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The evening sky over Lamorinda Oct. 12 filled with smoke from the North Bay wildfires.

Photo Andy Scheck

Smoke puts a chokehold on Lamorinda

By Nick Marnell

The worst air quality ever recorded in many parts of the Bay Area descended upon Lamorinda the week of Oct. 9 with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District reporting Very Unhealthy air caused by smoke from the massive wildfires in the North Bay.

The amount of air pollution was unprecedented throughout the Bay Area, according to Ralph Borrmann

of the air quality district. With active wildfires and changing wind patterns, the poor air quality lingered in Lamorinda, with reports of local hardware stores quickly selling out of masks.

However, Victoria Ballabares of Contra Costa Health Services advised that masks provide little protection. "People feel safe with masks, but we do not recommend

them because they do not stop the particulate matter from the smoke from those fires," she said. "Keep indoors and keep outside air outside."

All schools in the Acalanes, Moraga, Orinda and Lafayette school districts remained open but curtailed outdoor activities. Homecoming games were canceled. The Orinda Library closed. ...continued on page A8

Advertising

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Shop Moraga	C4

Peter Liu's Active Listings:

- 17 Nephi Ct., Lafayette: 4bd/3ba, \$1,265,000
- 651 Moraga Rd. #10, Moraga: 3bd/2ba, \$515,000
- 785 Augusta Dr., Moraga: 3bd/2ba, \$1,050,000
- 114 Lucille Way, Orinda: 4bd/3.5ba, \$1,295,000
- 595 Dalewood Dr. Orinda: 5bd/4.5ba, \$2,195,000
- 52 Coachwood Terr., Orinda: 3.75 ac lot, \$1,195,000
- 240 Taurus Ave., Oakland: 4bd/4.5 ba, \$2,090,000

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Get your street feast on: food trucks staying in Orinda

By Sora O'Doherty



Photo Sora O'Doherty

Much to the delight of What's Up Downtown Orinda, the City Council agreed to continue the pilot food truck project on Thursday nights into the spring, while at the same time seeking a request for proposals for a permanent food truck event.

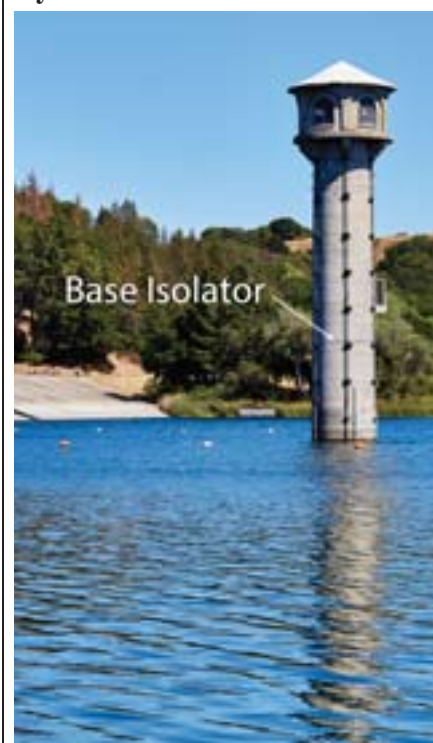
Local restaurateurs, however, were not unani-

mously happy with the pilot project. Representing the Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director Sophie Braccini told the council at the Oct. 5 meeting that formal restaurants felt no impact from the food trucks, but that the casual restaurants felt they were severely impacted.

... continued on page A11

EBMUD to jumpstart Lafayette Reservoir tower repairs

By Nick Marnell



Officials of the East Bay Municipal Utility District said that it will begin the seismic renovations to the Lafayette Reservoir outlet tower in 2020 once the project is approved by the California Division of Safety of Dams and the district completes its planning, design and community outreach. The DSOD found that the tower was vulnerable to a major seismic event and though EBMUD had planned to retrofit the tower by 2022, the state agency said the proposed timeline was unacceptable, with continued delays "increasing the potential risk to public safety."

According to Xavier Irias, EBMUD director of engineering and construction, the district and its consultants came up with three options for the tower renovation. Option No. 1 would be to cut off the top of the tower, which would reduce the tower weight and prevent it from overstress. An alternative was to strengthen the tower with external rods and tendons. ... continued on page A8

Civic News A1-A12	Life in Lamorinda B1-B8	Sports C1-C4	Our Homes D1-D16
Moraga approves additional \$1M Canyon Bridge funding – page A4	Residents ramp up fire relief efforts – B1	Strong football season highlighted – page C1	Kitchen remodel lessons learned – page D1
Fire Districts A8	Full-time ambulance for Orinda on hold – page A8		



Lafayette

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Oct. 23, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Nov. 6, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Oct. 23, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Arts & Science Discovery Center,
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District
Wednesday, Oct. 18, 7 p.m.
AUHSD Board Room
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Oct. 18, 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




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Chamber of Commerce:

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Delayed opening still possible for Lafayette Res, but not effective yet

By Pippa Fisher

Concerned early walkers at Lafayette Reservoir made their voices heard after seeing signs indicating that the reservoir would be pushing back the daily opening of the park from 6:30 to 7 a.m.

The East Bay Municipal Utility District had hoped to open later in an effort to concentrate staff at the reservoir during the busier parts of the day, increasing their availability to manage visitor needs.

EBMUD spokesperson Jenesse Miller said that because those ear-

ly-morning walkers who would be impacted had contacted them, they have put any plans for a delayed opening schedule on hold for now. "We are re-evaluating the situation because of public outcry." She said that in recent years the park has opened year-round at 6:30 a.m. but that there are not that many visitors before 7 a.m.

Miller says the utility company is responsive to the community and will be looking in more detail at early morning usage during the

months of October through December, evaluating impact to customers and safety before deciding whether to bring in the later opening currently planned for Jan. 1 through March 31.

Residents may also have noticed signage threatening a total ban on dogs in the area if dog owners don't pick up after their dogs. These signs, now removed, were not official, Miller said.

Miller commented that, while picking up dog poop is far from the

park rangers' favorite job up at the Lafayette Reservoir, there are no plans to ban dogs from the area. She said they plan to use improved signage to get the message across.

If residents want to weigh in on the subject of opening hours, they should call (510) 986-7807 or email Lafayette.reservoir@ebmud.com.

Bay Area young musicians audition in Battle of the Bands

By Pippa Fisher



Teen band "DEA" wins Battle of the Bands in 2016.

Photo provided

Local teen bands have a chance this fall to take their musical talents out of the garage and onto the stage and to possibly win some cool cash and gift certificate prizes in the bargain.

Teen Services Library Assistant Patrick Brogan is once again in charge of organizing this year's annual Teen Battle of the Bands, now in its fifth year, which will take place this year from 6 to 8:30 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4 at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center in the Community Hall.

Brogan says it is open to bands whose members are in sixth to 12th grades and who live in the San Francisco Bay Area. It is open to all types of musical genres but songs must not contain obscene or offensive lyrics. Each band gets to perform up to three songs each during their set.

Audition videos or sound recordings should be sent to Brogan via email to pbrogan@ccclib.org with the subject line "5th Annual Teen Battle of the Bands Audition" and are due by Sunday, Oct. 22.

If more than five bands audi-

tion, then the community will be invited to vote during the week of Oct. 23-29 on the top five bands to perform. Selected bands will be notified the week of Oct. 30.


This is Brogan's fifth year organizing the event. He says he loves getting to see everyone per-

form. "There is some seriously amazing talent out there!"



Typically the panel of judges is made up of professional musicians and music enthusiasts who are looking at musical ability, originality, professionalism and stage presence/style.

Interested teen musicians should contact Brogan at pbrogan@ccclib.org or go to https://docs.google.com/document/d/1U1C1LJqhtKyUltEVfemtGU6-8rjv2HY4b1L_FE5pzF4/edit to learn more.

LAFAYETTE POLICE	
Lafayette Police Department Incident Summary Report Sept. 24-30	
Alarms	34
911 Calls (incl hang-ups)	6
Noise Complaints	5
Traffic Stops	97
Suspicious Circumstances	8
Suspicious Subjects	11
Suspicious Vehicles	7
Service to Citizen	18
Animal Cruelty	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
20 Block Lafayette Cr.	
1000 Block Windsor Dr.	
Auto Burglary	
Orchard Nursery And Florist	
1000 Block 2nd St. (2)	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Battery	
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Civil Disturbance	
Happy Valley Rd./Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
1000 Block Carol Ln.	
Civil Problem	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Fire/Ems Response Info	
4000 Block Happy Valley Rd.	
Forgery	
400 Block Florence Dr.	
Found Property	
900 Block Dewing Ave.	
900 Block Acalanes Rd.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)	
1000 Block N Thompson Rd.	
1000 Block 2nd St.	
Fraud False Pretenses	
300 Block Read Dr.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
H&S Violation	
Moraga Rd./School St.	
Harassment	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
Pleasant Hill Rd./Acalanes Ave.	
3500 Block Brook St.	
900 Block Moraga Rd.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)	
Identity Theft	
3300 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Juvenile Disturbance	
1200 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.	
Lost Property	
3100 Block Old Tunnel Rd.	
3000 Block Bradbury Dr.	
Missing Adult	
1000 Block Pleasant Hill Rd.	
Motorist Assist	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Ordinance Violation	
Cabernet Ct./Silverwood Dr.	
Patrol Request	
Hampton Rd./Dyer Dr.	
Oak Hill Rd./Deer Hill Rd.	
Petty Theft	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd. (2)	
10 Block Almaden Ct.	
3500 Block Silver Springs Rd.	
Public Nuisance	
900 Block East St.	
Oak Hill Rd./Deer Hill Rd.	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Reckless Driving	
Hidden Valley Rd./Acalanes Rd.	
Deer Hill Rd./Laurel Dr.	
3500 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Silverado Dr./Merriewood Dr.	
Black Hawk Rd./Springhill Rd.	
Moraga Rd./St. Marys Rd.	
Silver Springs Rd./Moraga Rd.	
Shoplift	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Threats	
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
3400 Block School St.	
Trespass W/ Vehicle	
3700 Block Highland Rd.	
Unwanted Guest	
3400 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Springhill Elementary School	
3600 Block Bickerstaff St.	
3600 Block Mt. Diablo Blvd.	
Vandalism	
10 Block Wallabi Ct.	
Verbal Dispute	
Mt. Diablo Blvd./Moraga Rd.	
3200 Block Sweet Dr.	




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Second lawsuit filed in attempt to keep PG&E chainsaws out of Briones

By Pippa Fisher

Save Lafayette Trees has initiated another lawsuit in its attempt to save trees that PG&E says need to be axed in order to protect underground high transmission gas pipelines as part of the utility company's Community Pipeline Safety Initiative, this time in Briones.

The organization Save Lafayette Trees, which formed from concerned residents in response to the Lafayette City Council's March 27 decision to allow the removal of 272 trees from within the city, many on the Lafayette-Moraga regional trail, filed a second lawsuit on Sept. 29 against the East Bay Regional Parks District and PG&E in an attempt to save an additional 200 trees threatened in Briones. Save Lafayette Trees already has a lawsuit outstanding against the city of Lafayette and PG&E.

PG&E claims the trees in Lafayette need to be removed to provide access to the pipes in case of emergency and to protect the pipes from damage caused by tree roots.

However, Save Lafayette Trees, headed by Lafayette residents Michael Dawson and David Kusters, disputes the necessity of such drastic tree removal measures, saying that PG&E has failed to document a single case of tree roots damaging pipes and suggests instead that the utility company wants to make aerial observations easier by removing the trees.

"The California Environmental Quality Act lawsuit against EBRPD (and PG&E being named as real party) was filed as a direct result of EBRPD not being willing to extend our existing 'tolling agreement,' which would have assured both parties we would continue to discuss the issue of tree removal without risk of them implementing it," Dawson said.

"Since EBRPD was willing to let that tolling agreement expire, it was clear they were going to allow the removal of over 200 trees in Briones Park, which was separately negotiated with PG&E from the March 27 Tree Cutting Agreement with the city of Lafayette," Dawson continued.

PG&E has not released a map of the threatened Briones trees but a pipeline map is available on its website. Dawson says most of the trees are clearly marked for removal with most of the largest trees on the south side of Briones along the ridge.

"PG&E is paying East Bay Parks \$245,000. This amount is on top of the additional \$531,000 PG&E is paying to the city for the 272 trees within Lafayette," Dawson noted. "The bottom line is that with tree removal costs, it's easy to see PG&E is spending close to \$1 million taking down these trees, although it won't make our pipeline any safer."

EBRPD Assistant General Manager of Public Affairs said that they are currently evaluating the case.

While unable to comment on litigation, Dawson says that, regarding the original lawsuit, although they do not have any further settlement meetings scheduled before their Nov. 8 court appearance, they have not stopped talking to PG&E or to the city.

"Safety is and will always be our top priority," said PG&E Marketing and Communication Manager Jeff Smith. "We understand how important trees are to the community and are committed to working collaboratively with all stakeholders on plans to address those trees that pose a community safety concern."

As of now, PG&E has yet to respond to the EBRPD lawsuit but Dawson hopes that if they are able to come to a mutually agreeable resolution to the city lawsuit, it will help them resolve the EBRPD lawsuit as well. "It depends on how willing PG&E is to listen to the community concerns regarding unnecessary tree cutting and to address our ongoing pipeline safety questions.

"Again," Dawson said, "the (second) lawsuit was our last resort, after attempting to work directly with the agency to save the trees."

More kids than ever participate in Lafayette Walk/Bike to School Day

By Pippa Fisher



Plenty of bikes in the bike rack on Walk/Bike to School Day

Photo Pippa Fisher

With at least 50 percent of the school student population taking advantage of this year's Walk/Bike to School Day, Lafayette Elementary School's event was clearly a big success.

More walkers and bikers took part this year than in the past, according to event organizer Jenny Champion. "We definitely have parent support for walking to school and we love the walkability of Lafayette Elementary School."

School Principal Ann Kim elaborated that being located in close proximity to so many neighborhoods allows for much of the school population to live close enough to bike or walk to school on a regular basis. She makes the point

though that days such as Bike/Walk to School Day heighten that awareness within the community.

In exchange for stickers, bagels and juice, kids were encouraged at least on the day of the event, Oct. 4, to arrive at school by some means other than by car. Many youngsters enjoyed the snacks and music before school. And even after the bell sounded and the kids had all trooped back into their classrooms, parents continued to congregate and enjoy coffee.

"An additional benefit is that our parent community has an opportunity to come together on campus to socialize and share a light breakfast," said Kim.

... continued on page A9



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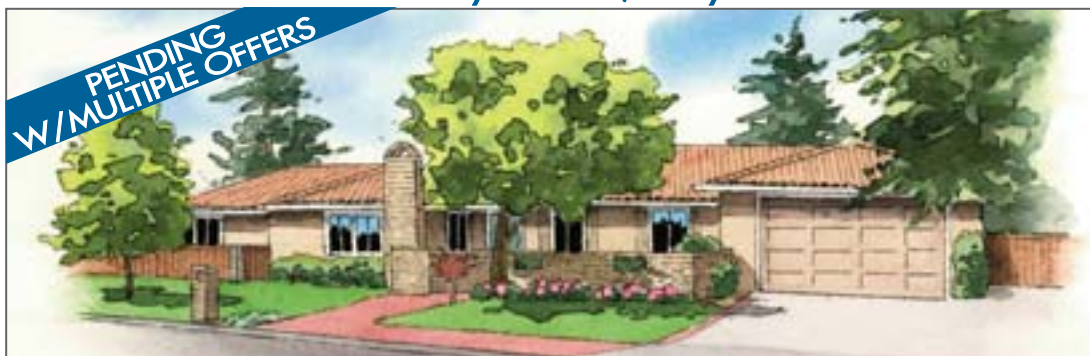
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Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, Oct. 25, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Nov. 6, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Oct. 23, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Moraga School District
Thursday, Nov. 14, 7 p.m.
Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School Auditorium
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

Summary covers Oct. 1-9

Alarms	20
Noise Complaints	7
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	7
Suspicious Circumstances	8
Suspicious Subjects	0
Suspicious Vehicles	1
Abandoned Vehicle	

Alta Mesa Dr./Moraga Rd.

Accident

Moraga Rd./Ascot Dr.

Battery

1700 block School St.

Disturbing the Peace

500 block Center St.
100 block Danefield Pl.

Disturbance (juvenile)

500 block Moraga Rd (2)

Dispute

100 block Eileen Ct.

Location n/a

Excessive Speed

Moraga Way/St. Andrews Dr.
Larch Ave./Sparrow Ct.

Fire/ EMS Response

3900 block Campolindo Dr.

Harassment

location n/a

Hit & Run

Camino Peral/Alta Mesa

ID Theft

200 block Corliss
200 block Calle La Montana
Location n/a

Mentally Ill Commitment

Campolindo High School

Missing Adult

10 block Magee Ct.

Reckless Driving

Natalie Dr./Campolindo Dr.
Moraga Way/Ivy Dr.
Moraga Rd./Rheem Blvd.

Shoplift

Safeway

Theft, petty

Saint Mary's College

Unwanted Guest

location n/a

Welfare Check

900 block Country Club Dr.
1900 block St. Andrews Dr.

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Town approves additional \$1M to complete Canyon Bridge construction

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Public Works Department received much higher bids than expected for the preparation of the site and the installation of a temporary bridge that will restore communication with the Canyon community. The increase in cost is partly due to the fact that the contractor was asked to work seven days a week and extra hours, if needed, to meet the deadline. Staff continues to target the end of November for the re-opening of Canyon Road.

Public Works Director Edric Kwan opened his presentation at the Oct. 12 special council meeting indicating that the town was facing a new challenge. The total cost to build the emergency temporary bridge replacing the one that became unsafe last April had jumped by about \$1 million. Most of that extra cost comes from the contractor that will prepare the site and install the emergency one-lane

bridge that the town will lease. The bid for the bridge lease itself, around \$200,000, came in at the estimated cost, and staff issued the contract for the bridge on Oct. 13.

Myers and Sons, which is doing the bridge preparation and installation, started work Oct. 9, preparing the mobilization and excavating for the future abatements. The schedule allows for 43 days to complete the work, including the installation of the bridge.

Several Canyon residents who depend on that bridge to reach Moraga, and who rely on the bridge for Moraga-Orinda Fire District responders to access the area, came to the Oct. 11 regular council meeting to express their frustrations and fears. The difficult situation they are enduring has fueled rumors, often unfounded, which in turn increases anxiety and feelings of neglect. For example, residents on Oct. 11 asked about the potential

of possible winterization of the bridge and postponement of the work to next year. Kwan explained that the basis for that rumor was a statement he made when the vice president of the Canyon School Board asked a judge to stop the demolition of the bridge. If that had happened, Kwan said he would have had to winterize the site because there is no room in the narrow passage to have both the old bridge and the emergency one.

When asked what would happen if rain would stop the construction and installation, Kwan explained that the contractor would have to follow the rules of closing the site on heavy rain days, and that it could delay the process, but that the first priority was to reopen Canyon Road.

The council members unanimously approved spending the extra money. Part of it will come from the town's reserve fund, fur-

ther reducing it to just \$500,000.

Council member Kymberleigh Korpus asked Kwan if some money could have been saved if the bids had been sent earlier in the summer. Kwan agreed, but explained that the bidding process is a highly regulated procedure that under normal circumstances can take a year for a bridge and includes many levels of environmental reviews. In this emergency case, some procedures were expedited but the Federal Highway Administration that will ultimately reimburse the town still required a bidding process.

When Kwan was asked when he thought the town would get its money back, he said that it would likely take several years. In 2017 alone, and even before the devastating North Bay fires, California was in need of emergency funding totaling over \$10 billion, most of which is unfunded at this time.

More property owner input sought for zoning of the Moraga Center Specific Plan

By Sophie Braccini

The Moraga Center Specific Plan was approved seven years ago, envisioning the construction of up to 600 new residences, new commercial spaces, and the creation of roads and civic spaces at the crossing of Moraga Way and Moraga Road. The zoning defining how this space would be developed was never approved. The town secured a grant to start the process of creating this zoning but now the town council has decided that it will not allocate the \$38,000 needed to complete the process with the consultant Opticos. Instead, the council decided to work with the Bruzzone family that owns most of the MCSP land and publicly study what elements of the plan could be amended to make its development possible.

For more than two years, the town has worked with Opticos to create zoning of the MCSP that would foster downtown development. The town has already spent \$150,000 of grant money from the Contra Costa Transportation Authority on this project, as well as an additional \$50,000 allocated in 2015-16.

The City Ventures' project, Moraga Center Homes, was approved as part of the MCSP and the lack of zoning led to the endorsement of a design that created deep resentment with residents who tried to overturn the ruling through a referendum. When she launched this zoning process, Planning Director Ellen Clark hoped to avoid a similar battle in the future and create common ground around a vision accepted by all. At the Oct. 11 council meeting, David Bruzzone forcefully criticized the proposed

zoning, indicating that it was going down the wrong path and was inconsistent with the MCSP.

He explained that the proposed zoning would create an element of uncertainty for future developments, and would limit any possible grading of his family's property. He reminded the council that he had several times raised the issues associated with this process and complained that he had been ignored.

... continued on page A8



MCSP land south of the new Harvest Court development.

Photo A. Schreck

Just Listed in Moraga!



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Town manager recruiter seeks community input

By Sophie Braccini

Bobbi Peckham of Peckham & McKenney presented to the town council the draft documents to advertise the town manager position in Moraga. All mostly agreed to the language proposed by the consultant, asking that reference to the salary of the current manager be removed. Council Member Jeanette Fritzy asked and got approval for the consultant to seek the public's input on the characteristics required for the position. An open meeting with Peckham, without the council members, is scheduled in the coming weeks.

The proposed advertising document opens with the description of Moraga as "a picturesque, affluent community tucked in the beautiful hillsides of San Francisco's East Bay. ..." Some council members were unhappy with the word "affluent," noting that the residents are mostly well-off, but that the town itself is poor. They asked that the now legendary qualifier for Moraga since its incorporation as "minimal government," be properly highlighted in the document.

Concerns over financial con-

straints peppered the entire Oct. 11 discussion with Peckham. Council Member Kymberleigh Korpus asked if Peckham had considered recruiting graduating students. The consultant responded that Moraga needed to hire someone with at least 10 years of public administration experience and that hiring a recent graduate would mean that department heads would spend a lot of their time training the new person.

Peckham detailed her recruiting process, based on years of experience and networking with professionals with potential who could fill the role in Moraga.

The council members also asked that the compensation of the current town manager, \$202,800, not be specified in the document, but that reference be made to a remuneration commensurate with the person's experience.

The discussion seemed to underscore that the council would like to see a non-town-manager candidate who may want to move upward, and who would be willing to sacrifice some of the remuneration in order to do that.

When asked about his recommendation, Town Manager Robert Priebe suggested that the person chosen also have experience in emergency preparedness.

Peckham will meet with the different department heads; Council Member Jeanette Fritzy asked that she also meet with the community to get input. The council suggested opening a meeting session where residents could come and share their vision for the next town manager with the consultant. Residents are invited to meet with Peckham anytime between 4:30 and 7 p.m. Nov. 7 in the Mosaic Room at the Hacienda de las Flores. Residents unable to come can reach the consultant via email at bobbi@peckhamandmckenney.com.

The timeline for the recruitment is tight: the filing deadline for candidates is Nov. 27, the preliminary interviews will be held on Dec. 5 and 6 with a list of recommended candidates given to the council by Dec. 13. Peckham plans for the finalists' interview process to take place in early January 2018.

Rheem reopening ceremony scheduled for early November

After 20 months of disruption due to the formation of a massive sinkhole, Rheem Boulevard is scheduled to reopen in mid-November. The section of corroded metallic culvert that failed has been replaced by reinforced concrete where Laguna Creek will now be able to flow.

While the repair itself will be

finished by the end of October, the town will take the opportunity to repave a part of Rheem Boulevard and include that in the overall cost of the repair, which will be reimbursed at about 85 percent.

Residents and merchants that were impacted by the traffic disturbances will be invited to cel-

brate the end of the disruption, partly caused by the weather and partly by the administrative obstacle course that impeded the town process to secure reimbursement of the work. Town staff will be there to celebrate the reopening as well, weather permitting.

- S. Braccini

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Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Nov. 8, 6 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Oct. 24, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Citizens' Infrastructure Oversight Commission

Wednesday, Nov. 8, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

School Board Meetings

Orinda Union School District
Monday, Nov. 13, 6 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
8 Altarinda Rd., Orinda
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

www.cityoforinda.org

Phone (925) 253-4200

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report

Oct. 1-7

Alarms	27
Noise Complaints	1
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	3
Traffic Stops	24
Suspicious Circumstances	9
Suspicious Subjects	5
Suspicious Vehicles	15
Abandoned Vehicle	
50 block Brookside Rd.	
Accident Injury	
Wilder Sports Field	
100 block Ardith Dr.	
Burglary, Auto	
10 block Theatre Square	
Burglary, Residential	
50 block Camino don Miguel	
Civil	
40 block St. Stephens Dr.	
50 block Tappan Ln.	
DUI	
Brookwood Rd./Moraga Way	
Dispute	
200 block Glorietta Blvd.	
Exhibition of Speed	
20 block Wilder Rd.	
ID Theft	
reported to police (2)	
Litter	
St. Stephens/Hwy 24	
Medical Hospital	
20 block Vista del Mar	
Misdemeanor	
Orinda Theater	
Phone Harass	
10 block Theatre Square (2)	
Promiscuous Shooting	
20 block Wildwood Rd.	
Reckless Driving	
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.	
Warrant Service/Arrest/Advice	
60 block Moraga Way	

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Maureen Wilbur

MW~ Maureen Wilbur ~

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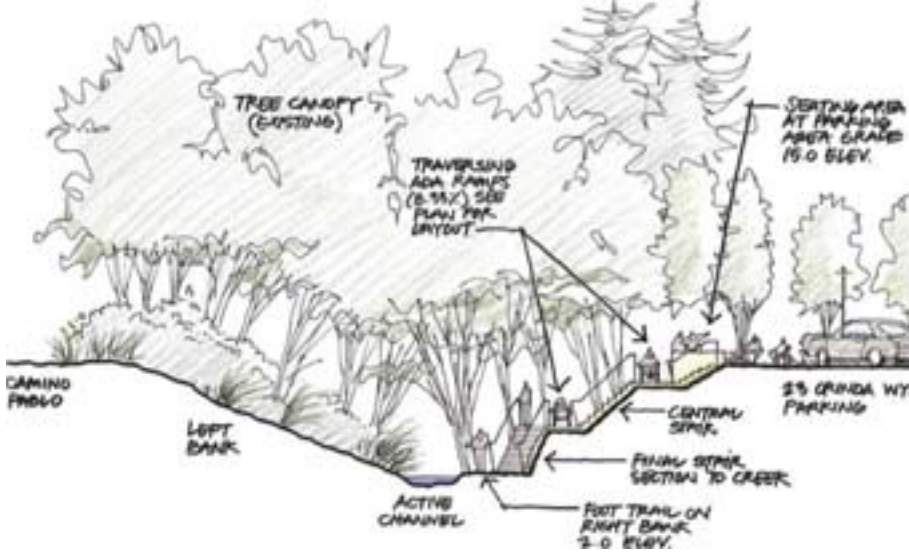
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Expert discusses restoring streams in difficult urban locations

By Sora O'Doherty



If there is one thing that Orindans seem to agree would be a positive step in the development of downtown, it is the daylighting of San Pablo Creek. It is also generally acknowledged that doing so will be a challenging process. That is why the Friends of Orinda Creeks invited an expert on exactly that process to speak at their October meeting.

Ann Riley, Ph.D., is the executive director of the non-profit Waterways Restoration Institute (WRI), and watershed and river restoration advisor for the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board. During her 12-year tenure with WRI, she has organized, planned, designed, constructed, and funded numerous stream-restoration projects in California and throughout the United States, and over four decades she has been involved with community-level nonprofits, as well as local, state and federal agencies in watershed planning. ... continued on next page

Orinda's approved short-term rentals must be registered, pay TOT

By Sora O'Doherty

With the growth of hosting platforms such as Airbnb, VRBO and Craigslist, short-term rentals out of private homes have been growing in recent years, but short-term rental registration got off to a good start with the registration of six properties in early October. According to Orinda Senior Planner Daisy Allen, the city has received no complaints about the plan to allow short-term rentals and collect transient occupancy tax (TOT) on them.

The ordinance regulating short-term rentals was adopted Aug. 15 by the Orinda City Council, and as of Oct. 5, property owners and/or operators who list properties, or guest areas on properties in Orinda for a rental period of less than 30 days, are required to register these short-term rentals with the city. Hosts of existing short-term rentals have a grace period of two months to register; the city may pursue code enforcement on unregistered short-term rentals after Dec. 5.

The ordinance provides for a new Section 17.3.12 in the Orinda Municipal Code, creating an annual short-term rental registration system with the following requirements: signed registration forms must be submitted, including contact information and other key information; short-term rentals are not eligible for temporary event permits; there must be a maximum occupancy of two people per bedroom, plus three people; there must be a maximum of one short-term rental per property at any given time; short-term rental operators must get a transient occupancy registration certificate and pay a TOT on guests of hotels or short-term rentals of 8.5 percent of the rent charged quarterly; and the property owner must affirm that short-term rentals comply with all applicable building, fire, health and zoning codes.

The TOT is collected by property owners except for those who use the Airbnb website; Airbnb builds the TOT into their booking system and passes the tax on to the city. The TOT is reported quarterly. Once there are 100 short-term rentals in Orinda, the planning commission will hold a public hearing to consider the effectiveness of the ordinance. Staff will prepare a report for the city council regarding implementation next August. More information about short-term rentals can be found on the

city of Orinda's website: <http://www.cityoforinda.org/365/Short-Term-Rental-Registration>.

Short-term rental registration process:

- Complete the Short-Term Rental Registration form.
- Complete the supplemental Tax Registration Certificate Application form.
- Submit both documents to the Planning Department along with payment of \$100. Registration can be completed via mail or in person during Planning Department permit counter hours: Monday through Thursday 1 to 4:30 p.m.
- Registration is valid for one year and must be renewed annually along with a renewal fee of \$50.
- Short-Term Rental property owners must pay a quarterly transient occupancy tax. The quarterly tax return form will be provided by the Finance Department upon issuance of a TOT registration certificate.

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Restoring streams

... continued from page A6



A beaver lives in the restored Napa Creek. Photo provided

water quality, water conservation, hydrology, flood management, stream science and restoration. She has served on committees for the National Academy of Sciences and the John Heinz Center for Science, Economics, and the Environment.

In 1982 Riley cofounded the Urban Creeks Council in California and in 1993 was instrumental in organizing the first conference of the Coalition to Restore Urban Waters, a national network of urban stream and river organizations. In 1984 she spearheaded a program under the auspices of the California Department of Water Resources that continues today to provide grants supporting urban stream restoration. She is the author of "Restoring Streams in Cities" and "Restoring Neighborhood Streams," both published by Island Press.

While many think that restoring San Pablo Creek is a daunting task, Riley thinks it is a piece of cake. She showed how creeks in difficult urban landscapes have been successfully restored. Two areas of particular note in her talk were the Albany University Village and the restoration of Napa Creek. In the Napa creek project, seven to nine homes beside the creek that were

constantly flooding were relocated. Following its restoration, the creek is now home to beavers and other wildlife. In Martinez you can also find beavers in the restored creek, plus steelhead, herons, pond turtles and otters. She also talked about bringing the use of ancient technology that has been forgotten but is enjoying a comeback, such as soil bioengineering to stabilize creek banks.

Funding the Napa project required a sales tax that had to be passed by a two-thirds vote. But Riley pointed out this led to participation and "buy in" that really meant a lot to the project. Riley talked about other funding possibilities, and noted that there will be a bond for parks and water projects during the next election. Codornices Creek in Albany/Berkeley was restored with grants from the state of California. El Cerrito, she noted, made it a development condition for a new shopping center that the developer daylight the creek.

In Orinda, she said, what needs to be done is to provide a new slope for the creek and to control flooding by design, and added that there needs to be a community discussion about how many parking spaces can be traded off for creek restoration and business rejuvenation. Riley concluded her talk with a wish list for San Pablo Creek, which included bringing the creek up to the level of the stores, providing more outdoor seating, trails and a pocket park. Riley thinks that the Urban Land Institute report, which was presented Sept. 20 to the city of Orinda, is of great value and that there are a lot of creative things that can be done with San Pablo Creek. She recommends that there be a subcommittee on creek restoration, and that a team of landscape architects be consulted.

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Orinda wins Outstanding Sustainable Engineering Project of the Year award

By Sora O'Doherty



Public Works Director Larry Theis and Paving Engineer Project Manager Farah Khorashadi are all smiles after receiving the Outstanding Sustainable Engineering Project of the Year award. Back row, from left: Orinda City Council members Dean Orr, Inga Miller, Mayor Eve Phillips, Vice Mayor Amy Worth and Council Member Darlene Gee; front row: Don Greb, principal engineer of Griffin Soil, Theis, Khorashadi, and Bill Howard, president of Griffin Soil Group. Photo Sora O'Doherty

Using full depth reclamation to restore Orinda's roads garnered an award for Public Works Director Larry Theis and Paving Engineer Project Manager Farah Khorashadi at the American Society of Civil Engineers San Francisco Section annual meeting and

awards gala on Sept. 14. Full depth reclamation is beneficial environmentally and financially and leads to quicker restoration of roads. Vice Mayor Amy Worth commended the Public Works Department at a recent council meeting, noting that Orinda tried full depth reclama-

tion before other cities. Full depth reclamation, or full depth recycling, is a process that rebuilds worn out asphalt pavements by recycling the existing roadway. Old asphalt and base materials are pulverized in place using a specialized machine called a reclaimer, and then reused.

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Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Board of Directors Wednesday, Oct. 18, 7 p.m. Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors Tuesday, Nov. 14, 1:30 p.m. Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.



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MOFD to add firefighters, but no full-time ambulance for Orinda

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District accepted a federal grant in September that will allow the district to add four firefighters over three years, but the district will not use the funds to restore a full-time, dedicated ambulance to Fire Station 45 in Orinda.

The \$1.4 million Staffing for Adequate Firefighter and Emergency Response grant, authored by Interim Fire Chief Jerry Lee, covers 75 percent of the costs for years one and two and 35 percent for year three for the additional firefighters.

Lee requested in the grant application that the money be used to fully staff Medic 145, which is currently cross staffed by the Station 45 engine company when the two principal district ambulances are deployed. He explained that adding the ambulance to Orinda will help reduce the city's overall response times, which lag those in Moraga by two minutes or more, and will help address the tax equity situation of Orinda residents paying the district a higher share of property tax than do the residents

of Moraga.

By using the grant money, should the district have restored full-time Medic 145 service into Orinda, MOFD costs would have increased \$344,000 for two additional daily staffed positions over three years. With the district maintaining its current daily staffing level of 17 over the same period, expenses will drop by nearly \$1 million.

Capt. Mark McCullah, newly elected district union representative, pushed for restoration of the full-time ambulance. "The grant

was written for a reason, and should be accepted for that reason," McCullah said. Acceptance of the award does not lock the district into how it uses the money.

The board voted unanimously to accept the SAFER grant but the district will maintain its current staffing model, eschewing the additional full-time ambulance for now. The chief said he will return to the board with an updated staffing analysis for 2018, likely when MOFD places its new truck into service in the spring or summer.

MOFD firefighters take on larger roles with their labor union

By Nick Marnell



Anthony Stephens

The management of Local 1230 of the United Professional Firefighters of Contra Costa County will feature a strong Moraga-Orinda Fire District presence with the recent election of MOFD firefighter-paramedic Anthony Stephens and engineer Daniel Elbanna to the executive board of directors.

Under the leadership of President Vince Wells, Local 1230 includes firefighters from six fire districts and fire departments in the county, with the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District accounting for the largest number of rank-and-file members, nearly five times the number who work for MOFD. It makes the Oct. 1 ascendancy of Stephens and Elbanna to the five-person executive board even more impressive.



Daniel Elbanna Photos Nick Marnell

"The Moraga-Orinda guys wanted to get more involved with the union, and people were confident in those two," Wells said. "They are well respected by the membership."

Stephens, in his role as vice president, works closely with Wells and the district union representatives. His duties include participation in contract negotiations and representing the union in meet-and-confer efforts with fire agency management.

As secretary-treasurer, Elbanna, among his other union responsibilities, manages the local's \$500,000 budget. "He and I sign the checks," Wells said.

"The union does so much for us and I wanted to give back," Elbanna said. "There is a lot to know about

union activities and it will be beneficial for me to learn and to be able to contribute to a strong union."

Stephens was recently the Local 1230 secretary-treasurer and he is also president of the Moraga-Orinda Professional Firefighters Association. "There is more to the life of a firefighter than just fight-

ing fires," Stephens said. "Being involved with the community and with the membership has always been important to me."

Firefighter-paramedic Lucas Lambert and newly elected Capt. Mark McCullah are the union representatives for the 52 MOFD firefighters.

Orinda resident named ECCFPD fire chief



Photo courtesy ECCFPD

Orinda's Brian Helmick was named the fire chief of the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District on Oct. 2. Helmick had been interim chief since the March

departure of Fire Chief Hugh Henderson.

The Miramonte High School grad started in the fire service with the old Moraga Fire District and served through the consolidation into the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. Helmick began his ECCFPD career in 2002 as a firefighter and progressed through the ranks as battalion chief, operations chief and interim fire chief.

"I will forever be grateful to the men and women of MOFD, as the time they invested in me built the foundation for my 21-year fire service career," Helmick said. "I will always have a special place in my heart for the communities of Moraga and Orinda and the members of MOFD." — Nick Marnell

Smoke puts a chokehold on Lamorinda

The air quality district asked residents to avoid adding additional air pollution by curtailing air polluting activities such as wood burning, driving, barbecuing, lawn mowing and leaf blowing.

Pets were included in the smoke advisories. "Especially small pets," said Capt. Lisa Martinez of the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District. "Just like small people, they should stay inside and not be exposed."

Firefighters spend much of their working life in smoky conditions, but the unhealthy air impacted even them. "I've never seen anything like it," said Moraga-Orinda Fire District firefighter Mark DeWeese, an assistant football coach

with the Campolindo High School junior varsity. "I took my 4-month-old son to football practice but we had to go inside the gym. School would not allow us to play outside."

DeWeese agreed that wearing a mask was not helpful but he said he did not do things much differently, except maybe stay inside more. "Instead of running around the Lafayette Reservoir, maybe I'll do my work on the 24 Hour Fitness treadmill," he said.

Unlike the September hurricanes that made news in Texas and the southeast, the natural disasters that strike the Bay Area offer no warnings. Wildfires and earthquakes come without notice, and

when they do, those in danger must act quickly. Access to an emergency notification system behooves Lamorinda residents.

Nixle is a national mass emergency notification provider. Text your zip code to 888777 for instant messages via phone, email and web from government agencies.

Designed by a fire chief of the San Ramon Valley Fire Protection District, Pulse Point is a mobile phone app that allows you to receive alerts on fire department responses and emergency medical service calls. You can even listen to the live public audio safety feeds.

The Contra Costa County Community Warning System alerts residents and businesses that are in the

... continued from page A1

crosshairs of an emergency with a message that includes basic information about the incident and what specific actions are necessary to protect your life and health. Register at the Community Warning System website for notifications on your mobile phone.

Yes, the North Bay fire could happen in Lamorinda. ConFire Chief Jeff Carman explained to his advisory fire commission the topographical similarities between Santa Rosa and cities in his district, and the chief has often said that Lafayette, with its proximity to a virtual urban forest, concerns him more than any other area of his jurisdiction.

This time, it was only smoke.

EBMUD to jumpstart tower repairs

The third option, and the one under review by the DSOD, was to install a base isolation device within the tower; in short, to separate the tower from its foundation,

which would absorb the energy and minimize the earthquake force transmitted to the tower. Think of riding in a car over a rough, rocky road. The suspension absorbs the shock of the rocks and the potholes and cushions the blows inside the vehicle. San Francisco and Oakland city halls are constructed on base isolators.

As the district and the DSOD analyze the base isolator alternative, Irias said EBMUD is lowering the reservoir water level 5 feet from its current depth of 445 feet.

The base isolator option would preserve the visual appearance of the tower, a consideration for the city. "Because it is a community icon ... it would be ideal if the existing tower could either be retrofitted or rebuilt to bring it up to an excellent rating while retaining our beloved tower's architectural form," said City Manager Steve Falk, though John Coleman, EBMUD board member, emphasized that design is less important than the safety of those who live downstream of the reservoir.

Alison Kastama, EBMUD

... continued from page A1

manager of public affairs, said the district intends to be conscious of community concerns over the planned modifications and she promised plenty of community outreach before any tower construction begins.

Lafayette Council Member and EBMUD liaison Cameron Burks met with Coleman and requested that EBMUD provide a Lafayette Reservoir construction fact sheet for residents. The district complied and posted information on the city of Lafayette website.

Moraga Center Specific Plan

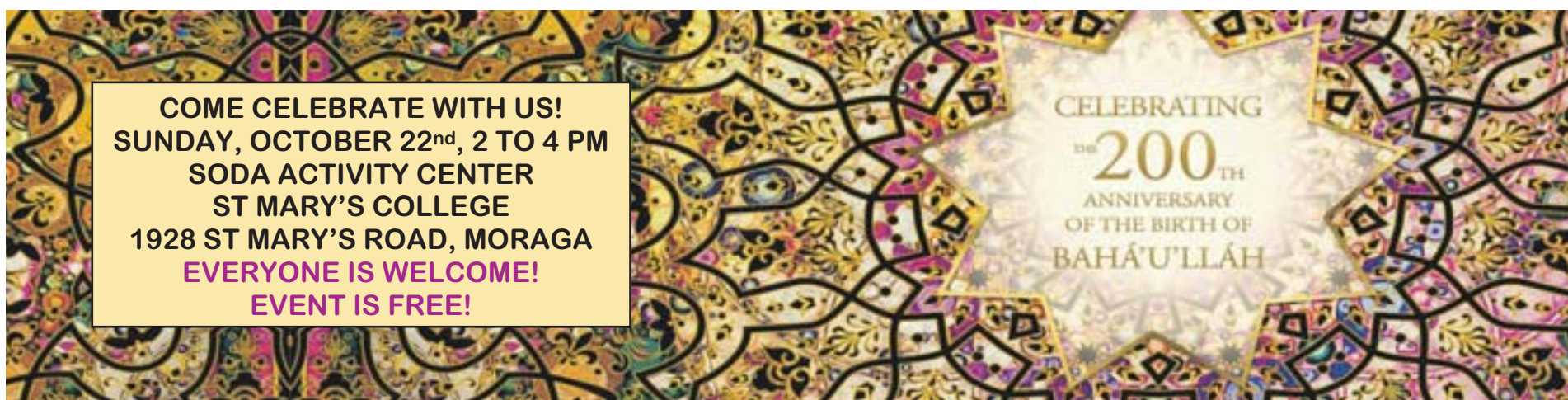
He showed the council pictures of the Summerhill Development on Camino Ricardo, which has an important visual impact on the skyline from the scenic corridors, and warned that with the proposed new zoning rules his own developments would reach the same height. He asked that the council work with him and define the easy things to do to implement the specific plan.

Council member Dave Trotter asked that the council not pay Opticos any extra money to finish the zoning project at this time, and recommended the zoning process be put on the back burner for six months.

The council did not support Council Member Kymberleigh Korpus' suggestion of a moratorium on any development in the MCSP

... continued from page A4

until the zoning was approved. Instead, the council followed Vice Mayor Roger Wykle's recommendation to have the council work with the property owner and the public during ad hoc study sessions to continue to refine the MCSP and decide on some macro issues such as densities or setbacks. No dates were discussed for future study sessions.



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Letters to the Editor

Anti-BDS legislation

Kudos to Cindy Swanson.

An article in the Oct 4th issue of the Lamorinda Weekly reports on an Orinda Town Hall meeting in which Cindy Swanson spoke out against the anti-BDS legislation supported by Rep. Catharine Baker.

In endorsing anti-BDS legislation, Catharine Baker has bowed to a foreign country's attempt to squelch our first amendment rights. This is as shameful as giving that same country more than 10 million dollars a day in military aid while it violates international law with impunity.

Despite multiple presidential pleas to cease building settlements, Israel continues to demolish Palestinian homes and rip up Palestinian orchards. The anti-BDS legislation supported by Catharine Baker would inhibit any business that criticizes this gross violation of human rights from doing business with the state of California.

This is but another example of the detrimental subjugation of American values to the interests of Israel. Freedom of speech is central and essential to our American democracy. Let's not encumber it at the behest of a foreign country.

Forrest J Cioppa, MD
 Moraga

Thanks to Garden Club for 'Toxic Puzzle' showing

We would like to publicly thank the Orinda Garden Club for arranging the special sold out showing of *"Toxic Puzzle: Hunt for the Hidden Killer"* and guest Dr. Paul Alan Cox. For anyone who missed the award winning documentary about the search for cures for Alzheimer's, ALS and Parkinson's, known as the brain tangle diseases, please checkout the website toxicpuzzle.com. Charitable donations to further this research may be directed to the 501 (c)(3) nonprofit Institute of Ethnomedicine at brainchemistrylabs.org.

We have known Dr. Cox for many years and are very excited about the wonderful progress he is making.

Sue and Ralph Severson
 Orinda

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

Lafayette Walk/Bike to School Day

... continued from page A3

School parent Jocelyn Birrell said that she and her children often walk down Moraga Road. She referred to the previous week's cyclist versus car accident at the intersection of Moraga Road and St. Mary's Road as "horrifying" and said that it is too dangerous to let even the older children walk or bike in alone. "You should be able to let fourth- and fifth-graders go on their own -- but you can't," Birrell said there are several "walking trains" with parents who take turns escorting groups of children to and from school.

Birrell commented too on the number of families who walk or bike from the Moraga Boulevard area but notes that the residential neighborhood is quickly becoming a "cut through" for speeding motorists trying to avoid traffic on Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

A regular cyclist who gets her

children to school on bikes most days, Stefania Kapalanes, a trauma coordinator in a Bay Area hospital, was taking the opportunity to talk to some of the children about bike safety. She said she spotted one young girl with her helmet secured too loosely to be effective. The student had told her she didn't want to mess up her hair and that she lived very nearby. Kaplanes made the point that the child was saying "all the 'right' wrong things."

Kim says they are grateful to the PTA who sponsors the event and to Champion. "We continue to work with the city to educate our families (students and parents) about pedestrian safety and safe routes to and from school."

Says Champion, "I think we have an amazing community in Lafayette where families enjoy walking downtown on the weekends."

Correction

The Oct. 4 Lamorinda Weekly article, "Town Hall with Baker, Andersen and Phillips," incorrectly stated that Richard Colman brought up the subject of the Los Vaqueros Reservoir during the Sept. 25 town hall meeting in Orinda. Colman instead focused on an Aug. 18 letter that Orinda Mayor Eve Phillips wrote to members of the California state legislature and quoted from parts of that letter. In her letter, Phillips wrote: "The City of Orinda is opposed to SB 35 [Senate Bill 35] . . . which would pre-empt local discretionary land use authority . . ." Colman quoted most of that sentence. He said that SB 35, if signed into law, would make Orinda a "colony" of the state of California. His last name was also misspelled. The correct spelling is Colman.

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50 years of Valley Glass

By John T. Miller



From left: Brian Hersey, managing partner; Sherry Elliott, office manager; and Charles Whelan, owner.

Photo John T. Miller

Valley Glass is celebrating its 50-year anniversary in the Saranap area, churning out windows and mirrors for local homeowners and businesses at the same consistent pace as when it first opened in 1967.

While not quite qualifying as a family-run business for all these years – Ben Wadsworth founded the business and sold it to Charles Whelan and Brian Hersey in 2013 –

the new owners have kept the family spirit and the business model alive.

“We kept all the people and everyone gets along well,” Hersey says. “The company runs smoothly because we have great people, with everyone striving to do the best they can.”

Hersey, the managing partner, estimates he and Whelan spend almost half their lives at the shop, 10 hours a day, six days a week. He says, “We love what we do here and enjoy the work.”

Whelan adds that he and Hersey have been working together on various projects for over 30 years. They have almost a brotherly rapport and genuinely enjoy their time together running the business.

“We don’t do many big jobs,” says Hersey, “and most of our clients are local.” In fact, nearly half their business goes to the Lamorinda area.

Their longest tenured employee, Sherry Elliott, came to work for Wadsworth in 1977 and is currently the general manager in charge of the office.

Hersey gushed when asked about her. “She’s the brains of the outfit and helps out with everything. She’s got a great sense of humor and customers love her.”

Elliott recalls that when Whelan and Hersey took over four years ago, they made some cosmetic changes with updates to the office and website and increased their marketing, but basically kept the same business model that had been successful for Wadsworth.

Asked about the impact of the upcoming Saranap Village, Hersey

replied, “No real worries about it. We’re excited about it bringing new people to the area and making the surrounding area look better.”

The company has 10 employees and five trucks and, according to Hersey, they keep them busy every day: “We don’t do giant jobs, but basically stick to local homeowners and businesses. We’re good at what we do and things tend to run smoothly.”

On the day of our interview, the company covered 14 different jobs, ranging from windows and mirrors, to shower enclosures, decorative frames and anything having to do with glass.

“Except automobiles,” cautions Hersey. “It’s tough to compete with the small garage business dealing with auto glass when they have so little overhead.”

Naturally, broken glass is a hazard of the trade, but Elliott jokes, “If it weren’t for broken glass, we wouldn’t have a business.” She added, “We salvage every bit of glass we can, making glass boxes or other small items. We even find uses for broken tempered glass, from filling flower vases to putting the pieces in fire pits.”

And don’t even mention any superstition involving broken mirrors.

Valley Glass is located at 1177 Boulevard Way at the eastern entrance to Saranap on a triangular piece of property. Wadsworth originally set up shop in the ground-floor space he rented from Louie LaRossa beneath the old family market. (See related story on next page).

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Michelle Marcucci named Moraga Employee of the Month for October

Submitted by Kevin Reneau



From left: Diane Wilson, Michelle Marcucci, Doug Meyer and Wendy Scheck

Photo provided

The Moraga Chamber of Commerce and the Rotary Club of Moraga announced UPS store manager Michelle Marcucci was named October’s Moraga Employee of the Month.

Marcucci, who has managed the UPS store in the Moraga Shopping Center for almost two years, came from just down the road, having previously worked at the Orinda UPS store. She seems to be a born problem-solver and provides superior customer service

skills while assisting customers at the counter. “Michelle is a terrific employee and manager,” said UPS owner Doug Meyer. “She handles everything whether it be a difficult print job to following up on a delayed shipment, and her customers love her. She just has a ‘get it done’ attitude.” Marcucci will be presented with gift cards to the Golden Palace Restaurant and Safeway at an upcoming Moraga Rotary luncheon.

Saranap Nostalgia: Many memories to be razed

By John T. Miller



Former owners Tony and Donna LaRossa are hoping they can salvage this iconic sign and transfer it to their daughter's property in Carson, Nevada.

In a few short months the wrecking crews will descend on what was once the hub of unincorporated Saranap in order for Hall Equities Group to build the new, vibrant and updated Saranap Village.

Hauled away with the rubble and debris of the antiquated buildings and vacant lots will be the memory and nostalgia of simpler times when family-run businesses carried out the day-to-day commerce of the area.

In an attempt to preserve some of this history, this two-part article looks at these former times and an appreciation for the contributions of some of these families.

One of the prominent landmarks to be removed when construction begins is the LaRossa Market building, which has stood since the mid-1950s.

After managing markets in Alameda and Berkeley beginning in the 1930s, Louie and Martha LaRossa moved to Lafayette where they opened a grocery store at the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Pleasant Hill Road.

The county wanted the property to build a freeway ramp and the LaRossas were forced to sell. Appealing to the county for more money, they were able to buy property on Boulevard Way where a chicken ranch existed.

According to "Saranap: Then and Now," written by Dorothy M. Ligda (2006), many of the neighbors — much like in recent times — objected to the large structure being built near their homes. The family persisted, though, and the market was built in 1955.

The LaRossa's son, Tony, attended Acalanes High School

where he starred in football and track. The rest of his time was spent working in the store along with his sister, Carmen. Louis passed away in 1973 and Martha became a familiar figure behind the register while Tony managed the store. His second wife Donna — who had been a loan officer before marrying Tony — helped in the store and did the books.

Donna met Tony on her frequent visits to the store and married him. "I knew when I married him that the store would become my life," said Donna. "We worked there from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. six days a week with some help in the evenings." Tony LaRossa's first wife died tragically from a fall off a horse.

The Morucci family ran the deli at the store for a time and eventually set up their own popular sandwich shop down the street. The Moruccis eventually sold their business and the family name.

Downstairs from the store, the LaRossa's rented space to many different enterprises, including Valley Glass (see accompanying story on previous page), a moving company, and a beauty salon.

According to Donna, Martha had a soft spot for other small businesses, so the rent she charged never amounted to much.

"A lot of the local workers came in for donuts and coffee in the morning," recalls Donna LaRossa, "and even though we didn't have any tables, they'd stand around and visit."

The store was sold to a Vietnamese conglomerate, and Ann and Philip Pham, who survived two years in a refugee camp after

the war and eventually escaped by boat (as told in Ligda's book), ran the market for several years.

In April of 2002, however, the Contra Costa Times reported a scandal in Lanai's Massage and Beauty Image Plus downstairs. Three women were arrested in an undercover sting and charges of prostitution were brought against a ring that had collected hundreds of thousands of dollars in illegal money.

Because the people connected with the prostitution ring were Asian, many assumed the Phams were involved. They were upset and denied any involvement, according to Ligda, and continued to run the store.

In May, 2004, Sufism Reoriented bought the property, using the gutted market for their charitable endeavors. After Hall Equities

purchased the land, Mike Murphy Baseball has temporarily equipped the site with batting cages and runs clinics there while waiting for their permanent facilities.

(Next Issue: A look at the old Holy Ghost Hall, Leo's Mobil Service Station and Danny Van Allen's bar.)

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Food trucks staying in Orinda

... continued from page A1

The choice of Thursday night was particularly galling to the restaurateurs, because Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday are the nights on which they earn enough to cover their bills. They asked that the project be discontinued, or moved to another night.

Respondents to a survey on the project were overwhelmingly positive, however, stunning the council with 90.5 percent of respondents wanting the project to continue, and rating it 4 out of 5 stars, although they expressed somewhat less enthusiasm for the long lines.

Javid Ebrahimi, the owner of Taste of the World, the food truck company running the pilot project, attended the council meeting with Samantha Ross, also of TOW. Ebrahimi said that the project exceeded their financial expectations, thanked the city and WUDO for their help, and stated that they wanted to continue the food truck event through the winter so people won't forget about them.

Ebrahimi discussed the possibility of a different night with the council. Apparently, no one has ever tried food truck events on Mondays. Tuesdays conflict with other events, like Concerts in the Park, and Wednesdays are an almost sacred swim event night in Orinda. The weekend would be even worse for the restaurants, so that left Thursday nights, which have proved to be very popular. However, Ebrahimi expressed his willingness to work with the restaurants to promote their businesses by advertising them on the

food truck televisions, or by having a tent for local businesses at each event.

Council Member Dean Orr said the food truck event was a wonderful opportunity with a great deal of support. He had the sense that Orindans enjoyed the opportunity to bump into other community members at the event, and, while he expressed sympathy to all small businesses, he found the food trucks to be fundamentally different and so well supported it would be hard for him to vote against continuing the event.

Council Member Darlene Gee agreed that the pilot was a great success, a 100-percent positive, fun event that added to the community's enthusiasm about downtown Orinda. The pilot appeals to a wide variety of people, she said, and added that she was amazed at the openness and willingness of TOW to partner with local businesses. That sentiment was echoed by Vice Mayor Amy Worth, who added that some customers just came to the event for a beer, then moved on to a local restaurant for dinner. Council Member Inga Miller deemed the proposal to continue the pilot a "no brainer." She commended TOW for its outreach and Planning Director Drummond Buckley for the survey.

The food trucks collect and remit sales tax. Ebrahimi said he would like to be a registered business, but as yet Orinda does not issue business licenses. He was also open to the concept of a fee, which will be incorporated into the RFP.

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Local halloween happenings set to delight young and old

By Cathy Dausman



Scarecrows return to Orinda streets

Fall wouldn't be the same in Orinda without the many scarecrows and pumpkins adorning streets and sidewalks, thanks to the Orinda Garden Club's and community members' efforts. This trio welcomes visitors to Orinda from Highway 24 on their way into town. Photo Cathy Dausman

Halloween is time for oh-boys and ghouls to join in creepy fun-filled activities ranging from costume parades to community fairs and fright-filled haunted houses. If you're haunting down something to do, here is a monster mash-up of Lamorinda area celebrations:

Boo Fest, Orinda

Del Rey Elementary School will scare up its Boo Fest from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21, which will feature class carnival-like booths, bouncy houses, cake decorating contest/cake walk, Halloween puppet show, DJ Clem, dunk tank and for an extra cost,

shaved ice and food trucks. Admission is \$10 per person; tickets are available online at <https://delreyparentsclub.revtrak.net/Boo-Fest-Tickets/#/v/Boo-Fest-Tickets-364>.

Pumpkin Craft Extravaganza, Moraga

Children age 3 and older can decorate pumpkin cards and mini pumpkins (while supplies last) during the Pumpkin Craft Extravaganza Tuesday, Oct. 24 from 4 to 4:45 p.m. at the Moraga Library.

Halloween Parade for Tots, Orinda

Costumed kids can follow Glenda the Good Witch in a stroll around the Orinda Community Center Park during the Halloween Parade for Tots at 1 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 26. Light Halloween activities and refreshments are provided. Registration is not required. The event will occur rain or shine; if it rains we move the parade indoors. Admission is free.

Trick or Treat Street, Lafayette

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce's Trick or Treat Street allows kids to trick-or-treat from 4 to 6 p.m. Friday, Oct. 27, along Mt. Diablo Boulevard between Oak Hill Road and Dewing Avenue and in La Fiesta Square. Participating stores display "Trick-or-Treat" posters and balloons; there's also a costume contest and movie in the Plaza.

Get Your Ghou! On - just for teens, Orinda

Teens in grades 6-12 can make creepy crafts, gory treats and participate in bone-chilling activities at the Orinda Library from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 27.

Halloween Haunted House, Lafayette

The Lafayette Youth Commission's 12th annual Halloween Haunted House at Lafayette Community Center Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 28 and 29 comes in two degrees of fright. The Not Too Scary Haunted House (for children 7 and under with parents) runs 5 to 7 p.m.; admission is \$3; A Very Scary Haunted House (ages 8 and up) runs from 7 to 9 p.m.; admission is \$5.

Creepy Hollow, Orinda

Sleepy Hollow Elementary School in Orinda (best Halloween-themed school name ever) hosts Creepy Hollow from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 28, which includes its famous Haunted House, as well as a Denon & Doyle

DJ dance party, bounce house, face painting, carnival games, Spooky Spa and more. Home-cooked meals and tasty treats will be available as well as Abel's Mexican Catering and the Slider Guy food trucks. Advance ticket prices are \$20 per child and \$5 per adult (available at Will Call at the event). The last day to buy tickets online is Saturday, Oct. 21. Same-day tickets will be \$20 per child and \$15 per adult. Children ages 3 and under and grandparents are free.

Haunted Hardware Store, Orinda

Orinda Hardware on Moraga Way will be transforming into the Haunted Hardware Store from 6 to 8 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 29 with an upstairs aisle-by-aisle, spooky theme designed for "littles" or slip downstairs to the workshop - where things get a bit gory. Admission is free.

Trick or Treat at Rheem, Moraga

The Rheem Valley Shopping Center in Moraga hosts a trick or treat event for kids in costume from 3 to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 31, where kids can get free candy from participating businesses.

Frankenstein's Toy Lab, Lafayette

Visitors ages 8 to 14 can create their very own monster in Frankenstein's Toy Lab from 4 to 6 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 31 at Lafayette Library and Learning Center. (Gently used toys gladly accepted ahead of time for this project.) You can also view the library's Day of the Dead altar in the library homework center or look for hidden ghosts and goblins in the open space Oct. 23 to Nov. 4.

Zombies willing to travel farther afield might want to try:

Spooky Train Ride, Fremont

Fremont's Ardenwood Historic Farm offers a spooky but not scary train ride through the forest of Ardenwood Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights Oct. 20 through 29 from 7 to 9:30 p.m. (9 p.m. on Sunday). Tickets are \$7 per person ages three and up; parking is free. (Note: neither Tilden park RR or Niles Canyon RR offer Halloween themed rides.)

Not-too-Spooky Halloween, Berkeley

Berkeley's Habitot Children's Museum hosts a Not-too-Spooky Halloween 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 29.

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Local residents rally in response to North Bay fires

By Cathy Dausman



Brooke Penfold collects items for refugees at the Moraga Country Club

While evacuations continued and ashes began to cool in devastated areas of the ferocious North Bay wildfires, the needs for those who had already been displaced were immediate. Food. Shelter. Clothing.

Lamorindans have been stepping up to help.

Last week, four students from Burton Valley Elementary School – fifth-graders Sam Bishop, Hannah Burks, Mollie Scholfield and TK student Malcolm Bellias – planned (on their own) a bake sale for Oct. 13 to raise money for the Sonoma County Resilience Fund in support of the victims of the North Bay fires, according to Lafayette City Council Member Cam Burks.

“They spent the last few days relentlessly campaigning around the school, putting posters up and spreading the word,” said Burks, whose daughter Hannah was one of the group. “And ... baking cupcakes, cookies, Rice Krispie treats, etcetera.”

As school let out on Friday, they quickly set up a table on Merriewood (just outside of the school where everyone exits, Burks said), and started the sale. “Within 30 minutes, they sold out and raised \$655. It was literally a mob scene with dozens of students and their parents swarming the area, enjoying the treats and making very generous donations.

“It was unbelievable to witness and made me so proud to be part of this special community. These kids

did this all on their own,” Burks said. “I’ve never seen a group of kids so energized and committed over the past few days.”

Others within Lamorinda found ways to help, reaching out informally to their neighbors and local organizations or working through established nonprofits.

Zahra Hasanian, who is the disaster relief chair for the nonprofit Be the Star You Are, drove to Napa and Solano counties Oct. 12 with volunteer Chelsea Pelchat and Executive Director Cynthia Brian, who is from the Napa County area and whose family and friends have been devastated by the fire, to deliver boxes of books to evacuation centers housing people who fled their homes after recent North Bay fires. “Those affected by the fire have been squatting in these centers for days without any source of entertainment,” Hasanian said. “We figured that anyone, young or old, can always enjoy a good book.”

Hasanian said she often thinks of herself as helpless against things as arbitrary and ruthless as natural disasters, but her attitude changed with every smile and thank you they received as they handed books to people in person. “We went to several different evacuation centers, and the kindness of the people at all the centers was astounding,” she said. “When disaster strikes, it’s easy to send prayers, watch the news, or complain about how our world is becoming more and more dismal. It’s harder, but also much

more rewarding, to send hope as well as concrete help. Hope heals.”

If you’d like to donate items through Be the Star You Are, contact Hasanian at (925) 899-4634 or visit <http://www.BetheStarYouAre.org>. They need the following items: masks, diapers, feminine hygiene products, tissues, wipes, sanitizer, towels, books, art supplies, and journals.

Realtor Paddy Kehoe is brokering needs for fire evacuees one family at a time. Working with Orinda’s Church of Santa Maria and the Catholic fraternal service Knights of Columbus in Santa Rosa, he hopes to see Lamorinda families adopt stricken Santa Rosa families, especially those living “paycheck to paycheck” to offer relief and meet their basic needs.

“Right now we’re hearing the families are just shell shocked,” Kehoe said, so plans have not yet been finalized, but he wants to see that donations are family-specific rather than simply sending “truck-

loads of jackets” to the north. If you can meet the needs of a now-homeless Santa Rosa family, call Kehoe at (925) 878-5869 or email him at paddyrealtor@gmail.com.

Moraga Country Club swim coach Brooke Penfold said many of her friends have “lost their work, home, or both.” Penfold said her family and Rohnert Park home are safe, but Sonoma County “is currently in crisis.” She is currently

collecting supplies for Hidden Valley Satellite School and other Santa Rosa elementary schools. “All donations will go first to the families of students whose school or home was burned down and the schools receiving displaced students; anything that goes above and beyond that will be brought to evacuation shelters,” she said.

... continued on page B8

Photo Gary Irwin

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Burton Valley students raise money for fire victims Photo provided



Chelsea Pelchat and Zahra Hasanian bring boxes of books to an evacuation center Oct. 12. Photo Cynthia Brian

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From chemical engineer to first-grade teacher, retiree takes leap of faith

By Sophie Braccini



Bob Creek in his new first-grade class.

Photo provided

Kind eyes shielded by his glasses, Bob Creek does not expose much of his inner world. The first contact is still that of a “chemi,” a chemical engineer from the petroleum industry that enjoys working formulas and equations. But then, a glimpse of his emotions seeps through when he evokes the affection of his new students, first-graders at La Escuelita Elementary, who sometimes want to hug him.

Creek has done what few do: after retiring from Chevron he went back to school to get his teaching credential. This year he got his first class in Oakland, fulfilling an old dream.

The Creeks have lived in Moraga for many years where they raised their two adopted daughters and three biological children. Creek traces his desire to teach lower grades to the time his twin boys were in kindergarten. He remembers the teacher there, a retired high-tech publisher with a white goatee who decided to give back to the children of his community in his golden years. He remembers how well the teacher connected with the kids and what a difference he made in their lives. And this is the core of Creek's motivation: being able to give children a chance to succeed from an early age.

When asked why he would prefer teaching the lower grades, Creek says he believes that when children reach 9 or 10 years old much has already been played out. On the other hand, he says that when kids start going to school a larger number can be reached and

turned to a lifelong love of learning. He adds that they might never remember who made that happen for them when they were young, but what counts is the result.

By the end of 2015, Chevron offered some of its executives a nice retirement package in order to “right size” the business. Creek, at 59, decided it was the right time to change careers as he still had, in his words, “some runway.” He passed the CBEST and started subbing in the Moraga School District, then the CTEST before enrolling in the Cal State East Bay teaching credential program.

Creek really wanted to go through the training process again. He said he did not find the material particularly difficult to grasp, but it was very interesting and taught by extremely qualified and passionate teachers. He had designed classes for adults as part of his Chevron career, he had managed youth groups as a Cub Master and wilderness trek Scout leader for Troop 234, but there was much for him to learn in terms of pedagogy, psychology and class management. He also enjoyed the other students in his cohort and felt well accepted as the older person in that group.

His dream would have been to teach kindergarten in Lamorinda, but he accepted an offer from La Escuelita Elementary School, teaching first grade in Oakland.

He says that he was scared of the children for the entire first month. He had taught before, of course; it had been part of his curriculum and he had substituted, but

it was not his class. The daunting question was, will I be able to control the class and bring it back to a level of calm when the inevitable incidents erupt?

Now getting close to Halloween, Creek has found his marks, has successfully managed a few crises and is indeed in control, working very hard every day at igniting the passion of learning in the young hearts.

Creek's class size is 22 students, a very diverse group in terms of class readiness, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds. A homeless shelter is located next to the school and one little girl from there was in his class at the beginning of the year; the school is also close to Lakeshore Avenue and its million dollar-plus homes.

He says that all the children in his class are at grade level, with some clearly gifted, especially in science and math. He delights talking about the poems they learn together every week, the hands-on experiments that nourish the students' particular love for science. He talks about Principal Jeffrey Franey and his fellow teachers supporting him and giving him pointers to deal effectively with the children whose behavior is the most disruptive to the class.

Despite the long hours, Creek says he is the first to arrive at school at 7:30 a.m. and the last to leave at 7:30 p.m.; he feels that he is doing what he should. He speaks of what retirement could have been, a few years of extreme hikes and kayak adventures – he is very physically active – a few years of travel, and then what? He says that he does not necessarily feel that he was born to teach; in fact he remembers his engineering years with fondness, but he believes that it is one's duty to live life using abilities to the maximum possible.

Anita Wood-Creek, a recently retired lawyer, says that she might have liked to be able to travel outside of summer vacations with her husband, but she respects his choice, and like their adult children, she is proud of the difference he makes.

Second concert of the GCCP season: ‘Wayfarers’

Submitted by Pamela Freund-Striplen



Mezzo-soprano Kindra Scharich with the Alexander String Quartet

Photo provided

The second of this season's Gold Coast Chamber Players' five concerts, titled “Wayfarers,” will be performed at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 28 at the Lafayette Library Community Hall in Lafayette. The concert features three song cycles by Gustav Mahler – Kindertotenlieder, the Rückert-Lieder, and Lieder eines Fahrenden gesellen (Songs of a Wayfarer) – transcribed for voice and string quartet by the Alexander String Quartet's first violinist, Zakarias Grafilo. Lieder are typically scored for a soloist and piano, or later, as the genre developed, for singer and orchestra; these beautiful transcriptions combine the lushness of the orchestral Lieder with the intimacy of chamber music, and the result is something completely new.

Founded in 1987, the award-winning GCCP, which brings the finest in chamber music to Lafayette and the surrounding areas, distinguishes itself by its eclectic programming and by providing community access to leading mu-

sicians from throughout the world. Mezzo-soprano Kindra Scharich has been praised by the San Francisco Chronicle for her “noble, vocally assured singing, with stately grace and deep-rooted pathos.” A versatile musician, she has sung over 25 roles in the lyric mezzo repertoire, and is equally at home on the operatic or concert stage. This Mahler project represents Scharich's third appearance at Gold Coast concerts.

The Alexander String Quartet – comprising Zakarias Grafilo and Fred Lifshitz, violins; Paul Yarbrough, viola; and Sandy Wilson, cello – was formed in New York in 1981 and is widely acknowledged as one of the finest chamber music ensembles performing today. Three members of ASQ performed in September on the Gold Coast opening concert, but this concert represents the ASQ's formal debut at Gold Coast concerts. It is the first American quartet to win the London International String Quartet Competition in 1985, and has since

then gained widespread admiration for its performances of standard repertoire and contemporary music at major halls throughout North America and Europe.

The quartet has collaborated with many outstanding artists, such as pianists Joyce Yang, Roger Woodward, Anne-Marie McDermott, Menachem Pressler, Marc-André Hamelin, and Jeremy Menuhin; clarinetists Joan Enric Lluna, David Shifrin, Richard Stoltzman, and Eli Eban; soprano Elly Ameling; mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato; violinist Midori; cellists Lynn Harrell, Sadao Harada, and David Requiro; and jazz greats Branford Marsalis, David Sanchez, and Andrew Speight.

The Gold Coast Chamber Players offer a pre-concert talk with musicologist Kai Christiansen at 7 p.m.; the concert begins at 7:30 p.m. Single tickets are \$45 general admission, \$40 senior (65+), and \$15 for students. All tickets may be purchased online at www.gcplayers.org or by calling (925) 283-3728.

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Miramonte senior founds adaptive unlimited sports program

By John T. Miller



Bryce Radlow

Photo John T. Miller

Bryce Radlow, an enthusiastic and driven senior at Miramonte High School, has funneled his passion for tennis into forming an Adaptive Unlimited Sports organization for local youth to have fun and be successful on the tennis courts.

His latest endeavor will be to sponsor an event at the Miramonte tennis courts from 10 a.m. to noon this Saturday, Oct 21. The public is invited to view adaptive tennis in action.

At their inaugural event last July, about 25 participants, ranging in age from 10-17 years old, competed.

Radlow credits Michael Wayman, the former successful head tennis coach at Saint Mary's College, for inspiring him to create the organization. "He was giving a clinic for youth and told a story about when Jimmy Connors – who was ranked No. 1 at the time – kicked him off a court so he could practice. From then on, Wayman vowed that there would be no hierarchy on the court. Everyone should have as much fun as they could."

Also influencing him was a wheelchair basketball event in eighth grade. "I was amazed at how fantastic the young athletes were

despite their various disabilities and wanted to bring this kind of excellence to my favorite sport: tennis.

"I started this because I care a lot about tennis," adds Radlow. "It bothered me to see wheelchair and disabled athletes not getting fair treatment. The tennis court should be for everyone."

Since founding the organization in 2015, Radlow ran into a number of hurdles, including trying to start a nonprofit and dealing with insurance issues. Since that time, the United States Tennis Association and Special Olympics have jumped on board to help sponsor the organization.

The USTA takes care of insurance and finds athletes to participate, while also providing banners, tennis balls and other equipment. Grants from the USTA cover the cost of the events, which are free for participants.

Special Olympics provides some of the young athletes. Christine Costamagna, who is the founder of the Special Olympics tennis program in her community of Marin County, will help out with Saturday's event.

"Christine is the master," says Radlow. "She will bring some advanced Special Olympians who re-

ally can compete."

Radlow explained the differences between wheelchair and adaptive sports: "Wheelchair athletes are often extremely competitive and gifted," he says. "Some of them can really move. Adaptive sports focuses on more developmental disabilities, such as Down syndrome, Asperger's, and some extreme forms of Tourette syndrome, and other, more isolated disabilities.

"For me," sums up Radlow, "I can get so focused on school and sports, it's a privilege to be able to use my abilities to create opportunities for others to succeed by putting on these events."

Radlow is currently projected to play the No. 4, 5, or 6 singles on Miramonte's varsity roster this spring, and will occasionally play in the No. 1 doubles matchup.

Although Radlow might like to play tennis in college, he says he may prefer to focus on academics and has his sights set on some East Coast schools such as Syracuse, Rutgers, or the University of Maryland.

"No matter where I go, though," says the energetic senior, "I plan on continuing to work with adaptive youth on the tennis courts."

Orinda fifth-grader takes 1st in international young pianists competition

Submitted by Goodman Gu



Andrew Gu

Photo provided

Glorietta Elementary School fifth-grader Andrew Gu won the Rosalyn Tureck Prize (first prize) in Category Two Oct. 7 at the prestigious Fifth Rosalyn Tureck International Bach Competition for Young Pianists in New York City. Out of 12 semifinalists selected from around the world and invited to NYC for this category, four advanced to the final round. Andrew won this fiercely competitive category with a flawless musical execution. He performed at the Gala Winners Concert Oct. 8 at

the DiMenna Center for Classical Music, hosted by Robert Sherman from WQXR.

Andrew started piano lessons with mom, Helen Jung, at age 6. He studied with Sasha Starcevic 2013-16, then Corey McVicar. Currently, he is under the direction of Kaichi Zhu. He won first prize at Grotrian-Steinweg International Piano Competition in 2015, Gold Medal at the 2016 NW Chopin Competition, third prize and Most Promising Young Talent Award at 2016 San Jose International Piano

Competition. More recently, he was a prize winner at the 2017 Lagny-sur-marne International Piano Competition and Kaufman International Piano Competition. He made his orchestra debut at age 8, performing Haydn's Keyboard Concerto in D major with the Philharmonic Orchestra of the University of Alicante in 2015. You can view one of Andrew's performances on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITjpYvq6psw>.

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Fall family festival focuses on children with special needs

Submitted by Cathy Kauder



Last year's fall family festival

Photo provided

For most children, Halloween is an exciting event that they look forward to with eager anticipation. But for children with special needs, the chaos and unpredictability of the holiday can be intimidating. Because of their differences, which can include anything from sensory processing difficulties, motor skill delays, anxiety or other social/emotional issues, it can be very challenging for children with special needs to take part in activities during the Halloween season.

That's why Lafayette's special education development foundation, known as SEED, will host an inclusive fall family festival from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 22 at Sienna Ranch. This will be the second year that SEED is hosting this event, which will include a fun family barbecue, pumpkin crafts, hikes, pony rides and much more. The cost is \$10 per family, which will include lunch and all of the activities.

SEED was developed by a small group

of parents in 2006 after recognizing the need for a foundation to augment special educational services for children and families in Lafayette. With the collaborative efforts of its diverse parent population – stemming from Early Intervention, Lafayette's four elementary schools, Stanley Middle School and members of the Lafayette community – SEED quickly grew, raising money through grant writing, annual fundraising, community partnerships, and individual donations.

The organization provides a wide range of support and resources to families of children with special and diverse learning needs, as well as training programs for educators who work with these children. The programs funded include recess facilitation, after school social skills play groups, educational seminars, support groups and socials for parents and teacher training. For more information and to register for the event, go to www.seedlafayette.org.

Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School takes on global water crisis

Submitted by Robin Anderson



Students carry a water jug containing five gallons of water, weighing over 40 pounds, at a Sept. 25 assembly at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School in Moraga. Children and women in Africa carry one of these for miles daily to get water for their families. Photo provided

Over the years, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School has had many classroom competition fundraisers, typically raising up to \$1,900, involving a few classes per grade. This year, however, every single class participated (on their own), raising \$8,000 for Thirst Project, a nonprofit organization that educates students about the global water crisis and challenges them to fundraise to build wells in developing nations and impoverished communities to provide people with safe, clean water.

"Thirst Project is a great example of an organization started by youth wanting to make a difference in the world," said JM science teacher Kim Lockett. "The world can feel very overwhelming at times and it is great to show students that youth can work together to truly make a difference."

Lockett had seen a Thirst Project assembly at a YMCA Model United Nations Conference, and she brought the topic up to the ECO club at JM. "Everyone was on board with bringing it to the school," she said.

At a special assembly on Sept. 25 a Thirst Project representative spoke to students about community, building community, and working to help communities. During the assembly, to teach how hard life is in some countries, students carried five-gallon jugs of water weighing 40 pounds across the auditorium. "Children and women in Africa carry one of these for miles daily to get water for their families, often for water that is brown and not clean," Lockett said.

After the assembly, JM teacher Kristin

Anderson and the leadership class were so moved by the presentation that they set a school goal to raise the \$8,000 and fully fund a well providing access to clean water for an entire community.

"While listening to it I couldn't help but compare these children in Africa that we're hearing about and how their days are spent just trying to survive," said Anderson. "The idea of community is emphasized in Leadership, so I was grateful for an opportunity for Leadership students to assist in something so meaningful."

"We had our advisory lesson that morning focused on the assembly," said Lockett. "Classes watched a short video, answered some questions about fresh water, and came up with a class goal." Every \$25 raised sponsored one person for life with access to clean water, Lockett explained.

"Initially we did not think we could raise the amount for a well so we were focusing on how many lives could we save," Lockett said. The fundraiser ran through Tuesday, Oct 2, but some additional money came in the rest of that second week to get them over the top.

"I had told the presenter that in the past we raised between \$1,500-\$2,000 for an ECO-sponsored turtle fundraiser, and that in my experience people often are more willing to donate to help baby turtles than people," she said. "Yet this year proved me wrong. JM really came together to help."

For information about Thirst Project, visit www.thirstproject.org.

Fun in the vineyard

Submitted by Linda U. Foley



Sal Captain at Captain Vineyards in Moraga
Photos Linda Foley

On a recent gorgeous fall morning, a large group of chattering volunteers plucked succulent grape baubles on the hills of the Captain Vineyards. They filled "lugs," each weighing from 25 to 40 pounds and carried them up countless stairs to be weighed and dumped into the de-stemming machine.

Sal Captain's many overseeing chores included stomping down the stems of some very deep blue Petit Verdot grapes to be recycled in the vineyards' composter – after all, it's an organic vineyard and nothing is ever wasted. By lunchtime, there was a healthy tally of 4,000 pounds of Cab Franc and Petit Verdot grapes.



Petite Verdot grapes

Soccer team holds bake sale to raise funds in honor of Coach Coco

Submitted by Tara Harju



From left: Ella Erdem, Nikki McCarthy, Kelsey Severson, Caitlin Jenkins and Sophia Harju

Photo provided

Members of the Eclipse U14 Solar girl's soccer team raised \$120 for the Breast Cancer Awareness Foundation Oct. 7 at their bake sale at the little community park opposite Sideboard in Lafayette, in honor of their amazing coach Colette Bowler, who passed

away in August from cancer.

Coco, as she was fondly known, was a great mentor to these Lamorinda girls. She was a wonderful, loving, upbeat, fun and extraordinary person.

Celebrations

Longtime director of Bay Area Psychotherapy Institute honored for work

Submitted by Nes Pinar, LMFT

Dr. Robert Marino, co-founder and longtime director of the Bay Area Psychotherapy Institute in Lafayette will be honored Nov. 3 for his many years working in the field of addiction and mental health. Marino, an Orinda resident of 30 years, left a legacy with his retirement earlier this summer.

From 1993 to his retirement in June of 2017, Marino maintained a private practice of psychotherapy in Lafayette and Orinda with a particular focus on the treatment of addicts and their family members. He regularly consulted with therapists throughout the Bay Area on issues of addiction, and made it a priority to reach out to numerous attorney, teacher, and parent groups to help inform them about mental health issues and addiction and how these affect their clients, their students, and their families. He believed each person must be understood and

approached in an existential, psychological, and spiritual context.

Each year Constellation Behavioral Health hosts the Miracles Breakfast, an opportunity to gather to celebrate the miracle of recovery and honor the Northern California professionals whose dedication to the fields of addiction and mental health disorders is an inspiration to us all.

Dr. Marino will receive the Courage Tribute Award, which honors a professional who has empowered the addiction and mental health communities through advocacy, leadership, and courage. The event will be held from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at The Olympic Club, 524 Post St. in San Francisco.

Tickets are now available for individuals. For information about the Bay Area Psychotherapy Institute in Lafayette, visit www.bapti.org.

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

Share Your Celebrations and Remembrances

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

A touching tribute built at Moraga care home

By Cathy Dausman



Moraga Retreat Care Homes owner Ana Blaj, left, enjoys the new planter box with residents Joan (in pink) and Nora. Photo Cathy Dausman



From left: Andrew Logan, Kyle Leuteneker, Kyle Davis, Grant Larsen, Spencer Larsen, and Isaac Pugh. Photo provided

Grant Larsen always enjoyed his grandfather Vince Jones' company – whether he was mowing his grandfather's lawn or chatting with him after a Campolindo High School football game. The two continued to meet even after Jones suffered a stroke and went to live at Moraga Retreat Care Homes.

It was while visiting him there that Larsen formed an idea that would become his Eagle Scout project. He decided to beautify the care home landscaping and build a wheeled, raised planter box for its residents.

"I hoped to complete the project while he was there so he could

enjoy and watch my work," Larsen said, "but his health deteriorated and he passed away before I could start."

The proposed grandfather/grandson bonding time became instead a memorial.

In July Larsen, his "football buddy" Kyle Leutenaker (himself an Eagle Scout) and Scouts from Larsen's Troop 249 cleared out overgrown vegetation and replanted. Two weeks later they assembled the project centerpiece – a planter box on wheels.

The project was surprisingly time consuming, when design draft work, purchase of materials and final on-site construction were in-

cluded. Larsen estimates he and his fellow scouts committed over 50 hours to the project.

Larsen worked closely with owner Ana Blaj, whom he called "extremely supportive" and grateful. Blaj returned the compliment, insisting, "I only have nice things to say about him. He could have chosen something else to do," Blaj continued, adding, "not many high school kids are involved with their grandpa."

"I hope that my project will be able to make the home more appealing and help out the residents by adding some things for them to do," Larsen said.

The residents assembling at

the planter on the day photos were taken seemed delighted at the pansies peeking out from the soil. And Larsen's mother, Emily Larsen, is certain her son's project would

have meant a lot to Jones because he, like his grandson, was an Eagle Scout.

"He touched my heart," said Blaj.

Pet emergency preparedness

By Mona Miller, DVM

In the wake of the terrible California North Bay/Napa fires, and recent hurricanes, I was motivated to check my home emergency preparedness kit. I do this every couple years, replacing supplies that have an expiration date and adding additional items. In our beautiful Bay Area, it is not a question of whether a major earthquake will occur again, but when it will hit. In addition to stocking supplies and food for all human family members for a minimum of three days, here are some precautions you can take to help your pets survive.

First on my list of to-do's: microchip all your pets! It is a very safe procedure, inexpensive and can be done quickly without anesthesia by your veterinarian or the county. Without a collar or tag, this is a reliable way to connect pets with owners. Keep your microchip registration current with the company – make sure that your contact phone numbers and address are current.

Second is to have an individual carrier for each cat or other small pet (small dog, rabbit, guinea pig, etc.). In the event that you need to house your three indoor cats for a week or longer in a makeshift shelter, there is not enough room in a medium sized cat carrier for more than one animal. Make a small investment in a decently constructed medium-sized carrier for each pet,

and then store these in an area that is near your earthquake kit. In some cases, you might consider having a large dog carrier for your large dog – especially if your dog isn't friendly – in case you need to share space at an emergency shelter or with friends.

Consider adding some vacuum-packed dry kibble and several cans of pet food to your own food supply, along with a can opener (not one that relies on electricity). Include some lightweight food and water bowls. Canned food is the easiest method to make sure that your dog or cat gets water and stays hydrated.

Pets need to drink fresh, clean water daily, or consume a fair amount of water through canned food. The general rule of thumb is that a cat needs a half-liter per day, and a 20-pound dog needs one liter per day. Consider having a minimum of a three-day supply for each pet.

Does your pet take daily medication? Pack a week's supply for each pet in a waterproof baggy, clearly labeling the medication, dose and expiration date. Make sure to check this supply annually, along with your food supply, and replace any outdated medication.

For each pet, make an individual sheet of paper with name and photo, date of birth, microchip information, description and any

underlying health information. Include a current vaccine certificate. These papers can serve as a quick identifier to search and rescue responders. Some pet shelters may require proof of valid rabies vaccination in order to house your pet during an emergency.

Further information can be found on the following websites: <https://www.cdc.gov/features/petsanddisasters/index.html>, <https://www.aspc.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/disaster-preparedness>.



Dr. Mona Miller lives in Lafayette with her son, two cats and yellow Labrador. She attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate, and received her DVM from UC Davis. She has been happy to call Lafayette home since 2001. She can be reached via email at MonaSDVM@aol.com. She welcomes questions from readers that may get incorporated into a column.

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In Memory

George Anderson Talbot

Dec. 31, 1918 – Sept. 8, 2017



Former resident of Orinda and Moraga, born in Oakland, Calif., to William J. Talbot and Marie Andersen Talbot, brother of William J. Talbot, Jr., George Anderson Talbot passed away on Sept. 8. He is survived by three sons, Pete (Debbie), Rick (Carol Devincenzi) and Al (Lucy), eight grandchildren, one great-grandchild, nephew Jim Talbot, and niece Marcia Porter Ellis. He is predeceased by his parents, brother and wife of 62 years, Mary L. Talbot. A 1941 graduate of UC Berkeley and member of the 1938 Cal national champion freshman crew. Following college, George worked for Pan American World Airways and met Mary Louise Lyman (his first boss!) and they married in 1947. After

retiring from a career in marine and industrial sales management, he and Mary traveled the U.S., Europe, and the Pacific where they had both worked during and after World War II. His greatest adventure was a cruise up the Amazon on his own, at age 94. He and Mary had many great summer vacations at Lake Tahoe as well, with family and friends, where he was always happy to share his treasured Chris Craft with all. Family is eternally grateful to his many caregivers these past few years, as they surely extended and improved his life. A celebration of life was held at Metro, 3524 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Lafayette, on Oct. 15. Donations may be made to a charity of your choice.

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ART

The Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery presents "Refuge," a two-person exhibit featuring new work by Susan Sharman and Susan Taira. Sharman and Taira both find inspiration – and solace – in nature, translating their personal experience through a variety of mediums. Exhibition runs through Oct. 21. www.jenniferperlmuttergallery.com

The award-winning Netflix series, "Stranger Things" has sparked fan art and loyal followers around the globe. Join a fun night of art and atmosphere to celebrate the love of all things "Strange" from 6 to 9 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 28. Step inside the Sci-fi realm of "The Upside Down" at the Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery, featuring 11 artists from around the Bay Area paying tribute to the characters, sets, and themes of "Stranger Things." The \$10 admission ticket includes entry to this experiential exhibit, plus refreshments, live painting, meet the artists, photo ops, costume contest, raffle prizes, "Strange Art" for sale and other surprises! Purchase at: <http://jenniferperlmuttergallery.com/product/strangerartist/>.

The Moraga Art Gallery presents "Impressions-Expressions," highlighting Asian-accented jewelry by K. de Groot, enticing light-infused paintings by Carol Tarzier, and a bounty of artistic gifts for the holidays. The exhibit, which also includes work by the gallery's 13 member artists and several guest artists, runs from Oct. 25 to Jan. 6, with an open reception on Oct. 28. For more information visit www.moragaartgallery.com or call (925) 376-5407.

Valley Art Gallery's new Exhibition "Art, Naturally" runs through Nov. 11. From objects found to impressions visualized, artists have been busy creating the new fall 2017 show of more than 300 works of art for sale or for rent.

11th Annual Artisan Faire from 4 to 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 10 at the Orinda Country Club, 315 Camino Sobrante. This popular Faire showcases over 30 talented artists selling their unique and original works in jewelry, ceramics, painting, photography, glass, fiber art, woodwork and clothing plus cosmetics and culinary products. Enjoy complimentary wine tasting and delicious samples of artisan chocolates and food items.

MUSIC

The Little Fall Music Fest is scheduled from 3 to 6 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21 at the Library Community Hall, Lafayette Library and Learning Center. Enjoy an afternoon of great music and libations, starting with flamenco dancer Melissa Cruz, followed by the bluegrass and blues sounds of Dirty Cello, and finishing with the rousing music hall songs of Brass Farthing. Lafayette Rotary Club will be on hand with barbecue, beer and wine. Cost: \$10.

Crowden Music Center presents Community Music Day from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 22 at Crowden Music Center, 1475 Rose Street, Berkeley. Crowden's Community Music Day is a free musical carnival, with Instrument petting zoos, San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, face painting, prizes and more. For more info see <http://www.crowden.org/concerts-and-events/community-music-day> or call (510) 559-6910 or email concerts@crowden.org.

Gold Coast Chamber Players concert, "Wayfarers" at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 28 in the Lafayette Library Community Hall. Gustav Mahler (arranged by Zakarias Grafilo); Kindertotenlieder; RückertLieder; Lieder eines Fahrenden

gesellen (Songs of a Wayfarer). Tickets: \$45 general; \$40 senior (65+); \$15 student. Purchase online at www.gplayers.org or by phone at (925) 283-3728. (See story on page B2.)

Songs and Stories to Benefit Terry's Kids beginning at 6:30 p.m. Monday, Nov. 6 in the Orinda Library Auditorium. This evening will raise funds for our Cuban friends in need, as well as support Terry's Kids music programs in underfunded schools in the Bay Area. Tickets: \$35. tmkids.org (925) 285-0996

THEATER

Town Hall Theatre Company presents "The Song of the Nightingale: A Musical Fairy Tale," a new pop musical based on the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale, with book, music and lyrics by Min Kahng, directed by Michael Mohammed with music direction by Margaret Halbig. The show runs through Oct. 21. For ticket information and showtimes, visit www.townhalltheatre.com.

Saint Mary's Performing Arts Department presents "... and Jesus Moonwalks the Mississippi" by Oakland-based playwright Marcus Gardley. Directed by Ken Prestinzi, the play weaves the Demeter myth and American Civil War into a tapestry of redemption Nov. 1-5 at the LeFevre Theatre, 1928 Saint Mary's Road, Moraga. Tickets: \$15. For exact times and to purchase tickets see <https://www.stmarys-ca.edu/performing-arts>.

LECTURE & LITERATURE

Humanities West Fireside Chat: Norman Sicily at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 24 at the Orinda Library. Join George Hammond of Humanities West to explore Sicily under the Normans where the intense yet prosperous interaction among Norman-Catholic, Byzantine-Orthodox and Arab-Islamic cultures endowed Palermo with great art.

SMC Creative Writing Reading Series presents an Evening with Tyehimba Jess, 2017 Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, reading followed by a Q&A with Matthew Zapuder at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday Oct. 25 in the Soda Center.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

Wheel Day from 10 a.m. to noon Saturday, Oct. 21 at Lafayette Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive Lafayette (rain or shine.) Bring the whole family for a day of horn-honking fun. Children can climb, explore, ask questions and have their photo taken with a variety of vehicles! Popcorn and baked goods available for purchase.

Orinda Academy will be hosting an open house event for fall 2018 enrollment from 1 to 4 p.m. Oct. 22 and Dec. 9 at 19 Altarinda Rd., Orinda.

The annual Lafayette Res Run for Education begins at 8 a.m. Sunday, Oct. 22 in downtown Lafayette. Now celebrating its 25th anniversary, this community fitness event features beautiful scenery, a fast 5-K race, a challenging 10-K course which includes a trip around the Lafayette Reservoir, and a 2 Mile Fun Run/Walk for dogs, walkers and runners of all ages (this one begins at 8:45am). All races start and end at the same location – corner of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Oak Hill Rd. in downtown Lafayette. Register online www.lafayettechamber.org/resrun.

Teen Stress and Student Performance from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 25 at Acalanes High School Performing Arts Center. All are invited to a free informative talk sponsored by Acalanes Parents Club given by author Dr. Ben Bernstein, Ph.D., a psycholo-

gist and educator specializing in how stress affects performance, including test anxiety. For more information and to register, visit <https://benbernstein.eventbrite.com>. If you have any questions, please contact Holly Nolan at HollyNolan@comcast.net.

Get Your Ghoul On at 4 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 27 in the Orinda Library Garden Room. Just for Teens. Join us for some creepy crafts, gory treats, and bone-chilling activities...if you dare. For grades 6-12.

For a fun, safe Halloween event, children and their parents are invited to trick-or-treat on Mt. Diablo Boulevard from Oak Hill Road to Dewing Avenue and in La Fiesta Square from 4-6 p.m. Friday, Oct. 27. All participating businesses will display a "Trick-or-Treat Poster" and balloons. Please come in costume to receive a special treat. Don't forget to bring a trick-or-treat bag.

Put on your costume and join Lamorinda Moms and Theatre Square businesses for a morning of free trick-or-treating fun in Theatre Square from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Oct. 28. Bring a friend, all are welcome!

Lafayette Youth Commission Haunted House from 5 to 9 p.m. on Oct. 28 and 29; from 5 to 7 p.m. for Not-So Scary - \$3; and from 7:30 to 9 p.m. for Very Scary - \$5.

Trick or Treat with the kids 3 to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 31 at the Rheem Shopping Center in Moraga.

Halloween skit in Moraga with the Addams Family from 7 to 9 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 31 at 12 Lynwood Place in Moraga. An annual tradition, trick-or-treaters watch a 10-minute show and then get their treats.

OTHER

Burton Valley Elementary PTA Blood and Bone Marrow Drive from 8:15 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. Friday, Nov. 3 in the BVE Multi-Purpose Room. To schedule your appointment or for more information visit redcrossblood.org (Sponsor Code BURTON) or call 1-800 RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767). Learn more about the bone marrow registry and eligibility at bethematch.org. If you are unable to attend but would like to order a swab kit, go to join.bethematch.org/burton.

Luminance Vision Optometry ribbon cutting and opening party will be from 5 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 19 at 3444 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

Volunteers will remove Fire Blight - damaged branches from the 104-year-old pear orchard adjacent to Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School in Moraga from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21. The trees are doing better after several years of fire blight removal, treatment with an organic fertilizer last year, and our winter rains. Bring gloves, sunscreen, hats and sturdy shoes. If you have them, bring (labeled with your name) loppers, hand pruners and (especially needed) pole pruners and orchard ladders. For more information, contact Bobbie Preston at (925) 376-8474 or barbarampreston@comcast.net.

The big semi-annual book sale sponsored by the Friends of the Moraga Library will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21 at the Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Road. Books, CD's, DVD's of every category will be sold at prices ranging from 25 cents to \$4. Beginning at 1 p.m. a bag can be purchased for \$5 and filled with all the books it can hold. Come to one of the biggest bargain sales in Lamorinda.

... continued on next page

Upcoming movies and events at Orinda and Rheem theatres

By Derek Zemrak



Image provided

Orinda Theatre will be showcasing the Contra Costa County exclusive release of "Mark Felt: The Man Who Brought Down the White House" on Oct. 20. The film centers on "Deep Throat," the pseudonym given to the notorious whistleblower for one of the greatest scandals of all time, Watergate. The true identity of the secret informant remained a mystery and a source of much public curiosity and speculation for more than 30 years. That is until 2005 when special agent Mark Felt (Liam Neeson) shockingly revealed himself as the tipster. This unbelievable true story chronicles the personal and professional life of the brilliant and uncompromising Felt, who risked and ultimately sacrificed everything – his family, his career, his

freedom – in the name of justice.

The Autumn Concert at the Rheem Theatre is scheduled at 7 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21. Enjoy your evening with a live musical concert from some of the Bay Area's best singers including Doug Bryson (Tenor), Gordan Douglas, Karen Henson, Tommy O'Dowd, Ellen Wing, Brett and Eileen Zamora all accompanied by pianist, Patti Leidecker. This lineup of amazing talent has performed all over the Bay Area including Festival Opera, Leshner Center of the Arts, Oakland Lyric Opera, San Francisco City Chorus, Society Cabaret in San Francisco and Ciné Cuvée Wine Bar in Orinda.

The family film "Goodbye Christopher Robin" arrives in theatres on Oct. 27. This movie is a behind the scenes look at the life of author A.A. Milne and the creation of the Winnie the Pooh stories inspired by his son, C. R. Milne. "Goodbye Christopher Robin" is produced and directed by Simon Curtis who previously produced and directed "Woman in Gold" (2015) and "My Week with Marilyn" (2011), both of which were audience favorites at the Orinda Theatre.

Also on Oct. 27, "Thank You for Your Service" will open in theatres nationwide. Oscar nominee Jason Hall ("American Sniper," Best Writing, Adapted Screenplay) makes his directorial debut with "Thank You for Your Service." A group of U.S. soldiers returning from Iraq struggles to integrate back into family and civilian life, while living with the memory of a war that threatens to destroy them long after they've left the battlefield. The film stars Miles Tiller ("Whiplash," "The Spectacular Now") who I believe is one of best actors of his generation. Tiller one day will win an Oscar, and "Thank You for Your Service" may be his first Academy Award nomination.

◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆

OTHER ... continued

Lafayette Reservoir Rim Trail meeting at 8:30 a.m. Saturday, Oct. 21. Meet in the parking lot out from Lafayette BART's main entrance. We form carpools to the trailhead. Bring lunch or snacks, water, layered clothing, good walking shoes, sun protection and money to contribute toward gas, and parking. (\$3 local). Strenuous with two steep hills, just over 5 miles. Leader: Alison Hill.

This is a worldwide celebration of the 200th anniversary of birth of the founder of the Baha'i Faith and the Baha'is of Lamorinda would like to celebrate with all of their friends and neighbors in Lamorinda from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 22 at the Soda Activity Center at Saint Mary's College, 1928 St. Mary's Road in Moraga. Everyone is welcome to this free event.

Humanities West Fireside Chat: Norman Sicily at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 24, Fireside at the Orinda Library. Join George Hammond of Humanities West to explore Sicily under the Normans where the intense yet prosperous interaction among Norman-Catholic, Byzantine-Orthodox and Arab-Islamic cultures endowed Palermo with great art.

Contra Costa Tale Spinners will host a story swap with featured teller, Dana Sherry, who brings folk tales from the heart of the Silk Road alive and transforms historical events into tales of wonder and horror at 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 26 in Orinda Community Center Room 6. Share, listen, expand your universe.

Daughters of the Goddess Womyn's Temple welcomes womyn and girls of all ages to the Annual Spiral Dance at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 27 at the Orinda Masonic Temple, 9 Altarinda Rd. During this multi-cultural ritual, led by Kahuna Leilani, and accompanied by spiritual elders of different traditions, come together to honor and celebrate loved ones who have passed away. Ticket cost is \$23 advance by Oct. 23 or \$29 at the door. Student and Crone discounts are available in advance. Please bring pictures of your loved ones that have passed to be placed on the An-

cestor Altar. Also bring along your drums and rattles for the ceremony.

Celebrate the 500th anniversary of The Reformation from 2 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 29 at The Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church 433 Moraga Way in Orinda. The "Marty Party" will offer beer tasting with numerous Lamorinda home brewers, bounce house, games, and crafts for kids, apple carving, Oktoberfest-style bratwursts and much more. All proceeds will go to help the victims of the recent North Bay fires.

Joaquin Miller Park hike meeting at 9 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 1. Meet at the parking lot at the corner of Pleasant Hill Road and Olympic. We form carpools to the trailhead. Bring snacks, water, layered clothing, good walking shoes, sun protection and money to contribute toward gas, and parking. (\$3 local). Strenuous with hills, approximately 4.5 miles, and two hours of hiking. Leader: Erwin Johnson. Lafayette-Hiking@comcast.net

Lafayette Juniors 24th Annual Rummage Sale from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 4. Special Early Bird Entrance fee \$5 per adult from 7 to 8 a.m. at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Dr., Lafayette. Pre-loved designer clothes, baby and kid clothes, toys, children's gear, furniture, household goods, and much more. Visit www.lafayettejuniors.org.

Discovering Opera: Puccini's La Rondine presented by Bradford Wade from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 9 in the Lafayette Library, Arts and Science Room. An operetta by Puccini? With waltzes? And no one dies? Yes, it's La Rondine (The Swallow). Lecturer Bradford Wade will give a guided tour of La Rondine, with a description of the plot interspersed with musical examples. This lecture is given in conjunction with Opera San José's production of La Rondine, Nov. 11-26. Fee: members free; non-members \$10.

Lamorinda Business Symposium from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 14 at the Soda Center at Saint Mary's College. A panel discussion on the "Customer Experience – getting back to basics in today's ever changing retail and business

environment." Free event for all, but please RSVP to kathe@moragachamber.org as refreshments will be served.

SENIORS

Lunch n' Learn: That Elusive Thing Called Sleep, presented by Linda Fodrini-Johnson from 10:30 a.m. to noon on Tuesday, Oct. 24 at Merrill Gardens Lafayette, 2nd Street at Mt. Diablo Boulevard. Changes in sleep patterns are normal as we get older. It's a common misconception, however, that sleep needs decline with age. In fact, studies have shown that our sleep needs remain constant throughout adulthood. So, what's keeping us older adults awake? And what can be done to combat these issues to get a good night's sleep? Lunch generously provided by Merrill Gardens. Space is limited; RSVP required by Oct. 18: Seniors@LoveLafayette.org or 284-5050.

Anne Randolph Physical Therapy Presentation The Art of Balance from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 25 in the Cedar Room, Lafayette Community Center. If you are worried about falling or are at risk of falling, you should know about activities that improve balance. Learn how to gain increased balance and avoid the risk of falling.

GARDEN

The Moraga Garden Club will hold their next meeting at 9:30 a.m. Thursday, Oct. 19 at the Holy Trinity Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga. The guest speaker will be Linus Eukel, executive director of the John Muir Land Trust. Interested parties are welcome to attend the 9:30 a.m. social hour, 10 a.m. meeting, and the presentation by Eukel immediately following the meeting.

Botanical Drawing Workshop at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 9 in the Orinda Library Garden Room. Botanical artist and instructor, Catherine Watters, will introduce you to botanical art and guide you through hands-on exercises to experience the practice of botanical drawing. Materials provided. Space is limited. Register online, by phone or in person at the Orinda Library.

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Service Clubs Announcements

Meets Friday mornings at 7:00 am at The Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa, Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. Check us out at www.lamorindasunrise.com or email us at lamorindasunrise@gmail.com.

October 20	October 27
Julieanna Castellanos saving kids through Destiny Rescue.	Featured member of the month Pat Flaharty , past club President and mean bread maker!

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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.

October 19:	October 26:
Award presentations to school music programs from Concert at the Res fund raising	Deanne Pearn- Contra Costa Interfaith Housing

www.rotarylafayette.org
www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-Ca-197392963631366

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Please join us for our next meeting:

WHEN: Wednesday, Nov. 1st
Social 5:30-6:00 p.m.
Meeting 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

WHERE: The Buttercup Grill
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Contact us to purchase raffle tickets for a chance to win \$1000 in Safeway gift cards. \$10 per ticket.

For more information, contact:
Regina Englehart @925-876-9076
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Comforting seasonal cuisine offered at The Park Bistro & Bar

By Susie Iventosch

There's something fresh and exciting going on at the Lafayette Park Hotel and it involves the trio of Jason Reiplinger, director of food and beverage, Executive Chef Frank Macias and Pastry Chef Francisco Cabrera. These three gentlemen have teamed up to create a new approach to the dining atmosphere at The Park Bistro & Bar.

"Where the Duck Club was more of a special occasion type restaurant, the bistro is one where we want people to feel comfortable dining with us more often during the week," Reiplinger said. "We don't believe that guests should have to work to understand the menu, so we've evolved the menu to one that is comfortable and understandable with lots of new seasonal favorites. We're the opposite of most every other hotel restaurant, in that our regular patrons are not just traveling through, but are local community members."

While Reiplinger recruited both Macias and Cabrera from The Wynn Hotel in Las Vegas, both are originally from the East Bay and they are delighted to be back home, close to friends and family.

"I'm so happy to be back home, and it's also so much easier to create a seasonal menu being so close and accessible to local farmers," Macias noted. "This allows us to offer seasonal and approachable, recognizable fare." To these fellows this not only means menu

items that are familiar, but also foods prepared as they were meant to be.

"I trained in classic French cuisine while working at Alain Ducasse's Benoit New York in Manhattan and those classical techniques continue to be the driving force behind good food," Macias mentioned. "Among the important lessons learned there is how to prepare seasonal vegetables as they should be prepared and cooked. Vegetables should be treated with respect."

Macias said that roasting with olive oil is a very good way to cook green beans, for example, which maintains the integrity and flavor of the vegetable.

Cabrera, a self-taught chef who ventured to Las Vegas when he was 19 years old to learn the trade, developed skills in chocolatier, Danish and banquet before ultimately becoming a chef de partie in chocolates. He enjoys making what he calls "comfort desserts."

"The best thing about comfort desserts is that they bring back great memories and take you back to a certain place in time," he said. "When I make them for guests, I get great feedback."

Currently, Chef Cabrera is making "cereal milk" frozen panna cotta. The milk for the panna cotta is infused with toasted cereals, strained and then combined with brown sugar and gelatin. He serves this dessert with caramel-

ized bananas and strawberries or other seasonal fruits.

The Park Bistro & Bar menu changes seasonally. Chef Macias has generously shared his recipe for Braised Short Ribs and Crushed Okinawan Yams, which I

made last week to my guests' delight. It was perfect comfort food and the colors of the crushed yams and carrots made a beautiful autumn plate. Because I did not have access to Okinawan yams, I used regular orange yams, which turned

out to be delicious with his short rib recipe. Chef Cabrera has also shared a recipe for one of his "cereal milk" desserts. Unfortunately, I did not have the chance to try the dessert recipe, but hope to soon!



Braised short rib, crushed Okinawan yam, Tokyo turnip and dandelion greens

Photo provided

Braised Short Rib, Crushed Okinawan Yam, Tokyo Turnip, Dandelion Greens

(4 servings)

Short Ribs

INGREDIENTS

5 lbs. boneless short rib
Olive oil to sear
Salt and pepper to taste
4 each white onions julienned
4 each carrots, peeled and cut thin
750 ml. Cabernet Sauvignon
16 oz. Balsamic Vinegar
4 quarts beef bouillon

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Season and sear the beef short ribs with the oil. Remove the meat from the hot pan. Sweat the carrots and onion in the same pan until translucent. Deglaze with the red wine, add the ribs back in with the vegetables. Once the alcohol has burned off, add the balsamic vinegar and bouillon to the ribs. Cover with a lid and simmer for 2 ½ hours, or until fork tender. Remove meat from the liquid and reduce the liquid until it coats the back of a spoon. To serve: Add the ribs to the reduced braise and glaze.

Crushed Okinawan Yam

Susie's note: I could not find the Okinawan yam, so I used regular yams, prepared according to Chef Macias' recipe and they were beautiful and tasty with the short ribs!

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs. Okinawan yam
1 half-sheet pan filled with kosher salt for baking
¾ cup of fruity olive oil
Sea salt

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F and bake the yam on the salt. Once cooked and fork tender, pull out of the oven and let cool slightly. Peel the yams while still warm. Slightly crush the yams with a fork and drizzle in the olive oil. Season with sea salt and chives.

Glazed Tokyo Turnip

INGREDIENTS

15 Tokyo turnips with greens still attached
1 Tbsp. olive oil
1 Tbsp. butter
¼ cup chicken broth
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Boil water for blanching, and season the water heavily with salt. With a pair of tongs blanch just the turnip while holding the greens above the water for 2 minutes. Drop the rest of the turnip into the water for a quick 30 seconds. In a sauté pan add the butter, olive oil and chicken stock and apply medium heat. Add the turnip and season with salt and pepper. To plate the meal: Dandelion leaves, lemon vinaigrette, Maldon salt, olive oil. Place a spoonful of the yam on the side of the plate and place the glazed rib next to the yam. Lay the turnips around the ribs. Finish with Maldon salt. Dress the dandelion leaves in lemon vinaigrette and lay a couple of the long leaves gently on the meat and yam. Drizzle with olive oil.

Cereal Milk Panna Cotta, Cornflake Clusters, Macerated Strawberries, Caramelized Banana

(8 servings)

Panna Cotta

INGREDIENTS

Susie's note: Most food scales have both gram and ounce options, but in case you do not have a gram measurement device, I have put close conversions in parenthesis.

256 grams cornflakes (8.9 oz. or 5 cups)
710 grams milk (25 oz. or 3 cups)
470 grams heavy cream (22 oz. or 2 cups)
30 grams brown sugar (1.1 oz. or 3 Tbsp.)
2 grams salt (.1 oz. or 1 tsp.)
4 sheets of gelatin

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 F. Bloom gelatin. (Bloom means to soften according to directions.) Toast cornflakes for about 5-7 minutes. In a bowl scale out the milk and heavy cream. Add the corn flakes and steep for at least 40 minutes. Strain through a fine mesh sieve, add sugar and salt. Heat the mixture until it is warm and add the gelatin sheets. Remove from heat and pour into silicon mold and freeze. Unmold when completely set.

Cornflake clusters

INGREDIENTS

55 grams (1/4 cup) gianduja chocolate—a paste made from 70% dark, sweet chocolate and 30% hazelnut paste
2 grams vegetable oil (1/2 tsp.)
1 gram salt (1/2 tsp.)
75 grams 70% dark chocolate (2.5 oz.)
5 grams corn syrup (1/2 tsp.)
100 grams cornflakes (3.57 oz. or 2 cups)

DIRECTIONS

Melt 70% chocolate over double boiler. Add oil, corn syrup, salt, gianduja and corn flakes. Fold until evenly coated and spread on a sheet tray lined with parchment paper. Place in cooler and break into pieces when set.

Macerated strawberries

1 lb. strawberries
3 Tbsp. sugar

Caramelized banana

1 banana
3 Tbsp. sugar

Slice the banana coat one side in sugar and torch until caramel is light amber color

To plate: Crushed corn flakes. Center the panna cotta on the plate. Quarter cut the strawberries and place in staggering pattern with the caramelized banana. Break off pieces of cornflake clusters on top of the panna cotta. And sprinkle crushed corn flakes around the plate.

Cooking Term of the Week

Quenelle

A quenelle is a French term for an oval-shaped dumpling made from finely chopped and seasoned fish, meat or vegetables, and poached in water or stock. It is usually served with a sauce.

Local residents rally in response to North Bay fires

... continued from page B1

Aegis of Moraga General Manager Candice Moses said Moraga is ready to offer shelter for seniors who have been displaced by the firestorm. The Moraga location could easily house 10 to 15 displaced seniors, keeping them "for as long as necessary." The company has even been asked if they have common space available suitable for cots.

"There is so much need," Moses said, "and we've just started this search." She said displaced seniors often arrive with no extra clothing and no personal items. Lamorindans can call Aegis of Moraga at (925) 478-7327 to inquire about helping.

Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano, along with six other Bay Area food banks, have deployed resources to affected North Bay areas and issued requests for federal assistance, said Communications Director Lisa Sherrill. The best way to help is to donate directly to food banks in the affected areas, she says. Donations can be made online, with credit, debit cards or PayPal, at <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/foodbanknews>.

Local Moraga fourth-grader at Camino Pablo Elementary School, Olivia Metz, has launched a non-profit, Costumes4Kids.org. She is collecting brand new and gently used costumes (sizes 0 to 16) between now and Oct. 22 for a local family shelter and hospital pediatric unit, and hopes to collect over 200 costumes.

In light of the devastating fires and to help spread a little joy to the kids who may have lost everything, Costumes4Kids is planning to also make a delivery to one of the shelters in the North Bay this week. You may bring your costumes to Loard's Ice Cream and Candies (Orinda or Moraga locations), Rheem Theater, Orchard Nursery, or Camino Pablo Elementary, all of which have generously agreed to house the nonprofit's decorated containers.

There are many more throughout Lamorinda demonstrating very generous acts of kindness.

As Burks put it, they are "exercising acute awareness of the enormity of the tragedy and genuinely yearning to help those in need."

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Explosive offenses highlight home stretch for football

By Jon Kingdon

With the high school football season over half way completed, Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte are all well on their way to qualifying for the post-season playoffs. With each team displaying explosive offenses, averaging respectively, 45, 38 and 31 points a game, the home stretch of the 2017 season should provide some very intriguing matchups each week.

In his second season as head coach, Floyd Burnsed has led Acalanes to a major turnaround from last season's 4 and 7 team. That team scored a total of 209 points. So far after six games this season, the undefeated Dons have scored 274 points, averaging over 45 points a game. The team's defense has proven to be just as effective. After giving up 29 points a game last season, the defense this season is giving up an average of only 12 points a game. These numbers are certainly going to be challenged as Acalanes heads into the heart of their schedule.

Says Burnsed: "It took time for the team to learn the system on both sides of the ball. Everything, including the terminology, was new to them. We are still learning through this season."

Burnsed was concerned about his lack of depth coming into this season but the Dons have stayed "fairly healthy and the backups have been stepping in and getting good experience though it will still take them time to develop."

Running a passing offense, quarterback Robbie Rowell has been dominating. He has thrown for 25 touchdowns and only one interception. "He really understands where to go with the ball," says Burnsed. Sophomore Nick Kresnak, the team's backup quarterback, has gotten valuable experience as Rowell has rarely had to play in the fourth quarter.

The team's offensive line, though not big, has utilized a lot of different blocking schemes to compensate for their lack of girth. Complementing Rowell are running backs Jake Delaney, a sophomore, and junior Kezaiah Smith, both of whom Burnsed describes as "fast and elusive."

Assistant Coach David Ortega's defense has been dominating at times. Inside linebacker Nick Henderson and outside linebacker Ryan Nall have been the mainstays for the defense. It was Henderson that made the final tackle at the goal line to preserve the Dons' win over Suncoast High School in Orlando, Fla., a game which Burnsed saw as "building confidence in ourselves to the point where we now expect to win every time we go out to play a game."

Campolindo Head Coach Kevin Macy was taking a big gamble coming into the 2017 season. He announced that his starting quarterback was going to be his best athlete, John Torchio, a wide receiver/



Robbie Rowell



John Torchio

free safety the prior two seasons. After six games, it appears that the gamble has paid off. Campolindo, with a 4 and 2 record, has been averaging over 38 points per game. Macy feels there is still room for improvement: "John has been more of an athlete than a classic quarterback, but he has been improving each week."

Vince Mossotti has been Torchio's favorite target having come a long way from the start of the season. Macy appreciates how far the two have come: "The two of them are connecting more. It was not natural initially but it has been a work in process." Lucas Allen is another receiver who has shown constant improvement.

The rushing attack has been relying primarily on Torchio's designed runs and his ability to ad lib when the receivers are not open.

Macy was particularly concerned with his young defense and with good reason as they have given up an average of 28 points per game but anticipates much improved play from this unit. "Last week was the first time that we had three players that we were relying on coming into the season on the field at the same time," he said.

Defensive end, Justin Ehrenberger, who has been plagued all season with a pulled hamstring, is finally healthy. The other defensive end, Jake Walgen, is also healthy for the first time after suffering a broken collarbone. The team's top

cornerback, Ryan Mc Nally, though still a bit rusty, coming back from a torn medial collateral ligament suffered in the offseason playing baseball, is providing a lot of stability in the team's secondary.

Miramonte High School has been able to show great balance between their offense and defense. Head Coach Jack Schram prior to the season said that he "looked for much improvement on defense." He has not been disappointed: the 5-1 Matadors have held their opponents to seven points or fewer, with one shutout in their five victories.

Schram has been most pleased with all of his linebackers. As expected, middle linebacker Sam Walker has been the leader on the defense. Outside linebackers Ben Schmidt and Peter Stehr have been equally effective.

Jake Hazard has proven to be a shut down cornerback.

Behind quarterback Xavier Clark, the offense has proven to be a smooth running machine. Schram is very pleased in Clark's development this season. "Xavier is a solid quarterback," he said. "He is a great leader and he really understands the game."

The running attack has relied on two backs: the aforementioned Peter Stehr, who Schram describes as "a downhill, power runner" and Henry Vacakis, the change of pace back who has proven to be an effective, cutback openfield runner.



Sam Walker

Miramonte alum obliterates MAC passing record

By Jon Kingdon



Drew Anderson

Photo provided

Talk about a Matador making the most of an opportunity.

University at Buffalo backup quarterback Drew Anderson smashed both the school and the Mid-American Conference passing records throwing for 597 yards and seven touchdowns in a wild seven-overtime game at UB Stadium Oct. 7. Anderson connected with 10 different receivers and also ran for a score in a 71-68 loss to conference rival Western Michigan.

Anderson, a football, basketball and baseball star at Miramonte High School, was named the Mid-American Conference East Division Offensive Player of the Week and was one of eight quarterbacks

named Manning Award Stars of the Week nationally.

Anderson walked on at San Diego State, transferred to Diablo Valley College and in 2016 transferred to the University at Buffalo. A business administration major, Anderson redshirted his first season at Buffalo and did not anticipate playing much this season.

In the fourth game, Buffalo's starting quarterback, Tyree Jackson, went down with a knee injury and Anderson stepped in, leading the team to victories over Florida Atlantic and Kent State, completing 18 of 27 passes for 251 yards, two touchdowns and one interception. Since entering the game

just before halftime of the contest against Florida Atlantic, Anderson has completed 53 of 88 passes for 848 yards, nine touchdowns and only one interception.

Miramonte Head Football Coach Jack Schram was not surprised at Anderson's performance: "He has all the qualities you want in a quarterback - he's intelligent, he has good arm strength and is real leader. I do not know why it has taken so long for him to be recognized."

Oakland Raiders All-Pro linebacker Khalil Mack was the team's 2014 first round draft choice out of the University at Buffalo.



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Players show strengths in tough tennis matches

By Jon Kingdon



Celia Campo (Campolindo)



Sasha Schtein (Acalanes)



Eliza Bates (Acalanes)

Photos Gint Federas

Campolindo High School, which has historically had competitive tennis teams, has this season become the victim of senior graduations and coming up on the wrong side of a couple of 5-4 matches, compiling a 2 and 7 record so far this season.

Coaches Steve Robinson and Sunun Faulkner anticipated that it was going to be a challenging season with respect to wins and losses. "We have a very young team," Robinson said. "We only have two seniors in our starting line up, for most matches, with lots of freshman and sophomores."

Despite this, Robinson appreciates how his players have maintained a positive attitude. "We have great team spirit. The girls are committed and working hard."

Co-captains Jessalyn Simon-Parker and Hannah Mc Donnell have provided the necessary leadership for the team, keeping everyone focused through some difficult losses. Simon-Parker plays No. 1 singles and Mc Donnell plays No. 1 doubles.

Robinson can find the positives on his team. "There is a lot of athletic talent on the team and we have good depth which is shown by our success with our doubles teams."

Six of Campolindo's seven singles players are either freshmen or sophomores, which bodes well for the team's future, though Robinson says, "The key is for the girls to work hard in the off season."

Miramonte's coach, Michael McCollom, almost finds it difficult to control his effusiveness when he discusses his team. With a 13-1 record (6-0 in league play) McCollom states the obvious: "We're having a great season at a time when there are so many talented players in the East Bay."

The top player for the Matadors is freshman Amber Lee, a nationally ranked player

for the 16 and unders. Playing in other tournaments has forced McCollom to substitute for Lee in some matches. Freshman Macey Dowd, who normally plays No. 2 singles, has stepped in for Lee when necessary with great success. Yet this is a team blessed with players from all four grades. McCollom has utilized his depth, having played 19 different players through the season. "I've never had a team with such depth and consistency – right down the line," he said. "They're all great kids – all good students – it's just a marvelous team."

With so many freshmen playing, McCollom has found great support from the seniors on his team.

Co-captains Allison Burkholder (singles), Olivia Kudszes (doubles) and Kiki Immel (doubles) have provided leadership both on and off the court, as has Annabelle Lee (singles).

This is crucial to McCollom. "The leadership from the seniors is all about making it a supportive environment," he said. "The upperclassmen on the team make it an accountable and cohesive group. This is essential, especially with so many freshmen. They are passing on the culture and the legacy of winning here. The significance of their efforts is evident in the team's record."

It has been an up and down season for the Acalanes tennis team. Having to overcome a series of injuries and illnesses, the team went into some of their matches short-handed.

Coach Valery Jorgensen, one of a triumvirate of coaches (Michelle Mc Donagh, Corby Mullins), credits the work of her senior co-captains Maddie Mc Donagh, Megan Cardiff and Sasha Schtein. "They have done great work on and off the court. They have shown the underclassmen how to behave, fo-



From left: Maile Nomura and Alex Bonardi (Campolindo)

cus and work hard. They have gone so far as organizing team dinners."

Freshman Eliza Bates has been the top player for the Dons. Says Jorgensen, "Eliza is a great competitor with a great mindset. She sees the court really well, hits the ball hard and is very consistent in her play."

If there was a positive side to the early season travails, it gave the coaches the opportunity to see the younger players put into unexpected pressure situations. Jorgensen saw the players take advantage of this opportunity. "Many of the girls developed immensely," she said. "Our lower level singles players got to compete against much tougher competition filling in for the missing starters and the backups stepped in for those girls as

well." Jorgensen highlighted sophomore Sophia Cooper and senior Olivia Reineke who went from doubles to play singles and "were a huge help for our team."

If there was a pleasant surprise this season, it was the play of freshman Jasmine Toni, who according to Jorgensen has shown "constant improvement and growth throughout the season. She is playing great."

With the week off due to the air quality issues, the Dons should be in even better shape as the season winds down.

Due to the bad air quality the Miramonte/Campolindo match last week was rescheduled and we were not able to take photos of Miramonte athletes.

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USPTA Jr Circuit kicks off season

Submitted by John Sharpe



Dev Boora of Alamo, right, beat Will Stokes of Orinda in the Boys 12 Singles at a USPTA Jr Tournament hosted by Orinda Country Club.

Photo provided

The USPTA Jr Circuit kicked off its 2017-18 season with tennis tournaments at Orinda Country Club and Sleepy Hollow Tennis and Swim. The circuit consists of nine local events from September 2017 to June 2018. The Circuit was established back in 1987 to offer juniors local one-weekend novice tournaments.

Lamorinda junior champions or finalist of Orinda CC were: Jonah Elias B10 finalist, Will Stokes B12 finalist, Nishad Elias B14 finalist,

Alton Schmitt B16 finalist, Soleil Skjorshammer G12 finalist, and Vy Anderson G16 champion. Lamorinda Sleepy Hollow champions or finalists were: Nicholas Owens B10 finalist, Liam Sullivan B14 champion, Nishad Elias B14 finalist, Soleil Skjorshammer G12 champion, Alicia Babson G14 champion, and Chloe Liljegren G16 champion.

The next tournament is at Orindawoods Tennis Club Oct. 20-22.

5th grade girls basketball team wins 2017 Bay City Fall Classic tournament

Submitted by Rhodora Del Rosario



Bottom row, from left: Ella Del Rosario, Jadee Salvador, Natalie Frechman, Clara O'Connor; top row: coach Brian Frechman, Dulci Vail, Kalli Crowder, Jazlyn Alcantar, Campbell Evans, and coach Mark Del Rosario; not pictured: Addi Ames. Photo Chris Evans

The Bay Area Blitz fifth-grade girls basketball team won the 2017 Bay City Fall Classic tournament, beating a few of the best Bay Area teams, including the sixth-grade SJ Spartans, the fifth-grade MRC, and the sixth-grade Top Flight Elite.

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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 11 Issue 17 Wednesday, Oct. 18, 2017



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

...read on page D12

Adventures in home renovation – pitfalls and triumphs of kitchen rehab

By B. B. Kaye



Kent Cremolini carefully reviews plans with Francis Combes of Premiere Kitchens in Lafayette.

Photo Andy Scheck

Kitchens have evolved dramatically over the last 100 years. Your great, great, or even only great grandparents may well have cooked meals in a wood burning fireplace or over a coal-burning stove, after pumping water by hand out in the yard and carrying heavy, sloshing pots back into the house for cooking and washing no matter how cold the time of year.

Nowadays, a kitchen is the most complex room

in a house.

Done well, a kitchen can dramatically increase your quality of life, becoming a sublime center of easy living, a joy in which to entertain family and friends. Done poorly, it can be a miserable affair, inspiring only avoidance or, worse, be an unhealthy and dangerous place.

A truly great kitchen can only be the product of thoughtful planning and communication, where

nothing is left to chance between a homeowner and the craftspeople and designers who are entrusted to create it.

Tom Pollock, a Lafayette resident and home improvement contractor, has been in home renovations for over 30 years, beginning as a union carpenter in Colorado. “Most of the people I work with have already been to an architect to get the big things worked out. I would say to most people who are thinking about doing (a renovation), sit down, think about, and write down what their preferences are. What would they really like, in the design or layout, like where they want the sink, and what size refrigerator. Then they can relay those details to the architect or contractor.

“Even when clients do talk with an architect and they think they have an idea of what is going to happen, they have trouble communicating it to whoever is doing the work,” said Pollock. “They may assume that a feature will be located somewhere, but have not communicated it to anybody. They should communicate all along the job.”

Pollock says architects may have one idea, and so they may do things differently from what the client wants. “Clients should review drawings carefully, and let the architect know if what they are drawing isn’t going to work out,” he said. “It’s much more difficult after the fact. The more planning and thought, and the more you can communicate your preferences, is a good start.”

... continued on page D4





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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	12	\$942,500	\$1,879,000
MORAGA	14	\$460,000	\$1,895,000
ORINDA	6	\$935,000	\$2,400,000

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 Beaumont Court, \$1,026,000, 3 Bdrms, 1675 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 9-8-17
- 3632 Boyer Circle, \$1,750,000, 3 Bdrms, 2362 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 9-18-17;
Previous Sale: \$1,605,000, 04-30-04
- 936 Dana Highlands Court, \$1,585,000, 4 Bdrms, 3813 SqFt, 1999 YrBlt, 9-20-17;
Previous Sale: \$1,575,000, 02-26-07
- 651 Evelyn Court, \$1,800,000, 4 Bdrms, 2934 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 9-8-17;
Previous Sale: \$842,500, 11-20-15
- 3094 Hedaro Court, \$1,507,000, 3 Bdrms, 2579 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 9-8-17;
Previous Sale: \$425,000, 09-22-99
- 603 Huntleigh Drive, \$1,295,000, 3 Bdrms, 1749 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 9-14-17
- 633 Los Palos Drive, \$1,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 1980 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 9-12-17
- 1076 North Thompson Road, \$1,879,000, 4 Bdrms, 3322 SqFt, 1928 YrBlt, 9-14-17; Previous Sale: \$1,745,500, 05-15-14
- 412 Read Drive, \$994,500, 3 Bdrms, 1624 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 9-19-17;
Previous Sale: \$180,000, 05-24-85
- 17 Shreve Lane, \$942,500, 4 Bdrms, 2031 SqFt, 2013 YrBlt, 9-15-17
- 3915 South Peardale Drive, \$1,410,000, 4 Bdrms, 2278 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 9-14-17;
Previous Sale: \$310,000, 12-12-94
- 1303 Summit Road, \$1,836,000, 4 Bdrms, 3723 SqFt, 1980 YrBlt, 9-12-17;
Previous Sale: \$1,550,000, 11-16-12

MORAGA

- 1988 Ascot Drive #B, \$460,000, 2 Bdrms, 1233 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 9-15-17;
Previous Sale: \$457,500, 06-30-06
- 85 Brookfield Drive, \$1,286,000, 4 Bdrms, 1969 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 9-15-17;
Previous Sale: \$571,000, 03-17-00
- 1463 Camino Peral, \$650,000, 2 Bdrms, 1159 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 9-18-17;
Previous Sale: \$620,000, 01-13-17
- 686 Carroll Drive, \$1,175,500, 3 Bdrms, 1969 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 9-18-17;
Previous Sale: \$840,000, 01-25-17
- 6 Corte Fresca, \$1,200,000, 4 Bdrms, 2340 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 9-11-17
- 406 Fernwood Drive, \$1,550,000, 4 Bdrms, 2781 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 9-13-17;
Previous Sale: \$337,500, 05-18-99
- 25 Hardie Drive, \$1,350,000, 4 Bdrms, 2360 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 9-15-17
- 55 Miramonte Drive, \$684,000, 2 Bdrms, 1762 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 9-18-17;
Previous Sale: \$222,500, 08-18-95
- 106 Miramonte Drive, \$720,000, 2 Bdrms, 1514 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 9-8-17;
Previous Sale: \$560,000, 05-30-14
- 34 Sanders Ranch Road, \$1,510,000, 4 Bdrms, 2581 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 9-15-17;
Previous Sale: \$575,000, 08-08-90
- 26 Sea Pines Street, \$1,317,500, 3 Bdrms, 2828 SqFt, 1982 YrBlt, 9-19-17;
Previous Sale: \$775,000, 10-25-00

... continued on page D10

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Adventures in home renovation – pitfalls and triumphs of kitchen rehab

... continued from page D1



*Detail in a featured kitchen during this year's Lafayette Kitchen Tour
Photo Sora O'Doherty*

Storefronts may appear to have an increased legitimacy over more transient contractors, but occasionally even brick-and-mortar businesses can be a front for the unscrupulous. Owners of a store in Pleasant Hill that specialized in custom cabinetry are currently embroiled in litigation with several Walnut Creek and Lamorinda residents, accused not only of incompetence but also of making off with tens of thousands of dollars in deposits. Kent and Jan Cremolini lost a \$50,000 deposit for kitchen cabinets there, and are attempting to recoup their loss in the courts.

Not to be dissuaded in their desire for a new kitchen, the Cremolinis are forging on with another designer, and are now happily working with Francis Combes of Premier Kitchens in Lafayette.

Lafayette residents Anita and James Low recently completed a bright and spacious modern renovation of their kitchen after enduring 11 years in the small, dark, outdated original.

“It’s difficult to eat well in a kitchen that doesn’t

work,” Anita Low said. “If you don’t have a place to prep and a place to cook, everything has to be quick, or you buy ready-made food, or you spend a whole day of your weekend figuring out a meal plan. My kids were really happy when we got the kitchen done. After four months (of renovation), the first thing that they wanted was scrambled eggs!”

This renovation, however, was not the Low’s first attempt. They tried a contractor who had done a friend’s kitchen, and a number of their friends’ kitchens as well. “I called and asked for references, and looked at his work, and he seemed to be okay, but looks are deceiving.”

The Lows eventually discovered that the contractor was using someone else’s license. Fortunately, they had tried him out on smaller projects first, before committing to anything larger.

“A big red flag was that his own subcontractors told us that his work was not up to par, and that he had a habit of overcharging previous clients by a lot,” Anita Low said.

In the end, that contractor became unpleasant and threatening, and even attempted to collect tools not belonging to him which had been left by other subcontractors.

After that experience, the Lows were thorough and careful in choosing a contractor.

The architect they found was amazing, and he helped them look for somebody who was trustworthy. “This was going to be a long project, with a bigger budget than anywhere else in the house, so we wanted it done right – we had waited years to do it right. I recommend that whether the work is small scale or large scale, that someone be on the jobsite at all times to make sure that the work is done, and done right.”

The contractor they finally settled on had worked in the architect’s own home. “My contractor was awesome, and trustworthy to the point where I gave him the keys to the house after months of working with him, and I have never done that with anybody else. I would even trust him to watch my 5-year-old,” Anita Low said. “He understood not only the structural parts, but also the plumbing and electrical. Not all contractors can do that, and that’s where the subs come on. Ask who’s doing the

work? How many people will they be subcontracting? How long have they been working with those subcontractors to know the quality of their work and reputation for trustworthiness? Ask for extensive references.”

The finest contractors are an amalgam of experience – well-read, artistic, technically knowledgeable, well-versed in materials, tools and techniques, ethical, and rare.

One of the things you can do to prepare yourself for any renovation work is to read building books about your type of project to help you recognize if the work is proper and that the right materials are being used.

Building department rules can vary widely from municipality to municipality, but if actual structural changes are not being made, it is often permissible to replace kitchen interiors without an architect. You can create a sketch, or have the contractor sketch what you communicate.

But Pollock warns that even if you are only replacing cabinets, city rules might require you to get a permit if the work you do is over a certain dollar amount. “It used to be \$500; it might be more than that now, except for painting. Everything has pluses and minuses – while it’s more expensive to get a permit, the city will be overseeing the renovation and protecting you from an unscrupulous contractor or craftsman who might do inferior work, or not do something up to code.”

Homeowners may apply for permits themselves and save some money, but they should educate themselves beforehand in the related codes and terminology. Be sure to ask your local buildings department what their rules are. The more thought that goes into planning – such as changes to plumbing if a sink is relocated – the more pitfalls can be avoided. And always allow for contingencies! Once walls are opened there may be surprises, such as concealed structural damage, dangerous wiring, or corroded or improper plumbing that needs to be replaced or upgraded.

If you do discover such things, look on it as an opportunity to correct them, and do them right. In the long run, you’ll be happy that you did.

(This reporter has been a New York City licensed Home Improvement Contractor and a New York State licensed Home Inspector.)



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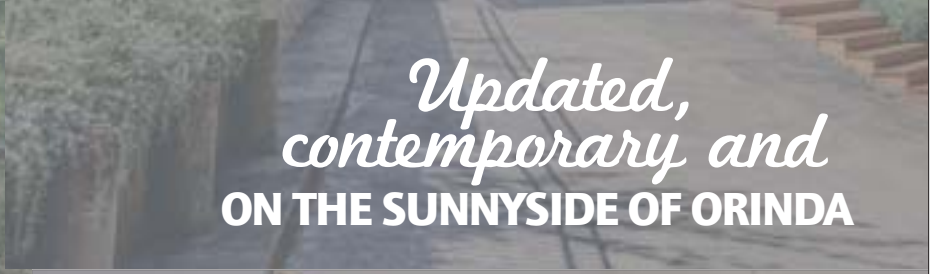




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The Real Estate Quarter in Review

By Conrad Bassett, CRP, GMS-T

The third quarter of 2017 showed solid activity on the residential side of Lamorinda real estate versus the quarter a year ago. This activity continues to be based more upon a short supply of available properties than on a significant change in the market.

Per Contra Costa Association of Realtors statistics reported from July 1 through Sept. 30, 85 single-family homes closed in Lafayette, which was an increase from the 71 that closed in the third quarter of 2016. Sales prices ranged from \$800,000 to \$6.5 million. The average number of days on market was 26 versus 30 for the same period in 2016. The average sales price was \$1,713,249 versus \$1,565,394 in the same period a year ago. In 2015 it was \$1,462,872 versus \$1,310,790 in 2014. The average 3Q2013 sale price was \$1,204,739. In 3Q2012 the average was \$1,001,291. Average prices have increased over 70 percent in the last five years.

In Moraga, the number of single-family closings was 39, almost twice what closed in the same quarter a year ago when there were 21. It was near the 49

in the third quarter of 2015 and 50 in 2014. Prices ranged from \$890,000 to \$2.265 million. The average sale price was \$1,386,634, a \$140,000 increase from 3Q16 when it was \$1,245,605, which was actually below the \$1,281,936 in the third quarter of 2015. It was \$1,178,956 in the same quarter in 2014. In 3Q2012 the average was \$1,049,408. The average marketing time was 19 days, down from 25 days a year ago.

In Orinda, the number of single-family closings was exactly the same as the same period a year ago: 73. It was 69 two years ago, down from 90 in 3Q2014. Sales prices ranged from \$750,000 to \$3.495 million with an average price of \$1,601,869, a minor increase from 2016 when it was \$1,558,244. In 3Q2015 it was \$1,520,904. In 2014, it was \$1,420,663. In 3Q2012, the average was \$1,109,094. It took an average of 26 days to expose a home to the market this last quarter. A year ago, that number was 24.

In the third quarter of this year, on an average price per square foot basis, Lafayette detached single-family

homes sold at \$640.73. A year ago it was \$585.96. Two years ago it was \$573.91. Moraga homes sold for \$551.21 up a bit from a year ago's \$540.27 and \$526.77 in 3Q2015. In Orinda it was \$603.07, a slight increase from \$599.67 a year ago – again, an increase over the 2015 third quarter of \$566.29.

In Lafayette, the average sales price was right at 102.2 percent of the final asking price. In Moraga it was a fraction above 100 percent and in Orinda it was 101 percent. In many cases, there were multiple offers on homes and the result was a closing price above the asking price.

In Lafayette, 58 of the 85 closings sold at the list price or above. In Moraga, 22 of the 39 sold at or above asking and in Orinda it was 38 of 73.

In the condominium/town home category, Lafayette had seven resale closings. They were priced from \$795,000 to \$965,000; Moraga had 19, down from 25 a year ago and from 40 in the same period two years ago.

... continued on page D10

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FALL REAL ESTATE MARKET UPDATE

While it might be Halloween season the Lamorinda real estate market is anything but spooky these days. Below is a summary of Multiple Listing Service (“MLS”) data for Lamorinda residential detached home sales over the last twelve months from October 2016 to September 2017 (the prior-year comparison is from October 2015 to September 2016).

Our real estate market remains strong as the Summer market delivered record figures for most of Lamorinda. The Lamorinda average sales price is now \$1.56M, up 6%, and the average sales price per square foot is \$610, up 4%. The biggest gains came from homes between 2,500–3,500 square feet where the price per square foot is up 11%. Families are feeling more confident about their financial situation and are moving up into larger homes. In addition, transaction volumes are up 14%, primarily driven by Moraga where transactions are up 37%. We believe this trend can be attributed to the award-winning Moraga schools and the small-town feel. In Lafayette, the average sales price and price per square foot were both up 6% to \$1.61M and \$634. In Moraga, the average price is up 6% to \$1.37M and the average sales price per square foot is down slightly by 1% to \$561. In Orinda, the average sales price is up 7% to \$1.62M and the average sales price per square foot is up 4% to \$610. This is great news for all of us that live in Lamorinda. We expect the market to remain strong through year-end and expect the 2018 Spring market to deliver another record setting performance.

Please see the Lamorinda Market Update section of our website (www.MartinHomesTeam.com) for further details and breaks down the numbers by home size. Please also don't forget to sign-up and participate in the Lafayette Reservoir Run on October 22nd and help support our local schools.



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CalBRE #01922810



Lamorinda Home Sales recorded ... continued from page D2

MORAGA

1733 St. Andrews Drive, \$1,279,000, 3 Bdrms, 3150 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 9-22-17;

Previous Sale: \$575,000, 03-31-93

433 Stonefield Place, \$1,895,000, 4 Bdrms, 3303 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 9-18-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,000,000, 09-08-06

121 Westchester Street, \$1,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 2036 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 9-22-17;

Previous Sale: \$129,500, 09-14-79

ORINDA

16 Hall Drive, \$1,560,000, 4 Bdrms, 2393 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 9-15-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,400,000, 07-31-14

1 North Lane, \$935,000, 3 Bdrms, 1460 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 9-18-17;

Previous Sale: \$932,000, 07-15-16

99 Tappan Lane, \$2,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 3952 SqFt, 1982 YrBlt, 9-15-17;

Previous Sale: \$85,000, 03-06-80

14 Van Tassel Lane, \$1,450,000, 3 Bdrms, 2728 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 9-8-17

37 Wilder Road, \$2,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 3984 SqFt, 2016 YrBlt, 9-22-17

500 the Glade, \$1,480,000, 3 Bdrms, 2635 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 9-22-17;

Previous Sale: \$875,000, 04-01-09

The Real Estate Quarter in Review ... continued from page D8

Sales prices ranged from \$435,000 to \$1.195 million. Moraga Country Club had five attached home sales – \$775,000 to \$1.05 million. Orinda had one town-home in Orindawoods at \$1.48 million.

As of Oct. 13, there were 87 pending sales in the three communities combined. A year ago there were 65 pending sales per the MLS. The asking prices for the pending single-family detached homes range from \$719,000 to \$13.25 million. It should be pointed out that there are no “Potential Short Sales” that are currently pending and subject to lender approval.

It is interesting to point out that of the 87 pending sales in the area, 21 have received acceptable offers since Oct. 1. That is an average of over one per day. Usually, many of the sales are completed prior to the start of school. Depending upon how many of the homes are being purchased by families with children who are new to Lamorinda, it may impact certain grades at the elementary level. Inventory, however, continues to remain low although increasing when looking at the available homes. In Lafayette there are 42 on the market as of Oct. 13 and there were 45 at this time one year ago.

In Moraga buyers have their choice of only 28 properties, up from 25 properties a year ago.

Orinda inventory has slightly decreased from 46 to 43.

Current asking prices range from \$515,000 for a condominium in Moraga to \$25 million for a Lafayette property.

At the high end, 31 homes closed above \$2 million in the three communities combined during the quarter. In the year ago period there were 26.

There are 47 currently available above this amount: 11 in Lafayette, 24 in Orinda, and three in Moraga.

Going forward through the end of the year, activity will likely remain strong. Low interest rates and continued office building in the East Bay and a low supply and high demand should continue to push the market higher.

We may also see some effect from the fires in the North Bay as there are hundreds of families who need housing and, although our prices are higher, a lot of high-end homes were lost and those people may need places to live until they can rebuild, which may take a few years.

This may affect our rental markets and the residential market for sales.



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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

The grass is always greener ...

By Cynthia Brian

"Society is like a lawn where every roughness is smoothed, every bramble eradicated, and where the eye is delighted by the smiling verdure of a velvet surface." – Washington Irving



A pole of pink and purple petunias shines brightly against the blue skyline.

Photos Cynthia Brian

The cool evenings, warm days, and majestic orange sunsets signal the season of fall. While children will be preparing for the festivities of Halloween, gardeners need to be thinking about greening their lawn costumes. Much to my dismay, throughout the drought our water company encouraged homeowners to dispense with growing grass and either let lawns die or replant with succulents and other drought resistant species. In my humble opinion, this was terrible advice as a healthy lawn offers so many benefits, not only to the environment but also to our health and well-being. It is also much more expensive to revamp a landscape than it is to maintain it, even minimally. With the drought in our rearview mirror, my email has been blowing up with requests on how to reinstall a green lawn.

Thankfully, all is not lost as autumn is the perfect time to plant a new lawn or reseed an existing one. Most grass seeds that you scatter in late October or early November will thicken and be well established by spring. Over-seeding a healthy existing lawn works wonders but if you have multiple bare spots, using a grass patch is a super alternative.

"What type of grass should I plant?" you may be thinking. Several readers have asked about UC Verde buffalograss. Although I have never set out plugs of this buffalograss, it is my understanding that this particular grass must be planted in the spring as it goes dormant in the winter, allowing for more weeds to take hold. It is also work intensive as you cannot just toss seeds or plant sod. Plugs need to be planted on a 12-inch center. Once established, it is resistant to most turf damaging insects and diseases and requires less water than other grasses. Since it is seedless, it produces less seed heads resulting in less pollen, which may be of interest to allergy sufferers.

My personal preferences to obtaining a greener grass is to use seeds from Pearl's Premium (www.PearlsPremium.com), red or white clover, or plant plugs of isotoma,

also known as blue star creeper. Full disclosure: I do not work for, nor have I any affiliation with any of these three favorite lawn alternatives. I recommend them because they work. You can plant just one species for a clean, fresh, green blanket of tactile grass, or you can mix and match as long as you realize that your lawn will resemble a patchwork quilt.

Here's a rundown on my three preferred lawns:

Pearl's Premium: www.PearlsPremium.com

Although you can start from scratch, I really appreciate being able to over-seed my existing lawn with grass seed that grows roots to 20 inches deep, starves out the weeds, and is easy to maintain. Pearl's Premium is constantly upgrading its seed to be the most effective for creating a beautiful lawn. This past year it added a thin white coating to the seed to help gardeners know where exactly the seed has been tossed. The coating also thwarts our feathered diners, although I suggest putting screens over areas with new lawn seed if you witness birds pecking at the ground. Spread the lawn seed at a rate of 10 pounds per 1,000 square feet right over your existing lawn. Add organic fertilizer and top dress with a quarter inch of organic compost. I like to spread the seed right before a rain, but otherwise water twice a day until the grass sprouts; then be attentive to watering needs. In our warmer climate, to maintain the greenest color, you may have to water deeply twice a week, but it will be less than using other grass seeds. Once established, the lawn gets so lush and thick that you may need to adjust your sprinkler heads. Although many people have indicated that they mow once a month, I have found that for the most manicured look, it is necessary to mow at least twice a month, or ideally, once a week at a mower height of 3.5 inches.

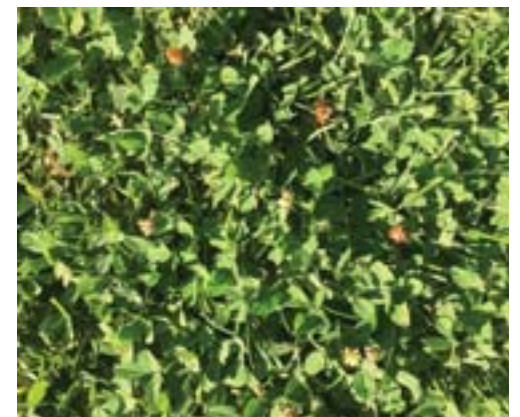
Clover

At one time clover was systematically eradicated from lawns using pesticides. But as gardeners now realize the importance of organic living, more homeowners are including clover in their grass. As a legume, clover has the ability to turn nitrogen into fertilizer using the bacteria in its root system. It stays green all year, even when it is not watered on a regular basis. I love it because it thrives in conditions where other grass seeds struggle. It does fine in the sun or the shade and even in poorly drained soil.

... continued on next page



The fine green leaves of Pearl's Premium, an excellent choice in scattering grass seed for a lush lawn.



Red or white clover is excellent for a lawn in combination with grass seed.

My favorite parts of growing clover, besides its self-fertilizing system, are the beautiful pink or white flowers that crown the tops of the clover when it is left uncut. Butterflies, bees, and beneficial insects flock to clover. Don't be afraid of the honeybees as they usually don't sting when away from their hives. Clover does best when it is mixed with grass seed. I mix mine with Pearl's Premium. Try incorporating two ounces of clover for 1,000 square feet of lawn. By planting the two together, you'll have a minimum care green lawn.

Isotoma—Blue Star Creeper

This lawn substitute is best used in small areas or between stepping stones. I like it for its tiny blue star flowers that surface and shine brightly spring through summer. I would only use it in combination with clover and Pearl's Premium because I have found that in the cold months it has a tendency



The blue star flowers of isotoma are lovely as a filler in a grass seeded lawn.

likes full sunshine, doesn't require much water, and sustains immense foot traffic, both human and animal, without damage. It sends out runners and creeps along and is especially good as a ground cover. If you like the idea of a patchwork lawn, buy a flat or two of isotoma and plant the plugs randomly throughout your existing grass as a filler and thriller.

For homeowners who want instant gratification, sod is the answer. The caveat with planting sod is that the roots don't grow deeply enough and sod has a shorter lifespan. You can lengthen the longevity by over-seeding when bare spots begin appearing. By throwing seed on top of the sod, keeping the grass watered and fed, you'll be able to have a long lasting green oasis.

Benefits of Maintaining a Lawn

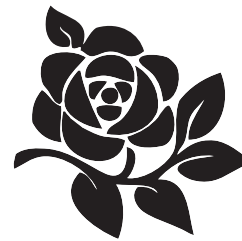
Although many people tend to discourage lawns in landscapes as a water conservation method, I am a firm believer that the humble grass shoot offers benefits to our health and well-being. Besides the fact that children and animals enjoy a safe, comfortable place to tumble and toss, lawns contribute to better air quality by trapping dust and smoke particles while cooling the air from the ground up. Our environments are made more habitable by the generation of oxygen absorbing the pollutants of carbon and sulfur dioxide. Lawns clean the air we breathe. Erosion is controlled because water can't carve deep recesses in a thickly planted lawn. Water filters through turf grass making our ground waters safer and cleaner for the environment. A patch of green soothes the eye in viewing a landscape, offering a resting space between the color explosions of flowers and shrubs. And a huge plus in our fire prone communities, lawns offer a buffer zone for fire prevention.

The grass will only be greener if you maintain it. You'll be rewarded with better health for you and the environment. Your green grass is your safety zone. May all your roughness be smoothed as you delight in your velvet verdure.

... continued on page D14



As a ground cover, Baby Tears works well in the shade. It is not a lawn substitute.



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Cynthia Brian's Mid-Month Garden Guide

- **FIRE** danger is at a high point this month. Be alert. Remove brush, wood, dry grass, and all other flammable materials from around the perimeter of your home. Clear your roof and gutters of leaves. Create 100 feet of defensible space around your home and structures.
- **SIGN** up for emergency notifications at www.nixle.us. The easiest way is to do it through text messaging on your smart phone. Text 888777. In the message area, type in your zip code. You will get an alert in case of any impending emergency.
- **APPLY** deer repellent to young trees and shrubs. As winter nears the deer are hungrier and will do damage to saplings causing branch injury and even inviting diseases.
- **EAT** fresh locally grown figs and grapes.
- **CHECK** for decay or damage to trees to thwart injury or downing of trees when storms arrive.
- **MULCH** your landscape to prevent erosion in winter and protect plants from a freeze.
- **SWIM** a few laps in a garden pool before the cold weather begins.
- **ORDER** my new gardening book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," from my online store and receive extra goodies; 25 percent of the sales will benefit Be the Star You Are!® 501c3 helping in disaster relief. <http://www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store>

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!



Add mulch now to the garden for winter protection, erosion control, and water retention.

Photos Cynthia Brian



For fall color, add coleus and begonias to your landscape.



Fresh local Mission figs and seedless grapes are nutritious and delicious.



As I wrote this column, devastating fires were raging throughout California and in my home area of Napa County affecting my family, friends, and thousands of residents. My heartfelt empathy to everyone for your suffering and loss. Pray for the firefighters, first responders, evacuees, shelter volunteers and everyone who is affected by this most disastrous fire in California history. We will rise again!



Cynthia Brian sits on her porch.

Cynthia Brian, The Goddess Gardener, raised in the vineyards of Napa County, 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. Please make a donation to help with hurricane disaster relief at www.BetheStarYouAre.org. Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at www.StarStyleRadio.com. My new book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," is available at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store. Available for hire for any gardening project. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com www.GoddessGardener.com

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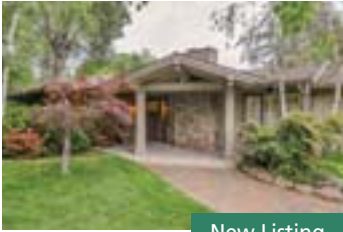


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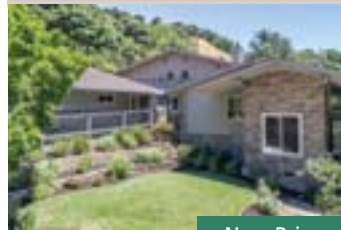
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