so well camouflaged" Fisher says you must consider that every "stick"

along the trail could be a snake. "They're kind of neat to see," she said, "but I did recoil."

The CPCS website says rattlesnake season begins in spring and most bites occur between April and October. A rattlesnake bite can produce painful swelling, bruising, tissue destruction, bleeding problems and in rare cases can be fatal. More than 300 cases are reported to CPCS annually in California.

The CPCS's assistant medical director Cyrus Rangan says online that it is important to seek medical attention immediately if bitten. Do not apply ice or use a tourniquet or try to suck out the venom or slice the bite site. Do keep calm, do not run and keep the affected extremity elevated during transport to a medical facility.

Veterinarian Mona Miller says the same strategy applies if cats or dogs get bitten. She warns that not all general veterinarian prac-

tices stock antivenin because it is "very, very, very expensive." Most rattlesnake bites affecting dogs or cats require more than 10 hours of care, she said. Miller suggests calling your regular vet practice for guidance; they'll tell you whether to head to a vet hospital. Next call that hospital to insure they have antivenin in stock. If a human has suffered the bite, "paramedics will generally bandage, transport the patient to the emergency room, and provide pain management if needed, says Moraga-Orinda Fire District Battalion Chief Jerry Lee, but "paramedics in the State of California do not provide any type of 'anti-venom' for snakebites," he said.

Still, that shouldn't keep hikers from the area's beautiful trails.

"I've been with MOFD for over 13 years, and only recall one incident involving a snakebite," Lee said.

### Snakebite prevention for humans:

- Wear boots and long pants when hiking.
- Stay on trails, away from underbrush and tall weeds.
- Do not touch or disturb a snake, even if it appears dead.
- Carefully inspect logs or rocks before sitting on them.
- Never hike alone in remote areas. Always have someone with you who can assist in an emergency.
- Teach children to respect snakes and to leave them alone.

### Snakebite prevention for pets:

- Carry a cell phone with vet numbers pre-programmed.
- Know the location of the nearest vet emergency hospital
- Have a harness or towel to drag a large pet to the car if the pet cannot walk.
- Remove the pet's collar to mitigate swelling

### Online information:

[www.calpoison.org/about/docs/2016-03-10\\_CPCS\\_Rattlesnake\\_release\\_2016.pdf](http://www.calpoison.org/about/docs/2016-03-10_CPCS_Rattlesnake_release_2016.pdf)  
<https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=2804&inline=1>  
[www.yncrattlesnakes.com](http://www.yncrattlesnakes.com)  
[www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0202/RATTLE-SNAKESSSSS.html](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue0202/RATTLE-SNAKESSSSS.html)

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](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com) for submission guidelines. **Email:** [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com); Regular mail: Lamorinda Weekly, P.O.Box 6133, Moraga, CA 94570

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Orinda Hardware, Orinda – Bronze Winner

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Faz Bakery & Coffee Bar, Danville – Gold Winner  
panCoast pizza, Walnut Creek – Silver Winner  
Millie's Kitchen, Lafayette – Bronze Winner

### Office Building

Olympic Building, Walnut Creek – Gold Winner  
101 Ygnacio Plaza, Walnut Creek – Silver Winner  
Lamorinda Medical Office Building, Lafayette – Bronze Winner



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# Three local businesses given East Bay Leadership Council awards

The East Bay Leadership Council recently honored three Lamorinda businesses selected by their local Chambers of Commerce as Small Business of the Year at a luncheon held during National Small Business Week.

### Moraga

#### Penninis/Michael's Ristorante

Chef Patrick Vahey has owned Penninis Pizza and Pasta and Michaels Ristorante in Moraga Shopping Center for just over 10 years. Pennini's Pizza & Pasta was founded in 1998 by Michael Pennini, with the vision of becoming a true neighborhood destination. Vahey joined the Pennini's team in 2002 and helped to launch Moraga's Michael's Ristorante for fine dining. Vahey took over when Pennini retired.

The closest thing Moraga has to a "sports bar," Pennini's is a favorite Moraga hangout spot for Saint Mary's students and the community. Michaels continues to offer Italian-inspired cuisine prepared simply and properly, with fresh ingredients and "served with joy," the owner says. Vahey is known for generously supporting the community with donations and fundraisers.

#### Penninis Pizza & Pasta

- 1375 Moraga Way Suite D, Moraga, CA 94556
- 925.376.1515

#### Michael's Ristorante

- 1375 Moraga Way Suite A, Moraga, CA 94556
- 925.376.4300
- Penninis@sbcglobal.net

### Lafayette

#### Lamorinda Theatre Academy

If you visit Lamorinda Music on Lafayette Circle, you will find a door tucked in the back of the parking lot that leads upstairs to a space that most kids think is magical. Over the last five years Renee DeWeese and Rena Wilson have been teaching technique-based acting, singing and dancing, and cultivating confidence in their students.

Lamorinda Theatre Academy opened in Lafayette in 2012. DeWeese and Wilson are no strangers to the stage. DeWeese studied musical theatre at New York University's Tisch School of Arts. She has been teaching, directing, choreographing and running children's theater programs since 2004. She is a recipient of two Shellie awards and a Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle Award.

Wilson currently performs with "Beach Blanket Babylon." A two-time Bay Area Critics Circle Award winner, she received a Bachelor's degree in Vocal Performance from San Jose State University.

Kids of all ages attend programs, classes and camps throughout the year to become what DeWeese and Wilson call a "triple threat," which includes acting, singing and dancing.

- 83 Lafayette Cir, Lafayette, CA 94549
- (925) 385-0354
- www.lamorindatheatreacademy.com

### Orinda

#### Land Home Financial Services, Inc.

Land Home Financial Services Inc. is a private mortgage banker headquartered in Concord, comprised of six divisions, 80-plus branches nationwide and licensed in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

Land Home opened its Theatre Square location



Patrick Vahey

Photo provided



Rena Wilson receiving the award

Photo provided



Land Home Financial Services Inc. Photo Sophie Braccini

in early 2013 to much acclaim. Bridging the chasm between business and community, Land Home's lending model is driven by local relationships, community prosperity and disconnectedness.

Led by Angela Erves, Land Home Orinda annually hosts two chamber of commerce events, provides its space to the Orinda Action Day committee, and sponsors Orinda's July Fourth Parade, Action Day, and the NorCal Kids Triathlon.

With resources geared for home buyers, real estate agents, mortgage brokers and builders, its services span the spectrum of commercial and retail lending, offering specialized products to meet the unique needs of the community of Orinda.

"They have been very active in the community, and so welcoming to all chamber members!" says chamber board member Holly Henkel.

- 2 Orinda Theatre Square #146, Orinda, CA 94563
- (925) 885-6760
- www.lhfs.com or www.facebook.com/Land-HomeFinancialServices.

—Peggy Spear

# Lafayette to mark 70 years of bean dip and margaritas at El Charro restaurant

... continued from page A1

They added an outdoor patio and have worked to improve the restaurant while maintaining its charm and character.

This particular Tuesday night is representative of all 70 years worth of business. Bartender Jocelyn Monroy is a figure in constant motion. El Charro is her "second family," she says, estimating she makes between 200-300 margaritas a night. She has been working here for 15 years -- the first five fulltime while she went to school, but now that she works as a medical assistant at a cancer facility in Pleasant Hill, the owners give her two nights a week where she happily toils behind the bar.

Ron Adams moved to Lafayette four-and-a-half years ago and calls El Charro his favorite spot in town. "The food is good and everyone who works here is super nice. The prices and the atmosphere are really good. It's laid back." He says he comes here about two to three times per week.

At the other end of the bar, a customer who declined to be named said that he's been coming at least twice a week to El Charro for 50 years. His dad was in the liquor business and claimed that the restaurant was one of his

best clients. The Acalanes grad remembers the happy hour that included free bean dip by the pay phone next to the bar. His favorite part of the restaurant? "The parking lot! There's always room for one more car...and the bean dip."

Asked what the secret is for lasting so long in a business where restaurants tend to come and go, Dave Shields responds, "We strive to create the perfect place for friends and family to meet and eat. Everything we do has to answer the question: What does it look like to the customer?"

Laura added, "We want our customers to feel welcome, like we've invited them into our home." She pointed out that they are now serving the third and fourth generation of families in the restaurant.

In 1974, Garcia loaned money to Shield's brother Jim -- an employee in the restaurant at that time -- in order to sell him the business. That same year Laura was hired as the first female hostess. Dave worked for his brother until buying the restaurant from him in 1993. The Garcia family still owns the land and has control of the outside of the building. "When we took over the busi-

ness we had 22 employees," said Dave. "Now we have 75!" When Dave worked for his brother he would open in the morning, work as a prep cook for lunch, run the bar at night, close the restaurant and do janitorial work. "I always remember where I came from and try to treat my employees well," he said.

It truly is a family business. One of Dave's favorite memories is of his mom and dad working for them. "My father tended bar and my mom served as a hostess for a 10-year span." The Shields also fondly remember their wedding: "After the ceremony at Hacienda de las Flores the wedding party came to El Charro afterwards for dinner and dancing," recalled Laura.

When Dave was diagnosed with Parkinson's Disease about four years ago, Laura took a more active roll in the restaurant after having the luxury of staying at home and helping to raise a grandson. Asked what the future holds, she says, "I'll hang in there as long I can, but when the time comes I'll probably sell the business to one or more of my employees."

We imagine Frank Garcia would applaud the move.

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# Lamorinda is becoming HeartSafe

By Cathy Dausman



Members of Moraga Movers club practice CPR during a recent meeting at Saint Mary's College Photo Cathy Dausman

There's a brand-new "Best" in Lamorinda — that of best possible chance of survival for someone experiencing out-of-hospital cardiac arrest.

Moraga, Lafayette and Orinda are becoming HeartSafe communities, joining HeartSafe programs established in Alamo, Brentwood, Clayton, Concord, Danville, El Cerrito, Kensington and San Ramon.

"It's all about promoting the chain of survival," says Lamorinda Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Dennis Rein. Rein says out-of-hospital cardiac events are the leading causes of death nationwide and 90 per cent of victims will die without early intervention. But five things — early 911 access, early cardio pulmonary resuscitation, early defibrillation, early advanced life support and integrated post-cardiac care — greatly increase a victim's odds of survival.

"The first three are all things that we can do," he said. Response time is critical, says Rein "even with the best trained emergency responders," because the survival odds decrease 10 percent for every minute the onset of advanced life support is delayed.

Local support for the program comes from Contra Costa County Fire Protection District, Contra Costa County Emergency Medical

Services, Moraga-Orinda Fire District and RESCUE ONE Foundation.

Learning CPR and having access to AEDs is critical. Lamorinda currently has nearly 90 AEDs in public places; their exact locations can be found on PulsePoint mobile app.

The big goal for Lamorinda is to teach residents to recognize the signs and symptoms of a heart attack and have them call 911 instead of driving to the hospital, says Lisa Vajgrt-Smith, with CCC EMS. Rein says even hands-only CPR increases the survivability rate yet it can be learned in only 45 minutes. He hopes to train 1,000 Lamorinda residents this year, and the program is off to a good start. Thirty Lamorindans took CPR training through a Parks and Recreation Department-sponsored class in Moraga last month. Lafayette and Orinda BART passengers got fliers May 1 (May is Stroke Awareness Month). Fifty-two MOFD Open House attendees learned hands-only CPR in Orinda earlier this month, and approximately 130 Moragans had CPR training during a recent meeting on the Saint Mary's College campus.

Countywide nearly 30,000 people have been CPR trained since January, 2012. Nationwide the average of CPR trained bystanders is

approximately 30 percent; already it is 42 percent throughout Contra Costa County and "closer to 80 percent" in HeartSafe communities. "We're working on improving those numbers," said Vajgrt-Smith.

Lafayette

## Tree Controversy

... continued from page A2

Also at the meeting was PG&E Director Angus Coyle, who reassured residents that there would be no rush to action. He said he wanted to continue the dialog and that clearly there was outreach work to be done with the public. However, he made the point that PG&E is ultimately responsible for safety and that it can't compromise on that.

Mayor Mike Anderson said that there was clearly a need for all residents to have easy access to talk to PG&E before the utility comes back to a future city council meeting.

Following the meeting, Lafayette resident Michael Dawson, who started the organization Save Lafayette Trees with a petition which now has close to 2,000 signatures, commented that he thought the meeting went well because it was the first time people were able to give input.

He said the variety of concerns were clearly expressed, ranging from lack of safety valves to lack of public disclosure, and evaluation of the California Environmental Quality Act, were too numerous to ignore. "It was particularly heartening to hear that the city council, and mayor in particular, are now questioning PG&E's rush to agreement," he said. "We hope this opens the door to questioning the validity of the agreement and ultimately recalling it."

If nothing else the strong emotions expressed by residents at the meeting prompted PG&E to more dialog and to initiate the series of conversation opportunities at the

reservoir and along the trail, where they were handing out informational brochures and were answering general questions.

When asked about possible alternative solutions, PG&E spokesperson Jeff Smith said, "We look forward to discussing the concerns the community has raised. We are responsible for ensuring the public is safe, and first responders have the access they need, and we can't compromise on public safety. The outcome of those discussions is still to be determined." He added that currently the exact timing has not been set. He said, "The earliest would be mid-June but that is not at all definitive."

Lafayette resident Gina Dawson, who stresses that while the representatives she has spoken to at PG&E have been very polite and helpful, says that she questions the delay of potentially only a couple of weeks in starting.

"It signals to me that PG&E did not take into consideration comments expressed at Monday's council meeting regarding the impact of removing trees in June due to prime nesting season, among other environmental concerns. It makes me wonder if (the) community outreach work Angus Coyle referred to is really about getting agreements from residents who have trees targeted to be removed in place by mid-June. My opinion on that? Just say no."

It is not going out on a limb to say that Lafayette will be hearing more about the trees.

For more information:

- www.heartsafe-community.org/
- www.pulsepoint.org/
- http://cchealth.org/ems/heartsafe.php
- www.mofd.org/about/rescueone
- www.heart.org/HEARTORG

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## All-Access-Playground is a sure thing

**... continued from page A1**

The list of donors is long and includes some big contributors such as all the area Rotary clubs, the Moraga Valley Kiwanis, the Orinda Community Foundation, the Lafayette Community Foundation, and some smaller but nonetheless meaningful contributors such as the Lafayette Youth Council, as well as middle school and high school kids contributing to help other kids.

Lafayette resident Steve Parlatt, whose disabled son is involved in a lot of structured sports activities available in the larger Lamorinda community, says he is very excited to see the opening of a recreation option for free and unplanned fun. He notes that the reaction of other kids to his son who has very different abilities has always been good and he looks forward to a space where able as well as disabled children can interact. Parlatt who has been a constant supporter of the Moraga project, believes that the new park's design is intelligent and adapted.

Ingram hopes to take the bid documents to award the construction work to the council in June. The town has committed close to \$200,000 to study and grade the site that the new playground will occupy. The money comes from development fees earmarked for recreation and Ingram does not think that other financial challenges in town would impact that project. Ingram anticipates breaking ground after the Fourth of July celebrations, with a ribbon cutting in October.

Moraga Rotary will continue to raise funds until June in an attempt to get to \$300,000 to accommodate the town's wish for an upgraded fence, any potential cost overruns and to possibly aid the town for some part of the grading and preparation costs for the site.



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## Lafayette Sculpture to roundabout

**... continued from page A2**

Addressing concerns from council members regarding traffic, and safety should some high-spirited youth attempt to climb it, Mudgett said that there would be several boulders around the structure, protecting both it and motorists from collision. Weighing approximately 3,000 pounds, he pointed out it will be secure and strong.













Council Member Mark Mitchell commented, "The more I see it, the more I like it." However the view was not shared by fellow Council Member Ivor Sampson, who did not agree that it fit with Lafayette and said he would prefer additional trees instead.

Mudgett said he would have the pedestal installed in August, with the sculpture itself installed in November and lighting completed by the end of the year.

From four finalists selected out of the original proposals, in March the PAC narrowed the field down to Mudgett's "Resolve" and Gale Wagner's "Pals: Chameleon and Dragonfly." The public was invited to weigh in with comments through the city's roundabout art webpage and a display at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center.













The PAC, after examining the 121 public comments and keeping in mind such issues as maintenance decided "Resolve" best fit the criteria.

The council voted four against one for the art piece, with Samson against.

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# ~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

## California Shakespeare Theater shakes up 'As You Like It'

By Sophie Braccini



Jessika D. Williams (Rosalind), Maryssa Wanlass (Celia), and director Desdemona Chiang. Photos by den

New California Shakespeare Theater director Eric Ting has defined an artistic line guiding the East Bay Shakespearean company toward contemporary social relevance, and better accessibility to the great classic work.

His choice of Desdemona Chiang to direct the opening season with "As You Like It" is therefore logical, since Chiang says that for her, theater is a political gesture. She brings a transposed vision of Shakespeare's comedy to a setting relevant to our time, redefines gender roles, and lets the actors slightly dust off the language. The ambitious but respectful production promises to be a highlight of East Bay theater this spring.

Chiang carries with grace a first name that sounds like predestination: it is after Othello's wife Desdemona that she was named. She confesses that it was not an easy name for a little girl

and explains how at nine years of age she checked Othello in her school's library to understand who her namesake was. "I opened the first page and reading the words, it looked like English, but I could not understand a thing," she recalls. She later discovered the great English writer's poetry and relevance, but from this initial frustration she drew a desire to break the language barrier and make Shakespeare understandable and accessible to many.

"Shakespeare was a populist," says Chiang. "He was commissioned by the Queen but his work is activating for the people." So her objective is to extract the central theme of the play and make it meaningful to a 21st Century audience.

"As You Like It" is a pastoral play where banished, formerly privileged youth experiment with new relationships and personae.

Chiang understands it as a play about community. "Everyone who goes to Arden is banished, they come there under duress, yet at the end of the play everyone gets married." She says that the story shows how to find love and connection out of tragedy.

In the 17th century setting the two opposing worlds are the Court, the place of civilization and intrigues, opposed to Arden, the romanticized countryside, realm of sheep and shepherds, where everything is more natural and honest. Chiang turned the setting completely on its head. For her the Court is a place of wealth, and today that means real estate. "Napa Valley, wine country, that's wealth, that's leisure, that's Court," she says. Meanwhile, the renegades of today dwell in the margins of the industrialized world, in abandoned warehouses. That's where she placed those who were chased from their life of leisure and learned to survive.

Chiang explains that she also enjoyed exploring with the actors the gender roles in the play. Rosalind is one of the most endearing feminine Shakespearean characters for our time. She is a resourceful young woman who ventures in the unknown and takes a gender disguise to transcend societal rules. In the play, Rosalind's disguise as a boy is interpreted as a constraint that she has to endure, but Chiang wants to show that in fact it is freeing for the young woman, an opportunity to explore new territories and discover the masculine part in her that was always there. The director highlights that the play functions on identity changes and people exploring alternatives ways of being.

Jessica Williams plays Rosalind. She trained at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama and the Interlochen Arts Academy, has performed on B.B.C., in England and the East Coast as a Shakespearean actress among other deeds. It is her CalShakes debut. James Carpenter who was a magnificent Iago in last season's "Othello," plays Rosalind's father and uncle. Maryssa Wanlass plays Celia, Patrick Russell is Orlando, Craig Marker is Oliver. They are just a few members of the very strong cast chosen by Chiang.

Ting said in a press release that the play's theme of personal exploration is very emblematic of the Bay Area, "In my time here, I've been struck by how this community is a beacon for those seeking to redefine themselves — for those seeking to expand their sense of 'family.'"

The play opens the 2017 season of CalShakes at the Bruns

Theater in Orinda. It begins with previews on May 24 and opening night is May 27. The play will run

until June 18. Tickets and more information are available at [www.calshakes.org](http://www.calshakes.org).

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Jomar Tagatac (Jacques) listens to director Desdemona Chiang.

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## Orinda neurologist's new book of poetry gives voice to vets

By Kara Navolio



Dawn McGuire

Photo by Sonia Menenberg

Orinda poet Dr. Dawn McGuire has just launched her fourth book of poetry, inspired by her work as a neurologist with veterans returning from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

McGuire's unique perspective stems from the work she does at her free clinic with veterans to treat their neurological symptoms like phantom limb pain, head injuries and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. But in order to treat these men and women returning from war, she is compelled to understand the psychology of the patients and how that is also impacting their brain. She spends a lot of time with her patients to develop trust and find a new language that can build a connection.

"If I can be part of restoring their sense of agency, then that is a cherished success," says McGuire.

The book, "American Dream with Exit Wound," gives voice to the post 9/11 vets. "I don't pretend that I can feel what they feel or experience their inner life, but I can create an empathic connection through the poems," explains McGuire. "I see real pain. Not all of it stems from the body, but it acts out through the body. Some of the poems are written from the perspective of family members and their pain as well."

She says that the U.S. does a lot of training to get soldiers ready for war. "They go to war and make sacrifices – morally, physically, psychologically — then we expect them to automatically reassemble when they return. We have no boot camp to retrain them to be who they were before the left." The result can be depression and social isolation.

A neurologist since 1991, McGuire conducts research on brain trauma at the Neuroscience Institute at the Morehouse School of Medicine. She began her free clinic in 1990 helping AIDS patients with neuro-

logical problems.

She has been writing poetry since the age of 15. "One of the things I fell in love with medicine is the beautiful language. The Greek and Latin roots in medicine feel like you are touching history," says McGuire.

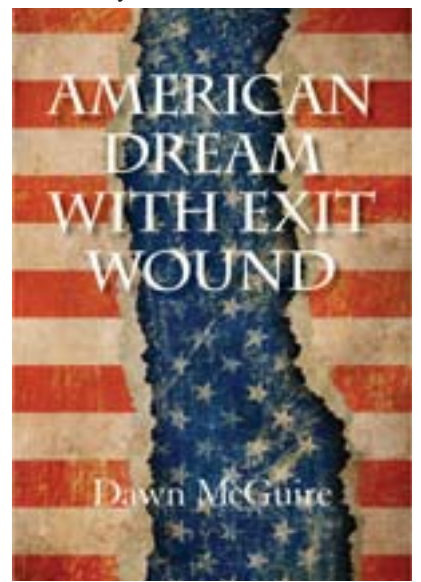
McGuire's previous book of poetry "The Aphasia Café," published in 2012, deals with her response to patients who have experienced damage to the part of the brain that controls language, often due to strokes. It won the 2013 Indie Book Award.

Aspects of the new book also deal with loss of language, but in the case with vets, it's often due to severe physical and emotional pain.

McGuire, who herself has lost family and friends in war, bases her practice on slowly building a safe place for patients to connect so she can really help them, not just with their neurological symptoms but with their inner wounds, too.

In writing this book of poetry, she expressed, "I hope people will arise more curiosity and concern for what our vets go through." She poses questions like, What if we were able to change the experience for returning vets? What if they didn't have to wait three months to see a VA doctor? What if we did proper re-assimilation? What if we gave proper medically-assisted detox from pain killers? Aren't these things also worth fighting for?

McGuire will be reading from her book at the Poetry Flash Series at 7:30 p.m. on May 18 at Moe's Books in Berkeley.



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## Short Docs festival touches hearts and minds

By Sophie Braccini



Middle school filmmakers Zachary Lara and Keith Johnson stand with Matt Chaney, their Short Doc subject, along with their moms. Photo Christy Mack

The second edition of the Lamorinda Short Docs festival and competition was a vibrant testimony of the budding local visual talents the region holds.

In a time when images and videos are favorite media, this celebration is welcomed. With participants from kindergarten to adults, and documentaries from the most simple to the most polished, the festival showcased amusing, beautiful, meaningful, surprising and informative short films made and produced by students and amateur adults. It could have attracted a wider audience.

Lamorinda Arts Council started the video competition last year with LAC Meredith Frieman as the main driver. This year 16 short docs were in competition in four categories: elementary school, middle school, high school and adults. It was judged by cable network producer Greg Flucher, T.V. producer Joel Patterson, writer, filmmaker and actor Julie Rubio and editor, animator and colorist David Santamaria.

In attendance at the Lafayette library on May 7 were mostly the parents and friends of the filmmakers, but the presentation would have deserved a wider audience, as the spectators were charmed by these unique creations.

The elementary school group

backgrounds, getting together to thrive and test their limits. The movie included some drone footage of the Moraga Skate Park, slow motion, and skating visuals nicely weaved with interviews.

The audience favorite was also part of that category. Movies are judged by a group of professionals in each category, and LAC also allows the audience to choose one school-age favorite after all the films have been viewed. Zachary Lara and Keith Johnson won this prize for their movie "Matt: A Story of Hope and Inspiration," about Matt Chaney, who is suffering from the highly debilitating condition ALS. The film is a touching portrait, never too dramatic and even humorous at times.

"Behind The Scenes of Campolindo's 'Beauty and The Beast'" by Frenel Franciso won the high school category, an excellent film that was able to convey the atmosphere of camaraderie and all the hard work that needs to happen to put together a sophisticated high school musical.

The adult category entries were all bordering on professional level videography. "Sunjams" was an all-music film presenting the local nonprofit that raises money to fund musical education in less fortunate schools; "Pack 464" told the unique story of the Pinewood Derby, a cub scout activity and competition where boys build small wood cars and race them; "Getting It Right" presented, in a very aesthetic and interesting portrayal of Steve Benjamins, who restores and tunes pianos in Lafayette; and the winner was Réka Pigniczky's "Wild Thing," the sculpture that was created by elementary school children in Orinda and is now on display at the library plaza.

Local filmmaker and judge Rubio expressed her enthusiasm at the quality of the videos that were presented and rejoiced that LAC created this competition to nurture and recognize these abilities in young filmmakers. LAC plans to hold the competition again next year.



# 2017 SUMMER CAMPS/Classes

Alphabetical listing of all 50 camps and classes

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www.ArtemisRowingClub.org  
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www.aspennetwork.net  
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www.avid4.com  
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### Berkeley Rep School of Theatre

www.berkeleyrep.org/summerintensive  
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### Camp Kefli

www.temple-isaiah.org/kefli  
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### Camp Orinda

www.cityoforinda.org  
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### Castle Tales

www.cityoforinda.org  
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www.LafayetteRec.org  
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### Lafayette United Methodist Church Camp

www.thelumc.org  
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- June 26<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> (Intermediate\* 10:30am - 1:30pm)
- July 10<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> (Intermediate\* 10:30am - 1:30pm)
- July 17<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> (Intermediate\* 10:30am - 1:30pm)
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Michael Adler

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SUMMER CAMPS and Classes 2017



# 2017 SUMMER CAMPS/Classes

Alphabetical listing of all 50 camps and classes

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### STEM Workshop Series

www.spectrumofscience.com (925) 820-2415  
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### Summer ART Camp: Planet Earth

www.theart-room.com (925) 299-1515  
Artists can experience sketching, drawing, pastels, canvas painting, silk painting, ceramics, and creating collaborative artwork.

### Summer Bridge Math

www.lorietutors.squarespace.com  
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### Summer Shakespeare Conservatories

www.calshakes.org/conservatory (510) 809-3293  
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### Summer Tennis Camp – St. Mary’s College

www.smctenniscamps.com  
Morning sessions 9 a.m. to noon for boys and girls ages 8-15 to address technical, tactical, and fitness aspect of the game.

### The Crucible Youth Summer Camps

www.thecrucible.org/youth-camps/ (510) 444-0919  
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### The Randy Bennett High Potential Camp

www.smcmenbasketballcamps.com  
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www.lafayettewritingstudio.com (925) 385-0211  
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### Town Hall Education Summer Camps & Classes

www.TownHallTheatre.com  
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### Willow Spring Church

www.willowsspringchurch.com (925) 376-3550  
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Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church



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**June 19-23**

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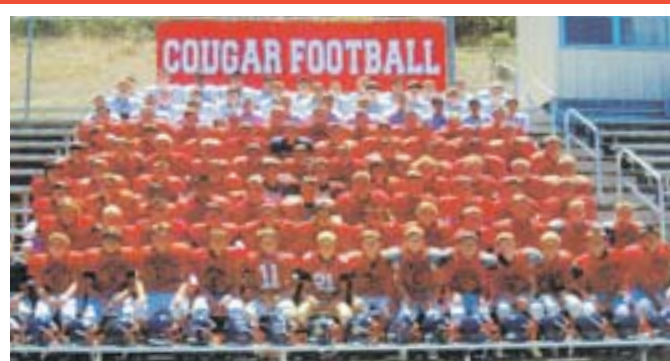
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CELEBRATING 45 YEARS



## LL&LC celebrates Boomark Contest winners

Submitted by Kay Pekrul



Back row, from left, Ava Curletto (Stanley), Andreyra Cox (Stanley), Isabella Bartos (Stanley), Chloe Dawkins (Stanley), Ethan Del Rosario (Stanley), Carrie Zhang (Burton Valley), Sofia Bartos (Burton Valley), Dagny Bradford-Urban (Stanley), K. Yasumura (Saklan); front row, from left, Cooper Banwart (Burton Valley); Stella Byrne (Springhill); Ella DelRosario (Springhill); Gavin Wang (St. Perpetua); Avery Marshall (Happy Valley); Tamia Grosser (Lafayette)

More than 700 young artists participated in the annual Friends of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center's Bookmark Contest. Each winner received a gift certificate to Bel & Bunna's or a gift certificate to the LL&LC's Friends Corner Book Shop. In

addition Anthony Ruiz of FastFrame in Lafayette is framing each student's bookmark free of charge. Mr. Ruiz also frames the winners' artwork for display in the Library and in the Friends Corner Book Shop.

## Assistance League of Diablo Valley Receives Proclamation of Achievement from Board of Supervisors

Submitted by Betty Miller



Assistance League of Diablo Valley President Lesley Salo receives Proclamation of Achievement from Contra Costa County Supervisor Karen Mitchoff much to the delight of Vice President Philanthropic Programs Susan Angle, as well as Supervisors Federal D. Glover, Diane Burgis, Candace Anderson and John M. Gioia.

Celebrating its 50th Anniversary this year, Assistance League of Diablo Valley is a nonprofit, member volunteer organization dedicated to improving lives in our community through hands-on programs. To that end, on May 2, the Contra Costa Board of Supervisors awarded Assistance League of Diablo Valley a framed Certificate of Proclamation that specified the organization's philanthropic programs. Vice Chair Karen Mitchoff read the names of the programs aloud to emphasize their support of infants, children, families, adults and seniors alike.

Assistance League of Diablo Valley President Lesley Salo said that all programs are needs-based and operate on a spartan budget, which accounts for Operation School Bell's ability to provide new clothing and shoes for 4,500 schoolchildren in 2016-2017. Likewise, Scholarships will award

\$170,000 in support of high school and college students, foster youth and adults at the May regular meeting. Salo added that several of the chapter's philanthropic programs address children's literacy, while its TeleCare program reaches out to the homebound.

Supervisor Mitchoff concluded the presentation by encouraging members of the community to shop at the organization's primary fundraiser, Assistance League Way Side Inn Thrift Shop, located at 3521 Golden Gate Way, in Lafayette, where they will find wonderful bargains while supporting the chapter's programs.

To learn more about Assistance League of Diablo Valley and its primary fundraiser, the Way Side Inn Thrift Shop, please visit this website: [diablovalley.assistanceleague.org](http://diablovalley.assistanceleague.org).

## Lafayette Middle School Student stars in Berkeley Playhouse Youth Production

Submitted by Jenny Berten



Lafayette resident Sarah Berten, a Stanley Middle School seventh grader, recently performed the lead role of Hope Cladwell in Berkeley Playhouse's Teen Stage musical theater production of Tony Award-winning "Urinetown." Hope is the innocent then rebellious daughter of corporate manager Caldwell B. Cladwell. The play was performed at the historic Julia Morgan Theater.

This fall, Sarah looks forward to performing with Ohana Arts in "Peace On Your Wings," the story of Sadako Sasaki, which will perform in San Jose and Seattle.

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](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com) with the subject header In Service to the Community.

Submit stories to  
[storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com)

## NCL honors graduating seniors

Submitted by Lily Wescott



Bottom row from left, Amanda Dunning, Angelique Axelrode, Raquel Wescott, Kimberly Tang, Megan Miller; Second row from left, Chloe McCullough, Katherine Cane, Annie Varellas, Jaqueline Nichols, Kai Otsmaa, Annika Walker; Back row from left, Madison Alvarado, Becca Buck, Emma Godfrey, Sarah Fass, Mia Grillo, Lauren Williams, Kaitlin Clever, Anne Shepherd, Carlie Crumbaugh, Heidi Sanford, Molly Bobrovitch.

The Lamorinda Chapter of the National Charity League, Inc. held its Senior Recognition on March 5, 2017 at the Claremont Resort and Spa in Berkeley. Twenty Two seniors from the graduating class of 2017 were honored for their dedication to philanthropic service and cultural enrichment. Over the past six years, these seniors have

graciously volunteered over 4,300 hours of community service to organizations in need of assistance.

The NCL Mission Statement is: To foster mother-daughter relationships in a philanthropic organization committed to community service, leadership development, and cultural experiences.

## 16th annual Wildlife Festival hosts record number of visitors

Submitted by Kathy Barrett



Steve Gentry, at right, looks on as children sample honey.

Photo Wade Barrett

More than 1,000 people of all ages, hundreds more than last year, streamed into the Wildlife Festival at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area on Sunday April 23 to celebrate Earth Day.

Soon children were catching water boatman bugs in the pond with dip nets, while others were feeding grass to the friendly goats. Gorgeous parrots from the Contra Costa Avian Society were riding on shoulders, and families were cooking biscuits in solar ovens with Wendy Helms and The Trust in Education Institute. The splendid weather and mesmerizing drumming and singing by Chester Miner and the Native American Cherokee Elders contributed to the atmosphere of fun and exploration.

For 16 years the Friends of the WR Nature Area have invited the community to

enjoy the wisdom of local environmental groups like Friends of Orinda Creeks, Parents for a Safer Environment, and Sustainable Contra Costa, and celebrate Earth Day. Young artists paint ceramic tiles for the entrance bench, make nature crafts and wear the beautiful tattoos by Coyote Brush Studios and face paintings by the Orinda Juniors. Joan Morris invited visitors to ask questions about wildlife and had them observe the structures of several abandoned bird nests. Cricket, of Raw Soap, offered samples of her organic olive oil soaps, and groups of curious children were asking Orinda Bee Man, Steve Gentry, a million questions.

That was just some of the fun activities offered at the festival. For more details about the Friends visit its website [www.fwrna.org](http://www.fwrna.org).



Jack Howell describes how solar cookers are used in Afghanistan

## 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](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com), and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.



# 'Truman' examines death with delicateness and elegance

By Sophie Braccini



Yes, "Truman" talks about death in the western world in the 21st century, and about emotional responses when confronted with the end of life. The topic is heavy, but director Cesc Gay has created a human and uplifting story out of tragedy, bittersweet, tender and touching. The film talks about our relationship to death, how it strips us of all pretenses, but not of our humanity and of what lies at its core: love.

Tomás is Argentinian and lives in Canada. One early morning we see him kiss his family goodbye and fly to Spain where he pays an unexpected visit to his friend Julián. Both men are middle aged, they have a deep bond from their early years in Buenos Aires, and it is clear that they have not seen each other for a long time. Little by little the spectator understands that Julián is very sick and that Tomás has come for a last visit.

The movie follows the two friends during the few days they are spending together in Madrid where

Julián now lives and works as an actor.

Julián also has a big good old dog, Truman. What will become of him? The two men meet different people whose reactions to Julián spell a whole gamut of behaviors. There are those, like his cousin, who refuse to see him abandon the fight and would want him to give one more chance to an ultimate round of chemo. The young woman is all anger and denial, she does not want to accept what is going on, she feels betrayed and can't deal with the loss.

There are the friends who avoid Julián, those who pretend to care and cast him away without a second thought, and the unexpected former foe who offers compassion with grace.

The movie says a lot about how males deal with such overwhelming emotions. Julián's son for example is surprisingly touching and restrained.

The movie first and foremost

contrasts the two men. Tomás, who cannot and does not want to cry and let his emotions out, and Julián who has already been through the different phases of denial and anger and is now accepting, if not anticipating, the inevitable. He is naked and pure in front of his demise, like Vivian Bearing is at the end of the play "WIT" by Margaret Edson. All has been taken away from him, his health, his job, his future, he is even giving away Truman, and all is left is an acceptance, a love, a pure flame. That flame burns those who are afraid of it, it ingratiates those who can face it and simply recognize the dying man for who he is.

The movie features two remarkable actors Ricardo Darin (Julián) and Javier Cámara (Tomás). "Truman" won five Goyas (Spanish Oscars) when it came out.

"Truman" is part of the international film showcase and will play for a week at the Orinda theater starting on May 19. More information at lamorindatheatres.com.

# Our First 100 Days: Lessons from the Lamorinda Community Conversations

Submitted by Maura Wolf



Photo provided

While the rest of the country and world might be looking at Trump's First 100 days, a local group of Lamorinda residents has been looking back on our own First 100 days of the new administration.

Since the campaign season and election that illuminated the divisive nature of politics in our country, a small group of local citizens has been organizing and hosting Community Conversations, in conjunction with Saint Mary's College.

The effort was started when Maura Wolf and Edy Schwartz, both Moraga residents, decided that there was a need for an open-to-all, face-to-face convening.

They structured the Community Conversations so that people could be listened to – not debated. Attendees were invited to share what they were thinking and feeling, and eventually discuss with other people who had similar concerns. It wasn't a place for action and mobilization, but it was a place in which people were encouraged to gain clarity about how they might take action with other local or national groups. Saint Mary's College agreed to host the series.

Since the first convening in December, five Community Conversations have been hosted each month, with the last one of the academic year being hosted at the

Soda Center at Saint Mary's College in late April. Topics at these gatherings ranged from discussions about crossing divides, to health care, the environment, bias and privilege in the schools, cultivating women's power, sanctuary cities, finding well-being in a turbulent time and many others.

At each one, deep listening and creating thinking were emphasized as critical skills for our current community and political environment. And an intergenerational group was encouraged to attend. This aspect offered new bridges for connection and new energy to the civic conversations. Over the six months the meetings involved over 160 Lamorinda residents. On any given Saturday the group included some mix of middle school, high school and college students, young parents, older residents and seniors.

Teresa Onoda, mayor of Moraga, noted, "Who does not benefit from learning how to be an active listener especially when you make decisions that affect peoples lives? Jeanette Fritzy (Moraga Town Council), Bob Priebe (Moraga Town Manager) and I have attended most if not all of the Community Conversations at SMC and appreciate that we have a local institution that is helping make Moraga lead-

ers more effective. This is part of how Saint Mary's College and the town are becoming comfortable dance partners."

While the series has concluded for now, the Leadership Center at Saint Mary's College is open to community groups that want to talk

about conversations for the future. You can learn more about the effort or contact the Leadership Center here: <http://smcleadershipblog.org/2017/04/towards-new-way-civic-engagement-small-town-america/>.

# Wagner Ranch Elementary Presents 'Alice in Wonderland JR'

Submitted by Laurie Schmitt



Cast photos provided

Travel down the rabbit hole and join Alice, one of literature's most beloved heroines, in her madcap adventures as Wagner Ranch Elementary presents "Alice in Wonderland JR" the first week in June.

The ever-curious Alice begins her journey innocently enough as she chases the White Rabbit and meets, not one but, three Cheshire Cats. Her adventures become increasingly stranger as she races the Dodo Bird, gets tied up with Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, meets sassy Flowers, celebrates an Unbirthday Party with the Mad Hatter, raps with a bubble-blowing Caterpillar and beats the Queen of Hearts at her own game!

"Alice in Wonderland JR.," based on the classic Disney story, is sure to be fun for the whole family. Wagner Ranch's fourth- and fifth-grade actors have been rehearsing for months to bring you this wonderfully wacky musical. It is directed by Ron Pickett, with help from Music Director Derrick Silva, Executive Producer Mara Plankers, and Assistant Producers Sonya Grover, Sally Hua, Loryn Nieto and Candace Poon.

Showtimes are 4 and 7 p.m. Friday, June 2, and 3 and 7 p.m. Saturday, June 3. Tickets may be purchased at the door or online at [www.showtix4u.com](http://www.showtix4u.com). Price is \$10-\$12.



# Writing college essays is a complicated task

By Elizabeth LaScala

It is important to understand some fundamental truths about college essays. First, many parents ask me if I can help their student with "The College Essay." These three words suggest a singular piece of writing. The average college applicant will tackle far more than one essay before the application process is complete.

Last cycle students I worked with wrote an average of six essays and the range was between zero and 16. On the lower end of this range are students who wrote four essays as responses to the University of California's four Insight Questions. Students who applied only to the California State Universities did not need to write any essays, since none are required. On the higher end of the range were applicants who developed responses to the UC application's four Insight Questions, the central essay for the Common Application as well as a wide variety of supplemental essays required by selective colleges nationwide.

With careful revisions and editing, the central essay on the Common Application can often be used for one of the four Insight Questions on the UC application — but just one.

Supplemental essays are essay questions that are unique to each school and are a way for colleges to know more about what they are looking for in an applicant — colleges are searching for good match-

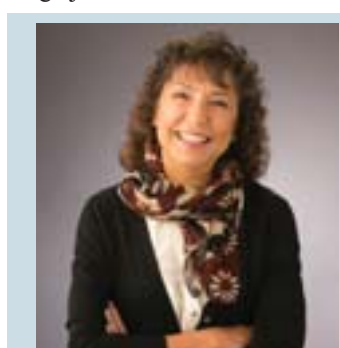
es too! For example, supplemental essays help a college to assess the writing ability of students, freshness of their minds, the uniqueness of their experiences as well as how well the student has researched their school. Having a number of writing requirements also enables colleges to assess if the students are writing their own essays — they look for consistency across essays (of voice, writing quality, knowledge of conventions, overall presentation, and so on).

Then there is the matter of timing. If you know that the UC is keeping its Insight Questions the same as the prior year's prompts, and the same is true for the Common Application prompts, a student can write essays for these applications as early as the summer following junior year. But a student can't begin to develop their supplemental essays until she or he has a college list, and even then, only after the college has released all of its essay requirements for the current application cycle. Often this does not happen until September of the student's senior year.

For many seniors, the list of colleges and essays to write continue to grow well into fall application cycle. After the student has done a substantial amount of writing, many essays can be recycled with smart editing and minor revisions, often including expansion or reduction in word count. I do try to help the student reuse essays, whenever

this is possible, but not when reworking an essay will damage the student's chances of admission.

I take the time to describe and explain this essay writing process, so you are not misled by advertising that promotes getting "The College Essay" written for a small price tag over the summer months. In my view, these essay workshops are unethical, unless they clearly explain that writing one essay may only get a small part of the job done. It's tough enough to write good college essays. Uncovering them late in the process makes a tough job even harder.



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD, brings decades of admissions expertise to personally guide each student through applying to well-matched colleges, making each step more manageable and less stressful. She has placed hundreds of students in the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. Reach her at (925) 385-0562 (office) or (925) 330-8801 (mobile), or online at [www.doingcollege.com](http://www.doingcollege.com) or [Elizabeth@doingcollege.com](mailto:Elizabeth@doingcollege.com).



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Coffee Fellowship 10:30 a.m.  
Childcare available for ages 5 and younger

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## ◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆

### ART

**The Moraga Art Gallery announces its springtime show, Color and Caprice, an exhibit that spotlights member artist Angelica Samame's eye-catching collection of stylized portraits of sophisticated women — slender and fashionably-clad. The show also features guest artist, Elizabeth Russell, aka Liz R Honeytops, from Forestville, whose ceramics consist of utilitarian platters, mugs, casserole dishes and more. The show runs to June 3. For more information, visit the gallery's website: www.moragaartgallery.com, call (925) 376-5407 or email moragaartgallery@gmail.com.**

**IRAN|USA, an original exhibition organized by the Saint Mary's College Museum of Art, presents a program of compelling video art and prints by artist and faculty member Peter Freund through May 28. The museum is located on campus, 1928 St. Mary's Road in Moraga and is open from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday; \$5 admission.**

**The Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery in Lafayette presents Simple Sentences, an exhibit of new paintings and explorations by Bay Area artist Bill Rushton running through May 27. www.jenniferperlmuttergallery.com**

**The Orinda Library Gallery presents The Glover Group Color and Light: The Legacy Continues through May 31. A passion for the beautiful farmland, coastal and rural geography of the San Francisco Bay Area is the inspiration for over 60 new plein air paintings. Gallery hours: Monday-Thursday 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Sunday 1-5 p.m.**

**Lamorinda Arts Alliance announces a new show at the Piedmont Center for the Arts, "Art to Soothe the Soul," opening Saturday, May 6 and running to June 11. Join the artists of the Lamorinda Arts Alliance for this soulful exhibition and help yourself feel good. The reception will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. on Friday, May 26; the artists will get a chance to talk about their inspiration during the Question & Answer Session.**

**Valley Art Gallery presents Works On Silk by featured artist Susan Helmer opening May 16. In addition to Helmer's work, the new 2017 spring collection of over 300 new works by Valley Art Gallery Artists is on display, in a wide range of motifs, styles, media and prices, and representing the best of the best from more than 100 East Bay artists. There will be a free artist reception from 3 to 5 p.m. on May 20. www.valleyartgallery.com.**

### MUSIC

**The Diablo Women's Chorale invites you to join them in celebrating 75 years in the community with their Spring Concert "Make Them Hear You! Music for Our Times," to be held at 2 p.m. on Saturday, May 20 at Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church, 1801 Lacassie Avenue. Advance purchase tickets are \$18. General admission, \$10 Student, and \$24 Premium seating. Purchase at the door for \$20. Call 1-800-838-3006 or go online at www.DiabloWomensChorale.org.**

**"Music Down In My Soul" will be presented at 7:30 p.m. on June 3 at the Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, Lafayette. The 30th Anniversary Concert will feature numerous favorites drawn from the 1,500-plus compositions presented in past seasons — classics, folk songs, jazz, popular, show music and patriotic songs, spirituals and gospel. Ticket info: \$10 Student, \$20 Senior, \$25 General. Tickets can be purchased through our website, at www.cantareconvivo.org/upcoming-events or through the LOPC office at (510) 836-0789.**

**The Dave Rocha Jazz Trio will perform at 1 p.m. on Saturday, June 3 in the Orinda Library Auditorium. The concert will kickoff the library's Summer Reading Program with a "hot" jazz concert.**

**Diablo Choral Artists presents a choral journey of Summer Travels, featuring works by Mendelssohn, Elgar, Rossini & Copland. Includes Rossini's Il Carnevale de Venezia, Mendelssohn's Sechs Lieder, Op. 48, Elgar's From the Bavarian Highlands, and more at 8 p.m. on Friday, June 9 at Mt. Diablo Unitarian Universalist Church, 55 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek, and at 3 p.m. on Sunday, June 11 at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, 1601 Mary Drive, Pleasant Hill. Details and ticket purchase on website: www.dcachorus.org, 925-680-7089, info@dcachorus.org (early adult & senior discount before May 30).**

### THEATER

**The Peter Pan Foundation presents the annual production of "Wish Upon A Star," a benefit musical. Bring the whole family to enjoy this musical spectacular, with princesses, villains, heroes and all your favorite characters. Younger cast performances at 10 a.m. on May 28 and 29, full length performances 7 p.m. May 27, 28, 29 and specialty matinees at 2 p.m. to accommodate seniors May 27, ASL and hearing impaired May 28 and special needs children and their families May 29. Diablo Valley College, Pleasant Hill. For tickets, please visit www.peterpanfoundation.org**

### KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

**"Let's Go On A Letter Hunt" at The Saklan School kicks off at 1 p.m. on Saturday, May 20. Local authors Sue Tenerowicz and Lynn Champagne of Spell-It-Out Photos will read their "Seussical" adventure book, taking young readers on a marvelous journey of rhyming and hunting for letters from A-Z. Following the reading, there will be a book signing and children will go on a Letter Hunt on the Saklan playground. Recommended for Pre-K through second graders. This event is free of charge and open to the public. Drop-ins are always welcome! Information and RSVP at bit.ly/letterhuntsaklan.**

**Hats for Fun in the Sun is at 4 p.m. on Friday, May 26 in the Orinda Library Garden Room. Orinda Library invites teens to come in for some hat making for fun in the sun. Learn about our Summer Reading Program for Teens and summer volunteering opportunities at the library.**

**Face Painting with Buki the Clown at noon on Saturday, June 3 at the Orinda Library.**

Orinda Library welcomes Buki the Clown who will paint your face to kickoff your Summer Reading Program at the library. Have a snack while you're there!

### OTHER

**The Lafayette Juniors 18th Annual Kitchen Tour** is from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 20. Tour six Lafayette kitchens for a great cause benefiting Contra Costa Interfaith Housing, Alternative Family Services, The Taylor Family Foundation, and Trinity Center. Tickets are \$40 and available at www.lafayettejuniors.org or Premier Kitchens in Lafayette.

**The Moraga Community Garage Sale provides an opportunity to clean out garages, attics, storage sheds and closets, while meeting neighbors and recycling unwanted items. Moraga residents are invited to hold garage sales at their homes, join with neighbors to hold block sales, or organize a community group to hold a combined sale from 9 to 3 p.m. on Saturday, May 20. A \$15 registration fee will provide a listing in the Community Garage Sale Guide. The Town will provide marketing for the event and the sellers keep the cash — it's that easy! Moragarec.com.**

**April showers bring May meowers! See the best big and little meowers at Community Concern for Cats adoption event from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday, May 20 and 21, at Pet Food Express in Lafayette and Pleasant Hill, and Petco in Walnut Creek. For more information, see www.community-concernforcats.org.**

**The second Mega Challah Bake is here! Join Jewish women and girls ages 12 & up from Lafayette, Moraga & Orinda for an evening of Jewish pride, unity and inspiration at 7 p.m. on May 23 at the Lafayette Library Community Hall. Prepaid registration required. \$25, or \$36 for mother and daughter. Register at ChabadofLamorinda.com/Challah.**

**"The Many Faces of Skin Cancer" runs 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on May 24 in the Lafayette Library Community Room. Join an engaging panel of medical experts as they offer insights in the latest information on prevention, risk factors, new treatment options including immunotherapy, and explore the unique issues of skin cancer survivors. To reserve, call (925) 677-5041 x272.**

**Saint Mary's undergraduate commencement begins at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday, May 27 and the graduate and professional studies commencement begins at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, May 28. Traffic will be extremely heavy on Saint Mary's Road both mornings.**

### SENIORS

**"The Aging Brain: Myths & Facts is at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 7 in the Orinda Library Auditorium. Orinda Library welcomes Dr. Patrick Arbore, founder and director of the Center for Elderly Suicide Prevention and Grief Related Services (CESP), a program of Institute on Aging in San Francisco. Bringing over 40 years professional experience in the field of aging, Arbore will dispel the myths and share the facts about the aging brain.**

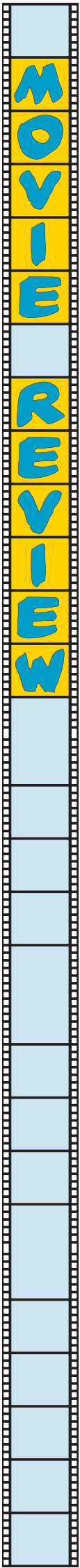
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Film Clips

# It's all an illusion at the Rheem

By Derek Zemrak



Timothy James Photo provided  
**L**amorinda On May 20 at the Rheem Theatre, get ready for a night of unbelievable sleight of hand, hilarious audience interaction, and a grand finale that will amaze you! It's fun for the whole family when illusionist Timothy James takes center stage accompanied by pianist Patti Leidecker.

I had the opportunity to interview him this week.

**Derek Zemrak:**When did you start doing magic?

**Timothy James:** I can't think of a time when I wasn't doing magic. I grew up in a neighborhood where there weren't any other kids my age. I also struggled with asthma and allergies, so going outside wasn't always an option. I had to keep myself busy with other things and magic tricks seemed to stick. I read every magic book the library had to offer. I still have a few of them.

By the time I was in high school, I realized I was good enough that people would actually pay me to do magic. I was the first person in my small circle of friends to have a job. A job that quickly turned into a career.

**DZ:** What can the Rheem attendees expect to see on May 20?

**TJ:** Hard to say without giving away the surprise, but you can expect a lot of audience interaction, comedy and magic. I have a lot of surprises for everyone, including people who have seen my act before. It's going to be a fun night.

**DZ:** Is the show on May 20 at the Rheem Theatre appropriate for kids?

**TJ:** Yes. I always lean toward a family-friendly show. It comes down to the audience. If it's mostly families, I'll do a family show. If it's mostly adults, I'll do something with a bit of an edge. I have a lot of material to draw from, so I can customize the show to suit the crowd. Whatever I think is appropriate for the audience.

**DZ:** You are an amazing illusionist. What is the difference between an illusionist and a magician?

**TJ:** About \$10,000 a show.

The title is more of a personal preference. When people think of a magician, the first thought is often a guy in a top hat with a rabbit.

That's not me. When I call myself an illusionist, people know what it means, but they aren't entirely certain what to expect. It makes them curious.

**DZ:** You have had the opportunity to perform all over the country. Please tell the Lamorinda Weekly readers about your most memorable show.

**TJ:** I was working at the Magic Castle in Hollywood, on the main stage, "The Palace of Mystery." I was booked for the week. Three shows a night, and having a blast. In the act I was doing, I needed one volunteer to come on stage to participate. Picking people on the fly is difficult. You want someone who looks like they're having fun...but not too much fun. With the spotlights in my eyes, I could only make out one figure near the front of the audience, a woman who looked like she was enjoying herself. I invited her up. Up the stairs she came.

The audience at this point was laughing, and I wasn't sure why. There was some applause for the volunteer, that's not unusual, but the laughter told me that something was up. As she approached the center of the stage, I immediately recognized her as Geena Davis. Yes! Oscar winner Geena Davis. And I had just watched "The Long Kiss Goodnight" a few days earlier.

There was no time to be star struck, I went on with the act, saying the next line the way I always say it, "And your name is?"

Laughter.

"Geena."

"Nice to meet you, Geena." And I continued with the act. She was a great participant. She could have easily played things up and the act could have gone off the rails, but she was there to see magic and have fun. She was great!

Don't miss this amazing unique event for the entire family at the Rheem Theatre at 7 p.m. Saturday, May 20. Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for 18 and under. Tickets can be purchased at the Rheem Theatre box-office or online at [www.lamorindatheatres.com](http://www.lamorindatheatres.com)

You will be amazed at the talent of Timothy James!

The show is sponsored by the Moraga Community Foundation a philanthropic organization that works with the community to build a vibrant future for Moraga. The Moraga Community Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

## 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](mailto:lamorindasunrise@gmail.com)

May 19

Tim Farley -  
Mystery guest speaker

May 26

30th Year Anniversary Club history lesson...complete with amazing guest stars

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## Lafayette Rotary Club

Step in on a Thursday and join us for our lunch meeting. Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

May 18:

Jacques Bernou

Acupuncturist/Eastern Medicine

May 25:

Molly Gleason-Kodama

Exotic Bird Keeper

[www.rotarylafayette.org](http://www.rotarylafayette.org)

[www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-Ca-197392963631366](https://www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-Ca-197392963631366)

## Town of Moraga Community GARAGE SALE

Saturday, May 20, 2017

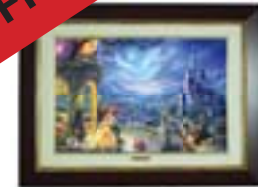
Come out to Moraga for a day of garage sale shopping! There will be over 25 sales in Town! Garage Sale Guides with a map and listings of each sale will be available at the Hacienda de las Flores, Moraga Library, Town Offices, and Online starting on May 17th.

[moragarec.com](http://moragarec.com) or 925-888-7036

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## Lamorinda Weekly

is an independent publication, produced by and for the residents of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, CA 26,600 printed copies; delivered to homes & businesses in Lamorinda.

Contact us:

Letters to the editor (max 350 words): [letters@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:letters@lamorindaweekly.com)  
 Delivery issues: [homedelivery@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:homedelivery@lamorindaweekly.com)  
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 Sport events/stories/pictures: [sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com)

**Publishers/Owners:** Andy and Wendy Scheck; [andy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:andy@lamorindaweekly.com), [wendy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:wendy@lamorindaweekly.com)

**Editor:** Peggy Spear; [peggy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:peggy@lamorindaweekly.com)  
**Copy Editor:** Nick Marnell; [nick@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:nick@lamorindaweekly.com)  
**Sports Editor:** [sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sportsdesk@lamorindaweekly.com)

**Advertising:** 925-377-0977, Wendy Scheck; [wendy@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:wendy@lamorindaweekly.com)

**Staff Writers:**

Sophie Braccini; [sophie@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:sophie@lamorindaweekly.com)  
 Cathy Dausman; [cathy.d@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:cathy.d@lamorindaweekly.com)  
 Pippa Fisher; [pippa@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:pippa@lamorindaweekly.com)  
 Nick Marnell; [nick@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:nick@lamorindaweekly.com)  
 John T. Miller; [john@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:john@lamorindaweekly.com)  
 Sora O'Doherty; [Sora@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:Sora@lamorindaweekly.com)

Digging Deep: Cynthia Brian; [cynthia@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:cynthia@lamorindaweekly.com)  
 Thoughtful Food: Susie Iventosch; [suziventosch@gmail.com](mailto:suziventosch@gmail.com)

**Contributing Writers:** Conrad Bassett, Karl Buscheck, Amanda Kuehn Carroll, Diane Claytor, Michele Duffy, Paula King, Ariel Keys, Michael Lupacchino, Ann McDonald, Fran Miller, Kara Navolio, Alexandra Reineke, Victor Ryerson, Moya Stone, Uma Unni, Jennifer Wake, Derek Zemrak

**Calendar Editor:** [Jaya Griggs; calendar@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:Jaya Griggs; calendar@lamorindaweekly.com)

**Photos:** Tod Fierner, Gint Federas

**Layout/Graphics:** Andy Scheck. Printed in CA.

Mailing address:  
 Lamorinda Weekly, P.O. Box 6133,  
 Moraga, CA 94570-6133  
 Phone: 925-377-0977; Fax: 1-800-690-8136  
 email: [info@lamorindaweekly.com](mailto:info@lamorindaweekly.com)  
 website: [www.lamorindaweekly.com](http://www.lamorindaweekly.com)



## Teen Writes

## Homework, lack of sleep stress out students

By Cecilia Chang

There is no doubt that Lamorinda holds their students to a high level. From the value of academics, extracurriculars and volunteer work, it may seem almost inevitable that students feel stressed.

Of course, stress is not always a bad thing; it motivates students to stay focused. But as the number of student suicides have been steadily increasing, lowering this stress may be worthwhile to look into.

Using an online survey of roughly 75 students based in the Lamorinda high schools, I asked how stressed they were on a scale of 1-10; the average was around 8. Two of the main factors for this seemed to be homework and lack of sleep. The average amount of homework students are currently receiving totals out to 4.5 hours. The suggested amount of homework for students with seven periods is around 2.3 hours of homework at most.

But this is not the student's main issue with homework. As one student, Devon Ashburn, states, "Most of the homework we receive is busy work. In my opinion, it doesn't help me learn more or gain more insight in the class."

The majority of the students surveyed seem to agree. The prevailing attitude seemed to be while students don't enjoy having lots of homework, they can tolerate it if it inspires them to learn more. Their biggest issue is they feel that teachers are giving massive amounts of tedious work, which doesn't motivate students.

In many cases, the amount of homework doesn't immediately equate to stress: the students want the homework to be useful, and help them understand the concept in class.

The other deciding factor in student stress: sleep. Seventy-nine percent of students surveyed say that they are not getting enough

sleep. Additionally, of these students, eighty-nine percent said this directly correlated to poor performance in class.

An anonymous student expresses this concern: "I sleep more than most people I know yet I've dropped to C's on tests because I couldn't possibly keep my eyes open."

The Acalanes Union High School District has been taking measures to lower student stress. In the 2017-18 school year, block scheduling will be put into place, in which the day is spaced out into intervals of four classes, two of which contain a free "academy period" and a late start. The aim of this schedule is explained best by student Erica Wilson: Theoretically, students will have more time to do homework, and be able to sleep more so it should be good. Also, if "academy periods" are utilized wisely by students this could be very helpful.

A one-week test run was put in place, and many people seem to agree that although the block scheduling helps to an extent, it is extremely hard to concentrate in long periods of time, and teachers seem to be more inclined to give out more homework, which quickly builds up.

The students of Lamorinda are the future of Lamorinda. For the sake of our future, it is important to ensure the well-being of our students while they juggle their busy academic, athletic and social lives.

Cecilia Chang, a student attending Campolindo High School, is set to graduate on the year 2020. At Campo, her favorite subjects are the sciences, including Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. In her spare time, she plays multiple instruments, and enjoys a multitude of sports, although not competitively.

## Thoughtful Food

## A yummy 'mishmash' of Israeli heritage

By Susie Iventosch

In December, I accompanied my husband on a business trip to Israel. One day, while he attended business meetings in Tel Aviv, I ran off for a full day of market touring and cooking with Orly Ziv, who runs a great little cooking school, Cook in Israel. The feast we prepared was mouthwatering, bursting with flavors of fresh local veggies, salads, falafel and a wonderful savory dish called Shakshouka.

Our tiny band of nomadic cooks met Orly at the Carmel Market in Tel Aviv, just four blocks from the sparkling Mediterranean Sea. The vibrant colors, sights and sounds of this dynamic market featured exotic and unusual veggies, spices, rice varieties, legumes and a host of cosmopolitan characters. Colossal bunches of waist-high leeks were stationed like sentinels in front of several produce stands.

We learned about Moroccan paprika, which smells and tastes completely different than its Hungarian sibling due to the addition of olive oil, salt and, occasionally, hot peppers.

Also, Orly says there are about 200 types of garbanzo beans all over the world – some are much smaller than the garbanzo beans typically seen in the U.S., while others are similar in size. Orly uses a combination of the two for her hummus, but only the large ones for her falafel. "They must be dried and soaked for falafel, never cooked or from a can," she said. Glad to know, because the first time I attempted falafel using canned garbanzo beans, it was a disaster.

Venturing from the "shuk" (market) to the Yemenite quarter (Kerem HaTeimanim), we arrived at Scholom & Doron for breakfast. They served pita bread with hummus and fuul, a dip made of fava beans and very similar to hummus. Delicious! While in the Yemenite district we visited several of Orly's favorite haunts to sample a variety of breads including saluf, lahouch and pita, all very different, all delicacies. One stand served burika, a Libyan specialty made with mashed potatoes and eggs wrapped in pastry and deep-fried. There was a final stop at Orly's favorite juicer, Tikva, for a glass full of vitamins — fresh squeezed pomegranate juice with a splash of lime. This was a morning of true bliss for any bona fide foodie.

Just when we couldn't eat another bite, the party moved to Orly's home north of Tel Aviv for an afternoon of hands-on Israeli cooking. The menu boasted Malabi cream with rose water syrup for dessert, homemade pita bread, hot spicy tomato salad, falafel, tahini mixed with lemon juice and buttermilk, hummus and shakshouka (or shakshuka), a rich tomato and vegetable sauce with fresh eggs poached right in the sauce. My brother-in-law, Efi Lubliner, who was raised in Israel and now resides in Lafayette, said the word "shakshouka" simply means "a mix." He said that the closest direct translation might be "mishmash." And, what an appetizing mishmash it is! Shakshouka finds its origins in northern Africa, and can easily be served for any meal of the day.

Upon returning home, we made the entire feast for New Year's Day, and I am so pleased to be able to share Orly's recipes for both her pita bread and shakshouka. I added eggplant to the shakshouka, and really enjoyed that addition. You may find that you would like to add a different ingredient to your batch, too. After all, it is a mishmash.



Shakshouka

Photos Susie Iventosch

## RECIPES

## Shakshouka

## INGREDIENTS

2-3 Tbsp. olive oil  
1 onion, diced  
1 red pepper, diced  
1 Ortega chili, diced  
1-2 Tbsp. tomato paste  
2 serrano peppers, finely diced  
1 medium eggplant, peeled and cubed  
4 fresh ripe tomatoes, grated on a cheese grater, juices and pulp reserved  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
1 Tbsp. Moroccan paprika  
1 tsp. cumin powder  
1 tsp. ground caraway  
4-6 eggs  
Minced fresh parsley for garnish  
Feta Cheese for garnish

## DIRECTIONS

Peel and slice eggplant. Salt both sides and allow to sweat for about 30 minutes. Wipe off excess moisture and cut eggplant into small cubes. Heat oil in a large skillet. Add onion and paprika and sauté over medium heat for a few minutes until onion is translucent. Add garlic, cumin and caraway and continue to cook until fragrant, 3-4 minutes. Add eggplant, peppers and tomatoes (along with their juices) and sauté until vegetables are tender. Season with salt and reduce heat to simmer for about 8 minutes. Crack eggs into a small bowl, one at a time, and slide into the tomato mixture. Cover and cook for about 3-5 minutes or until egg whites are set and yolks are cooked as desired. Serve and sprinkle crumbled feta and parsley over each serving. Serve with fresh pita bread. (Recipe below.)  
Note: The shakshouka will be chunkier or smoother, depending upon how finely you chop the vegetables.

## Pita Bread

## INGREDIENTS

½ kilogram all-purpose flour (500 grams)  
15 grams fresh yeast or 8 grams dry yeast  
1 tsp. salt  
1 Tbsp. brown sugar  
1 ½ Tbsp. olive oil  
350 grams water

## DIRECTIONS

Heat oven to 450 degrees. Place flour and salt in the bowl of your mixer or KitchenAid. Sprinkle the yeast and brown sugar around the edges of the bowl. Add olive oil and half of the water and start mixing on low speed. Gradually add the rest of the water while mixing. The dough will look very sticky and wet. Continue to mix on medium-low speed for about 8 more minutes, or until the dough starts pulling away from the sides of the bowl. Cover the bowl and allow dough to rise in a warm spot in the kitchen for about one hour, until doubled in volume. Turn dough out of bowl onto a very lightly floured surface and form into a large loaf with your hands. (You will need to dust your hands with a little bit of flour, too.) Divide dough into 8-10 balls and allow to rise again for about 10 minutes. Using your fingertips, flatten and spread each ball into a flat shape, approximately 4-5 inches in diameter. Bake for 10 minutes. The pita is ready when you can see an air bubble in the middle of each round. These scones also freeze well. Thaw and reheat in a warm oven or toaster oven.



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# LAMORINDA SPORTS

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## Campo and Acalanes boys lacrosse top NCS DII bracket

By Karl Buscheck



Josh Baginski

Photos Gint Federas

With Campolindo commanding the top seed in the NCS Division 2 bracket and Acalanes sitting second, the local rivals and newly-minted DAL co-champs could be headed for a postseason title-game showdown. “That is looking so far forward,” Acalanes head coach Brent Ringwood warned, brushing aside the talk of a third meeting with the Cougars. “That’s not even worth envisioning at the moment.”

The clubs split the DAL season series, with the Dons winning the first leg in Moraga, and the Cougars claiming the second in Lafayette in the penultimate game of the league schedule on May 2.

“It would be great,” Ringwood said before stopping to chuckle. “But that wouldn’t be conducive to winning many games if we were thinking that far ahead.”

The Dons and the Cougars aren’t just among the pre-

mier teams in NCS, but in the entire state, ranked No. 36 and 31, respectively, by MaxPreps. “We’re pretty pumped that our league is very well-represented at the top (of the bracket),” Ringwood said. “And we’re looking to make a deep run.”

After a first-round bye, Acalanes started the postseason by taking care of No. 10 University, 10-3, on May 12 at home. They’ll meet the No. 3 seed – Marin Academy – on May 17 in a semifinals showdown.

Owners of an 17-4 record overall (13-1 in DAL), the Dons are making a postseason push while navigating an array of injury problems. With the team at less than 100 percent strength, Ringwood is looking for his senior backline – featuring goalie Nate Welcomer and defenders Josh Baginski and Sean Ortlieb – to frustrate opposing attackers.

“For us, considering how banged up we are, we’re going to

really have to rely on our defense,” Ringwood said. “We’re going to have to make some really talented offensive teams think quite a bit about how they’re going to score on us and we’ve got to find ways to manufacture points. But it’s going to be a grind for sure.”

Campolindo, who followed up their opening-round bye with an 18-6 rout over No. 9 Saint Mary’s of Stockton on May 12 in Moraga, have their sights set on adding to their trophy collection after tying the Dons atop the league.

“I’d say it’s a testament to how hard our boys have been working and putting their minds to a goal,” head coach Mitchel Frey said of his team’s regular-season accomplishments. “Obviously, being co-league champions and then ultimately NCS champions is just part of their journey. And it’s a testament to how hard they’ve worked and continue to work to reach their goals.”

With No. 4 Piedmont awaiting in the semifinals on May 17, the Cougars’ record stands at 17-3 (13-1 in league). Like the neighboring Dons, Campolindo’s cast of established stars have piloted the program throughout

the DAL slate and the NCS run. “Our group of seniors have done an excellent job of leading by example as well as by their play on the field,” Frey said. “And it’s just really helped develop a lot chemistry amongst the team.”



Drew Cirelli

## Sisters qualify for Jewish Olympics

By John T. Miller



From left, Samantha and Sydney Bell.

Samantha and Sydney Bell, sisters at Acalanes High, have qualified to compete in the 20th Maccabiah — also known as the Jewish Olympics — this summer in Israel. Samantha, a senior, will join the United States soccer team in the Open division, while Sydney will play tennis in the Junior division.

The sisters will represent Maccabi USA at the games in Jerusalem that run from July 4-18 this summer, with opening ceremonies slated for July 6. Samantha will report on June 25 to train with her team in Jerusalem and Sydney arrives three days later in Haifa. Participants from all over the world will then have a week to travel and tour Israel to view historic sites and experience the Jewish culture.

Samantha, a team captain on the Acalanes soccer team, is also president of the Jewish Club on campus. This fall she will attend the University of Texas at Dallas on an academic scholarship, majoring in Global Business and playing soccer for the Division III team.

Two years ago she qualified and competed in the Maccabi Pan American Games in Chile. Although she was young enough to be on the Junior team, she played in the Open division and helped her team to a gold medal. She looks forward to playing again with some of the same friends she met there.

“Being on that team was a spe-

cial experience,” says Samantha, “but I’m really looking forward to my first visit to Israel and making the connection with being Jewish.”

Sydney, who has been playing tennis since kindergarten, competed as the No. 2 singles player for Acalanes and earned second-team all-league this year -- a great achievement for a sophomore. Her inspiration comes from her great grandmother, who was still playing tennis at the age of 92. She is also active in the Jewish Club at Acalanes.

She traveled to New York for a two-day tryout and was one of six girls to qualify for the Junior team. Sydney also looks forward to visiting Israel, saying, “I’m excited to meet Jewish people from all over the world and see all the important sites.”

The Maccabi World Union is the largest and longest running Jewish sports organization, involving more than 60 countries, 450 clubs, and 400,000 members. Their signature event, the Maccabiah Games, which began in 1932, takes place in Israel every four years. This year’s event will draw about 10,000 athletes.

According to Dakota Marine, a marketing and communications associate for Maccabi USA, the program “develops, promotes and supports international, national and regional athletic-based activities

and facilities to provide Jewish athletes the opportunity to share their heritage and customs in competitive athletic settings.”

Many Olympic gold medalists, world champions and world record holders have competed in the Maccabiah, most notably Mark Spitz in swimming and Kerri Strug in gymnastics.

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## Miramonte exits in second round of NCS Division 1 tournament

By Karl Buscheck



Photo Gint Federas

After powering to the DAL title with a flawless 10-0 mark, the Miramonte boys tennis squad earned a berth in the NCS Division 1 team tournament.

Seeded No. 5 in the bracket, the Mats advanced to the second round of the competition before Foothill – the champions of the East Bay Athletic League – dumped them out of the competition.

Before entering the premier NCS field,

head coach Michael McCollom had warned of the difficulties that lay ahead.

“We are a very good team – one of my better teams over the years,” McCollom said. “But I can tell you, it’s going to be quite a big (challenge to win NCS).”

In the second-round defeat on May 11 in Pleasanton, the Mats lost to Foothill, the fellow league winners, 5-2. Junior Nico Haet claimed the team’s only singles match win

(6-2, 4-6, 6-3), while the pairing of Kush Subramanian and Dominic Davidson earned the only double victory (6-4, 6-0).

The loss to Foothill marked the first time since Feb. 24 (against Mission San Jose) that the Mats were on the wrong side of the score line.

Miramonte had reached the meeting with Foothill by dispatching College Park, 4-3, in the opening round on May 9 in Orinda.

Even as the Mats claimed just one of four singles matches – freshman Micah Elias’ 5-7, 7-5, 7-5 win in the No. 4 spot – Miramonte triumphed by sweeping the doubles ladder.

“That usually is my goal is to have a real solid doubles performance,” McCollom explained. “I have some wonderful boys in my lineup. The two juniors are William Hwang at No. 1 (singles) and my No. 2 Haet. They’re really strong. Behind that, I have (senior captain) Jack O’Melveny at No. 3, (sophomore) Liam Dowd at No. 4. Then I have a really nice freshman – Micah Elias – he’s really strong.”

While Campolindo didn’t advance to the NCS team tournament – the Cougars toppled out of the doubles competition in the opening round – head coach Alan Weissbaum is confident the program is trending in the right

direction.

The Cougars (11-8 overall, 8-3 in league) will have nine seniors on the roster next spring and one of the team’s rising sophomores – Cal Hunter – has already emerged as a marquee talent.

“I think we’re going to be fairly strong next year,” Weissbaum said. “We’re not losing any of our singles players, so that’s really good for us and I think we’ll only get stronger. Our No. 1 player Cal Hunter is improving nicely and he won the DAL singles tournament.”

In addition to Hunter, Weissbaum singled out junior captain Zach Goldman as an “good all-around guy,” and also paid his respects to one of the Cougars’ departing stars.

“Jake Oxendine was our No. 1 doubles guy and he was a standout,” Weissbaum said. “He pretty much won all the time. He was also one of our captains and it was fun to have him on board and he’s a senior, so we’ll certainly miss him.”

Like the Cougars, the Dons didn’t advance to the NCS team competition. Acalanes concluded its season with a 7-7 record overall and a 2-5 mark in league play, good for fourth place in the league standings.

## Mats, Cougars and Dons girls lacrosse all advance to NCS

By Karl Buscheck



Abigail Burns

Photo Gint Federas

After splitting the DAL crown with Campolindo, the Miramonte girls lacrosse team secured the No. 13 seed in the NCS Division I bracket, their first spring playing in

the sport’s top flight.

“It just shows the growth of the sport in this area and how hard these girls have worked,” said head coach Jackie Pelletier. “Some of the girls were bummed to share the league title with Campo, but (then) we step back and we look and their success over four years – that’s allowed us to move up to the D I bracket.”

The Mats (17-4 overall, 15-1 in league) exited the postseason in the first round of NCS, losing 14-10 to the No. 4 seed Amador Valley in Pleasanton on May 10.

“For such a small school to be right there with the biggest schools in the area is just amazing for us,” Pelletier said.

Ranked No. 38 in the state by MaxPreps, the Mats were anchored by a trio of veteran captains.

“The key to our success, 100 percent, has been our senior captains,” Pelletier.

Taylor Geary – the league MVP – didn’t take part in the postseason, but made it through the first 18 games while playing on an injured knee. Geary, who will join the

team at Claremont McKenna College next season, excelled for the Mats even as she entered her senior season knowing her knee would eventually require surgery.

Pelletier described Lucy Stenovc – the club’s sharp-shooting attacker – as a “quiet confident leader” and called Morgan Johnson a “fierce competitor” and the “most tenacious athlete” she’s ever coached.

“She will hunt people down on the field,” Pelletier said of Johnson.

The co-champion Cougars, who earned the No. 1 seed in the Division 2 tournament, earned a bye in the opening round before smashing past the No. 8 seed Christian Brothers, 16-5, in Moraga on May 12.

With the quarterfinals romp over Christian Brothers, Campolindo – the No. 24 team in the state per MaxPreps – have now produced a 15-game unbeaten stretch.

Captained by seniors Grace Burnite, Claire Cimino, Peyton King and Abigail Burns, the Cougars took the field on May 16 in the semifinals, hosting No. 5 Branson. The finals of the D2 bracket will take place on

May 18.

Like Miramonte, Acalanes (12-9 overall, 12-4 in league) took part in the DI bracket, claiming the No. 16 seed before falling 22-7 to No. 1 Novato on the road on May 10 in the first round.

“They really deserved to be up in that top 16 and I’m glad other people recognized that too,” head coach Courtney Neff said. “Overall, I’m super proud of all their work that they put in to get there and they put up a good fight (against Novato). I was really proud of them.”

The Dons will lose a pair of senior headliners in Julia Mueller and Anna De Roque, who are both set to play at the collegiate level next spring. Despite those departures, Neff believes her team is poised to make another postseason push next spring, noting that the varsity and junior varsity setups are flooded with high-upside underclassmen.

“Acalanes lacrosse overall is a really young program,” Neff said. “And I think it has a really bright future and I’m excited to see everything (the girls) can do.”

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## All Lafayette team wins Flag Football Championship

Submitted by Charlie Vezzali

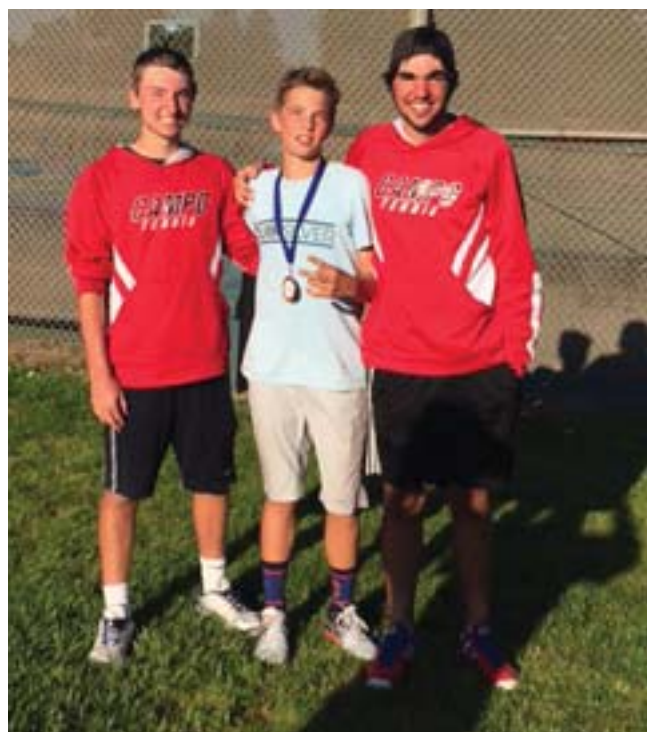


Top row from left: Aidan Parnell, Leo McDonough, Allesandro Curletto, Ryan Ventrelle, Rhett Hollyfield, Grant Ricker, Reid Habas; bottom row from left: Blake Robison, Cody Michlitsch, Illias Kaplanes-Jones, Luca Vezzali, Ben Pass (not pictured Brody Jones)

The All Lafayette team is comprised of all Lafayette residents and went undefeated for the entire year capturing the Next Level Championship title for the Third Grade Division of flag football.

## Diablo Athletic League tennis championships

Submitted by Kimberly Hunter



Center: Cal Hunter, Campolindo sophomore (1st singles); left and right, Zach Goldman, Campolindo junior and Jake Oxendine, Campolindo senior, the third place doubles team.

Lamorinda mens' tennis teams had a great showing at the Diablo Athletic League Championships on April 27 and 28. In singles, Campolindo sophomore Cal Hunter defeated College Park senior Akbar Mamirov 7-5, 3-6, 7-6 (5) to win the singles title. Miramonte juniors Nico Haet and William

Hwang were third and fourth. In doubles, the College Park tandem of Nick Toman and Subham Dikhit were first, Cole Brightbill and Jin Heo from Acalanes were second, Campolindo's Zach Goldman and Jake Oxendine took third over fourth-place Jack O'Melveny and Stephen Tse from Miramonte.

## Lamorinda JV rugby wins championship

Submitted by Thomas Miller



In a stunning display of player determination and skill and coaching excellence, Lamorinda (LAMO) JV Rugby completed their undefeated 12-0 season by dispatching Granite Bay Rugby Club 40-9 in the NorCal Premier League Rugby championship May 6 in Stockton.

Fresh from a dominating play-

off victory over local powerhouse Danville Oaks, Granite Bay's big, strong, talented and well coached JV team took on LAMO's JV.

LAMO gave up three penalty kicks to Granite Bay in the first half, but scored 14 points of their own. The halftime score stood at 14-9 in favor of LAMO.

The second half, was all

LAMO. Time and again Granite Bay made it close to the try line, but LAMO's defense turned them away, often stripping the ball and retaking possession.

LAMO scored 26 unanswered points in the second half to take home the NorCal Rugby Premier League championship by a score of 40-9.

## Cal Magic Girls U99 No. 1 in the nation

Submitted by Dan Rascher



The Magic U99 Girls team under Coach Haris Obic were ranked No. 1 in Cal North, No. 1 in Region IV and No. 1 in the nation at GotSoccer.com. This is

quite an accomplishment for the U99 girls and a testament to the years of hard work, commitment, resilience and focus this team has displayed.

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# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 11 Issue 6 Wednesday, May 17, 2017



*Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian*

*...read on page D16*

## Creating a kids' zone is child's play

By Paula King



*Stephanie Catron finishes up decorating this kids' bedroom.*

*Photos Andy Scheck*

After building an addition onto her Orinda home, Meredith Friedman had several new living spaces to decorate and the most challenging was a front great room space designated as the hangout area for her two sons and their friends.

One of Friedman's goals for the project was to give the house more of an "adult" ambiance. However, she was unsure of how to balance the kids' entertainment needs and achieving her desired interior style.

"I wanted this area to be the place my kids would want their friends to hang out in, but it's also the first room you walk into in my house, so it couldn't look like a playroom," Friedman said.

Friedman's experience was a common struggle in interior decorating for most parents while trying to create a home that is whimsical and comfortable enough for children yet stylish and striking enough for entertaining.

So, Friedman hired Orinda real estate agent and home designer Stephanie Catron of SBC Style, who believes that you don't have to wait for your children to grow up to have the home of your dreams and you don't have to spend a fortune.

"When you have small kids so much of your time is spent at home either having other families over, hosting play dates or just spending the weekend reconnecting as a family. It's important that you love the space you are in," Catron said. "Invest some time in pulling together the main living spaces with art work and accessories that

make you happy."

According to Catron, the key is occasional updates to create a space that is fresh and inviting to family and guests. She is known among Lamorinda clients for her inexpensive Home Goods, Living Spaces and Target finds of art, pillows and throws that are paired with investment pieces of furniture, professional painting and quality flooring to create a signature look.

"One day you will set an object on a low table and find that the kids are not interested in touching, moving it or putting it in their mouths. That's when you can move your style forward," Catron said.

Catron guided Friedman through a process of searching Pinterest and magazines for images of eye-catching rooms. As a family, the Friedmans tested out new accessories and the overall layout of each room until it was the right fit.

Catron often tells homeowners to utilize store return policies as they place things in various spots throughout the home and find what works for them.

"Don't be afraid to move things around after the kids are in bed. Pour a glass of wine and have fun creating your new space," Catron advised.

In the Friedman kid's zone, Catron placed the TV over a fireplace, suggested an L-shaped sectional and found the perfect placement for a seven-foot pool table. Catron finished the room with lamps, rugs and coffee tables and even Friedman's sons, ages 9 and 11, were impressed.

*... continued on page D4*





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**KNOCK YOUR SOCKS OFF** fabulous custom home featuring 5 bedrooms, 3 baths and approximately 3000+ square feet on a gorgeous .95 acre lot with exquisite gardens and landscaping. Pride of ownership abounds, and the home has been tastefully updated with the finest of materials. The gracious floor plan is highlighted by a quintessentially California indoor/outdoor atmosphere with stunning views. Stand out features include a striking chef's kitchen, a lavish Master Retreat with a charming viewing deck, a private guest suite with its own separate entrance, a wine cellar and an easy commute location.

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## Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	12	\$850,000	\$2,765,000
MORAGA	3	\$618,000	\$1,098,000
ORINDA	7	\$1,215,000	\$2,250,000

Home sales are compiled by Cal REsource, an Oakland real estate information company. Sale prices are computed from the county transfer tax information shown on the deeds that record at close of escrow and are published five to eight weeks after such recording. This information is obtained from public county records and is provided to us by California REsource. Neither Cal REsource nor this publication are liable for errors or omissions.

### LAFAYETTE

1 Camelia Lane, \$2,765,000, 4938 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 4-12-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,525,000, 12-06-05

3939 Canyon Road, \$1,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 2696 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 4-11-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,800,000, 05-06-15

16 Diablo Circle, \$1,605,000, 3 Bdrms, 1730 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 4-11-17;

Previous Sale: \$990,000, 02-23-15

754 Glenside Drive, \$1,070,000, 3 Bdrms, 2371 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 4-7-17;

Previous Sale: \$160,000, 09-15-82

125 Haslemere Court, \$850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1638 SqFt, 1988 YrBlt, 4-7-17;

Previous Sale: \$209,500, 06-30-88

... continued on page D17

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### Correction

In a Lamorinda Weekly Our Homes article published in the April 5 issue, "Changing your garden, changing your life," the name of the landscape architect who worked with Kay Countryman and Ron Briggs to create their garden was incorrect. It was Roxy Wolosenko.



# MORAGA COUNTRY CLUB RENOVATION



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# Creating a kids' zone is child's play

... continued from page D1



"Some of the items she shopped for me, but I also found options and asked her advice and she steered me in the right direction. I am so happy with how it came together," Friedman said.

Some of Catron's advice for parents of little ones is to keep the accessories to a minimum and opt for a clean and uncluttered look. To keep youngsters safe, use a big ottoman or a few average sized ones as a coffee table with a decorative tray.

Since children can be messy, Catron said to pick white furniture that can be bleached or utilize slipcovers on couches, chairs and ottomans. She noted that dual purpose pieces are ideal for saving valuable space such as a tall bookcase that can house more valuable pieces on top shelves and toy storage in baskets on the bottom shelves.

"Think about your priorities and how you want the space to be used. That's the most important thing. And

don't be afraid to repurpose what you have," said Friedman, who admits that her home's redesign was an education in interior decorating for her.

For families with infants and toddlers, Orinda's Trish McDermott suggested that portability and compactness of baby gear helps to cut down on clutter in the home. McDermott manages a baby equipment rental business called Babierge East Bay.

"Some high chairs and strollers fold more compactly than others and can be easily stored between uses in a nearby closet, which helps your home look less cluttered," she said. "You can also match your gear's color scheme with the same manufacturer like your pack n' play, infant swing and high chair."

A huge part of the process of redecorating a family home is to ensure that the kids feel comfortable and cozy there too. Catron said that plush rugs, beanbags and blan-

kets are ideal for that.

"Get down on the floor and imagine how it feels to be there," she said. "Any home that is pulled together, looks great and has spaces that feel organized will add to a child's sense of well-being."

Before the home makeover, Friedman said her family knew what they liked but struggled with committing to real pieces over temporary solutions. Catron didn't come in and decorate the home but guided them with vendor and color choices and design options and empowered the Friedmans to create their new, family-friendly home.

"It has absolutely made us enjoy our home more," Friedman said. "She gave me confidence to make some of these decisions myself that I never would have before. She taught me what to look for and how to see design elements that would complement each other."



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## **Grand Estate Sprawls Across Two Parcels - Ideal Family Compound!**

MORAGA - Sanders Ranch

Exclusive estate property features approx. 7,500sf including an approx. 5,500sf home featuring 4-bedrooms, 4-full and 1-half bathrooms, library, bonus room and gourmet kitchen. The pool/guest house with almost 2,000 sf w/full bath & kitchenette, and two apartments each with kitchenette and full bath.

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ORINDA - Thoughtfully designed custom home near the historic Orinda Country Club brims with upscale amenities, amazing hillside views, enchanting gardens, pool, spa, spacious spaces with two family rooms, gourmet kitchen, and sweeping staircase with spacious landing and library/office nook. . 4 Bedrooms, 2 full and 2 half baths, .45 acre

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# THE *Beaubelle* GROUP



## Beautiful Views ~ Convenient Location

### Open Floor Plan ~ Desirable Glorietta Area

ORINDA - The almost 4,000 square feet of living space is expertly designed on a gentle .80-acre hillside lot with six bedrooms and four and a half stylish bathrooms including an au pair/guest suite with kitchen and private entry, and a spectacular lower level apartment with living room, bedroom, office/second bedroom, full updated bathroom, eat-in kitchen and spacious, private deck with separate entry and view of backyard gardens. Walk to Meadow Pool & Tennis club.

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## Gorgeous Estate Lot with Panoramic

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LAFAYETTE - One of a kind secluded 15 acre plus Estate lot with level building pad and panoramic views of tree studded hills, Happy Valley and the Lafayette reservoir; access to Briones park; approved plans for a 10,000 square foot estate with outdoor loggia and pool! Enjoy close proximity to Lafayette's thriving downtown, BART, Highway 24, the library and top performing schools.

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## Privacy ~ Views ~ Potential

LAFAYETTE - Located in the desirable Old Jonas neighborhood, this property offers endless potential. The approx. 1,790 sf home features 4-bedrooms, 1-bathroom and another potential bathroom, which is plumbed and ready to go. The property sits on .89 acre, per country assessor. One may choose to remodel the existing home or tear it down and start from scratch. The flat building pad and beautiful views make it something special that few properties offer.

**Offered at \$1,150,000**



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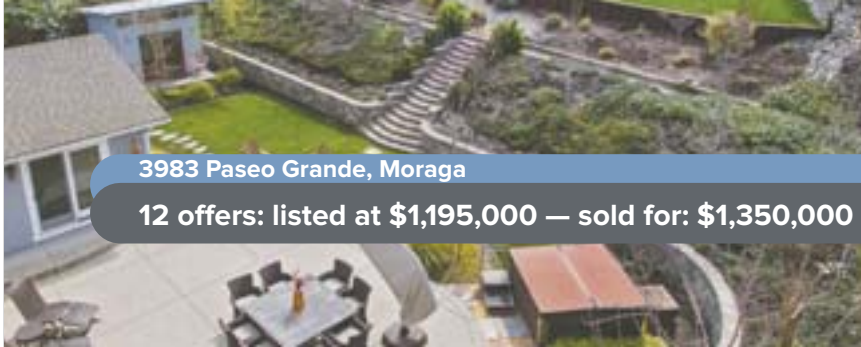






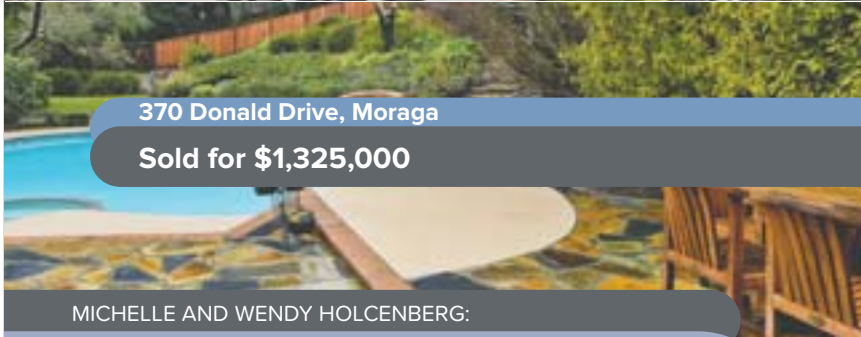
42 Lambeth Square, Moraga

6 offers: listed at \$1,650,000 — sold for \$1,810,000



3983 Paseo Grande, Moraga

12 offers: listed at \$1,195,000 — sold for: \$1,350,000



370 Donald Drive, Moraga

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Offered at \$2,100,000 | 48michaellane.com



Paul & Virginia Ratto

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## Village Associates is Pleased to Welcome Steve Stahle as their Newest Associate.



Village Associates is pleased to announce that Steve Stahle has joined our firm. Steve is a native Californian and has lived in Orinda since 1976. Steve and his wife Margene raised their three children, daughter Lindsey, son Curtis, and daughter here and they now have six grandchildren.

After graduating from the University of Missouri, Steve was commissioned a Lieutenant in the US Calvary and served in Fort Lewis, Washington and Vietnam. He joined Smith Barney & Co in New York City and ended his 25 year Wall Street career as a Senior Vice President of Drexel Burnham Lambert.

Steve started his real estate career in 2009 with Coldwell Banker. He joined Village Associates in April of 2017. Steve is active in the community having served on the Orinda Association Board of Directors, Charles Hill Association and the Orindawoods Homeowners Association. Steve is praised by his clients for his diligent, timely work and creative solutions to challenges. Clients also appreciate his attention to detail and professionalism. Steve's professional affiliations include NAR, CAR & CCAR.

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**IN ORINDA COUNTRY CLUB**

**24 LA CAMPANA**  
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**\$2.195M**

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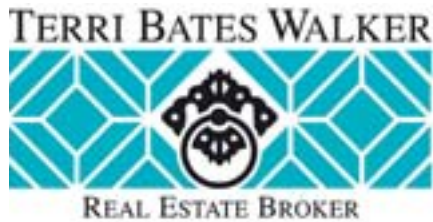


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3280 Sweet Drive, Lafayette



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## At Home with Amanda

# Making an entrance: 6 Ways to spruce up your entry

By Amanda Eck

**H**ello Lamorinda readers! I am so excited for this opportunity to meet with you on a monthly basis and share my thoughts and insights on all things for the home.

If we were meeting together face-to-face I would welcome you with a warm hug and offer you a cup of tea (or coffee if you prefer) and we would sit and get to know one another better. I love to entertain and as a designer I love helping clients create a space of beauty and warmth for the family and their guests.

And the first place I like to start with is the entry or foyer. It is your guest's first glimpse of your home. It is the space that greets you as you walk in the door after a long day. It is the space your kids come barreling through after a busy day of school. It is the space your dearest friends, closest relatives and even your UPS delivery person sees. I don't know about you, but the rest of my home can be a complete disaster but if my entry is clean and welcoming I feel at ease with whoever comes to my door.

I am going to share my six favorite tips for making your entrance feel welcoming. Or in the words of Oprah, "make your home rise up to meet you."

### Tip No. 1: Declutter

If you have small children like I do, the entry becomes the catchall for backpacks, basketballs, discarded shoes and yesterday's mail. Clearing out the clutter sets the

stage for a welcoming space.

### Tip No. 2: Add a rug

Rugs in the entry are not just for keeping dirt at bay from pets and kiddos, it also help define space. A rug can introduce a splash of color or pattern to your entrance. I love using indoor/outdoor rugs for entries. My go-to rugs for high traffic areas are from Dash & Albert. They make great flat weave rugs that are both reversible and washable. Another tip is to make sure your rug is not so thick that it gets caught on the door every time you open it.

In this entry for one of our clients we took their dark, drab space and lightened it up with a Dash & Albert rug, a lighter wood furniture piece and a new mirror to help reflect the natural light. We displayed a few decorative coastal pieces to reflect the client's love for the ocean.

... continued on page D14





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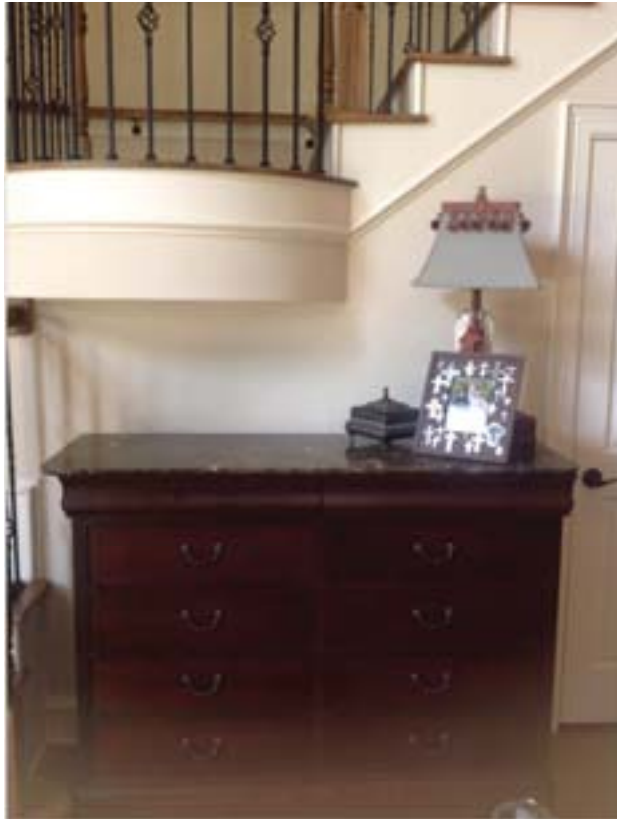




## At Home with Amanda

# Making an entrance: 6 Ways to spruce up your entry

... continued from page D12



### Tip No. 3: Small Table or Console

Adding a small table, chest or console can help create a “drop zone” for things like keys and mail. It also creates a space for decorative items to be displayed giving your guest a small taste of what’s to come in the rest of your home. If space is tight I forgo the table and use a small bench, you can add a pillow or two for a pop of color.

In this client’s home their entry immediately opened up to the living and dining room, so we opted to place a rug at the entrance and created a “drop zone” down the hall by the staircase. We used upholstered storage ottomans for their dog’s leash and other small items that can be grabbed on the way out the door.

### Tip No. 4: Lighting

I love using lamps in the entry for both practical and aesthetic reasons. There is something so inviting about coming home in the evening and being greeted by the warm glow of a lamp. It’s also a great way to illuminate what can otherwise be a dark area. If you do not have an electrical outlet in your entry consider adding a ceiling light. I love using a nice chandelier or lantern style light. And make sure your light is installed high enough that guests don’t bump their heads or the door bangs it when opening. I use flush mount or semi-flush mount lights for entries with low ceilings.

### Tip No. 5: Tray, bowl or basket

Decorative trays or bowls are great for corralling the clutter. Car keys tossed into a bright ceramic bowl versus tossed onto the table make the space feel organized. And who wants to see that pile of junk mail piled up waiting to be read? Instead toss



it into a pretty basket to be sorted through later.

### Tip No. 6: Fresh Flowers

And finally, never underestimate the power of fresh flowers. Yes it can seem like a bit of an indulgence to have fresh flowers on a weekly basis. But how about an orchid or other flowering plant? You will be greeted with fresh blooms for weeks on end. I love buying the inexpensive orchids from Trader Joe’s and popping them into a decorative pot or bowl and adding some Spanish moss around the top. I can get six to eight weeks of blooms before having to replace them.

And there you have it, my top ideas for creating a warm and welcoming entrance. I hope this inspired you to create a little space of beauty in your own home.

Until next time!

As the Owner and Principal Designer of Lamorinda-based Amanda Carol Interiors, Amanda Eck believes your home’s interior should be both approachable and well-appointed. She often asserts, “Beauty is a necessity.”

With a distinct sense of style that mixes contemporary and classic design she fashions spaces that are both elegant and inviting. Her design aesthetic is inspired by anything visual but especially fashion, architecture and art.

Visit <http://amandacarolinteriors.com> for more design ideas.





# 1031 Bollinger Canyon Road, Moraga



Rancho Dos Rios: Main house: 4bd/2.5ba, 3,432 sq.ft. Detached 4 car garage with 1,018 sq.ft. inlaw. Breezeway barn & More! Shown by appointment only. Offered at \$1,995,000

161 Walford Drive, Moraga



4bd/2.5ba, 2,271 sq.ft.  
Offered at \$1,275,000

39 Sherwood Court, Moraga



5bd/3ba, 2,850 sq.ft..  
Offered at \$1,449,000

204 Moraga Road, Moraga



4bd/2.5ba, 2,438 sq.ft.  
Offered at \$1,325,000

1038 Leland Drive, Lafayette



3bd/2ba, 1,228 sq.ft.  
Offered at \$925,000



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All information herein deemed reliable but not guaranteed.



*Digging Deep*

# The Magic of May

By Cynthia Brian

*"Harmony makes small things grow. Lack of it makes big things decay." — Sallust**Sweet jasmine climbs a palm tree filling the air with perfume.*

Photos Cynthia Brian

**B**y mid-May Mother Nature has waved her magical wand sprinkling glitter and glory among her growing children. No matter where you look, shrubs, trees and landscapes showcase a beauty and harmony that set this month apart from the remaining 11.

Herbaceous peonies are budding and will bloom for weeks offering outstanding companionship to mixed perennial gardens. Glorious bouquets of roses decorate pathways and arbors. Fields of bearded iris brighten the most mundane areas with their multitude of colors, gentle fragrance and graceful arches. Horse chestnut, buckeye and locust trees are overflowing with grapelike bunches of blooms. Get up close to examine the intricacies of their flowers.

The warmer weather has sped up the blooming season while only a month earlier the cooler weather slowed it down. My waves of bright blue forget-me-nots have settled into a sea of seeds that attach to any clothing that ventures near, easily spreading the flowers to places unplanned. Along the creek beds, even the poisonous hemlock weeds sprouted several feet taller than in previous years with attractive clusters of flowers resembling Queen

Anne's lace. Tiny Alpine strawberries are red, ripe, and delicious as snacks or in salads. Better to eat these than any store-bought strawberry. Thanks to the unparalleled Pearl's Premium grass seeds, my lawn has never looked so lush and lovely. If you want turf that is tough, drought resistant, low maintenance and beautiful, start thinking now about preparing your ground for an autumn seeding of Pearl's Premium ([www.PearlsPremium.com](http://www.PearlsPremium.com)).

The Old Farmer's Almanac recently contacted a colleague garden writer asking about what tools, products, and plants gardeners sought most this year. She posted a request for suggestions on our member community site and I reveled in the answers that I believe resonate with you, my garden guide readers. Here's my abbreviated version of what we gardeners want.

1. We crave information that we can use on a daily basis.
2. We want to grow our own food for better nutrition and first-rate freshness.
3. We want to save money.
4. We want to bring pollinators into our gardens for an organically friendly habitat. We are putting out the welcome mat for birds, bees, butterflies and bats.
5. We want to reduce waste by composting more.
6. We want tools that are sturdy, long lasting, yet not exorbitantly expensive.
7. We want to explore simpler to use, more environmentally friendly power tools that are battery powered and strong.
8. We want space saving ideas including container and vertical gardening techniques.
9. We want to learn to prune properly.
10. We want low-maintenance, native alternatives, and drought resistant plants.
11. We want to ENJOY our garden rooms!

The wants of the national garden community echo locally as well. My promise to you is to continue to bring you the latest tools, tips, and tricks that will make your garden experience extraordinary.

... continued on page D18

*Green, lush Pearl's Premium grass and colorful landscaping is a tribute to May magic.*





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## Lamorinda Home Sales recorded ... continued from page D2

### LAFAYETTE ... continued

550 Merriewood Drive, \$1,424,000, 4 Bdrms, 2142 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 4-5-17;

Previous Sale: \$901,000, 05-02-03

1191 Pleasant Hill Circle, \$1,600,000, 3 Bdrms, 1408 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 4-13-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,000,000, 07-30-15

841 Santa Maria Way, \$1,425,000, 3 Bdrms, 1844 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 4-7-17

3337 Sweet Drive, \$1,220,000, 3 Bdrms, 1209 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 4-11-17;

Previous Sale: \$860,000, 10-07-13

1005 Timothy Lane, \$2,100,000, 5 Bdrms, 4868 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 4-12-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,735,000, 01-31-13

1083 Upper Happy Valley Road, \$1,905,000, 3 Bdrms, 2073 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt,

4-7-17; Previous Sale: \$1,175,000, 05-03-13

3330 Vaughn Road, \$1,630,000, 3 Bdrms, 2736 SqFt, 2003 YrBlt, 4-10-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,485,000, 07-05-05

### MORAGA

119 Ascot Court #3, \$618,000, 3 Bdrms, 1320 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 4-10-17;

Previous Sale: \$430,000, 12-27-13

1260 Bollinger Canyon, \$875,000, 4 Bdrms, 2303 SqFt, 1940 YrBlt, 4-7-17;

Previous Sale: \$575,000, 12-22-00

217 Rheem Boulevard, \$1,098,000, 3 Bdrms, 1610 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 4-6-17;

Previous Sale: \$695,000, 11-30-11

### ORINDA

19 Charles Hill Road, \$1,405,000, 4 Bdrms, 2850 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 4-7-17;

Previous Sale: \$103,500, 06-11-76

95 Diablo View Drive, \$2,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 3961 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 4-11-17;

Previous Sale: \$2,375,000, 04-09-13

36 El Patio, \$1,900,000, 4 Bdrms, 3144 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 4-7-17;

Previous Sale: \$60,000, 06-23-72

80 La Encinal, \$1,875,000, 5 Bdrms, 3421 SqFt, 1990 YrBlt, 4-7-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,778,000, 04-27-15

220 Longview Terrace, \$1,215,000, 3 Bdrms, 2021 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 4-11-17;

Previous Sale: \$895,000, 11-12-10

27 Martha Road, \$1,295,000, 4 Bdrms, 1772 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 4-12-17

37 Southwood Drive, \$1,565,000, 4 Bdrms, 1900 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 4-6-17;

Previous Sale: \$375,000, 01-06-98

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## Gardening Guide

# The Magic of May

... continued from page D16



A close-up of the horse chestnut blossoms.

Photos Cynthia Brian



Alpine strawberries are a tangy snack.



Hemlock is growing to twelve feet with beautiful white blooms that are toxic.

### CLEAN and DIRTY PRODUCE

In my opinion, one of the main reasons to grow your own fruits, vegetables, and herbs is to know what is in your soil and on your plants. The USDA discovered 178 different pesticides on sample produce this year with the residue persisting even after the produce was thoroughly washed. Strawberries topped the list with over 20 different pesticides, one of the main reasons I grow my own strawberries and Alpine berries.

The cleanest and therefore the healthiest produce included:

1. Corn
2. Avocadoes
3. Pineapples
4. Cabbage
5. Onions
6. Peas
7. Papaya
8. Asparagus
9. Mangoes
10. Eggplant
11. Honeydew Melons
12. Kiwis
13. Cantaloupe
14. Cauliflower
15. Grapefruit

Pesticide residues are extremely rare on “The Clean 15” so these are items that we can buy and serve without worry.

Known as “the Dirty Dozen” here’s a list of the worst produce culprits you can purchase:

1. Strawberries
2. Spinach
3. Nectarines
4. Apples
5. Peaches
6. Celery
7. Grapes
8. Pears
9. Cherries
10. Tomatoes
11. Bell Peppers
12. Potatoes

Sadly, all of these fruits and vegetables are family favorites and generally considered to be healthy. Luckily we can easily grow all of these and if you don’t want to grow your own, make sure to buy organic.



The fluorescent pink cornflowers (*gladiolus communis*) are a favorite deer dinner.



## Cynthia Brian's Mid-month Gardening Tips

- **TUNE UP** your irrigation system. Check for sprinklers that aren't working, bushes or fences that are blocking sprinkler heads, broken pipes, clogged nozzles, leaky hoses and valves, and sprinklers that are spraying driveways and walkways.
  - **MULCH** for water retention and weed prevention. Three inches is recommended. Your soil will improve over time as well.
  - **TAKE** breaks while gardening to protect your back and knees.
  - **PLANT** summer blooming bulbs and seeds. There are over 100 different choices of bulbs and 200 perennials.
  - **IMPROVE** memory, lower cancer risk, and promote your heart health by planting a container of blueberries. Easy to grow as a patio plant, one serving provides 25 percent of your daily Vitamin C requirement.
  - **WIN** \$50,000 for your Garden: As a judge in America's Best Gardener Contest. I encourage you to enter your best garden photo. The top prize is \$50,000. [www.americasbestgardener.com](http://www.americasbestgardener.com).
- Avoid decay and continue the harmony every day. Enjoy the magic of May. Have a magnificent Memorial Day weekend, too!

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!



Cynthia Brian loves gardening in May.

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, is a New York Times best selling author, actor, radio personality, speaker, media and writing coach as well as the Founder and Executive Director of Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3. Tune into Cynthia's Radio show at [www.StarStyleRadio.com](http://www.StarStyleRadio.com) Available for hire for any project. [Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com](mailto:Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com) [www.GoddessGardener.com](http://www.GoddessGardener.com) 925-377-STAR

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### ORINDA

New Listing

#### 29 Via Callados

Romantic Sleepy Hollow "tree house" Retreat. 3 bedrooms + office, 2.5 baths, approx. 2318 sq ft., on .62 acres. Updated and light filled home with soaring ceilings and skylights. Come see!  
**\$1,125,000**



### ORINDA

New Listing

#### 1 Kittiwake Road

Exceptional allure Mid-century 3 bedroom, 3 bath home of great charm & appeal. Lovely features of quality redwood, floor to ceiling windows, vaulted beam ceilings, views & nature at your doorstep.  
**\$1,225,000**



### ORINDA

New Listing

#### 662 Moraga Way

Meticulously maintained 4 bed, 2.5 bath with open kitchen with custom cabinets, granite counters, high end appliances & center island. Pool, hot tub, sport court, synthetic lawn & expansive patios.  
**\$1,249,000**



### ORINDA

New Listing

#### 11 Las Palomas

Modern light filled home set on knoll providing exceptional privacy & tranquility. Each bdrm is en-suite. Bonus office/ 4th bdrm. Fabulous kitchen. Special in/outdoor ambiance, valley views, level lawn.  
**\$1,365,000**



### ORINDA

New Listing

#### 411 Camino Sobrante

One of Orinda's most charming & distinctive homes set on Premier parcel at El Sueno corner lot. Incredible "Old World" charm in every rm. Easy access to patios, yards for entertaining, family fun.  
**\$1,750,000**



### ORINDA

New Listing

#### 2 Scenic Drive

Fabulous 3281 sq ft, 5bd/4ba two story French country home in wonderful close-in neighborhood. Exquisitely renovated throughout. Private level 1/3 acre lot with expansive lawn, pathways, & gardens.  
**\$2,089,000**



### ORINDA

#### 176 Camino Don Miguel

Magnificent custom built classic traditional 3 bedroom, 3.5 bath home overlooking the 5th fairway of Orinda Country Club. Beautiful lawns, gardens, terraces.  
**\$2,225,000**



### ORINDA

New Price

#### 3 Gardiner Court

Fabulous apx. 5156sf executive retreat nestled on gorgeous 1.2 acre w/sparkling pool, sport court, lawns, & views. Kitchen adjoining family room w/French doors open to veranda. 5 bdrms + office.  
**\$2,695,000**



### ORINDA

New Listing

#### 22 Van Tassel Lane

Quality crafted Mediterranean style with ideal inside/ outside living spaces of exceptional beauty. Over-sized rooms, atrium, guest cottage, sauna, wine cellar, pool & spa. Views!  
**\$2,795,000**



### MORAGA

New Listing

#### 365 Birchwood Drive

Spacious Single-Level home with 4 Bedrooms, 3 Baths, Eat-in Kitchen, Sparkling Pool and Views. Close to trail, park and shopping.  
**\$1,395,000**



### MORAGA

New Listing

#### 1031 Bollinger Canyon Road

Horse lover's dream home! Rancho Dos Rios is a 10.51 acre ranch with 3,432 sq.ft., 4bd, 2.5ba home, detached 4 car gar. w/1,018 sq.ft. in-law apt., pool, 2 stall barn w/paddocks, 5,400 sq.ft. arena, mare-motel.  
**\$1,995,000**



### LAFAYETTE

New Listing

#### 844 Santa Maria Way

Exceptional home in sought after "Trails Neighborhood". Apx. 4000 sq.ft., 5 bdrms, 4 baths, "Chef's" kitchen adjoining family rm plus play/theater rm. Seamless indoor/ outdoor living. Come & enjoy!  
**\$2,700,000**



### CONCORD

New Listing

#### 1901 Meredith Court

Beautiful Rancher on quiet cul-de-sac. Pride of ownership abounds. Fully remodeled 3 bedroom/ 3 bath with Bonus Detached Office/ Studio. Fruit trees and garden beds. Backs to Open Space.  
**\$685,000**



### KENSINGTON

New Listing

#### 71 Rincon Road

Adorable 1950 Cottage, apx. 1224 Sq. Ft., 3 Bedrooms, 2 New Baths, Hardwood Throughout, Fresh Paint.  
**\$895,000**



### WALNUT CREEK

New Listing

#### 225 Mayhew Way #11

Spectacular townhome w/remodeled kitchen, hardwood style flrs, beautiful master bdrm & more. Short walk to Trail & nearby BART. Assigned covered parking space w/add'l guest parking, community pool.  
**\$495,000**



### WALNUT CREEK

New Listing

#### 361 Shady Glen Road

Walnut Heights Treasure. Beaut. renovated in 2017. Single level, high ceilings, walls of glass, detached bonus rm, fabulous .74 acre private setting. Views, top W.C. schools, Las Lomas High. Close to downtown.  
**\$1,375,000**

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