

# Life in LAMORINDA

## Lamorinda Pétanque goes global

By Sophie Braccini



Noah in Marseilles

Do you know pétanque? Fourteen-year-old Lafayette resident Noah Sonet does and he is representing Lamorinda at the pétanque world championship in Marseilles, France this summer.

The young member of the Lamorinda Pétanque club is one of three young Americans on the U.S. junior team. While his son Noah is competing in France, Gilbert Sonet will be featuring the local club in San Francisco on July 15 as part of the annual celebration of the French-American friendship that takes place (almost) on Bastille Day, which is July 14.

Who knew that the club that was founded in Lafayette and endowed with beautiful courts along Saint Mary's Road less than 10 years ago would grow to breed champions? Gilbert Sonet was instrumental from the start in the creation of the club. He is a native French businessman who has been working in the restaurant and retail industry for years and lives in Lafayette with his family. His son Noah has been playing pétanque since he was 4 years old and quickly showed great talent. Two years ago he won the U.S. championship as part of a "triple" — a team of three players of different ages, with

his father and another Lamorinda player.

Pétanque is a rather simple game of small metal bowls (boules) that have to get as close as possible to a wooden target (cochonnet). It is part of the very ancient and wide family of games that involve rolling a ball toward a target; bocce in Italy and lawn bowling in England are part of the same group. This French version was born in Provence in the mid-19th century. There is a U.S. pétanque fédération that connects clubs all over the country, and 10 clubs are affiliated in northern California.

Gilbert Sonet insists that even if some players at the Lamorinda Pétanque club are very serious, the majority just play to have a fun family time and a picnic under the trees of Lafayette. He says that the majority of the members are English speakers, always ready to show the game to beginners on a Sunday afternoon and lend some bowls.

It is the same spirit of inclusion that drove Gilbert Sonet to say yes when he was contacted by Charles Ségalas to organize pétanque demonstrations and games at the San Francisco Bastille Day celebration. Ségalas is the president of an organization that connects all

the French clubs in the Bay Area. There are some 30,000 French citizens in the Bay Area, and many more who have become Americans or have French parents.

Ségalas says that the July 15 party at Justin Herman Plaza at the Embarcadero has been revived by the French Consul in San Francisco, Emmanuel Lebrun-Damiens with the support of San Francisco mayor Ed Lee. The event will feature local French businesses, entertainment, food and libations. After 6 p.m. a dance party is organized on the plaza.

Gilbert Sonet and members of the Lamorinda pétanque will start playing and teaching the game starting at 11 a.m. until 6 p.m. He has already prepared the "boules," the Lamorinda banners, and his joyous energy along with his unmistakable French accent that will do wonders to get people to participate.

By the time the party ends, Gilbert Sonet should have the results of the world tournament and hope to be able to announce it. The event is free and opened to the public. More information is available at [www.bastilledaysf.org](http://www.bastilledaysf.org).

Photos provided

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Noah Sonet shows his pétanque style in Lafayette.

## Lafayette Plaza rocked by Lamorinda Idol finalists

By Pippa Fisher



Lamorinda Idol contestant Maggie Heiskell sings during Rock the Plaza. Photo Pippa Fisher

Crowds enjoyed the evening sunshine and the musical sounds of Lamorinda's finest young musicians, packing the Plaza on a recent Friday night as many of the 36 soloists and 10 groups selected as finalists for the Lamorinda Idol Competition performed at the Lafayette park.

These finalists will be given the chance to perform at several events over the summer prior to the finals, which will be held at the Orinda

Theatre on Aug. 27. Winners will be selected based on a combination of judges' and audience votes.

The contest, now in its 12th year, is sponsored by the Lamorinda Arts Council. The talented young performers remaining in the competition were selected from an initial group of 150, from 27 schools. The program is open to those from kindergarten through 12th grade who either attend school or reside in Lamorinda.

## Tribute to the Troops

Honoring our Veterans and Saluting our Troops

### Saturday July 15, 2017

5 PM to Twilight

Lafayette Reservoir  
**FREE to the public and all military**

### Twilight Concert and Picnic

featuring  
**The Midnight Flyers (acoustic Eagles covers)**  
**and The Big Band of Rossmoor**

Bring a blanket, your lawn chairs and a picnic and join the Rotary Club of Lafayette at the Lafayette Reservoir to show support for our active military, reserves, veterans, Gold Star Families whose children have died while in service to our country and the Blue Star Moms who work tirelessly to provide a piece of America to military who are serving overseas and who assist and support the Gold Star Families keeping the memories of their children alive.

**Golf Cart shuttles will be available from the main parking lot up to the Rotary Stage.**

**The Lafayette Reservoir is located west of downtown Lafayette.**

The Big Band of Rossmoor is presented by Generations in Jazz

sponsored by Lamorinda Weekly