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See's
Moraga Center
 1 PM - 5 PM
 &
Rheem Center
 10 AM - 5 PM
 Kiwanis Fundraiser



Photo Andy Schreck

Terrific turnout at inaugural Turkey Trot

Most people don't think of Thanksgiving as a day to don running shoes and slap a bib number on your chest, but that wasn't the case for 562 people, ranging in age from the very young being pushed in strollers to dedicated athletes in their 80s who took to the course Nov. 23 at the Moraga Country Club as part of the first annual Turkey Trot.

Event brainchild, and MCC general manager/COO Ron

Haas was delighted with the turnout.

"It is hard to believe that this was our first turkey trot in Moraga," Haas wrote in an email to volunteers. "We had participants (two and four legged) from infants to age 83 run/walk our beautiful course. We saw families having fun and smiling ear to ear."

The course consisted of a fun 1.5K trot to a more serious 5K run on the Moraga Country Club grounds. The top three

winners of the male 11-20 5K race each hailed from a different Lamorinda city: First place went to 19-year-old Niki Moore of Lafayette, with a time of 16:24.3; second place went to 20-year-old Ryan McDermott of Orinda (17:16.8); and third went to 18-year-old Kyle Flett of Moraga (17:18.5). Allison Whipple, 16, of Orinda, took first in the female 11-20 age 5K race with a time of 22:54.1 and John Hamilton, age 83 of Moraga, took first in the male 66 and over 5K with 30:31.3.

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Join us for Photos with Santa at 5A Dec. 2nd from 11am - 3pm

Santa will be at 5A with Free Photos, frame, cookies, cocoa, arts & crafts! Don't forget to use our FREE Wrapping Room with everything you need to wrap presents clear 'till 12/24!

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Cannabis growers in Bollinger Canyon respond to allegations

By Sophie Braccini



Medicinal cannabis in Bollinger. Photo provided

Three Bollinger Canyon residents who were referred to in a recent article regarding cannabis growing in that area contacted this newspaper to give their version of what was happening in their neighborhood, painting a picture of small family organic farms growing medicinal plants, far from any nefarious cartel activity.

Lamorinda Weekly had reached

out to one of these residents prior to publishing the Nov. 15 article, "Cannabis in Bollinger Canyon," but did not get a response before press time. The Bollinger Canyon residents who contacted this reporter following the article publication asked that we do not print their names.

... continued on page A11

Behind the scenes – protecting Lafayette's community events

By Pippa Fisher



A Lafayette Police Officer smiles at a recent Lafayette event. Photo provided

Lafayette residents enjoy a great community known for being family-friendly and safe, giving little thought to how the many community events are protected – simply taking for granted that they are safe. And that's just fine with Lafayette Police Chief Eric Christensen.

Prior to this year's Res Run, for example, residents might not have noticed the bomb-sniffing

dogs and their handlers checking the entire route, or the drone checking the rooftops.

"We've done a security plan on large scale events for the last five years," says Christensen. "You probably never noticed it, which is a good thing. I don't know when something is going to happen, but my boss (the city manager) expects that we are prepared to handle it if it does."

Lafayette city leaders do not have the attitude that "it can't happen here" and Christensen says that guides all the planning for large community events. He explains that for events such as the Res Run or the Art and Wine Festival, which attract a large number of people from outside the community, the police publish an Incident Action Plan for the event. "The plan tells all of the responders what is going on and what we are going to do if something happens."

Christensen says that in 2012, following a number of incidents where people had driven into crowds at that time, the police started requiring that K-Rail barricades be used to protect any street when people are expected to gather.

"In 2013, we started having bomb dogs go through our larger events, because of bombing incidents.

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Miramonte girls water polo wins NorCal CIF – page C1



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Preparing for quick exit in potential disasters – page D1





Lafayette

Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 4, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m.
Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
Arts & Science Discovery Center,
3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District
Wednesday, Dec. 6, 7 p.m.
AUHSD Board Room
1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
District Office Board Room
3477 School St., Lafayette
www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting
notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

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

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org



The Lafayette
Police Department
has changed their
reporting and we
were unable to get the complete
information before press time.

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The Dana Green Team is once again proudly joining the Chamber of Commerce in sponsoring the 5th Annual Community Holiday Celebration and Tree Lighting.

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Date: Friday, December 1st

Time: 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

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New online forum opens civic discussions for Lafayette residents

By Pippa Fisher

Lafayette has added another tool to its communications toolbox by bringing a new electronic communication forum for civic engagement online.

Lafayette City Manager Steven Falk made the point during a presentation at the Nov. 13 city council meeting that since 1968 residents have had only the same couple of options available for making their voices heard to local government: either by speaking at a city meeting or by writing a letter or email.

With the unveiling of "Lafayette Listens!" on Nov. 9, residents now have the option of accessing the forum at their convenience any time of day or night from a computer or smartphone. As residents navigate this platform they can read what others are saying and give their own opinions on impor-

tant Lafayette topics. City leaders will take into consideration these comments and responses as they make their decisions.

In this age of social media, Falk said that this tool, run by Peak Democracy, a nonpartisan company whose mission is to broaden civic engagement and build public trust in government, will be a great alternative to other social media platforms out there such as Nextdoor, which has several drawbacks including its divisions by neighborhoods, distracting advertising and an extreme range of conversation threads from dogs barking to babysitter recommendations.

Falk has high hopes that this platform will become a focal point for people registering their thoughts and he urged city council members to check the site frequently. "I

know that Lafayette residents are super smart and super engaged," he said, "But they won't embrace this tool if they feel like it's not substantive and if it doesn't register with the council. We need a commitment to have real questions, even if they are 'sticky,' on the website."

Falk suggested the possibility of making periodic presentations at the council meetings to keep council members aware of opinions being shared. City Council Member Cam Burks concurred. "I heartily agree we have to demonstrate that we are receiving the input, open to the input and maybe agendizing topics."

Lafayette Listens allows only one comment per topic from each computer, preventing residents from hijacking a subject and posting multiple comments. Falk drew

attention to sophisticated civility filters, taking out foul language.

The forum is intuitive to navigate and can be reached simply by typing Lafayette Listens into the browser. It is also accessible from the home page of the city website at www.lovelafayette.org.

For now there are six topics available, from the question of whether the city should own or rent its city offices to the topic of how well residents think the new roundabout is working. Users are directed to offer opinions through polls, surveys and other interactive media.

With in excess of 260 registered responses within the first 10 days of going live, it looks like this is going to be a useful new way of encouraging feedback and engaging residents on local issues.

Reliez Valley Road sees immediate measures on safety

By Pippa Fisher



The public works department creates a new stop sign Nov. 17 on Reliez Valley Road.
Photo Pippa Fisher

Lafayette is moving fast to address the safety issue on Reliez Valley Road with the immediate implementation of two new stop signs, a new crosswalk, painted speed reminders on the pavement and, at the Pleasant Hill intersection, a "No Right Turn" sign.

But does addressing the issue of safety come at the expense of the issue of congestion? Will some of the measures such as two extra stops add time to the drive along the corridor and add to driver frustration during peak hours? These issues were once again before the city council at its Nov. 13 meeting.

Lafayette Chief of Police Eric Christensen gave the five measures for addressing the issue of safety as his recommendation to the council following two weeks of directed police enforcement along Reliez Valley Road.

With police handing out a steady flow of speeding tickets during this time, some for speeds as high as 65 mph, it became very apparent that certain stretches of the road pose a real danger.

Over 16 local residents including several students got up to speak – many in favor of the stop signs, while others foresaw increased congestion as a result. All other measures were supported. The students in particular spoke of long commutes from the north end of Reliez Valley Road.

Concerned residents have

formed the group Reliez Valley Residents for Reduced Traffic demanding No Turn and No Thru signs at various locations on Grayson Road, Withers Avenue and Taylor Boulevard aimed at stopping the WAZE app from sending thru traffic along the corridor.

Kristen Altbaum, a Reliez Valley resident, says she supports stop signs and anything that facilitates more safety along the road, but emphasizes that she wishes the city and county supported efforts at mitigating congestion prior to adding more stop signs.

"School commutes have grown considerably over the last few years because out-of-area commuters are flooding Reliez as a 'shortcut' to Hwy 24 and an alternative to traveling south on Taylor or Hwy 680," says Altbaum, referring to the WAZE app that directs drivers along the residential road. "A two-minute saving for these out of area drivers costs residents an extra 20-30 minutes on many days. School tardies are at an all time high and (school) buses keep adjusting their pickup times earlier and earlier."

Council Member Cam Burks, who has been spearheading the push for immediate safety measures, called for the council to be "nimble," saying it should "take interim steps while the circulation committee meets to come up with a holistic plan."

Vice Mayor Don Tatzin agreed and was keen to have the results come back to the council in three months as well as maintaining continued enforcement. With Mayor Mike Anderson of like mind, the only council member to voice concern about the proposed measures was Ivor Samson, saying that he found it hard to divorce safety from congestion. Samson feared additional stop signs would bunch up traffic and said he would also like to see electronic speed feedback signs and speed cushions or speed bumps.

However in the end, Samson

made the vote unanimous, 4-0 (with Council Member Mark Mitchell absent) to start the implementation of all five recommendations, with the added wording that police enforcement should continue for the foreseeable future and that the stop signs' effects are studied with the results brought back to the council in three months.

As far as safety goes, in the first week following the installation of the new stop signs Christensen says that his officers have reported the sign at Fairholm Court is having the desired effect, slowing the traffic down

along that portion of the roadway. "While I am sure the enforcement has also had some effect in the area, we were still getting people speeding along the route before the signs – now they can't get anyone in that area."

"We are still collecting data from the area which will show us how the driver behaviors have changed," says Christensen, "but I think preliminarily, it is safe to say the signs are doing exactly what was expected."

As for how the controversial stop signs will affect congestion, time will tell.



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Ho Ho Ho! Santa knows 'It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette'

By Pippa Fisher



Santa's visit last year

Photo provided

Lafayette is once again embracing the holiday season and kicking it off with its traditional "It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette" celebration, featuring refreshments, music, activities and, of course, starring the big man himself.

Yes, that's right. Santa will be there, checking his list and visiting with children, ably assisted by Town Hall Elves. The fun, family-friendly, free party runs from 4 to 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 1 and is hosted by the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. The event is sponsored by local realtors, The Dana Green Team and Branagh Development, who together are hosting the environmentally friendly downtown Lafayette twinkle lights for the 2017 Holiday Season.

The annual celebration includes the tree lighting, live music, a community sing-a-long, and crafts. Santa's "sleigh" for the event is Lafayette's historic fire truck, Old

Betsy, which will parade along Golden Gate Way from the Lafayette Historical Society with a police escort, arriving in the Plaza Park at 4:30 p.m.

The police department, which is partnering with the Lafayette School District for its Second Annual Toy Drive, will be accepting donations during the festivities. This program collects toys for distribution to those in need within the community. Residents can help fill a police car with new toys.

There will be an exhibition of holiday drawings by Lafayette's third-graders. Local student musicians will be providing music for the celebration.

Residents always enjoy the community and the cheer of the season as they take advantage of the photo-ops with Santa at this heart-warming Lafayette tradition – a great way to start the holidays!

No rent review ordinance for Lafayette

By Pippa Fisher



The apartment complex owned by Tilden Properties was the focus of discussion about rent at a recent city council meeting. Photo Pippa Fisher

Lafayette lawmakers fell short of the votes needed to adopt a residential rent review ordinance at this time.

With only three members of the council voting at the Nov. 13 city council meeting and one of them publicly opposed to such an ordinance, it was clear from the start that there could be no further action. Council members Ivor Samson and Mark Mitchell had elected to recuse themselves from the discussion due to potential conflict of interest.

Nonetheless the council heard follow up from city staff on several points that had been raised at the September city council meeting.

At issue was whether the city should adopt an ordinance capping rent increases in complexes of 25 units or more at 10 percent.

Lafayette City Planning and Building Director Niroop Strivatsa presented the \$60,000 roughly-estimated costs of a rent review program (including the hiring of

a part-time planner to run the program) and showed studies of other cities – Fremont, San Leandro and Concord – that have implemented similar programs.

City Attorney Mala Subramanian drew the council's attention to the recent ban on price gouging implemented at the state level by California Gov. Jerry Brown, which will remain in effect until April, stating that rental-housing rates may not be increased by more than 10 percent, with certain exceptions.

As at the September council meeting, several speakers complained of rent increases, all from the 1038 Second Street complex in Lafayette. One such resident, Peggy Pricco, said that she had sought legal advice and had been advised to consider legal action. She said she was told, "If your city is not willing to stand behind you, the legal action should become a class action and be inclusive of the city."

... continued on page A11

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In the spirit of the holiday season we have made a donation to the Wine Country Fire Relief Fund.

Happy Holidays!

 1042 Leland Drive, Lafayette Pending	 1154 Glen Road, Lafayette Sold \$3,525,000	 4144 Canyon Drive, Lafayette Sold \$2,755,000	 952 Stow Lane, Lafayette Sold \$1,965,000
 3676 Hastings Court, Lafayette Sold \$1,950,000	 1136 Glen Road, Lafayette Sold \$1,700,000	 3155 Stanwood Lane, Lafayette Sold \$1,645,000	 840 Santa Maria Way, Lafayette Sold \$1,425,000
 3341 Betty Lane, Lafayette Sold \$1,420,000	 149 Calle La Montana, Moraga Sold \$1,375,000	 1753 Spyglass, Moraga Sold \$1,300,000	 3337 Sweet Drive, Lafayette Sold \$1,220,000
 2313 Belford Drive, Walnut Creek Sold \$1,212,000	 49 Mariposa Way, Walnut Creek Sold \$1,160,000	 3294 Sweet Drive, Lafayette Sold \$1,075,000	 3150 San Gabriel, Concord Sold \$690,000
 2560 Oak Road, Walnut Creek Sold \$545,000	 1324 Skycrest, Walnut Creek Sold \$430,000	<small>*Represented either the Buyer or Seller in the above properties*</small>	



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Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 4, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Dec. 11, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Moraga School District
Thursday, Dec. 12, 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 Nov. 7-12

- Alarms** 7
- Noise complaints** 2
- 911 Calls (incl. hang-ups)** 2
- Traffic Stops** 9
- Suspicious Circumstances** 4
- Suspicious Subjects** 2
- Suspicious Vehicles** 0
- Accident, Property**
100 block Moraga Rd.
- Burglary, Auto**
300 block Birchwood Dr.
200 block Birchwood Dr.
- Domestic Disturbance**
400 block Woodminster Dr.
- Excessive Speed**
Donald Dr/Laird
Camino Pablo/Oxford
Arroyo Dr/Sullivan Dr.
Alta Mesa/Moraga Rd.
Moraga Rd/St Mary's Rd.
- ID Theft**
reported to police
- Mentally Ill Commitment**
location n/a
- Public Nuisance**
200 block Rheem Blvd.
- Theft, Petty**
500 block Moraga Rd.
10 block Kings Crown Ct.
300 block Birchwood Dr.
- Trespass**
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Wishing you Health & Happiness this Holiday Season!

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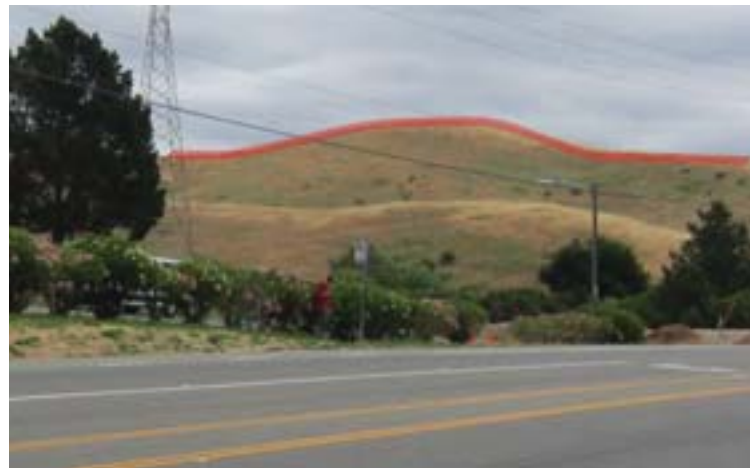
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WALNUT CREEK

Hillsides and ridgelines: Town council begins laying new law of the land

By Sophie Braccini



Moraga Road at Sky Hy Drive views of Palos Colorados Ridgelines

Image provided

While revision of land development regulations is not a sexy topic, it is complex, and decisions that are made now will affect the future of Moraga for years to come.

After years of study sessions, public forums, task force work and countless staff hours, the Moraga Town Council on Nov. 15 began reviewing the final modifications that should clarify and amend the town's rules regarding development on hillsides and ridgelines. The two original texts that regulate Moraga's land development practices are the General Plan and the Moraga Open Space Ordinance, plus different implementation ordinances that need harmonization.

Broadly speaking, two groups sat in opposition during the council meeting: large property owners who believe the new rules will penalize them and create unintended consequences on downtown development; and the nonprofit group Protect Lamorinda Open Space that wants to maximize the protection of ridgelines and viewsheds, regardless of the economic impact on property owners. A majority of the current council members were elected with the support of PLOS.

MOSO restricts allowed development to one home per 20 acres in high-risk areas, as determined by a map of landslides and other hazards. MOSO implementation regulations allowed increasing that potential building envelope

when the site was remediated. The new rules will limit to one unit per 20 acres in high-risk areas, whether remediation takes place or not. The planning commission was split on the issue, with some commissioners stating that giving a bonus of development would encourage remediation, which could be good for the town. The council members voted in favor of the maximum restriction.

Council Member Kymberleigh Korpus argued that if someone remediated a site out of necessity, and came back years later to build on their property, the new status of the land should be the baseline to determine the building allotment, not its former high-risk state. The Protect Lamorinda Open Space group demanded that the most restrictive rule be applied.

A few large property owners came to the meeting to defend their interests. The Bruzzone family was represented by their lawyer, a consultant, and two members of the family.

The group representing the Bruzzones argued that the proposed new rules for building height on hillsides and new viewshed requirements would curtail downtown development. The proposed rule aims to ensure that at least 35 percent of major ridge-

lines can still be visible after new homes are built. PLOS asked that developers be required to present a simulation of someone traveling along their development to make sure that the viewshed was protected. Dave Bruzzone said that if such a rule was adopted, the development of the Moraga Center Specific Plan would be compromised. The council decided that the maximum building height should not be changed for now, but approved the PLOS proposal to mandate the protection of viewsheds along scenic corridors for developments built nearby.

The council finally discussed if exceptions and exemptions to the new rules should be granted to projects that have been in the works for years, such as the Bollinger Canyon project that has been 13 years in the making. The council members agreed that a project completely approved, such as the new homes in the country club would be exempt, but they decided that the Bollinger project needed more discussion before a decision could be made.

After four and a half hours of discussions, the council members decided to meet again in January during a special meeting to finish the study session and get closer to adopting final changes.

Two special town events planned for December

The Hacienda Foundation, which was formed in 2006 to enhance, promote and preserve the Hacienda de las Flores in Moraga, will hold its annual holiday faire Dec. 1-3. Faire hours on Friday will be from noon to 8 p.m., and from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Held at the historic site, the fundraising faire will feature handcrafted items and gourmet foods from

over 45 local artisans, as well as complimentary wine tasting from Captain Vineyards from 6 to 8 p.m. on Friday evening, and 4 to 6 p.m. on Saturday.

Additionally, the Moraga Youth Involvement Committee

will be serving hot cocoa and cookies during a special tree lighting event with Santa at 6:30 p.m. prior to the 7 p.m. tree lighting ceremony on Thursday, Dec. 7 in Moraga Commons Park. Attendees can participate in this

annual event by donating to the Buy-a-Bulb Fundraiser. For information, visit the Town of Moraga website at www.moraga.ca.us and enter "Buy a Bulb" in the top right search bar.

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HOLIDAY TREE LIGHTING

Thursday, Dec. 7, 6:30 pm

Moraga Commons Park

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Moraga's arterials reopen

By Sophie Braccini



Edric Kwan holds a drawing he received with a thank you from a young Canyon resident. Photos Andy Scheck

Over the last two weeks Moraga was able to reopen Canyon Bridge and Rheem Boulevard, after the two major infrastructure failures disrupted traffic and cost the town over \$6.8 million to repair. In the words of council members, the town has turned the corner this November, at least for road repairs. The reimbursement expected from the Federal Emergency Management Agency is likely to take years.

A very young smiling Canyon resident came up to Public Works Director Edric Kwan on Nov. 21 and gave him a large drawing representing the Canyon Bridge and saying thank you. Near the bridge, a Canyon teen held a poster saying, "Canyon Says Thank You." For the

small, unincorporated community, this day was the last of a long seven-month period during which their link to Moraga and fire and police services was severed. Beyond the very serious safety concerns, people going to school or work in Moraga, Moragans taking their kids to school in Canyon, and commuters using this Moraga south access needed to go through Pinehurst, the freeways and Moraga Road, turning the three-mile, 10-minute trip into 15 miles and 40 minutes of travel.

The bridge that was first crossed by fire and police vehicles on the opening is a one-lane overpass. The alternate traffic circulation is controlled by a light that is activated

by a motion sensor or functions according to a predetermined timing during commute hours. A side path for pedestrians was also installed; bicyclists are asked to either dismount and walk their bike across, or respect the traffic lights. The bridge is indeed narrow, so users should respect the signal, since the hazard of oncoming traffic could be significant. Police Chief Jon King, who attended the opening, said that there would be a lot of police control at the bridge. He added that he would quickly post speed limit signs at both ends.

The bridge opened a few days before the end of November deadline.

During his thank you remarks, Kwan particularly praised Myers and Sons Construction, which he said worked from 4 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on weekends to finish the project ahead of schedule. Moraga Mayor Teresa Onoda thanked by name all "the guys" who did what had to be done to consolidate the site and install the bridge.

Kwan gave a glimpse of the administrative complexity of what the town navigated to secure emergency funding approval for the bridge, including having to build a single one-way lane, since otherwise it would not have fallen within the federal parameters. He also explained that the plan for a new bridge was already underway before the old one collapsed, but that the drawings and permits will need to be redone to take the landslide that caused the bridge to initially fail into consideration. He believes that the construction of the permanent new bridge will start in 2019.

Council Member Dave Trotter also thanked everyone, before ex-



State Sen. Steve Glazer and Assemblywoman Catharine Baker at the re-opening of Rheem Boulevard after the sinkhole repair.

pressing the town's frustration over the East Bay Municipal Utility District that owns the piece of property where the hill failed. He said that EBMUD will have to answer in the coming year about its responsibility in this incident. Two homes on Saint Andrews Drive, above the landslide, have been red-tagged because of it.

The week before, on Nov. 16, the town organized a big ceremony for the reopening of Rheem Boulevard after the repair of the sinkhole that had collapsed 20 months

before. The ceremony was attended by Assemblywoman Catharine Baker and state Sen. Steve Glazer, as well as local officials. Moraga Chamber of Commerce distributed "I survived the sinkhole" bags filled with goodies and coupons from Rheem Center merchants happy to see normal traffic resume.

Kwan expects that it will take years for the town to get the money back from FEMA, but he is confident that the town went by the book and will eventually get back the funds that were spent.

First Sale at Kiwanis' See's store

Submitted by Bob Reynolds



Photo provided

Kiwanian Tim Freeman greets Moraga Mayor Teresa Onoda for the first 2017 sale at the Grand Opening of Kiwanis seasonal See's candy shop at the Rheem Shopping Center. This shop and another at the Moraga Shopping Center will

be open through the holidays. Proceeds benefit local education and other charities. Shops are open seven days each week: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Rheem; 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Moraga Center.



Happy cyclists are again able to cross the bridge for their bike rides.

<p>1202 Thomas Dr., Martinez</p> <p>Hillside custom home, almost 3300 sf, water views, private secluded lot. 5 bdr. 3 baths, hardwood flooring, a commercial kitchen, master suite retreat, spiral staircase to lower level, huge family room, and 2nd fireplace. Offered at \$745,000 by Suzie Tinsley, 925.787.3072.</p>	<p>1470 Creekside Dr #7, Walnut Creek</p> <p>COMING SOON</p> <p>This darling 1 bdr. condo is an upper, end unit with privacy as well as security. Updated kitchen with maple cabinets and granite counters. Conveniently located near 680, it is within walking distance of Broadway Plaza, Las Lomas High School and Kaiser Hospital, as well as being on the Iron Horse Trail! Offered at \$345,000 by Suzie Tinsley 925.787.3072.</p>	<p>391 Livorna Heights Road, Alamo</p> <p>PENDING</p> <p>Lovely 1.31 acre lot set on a knoll at the end of the road with views from Mt. Diablo to the Carquinez Strait! Suitable for horses or a lot split. Includes 2-bedroom cottage and utilities, as well as plans for a 5200 sf house and workshop/garage. Offered at \$1,400,000 by Suzie Tinsley, 925.787.3072.</p>	<p>22 Warford Terrace, Orinda</p> <p>PENDING</p> <p>Beautifully remodeled 5 BR, 3.5 BA home with 3781 sf situated on .65 acre with views, pool, and a 1000 sf cottage! With so much to offer, this is a perfect family home or entertainer's dream and is located close to downtown, BART & CA-24 freeway. Offered at \$2,300,000 by Lisa Shaffer 925.528.9278.</p>												
<p>Meet our Featured Agents ...</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Suzie Tinsley 925.787.3072 CalBRE#01253559</td> <td>Lisa Shaffer 925.528.9278 CalBRE#00996886</td> <td>Sheri Wedlake 925-528-2091 CalBRE#00872175</td> <td>Julie Georgiou 925.200.8246 CalBRE#01043977</td> <td>Tania DeGroot 510.367.1422 CalBRE# 01094898</td> <td>Regina Englehart, Broker-Manager 925.876.9076 CalBRE# 01308462</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: right;">Better Homes and Gardens REAL ESTATE RELIANCE PARTNERS 89 Davis Road Ste. 100, Orinda 925.254.0440 www.bhghome.com/Orinda</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Our Orinda office is uniquely positioned as a gateway for sellers and buyers around the Bay Area; a central hub for our 30 Better Homes and Gardens offices.</p>										Suzie Tinsley 925.787.3072 CalBRE#01253559	Lisa Shaffer 925.528.9278 CalBRE#00996886	Sheri Wedlake 925-528-2091 CalBRE#00872175	Julie Georgiou 925.200.8246 CalBRE#01043977	Tania DeGroot 510.367.1422 CalBRE# 01094898	Regina Englehart, Broker-Manager 925.876.9076 CalBRE# 01308462
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Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Dec. 5, 6 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Citizens' Infrastructure

Oversight Commission

Wednesday, Dec. 13, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

School Board Meetings

Orinda Union School District

Monday, Dec. 11, 6 p.m.
Regular Board Meeting
8 Altarinda Rd., Orinda
www.orindaschools.org
See also AUHSD meeting page A2

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Orinda:

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

Chamber of Commerce:

www.orindachamber.org

The Orinda Association:

www.orindaassociation.org



Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report

Nov 12-18

Alarms	21
Noise Complaints	1
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	3
Traffic Stops	31
Suspicious Circumstances	2
Suspicious Subjects	9
Suspicious Vehicles	11
Abandoned Vehicle	
MacDonnell Nursery	
Barking Dog	
Van Ripper/Van Tassel	
Burglary, Auto	
40 block Stanton Ave.	
Kite Hill Rd/Kite Hill Terrace	
Burglary, Residential	
80 block Underhill Rd.	
Death, non-criminal	
400 block Moraga Way	
Dispute	
100 block Moraga Way	
Drunk in Public	
60 block Moraga Way	
Forgery	
Wells Fargo	
Hit & Run	
CVS	
ID Theft	
10 block South Trail	
Juvenile Disturbance	
100 block Village Square	
Safeway	
Medical Hospital	
Miner Rd/Camino Pablo	
Other misdemeanor	
300 block Camino Sobrante	
Missing Adult	
80 block Underhill Rd.	
Property Accident	
10 block Orinda Way	
Camino Pablo/Camino Sobrante	
Moraga Way/Sanborn Rd.	
Reckless Driving	
Camino Pablo/Via Corte	
Miner Rd/Lombardy Ln.	
Camino Pablo/Miner Rd.	
Theft, Grand	
Safeway	
Theft, Petty	
300 block Glorietta Blvd.	
50 block Moraga Way	
Unwanted Guest	
600 block Fish Ranch Rd.	
Vandalism	
Wilder Blvd.	
40 block Singlewood Ln.	
Warrant Service/Arrest/Advise	
Theatre Square	
Hwy 24/Fish Ranch Rd.	

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Labor agreement reached between Orinda and city employees

By Nick Marnell

The Orinda City Council approved a new two-year labor agreement Nov. 21 between the city and its represented employees. The agreement runs through June 30, 2019.

Key provisions include an immediate general salary increase of 3 percent, with a second 3 percent increase starting July 1. Each bargaining unit member employed as of Nov. 1 receives a one-time \$250 payment, and the medical benefits remain unchanged for both years.

Total cost to the city for the wage and benefit increases was estimated at \$140,000.

The previous labor contract expired June 30, and with no talks scheduled, city workers

represented by Teamsters Union Local 856 staged a two-day strike in July over what the union termed bad faith bargaining by the city. "They've been arbitrarily refusing to negotiate with us over important topics," city maintenance worker Robbie Thompson said at the time. "We want to be treated with respect and the games they play in bargaining are just plain unfair." The Teamsters represent 23 of the 38 city employees.

"The city council is pleased it was able to approve the new contract," said City Manager Steve Salomon. "We were able to give the employees a raise and continue their medical

benefits."

Representatives of Teamsters Local 856 did not return repeated calls seeking comment.

The city has struggled financially in 2017, using money from its general fund reserve to pay for the Miner Road sinkhole repairs, with the reimbursement date and amount uncertain. The general fund reserve balance was depleted by more than 50 percent, to under \$3 million.

"Given the financial circumstances, the council feels good about what it was able to do," Salomon said.

Moraga Adobe moves closer to approval as an Orinda cultural institution

By Nick Marnell



Moraga Adobe

Photo Sora O'Doherty

The Orinda Planning Commission unanimously recommended Nov. 14 that the city council approve General Plan and zoning map amendments applicable to the Moraga Adobe, an historic landmark on the site of the future J and J Ranch subdivision. A local community group, the Friends of the Joaquin Moraga Adobe, is negotiating the purchase of the Adobe with the intent to convert it into a history and learning center for the public.

The Adobe is the oldest residential structure

in Contra Costa County. In order for the building to be used as a local cultural institution, with the ability for FJMA to host educational, community and fundraising events, the commission recommended a General Plan parcel designation change and a zoning map change to convert the Adobe to Parks and Recreation status.

Neighbors along Donna Maria Way were not enthusiastic, as they complained about possible damage to their private road and the time and number of events to be hosted at the Adobe,

resulting in a change from the semirural nature of the area.

All of the conditions regarding parking, time and number of events and responsibility for property damage will be regulated under the terms of a general use permit, according to senior planner Daisy Miller. "The semirural nature will not be affected by the changes," Miller said.

A memorandum of agreement between J and J Ranch and the Friends specifies that the structure must be restored and opened to the public and conveyed to the FJMA if the group is able to raise \$500,000 for purchase of the Adobe.

"We have \$135,000 in the bank, which does not include a \$100,000 pledge from the Moraga Historical Society," said FJMA President Kent Long, though to operate the center, Long says the group will need much more than a half-million dollars. "We talk about a \$1 million fundraising plan," he said.

The Friends will have three years to raise the money from the time the group enters into a purchase agreement with J and J for the Adobe.

Long said the purchase agreement could be completed in early 2018.

If the FJMA fails to raise the money, the parcel reverts to a J and J Ranch homeowners association, which would allow limited public access to the structure.

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City considering increased funding options for the Orinda Library

By Nick Marnell

The Orinda City Council at its Nov. 21 meeting unanimously authorized the city staff to issue a request for proposal to hire a public opinion polling firm to measure options for an Orinda Library parcel tax.

“We need additional revenue for the library,” said Vice Mayor Amy Worth, and no one on the council disagreed. The library parcel tax of \$39 has been in effect since 2008, and the staff projected that money for operations will run out in 2018-19. There is no source of funding for long-term maintenance, either. With no additional revenue, the council would consider adjustments to library service levels.

The council members agreed that the polling firm should report on establishing proper ballot language and the level of funding voters will support. If the council wants to place a parcel tax on the ballot in June, it would need to act by March 9, so polling would have

to begin in January.

But how do pollsters get to voters in the cell phone age when people rarely answer calls from numbers they do not recognize? “I’m skeptical of telephone polling and its effectiveness,” said Council Member Darlene Gee, who also questioned the proposed \$25,000 cost to pay the polling firm. “I would risk putting the library on the ballot without spending the money,” she said.

Mayor Eve Phillips suggested doing an online poll after the phone poll and compare the results. “That would tell us how far off we are when we do this kind of outreach,” Phillips said. “It would be an extra testing step.”

In the end the council members agreed to authorize up to \$25,000 for the RFP, with guidance to keep the poll simple and focused only on the library.

“The measure takes two-thirds to pass, so it’s very important to get it right,” Worth said.

Business registration program on its way to Orinda

By Nick Marnell

Orinda moved a step closer to collecting an annual registration fee from most businesses in the city when a split city council voted to introduce an ordinance establishing a business registration requirement at the Nov. 21 city council meeting. The stated purpose of the registration program, for which the city conducted public outreach in the fall, is to identify and maintain an up-to-date list of businesses in the city.

Planning Director Drummond Buckley presented the main benefits of the program to the council: A structured way for the city to communicate with businesses; building a data base of businesses and commercial activities, including home-based businesses; increased sales tax revenue since distribution of sales tax money by the state can be monitored more closely; and improved economic development, as simple as letting businesses know about community events from which they might benefit. Buckley said that Orinda, Lafayette and Moraga are the only municipalities in the county with no business registration license or requirement.

“It is not a tax, and it is not a permit,” Buckley said. Certain businesses would be exempt from the discussed \$50 annual fee, including businesses that gross less than \$10,000 a year, nonprofits and

religious organizations. The city would outsource the administration of the program.

Orinda Chamber of Commerce President Roy Hodgkinson, who supports business registration, cautioned that the \$10,000 annual revenue figure was too low. “There are people in high school doing website businesses who would achieve that threshold,” he said.

Not so fast, suggested Orinda resident Richard Colman. “It’s a fee, it’s a tax, call it what you want,” he said. “It takes more money out of the hands of business and perhaps adds to higher prices.”

Mayor Eve Phillips remained wary of the program benefits. “I agree with some of the letter writers that this is a solution chasing a problem. The benefits listed could be achieved in other ways,” she said. “On the economic development side, (not having a business registration program) certainly hasn’t hurt Lafayette.”

The motion to introduce the ordinance passed 3 to 1, with Phillips voting no and Council Member Inga Miller recusing herself because she owns a business in Orinda. The ordinance, which will include a proposed registration fee and a start date for the program, will return for adoption at the Dec. 5 city council meeting.

Homelessness Awareness Month



Photo Sheri Smith

The Orinda City Council proclaimed November as Homelessness Awareness Month. Mayor Eve Phillips presented the proclamation to John Barclay, right, Director of Home and Community Based Services, Good Health and Case Management for the Contra Costa Health Plan, at the Nov. 21 council meeting.

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As a valued resident of Orinda, you are cordially invited to attend a Town Hall to provide your feedback regarding the exciting improvements planned for Orinda Union School District’s school campuses!

WHAT: Orinda Union School District is pleased to host a community Town Hall to provide information about our long term facilities master planning process and share preliminary ideas about ways to improve our campuses so they better support teaching and learning for our students.

WHEN: Wednesday, December 6th, from 6-8 p.m.

WHERE: Orinda Community Center, 28 Orinda Way in Orinda

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED:

- Status of current school facilities
- How school facilities support teaching and learning
- Currently identified improvements desired by staff, parents, and students



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Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, Dec. 20, 7 p.m.
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit www.mofd.org

ConFire

Board of Directors
Tuesday, Dec. 12, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

Please...



MOFD 2017 financial report shows mixed results

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District presented its 2017 audited financial report to the board Nov. 15, and though the numbers show the district general fund in its best position in MOFD history, the district still reports a \$42 million deficit in its net position.

Thanks to higher than expected property tax revenue and an increase in ambulance fees, the district general fund revenue increased 6.9 percent for the year ending June 30, increasing the

general fund balance by \$1.6 million to \$4.9 million. The general fund balance sits at 23 percent of revenue, higher than the 17 percent minimum required by district policy.

Because of strong investment returns delivered by its pension manager, the district net pension liability fell to \$32.5 million, technically measured as of Dec. 31; the same figure from the previous year was \$39.7 million. Combined with the outstanding balance of its

pension obligation bond, MOFD recognizes \$49 million in pension obligation. The district reported a net liability of \$15.3 million for other post employment benefits, nearly identical with the previous year.

The district board continues to push for financial sustainability, and in the 2017 fiscal year took steps to reduce its negative net position by adopting a balanced budget, committing to significant contributions to its pension stabi-

lization fund and OPEB trust account and increasing the minimum percentage of general fund balance to revenue. In the current fiscal year the district raised the contributions to its OPEB trust account and its pension stabilization fund and cut \$400,000 in expenses from its operating budget.

"We're still in a hole," said director John Jex, speaking of the district's negative net position. "That's still a big liability that we have to focus on."

MOFD chooses 'leader for the new generation' as fire chief

By Nick Marnell



Dave Winnacker Photo provided

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District board selected Dave Winnacker as the sixth fire chief in the history of the district. Winnacker, who was chosen unanimously Nov. 20 by the board members, joins the district from the Alameda County Fire Department, where he was Di-

vision Chief of Special Operations.

"I am thrilled to come to work in a community that takes pride in their fire district, and I look forward to engaging with the people," Winnacker said. "And I am very happy to be working for an exceptional organization with very talented members."

Winnacker takes over a fire district that has struggled financially for much of the decade, and even with recently improved economics, still faces hard decisions on its financial sustainability. "I have a good idea of what I'm getting into," said Winnacker, who managed budgets in his role with Alameda County Fire. "It is imperative that MOFD remains capable of responding to all emergencies and is able to provide the service levels the community expects, while operating as a lean organization that is fiscally sustainable."

A large majority of MOFD

calls are medical, and the new chief comes from a fire department that relied on an outside contractor to handle its ambulance calls. "Everyone can always learn. I will reach out to those who have been doing it - both internally and externally," the new chief said, adding that he appreciates the flexibility of local control of the district ambulance service.

Winnacker leaves a fire department where he reported to a chief and comes to a fire district where he will report to a governing board - a board that has been demanding of its fire chiefs. "I am very excited about the opportunity and look forward to establishing collaborative working relationships with all stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcomes for the citizens of the district," said Winnacker, a 23-year Marine Corps veteran and a reservist since 2001.

The board did not use a recruiting firm to screen candidates, but

relied on industry advertising and referrals plus feedback from residents at a public forum. In addition to the board members, a panel including Interim Fire Chief Jerry Lee and two captains interviewed the final candidates. "We believe we have found a real leader for the new generation," board president Kathleen Famulener said.

Winnacker, 42, has worked in the fire service for 13 years, including positions with Fresno City Fire and Newark Fire before joining Alameda County Fire in 2010. Born in Tokyo, Winnacker was raised in Berkeley and graduated from UC Santa Barbara. He lives in Albany and is married with two young daughters.

Winnacker's appointment is subject to a background check and the negotiation of his contract, which Lee expects to be wrapped up by the end of the year.

ConFire recruit training covers a lot of ground

By Nick Marnell



Recruits discuss strategy with Capt. Xon Burriss, right, at the ConFire training center. Photo Nick Marnell

When the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District realigned its management structure in August, it named Lon Goetsch, a 15-year ConFire veteran, the Assistant Chief in charge of Training and Safety. It is the first time an assistant chief has run the training division.

Prior to this change, rotating

battalion chiefs supervised the training division, but Goetsch said the job had become too complex for rotating personnel. In addition, the district is loaded with young firefighters, the youngest staff that Assistant Chief Ed Gonzales said he has ever worked with in the district. Superior training and contin-

ued education are paramount.

Goetsch led a tour of the 12-acre ConFire Training Center in Concord, as recruits from Academy 51 went through their exercises. They repeatedly practice two essential maneuvers: carrying and throwing a ladder and hose lay, both on the ground and aside a mock-up building and drill tower. Later they would be purposely disoriented into a smoky, confined space and have to find their way out. "They cannot panic in that situation," Goetsch said.

Nearly every imaginable rescue operation is practiced during recruit training, from disentanglement to sewer rescue. A hosed-down skid pad is used for practice in pulling a fire engine out of a skid. Goetsch said that the most dangerous calls for firefighters are those on the freeways, and the firefighters at stations 15 and 17 in Lafayette respond to a number of calls on Highway 24. As such, a simulated highway, complete with donated wrecked cars on which the recruits practice extraction, lies at the rear of the center.

The academy lasts 20 weeks, into February, after which the 28 recruits become probationary firefighters for one year and are assigned to an engine company. "We expose them to different people and different areas," Goetsch said. "Five months with one captain, five with another. Maybe five months at Station 15 in Lafayette, then five at Station 88 in Antioch."

After 10 months, their skills and knowledge are evaluated. The firefighters have two months to catch up in areas they are weak. "Probationary firefighters can be

released without cause. But we invest an enormous amount of time, energy and expense in them to be sure they make it to the field. About \$40,000 per recruit," Goetsch said.

Some firefighters fail because they cannot perform the physical tasks. Some cannot handle the academics. Others cannot deal with the pressure. "In training, everything is simulated," Goetsch said. "When they see the realities of what the firefighters have to deal with - from seeing serious injuries, the lack of sleep, the stress of being away from their families - some drop out."

Responding to many of the challenges unique to the Lafayette area is practiced outside the training site, most notably wildland training. For that, ConFire trains on East Bay Regional Park land, and some private property owners allow wildland training with the Type 3 engines - smaller, more nimble four-wheel drive vehicles.

"We do driver training on fire trails around Lafayette - near the ridge and the reservoir. The trail between Rossmoor and Lafayette we use for hose lays and to practice mobile attacks on a wildfire," Goetsch said.

ConFire responds to BART emergencies at the stations, on the tracks and in the tunnels, and the districts train together in the Lafayette-to-Walnut Creek tunnel. "In the middle of the night, when the trains aren't running, we train on rescue cars. Evacuation training is the key. People are stuck in a train, we send a rescue train, park it parallel and set up bridges for evacuation," Goetsch said.

The district is the closest responder to incidents at the Lafayette Reservoir, where ConFire coordinates with the regional park district. Goetsch said that fire stations 15 and 17 in Lafayette both house Type 3 engines for use on the trails around the reservoir.

As for a dam breach? "We respond to pretty much any emergency," Goetsch said. "But that type of emergency would be difficult to respond to."

The new training chief oozes passion for his new position. "I love it," Goetsch said. "I get to lead, advise, support and influence the future generation of ConFire firefighters."

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Letters to the Editor

Local residents in support of gun safety ordinances

We are Safe Moraga, a group of residents advocating for the town to pass two common sense gun safety ordinances. For detailed information, visit safemoraga.org. In a Nov. 15th article about these ordinances, the author highlighted the opposition from outside of our town but failed to mention the overwhelming community support the ordinances have received.

Our group has over 350 members, many of whom represent entire families. Many of our members own guns, but believe in safe storage and safe sales of guns. At the August town council meeting, 45 Moraga residents spoke in support of these ordinances while 7 people spoke against, at least one of whom was not from Moraga. At the November meeting, approximately 25 Moragans were present to support the ordinances and the council received over 50 supportive emails from residents. This is more than double the number of people who attended or wrote to show their opposition.

Additionally, the majority of the opposition letters were from NRA members who do not live in Moraga. Community groups and businesses support these ordinances, including the Camino Pablo, Los Perales, Rheem, and Joaquin Moraga PTAs; Lamorinda Pediatrics; Moraga Pediatric Dentistry; Lamorinda Montessori; Mulberry Tree Preschool; CAPA; Star Pilates; Studio E; Friar John Kasper of St Perpetua; retired principals Dr. Elaine Frank and Dr. Tom Rust; and realtors Ben Olsen and Kurt Piper.

The overwhelming support of these ordinances from the community is unsurprising given that in the 2016 election, 76 percent of Moraga voters supported the comprehensive gun safety initiative, Prop 63. Because the community is behind the ordinances, the NRA resorted to intimidation tactics, sending a threatening letter to the council, which delayed a vote on the drafted safe storage ordinance until January.

Regardless of the strong community support for these ordinances, the ultimate decision about whether to pass these ordinances rests with our council members. Their votes have not been cast. Please visit our website safemoraga.org for more information, sign our petition, and write our council members in support of common sense gun safety ordinances. It's our town. Let your voices be heard.

Sincerely,
Stephanie Dickerson, Moraga
On behalf of Safe Moraga

Request for harsher oversight on parcel tax error

I was taken aback by the Nov. 15 article "Lafayette school district seeks to quickly rectify parcel tax error."

It's the job of newspapers to keep government honest, and ask tough questions. But this story blandly accepts everything the Lafayette School District has to say about the issue. The mistake happened initially more than two years ago, and was exacerbated this year by a second error. \$400,000 was mistakenly billed. The mistake/s were caught not by the District, but by a curious taxpayer. And now, according to the article, the District says it will repay taxpayers "quickly," but doesn't give any indication of when.

I supported the Measure B parcel tax, but this looks like pretty lame oversight, to say nothing of accounting aptitude, by the District.

Lamorinda Weekly could have and should have asked some much tougher questions — and thought harder about putting the word "quickly" in the headline.

Best,
Chris Rauber
Lafayette

Request for more in-depth solutions and news coverage

For better or for worse, I ended up an almost accidental Lamorinda resident (now going on eight years). And while I and the average homeowner of the Lamorinda area have almost nothing in common, still I care about the regions, because, whether one approves of it or not, it has a distinct culture, a distinct geography, and it has a possibility for greatness.

What I'd like to see is the three cities forming a kind of Benelux union, (and you might have to look that one up) where a world-class infrastructure exists which marks it not merely as a NIMBY community warding off crime and any kind of development that could hurt property values, but as an integrated model of civic life. I won't even say whether a rail system, even an unprofitable and symbolic one, or a mass-transit gondola, or some other type of system, should connect it all. It would be oppressive to put one particular model forward as the only solution. But rather, I will say, some kind of infrastructure, or set of infrastructures, should move the region out of its current "by fiat" version of tightly-controlled and 100 percent safe charities or activities. In other words, Lamorinda should be about something other than "my family" and "my home value" and "my safety." This is not to say that I don't personally love the safety and cleanliness and nearly crime-free aspect of our lives here, but merely to say that, at some point, one fine day, we need to move away from the concept of safetyism and certaintyism.

A little backbone is needed here. There is, of course, only one hotel, and zero public laundry facilities, and no theory of what to do with our own homeless, except the usual methods of intimidation, prison or exile to Central California. Again, I'm not specifically saying we should have our own shelter, or even that exactly a laundromat is required. I'm not pushing for any one improvement, but something deeper than a list of exact petitions or proposals.

What I'm saying is that this is a magical place, but that it's not living up, even partially to its potential. It's time we admitted who we are. We are a collection of small European cities, and we should finally mature enough to act that way.

We should have something other than depressing buses, not because those programs would be self-supporting, or absolutely necessary, but because they say something about who we are, where we come from, and what we want the larger world to be. In this one sense, the roundabout, much debated, was a great idea. It is fundamentally a European way of doing something. But roundabouts, fountains, plazas, rail, gondolas — these things are important not because we exactly need them, but because they represent something larger, a distinct European Lamorinda identity.

But the reason I wrote this short tract was not even to dream any of these changes could happen now, but because, I assert, the first step in getting a great people to look at their own possibility for greatness in the larger world, they need leadership in media. That's where you come in. It's all very fine that little Johnny won an award and is going to Washington D.C. to be honored, or that Mary did well in the soccer tournament, and so on. But, at last, we have real problems with traffic, with poverty, with addiction, with mental illness; and we know the county of Contra Costa is just too corrupt and ineffectual and entrenched to move on anything at any level. But Lamorinda is small enough to really move, and could be transparent enough and local enough to innovate in ways that

would, by example, pressure the rest of the county to move on into the modern world, a thing which Contra Costa resists in an uncanny way, in spite of its world class wealth.

I'd like to see your paper be more than a feel-good self-celebration of upper-middle-class self-congratulatoryness. It's time to go deep, to believing in something larger than merely "my safe non-controversial upper-middle-class rigid happiness thing." It just is finally time for this region to grow out of it, if for no other reason than the rest of the county is so passive and sleepy and lifeless that someone needs to shoulder that burden. Media is important.

You are our local paper. Let's awaken and move ahead.
Mel C. Thompson
Lafayette

EDITOR'S NOTE: Moraga does in fact have a laundromat: Teddy Bear Coin Laundry, 496 Center Street, Moraga.

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



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Looking Good in Lamorinda: Holiday Chic

By Moya Stone



Cass Clutch and accessories in Sonoma Wine. Photo provided



Holiday jewelry from Natasha Grasso. Photo provided

It's been over a year since Lafayette resident Debra Szidon launched her line of handbags called The Cass Clutch. Inspired by her love of vintage, Szidon recreated a 1970s handbag that she found in a San Francisco secondhand shop. The versatile bags in suede are a chic option for women on the go.

"The Cass Clutch has become my everyday bag," says Szidon. "For work it holds my laptop, for daily use it's a catch-all and in the evening, folded over it becomes an elegant clutch." The Cass Clutch has been selling well both here and internationally. There are now six color options, with two new colors: Tahoe Blue and Sonoma Wine.

For each sale of Sonoma Wine, \$50 will be donated to The Sonoma County Resilience Fund in support of people affected by the recent fires. There are accessories, too. Laptop sleeves, card cases, pencil holders, and zippered pouches perfect for popping into The Cass Clutch. The entire line is locally crafted and the accessories are made from scraps. Holiday gifts? Stocking stuffers? For ideas, check out thecassclutch.com.

Local jewelry designer Natasha Grasso says she's been inspired lately by the various shades of woody greens and browns she sees on the drive from her home in Orinda to her shop in Moraga. Those rich colors have found their way into rings, earrings, bracelets, and delicate pendants. Grasso works with stones and gold-filled metal or vermeil (14k gold over silver). "I like to use stones in their natural forms." Among her favorites are green agate, tourmaline, and rough cut emeralds. Don't miss the upcoming holiday sale and soiree from 5 to 8 p.m. Dec. 6, 386 Park Street, Rheem Shopping Center. "Door buster deals from 5 to 6," says Grasso.

'Tis the season of cashmere and we are lucky to have pop-up shop, The Cashmere Sale. Each year the New York-based company sets up business for the

holidays. In the past they've called Lafayette home but this year it's Danville. Find them at 409 Railroad Avenue.

A fond farewell to two fashionable mainstays of the Lamorinda area: Mycro Pac in Moraga has closed and Specialtees in Lafayette will close the end of December. We will miss these popular go-to shops but I hear that Ann from Specialtees is planning to stay in the biz doing charity events and shopping parties. Stay tuned.

As old friends move on, we make new ones. The Piece Store, located in the Lafayette Clock Tower Building, offers casual chic options for women who want something different. The look is comfortable with a touch of edgy urban. Included are designers from New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, as well as a few European designers. About half of the labels are made in America. In stock now are trousers, chunky sweaters, quality T-shirts, skirts, and the trend of the year – sneakers.

"Experiences" are on many a holiday list and one experience that I recommend is Couture Korea.

Three years in the making, Couture Korea is the first major exhibition of Korean fashion in the United States and exclusive to San Francisco's Asian Art Museum. On now through Feb. 4 this fashion exhibit explores traditional Korean clothing from the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910) to the present. Included are reproductions and reinterpretations of traditional clothing as well as original modern works by top Korean designers (<http://www.asianart.org/>).

Happy Holidays and remember to go forth in style! (Moya Stone is a fashion writer and blogger at www.overdressedforlife.com.)



Urban edge looks available at The Piece in Lafayette. Photo Moya Stone

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Lamorinda golfers take advantage of class offerings off the course

By Jon Kingdon



Tom Rezendes works with a client at NorCal Golf Academy. Photo provided

As a golfer, living in the Bay Area has many advantages. Weather permitting, one can conceivably play golf 12 months a year. Unless you belong to one of the two very fine private clubs in the Lamorinda area, The Orinda Country Club and The Moraga Country Club, one is forced to find a course to play or practice outside of the immediate area. The nearest driving ranges are at Tilden Park in Berkeley, Buchanan Fields and Diablo Creek, both in Concord.

However if you are looking for a more local opportunity to take lessons or just practice and learn with video cameras and computer analysis, there are two options: NorCal Golf Academy, which is just west of Lafayette at 2094 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Walnut Creek and is run by long-time Orinda residents, Tom and Kjersten Rezendes, and East Bay

School of Golf at 3330 Mt. Diablo Blvd. run by Dave Gannon and Mark Majers, both of whom live in Lafayette.

NorCal Golf Academy has been in operation for several years. With three practice bays and two practice putting greens, Rezendes employs two other teaching pros: Curtis Rhoads and Jenny Park Choi. Rick Eisenhour, the head golf coach at Carondelet High School, exclusively teaches the Aim Point Technique in putting.

Rezendes brings a mechanical background along with a lifetime of golf experience, having worked for a top fuel drag racing team. With a true love of golf however, he committed himself to golf instruction, saying: "I just wanted to teach and improve the way people played golf. I believe that I have created a clean welcoming environment for

golfers where they will receive lots of feedback from trained, certified instructors."

Rezendes, a certified PGA teaching pro since 2004 who has appeared on the Golf Channel in a teaching segment last year and will be on their morning drive in late November, and was recently named 14th among the top 50 instructors in California by Golf Digest, relies on cutting-edge technology in teaching his students who range in age from 10 to 80. "Utilizing TrackMan radar technology, Swing Catalyst Balance Plate and GEARS Motion Capture I can measure every facet of my student's motion and give quantifiable data on what needs improvement and what is working properly," he says.

The improvement in golf technology is constant. According to Rezendes, "You can tell within the thickness of a piece of paper how much a golf shaft is bending, the exact body position of the golfer and where the ball hits on the club face. This equipment is being used by the professional golfers as well." NorCal also utilizes SAM putt lab to help the golfers improve their putting technique.

Over the past five years, NorCal has seen thousands of students, ranging from beginners to scratch golfers, ages 8 to 80. They have students that are now playing at Pepperdine and Yale and a student that qualified for the Drive, Chip and Putt tournament at Augusta. Rezendes philosophy is "to gear each lesson to the golfer's specific needs."

... continued on next page

Cannabis growers respond

... continued from page A1

The first grower indicated that his operation was small, in the area of 40 plants, and was started a few years ago for medicinal purpose only. He added that he uses organic methods with what he grows and that the production is distributed to elderly people suffering from different conditions through a nonprofit called Rocky Ridge Collective. One of his neighbors who also grows plants in the area indicated that he owns a farm in the remote area where vegetables and fruit trees are cultivated next to cannabis plants grown for medicinal purposes. He also says that he uses only organic growing methods, since he lives there and wants to preserve the area's quality. The third grower reported similar activity, though he does not live on the property. He added that five land owners grow only small quantities in the area.

The first grower said that he contacted other Bollinger residents to inform them of what he was doing and they never registered any complaint. His two neighbors confirmed that they were happy to discuss the issue and invite their neighbors over to address any concern. He acknowledges that a county code inspector came to visit his home and issued a code violation,

nothing criminal, asking that the plants be removed, which he did. A second grower was also visited by the code inspector. He says that he has a state permit to grow medicinal cannabis and had not been informed of the county's restriction. Both say that they are in touch with Supervisor Candace Andersen regarding coming county regulations.

The Bollinger residents added that the trucks seen on the road are likely going to construction sites that are up that road, and that workers at harvest time are more likely to go to the wine production facility also in Bollinger than to harvest cannabis. The first grower says that he employs one person from time to time that he drives up the road himself; the second and third ones say they do not employ any outside labor.

The first resident explained that gunfire noises are likely from poachers in the area hunting for wild boar and deer. He says that he does not own a gun and that he has confronted some of the poachers in the past, as well as someone who created a shooting range in Bollinger. He noted that a few years ago large growing operations were dismantled in the nearby open space area, but that no one in his neighborhood was involved with these activities.

Turkey Trot

... continued from page A1

Other Lamorinda first-place 5K winners included Jon Chambers, Eytan Brosh, Anne Willcoxon, Leslie Piper and Rebecca Tanner.

Volunteers worked tirelessly to pull the event together. In addition to Moraga Chief of Police Jon King, the Moraga PD, Moraga-Orinda Fire District, Stephanie Caronna from the Food Bank and "our wonderful Mayor Teresa Onoda," Haas thanked those who showed up at the wee hours of the

morning to help, as well as event sponsors, the Moraga Chamber of Commerce, Quick Dispense, and A Runners Mind. "Also, thank you to Aaron Ford from Ford Timing who helped make sure registration and time keeping was simple and smooth," he wrote. "I think this event is here to stay."

The event raised over \$5,000 for the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.
— J. Wake

No rent review... continued from page A3

The council also heard from a representative of the property owner, Tilden Properties. Ryan Crowley spoke of a "good faith effort" to work with the city but the 15 percent cap that the company has recently imposed on itself to which he was referring, exceeds the city's request for a 10 percent ceiling.

Following public comment, Council Member Cam Burks reiterated his remarks from the previous meeting; that he is fundamentally against government intervention in this area. Referring to the program as the first steps to rent control, he said he views it as a slippery slope

and believed the money could be better spent elsewhere.

Vice Mayor Don Tatzin disagreed and again voiced his concerns for the possibility of forcing out lower income categories of the community. He said he thought that Tilden Properties had the potential to be in violation of the governor's order and encouraged residents to take action at the state level.

As Mayor Mike Anderson reflected on what he sees as a real problem with affordable housing in the area, he summed it up as an issue that's not going to be going away.

Lamorinda golfers

... continued from page A10

The facility is also available for the golfer who would like to simply utilize one of the hitting bays for their own TrackMan analysis, and to be able to play golf utilizing E6 Simulator Software on over 50 renowned courses.

In addition to providing instruction, Rezendes is a certified putter and club fitter for Edell, Mizuno and Cobra.

The East Bay School of Golf opened six months ago. They only have one service bay to hit into, but Gannon takes pride in that "it's the largest screen available with TrackMan and high speed video."

Gannon has been a PGA Club Pro since 1996, having played golf for the past 27 years and met Majers, a PGA member since 2002, when both were teaching at the Presidio Golf course.

East Bay welcomes all levels of golfers with beginners as young as 5 years old, as well as low handicapped players and seniors. Gannon has a simple philosophy in analyzing his students swings: "We want to keep what is right and adjust what is wrong." Gannon and Majers believe that a player can learn faster in their facility due to the new technology and the ability

to analyze so many aspects of the swing that a lesson at a driving range can offer.

Gannon feels that an experienced golfer should see improvement immediately though a true beginner will take more time.

East Bay has various options for their students. A student can take individual or a series of lessons. Besides lessons, at East Bay golfers also have the opportunity to simulate play at over 40 different courses along with swing analysis. There is also the opportunity to utilize every club (besides the putter) and receive immediate feedback as to the direction and distance of every shot along with the club path and speed, launch and face angles of the club. In fact, the TrackMan technology can provide up to 25 different measurements of an individual's swing.

Because of their proximity to the studio, Gannon and Majers are flexible enough to come in early or stay late should someone call and request an odd time.

For info about East Bay School of Golf or NorCal Golf Academy, visit NorCalGolfAcademy.com or EastBaySchoolofGolf.com.

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Behind the scenes – protecting Lafayette

... continued from page A1

In 2014, we added the requirements to have vehicles blocking all of the roads so no one could ram through – we also added aerial over-flights to look for people on roofs, etc. We have added using the drone, but that's because we now have that technology here for us to use. Prior to every big event, we ask for an analysis of the event by our friends at the FBI and our local intelligence unit."

Christensen explained that the police plan for all types of potential incidents during public events. "Medical problems, snipers, bombing, fire, all the things that could occur – so we have a plan to start with."

Christensen notes that in Lafayette the Public Safety Committee also plays a big part in readiness and planning. He says that members of the committee, including council members Cam Burks and Ivor Samson, are all part of the "public safety team" and play an active role in operations, especially during large-scale events.

"I'll admit it, when I report to some people about what we do they roll their eyes," the chief acknowledges. "A great example is the drone flyovers. We use a FLIR (thermal imaging) device on our drone to survey all of the rooftops

and the areas that overlook the public event. I do this so I know there is no one that can cause harm."

But he says, "The day after the Las Vegas shooting I got an email from one of the organizers of the Art and Wine Festival thanking us for being proactive in our security plan."

Together with the PSC, Christensen says they continue to look for ways in which they can be better prepared. Three weeks before the North Bay fires, Lafayette hosted an evacuation workshop. "One of my current concerns raised by the North Bay fires is vulnerable populations. FEMA estimates that 30 percent of people will need assistance in getting out during an evacuation. We are currently developing a local registry where people who know they are going to need help can tell us up front – so we know where to send help when we need to evacuate an area."

Pointing for examples to the Las Vegas shooting and the North Bay fires, Christensen says the police need to develop a better way to communicate with the public. "We have now begun testing different ways that we can use public address systems to tell a crowd (public gatherings) and a neighborhood (community alerting) what to

do. In a crowd, I need to be able to tell people what to do and where to go. In a neighborhood, I have to be able to wake people up with a mobile siren system and tell them to get out."

Christensen says his officers react to incidents as they occur as well. "On Halloween, we have some streets with a lot of kids on them. After the New York thing, we added some officers to various areas of the city for the night," he said, referring to a driver who ploughed into a crowd in New York City just hours earlier on the same day. "I am fortunate that we have the flexibility to do this."

Community events provide the police with a great opportunity for training using all their resources. "When we use things like the drone, we get more familiar and proficient with the equipment. That makes us better when we need to use the equipment for an emergency."

Burks appreciates such a proactive chief. "He is innovative and pragmatic and I continue to be impressed with the skills and subject matter expertise he brings to the table, commensurate with the evolving security environment. He manages the safety of our community exceptionally well and he has my complete confidence."

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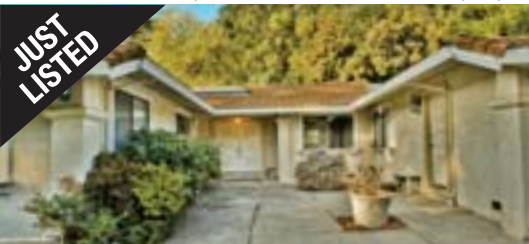
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~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

THT weaves historical perspective into Christmas musical celebration in 'A Civil War Christmas'

By Sophie Braccini



From left: Tom Reilly and Terrance Smith Photo Stu Selland

Town Hall Theatre ends 2017 with an American musical celebration – an ambitious and vast epic story set on Christmas Eve in 1864, on a very cold Civil War night. During that one night, a nation divided as never before is portrayed through the lives of historical figures and simple Americans, struggling with the difficult times and transcended by the miracle of Christmas, whether they believe or not. Through songs and narratives, the 50 characters played by 14 actors in “A Civil War Christmas” take the spectators on a journey of human struggle and hope.

The audience is taken back to 1864, in Washington D.C., in the White House with President Lincoln and his wife preparing for Christmas despite the burden of responsibilities, in the cold street of the capital city where a black woman who escaped slavery desperately searches for her daughter, with Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant hunkered down with their exhausted troops, on the banks of the Potomac River where a man seeks vengeance and a kid wants to become a man and a hero.

Fifty different characters paint the picture of that harsh night in the middle of war. The 14 actors comprising the cast constantly change costume, shift from supplying contextual commentaries, to embodying one of the many unique characters whose stories the audience follows. Costumes here are key: a top hat turns a commoner into Lincoln, a wide dress and a shawl transform a simple woman into the First Lady. The Christmas songs, the period hymns and marches

crimp each scene. The actors act, dance, some play a musical instrument, and they sing. There are some very solid and beautiful voices in the show; Alicia von Kugelgen sings with the purity of an opera singer.

Susan Evans, THT artistic director, asked Dawn Monique Williams to direct the play. She had never seen the play by Pulitzer Prize winner Paula Vogel before, but knew of it and was very interested in creating entertainment that would also provide food for thought. She says that this is a Christmas play, but not full of fluff, and that even if there is laughter there is also gravity. She liked that the play mixes real historical figures with fictional characters that are the conflation of several ordinary people of the time. Williams, who also was a singer, loved the musical aspect of the play, the variety and beauty of the songs.

The director says that it is particularly relevant to create this play at a time when the country is so polarized. The night this reporter went to the theater to see a final rehearsal, filmmaker Eric Metzger had come to film THT’s adventure. He is working on a documentary about 2017 in America, a year that he sees as a moment in history when this country has been more divided than ever. He sees this play as representative of our times of separation, but with the possibility of still reaching out to each other.

Williams says that she believes in Sankofa, a Ghanaian word meaning “go back and get it.” She says that as we move forward in time, we carry our cultural memory, and

that the lessons of our past that we transport into the future can bring hope. The play shows us that in a moment of time we can be united.

The play is a family show that will entertain all ages. The Civil War is studied in the fourth grade, so children 9 years old and older will understand most out of the show.

“A Civil War Christmas” will play at Town Hall Theatre from Nov. 30 to Dec. 16. For details and tickets, visit www.townhalltheatre.com.

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To My Specialtees Customers,

I am sad and conflicted to close Specialtees. Over 40 years ago I started a little t-shirt shop in Moraga and it grew to four Bay Area locations. I loved every minute buying and merchandising but most of all I loved my customers. I have been blessed with talented staff and wonderful sales reps through the years. It has been my pleasure to share my vision of Specialtees with all of you. I am excited to make this big change in my life. I will do something new that is simple with less responsibility. I will always be grateful. I wish you all happiness and success in your lives. I would love to end this era in a state of grace, dignity, love, and celebration!!!

XOXO, Annie

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Upcoming CAPA 'Nutcracker' vows to wow
Submitted by Lynn Davis



California Academy of Performing Arts performers from "The Nutcracker." Photo Kate Fim

Join Clara as her Christmas Eve dream comes true and snow falls onstage, a magical Christmas tree grows and grows, an army of mice battle toy soldiers and sumptuous treats and toys come to life in the California Academy of Performing Arts presentation of "The Nutcracker" at the Campolindo Performing Arts Center from Dec. 15-17.

This Lamorinda family tradition for 25 years is a feast for the eyes, filled with surprises and delights for all ages. The story is narrated as it unfolds, guiding young viewers through the beautiful ballet and making it much more enjoyable for little ones (and grown-ups) who might not be familiar with the timeless story of Clara and her magical Christmas Eve dream.

Anything is possible with enough talent and enthusiasm, and both are abundant in this extraordinary group of young dancers. This production is huge, with more than 100 local performers, sumptuous sets, live narration, and absolutely gorgeous costumes, many of which are hand-sewn in Russia.

While the studio demands excellence and precision in the dancing, it also seeks to involve ballet students of all ages, adding to the spirit of the performances: 6- and 7-year-olds are enchanting as the spun-sugar Christmas angels; and advanced high school ballerinas take on the more demanding, classic roles of the Snow Queen, Rose Queen, and Sugar Plum Fairy. Local high school football players and other athletes even appear as party guests!

Two Performances will be held at 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Friday Dec. 15, at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Saturday Dec. 16 and at 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. on Sunday Dec. 17 at the Campolindo Performing Arts Center.

Tickets for the general public are \$20 and can be purchased at www.capashows.eventbrite.com.

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Book penned by trio offers entertaining insight into life of Raiders icon Al Davis

By John Miller

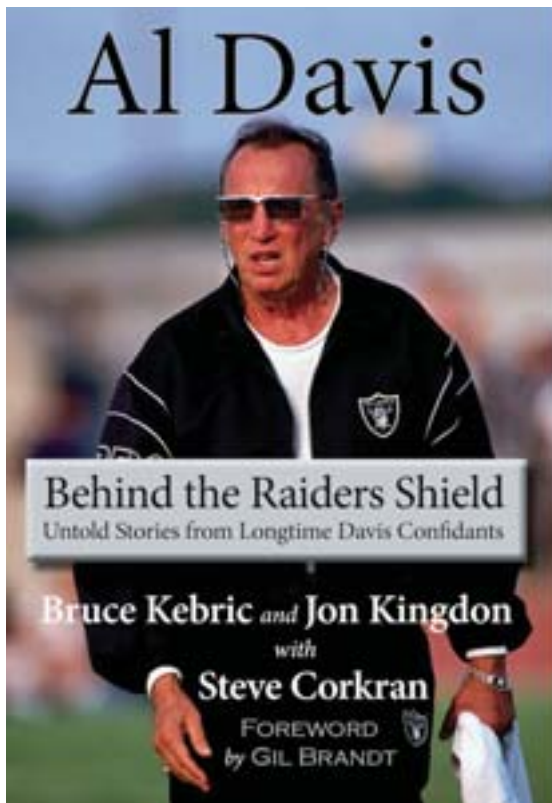


Image provided

and all.”

The genius of Al Davis is certainly here to see, evidenced by surprise finds in the draft, miraculous personnel decisions, five Super Bowl appearances (three wins), a Team of the Decade designation, and an organization that continues to draw unbending loyalty from its fans.

But the warts are definitely on display. The book draws a portrait of a man obsessed with football, a stubborn, irascible owner whose motto was “Just win, Baby.”

The book is written mostly in a journalistic rapid-fire bullet point style, with names, dates, statistics, and 40-yard dash times flying at a dizzying pace. On one page alone, we time travel from 1963, to 1967, 1979 and 1990!

The authors decided to organize the book through themes rather than chronologically, but it would have been nice to include an index to help with navigation.

The book is at its best when it slows down and focuses on one story, such as the chapter on John Matuszak (aka “The Tooz”). Kingdon relates spending an evening with the 6-foot-8, 272-pound wild man.

The Tooz drank seven tall cans of beer, numerous triple Crown Royals that fans bought for him, and then delivered a stirring speech to the booster club.

After another stop at a bar and several more Crown Royals, Kingdon was relieved to find that not only did Matuszak get home safely, but made it to practice the next day, showing no ill effects.

The Tooz was only one of many players Davis rescued from the NFL trash heap after other teams gave up on them, helping to create the Raider image of outcasts and renegades.

For those obsessed with NFL football, the book offers a wealth of information and insight into the inner workings of the draft and the relative “genius” label that Al Davis garnered through his draft day operations.

Davis also earned that reputation for some of his moves, including having a keen insight for switching players from one position to another. A prime example is when Davis took Billy Cannon – one of the AFL’s top rushers – and turned him into a productive tight end.

When Corkran teamed forces with Kebric and Kingdon, he issued one caveat: “It has to be warts

Two longtime employees of the Oakland Raiders, Bruce Kebric and Jon Kingdon, have collaborated with former Raiders beat writer Steve Corkran to publish a book detailing the behind the scenes machinations of their former boss, Al Davis.

The book is titled “Al Davis: Behind the Raiders Shield.” Corkran – along with the pair of Davis confidants Kebric and Kingdon – details the inner workings of the enigmatic force behind one of the most controversial professional sports teams of all time.

Kebric spent 31 years assisting Davis with personnel issues and coaching hires, while Kingdon, who currently writes for this newspaper, began in 1978 and eventually became the team’s Director of College Scouting from 1993-2012. Corkran covered the Raiders in some capacity from 1995-2014 for the Contra Costa Times, Oakland Tribune and San Jose Mercury News.

When Corkran teamed forces with Kebric and Kingdon, he issued one caveat: “It has to be warts

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St. Perpetua community breaks ground on new social center

By Pippa Fisher



Members of the St. Perpetua community at the Nov. 12 groundbreaking ceremony kick off the new construction, from left: Pat Fela, Kelly Daggs, Ruben Galindo, Kathleen Radecke, the Rev. John Kasper, Bruce Brady, Rick Bruzone, Karen Goodshaw, Peter Heiskell and Jim Hogan. Photo Pippa Fisher

After 65 years St. Perpetua's Church in Lafayette will be realizing its dream of a beautiful new 10,500 square foot community center, roughly three times the size of the old one.

Following the demolition of the old church hall, witnessed a couple of weeks earlier by about 260 enthralled students of the school that shares the same premises, the St. Perpetua community broke ground on Nov. 12 with much anticipation.

The new expanded facility will provide many benefits for the church and school and will be able to host many new events that had previously been impossible to consider in the old hall.

"The Catholic community of St. Perpetua is comprised of many wonderful people – those who have been members for decades and young families who are new to our area. Over the past 65 years the old hall had been the site of many community-building events. However, we were limited by the small size and outdated condition of the facility," commented the Rev. John Kasper, St. Perpetua pastor.

Longtime parishioner Monica Chappell says that she and her family are excited to see St. Perpetua

Parish expand their facilities to include a much-needed social hall. "The sense of community a project of this size requires is truly inspiring."

And this is indeed a community effort. The design is the result of feedback and input over the past two and a half years from parishioners, parish and school staff, religious education leaders and all the many parish ministries.

Led by Kasper, a team of architects worked with the Parish Design Committee to plan the new facility which includes a great hall, a religious resource center, a commercial kitchen, storage areas, ADA bathrooms, a reception atrium and corridors and an outdoor patio. The new construction will adjoin the existing church, which is hidden away, nestled into the hillside on Hamlin Road in Lafayette.

Just as the community is largely responsible for the design, so too is the community raising the estimated \$7 million in cost for construction through a capital campaign supported significantly with nearly 400 pledges and gifts from both parish and school families. They continue to raise funds. Kasper says that while the Diocese of Oakland

supports their efforts and provides a loan, the St. Perpetua community must raise all funds locally.

St. Perpetua School Principal Karen Goodshaw is looking forward to the new center too. "Our school community is thrilled to be partnering with our parish to make this community center a reality. We know that we will be able to improve the programs that we offer to our students in both the school and our faith formation programs with the addition of this new community center."

This particular project is the second phase of the St. Perpetua Master Plan inaugurated by the community over 15 years ago. The first phase was the renovation of the parish school about 12 years ago, a facility used both for St. Perpetua Catholic School (260+ students, K-8) and the faith formation program (350+ students, K-12). Construction is expected to take around 15 months to complete so Kasper says they are looking for a dedication date in late 2018 or early 2019.

"We'll be able to do so much more with and for our members to sustain and increase the great spirit that is the heart of our St. Perpetua community," says Kasper.

Thousands of book donations benefit many causes over 2017

By Pippa Fisher



From left: Kathy Coleman, Mary McCosker, Sue Nurock and Robin Holt pack over 300 books for donation. Photo provided

A small but hard-working group of four volunteers from the Friends Corner Book Shop spent a recent Saturday packing over 300 books into six cartons to ship to the St. Joseph's Indian School in South Dakota.

Although this is certainly in the spirit of the season, this is not a once-a-year effort by any means.

The Friends Corner Book shop has given very generously all year sending thousands of books to

schools affected by the hurricanes in Texas, a shelter in Napa, a school in Sonoma, the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center, a free clinic in San Francisco, schools in Richmond, jail libraries in Contra Costa County, Foster Home Services and the Veteran's Hospital in Livermore.

Longtime Friends of the Library volunteer Robin Holt said that she received a solicitation packet in the mail from the school in South

Dakota. "I read the enclosed letter which said some of the funds they raise go to buying reading books for the school children. I called the school, and they said they would be most appreciative of books for kindergarten through 12th grade."

St. Joseph's Indian School is a boarding school for Lakota (Sioux) students, founded in 1927 by a Roman Catholic priest.

The bookshop, tucked away beneath the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, which primarily supports the library, continues its long-standing tradition of outreach.

Budd MacKenzie: "It's time we all got off the couch"



Local Hero Budd MacKenzie will speak at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco about his work with women, children and refugees in war-torn Afghanistan.

Monday Dec. 4th, 6 PM

Commonwealth Club, 110 Embarcadero, San Francisco

Getting there: Travel by BART to the Embarcadero stop and take a four minute walk to their new headquarters located at 110 Embarcadero. Tickets available online or at the door.

www.commonwealthclub.org/events/2017-12-04/couch-war-hearts-and-minds

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- Niman Flat Iron Steak:** potato gratin, green beans, chimichurri sauce18
- Fresh Seafood Cioppino:** in a rich tomato-basil sauce, parmesan, garlic toast..19
- Roasted Scallops:** spinach, salciccia sugo19
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30th annual Lions' International Peace Poster Contest a success

Submitted by Robert Murtagh



Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, from left: Teacher Moose Wesler, Meera Phadnis, Emmie Cimperman, Ava Filer and Principal Joan Danilson. Photos provided

This year's local winners of the 2017 Peace Poster contest sponsored by the Lamorinda Lions were among more than 600,000 entries submitted worldwide by students aged 11 to 13 years old, located in more than 200 countries. The contest encourages young people to think about peace, creatively express what it means to them, and share their own unique vision with the world. This

year's theme was "The Future of Peace."

In addition to Lions efforts toward conquering blindness, the Lamorinda Lions Club has made a strong commitment to community service and helping youth throughout Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda.

For more information about the Peace Poster contest, contact Lion Bob Murtagh at (925) 283-1841.



Stanley Middle School, from left: Teacher Robert Anke, Hailey stripling, Isabel Clingerman, Tessa Chan and Ceil Murtagh (Lamorinda Lions Coordinator).



Orinda Intermediate School, from left: Gabriella Bertot, Sharh Yang, Lilia Insalaco, and teacher Susan Weiss.

Raiders icon Al Davis

... continued from page B2

The book chronicles both the successes and failures of Davis's picks, and the methods he used to decide on a player. He often ignored the wisdom of his scouts while looking for the strongest arm at quarterback or the fastest 40-yard time for each position.

Perhaps his biggest blunder was picking Todd Marinovich, a quarterback from USC with drug problems and a questionable work ethic, over Brett Favre, whom the scouts preferred. Favre went on to a Hall-of-Fame career, while Marinovich was out of the league in two years.

Davis would often scapegoat a staff member who had agreed with him on a pick and very rarely admitted a mistake.

Since the book deals almost exclusively with Davis's life in professional sports, the reader is left wondering what his early years were like and how they influenced the type of person he eventually became.

Speaking about the book, Kingdon, who has lived in Lafayette since the Raiders moved back from Los Angeles after the 1995 season, related that the focus was on the Al Davis they knew. For those interested in his background, Kingdon recommends a 1991 publication, "Slick: The Silver and Black Life of Al Davis."

Asked how they lasted so long with Davis, Kingdon responded, "If you did your job and didn't embarrass the organization, Al was very loyal to you. It was a challenge and fun to try and keep up with him. He was a very bright man."

After running the book by five major publishers, the trio formed Rather Be Feared Publishing and self-published. They are now in their second printing. The book is available in hardback, kindle, or audible form through Amazon, or can be purchased at behindtheshield.net.

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.

Moraga Garden Club honors parks maintenance leader

Submitted by Karin Biasotti



From left: Anna Lum, MGC President; Edric Kwan, Public Works Director/Town Engineer; Rena Munson; Ruben Ochoa, Maintenance Leader; Penny Walwark; Kyle Salvin, Public Works Maintenance Manager; Ute Kelley; Connie Coutts; Carolyn Westoff; Gisela Volkmer and Beverly Nelson. Photo Karin Biasotti

The Moraga Garden Club recently honored Ruben Ochoa, Moraga Parks Maintenance Leader, for all the support and assistance he has provided. A framed plaque was awarded to him to show their appreciation.

MGC maintains garden spots around Moraga, which includes the Moraga Commons, the Hacienda Perennial Garden, the Library Urn and the Urns on Country Club Drive.

Carolyn Westoff, who spearheaded the planting of the urns on Country Club Drive, stated "Ruben is a Gem! Moraga is lucky to have such a dedicated and conscientious employee. The restoration of the historic urns on Country Club Drive wouldn't have been possible without his enthusiasm for the project. He dug out the old, compacted soil, repaired the irrigation and filled the urns with composted soil from the Hacienda. All was made ready for the Garden Club to plant and have fun. I know he loves his job and takes great pride in his work."

Rena Munson, chairman of the Hacienda

Perennial Garden, stated: "We took over the care of the Hacienda perennial garden in 2016 after a year of extreme drought and many stressed out plants. After consulting with Ruben, he and his crew removed several overgrown, diseased bushes, wild grasses and trimmed back the rambling invasive ivy. The island between the lawn and our garden was cleared of many volunteer oaks, and other weedy plants, in order to make our garden more visible from the lawn area and the Hacienda. Large boulders were relocated, and a beautiful antique birdbath was rescued from a hidden obscure place on the grounds.

"While adding new soil in existing larger flowerbeds around the grounds, Ruben shared some of it with us as well as a few impatiens being planted in the fountain and by the long wall framing the lawn. The ongoing project is to make the MGC perennial garden a more important part of the greater park. With the help of Ruben and his team we will eventually have another corner at the Hacienda to sit and enjoy our beautiful Hacienda de las Flores."

Cold Weather Clothing Program helps county homeless endure winter cold

Submitted by Steve Spraitzar



A man without shelter shows the warm coat that he received from White Pony Express' "Cold Weather Clothing Program." Photo courtesy White Pony Express

White Pony Express has just launched its third Cold Weather Clothing Program for the upcoming winter. The program's focus is to help the homeless in Contra Costa County endure the cold and often wet winter.

WPE's ambitious program, being handled by its "Free General Store," is to distribute at least 10,000 articles to the homeless for the 2017-18 winter, such as warm coats, pants, shirts, socks, hats, gloves, scarves, underwear and boots.

White Pony Express' CWCP originated in January 2016 when two men without shelter died in Walnut Creek from exposure to very low temperatures. It was that sad situation that spurred WPE's founder and Principal Advisor, Carol Weyland Conner, Ph.D., spiritual director of Sufism Reoriented, to ask that warm clothing be procured and provided to the homeless to enable them to endure the freezing cold. FGS was able to provide hundreds of items to many homeless persons who were most at risk.

Earlier that winter, "Roy," a man without shelter, had told a WPE volunteer that he was looking for some thermal pants, as he knew that a very cold winter was coming and that he was sleeping out in the open. WPE happened to have a large thermal jumpsuit that had just been donated to the Free General Store, which the volunteer gave him.

A year later, as the same volunteer was giving a new pair of jeans to a man who had been wearing the same pants every day for

three months, Roy came on the scene and exclaimed, "White Pony Express saved my life last winter. You gave me that thermal jumpsuit!"

WPE is primarily asking for monetary donations to help with purchases of clothing for WPE's Cold Weather Clothing Project. These can be sent to White Pony Express, 1966 Tice Valley Blvd., #101, Walnut Creek, CA 94595. Donations of coats, etc., are also being accepted, but they need to be new or like-new donations of cold weather clothing.

This excludes stained, torn, or clothing that shows wear. Garments should be in a condition that might be given to a close family member. Donations of new or like-new clothing can be delivered to Suite 101, 3380 Vincent Road, Pleasant Hill, during hours of operation listed online at www.whiteponyexpress.org/donateclothes.

Volunteers are also needed for WPE's Food Rescue program, which picks up 5,000 pounds of surplus fresh food (fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy/deli/dry goods, bread/pastries and eggs) every day and delivers it to nonprofits that feed the hungry in our county - all free of charge. In just over four years, WPE has rescued more than 5.2 million pounds of quality, nutritious food that have would otherwise gone to waste.

Those wishing to volunteer for WPE should contact Mandy Nakaya at (925) 818-6361 or at mandy@whiteponyexpress.org.

For more information about WPE, visit www.whiteponyexpress.org.

Delicious apple dessert just right for fall

By Susie Iventosch



Baked apples with raisins, nuts and spice.

Photo Susie Iventosch

Apples are especially wonderful this time of year with so many different varieties available in the markets. When baked with spices, they make an excellent fall dessert that is nice and light. We've made these with several different kinds of apples, and while I love Fuji apples for eating raw,

they tend to fall apart when baked. The Braeburn, Honeycrisp or Gala apples all hold their shape really well and are also delicious raw or cooked. These can be served warm or at room temperature and a scoop of your favorite frozen yogurt or ice cream adds a nice touch!

Baked Apples with Raisins, Nuts and Spice

(Serves 6)

INGREDIENTS

- 6 apples (use good baking apples such as Gala, Braeburn or Honeycrisp)
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup walnuts and pecans coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. cardamom
- 2 Tbsp. butter
- 1/4 cup water

Topping

- 4 Tbsp. butter
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- Tops from apples, chopped
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped pecans and walnuts
- Liquid from cooked apples

Vanilla or Caramel Praline ice cream or frozen yogurt

DIRECTIONS

Cut the tops off the apples and save for later. With a knife, coring tool or grapefruit spoon, scoop out the core leaving the very bottom of it in tact. Place apples right side up in a casserole dish.

Mix raisins, nuts, brown sugar and spices in a bowl. Fill the cavity of each apple with this mixture. Place a small piece of butter on top of the filling in each apple. Pour water in the bottom of the pan around the apples and cover with foil. Bake at 350 F for 30 minutes and then remove foil. Continue to bake, uncovered, for another 10 minutes or until a knife easily pierces the apple, but the apple is not mushy. Remove apples from oven and reserve liquid for the sauce.

Meanwhile, melt butter in a skillet over medium low heat and stir in brown sugar. Add cooking liquid from apples and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until volume is reduced by half and sauce becomes syrupy. Add nuts.

To serve, place a scoop of ice cream or yogurt over apple and drizzle sauce over all.

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



Cooking Term of the Week

Ragout

Ragout is a French term and is a type of seasoned stew that's made with vegetables and small pieces of meat, fish or poultry. The term derives from the French verb "ragouter" which means to stimulate the appetite.



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School program offers promise of hope to underserved children

By John T. Miller



The Wolf of Gubbio (played by Ira Hastings) interacts with spectators at a Francis in the Schools presentation. Photos provided

Francis in the Schools, a program designed to provide field trips for underserved school children where they can learn about the life of Francis of Assisi and enjoy a day of fun and entertainment, is now in its sixth year.

Originally conceived of by Carol Weyland Conner, Ph.D., of Sufism Reoriented, the organization has put on over 22 events reaching approximately 12,000 students in grades K-8. In addition to local gatherings, the group has also served students from marginalized communities in New York, Baltimore, and Washington, D.C.

Functioning as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization, these programs are staffed and run by volunteers and are funded entirely by donation.

Conner, a psychotherapist who formerly worked with inner-city teens, came up with the idea because of a concern for children growing up in cities marked by unemployment, poverty, deportation,

drugs and crime.

"I had long been inspired by Francis of Assisi's example of selfless service to humanity, especially those on the margins of society," said Conner. "These children face challenges of ethnic and social blending and a below-average standard of living, yet they're delighted and encouraged when they learn the inspiring story of Francis of Assisi."

Current Executive Director of the program, Terry Hogan Johnson, who is also the music director of the White Horse Chorale, the Consortium of the Arts choruses and the Meher Schools' White Horse Youth Chorale, says there are many parallels of Francis's life that resonate with the kids today.

"Francis was originally petrified of lepers, just like people today have problems dealing with Aids victims or the homeless," she said.

The day begins with transportation to the event and then a high-quality theatrical production that



Giant puppets are used to represent oppressive people, such as Francis's father or the local magistrate.

dramatizes universal human values. According to Conner, "When children see these values dramatized, they recognize and understand them and internalize them."

One story that resonates with the children is the Wolf of Gubbio that terrorizes the village until Francis realizes that it is merely hungry. "They get the connection to homelessness and hunger," relates Johnson.

"If only the homeless could be cared for, they wouldn't do so much harm to the village."

Next, participants are escorted to a unique faire with activities to inspire and delight. These activities, like face-painting, noncompetitive games, and interacting with nature, are designed to "help the children feel respected, appreciated, and loved, to build their self-esteem and confidence," said Conner. "We try to nurture feelings of kindness, courage, and self-worth."

A favorite activity of Johnson's is at the end of the faire, when

each child is allowed to pick from a colorful array of flowers to make a bouquet to take home. The San Francisco Flower Mart, through the volunteer work of Kim Hunter-Reay, donates thousands of stems of roses, orchids, asters, daisies, sunflowers, mums, and other flowers for the children to choose from.

"Once it was El Salvadoran Mother's Day and a group of students from a San Francisco school made flower arrangements for their mothers and grandmothers," said Johnson. "On any other occasion they would have had nothing to give them."

While the day is ripe with religious overtones, the organization tries to deliver simple, nonreligious and nonsectarian statements for all denominations.

"We prefer to present Francis as an historical figure," Johnson said. "It's wonderful to be presenting in the San Francisco area, the namesake of Saint Francis. Plus, we are surrounded by some of his fellow

followers, like San Leandro, named for his friend Leo, and Santa Clara representing his devoted companion Saint Clare."

The group has presented in San Francisco at St. Mary's Cathedral, at San Damiano Retreat in Danville and in Oakland, along with cities on the East Coast.

The city of Baltimore, where many poor children live in difficult situations, asked for Francis in the Schools to present as part of their 250th anniversary.

In Washington, D.C., Georgetown University hosted the event, and, according to Johnson, prompted one junior high student to remark, "What do I have to do to go to a school like this?"

When New York wanted a Francis in the Schools presentation to coincide with the visit of Pope Francis, Johnson called some former students of hers to help stock the supply of volunteers. One of the volunteers overheard a participant say that the day made her feel like a princess: "But it's over now," the young lady admitted, "and now we have to go back. But we'll always have today."

Conner summed up the program, saying, "It is a celebration of the resilience, wonder, and joy in the children, of the kindness, compassion, and service Francis modeled for others, and the inspiration and encouragement children gain from learning about the life of this remarkable man."

Those interested in more information about the program can contact Terry Johnson at Terry@FrancisInTheSchools.org.

College Advisor

A solid approach to the 'Why Our College' essay

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

In October of 2016 President Barack Obama issued a proclamation deeming November National College Application Month. He might have been dealing with one application firsthand, since his oldest daughter, Malia, was im-

mersed in the process. This year, many seniors are once again working overtime to complete their college applications. One question that they often struggle with is how to approach the "Why our college?" essay.

It is important to understand that every college or university is trying to accomplish at least two things by asking this popular question. First, the college wants to learn if the applicant has done the research necessary to know exactly

why he or she is applying to their school. And second, the college wants to determine if the student is a good match for their campus.

In order to make these decisions, they ask questions that will help them to understand what the student knows about the school beyond name recognition. What are the specific factors that appeal? For example, is it the quarter system that permits many courses to be taken, making a dual major more feasible? Or perhaps it is the exploratory curriculum for freshman engineering students, permitting them to determine what area of engineering is best before choosing it as a major. Maybe a prospective applicant is excited by the option to apply to the honors college in the sophomore year, if she is not eligible as an incoming freshman. If the student wants to major in finance, do investment banking companies have a strong presence on campus at the college's career fairs? If the applicant is uncertain about his path, how easy or hard is it to change majors?

If the prospective student has done sufficient homework, the response to the "Why our college?" essay will reflect that effort and prove that he is truly a great fit for their school.

Here are eight basic tips:

1. Don't talk about location—many colleges are located in great towns and cities, but you are going to college for an education, not to sight-see. So it is best to leave out the "I just love NYC!" type of comment. Instead, clearly demonstrate the link between what you want to study, your future goals and the school's academic offerings.
2. Don't talk in generalities. Be specific.
3. Do not repeat what the college says on its website. Dig deeper to learn more.
4. If possible, visit the campus before you write your response, or at least do a virtual tour. Write specifics about what you liked when you visited. If you talked to current students, mention something they said that deepened your understanding of the school.
5. Many college representatives

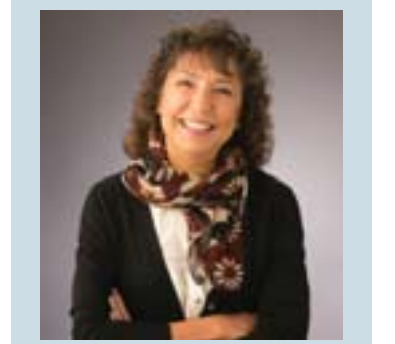
travel around the nation to make presentations at college fairs, high schools and other venues during the fall – look for those opportunities under the events tab on the college's website and at your high school's counseling office.

6. Point to some of the programs, research opportunities or projects that excite you. If you have done something similar over the summer or during the school year, explain why you hope to continue and expand that experience in college.

7. Write about more than one area of interest. That could be a club, sport, research opportunity, a study abroad program, volunteer work, an internship or anything else that truly appeals to you.

8. Even if the school is not one of your top picks, you must find valid reasons for applying. No one wants to feel second best, including colleges, and a lackluster response can result in a rejection letter from a school you considered a 'safe bet.'

Now you are on your way to writing a great essay! Remember, your overall goal is to discover specific details that appeal to you about each school, and then add in your personal experiences to show the connection between the person you are now, and what kind of college student you will be on campus over the next four years.



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

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The Peter Pan Foundation brings musical theatre to special audiences

Submitted by Gina Campo



A fan gets a hug from Moana, played by Nadya Jatoft.

Photo provided

The Peter Pan Foundation brought their music and magic to the Orinda Community Center Nov. 11, giving two special performances for audiences who would not normally be able to enjoy live theatre. The shows, a modified version of the foundation's annual Memorial Day spectacular, "Wish Upon a Star," was specifically produced for the special needs children from Easterseals Bay Area and the children at UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital, Oakland.

While the first performance for ESBA was performed to a packed live audience, the second performance was filmed and will be given to the hospital to be broadcast to patients' rooms via their closed circuit TVs.

Why provide these specialty performances? PPF founder Leslie Noel explained. "It is so important to provide live theatre opportunities to everyone, including our friends with special needs. What is especially wonderful about the specialty matinees that we are now providing, is that the onstage performances are designed specifically for our audience members with special needs; with lighting, sound, snacks, and interactions adjusted accordingly. Additionally, we are providing a safe, nonjudgmental environment for our guests watching the show. In the PPF, we embrace everyone's beautiful differences, and are working to help make everyone feel included. There is always a strong sense of real magic at the specialty matinees; the magic of loving others."

Stacey Murphy, senior programs manager for Easterseals Bay Area, is especially thankful for the partnership with the Peter Pan Foundation. "In addition to this (performance) and last year's fantastic Wish Upon a Star performances, the PPF has sent characters to five Parents Night Out events to play and sing with our clients and their siblings. I have been consistently impressed with the kindness and enthusiasm that each and every

PPF character shows our children, and watching the children's happy excitement and interaction with the PPF characters is one of my favorite parts of my role at ESBA."

Sheila Martinez, from Union City who brought her 5-year-old son, Nathan, to the show, was emotional about the experience. "When Leslie announced before the show the only rule 'was to be anything you need and want to be,' that the kids didn't have to sit still or quietly, and this show was for them, it brought tears to my eyes," she said.

While the event was a special occasion for the audience of special needs children and their families, the experience was equally rewarding for the performers. "Having the opportunity to provide a safe and loving environment for the children of Easterseals Bay Area to experience the magic of the PPF live for themselves was absolutely incredible," explained Nadya Jatoft, president of the PPF teen council, Bay Area Magic Makers. "Seeing the smiling faces of the kids laughing, dancing, and being able to meet all of the princesses and characters was such an unforgettable and inspiring experience that I will carry with me forever."

As magical as the first performance was, the second show of the afternoon was equally inspiring. Founder Leslie Noel explains how the performance for Children's Hospital Oakland started more than 10 years ago.

"Our very first CHO show was in 2006, with our original Peter Pan, Steffen Ryge. We lost him to a tragic car accident just months later. Visiting the hospital that year ended up serving as the inspiration behind The PPF's philanthropic endeavors. Since then, we have kept up the beloved annual tradition, with the PPF BMM Squad (Bay Area Magic Makers) performing for all of the patients at CHO ... it is one of our absolute favorite days of the whole year! I am so delighted to know that our show will once again be bringing magic to the lives of so many patients, while bringing a little piece of Steffen back to life, too."

You can experience some of the PPF magic for yourself at their upcoming holiday show, "Twas the Opening Night Before Christmas" Dec. 8-10 at Northgate High School in Walnut Creek. The original musical is a story about the magic of putting on a pageant during the holiday season. It follows a high school in the midst of auditions, callbacks, opening night, and all the comedy and drama that comes with it.

The show features favorite holiday classics and is a heartwarming story of love, hope and holiday cheer the whole family will enjoy. Showtimes and ticket information can be found at www.peterpanfoundation.org.

What's inside my backpack

By Karen Rosenberg

The things I carry in my head, in my hands, on my back, on my shoulders – both mentally and physically – all add to the heavy burden I drag through each and every day.

Everyone has things that weigh them down. As a high schooler, my backpack represents my life and the things that are important to me, mirroring my livelihood and ideals. Take a peek inside and you'll find my keys, my textbooks and my lunch – three things that heavily influence my life.

My keys represent my home and family. Growing up in an affluent society always caused me to be self-conscious of my financial situation, and I felt ashamed of living in a small, cluttered apartment. While many of my peers don't even know what it's like to share a bedroom, I struggled to share a bed with my mom, niece and sister. My two-bedroom apartment never seemed to live up to the million dollar houses around every corner, but I realize now that the size of my house doesn't mirror my character.

My textbooks are another symbolic item hiding in the pocket of my backpack. While carrying all my school supplies can be physically exhausting, the mental burden weighs heavily on me. My mother grew up in a third world country and life got in the way of college. My father grew up in a time where education was not necessary to be successful and was reserved to the wealthy few. My siblings never managed to make it through college. Normally this would lower expectations, but instead it pushes me to reach new heights and make a name for myself, something my family never dreamt possible for themselves. But while my family claims to be proud of who I am today, somehow my best never seems to be good enough. I set unrealistic standards, trying to make up for whatever my loved ones have lost, thus causing me to fail in the end. Knowing I am still young gives me hope that one day I will find my true calling and focus on goals I set for myself, rather than on goals set by those around me.

And then there is my lunch. To many, this may seem simple and quite insignificant, but for me, my lunch represents something that I have struggled with my entire life: my body. My friends have said I'm beautiful, my relatives have called me gorgeous, but that is not what I see when I look in the mirror every morning. Instead, I see someone who

is overweight and mediocre. I analyze my body, making an account of all the imperfections: my "too Asian" eyes, "thick" thighs, short stature, flat filipino nose. But most of all, I see someone who is not happy with her body. Someone who, at times, isn't confident enough to go to school without makeup. Someone who is ashamed of going swimming in public, in fear that she doesn't look like the girls plastered on billboards or magazine covers.

My friends try to comfort me, saying social media is just a bomb of Photoshop, good makeup skills, and the right lighting, but it's hard to listen when the people telling you this look like supermodels themselves. What hurts most is not seeing those around me with perfect bodies and flawless skin, but hearing from someone you love that "you're pretty, but you could always lose a couple pounds," or "are you sure you want to eat that?"

Every time I go and get boba with friends, or binge eat popcorn at the theater I think about how much I will have to work out to burn this off. Is it worth it? And at some point, I just give up and don't care anymore, thinking, Why am I so ugly? Why am I so fat? This societal expectation has plagued many young women my age, and, sadly, I have not yet figured out how to overcome it.

These are among the many things I carry. The expectations I've grown up having and the expectations I hope to one day diminish. We all have things that we aspire to be, to do and to have, but differentiating this from what others expect of you is the hard part.

What do you carry?



Karen Rosenberg is a junior at Acalanes High School. She is the president of the Acalanes Key Club, participates in Track and Field, and is a tutor for Mathnasium in Lafayette.

In Memory

Prudence "Prudy" Mary Mack

Sept. 17, 1947 – Nov. 15, 2017



Prudence "Prudy" Mary Mack, 70, of Pleasant Hill, died too early in life at 10:44 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 15, 2017 in her son's home after a sudden bout of aggressive cancer. Prudy died peacefully in the arms of her son, Thomas Mack, and daughter-in-law Edy Hayashi-Mack. She was born Sept. 17, 1947 in Brooklyn, New York, to Anna and Joseph Fiore. She married young and had three children who became the center of her life. As her children grew up, her passion was the love of her family and her relationship with Jesus. She moved to Florida in 1989. Then, in 2003 and after 37 years of marriage, she started a new life in California. Prudy was a strong, radiant, joyful, Jesus loving woman.

Prudy is survived by and will constantly be loved by her children (Frederick Charles Mack, Deborah Ann Comstock, Thomas Joseph Mack), seven grandchildren (Tyler Comstock, Briana Grether, Kaitlyn Comstock, MaKayla Comstock, Kai Mack, Emily Mack, and Frederick Mack), her extended Hayashi and Comstock family, Sue Laird and Camille Miller, and her friends of which there are just too many to name.

Professionally, she assisted in the school district in various positions in Florida and then again after her move to California until she finally became the Accounts Receivable Technician for Acalanes Union School District for the past eight years.

There will be a Celebration of Prudy's life on Jan. 21 at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Building from noon to 3 p.m. for family and friends.

In lieu of sending flowers, please give thanks and consider donating to the American Cancer Society.

In Memory

Carl Joseph Weber

April 19, 1928 – October 19, 2017



Orinda resident, Carl Joseph Weber passed away peacefully on October 19, 2017 surrounded by his family. He touched the lives of many with his dedication and commitment to serving, welcoming others and by his easy style of communication. He was a wealth of knowledge and shared it effortlessly with those around him.

Carl was born in Evanston, IL on April 19, 1928. He graduated from Evanston Township High School then served in the US Army in Japan following World War II. He studied at the University of Heidelberg in Germany and at the University of Paris and earned a degree in mathematics from Northwestern University in 1952. On September 6, 1952, Carl married Florence (Flo) Woodman. Always adventurous, the two immediately moved to New York where he worked for a bond trading firm. Following his passion for law, he earned a JD degree from DePaul University in Chicago. In 1959, he moved his family to Orinda and initially began working for Kaiser Aluminum in Oakland. After passing the California Bar, he began practicing Worker's Compensation Law and was a longtime partner with the law firm of Hanna, Brophy, MacLean, McAleer and Jensen. All the while, he was a steward of the Orinda Community. He was vital to securing the formation of the Orinda Community Center, the incorporation of the City of Orinda, the preservation of Orinda Theater and the formation of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District. He also served in many civic capacities including the Orinda Association, chairman of the Planning Commission, the Trees Committee, and the Historical Society. He was selected Citizen of the Year in 1970 and volunteer of the year by the Orinda Association in 1989 and again in 1998. Carl was an enthusiastic supporter of the arts, and was a faithful attendee of Cal Shakes, A.C.T., Berkeley Rep, the SF Symphony, the SF Opera, and the Lamplighters. Carl, as an Eagle Scout, was also dedicated to scouting, and served as a counselor for the Citizenship merit badge. He was deeply involved in the daily lives of his children, grandchildren and great grandchildren and most Saturday mornings he could be found at Geppetto's in Orinda with various family members.

Carl is survived by his loving wife Flo of 65 years, devoted children Joe (Judith) of Portola Valley, Wendy Thorpe of Walnut Creek, Nat (Jill) of Moraga, Liz Witbeck (Ray) of Orinda, Gretchen Latimer (Jim) of Orinda and his grandchildren: Natalie Munoz (Rene), Elle Koleckar (Kevin), Joanna Warden (Jamie), Matt Weber, Andrew Thorpe, Ted Weber, Allie Weber, Sam Weber, Tim Witbeck, Katie Latimer, Nick Latimer, Hannah Witbeck, and Jay Latimer. Carl also had 6 great grandchildren: Grace, Shepherd and Carpenter Koleckar, Lucas and Michael Munoz, and Avery Warden. Just five weeks earlier, Carl was predeceased by his brother Peter (Regina). He is also survived by his sister Natalie of Sierra Madre. His welcoming and friendly presence will be missed by all who knew him.

A celebration of life was held at the Orinda Community Center on Saturday November 25, 2017.

Lamorinda's Religious Services

Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church
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www.holyshepherd.org



8:30 a.m. Traditions Worship Service
9:45 a.m. Education for all ages
10:45 a.m. Celebrations Worship Service
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December 8 – Feast of the Immaculate Conception
Mass Times – December 7 Vigil Mass 7:30 pm
December 17 – Pancake breakfast in the Peace Room
following the 9 am Mass. All are welcome!

Christmas Eve / Christmas Day Mass Times:

December 23 – 5 pm
December 24 – 9 & 11 am / 4, 6 8 pm (8 pm with choir)
December 25 – 9 & 11 am

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ART

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 through Jan. 6. For more information visit www.moragaart-gallery.com or call (925) 376-5407.

MUSIC

Celebrate and renew with enchanting holiday music performed by the composers and music arrangers themselves. Start time for this event is 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 1 in the lovely sanctuary of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 1924 Trinity Ave in Walnut Creek, just a block from the Dean Lesher Theater. This free event is sponsored by the Contra Costa Performing Arts Society (www.ccpas.org).

The Diablo Women's Chorale invites you to join them in celebrating 75 years in the community with their fall concert "Season of Light," to be held at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 3. at Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Road, in Lafayette. From classic to contemporary, reverent to joyful, DWC's music will warm the heart, uplift the spirit, and soothe the soul. Advance purchase tickets are \$18 general admission, \$10 student, and \$24 premium seating. Purchase at the door for \$25. Call 1-800-838-3006, or go online at www.DiabloWomensChorale.org.

Acalanes High School's award winning Instrumental Music Department is proud to present its Winter Concert Series, to be held at the Acalanes Performing Arts Center at 7 p.m. Dec. 5 through 7. The first concert features the Acalanes Concert Band, Symphonic Band and the Symphonic Wind Ensemble, the String Orchestra and Symphonic Wind Ensemble will perform at the second concert, and the third and final concert features the Acalanes Jazz Ensemble along with a guest jazz group from Albany High School. Cost: \$5 suggested donation.

Sing-Along Messiah Christmas on the Hill Concert at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9 at 10 Moraga Valley Lane, Moraga. For more information go to www.mvpctoday.org or call (925) 376-4800.

Voci Women's Vocal Ensemble will present "Rejoice! Rejoice!" – three performances of stunning sacred renaissance and baroque masterworks, featuring the Jubilate Baroque Orchestra and soprano MacKenzie Covington, and showcasing works by Bach, Porpora, Hasse, Charpentier, Cozzolani, Vivaldi and Victoria. Voci's Artistic Director Mitchell Covington brings particular expertise in the Baroque style. Voci will perform at 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9 at St Paul's Episcopal Church, 114 Montecito Avenue, Oakland and at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 10 at St. Mary Magdalen Church, 2005 Berryman Street, Berkeley. Tickets: \$30 at the door, \$25 advance, \$15 students, free for children between 6 and 12. Available at the door or online at www.vocisings.org.

The Day Shall Dawn Holiday Concert at 7:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 11 at the Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church. Ring in the holidays in a glorious fashion by adding your voice to the more than 200 singers and instrumentalists! For info, visit www.cantareconvivo.org or call (510) 836-0789. Tickets: \$42.50 general, \$38 senior, and \$10 Student

Holiday Music in the Library at 5 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 12 in the Orinda Library. Stop by the library and enjoy holiday music with Mary Fuller on viola

WomenSing presents "Beginning With A Bang: Strike the Drum and Join the Chorus!" from 8 to 10 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 13 at the Church of Santa Maria, 40 Santa Maria Way, Orinda. WomenSing adds percussion to the holiday season in a joyous

concert of traditional and unexpected repertoire, led by Artistic Director Ofer dal Lal. Cost: \$28 general admission, \$10 student. For more info see <https://womensing.org/CurrentSeason> or call (925) 798-4875 or email info@womensing.org.

Join local band "JetBlacq" for their annual holiday show "Jingles with JetBlacq" featuring husband and wife Rebecca and Frank Faiola singing all of your favorite holiday songs at 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 15 at the New Rheem Theatre. Cost: \$15. Tickets are available online at www.lamorindatheatre.com. Check out JetBlacq at www.reverbNation.com/jetblacq.

THEATER

Orinda Intermediate School Bulldog Theater stages Monty Python's Spamalot Young@part Edition Nov. 30 through Dec. 2 at Orinda Intermediate School, 80 Ivy Drive. This version of the 2005 Tony Award winning musical, "Spamalot," is designed for youth theaters. Tickets are \$3-\$10. Visit www.showtix4u.com for show times and tickets. Tickets are also available at the door.

CAPA presents The Nutcracker. Snow falls onstage and the Christmas tree magically grows in the California Academy of Performing Arts presentation of a full-length, narrated Nutcracker. A beloved Lamorinda tradition for over 20 years, this energy-filled spectacle reflects the studio's dedication to young dancers with more than 100 local performers, extra characters and surprises. Performances at 5:30 and 8 p.m. on Friday, 2 and 7 p.m. on Saturday, and 1 and 5 p.m. on Sunday Dec. 15-17 at the Campolindo Performing Arts Center. For tickets, go to www.cashows.eventbrite.com.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette from 4 to 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 1. The fun includes a visit from Santa, photo ops, live musical entertainment, a tree lighting ceremony and a holiday sing-along. Hot chocolate and other goodies will be available and there will also be crafts for the kids. For the full entertainment schedule, visit www.lafayettechamber.org.

Saklan Middle School Open House from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. Friday, Dec. 1 at 1678 School Street, Moraga. Get an inside look at the advantages of Saklan's middle school program, including project-based, hands-on learning curriculum and an active social and emotional educational program. Please RSVP to admissions@saklan.org.

Holiday magic at Orinda Theatre Square from 6 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2. Free horse and carriage rides, an ornament workshop and photos with Santa. Tree lighting at 7 p.m.

Visit with Santa at 5A Rent-A-Space from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 2. Be the Star You Are! volunteers will be present to help kids write letters to Santa. Free event with refreshments and a photo with Santa. Cynthia Brian will sell and autograph her new book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," 455 Moraga Rd. #F, Moraga. <http://www.bethestaryouare.org/events>.

North Shattuck Association presents Snow? In Berkeley? from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 3 at Gourmet Ghetto, Shattuck Ave., 1451-1495 Shattuck Ave., Berkeley. Bring boots and mittens. Snow Queen, Pony Rides, DIY Crafts, Holiday Craft Vendors. Free. For more info see <http://www.anotherbullwinkeshow.com/holiday-berkeley/holiday-gourmet-ghetto.html> or call (510) 334-6523 or email Lisa@AnotherBullwinkeshow.com

The Moraga Youth Involvement Committee will be serving hot cocoa and cookies during a special tree lighting event with Santa at 6:30 p.m. prior to the tree lighting at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 7 in Moraga Commons Park.

Santa Claus visits Rheem Valley Shopping Center from noon to 3 p.m.

on Saturday, Dec. 9. Santa and helpers will be entertaining children of all ages inside the holiday home for the Moraga Valley Kiwanis Foundation's See's Candy Fundraiser. Parents can take photos of their children visiting Santa and shop for delicious holiday gifts. Visit rheemvalley.net for more information.

Orinda Academy will be hosting an open house event for fall 2018 enrollment from 1 to 4 p.m. Dec. 9. Come and see what makes OA a Best of Parents Press winner (independent high school/alternative learning high school). Our small class sizes, college prep curriculum, and full-time learning support coordinator help all students succeed.

Lamorainbow Get-Together from 1 to 3 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 9 in Moraga. Lamorainbow is a group for gender expansive kids and their parents. For information about event location and to join Lamorainbow, contact us at lamorainbow925@gmail.com.

Just for Teens: Holiday Crafts at 4 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 14 in the Orinda Library Garden Room. Just for Teens: Make holiday gift bags, boxes and tags with artist Valerie Adinolfi. All materials provided. For grades 6-12. No registration required.

Jewish Gateways presents Hanukkah Celebration for Families with Young Children from 10:30 a.m. to noon on Sunday, Dec. 17, at the Jewish Community Center East Bay, 1414 Walnut Street, Berkeley. Celebrate this festival of lights with Hanukkah songs, stories, a hands-on project, and treats. Led by Rabbi Bridget and Isaac Zones. Cost: \$30 per family, plus \$5 per sibling over 5. For more info see <https://www.jewishgateways.org/hands-on-holidays> or call (510) 410-0622 or email rabbibridget@jewishgateways.org

OTHER

Coping with the Holidays from 6 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 5 at 3470 Buskirk Avenue, Pleasant Hill. A class that presents ideas and strategies to help those experiencing grief during the holiday season as this time of year can be difficult for those who have lost a loved one. hospiceeastbay.org Herbal Gift Making for the Holidays at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 30 in the Orinda Library Garden Room. Elana O'Losky will help us make herbal vinegar and mini wreaths using fresh herbs and greens. Materials and handouts provided. Space is limited. Register online, by phone or in person at the Orinda Library.

Contra Costa Tale Spinners at 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 30 in the Orinda Library Garden Room. Join a story swap with featured teller, Suz Shampanian, who will share "Theodosia and Burr," inspired by the musical "Hamilton," by Lin Manuel Miranda. Share, listen, expand your universe.

Recycle Those Bicycles! For the 20th year, through the month of November, Bobbie and Tom Preston will collect bikes for Cycle Recycle to be refurbished and given to charitable groups to distribute for the holidays. New and/or used bikes and trikes in working or repairable order, or useable bike parts (no skateboards or plastic bikes please), may be delivered to the side driveway of the Preston's home at 1307 Larch Avenue in Moraga. No need to call before drop off, but for more information contact the Prestons at (925) 376-8474.

Hacienda Holiday Faire - Find all your handcrafted holiday gifts and support local artisans at the annual holiday faire from noon to 8 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 1 and from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec 2 at the historic Hacienda de las Flores, 2100 Donald Drive, Moraga. Hand-crafted gifts, décor and specialty foods by over 45 local artisans. Complimentary wine tasting with Captain Vineyards. For more information email HaciendaHolidayFaire@gmail.com, www.facebook.com/HaciendaHolidayFaire/

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Film Clips

Pixar moves bar higher with 'Coco'

By Derek Zemrak

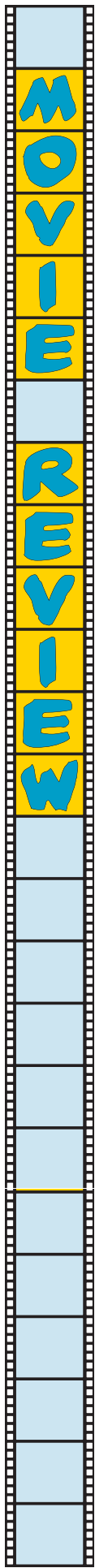


Image provided

Since 1995, Pixar has been raising the bar of the animated film industry. We have been waiting patiently for their next release and now it is time for "Coco." Once again Pixar has set the animation bar a few notches higher. "Coco" is set in Mexico during the Mexican holiday "Day of the Dead." This is a multiday holiday that focuses on gatherings of family and friends to pray for and remember those members who have died, and to help support them on their spiritual journey. "Coco" is a real tear jerker and will pull at your heartstrings as often as Miguel, the lead character, plays the strings on his guitar. There will not be a dry eye when the credits roll. "Coco" does more than just yank at your heartstrings. It's a wonderful adventure, a beautiful story and a stunning piece of art that the entire family will enjoy. In fact, you will be catching yourself singing the songs from the movie afterward.

"Coco" follows 12-year-old Miguel (voiced by newcomer Anthony Gonzalez), the youngest member of a close family that has banned music for generations. Still, Miguel dreams of becoming a musician. After making a questionable decision, he finds himself trapped in the Land of the Dead as a living boy. He gets help from his

deceased relatives, a stray dog and some new friends to get himself back to the Land of the Living.

"Coco" has an all-Latino cast including Benjamin Bratt, Gael Garcia Bernal and Edward James Olmos. Mexican culture takes center stage from the music, to the food, costumes to the vibrant colors present in the Land of the Dead. Coco is the perfect holiday movie, which celebrates the large extended family structure and appreciation of ancestral history for which Latino culture is known.

I would recommend parents of kids under 10 years see the movie before taking your little ones. Some of the Land of the Dead visuals may be too frightening for youngsters. "Coco" is appropriate for older kids, which will expose them to the Latin culture. Also, be prepared to be asked questions about death and dying.

As Miguel states in the movie, "We may have our differences but nothing is more important than family."

"Coco" is rated PG with a total running time of 1 hour and 55 minutes.

Enjoy the start of the holiday season and take the family to see "Coco." You will not be disappointed. Pixar does it again!

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

December 1
Precious Listana, co-founder of the Invention Corps of Berkeley.

December 8
Ever heard of the Dracula Ant? Brian Fisher, named it. He's the renowned entomologist of the California Academy of Science and our guest speaker.

THE BIG RAFFLE DRAWING.
Teardrop Trailer Raffle at The Lafayette Holiday Celebration. Lafayette Plaza Park Dec. 1, 4:00 to 6:30 p.m.

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.
November 30:
EBMUD water supply and/or conservation.
www.rotarylafayette.org
www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-Ca-197392963631366

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WHEN: Wednesday, Dec. 4th
Social 5:30-6:00 p.m.
Meeting 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
WHERE: The Buttercup Grill
660 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek.
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 or go to: soroptimist24-680.org

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website: www.lamorindaweekly.com

◆ Not to be missed ◆ Not to be missed ◆

OTHER ... continued
Live Nativity from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2. See the Christmas story come to life as the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church Courtyard is transformed into a Bethlehem manger with community members as Mary, Joseph, shepherds, angels, and the wise men, and live animals filling the stable. MVPC is located at 910 Moraga Valley Lane, Moraga. For more information go to www.mvpc.today.org or call (925) 376-4800.

Budd MacKenzie of Lafayette will speak at Commonwealth Club in San Francisco about his work with women, children and the needy in war-torn Afghanistan at 6 p.m. on Monday Dec. 4, Commonwealth Club, 110 Embarcadero, San Francisco. Tickets available online or at the door. www.commonwealthclub.org/events/2017-12-04/couch-war-hearts-and-minds.

The Saint Mary's College Guild will present its annual festive Christmas luncheon beginning at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 6 at Saint Mary's College, Dryden Hall 1928 St. Mary's Road. The festive affair will have music, provided by the SMC award-winning choir, a bake sale, and raffle baskets galore, including the infamous Christmas Money Tree. Cost: \$45 per person. Make checks payable to: SMC Guild, Send to: Susan Hooks - 120 Ardith Drive - Orinda, CA 94563. For further information, call Pat Mc Enaney at (925) 376-3306.

Come and experience The Many Faces of Leukemia, Lymphoma

and Myeloma, an event focusing on the unique issues of blood cancer patients from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 6 in the Lafayette Library Community Room. Join Dr. Robert Robles and Dr. Susan Kao as they discuss exciting advances in research and emerging therapies in treating hematologic malignancies. Q&A session to follow presentation. Space is limited. Advanced registration required. Admission and light dinner complimentary. To RSVP, call (925) 677-5041 or visit www.bit.ly/manyfaceslls.

Lamorinda Night for Saint Mary's Men's Basketball game 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9 in McKee Pavilion against Seattle University. Lamorinda Night will celebrate the communities of Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda. Special ticket price of \$11 available at SMC-GAELS.com/tickets with promo code LAMO17.v.

The 2018 U.S. Synchronized Swimming National Team is hosting a holiday show at the SODA Aquatic Center at Campolindo high school from 3 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9. The Team comprises 11 athletes aged 15 to 21 years old including 2016 Olympian Anita Alvarez. The Team will present its newest routines as it prepares for the 2018 Junior World Championships in Budapest, Hungary and the 2018 FINA World Series in July.

The Bethlehem Experience: The Lafayette United Methodist Church presents an interactive performance that takes you back through time from 5:30 to 8 p.m. Dec. 15-17. One-hour-long tours

begin every 15 minutes. Tour Guides will lead groups of about 12 people through the marketplace of Bethlehem on the night of the Messiah's birth. The Bethlehem Experience is a feast for the senses: the smell of exotic spices, the festive sound of music, the sight of robed and sandaled merchants in their stalls, the taste of freshly baked unleavened bread, live animals in the stable and the soft feel of flaxen "swaddling clothes." Freewill donation: \$5/person or \$20/family. For information, call (925) 284-4765.

Daughters of the Goddess, a Bay Area women-only Goddess Temple, will be holding its yearly Winter Solstice Ritual beginning at 7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 20. East Bay address given upon RSVP. This is our annual Peace ritual to help bring peace, love and joy into the World. At this sacred time of year come and join womyn and girls as we dance and sing in celebration of the returning of the light. Newcomers discount is \$15. Email Leilani@DaughtersoftheGoddess.com or visit www.DaughtersoftheGoddess.com.

SENIORS

Senior Scam Workshop at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 13 in the Orinda Library Garden Room. Learn about the scams that target seniors the most. Get tips on how to avoid these tactics, which red flags to be aware of, and what resources to use to lower your chances of becoming a victim. Presented by the Better Business Bureau.

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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Miramonte wins NorCal CIF Championship

By Jon Kingdon



Kelly Murphy



Photos Gint Federas Katrina Drake

Photos Gint Federas

Another successful season has concluded for the Lamorinda Girls Water Polo teams. With a combined won-lost record of 69 and 11, the Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte high school teams can all lay claim to having had successful seasons.

All three schools made the playoffs: Acalanes (21-5) won their first two playoff games and lost 9-8 in triple overtime against Monte Vista, the team that made it to the NorCal CIF Championship game; Campolindo (18-6) won their first two playoff games and then lost to Miramonte 12-6, the ultimate NorCal CIF champion; and Miramonte (30-0) closed out their season defeating Monte Vista (for the fifth time this season) in the championship match 13-5.

Coming into the season, Miramonte coach Lance Morrison knew that he had a team with great talent and potential. Morrison understood the pressure he was facing: "The hardest thing is not getting to the top, it's staying there that is the most difficult thing. Our coaches made sure that the kids stayed grounded and took care of business."

To win the Nov. 18 championship, Miramonte was going to have to play two games, first versus Davis, a team Miramonte had defeated by only one goal. This time, Miramonte prevailed over Davis 7-4. Morrison knew his team was ready for the rematch: "We had been missing two starters the first time we played. The girls understood how close it was before. We only gave up one goal per quarter versus Davis. Even though our offense was not clicking, we kept our composure on defense."

Having to play two games in one day can be a difficult task. Morrison actually saw this as an advantage for his team: "I believe this was actually an advantage for us for two reasons: we have such great depth and our goal from the first day was to be the most conditioned team in the pool."

This was the sixth time Miramonte faced and defeated Monte Vista, outscoring them by a combined score of 62 to 32. Morrison

did not allow the team to get overconfident: "The girls' mindset was to accept the challenge and not give in to that pressure."

Defending a championship is never easy, but Morrison is up for the challenge: "Replacing the seniors is going to be hard but we have a lot of young talent. If they put the work in during the off-season, we will continue to be a force to be reckoned with. This is a very competitive league and Acalanes and Campolindo should have qualified for the NorCal Championships."

We look forward to the new challenges."

The cliché that sports is a game of inches was driven home to Acalanes coach Mischa Barton. In their playoff loss to Monte Vista, a last second shot in regulation by his team hit the bar of the goal and then caromed off the goalie and somehow did not end up in the goal. Barton was somewhat philosophical over losing such a game: "You never want to lose a game like that but if you're going to lose, you'd rather lose in a great game."

Playing in such a competitive division can bring out the best in some teams. Barton finds great satisfaction in his team: "It was a successful season. It's the best record we've had since 2005. Talent wise, we were as good as we have been. Our only disappointment was not being able to play in the big tournament."

Barton brought a philosophy of "versatility" to his players that he feels attributed to the team's success: "I try to make sure that, outside of the goalie position, we develop the whole, well rounded player. They have to be able to move to another position as needed."

Barton is optimistic for the future: "We only lost a couple of seniors and are primed for a nice run of success. We will miss Bella Wenzel who will be going to UCLA next year but we will have a wide cross section of leadership for next season led by Lexi Rowell, Jewel Roemer and Brooke Westphal."

Campolindo head coach Kim Everist accepts the challenge of being in such a competitive league,

with two playoff victories prior to the loss to Miramonte: "I would call it a successful season. We are always disappointed to not be in the NorCal finals but there are a lot of things that we strive for outside of wins and losses."

Coming into the season with a number of new players due to senior graduations, Everist stressed the philosophy of "Team First - Self Last." She credits her six seniors, particularly the team's captains, Katie Klein, Erin Neustrom and Sidney Vranesh for much of the team's success: "A big part of what we needed this season was the right chemistry. Their leadership was great and held everyone accountable and kept everyone on the same mission. They were able to find those things within themselves. We had great consistency and I am super proud of this team."

Replacing Katie Klein, a staple on the team since her freshman year, is going to be the most difficult task for next year's team. Campolindo will be returning 13 seniors all of whom Everist feels will contribute to next year's team in one way or another, singling out Jessica Henningsen, Christina Crum, Zoe Crouch and Camryn Sutter to lead both in and outside the pool.

Even with a large number of seniors, underclassmen Nina Munson and Lola Ciruli with other underclassmen are being counted on as well. Everist describes next year's team as being "senior heavy with a young group."

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Campo continues playoff run with 45-14 win

By Jon Kingdon



John Torchio

Photos Gint Federas

Don't play poker with Campolindo head coach Kevin Macy. Prior to the Nov. 24 victory over Windsor High School, Macy took a very cautious approach: "Windsor has a good pass rush with big linebackers and a strong passing game." As for his Cougars who were able to play subs for most of last week's game against Maria Carrillo, Macy was not sure that this was an advantage for his team: "There's a fine line between being fresh and stale." In the 13th game of the season, Macy said his team is "still trying to find our identity."

No Clark Kent or Peter Parker in this team. With the 45-14 victory over Windsor, Campolindo has defeated their three playoff opponents - Washington 50-14, Maria Carrillo 44-20 and Windsor 45-14 - by a combined 117-21 in just the first halves of the games.

Once again John Torchio led the Cougars with an all-around performance. Torchio threw three touchdown passes, ran for a touchdown, had a sack, broke up a couple of passes and had an interception. No truth to the rumor that he was working the snack bar at halftime.

Field position proved to be a major advantage for Campolindo. Windsor started 7 of their 8 drives in the first half at their 20 yard line thanks to touchback kickoffs by kicker Seppi Ortman. The one kickoff that did not make the end zone was returned to their 21 yard line. Whereas Windsor's average starting drive in the first half was from their 20 yard line, Campolindo's average starting drive was from the Windsor 45 yard line, one time at the Windsor 15 yard line due to a fumbled Windsor punt.

Kyle Lutenecker scored on a 1-yard run, Shun Ishida scored on a 52-yard touchdown pass, Parker Windatt caught two touchdown passes for 20 and 60 yards. Lucas Allen closed out the first half scoring with a 16-yard touchdown reception from backup quarterback, Grant Harper.

If there was a "stale" aspect to Campolindo, there were several penalties that kept the game from being a complete rout. Macy also felt that "we did not run the ball well tonight."

Macy did compliment his defense, though he added, "There is still room to improve."

The defensive coaches complimented the team on their gang tackling and highlighted linebacker Grant Larsen who had an interception.

The Cougars will be playing Granada at 7 p.m. Dec. 1 at Dublin High School.

Having defeated Petaluma High School in their first playoff game by a score of 63-25, Acalanes knew they were facing a much better opponent Nov. 18 as they took on Bishop



Vincent Mossotti

O'Dowd High School. Battling right to the end of the game, Acalanes went down by a score of 36-21.

O'Dowd coach Napoleon Kaufman was well aware of what he needed to defeat Acalanes: "Robbie Rowell is more than just a quarterback. He is a genuine threat as a runner as well."

Rowell did not disappoint completing 18 of 35 passes for 217 yards and 3 touchdowns and 1 interception. Under constant pressure all day, Rowell was sacked six times by the O'Dowd defense led by senior Isaiah Henry who had three sacks. Acalanes coach Floyd Burnsed knew it was going to be a difficult matchup: "This was the best team we faced this year. They had a very good outside speed rush but we did adjust in the second half and improved our pass blocking."

Acalanes scored on their first drive with Rowell completing a 41-yard touchdown pass to Aidan Mc Namara, completing an 80-yard drive

Field position was soon to play a key role in the game. When O'Dowd was forced to punt after their second possession, the ball rolled down at the Acalanes 6 yard line. Under heavy pressure in his own end zone, Rowell was called for intentional grounding, giving O'Dowd a safety. After a kickoff that went out of bounds, O'Dowd took over on the Acalanes 45 yard line, O'Dowd quarterback eventually scored on a 4-yard run.

O'Dowd started three of their drives inside Acalanes territory at the 45, 37, 25 yard lines, amassing a total of 411 yards (170 passing and 241 yards rushing). Acalanes totaled 366 yards (217 passing and 49 yards rushing).

Down 36 to 7 early in the second half, Acalanes continued to move the ball, scoring two touchdowns on Rowell passes to Chris Rogers bringing the score 36-21. Rogers went on to catch 7 passes for 93 yards. Try as they might, O'Dowd was unable to put Acalanes away. The Dons defense rose to the occasion in the second half, keeping the Dons in the game, preventing O'Dowd from scoring on three drives when they got inside the Acalanes 10 yard line. Nick Henderson led the Dons with 12 tackles and Ryan Nall had 6 tackles with 3 tackles for loss.

Burnsed took a lot of positives out of the game: "There was no quit in the team. We put in a great effort and no question this was a successful season for us."

Unlike Campolindo and Acalanes, who had laughers in their opening playoff game, Miramonte High School opened their playoff run Nov. 10 with a comeback victory over El Cerrito by a score of 31-30 that will be long remembered.

Down 30-19 after an El Cerrito touchdown, Miramonte marched down the field to score with 3:25 left in the game on



Robbie Rowell



Will Cassriel

a 26 yard Will Cassriel pass to Ethan Fischler.

After recovering the onside kick, the game came down to a 4th and 17 play on the El Cerrito 36 yard line. Under a lot of pressure Cassriel scrambled around until he was able to find Fischler in the end zone for the winning touchdown.

Peter Stehr played a complete game rushing 18 times for 164 yards and two touchdowns while making 10 tackles on defense. Sam Walker once again led the Matadors with 14 tackles.

In their next playoff game, Miramonte faced Marin Catholic in what seems to be becoming an annual postseason matchup. With both teams combining for over 1,000 yards and the lead going back and forth seven times, Marin Catholic defeated Miramonte 49-39, the Matadors concluding with an 8-4 record.

On the first play of the game, Marin Catholic scored on a 90-yard pass to Ben Skinner. Miramonte answered with a 30-yard Cassriel pass to Fischler. Cassriel would go on to complete 23 of 33 passes for 253 yards and three touchdowns and one interception, running 10 times for 71 yards and one touchdown. Fischler ended up with eight receptions for 153 yards and two touchdowns. Stehr ran 19 times for 177 yards and two touchdowns, amassing a total of 1,693 yards for the season.

Late in the third quarter, Miramonte went up for the last time 39-35 on a touchdown pass to Sam Walker.

Gaven Cook then took a screen pass for 78 yards to put Marin Catholic ahead 42-35 and Cook then intercepted a pass at the Miramonte 17 yard line leading to their final touchdown.

Sam Walker had 7 tackles and 6 receptions. Keilan Stone led the Matadors with 10 tackles.

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Girls Volleyball season wraps up

By Jon Kingdon



Sarah Carrasco



Photos Gint Federas Zoe McPhail



Meaghan Hohman

Campolindo Girls Volleyball once again had a successful season with a 29-10 record overall and going 10-0 in league play.

Having lost six seniors to graduation last season, coach John Leung had to count on this team's seniors even though coming into the season, their experience was limited: "We did well this season. Our seniors stepped up and exceeded my expectations. They did what we asked them to do and I was pleased with the end results."

The Cougars lost in state tournament to Sacred Heart Cathedral 3-0, losing the final game 34-32. Still, Leung praised his team: "The girls fought to the end and never quit."

Leung is not willing to prognosticate as

to the type of team he will have next season: "All the kids improved throughout the season but they now have eight months to prepare and train, with many of them playing club volleyball, so I won't know what I have until we get together at the end of next summer."

With a smaller team this year, Campolindo utilized a quicker, up-tempo game but Leung would not commit to that type of offense next season: "We'll adjust to the talents that we have. We have a number of players returning and they understand our system and how we want to run it."

One talent Campolindo will be counting on will be sophomore Audrey Pak who was all-league and MVP this past season.

Junior Sarah Carrasco, the team's libero, will also be counted on for leadership provided a lot of motivation for her teammates by constantly throwing her body all over the court.

Leung anticipates having a young team next year but is not concerned.

Coming off a championship season, Acalanes coach Ernie Rodriguez knew that this was going to be a difficult year with teams looking to knock off the current champion. As Shakespeare said, "Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown" (Henry IV, Part II).

With a 31-9 record in the 2016 season, the Dons were going to be hard pressed to match the accomplishments of that team highlighted by a 5 set victory in the championship game. Finishing the 2017 season with an overall record of 13-16, Acalanes had to be satisfied with Rodriguez's preseason goal which was: "I want the players to enjoy our team as a team."

Entering the playoffs with 12-15 record, the Dons defeated Petaluma, who had an 18-6 record coming into the tournament, 3-0.

In the next round of the playoffs, Acalanes took Moreau Catholic to a fifth game, finally succumbing 18-16.

Losing captains Maddie Kalil, Zoe Mc

Phail and Theresa Nevins will hurt next year's team but Rodriguez has a corps of underclassmen that he will hope to build around for a more successful 2018 season.

Opening their season with five straight wins, Miramonte approached the rest of the season with great optimism, and head coach Lisa Bachtold was optimistic about the season ahead.

The team crested at 11-4, concluding the season with 16-12 record.

The Matadors won their opening playoff game versus Albany before losing their next two games against Marin Catholic and Los Gatos.

With three top scores on the team returning, Meaghan Hohman (255 kills), Jennifer Giron (168 kills) and Brigette Finger (94 kills), the offense should be a strength of next year's team.

With the graduations of Claire Swan, Elle Taylor and Tati Luevano, Miramonte will be looking toward Kaylyn Goode and Hohman to shore up the defense on the front row.

Lauren Lim with 504 digs, Jennifer Giron with 316 digs and Grace Guidotti 21th 192 digs should be the foundation for next season's defense.

JM Cross Country Team finished second

Submitted by Mark Orders



Front row, from left: Camille Yabu, Neha Ravikumar, Alyssa Flett, Lani Baliwag, Amy Blei, Mia Colombini, Ella Colombini; back row from left: coaches Bob Shipway and Mark Orders Photo provided

JM's XC team finished in second place at the recent East Bay Middle School Championships at Kennedy Grove. The Jag-

uars were led by race winner Mia Colombini, Ella Colombini (5th) and Amy Blei (11th) in a field of 115 runners.

MOL Super Bowl Champs

Submitted by Bill Boselli



From left: assistant coach Bill Boselli, Jimmy Cusumano, Bo Iverson, Partick Dunne, Bowie Hillstrom, Braden Baldwin, JT Goett, Tyler Winkles, coach Troy Winkles, Jackson Boselli, Riley Gates, Anthony Mullin and Jack Simmons; not pictured: Ander Peterson. Photo provided

The Trojans won the MOL Super Bowl Flag Football Championship for third-fourth grade division and went undefeated for the season.

OIS Cross Country wins Championship

Submitted by Jason Curry



From left: Reese Hansen, Shannon Murphy, Paige Mays, Kate Riley, Jamie Say, Sophia Swenson, Caitlin Jenkins, and Peyton Mays; not pictured Tahra Minowada, coaches: Maureen O'Neil and Jason Curry Photo provided

The seventh-eighth grade girls cross country team from Orinda Intermediate won their second consecutive East Bay Middle School League Championship Nov. 2 at Kennedy Grove.

8th grade Bills win MOL flag football Super Bowl

Submitted by Lauren Fritch



Front row, from left: Joe Gonzales, Max Metzgen, Xavier Esquer, Will Monkarsh, Hudson Reicher (seated), David Colachico, Jack Reardon; back row: coach Rick Monkarsh, Patrick Volk, Owen Van Stralen, Connor Fritch, Cade Bennett, Marco Chao, Zach Silverberg and coach Jason Fritch. Photo provided

The eighth grade Bills won the MOL flag football Super Bowl Sunday, Nov. 5 at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School.

Joaquin Moraga 8A girls volleyball team wins 2017 middle school tournament

Submitted by Melinda Storrs



Front row, from left: Ashley Wehrly, Francesca Restrepo, Angela Devine, Alyssa Lewis-Smith, Eliza Rutzen; middle row: Sophia Taylor, Maddy Ng, Marina Rago, Amelia Asuncion, Evelyn Storrs, Danielle DeFrancisci; back row: coach Eric Standing Photo Shirley DeFrancisci

The 2017 Middle School 8A Girls Volleyball tournament took place between Oct. 23-26 at Stanley Middle School in Lafayette. The teams participating in the tournament included Benicia Middle School, Foothill Middle School, Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School, Martin Luther King Middle School,

Martinez Middle School, Orinda Intermediate School, Piedmont Middle School, Seven Hills School, Stanley Middle School, and Walnut Creek Intermediate. Joaquin Moraga went undefeated, winning four games, to win the 2017 Championship title.



Commmisioner's CUP

Saturday, November 18, Lafayette Community Park

2017 Champions

3rd Grade Girls, HOLLAND



Back Row (L-R) Coach Joel Flory, Coach Robb McSorley, Middle Row (L-R) Stella Degroot, Anna Motes, Ingrid Flory, Tess Veronda, Layla Epperson, Madden McSorley, Front Row (L-R) Stella Denbow, Audrey Tugade, Jasmine McCasland, Kiona McCasland, Delphine Sherman. (Not Pictured) Lillian Stewart.

3rd Grade Boys, CHELSEA



Clockwise from Back Left: Coach Peter Marchetti, Danny Dunne, Luke Griffith, Tyce Watenmaker, Bryce Mansour, Rai Marchetti, Duncan Kinsey, Devin O'Dwyer, Kourosh Koopah. (Not Pictured) Paul Bacon, Jude Middleton, Shaun Sobel, Coach John Middleton

4th Grade Girls, USA



(L-R) Akhila Bhagavan, Madison Bernstein, Lauren Foster, Cameron Thornton, Addison Dankworth, Bryn Billings, Neve Murphy, Reese Imrie, Carina Trento, Lucy Kao, Reese Dankworth, Sierra Worster. (Not Pictured) Grace Wolpert.

4th Grade Boys, CHELSEA



Back (L-R) Illias Kaplanes-Jones, Caden Busfield, Coach Ben Busfield, Brady Adams, Cole Haraburda, Alex Chng. Front (L-R) Dillon Gaber, Matthew Wen, Christian Smario, Jacob Chun, Richy Zheng. (Not Pictured) Matthew Phillips, Cody Michlitsch, Coach Wayne Phillips

5-6 Grade Girls, IRELAND



Back (L-R) Sarah Vaughn, Julia Rohde, Coach Doug Ingham, Madeline Martindale, Carolina Wackowski, Anna Mollahan, Tatum Haggerty, Jojo O'Shea, Maddie Ingham, Coach Bill Vaughn. Front (L-R) Sarah Chen, Caroline Griffith, Helena Linnen, Georgie Wackowski Grace Ayers.

5-6 Grade Boys, GALAXY



Back (L-R) Coach Joanna Haskin, Preston Winkler, Coach Danny Polkinhorn, Middle (L-R) Orion Swanson, Ashton Hernandez-Amaro, Mitchell Herring, Andrew Polkinhorn, Jack Wilson, Tristan Ryan, Front (L-R) Quinn Flanagan, Alexander Kurimai, Jack Saltzberg, Evan Banwart. (Not Pictured) Benjamin Jo, Mackie Hall

7-8 Grade Girls CHILE



Back (L-R) Rebecca Libby, Coach Jeremy Foutch, Isola Foutch, Caroline Kemner, Inga-borg Foutch, Ava Caballero, Ellis Bergquist, Daisy Shea. Front Row (L-R) Emma Rohr, Anna Crinks, Annaluna Giacich, Riley George. (Not Pictured) Coach Eric Menke, Peyton Menke, Ellie Hawkins, Kate Laudy, Isabella Velazquez

7-8 Grade Boys SOUNDERS



(L-R, back to front) Sam Whipple, Britain Ellis, Matt Ozaki, Andrew Davis, Josh Gohres, Tyler Singh, Gannon McLeod, Zach Robb, Nick Venturini, Johnny Raffel, Harper Johns-Kerr, Miguel Strittmatter, Tyler Bullock, Kevin Cunningham. Coaches David Avnaim and Karl Davis

Photography by Lauen McSorley

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 11 Issue 20 Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2017



December Gardening Guide with Cynthia Brian ...read on page D9

Be fire evacuation ready, Lamorinda

By Cathy Dausman



These 'go-bags' include jackets, sturdy shoes, flashlights and other items. Photos Cathy Dausman

Spoiler alert: this story lacks the usual focus on decorating, home improvement or remodeling. Instead, it is about leaving your home in a hurry – and perhaps never coming back.

Although Lamorindans have much to be thankful for this November they have also been alarmed by the number and ferocity of last month's North Bay fires and the effect it has had on friends, family and familiar locales a mere 50 miles to the north.

Conversations in person and on social media have ranged from "What can we do?" to "How do we do it?"

Even if your family never has to evacuate ahead of a disaster, having a plan in place can help you manage that possibility and insure a more positive outcome.

Lamorinda Community Emergency Response Team program manager Duncan Seibert recently spent time in Napa working as a Medical Reserve Corps shelter volunteer at both Crosswalk Community Church and Napa Val-

ley College. He saw firsthand how difficult it was, especially for senior evacuees, who fled sometimes literally in their underwear. They hadn't time to collect their medicines or even medical necessities like oxygen tanks, "the stuff it takes to live," as Seibert describes it. In response, Seibert decided to put together a comprehensive checklist of fire evacuation tips, something he said took only a couple of hours to develop and a couple of days to vet through local police, fire and county medical agencies.

"It's gotten positive reviews," he says, noting that none of these tips are new but having them all in one place is helpful. And although the checklist is designed for a population leaving in advance of fire, it is thorough enough that the information can be useful for any type of evacuation.

The first thing to realize is that the advance "to do" list is twice as long as the actual evacuation checklist, and it covers a host of topics, from packing to document prep, communications, neighbor relations and providing help for what Seibert calls the "vulnerable population" – individuals with access or functional needs.

... continued on page D4



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We would like to say thank you to our clients and friends for their continued support and trust over the years. It is because of you that we continue to be leaders in the Lamorinda residential real estate market.

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	16	\$580,000	\$2,425,000
MORAGA	10	\$477,500	\$2,150,000
ORINDA	12	\$799,000	\$1,935,000

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

- 730 North Pond Court, \$1,100,000, 4 Bdrms, 2483 SqFt, 1997 YrBlt, 10-16-17;
Previous Sale: \$700,000, 03-29-12
- 3822 Palo Alto Drive, \$2,425,000, 6 Bdrms, 4984 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-20-17;
Previous Sale: \$1,850,000, 09-02-04
- 1729 Reliez Valley Road, \$1,833,000, 5 Bdrms, 4222 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 10-17-17;
Previous Sale: \$465,000, 11-19-93
- 3374 Sweet Drive, \$1,050,000, 3 Bdrms, 1725 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 10-10-17;
Previous Sale: \$45,500, 04-06-73
- 24 Warwick Court, \$1,850,000, 8 Bdrms, 3637 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 10-10-17
- 3646 Baker Lane, \$1,150,000, 4 Bdrms, 3180 SqFt, 1968 YrBlt, 10-27-17
- 3606 Chestnut Street, \$1,070,000, 3 Bdrms, 1190 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 10-30-17;
Previous Sale: \$242,000, 12-02-94
- 3266 Elvia Street, \$1,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 3292 SqFt, 1978 YrBlt, 10-26-17
- 3420 Goyak Drive, \$1,780,000, 4 Bdrms, 2840 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 10-27-17;
Previous Sale: \$527,500, 11-24-98
- 3746 Highland Road, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 4248 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 10-31-17;
Previous Sale: \$900,000, 03-26-15
- 1087 Leland Drive, \$1,930,000, 4 Bdrms, 3779 SqFt, 2016 YrBlt, 10-27-17;
Previous Sale: \$59,000, 06-04-15
- 641 St. Marys Road, \$580,000, 3 Bdrms, 1192 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt, 11-2-17;
Previous Sale: \$225,000, 03-08-01
- 3407 Sweet Drive, \$1,330,000, 3 Bdrms, 1729 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 10-31-17;
Previous Sale: \$885,000, 09-14-06
- 8 Valley High, \$2,425,000, 3 Bdrms, 4238 SqFt, 1985 YrBlt, 11-6-17;
Previous Sale: \$1,758,000, 12-09-04
- 2571 Pebble Beach Loop, \$825,000, 4 Bdrms, 1604 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 10-24-17;
Previous Sale: \$280,000, 07-25-97
- 1013 Via Roble, \$1,400,000, 4 Bdrms, 2294 SqFt, 1975 YrBlt, 10-25-17;
Previous Sale: \$1,425,000, 05-17-16

MORAGA

- 47 San Pablo Court, \$1,750,000, 4 Bdrms, 2376 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 10-11-17;
Previous Sale: \$1,625,000, 03-29-16
- 439 Stonefield Place, \$1,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 2557 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 10-16-17;
Previous Sale: \$79,000, 11-28-75
- 146 Ascot Court #3, \$447,500, 2 Bdrms, 945 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 10-31-17;
Previous Sale: \$227,000, 11-01-01
- 826 Camino Ricardo, \$1,135,000, 4 Bdrms, 1776 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 11-1-17
- 297 Corliss Drive, \$1,390,000, 5 Bdrms, 3229 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 10-31-17;
Previous Sale: \$1,000,000, 06-28-11
- 134 Danefield Place, \$1,395,000, 4 Bdrms, 2445 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 10-25-17
- 359 Fernwood Drive, \$1,375,000, 4 Bdrms, 2327 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 11-3-17
- 15 Merrill Drive, \$2,150,000, 5 Bdrms, 4237 SqFt, 1986 YrBlt, 11-3-17;
Previous Sale: \$1,843,000, 12-01-04
- 724 Moraga Road, \$875,000, 4 Bdrms, 1947 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 10-24-17
- 1729 St. Andrews Drive, \$905,000, 2 Bdrms, 2079 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 10-31-17;
Previous Sale: \$677,000, 03-31-15

... continued on page D7



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Be fire evacuation ready, Lamorinda

... continued from page D1

An access and functional needs designation describes, among others, those who have physical disabilities, as well as seniors, children and limited English speakers. The state's Office of Emergency Services website posts detailed information online.

The first step before a possible evacuation is to assemble a go-bag for each family member. This bag should include practical clothing like sturdy shoes, jacket and hat, a flashlight, toiletry kit and glasses. Pack a bag for your pets, too, being sure to include food, a leash, medication and even a picture of your pet. Both dogs and cats need to be microchipped. Bring a kennel if possible.

Scan personal documents to store in electronic form. Seibert says these should include title papers, mortgage information and insurance policies as well as personal identification like your driver's license, social security information and passport, and medical information. Transfer it to a zip drive, a CD or upload it to the cloud. Having this makes it easier to get help after the fact from government and private agencies at local assistance centers.

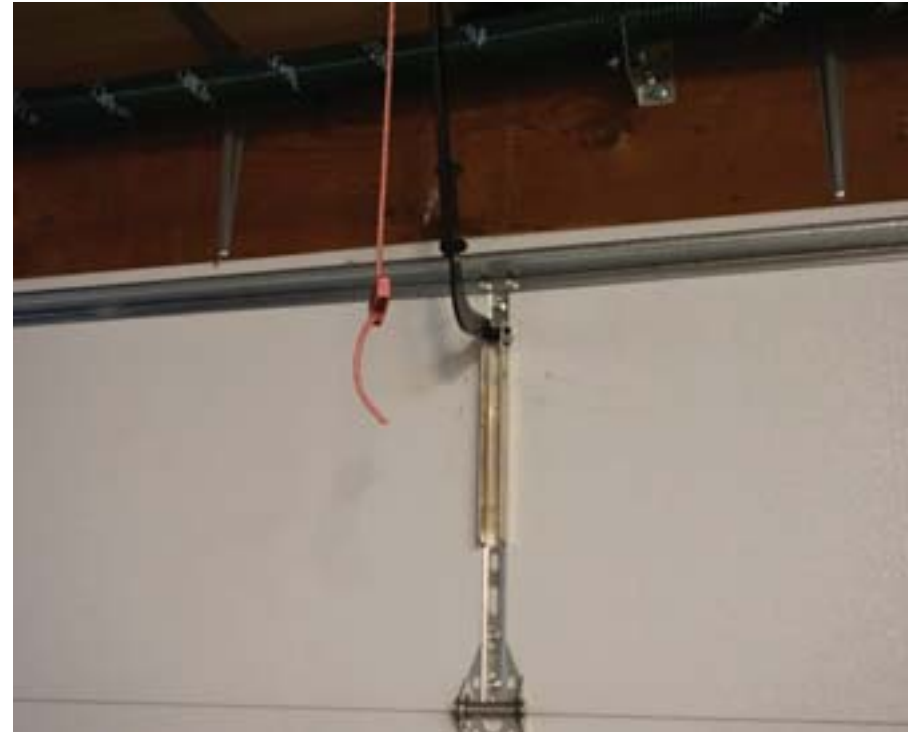
Evacuation plans are all about planning ahead. Know your neighbors, especially the vulnerable ones. Download apps like Nixle (text your zip code to 888777) and the county Community Warning System on your smartphone; designate an out-of-state telephone contact and program that person's number into each family member's cell phone.

When red flag warnings are posted, the focus shifts from packing to taking action. Ensure your gas tank is full, and pack the car with go-bags, water and medications. Park in the driveway, not in the garage. When power is out, garage doors become heavy and difficult to open quickly or easily. Park cars facing the street and open any driveway gates.

Gather your electronic devices, keep them charged and take them with you as



Besides cloud storage, media selection to store scanned documents



Make sure your garage door opens manually

Photos Cathy Dausman

you leave the house. Notify your out of state contact when you leave, via text, and notify them and local authorities of any missing or located family members. If cell phone service is not available monitor a local NOAA weather radio (that's channel 162.425 in Contra Costa County) or a local commercial radio station like KCBS (740 AM) or KQED (88.5 FM) for up-to-date information. Turn your outside lights on; leave your water sprinklers off (their use reduces available water pressure for fire agencies). "Be ready to go," Seibert says "and don't think twice."

Search for additional information and sign up

- For the full listing of evacuation tips from Lamorinda CERT, go online to <https://lamorindacert.org/documents/Evacuation%20Tips.pdf>
- For pet welfare emergency preparedness, see <http://www.lamorindaweekly.com/archive/issue1117/print/Pet-emergency-preparedness.html>
- AFN info at State Office of Emergency Services: <http://www.caloes.ca.gov/for-individuals-families/access-functional-needs>).
- Ready, Set, Go! Wildland fire preparedness: <http://www.wildlandfirersg.org/>
- Contra Costa County Community Warning System: <https://cwsalerts.com/>
- Nixle: www.nixle.com
- Weather radio information: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/nwr/coverage/ccov.php?State=CA>





SELLERS

- 918A DEWING AVE. LAF. \$790,000
- 42 MORELLO PLACE, ORINDA. \$1,385,000
- 189 URN RIPPER LANE, ORINDA. \$2,304,000
- 1883 UPPER HAPPY VALLEY, LAF. \$1,905,000
- 1253 PANORAMA DR. LAF. \$1,905,000
- 98 HILLCREST DR. ORINDA. \$1,525,000
- 29 VIA CALLADOS, ORINDA. \$1,270,000
- 245 SUNDOWN TER, ORINDA. \$2,700,000
- 28 SUNNYSIDE COURT, ORINDA. \$1,225,000

BUYERS

- 25 BYRON DRIVE, PLEASANT HILL. \$900,000
- 33 DIABLO CIRCLE, LAF. \$1,400,000
- 37 SOUTHWOOD COURT, ORINDA. \$1,565,000
- 36 EL PATIO, ORINDA. \$1,900,000
- 35 EL PATIO LOT, ORINDA. \$400,000
- 16 DIABLO CIRCLE, LAF. \$1,605,000
- 17 BROADVIEW TERRACE, ORINDA. \$1,607,500
- 50 WOODLAND DR. ALAMO. \$1,555,000
- 106 UPPER HAPPY VALLEY RD. LAF. \$2,195,000
- 38 VALLEY VIEW DRIVE, ORINDA. \$3,495,000
- 85 LA ENCINAL, ORINDA. \$1,005,000
- 11 LAS PALOMAS, ORINDA. \$1,365,000
- 24 LA CAMPANA RD. ORINDA. \$2,100,000
- 2510 LARKEY LN. WALNUT CREEK. \$1,100,000
- 141 BRODIA WAY, WALNUT CREEK. \$2,400,000
- 133 SLEEPY HOLLOW LANE, ORINDA. \$2,350,000

TOTAL 2017: \$42,039,500

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Best wishes to you and your families for a happy 2018!

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Feng Shui

Feng shui design for the dining room

By Michele Duffy



Change your holiday table up with fresh, sometimes nontraditional colors and let it guide your inspiration like with this lovely table in Lafayette, complete with soft candlelight. Photos provided

The dining room is most certainly reserved for the most special people and occasions of our lives, so this holiday season you can use sound feng shui design in this room to help create an intimate well-planned area that invites serenity, but also ignites abundance and good health.

Much like our kitchens, we spend so much more time in our dining rooms during the fall. You can breathe life into your dining room by first cleaning it thoroughly. Once this area is “space cleared” it’s much easier to have creative ideas flow. Discard things you no longer need, clear the dining room table of junk, and set about creating an intimate and warm area to host your family and friends this holiday season.

Make sure that the dining room is inviting, calm, well ventilated, comfortable, and appetizing. Be polite and gentle to family members while dining (this, in no

way, means that you can yell at them elsewhere); be gentle and polite always. Be relaxed, calm, happy and stress-free while dining; in fact, be this way always.

Nothing says chaos and creates uneasy meals more than piles of stuff all over the dining room table, so clear the clutter and tidy up.

Take an inventory of the color of the room and review the color palette of your textiles, everything from rugs to place settings. Is it time to invest in new linens? Have you wanted to paint the dining room? What colors will create warmth and comfort for your home? Yellow is one color that can stimulate your appetite and it may just require changing up the colors of the flowers you place to update the space. Maintain a balance of colors in the dining room so the space won’t be too bright or overly dull. One key indicator is the amount of natural light your dining room gets. If you have a lot



Nontraditional fall colors and place settings attract prosperity.

of sunlight, the hue you pick for the walls can be more dramatic but if not, lighten the space up with a hue that is pale and light.

Place a mirror on one wall of the dining room to reflect the abundance of the meals and company enjoyed there. This will also function like a window and reflect the greenery of the outdoors. If your dining room is on the small side, a large rectangular mirror will enhance and open up the space. If possible, keep the dining room near to the kitchen and both the dining room and kitchen should be on the same floor.

Choose an oval/circular or square/rectangular dining table. From a general Feng Shui perspective, a round or oval table is considered better than a square or a rectangular one – the flowing shape contributes to a more even distribution of energy. In simpler terms, sitting at a round or oval table will make everyone feel more welcome, at ease and equal in their relation to each other. The first criteria to consider, however, is your dining room size and shape. If your space is asking for a square or rectangular shape and you insist on having a round table, you will not be creating a good feng shui dining room. Each dining room is unique and requires some common sense. Make sure that the dining table is of high quality wood. Avoid glass dining tables.

... continued on page D8

Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

... continued from page D2

ORINDA

5 Idyll Court, \$1,310,000, 4 Bdrms, 2426 SqFt, 1967 YrBlt, 10-17-17

42 Irving Lane, \$1,275,000, 2 Bdrms, 1807 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 10-16-17

50 Orchard Road, \$1,900,000, 3 Bdrms, 2613 SqFt, 1937 YrBlt, 10-17-17;

Previous Sale: \$993,000, 11-06-09

26 Van Ripper Lane, \$1,500,000, 3 Bdrms, 2362 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 10-16-17

7 Ardilla Road, \$1,195,000, 4 Bdrms, 1722 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 10-31-17

166 Camino Sobrante, \$799,000, 3 Bdrms, 1833 SqFt, 1935 YrBlt, 10-27-17

151 Canon Drive, \$1,805,000, 4 Bdrms, 2951 SqFt, 1936 YrBlt, 11-3-17;

Previous Sale: \$590,000, 10-27-86

6 Del Valle, \$1,180,000, 4 Bdrms, 1651 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 11-3-17;

Previous Sale: \$460,000, 05-18-99

51 Donna Maria Way, \$1,825,000, 4 Bdrms, 3157 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 11-2-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,384,000, 06-10-05

44 Honey Hill Road, \$1,375,000, 3 Bdrms, 1625 SqFt, 1958 YrBlt, 10-24-17;

Previous Sale: \$287,000, 10-02-86

141 Lombardy Lane, \$1,675,000, 4 Bdrms, 2688 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 10-30-17;

Previous Sale: \$1,370,000, 04-22-05

2 Scenic Drive, \$1,935,000, 5 Bdrms, 3281 SqFt, 1948 YrBlt, 10-31-17;

Previous Sale: \$274,500, 07-10-87



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CABINETS

Feng Shui

Feng shui design for the dining room

... continued from page D6



Mirrors reflect natural light and attract amplification of abundance when placed correctly.

The dining table must be big enough to provide space for everyone and the dining chairs should be cushy, comfortable, and even in number.

Always keep something on the dining table. For example, you can place fruits like apples to help develop friendship, or pears attract positive abundant energy, peaches aid in good health and oranges symbolize protection and prosperity. Fresh flowers on the dining room table are always a wise choice. Make sure to discard the arrangement once the blooms wane (no stinky water). Avoid using dried flowers as they imply deterioration or “dead” chi.

Choose softer lighting to create a warm environment and deepen the emotional

contact of the family. Add soy candles to your dining room table and buffet to create a soft glow and an intimate atmosphere that will attract a special occasion chi to the celebration.

Don't worry so much about making it “perfect” and just relax and trust your instincts. Move things around and then move them back if it doesn't feel right. Take the time to try different ideas and colors and remember to stand back and view your creations as a guest for a moment. If when you enter the room you feel drawn in, cozy, intimate and you have also ignited anticipation, you will be well on your way to accomplishing a holiday-worthy dining room for yourself as well as all of your guests to enjoy.

WEALTH & PROSPERITY XUN Wood Southeast Purple	FAME & REPUTATION Li Fire South Red Summer	RELATIONSHIPS Kun Earth Southwest Pink
FAMILY ZHEN Wood East Green Spring	HEALTH TAI JI Earth Center Orange, Yellow Brown	JOY & COMPLETION DUI Metal West White Autumn
KNOWLEDGE & SELFCULTIVATION GEN Earth Northeast Blue	CAREER & OPPORTUNITIES KAN Water North Black & Dark Blue Winter	HELPFUL PEOPLE & TRAVEL QIAN Metal Northeast Grey

The Bagua Map: Front Door

Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating “Space as Medicine” Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, and spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. To schedule a professional 2017 Feng Shui Consultation, contact Michele at (520) 647-4887 or send an email to spaceharmony@gmail.com.



Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for December

A holly jolly garden

By Cynthia Brian

"As the rain falls equally on the just and the unjust, do not burden your heart with judgments but rain your kindness equally on all." – Gautama Buddha



Fuyu and Hachiya persimmons are ready to pick for Christmas puddings and cakes.



Photos Cynthia Brian Be a child again and play in the fallen leaves.

The month of December ushers in a time of joyfulness and giving with gardeners being the most generous givers of all. Harvests of persimmons, walnuts and pomegranates make for baskets of nutritious and delicious gifts. Root cuttings, potted plants, and arrangements made from bark, branches and pinecones are natural reminders of the wonders of a pre-winter season. The final flush of rose blooms mixed with orchids create a lush yet simple table display when a few glittering candles are added. With the colder weather, trees are ablaze with their final cloak of autumn hues as an array of colorful leaves litters the ground. Chrysanthemums are thick with blossoms adding a brightness and lightness to the darkening sky.

We encourage the rain and the intermittent sunshine.

Soon our landscapes will boast sparkling lights and festive decorations to welcome family and friends to enjoy holiday treats. Children of all ages are excited for the surprises that await them for Hanukkah and Christmas.

I'm excited to announce that my much anticipated garden book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," Book I in the Garden Shorts series is now available in both color and black and white. Buy directly from www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store for the best price and autographed copies; 25 percent of your purchase is a donation to Be the Star You Are!® 501 c3 charity (www.BetheStarYouAre.org). With every order placed directly at our store, you'll receive seeds and extra goodies. This book is a great gift for all the gardeners and nature lovers on your holiday list.

Have a holly jolly December and remember to give yourself the gift of rest and relaxation as there are only minimal gardening tasks while Nature takes her annual nap.

... continued on page D10



The bark of the eucalyptus works well for holiday decorating.



Pomegranates are high in antioxidants.

Cynthia Brian's December Gardening Guide

... continued from page D9

DISCOVER a living conifer at your favorite nursery that can remain in a container for a few years of Christmas decorating.

RAKE fallen leaves to add to the compost pile. Leave a layer of leaves on the ground, however, too many leaves remaining in the garden encourage disease and block the sunshine.

APPLY dormant spray to deciduous fruit trees and roses to smother insects and eggs.

REMOVE dead or dying branches from trees, bushes and shrubs.

APPLY a layer of mulch (about three inches) to your landscape to keep the heat in and prevent soil erosion.

CONTROL peach blight and peach curl by spraying trees on a windless day with sulfur mixed with dormant oil. Two other applications will be necessary in January and February.

WRAP frost tender plants such as bougainvillea, banana, and bird of paradise in burlap to prevent damage.

GATHER an array of fresh vegetables as you design your holiday menus.

GIVE the gift of my new book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," 12 months of inspiration and gardening tips to sustain your inner gardener with a full year of kindness and happiness in nature. www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store

CONTINUE planting spring blooming bulbs through the end of January. You'll enjoy a long lasting parade of flowers throughout the spring.

HANG a spray of magnolia leaves sprayed gold and silver on your front door or mailbox.

ADD merry pink berries to garlands of redwood branches to decorate a mantel or staircase.

FILL a bowl with grapes for nibbling.

SLICE orange Fuyu persimmons or seeds of bright red pomegranates into a salad for a delicious and nutritious treat drizzled with olive oil and homemade vinaigrette.

TIE a gossamer ribbon around a cyclamen, geranium, orchid, or rose to give as a festive hostess gift.

USE the bark of eucalyptus or a lichen covered branch in your holiday décor.

RAIN kindness and gentleness on everyone you encounter.

VISIT with Santa at SA Rent-A-Space from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 2. Be the Star You Are!® volunteers will be present to help kids write letters to Santa. Free event with refreshments and a photo with Santa, 455 Moraga Rd. #F, Moraga. www.bethestaryouare.org/events

REST, relax, and enjoy this season of holly jolly!

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!

Cynthia Brian



Spider plant with colorful geraniums.



Deck the halls with a simple composition of roses and orchids on a table centered by a candle.



Get the jump on holiday cooking with fresh garden vegetables.



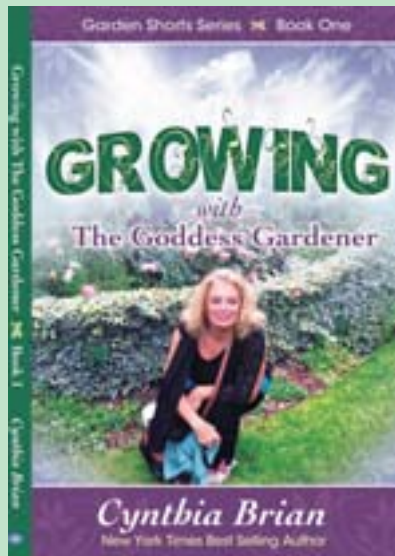
As winter nears a bright pink hibiscus offers tropical delight.



Growing tightly together, these colorful mums are happy bedmates.



The leaves of the crape myrtle turn a fiery pumpkin, saffron, and scarlet before falling.



Cynthia Brian's new book, *Growing with the Goddess Gardener*. Order at <http://www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store>

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 & fire 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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160 Camino Don Miguel

One of a kind estate overlooking OCC. Resort quality pool & spa, gardens, views & guest house.

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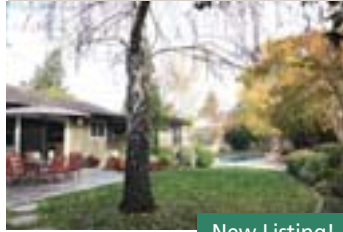


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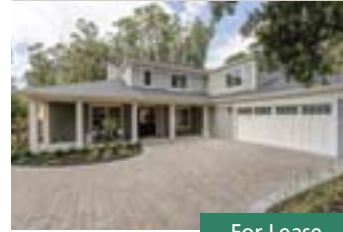


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