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Nurtury
PRESCHOOL AT MVPC
OPEN HOUSE

Monday, February 12th
9:30—10:30
See our Open House
AD on Page # A10

FREE



A group of children gathered in the front line of a big crowd watch Moraga Rotary President Dianne Wilson and Moraga Mayor Dave Trotter cut the ceremonial ribbon.

Photo Carol & Gary Irwin

Excitement abounds at all-access playground opening

By B. B. Kaye

A large crowd attended a sunny, balloon-festooned inaugural ceremony Jan. 28 for the new, all-access playground in Moraga Commons Park. Children thronged at the entrance, waiting for the moment a red ceremonial ribbon would be cut to officially welcome them in to play.

According to the Orinda Union School District and the Lafayette School District SARC reports from the 2016-17 school year, approximately 10 percent of the local school

population of 9,293 children receives special education services. Many of these children have difficulty accessing a public playground; the all-access playground is designed for them to safely engage in unscheduled free-play and mingle with kids of differing abilities.

Moraga Rotary Club past president Kevin Reneau spoke to those assembled about how the park came about: “We got together and said we should do something for the community

in honor of our 50th anniversary.”

Rotary members started talking and member Cliff Dochterman (master of ceremonies for the opening) suggested a playground for the children of Lamorinda and the greater community. The club thought it would be a \$25,000-30,000 project. “It evolved,” said Reneau. “As we got in and did some research, we decided we needed a more robust playground.” ... continued on page A12

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Lamorinda mayors balk at proposed CPUC resolution

By Nick Marnell



MCE Solar One, a new 60-acre, 10.5 MW solar farm in Richmond.

Photo provided

Mayors Dave Trotter of Moraga and Don Tatzin of Lafayette have urged the California Public Utilities Commission to vote against implementing a registration process for new community choice aggregators, arguing

that the registration process is an improper de facto freeze on CCA implementation.

“It is inappropriate for CPUC staff to now attempt to forcibly implement a freeze,” Trotter wrote in a Jan. 16

letter to Michael Picker, PUC president. “Adoption of the resolution would unreasonably delay new communities from joining or forming CCAs.”

Community choice aggregation is a nonprofit alternative to investor-owned utilities that allows government entities to purchase energy for their communities, choosing a power generating source that provides cheaper or greener energy products, or both. With the rapid emergence of CCAs, the PUC says it wants to force the aggregators to comply with its resource adequacy program, which ensures that the CCAs have contracted for enough power generation to meet peak customer demand, relieving the prior utility – locally, PG&E – of the cost and responsibility. According to the commission, many new CCAs are not incorporated into the resource adequacy program and the draft resolution will require their compliance.

Marin Clean Energy is California’s first community choice aggregator, providing a basic 50 percent renewable energy service to its customers, with an option to upgrade to 100 percent renewable energy. “We are concerned that the CPUC is overreaching its authority,” said Dawn Weisz, MCE chief executive officer.

... continued on page A8

Civic News A1-A12 Orinda City Council discusses library parcel tax increase – page A7. Fire Districts A8 MOFD adds firefighters – page A8.	Life in Lamorinda B1-B8 Campo musicians perform with professionals – page B8.	Sports C1-C4 Lamorinda boys and girls soccer face challenges head on – page C1.	Our Homes D1-D16 A look inside remodel on regional trail – page D1.
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Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, Feb. 12, 7 p.m. Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 20, 7 p.m. Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Feb. 12, 7 p.m. Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Arts & Science Discovery Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

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

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, Feb. 21, 7 p.m. Regular Board Meeting District Office Board Room 3477 School St., Lafayette www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

Check online for agendas, meeting notes and announcements

City of Lafayette:

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

Chamber of Commerce:

www.lafayettechamber.org

Lafayette Police logo and text: Due to a change in reporting by the Lafayette Police Department, we were unable to get complete information before press time.

First Orinda, now Lafayette considers LimeBike

By Pippa Fisher



Lafayette is joining neighboring cities in considering introducing dockless bike sharing for its residents.

The city council heard a presentation from LimeBike representative Sam Dreiman at its Jan. 22 meeting.

The young, Bay Area company launched in June and has since introduced its bike-sharing program in multiple cities and on college campuses across the country. What sets this company apart from other bike-sharing companies is the fact that it works without requiring bike racks to be installed, and comes therefore at no cost to cities and with more flexibility to users.

The customer uses an app on their smartphone to locate a nearby GPS-equipped, lime-colored bike. Customers use their phone to scan and unlock the bike and then the bike is all theirs until they are done with it, wherever that may be. The rental is over once the customer closes the back lock, parking it in a permissible spot. At that point the bike is available for another customer who will locate it for their ride. At \$1 per 30 minutes, the cost is much lower than traditional bike-sharing programs.

The app provides information on locally recommended parking spots.

Dreiman explained that the company's aim is to provide a sustainable solution to first and last mile transportation. He noted too that Walnut Creek is just starting its own LimeBike program.

... continued on page A8

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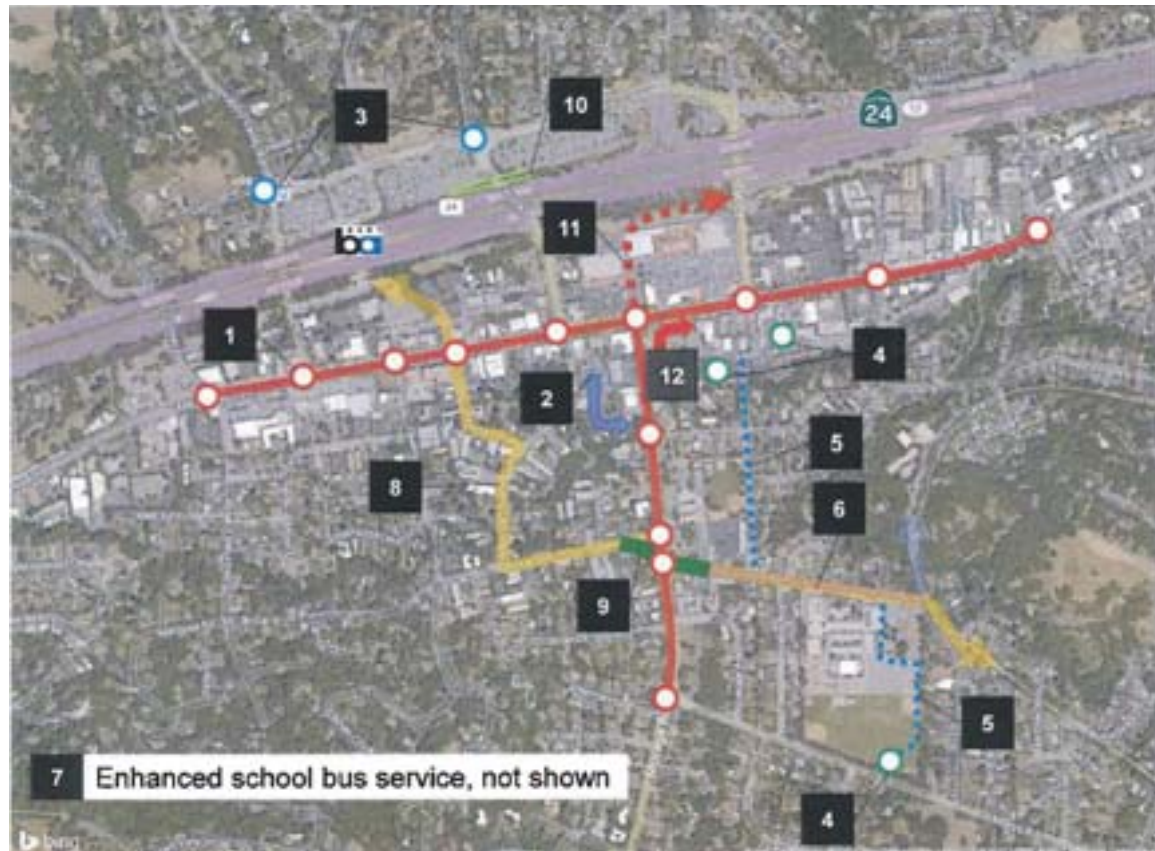
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Traffic solutions, all options still being explored

By Pippa Fisher



Strategies

Short-Term

- 1. Coordinated traffic signals on Mount Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road
2. Southbound left-turn lane at Moraga Road / Moraga Boulevard
3. Signalize the intersections of Deer Hill Road / Oak Hill Road and Deer Hill Road / Happy Valley Road
4. Additional School Pick-up & Drop-off Zones
5. Student-Pedestrian Safe Routes
6. School Street Bike-Ped Pathway Connection to Trail
7. Enhanced School Bus Program

Long-Term

- 9. Brook St / School St intersection realignment
10. BART Pedestrian Bridge over Oak Hill Road
11. Moraga Rd Extension Behind McCaulou's / Whole Foods To 1st St

Requires Council Deliberation

- 12. 2nd NBR turning lane at Mt Diablo Boulevard / Moraga Road

Image provided ARUP

Many ideas for solving traffic woes, but no silver bullet.

When it comes to addressing downtown congestion, the Lafayette City Council agrees - every single option comes with a cost, and it's not just financial.

The council reviewed proposed solutions to the traffic problems of downtown Lafayette from city staff and engineering consultants Arup at the Jan. 22 meeting but ultimately requested the item be continued to the Feb. 12 city council meeting and directed city staff to come back with further information on key issues and specifics on the benefits and tradeoffs of traffic signal coordination and further study of a possible pedestrian bridge over Moraga Road.

In 2015 the city received funding for a comprehensive study of congestion in the downtown area including projections for future increases in traffic. Since then, together with Arup, the city has come up with a list of 12 possible options, both short- and long-term, which have been discussed at multiple community and steering committee meetings, with sometimes heated input from residents.

However, at this meeting several members of the public spoke in favor of an option that has not made it to the city's list of strategies - that of a footbridge over Moraga Way in place of the pedestrian crossings that currently necessitate frequent traffic stops, especially at school drop-off and pickup times.

City Transportation Planner James Hinkamp said that contrary to popular opinion, delays on Moraga Road are not just due to pedestrians crossing but rather to the sheer travel demand. He said that staff are concerned with the geometry of a footbridge, pointing out that to get the 16-foot elevation required, it would be difficult to build the length of ramps needed at a less than 5 percent slope to be ADA compatible. He also made the point that over time, given the projections for traffic growth, any benefit in reduction of pedestrian-caused traffic stops would be offset.

An alternative long-term proposal for the Brook Street intersection (No. 9 on the map) is to realign Brook Street and School Street, with the demolition of the Masonic Lodge, creating one curved intersection. Most of the public comments were strongly against such a proposal, citing concerns that more traffic would cut through the residential Brook Street as a result, with at least one speaker referring to it as the "Brook Street bypass."

Council Member Mike Andersen requested more information on the benefits of the footbridge and was keen to explore it further as an option.

In fact Andersen made the point that he doesn't want to see a traffic system based solely on moving cars

through and wants a commitment that any ideas can accommodate pedestrians in a reasonable manner when the city is encouraging walkability from downtown communities.

For example, having a two-lane right turn from northbound Moraga Road onto Mt. Diablo Boulevard would mean losing the pedestrian crossing at that point, due to compromised visibility for drivers in the second lane, which would mean pedestrians would potentially have to cross in three spots to get across.

The 12 proposals, some short-term and some long-term, including adding a second right hand turn lane at Mt. Diablo Boulevard from Moraga Road northbound (No. 12 on the map) and adding a south-

bound left turn lane at Moraga Road and Moraga Boulevard (No. 2 on the map), come with various price tags. At an estimated cost of \$4 million to \$6 million a pedestrian bridge is one of the more pricey options, but similar to the cost of the Brook Street/School Street realignment.

Mayor Don Tatzin said that it was clear something has to be done at the Brook Street intersection. "When Brook Street realignment was proposed 20 years ago it got the same reaction as tonight," he said, noting that they don't need to do it for 10 years and "maybe never."

One thing is clear; whichever steps are taken will involve tradeoffs.

Thinking of downsizing or possibly need a bigger home?

Wondering if this is the time?

The answer is YES!

Our expectations are that the market will remain strong. Interest rates have risen slightly since the New Year and could go up more. There is no time like the present to buy or sell a home.

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Nominations are open for the 2018 Lafayette Citizen of the Year

Do you have a person in mind for this year's nomination?

Criteria are as follows:

- Must be a current Lafayette resident;
- Must be someone who has given of their time, money or energy to help make Lafayette a healthy community, where people will want to live, work and shop;
- Must be someone who models excellence in everything they do;
- Must be someone who brings this community together and/or makes us proud to be a member of the community.

A celebration dinner will be held on Friday, March 23 at the Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa to honor the winner! The deadline for submitting nominations is at 1 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15. Nominations can be sent to nominations@lamorindaweekly.com or jay@lafayettechamber.org.



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The Chamber of Commerce is back, bigger and better than ever

By Pippa Fisher



It was standing room only at the Jan. 24 Chamber of Commerce Grand Opening party. Photo Pippa Fisher

There was quite a lively party lighting up Lafayette Circle on a recent, rainy weeknight as over 200 people came by the new Chamber of Commerce offices to help celebrate the grand opening of the new digs.

The Chamber was forced to relocate in July after a massive blaze swept through the nearby complex, destroying the chamber offices at 100 Lafayette Circle along with the much-loved La Finestra restaurant and many other small businesses.

Lafayette Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Jay Lifson says although he and staff were up to speed just days after the fire, they are settled into their new location now and are delighted to be in the new digs just around the corner at 251 Lafayette Circle.

"I can't imagine how crowded it would have been if not for the rain," said Lifson, clearly pleased to have seen so many old and new friends of the chamber, including the mayor and three other city council members as well as the city manager and the chief of police.

With such a crowd present it was hard to see much of the offices and many didn't make it all the way back into Lifson's office to

see the album covers there: Beatles, Cream, Miles Davis, Bob Dylan, Rolling Stones, Santana, Crosby, Stills and Nash and, of course, the Grateful Dead.

"During the Art and Wine Festival last year, one of our volunteers presented me with a framed album cover of the Grateful Dead's Workingman's Dead," said Lifson by way of an explanation. "She reminded me that everything I had in the old office had perished, so she gave me the first thing to hang up. So I took that as a green light to theme my office with the album covers of my youth."

Lifson said that the staff and board of directors not only wanted to allow everyone a look at the new offices, but also to give a thank you to the community for all the love and support following the fire.

As the chamber celebrates its 70th anniversary this month, Lifson says the theme for the grand opening came from a Phish song:

"You got your nice shades on, and the worst days are gone,

So now the band plays on, you got one life, blaze on."

"We are off to a nice start in 2018. Let's all blaze on!" he said, adding, "It was a great party!"

Don Tatzin delivers State of the City Address



Lafayette Mayor delivers State of the City address at the Feb. 2 Business Person of the Year awards dinner. Photo Andy Scheck

Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin summed up the State of the City address in five words: "Happy birthday, Lafayette. Love Lafayette."

As the city celebrates its 50th anniversary of incorporation this year, Tatzin reflected on what Lafayette would have been like without incorporation, drawing atten-

tion to the many accomplishments that maintain the semirural feel of the city and the many city facilities that would not have been possible otherwise.

Tatzin encouraged all residents to "save the date" of July 29; a day which will be full of events to celebrate the city's 50th.

— P. Fisher

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Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, Feb. 14, 7 p.m.
Wednesday, Feb. 28, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 20, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, Feb. 12, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Moraga School District
Thursday, Feb. 13, 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 Department Incident Summary Report



Jan. 16 to Jan. 29	
Alarms	15
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	7
Traffic	38
Suspicious Circumstances	14
Suspicious Subject	1
Suspicious Vehicle	3
Service To Citizen	44
Patrol Request	15
Noise Complaint	6
Supplemental Report	15
Abandoned Vehicle	
Ivy Dr./Miramonte Dr.	
Ascot Dr./Moraga Rd.	
2000 Block Ascot Dr.	
Accident Property	
Moraga Rd./Rheem Blvd.	
Auto Burglary	
1400 Block Moraga Rd. (2)	
Barking Dog	
20 Block Harrington Rd.	
Battery	
Camino Pablo/Shuey Dr.	
Civil	
Growing Tree Preschool	
Civil Problem	
80 Block Miramonte Dr.	
Civil Standby	
Police Department	
1100 Block Larch Ave.	
Death Unknown Causes	
10 Block Hetfield Pl.	
Disturbance-Fight	
Ups Store Moraga Center	
Disturbing The Peace	
Moraga Rd./Rheem Blvd.	
30 Block Ross Dr.	
70 Block Corliss Dr.	
DUI Misdemeanor	
Rheem Blvd./Moraga Rd.	
Excessive Speed	
Moraga Way/School St.	
Bank of America	
Moraga Rd./Alta Mesa Dr.	
Camino Pablo/Hodges Dr.	
Found Property	
St. Marys College	
No House Number	
Moraga Rd./Corliss Dr.	
Police Department (2)	
Fraud False Pretenses	
1900 Block Ascot Dr.	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
Rimer Dr./Camino Pablo	
300 Block Rheem Blvd.	
Identity Theft	
40 Block Corte De Rosas	
Intoxicated Subject	
Not Available	
Juvenile Disturbance	
Sullivan Dr./Corliss Dr., Mar	
70 Block Sullivan Dr., Mar	
Los Perales Elementary School	
Medical Hospital	
900 Block Country Club Dr.	

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Accessory dwelling units ordinance regulation change

By Sophie Braccini

Like many other municipalities, Moraga has now adapted its municipal code to make it easier for property owners to add secondary dwelling units to their residences. "Over the counter" permits will be given to build attached or detached units up to 800 square feet, unless the property is located in open space; conversion of existing space adding a new unit is permitted throughout the town.

This change is required by California law and aims at diversifying the types of lodging offered in Moraga and allowing owners to receive additional income.

The planning commission and the Moraga Town Council have

worked with staff on this text for months. State law now requires that municipalities make it easy for property owners to add secondary or accessory units to their homes, in keeping with the need for additional housing. Moraga has struggled to find ways to comply with state law while preserving some of its development and design requirements.

The new rules allow for transforming or adding a second unit to a property. The current owners must still live on the premises, either in the primary or the additional unit, unless it creates real hardship. The text also allows for a new type of unit, called a junior unit, which is contained in a home and can

share a bathroom with the main home. Other units must offer independent living accommodations to one or more occupants.

Whether the unit is attached or detached, the owners must provide a parking space to the tenant.

Converting a portion of a home or already built structure on a property is permitted throughout Moraga, including structures on open space. The new unit has to provide an independent access, different from the main living unit. A garage, for example, can be converted, or an existing legally built barn. The council members noted that this could be a way to get around the need to get a special permit on open space lots,

but decided that this should be regulated with another text.

Council members Teresa Onoda and Roger Wykle opposed the ordinance text because of the allowance to add some types of accessory units in open space. The ordinance nonetheless was passed.

The setback requirements are the same for new units as for the remaining property. Specific rules apply to the size of a new deck provided for a new unit, and for setbacks when a second floor is added, such as over a garage.

While it is possible for a property owner to add a unit on an open space lot, it will require a specific permit requiring public review.

Can this company encourage more college students to Shop Moraga?

By Nick Marnell



Photo courtesy LimeBike

LimeBike, a San Mateo-based bike-sharing company that is spreading across the U.S., pitched to begin operations in Moraga at the Jan. 24 town council meeting.

A company representative said that LimeBike bicycles could not only instill less reliance upon automobiles but could also be a driver of commerce by bringing Saint

Mary's College students into the town more frequently.

"It could be a real boon for the college and the town," said Kathe Nelson, executive director of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce. "A big issue retailers have is finding and keeping help. The public transportation from BART, and the bus, is irregular. To have those bikes available would really help overcome that obstacle."

Pat Vahey knows about hiring Saint Mary's students; he has eight of them on his payroll at Pennini's Restaurant. "I see people walking around after we close, and I see them walking back and forth between school and here. LimeBike could only help bring more students to the shopping center. I don't see how it could miss," he said.

LimeBike's first client was the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

"We have no problems with them," said Desiree Coltrane of the school's Parking Operations and Campus Access Management division. "Every once in a while we'll have to move a bike that is lying around, but LimeBike comes by once a day and takes care of everything. We even let them use a facility on our campus to repair their bicycles."

The city of Greensboro noticed how well the project worked at the school that the city made a deal with LimeBike as its exclusive provider for 1,000 bicycles. "We have very little involvement. No need to fill a bike rack, no maintenance to take care of, no payments to worry about. I don't have the staff to do all that anyway," said Adam Fisher, city transportation director. "My only concern is that I hope they're going to last."

If something sounds too good to

be true, it usually is checked out by a journalist. "We have a very nice looking campus, and we don't want any bikes or bike racks lying around. If we see those bikes on our campus, we have them removed," said College of the Holy Cross transportation manager Jerry Maday. Holy Cross is a private college in Worcester, Massachusetts, similar in enrollment size to Saint Mary's.

The company is pitching not only Moraga but also the college. "This is in its nascent stage, and more study needs to be done in order to move forward," said Mike McAlpin, director of media relations for Saint Mary's College.

"LimeBike looks like a healthy way for all to get out of cars and bike around town. I look forward to learn more about this when it comes to council," said Vice Mayor and Saint Mary's liaison Teresa Onoda.

- Mentally Ill Commit**
St. Marys College
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Police Department
- Mentally Ill Violent**
Moraga Royale Retirement Home
- Missing Adult**
400 Block Rheem Blvd.
- Other Infraction**
Fernwood Dr./Bedford Pl.
- Out Investigate**
1000 Block School St.
10 Block Whiting Ct.
50 Block Buckingham Dr.
St. Marys College
- Petty Theft**
Los Perales Elementary School
- Public Assembly Check**
Rheem Valley Shopping Center (2)
Campolindo High School (3)
CVS (3)
Safeway
400 Block Center St. (3)
- Public Nuisance**
400 Block Fernwood Dr.
1900 Block Joseph Dr.
Calle La Montana/Campolindo Dr.
Lance Ct./Sanders Dr.
- Reckless Driving**
Moraga Rd./Campolindo Dr.
Moraga Rd./Canyon Rd.
- Robbery**
Safeway
- Traffic Hazard**
Moraga Way/Hardie Dr.
- Transportation**
Rimer Dr./Camino Pablo
- Vehicle Blocking Driveway**
3800 Block Campolindo Dr.
- Warrant Arrest**
Moraga Rd./Alta Mesa Dr.
Police Department
Safeway
- Welfare Check**
50 Block Buckingham Dr.
100 Block Hodges Dr.
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Impressive interior highlights include the perfect blend of formal and casual living spaces, secluded bedroom retreats, and a home office. Chef's kitchen is sure to impress with high-end appliances, tile back splash, custom cabinetry, and an island with a sink. Spacious master retreat includes a dream walk-in closet and oversized en suite full bathroom. Three secondary bedrooms share two hall bathrooms. Interior mud/laundry room off garage entry.

Gary Bernie

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Property fee assessment for storm drains headed toward a special election

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga Town Council decided to no longer kick the storm drains down the road.

"It is important that the council speak unanimously on this issue," Mayor Dave Trotter exhorted his council members Jan. 24, and Trotter got his wish. The council unanimously authorized adopting ballot procedures to charge residents for the \$26 million the town says it needs to repair its storm drain infrastructure.

The Moraga Revenue Enhancement Committee alerted town officials in 2009 of the need for revenue for storm drain repair, but when voters passed Measure K in 2012, imposing a 1 percent general purpose sales tax in the town, the council determined that roads were the major need at the time.

In response to the committee findings, the town completed a Storm Drain Master Plan in 2015, and residents specifically mentioned storm drain repair as one of the top town priorities in a 2016 community survey. Yet despite higher than expected property tax revenue since 2014, the town set aside no money for storm drain improvements, and the town seeks to place a property fee assessment on the ballot in a May special election, which could cost the town up to \$100,000.

"The time to act is now," said Council Member Kymberleigh Korpus, with residents having just endured the aggravation of a sinkhole for 20 months.

If a majority of ballots cast at the special election approve the initiative, owners of an average-sized single-family residence will be assessed \$120 each year, and owners of multi-family residences and commercial property will pay up to \$940 per acre annually. Even schools and churches will pay the fee. The measure, projected to bring in nearly \$800,000 per year, includes no end date and allows for up to a 3 percent annual inflation increase.

Property owners who object to the fee assessment may plead their case prior to or at a public hearing scheduled for March 14. According to Edric Kwan, public works director, any owner of a parcel of real property subject to the proposed storm drain fee may file a legibly signed protest with the town clerk, identifying the parcel by address or assessor's parcel number. If a majority of parcel owners object to the fee before the hearing, there will be

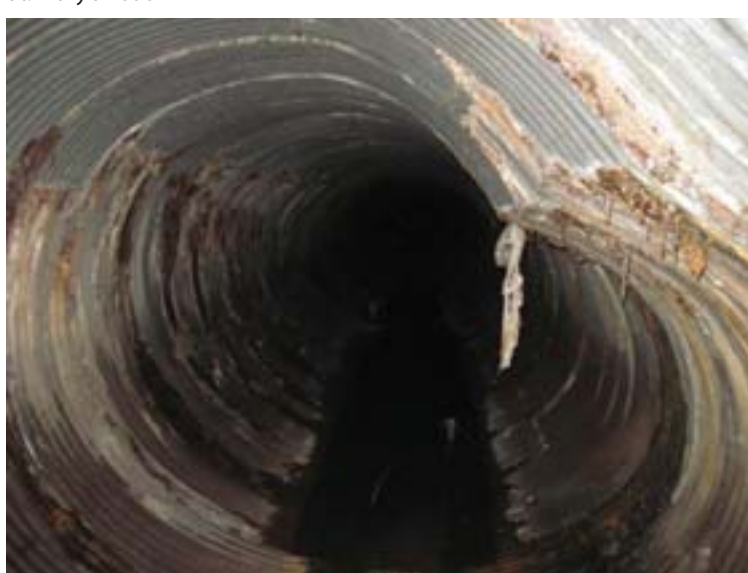


Canyon Road

Photos provided



St. Mary's Road



Rheem Boulevard and Center Street

no special election.

New homeowners, strapped with higher property taxes than long-time residents, receive no break on the storm drain fee; the only discount goes to parcel owners on private sewer systems. Furthermore, though the proposed fee would be added to owners' property tax bills, the storm drain fee is not tax deductible, Kwan said.

Trotter said that early polling supported the storm drain fee, but the mayor was taking no chances.

There are limits to what public officials can do to promote their own ballot measures, but Trotter made it clear to the council members that nothing prevents them from independently doing anything they want in the community to support the initiative.

The town staff will hold public informational meetings on the storm drain fee initiative, with the first ones scheduled for 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Feb. 12 at the town chambers.



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POETRY

KALEIDOSCOPE
by resident Lilana Kitts

Goodnight, I say, to Father Time
It is not my style to linger
Over vintage wines and Roman cheeses
I welcome the New Year

But, I pause after I say it
I cannot obliterate the times of laughter or tears
Life is a kaleidoscope
Every color has its season.

A baby's skin is a warm peach
Dear to a mother's touch
The spring of youth leaps in grassy
Green fields of distant lands.

Bright red roses call summertime lovers
Each feeling their passion unique
Drifting autumn leaves make golden years
A melody of tender memories.

Winter brings well-earned repose
Faith mellows the bracing day
While colors multiply in our hearts
Swirling in whirlpools of darkness and whirlwinds of light.

The mourning dove sometimes lingers
With a coat of gray
It overshadows the hot sun
Until the restful morning after.

Yes, life is a kaleidoscope
A symbol of dreams
With pink hellos and blue goodbyes
A mood swinging rotation of our days.

Goodnight, Father Time
Like your seasons I have the right to change my mind
I don't pretend to be wise, it's late in life
I ponder all the colors of yesteryear.

Today I am content with friends old and new
Spumante is festive and sweet
Apple pie is good
Citron oranges glow on my dreamy Christmas tree.

There are no clouds in the holiday sky
Angels blossom next to the berries on my wreath
My world shines
Wishing all a Happy Kaleidoscope year.

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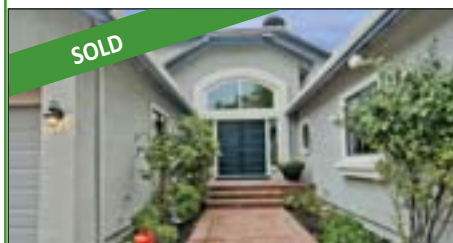
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30 Lancaster Ct., Alamo



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925.200.8246
CalBRE#01043977



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Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Feb. 20, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Feb. 13, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Citizens' Infrastructure

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

School Board Meetings

Orinda Union School District
Monday, Feb. 12, 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

Jan. 14 to Jan. 27

Alarms	37
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	3
Traffic	69
Noise Complaint	4
Suspicious Circumstances	12
Suspicious Subjects	13
Suspicious Vehicles	17
Patrol Request	18
Security Check	15
Service to Citizen	53
Supplemental Report	14
Vacation House Check	15

Accident Injury

Del Rey School
20 Block Orinda Way

Accident Property

600 Block Moraga Way
Moraga Via/Glorietta Blvd.
Via Hermosa/La Espiral
Moraga Way
Orinda Oaks Open Space,
Donald Dr.
Moraga Way/Lavenida Dr.
50 Block Charles Hill Rd.
Wagner Ranch Elementary School

Auto Burglary

Library

Barking Dog

200 Block El Toyonal

Beat Info

Fish Ranch Rd./Eb Sr 24

Civil

300 Block Dalewood Dr.
100 Block Rheem Blvd.
10 Block Fern Way
50 Block Muth Dr.
80 Block Moraga Way

Commercial Burglary

Miner Rd./Camino Pablo

Defraud Innkeeper

80 Block Moraga Way

Disturbance-Domestic

70 Block Brookwood Rd.

Disturbing The Peace

500 Block Tahos Rd.

DUI Misdemeanor

Knickerbocker Ln./Spring Rd.

Fire/EMS Response Info

30 Block Ramona Dr.

Found Property

10 Block Via Las Cruces

Fraud False Pretenses

100 Block Casa Vieja Pl.

Grand Theft

10 Block Bigleaf Rd.

Grand Theft from Building

10 Block La Campana Rd.
30 Block Marston Rd.

Hit And Run Misdemeanor

Safeway

Identity Theft

100 Block Camino Don Miguel

Lost Property

Pd Ori Police Department

Medical Hospital

3200 Block Stanley Blvd.
500 Block Moraga Way

Ordinance Violation

200 Block Glorietta Blvd.
Manzanita Terrace/Manzanita Dr.



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Educational Foundation of Orinda opts for professional leadership

By Sora O'Doherty



After almost 40 years of successful fundraising to benefit Orinda schools, the Educational Foundation of Orinda has decided to hire an executive director to drive donations higher than the current annual plateau of just over \$1.5 million. Over the course of its existence, the EFO has provided over \$27 million to Orinda's seven public schools, which are among the lowest funded in the state. Lo-

cal revenue sources fund 32 percent of educational programs in the district. Orinda schools consistently rank in the top 1 percent of California public schools.

EFO President Shauna Simmons said that the superintendent's fundraising taskforce put together a group to look at best practices in fundraising for public schools. The group examined 15 demographically comparable districts and concluded that the EFO has not been as effective as others. In particular, the Manhattan Beach Education Foundation, Piedmont Education Foundation, and the Palo Alto Partners in Education Foundation stood out as models for improved fundraising. It was therefore de-

ecided that a highly skilled professional director should be hired to manage the fundraising efforts for Orinda schools.

The EFO will also operate as an umbrella organization over the parents clubs that raise funds for each individual public school in Orinda. The EFO fundraising goal is \$1.635 million for the 2017-18 school year, which, together with Parents' Club fundraising efforts of approximately \$3.5 million, are the local revenue sources that provide for many programs above and beyond that which could be funded by the ordinary state school funding. The EFO has concluded that centralizing fundraising has worked well in other communi-

ties and that it should improve fundraising in Orinda too. The goal of hiring an executive director is, with significant collaboration from the Parents' Clubs, to create a lasting organization that will continue to serve Orinda students for generations. One of the responsibilities of the new executive director will be to develop a centralized district fundraising vehicle with the ultimate goal of "one ask" per child per year to meet current and future financial goals.

Currently the EFO is almost completely volunteer-led, with only a part-time administrator.

... continued on page A10

Orinda Community Foundation celebrates 8 years

By Sora O'Doherty



The Orinda Community Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to enhancing the life of all Orinda residents, will celebrate its eighth anniversary at 5 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22 at Heggie Plaza on the upper level of the Orinda library building. The event will recognize the over \$50,000 in grants this year to benefit the community. All are welcome to attend.

The OCF was founded in 2010 and supports numerous local initiatives such as the Fourth of July

parade, Lamorinda Idol and the purchase of outdoor art found in various parts of town. The OCF relies on two main fundraisers each year: direct mail solicitations and the NorCal Kids Triathlon. This year the triathlon will be held on Aug. 25.

OCF grants support events such as children's writing classes, Orinda's garden clubs, the Music in the Park and Opera in the Park programs, and much more. Grant applications are accepted Sept. 15 through Nov. 1, and grants are usu-

ally awarded each December.

Upcoming events include the popular Dancing with the Cars on the evening of Sept. 7 and the Classic Car Show, the following day. The OCF also organizes the annual Orinda Action Day each year on Earth Day; this year the annual cleanup event is scheduled for April 21.

For information about the Orinda Community Foundation and to learn how you can help, visit www.orindafoundation.org.

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Seeking Applicants to Serve on Parcel Tax Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee

The Orinda Union School District seeks applicants to serve on its Parcel Tax Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee. Currently there is a two-year term vacancy. The committee meets twice annually during normal business hours. The primary objective and purpose of this committee is to ensure that the parcel tax proceeds are spent for their authorized purpose and to report annually to the Board of Trustees and the public regarding the expenditure of such funds.

If interested, please submit an application to:
Orinda Union School District
Attn: Debbie Jamieson
8 Altarinda Road
Orinda, CA 94563
or via email to djamieson@orinda.k12.ca.us
or by fax to (925) 254-5261.

Applications are available at:
<https://goo.gl/rtwjPm>
or by email from djamieson@orinda.k12.ca.us

Application Deadline:
Friday, March 23, 2018, by Noon



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Orinda library parcel tax increase likely to appear on June ballot

By Sora O'Doherty



Photo Sora O'Doherty

At a special Jan. 25 meeting of the Orinda City Council to receive the results of a poll on the acceptability of a ballot measure to increase the existing library parcel tax, the council agreed to place a measure on the June ballot. The details of the ballot measure are yet to be fixed. Council members also asked staff to return with a capital assessment of the future expenses likely to be necessary for the maintenance and repair of the library

building. The poll was conducted by public opinion and research firm Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Mertz & Associates (FM3) via telephone and online polling. Paul Rankin, finance director, was pleased by the very good response to the survey, which also cost less than anticipated. Miranda Everett of FM3 reported the results of the survey to the council. More than 700 registered voters responded online and on the

telephone to the survey, conducted in early January.

The city has had a voter-approved library parcel tax since 2001. The tax, approved in 2001 by 75 percent of the voters, established a \$27 tax per residential unit per year. The tax was set to expire in 2009. In 2008, the council proposed and the voters approved the replacement of the 2001 tax with a \$39 per year tax that has no sunset date. The tax did not have a provision for any increases, and it was expected that a future adjustment would be required.

The poll asked Orinda voters if they would approve an increase of \$25, bringing the library tax to \$64 per year, which would generate approximately \$164,000 more per year than the current tax. The poll also tested the acceptability of an annual adjustment for inflation, with no sunset provision for the tax. The library is well regarded by Orinda voters, and is an element of city pride, according to the report.

... continued on page A8

Public can help choose Orinda's summer movies in the park

By Sora O'Doherty



Lamo archives

Family movies will return to Orinda Community Park next summer, starting on June 14 and running every other Thursday through Aug. 9. "Movies in the Park," which typically attracts around 100 people in normal circumstances, was started by Michelle Lacy and the Parks and Rec Department in 2014. It is the direct descendant of Danville's Moonlight Movies, which was also started by Lacy during her tenure as Danville's recreation manager.

Orinda is seeking help deciding which five movies will be screened

this summer and is asking the public to vote on the summer lineup for the Orinda Movies in the Park using the online survey website SurveyMonkey. The current choices are: "Coco," "Wonder," "Sound of Music," "Beauty and the Beast (2017)," "Smurfs: The Lost Village," "Cars 3," "The Goonies," "Mary Poppins," "Despicable Me 3," and "Leap!"

You may vote for five, or you may suggest a movie not included in the list at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Orindamovies2018>.

Voting will close on Feb. 9.

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Suzanne Geoffrion 925.699.4832
suzanne.geoffrion@cbnorcal.com | CalRE #01878803



Concord | \$640,000

4bd/2.5ba home located on a cul-de-sac. With A/C and "lap" pool.
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tom.stack@cbnorcal.com | CalRE #01501769

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Fire Districts

Public Meetings

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

ConFire Board of Directors Tuesday, Feb. 13, 1:30 p.m. Board Chamber room 107, Administration Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

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MOFD to add firefighters in time for fire season

By Nick Marnell

The Moraga-Orinda Fire District board authorized Fire Chief Dave Winnacker to hire six new firefighters, which, barring any sudden departures, will boost to 58 the number of district fire suppression personnel by the beginning of the fire season in July.

Four of the firefighters were technically approved in 2017 as part of the district \$1.4 million Staffing for Adequate Firefighter and Emergency Response grant that MOFD accepted in September. The four were to begin the Alameda County Fire Department Academy in January but Winnacker said that one recruit dropped out. The district was able to replace the dropout from its 2017 hiring list.

The two additional MOFD hires will enter an academy put on by the city of Alameda in April.

Winnacker explained that the addition of a firefighter costs \$18,000 more per year than using an employee on overtime to perform the same work. But the chief said there are hidden costs to excessive overtime that contribute to the potential for injury and a potential decrease in

efficiency. "One single shift of overtime means an 80-hour work week," Winnacker said.

The firefighters union affirmed its position on MOFD staffing at the Jan. 17 district meeting. "Our expectation is that the board approves a move to a 19 daily staffing model and to fully staff the second district ambulance," Vince Wells, Local 1230 president, told the board.

The union complained in October about what it determined was the district misuse of the SAFER grant funds. "The grant was written for a reason, and should be accepted for that reason," Capt. Mark McCullah, MOFD union representative, said at the time. The grant was written by Battalion Chief Jerry Lee, who requested that the funds be used to fully staff Medic 145, but the acceptance of the award did not lock the district into how it uses the money.

Winnacker said that the hiring authorization had neither a positive nor a negative impact on the district staffing model, including the full-time staffing of a second district ambulance.

Down goes 16!

By Nick Marnell



Photo courtesy ConFire

Lafayette Fire Station 16 bit the dust Jan. 31, one step closer to the opening of the new Los Arabis Drive station, scheduled for March 2019.

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District announced another facilities change at the end of January, as the company headquarters will move from Pleasant Hill to north Concord effective Feb. 20. The new central office will house

administration, operations and the emergency medical services division.

"It will be a much larger, more professional facility," said Assistant Chief Aaron McAlister. "We barely had enough room to walk around in the old building."

The ConFire dispatch center, which also serves the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, remains in Pleasant Hill.

Lamorinda mayors balk at proposed CPUC resolution

... continued from page A1

Weisz and Trotter, an MCE board member, agree that the issues of expanding CCA communities and resource adequacy should be resolved transparently in a formal regulatory proceeding. "The draft is an inappropriate procedural pathway to solving a cost allocation issue," said Weisz. The commission's reliance solely on confidential data

supplied by PG&E also troubled Weisz, she said.

Tatzin, an MCE board member, said that had the proposed PUC resolution been in place when his city applied to MCE, customers would have waited 15 months longer to receive electricity from the company, costing customers more money for nonrenewable PG&E energy. If

Lafayette had joined a new CCA, Tatzin said the delay would have caused startup costs to go on for 15 more months, decreasing the financial viability of the new CCA and depriving consumers of a choice.

"Even if a subsidy exists, the PUC has other means to correct that situation without delaying growth and formation of CCAs,"

said Tatzin who presented his arguments to the commission in January.

The PUC has scheduled a Feb. 8 vote on the draft resolution.

Moraga will join MCE in April. Lafayette has been an MCE member since September 2016, while Orinda has declined to join a community choice aggregator.

Orinda library parcel tax increase

... continued from page A6

Maintenance and repairs to the structure polled as very important. As a cost savings, some voters were OK with Sunday closures.

Everett reported that overall the poll showed that 66 percent of those polled support the proposed

increase, with women registering 81 percent support while men were less enthusiastic – 66 percent is just under the two-thirds requirement for a tax measure. The majority of Orinda voters are Democrats and they favored the increase by 75

percent, while Republicans polled at 50 percent support. People with children also recorded 75 percent approval.

When asked about the tax increase but without the inflation adjustment, the approval rate rose to 73 percent. Without the inflation adjustment, the increase in the parcel tax alone would fund the library only for the next four years. Staff estimates that a higher increase to \$71 annually, but without the inflation adjustment, would be sufficient until 2028, but the poll did not ask about the \$71 option.

A tax measure presented to the local voters must occur on the same ballot as a statewide General Election, which in 2018 would be either June 5, or Nov. 6. In order to meet

the June election date, the council needs to act on the measure by no later than March 9. Council members expressed support for the June ballot proposal, because if passed by the voters, revenue would begin to flow to the city on July 1, whereas if a November ballot measure were to pass, the city would not begin to receive funds for over a year, according to Council Member Dean Orr.

Having received a sense of the council, staff will return on Feb. 20 with the proposed resolutions defining the parcel tax and placing the measure on the ballot. This would still allow time for any adjustments and adoption of the final resolutions at the regular March 6 council meeting.



Photo Sora O'Doherty

First Orinda, now Lafayette considers LimeBike

... continued from page A2

City Council Member Mike Andersen raised questions about how the system would work in Lafayette given the topography of the city and said he would like to see a pilot program in place first. Vice Mayor Cam Burks agreed and said he thought the city should also look at some of the other dockless programs before committing to LimeBike. Two residents spoke, saying

that they had great experiences with the program in other cities.

Unanimously, with Council Member Ivor Samson absent, the four council members instructed the city manager to look into a pilot program and to also have staff access other dockless bike-sharing programs.

These hard-to-miss green bikes may yet be seen all over Lamorinda.

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Lafayette couple has a confection to make

By Pippa Fisher



Ellen Reintjes demonstrates the art of truffle making. Photos Pippa Fisher

Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin and his wife Ellen Reintjes have long been truffle makers. And a few times a year the talented couple share their knowledge and skills with residents by giving a truffle-making class at the library.

There seemed to be a fair amount of tasting going on, too, at the Jan. 24 class held at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center. For the adults and a few accompanied children alike who were there, it was obviously a deliciously fun class.

Tatzin and Reintjes have been making truffles at their home for 30 years. It is serious business – they even have a fridge dedicated to it.

They use the name ‘Mountain-dogs’ for their truffles, although there is no actual registered company. The name is a tribute to their dogs, past and present, who have always been named after mountains – Lassen, Sierra, Siskiyou, Tecumseh, Tioga, Tam(alpais), Cloud, and Greylock.

The 90-minute class teaches students techniques and terminology and all participants get to make their own truffles to take home, or at least take home any remaining after tasting. Everyone gets detailed handouts on equipment and where best to buy ingredients locally plus recipes and “how-to” directions. The couple work easily together as they demonstrate techniques and answer questions, clearly used to this being a team effort.

Tatzin says the two have never sold their truffles. “We have donated them for fundraisers,” he says, but mostly they make them for friends and family.

Tatzin and Reintjes buy all the ingredients and equipment necessary for the classes, which are free and hugely popular, always having a waitlist.

“Don and Ellen have been generously donating their time and

chocolates and handouts for these workshops for two years now, usually around Valentine’s Day and then before the holidays,” says Senior Community Library Manager Vickie Sciacca.

Sciacca points out that donating the truffle class is not Tatzin’s and Reintjes’ only involvement with the library.

“Ellen started the highly successful WOW Museum programs for the Friends of the Library in September 2012, which monthly draws 150 people to hear museum docents speak about exciting exhibits and special collections in the great museums around the Bay Area,” says Sciacca. She adds, “Ellen was also president of the Friends of the Lafayette Library from July 2015 to June 2017.”

Furthermore Tatzin is largely responsible for the Discover and Go library program, which allows patrons to obtain free museum passes with just a library card.

Sciacca explains, “Around 2004 Don returned from a trip to Boston where he learned about a museum pass program available there where patrons could get free museum passes through their local libraries. Don brought this idea to the library administration and after the idea was dormant for several years, it finally came to full fruition about eight years ago and has since become a huge program in west coast libraries started by the Contra Costa County Library in partnership with dozens of museums all over Northern California and beyond.”

Tatzin says that he is pleased that the county adopted the program that he outlined years ago. “(They) expanded it beyond my initial thoughts and have made it a great success. My compliments to the county library staff.”

How sweet is all of that?



The mayor shares a taste of the truffles.



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Smith's still satisfying customers

By John T. Miller

Tucked in the rear row of businesses between two vacant office spaces and behind the Blue Ginko in the Lafayette Plaza, Madison Smith's shoe repair shop has been serving the Lamorinda area since 1981.

Advertising only in the phone book, Smith gets more than enough business from repeat customers and referrals to keep him busy six days a week. Some of his clients have been with him for decades. "Repeat customers are really the heart of my business," he says. Word of mouth brings in many more.

In addition to working on shoes, Smith will work on most any leather product, including purses, wallets and suitcases, for example. He's also been known to fix saddles.

Smith's father was a sawmill worker in Oroville, where he grew up. He says this is where he learned his shoe and leather trades.

He began his shoe repair business in Chico. The soft-spoken 90-year-old says, "It was so long ago, I can't even remember the year." Later he moved to Concord where he set up shop near the BART station on East Street in 1972. Redevelopment forced him out and he relocated to the Clocktower Building for 28 years before moving to his current Lafayette Plaza location.

Smith commutes from his Oakland home every day. As he enters his 10th decade, he says, "I might consider retirement if I could sell my business. It's tough to make a



Although Madison Smith and his son John Smith declined to be photographed for this article, you can find them behind the door of their quaint shoe repair shop in the Lafayette Plaza. Photo John T. Miller

profit with the cost of rent and materials being so high."

He claims he has been able to do well in the business and "make a go of it," and he's been happy with the reception the Lamorinda community has given him.

Smith and his wife, Lori, have four sons and three daughters between them. Most of his children are scattered throughout the Bay Area, although his oldest son is in Texas and a daughter lives in Elk Grove. His wife is retired after a career working in the San Francisco schools.

His son John, who is retired after stints in many different careers, including the military, hospital work, and many other jobs, helps out part time in the shop. About his

father, he says, "He's been working in this trade so long he can fix anything. Kind of a magician with leather!"

Multiple reviews on Yelp praise the work of Smith and his son and it's easy to see why they have so many repeat customers.

When Smith is not in his Lafayette shop, his interest is focused on the Primitive Baptist Church in Oakland, where he and his wife are valued church members. He has previously served as an elder with the congregation.

When you enter the shop you may be startled by the jangling bells on the door, but you'll be pleased by the wonderfully redolent smell of fine leather, in addition to finding personable and quality service.

Lafayette realtor Dana Green honored



Sisters Jill Hazard Montaquila, left, Dana Green, center, and Wendy Hazard McClain, right. Photo Andy Scheck

At a packed dinner event Feb. 2, local realtor Dana Green received the award for Business Person of the Year, surrounded by family, friends, business associates and her entire "Green Team" on

an evening she described as being truly special.

There was no shortage of guest presenters to roast Green, including her two sisters – all paid tribute to her integrity, unsurpassed enthusi-

asm, civic involvement and love of family, saying her success is the result of her perfect balance between community, family and business.

– P. Fisher

EFO funding excellence in education

The Educational Foundation of Orinda (EFO) is looking to hire its first-ever Executive Director. The core proven competencies and experiences we seek in applicants are the following:

- Fundraising experience with a proven track record of developing and executing multi-million-dollar volunteer-led campaigns. Major gifts experience is a plus.
- Exceptional communication skills including writing, public speaking, meeting facilitation, and consensus building. Naturally persuasive and passionate.
- Financial and/or business management with similar revenue streams, including budgeting and oversight, nonprofit compliance and reporting.
- Demonstrated capacity to build alliances and sustain collaborative relationships with community members from diverse cultural, economic and political perspectives.
- Senior management experience in a comparably focused educational and/or fundraising organization. Ideally having built an organization in size, scope and impact.
- Experience working and partnering with a highly-engaged community-based Board of Directors.

EFO Executive Director applicants should send their qualifications to EFOEDSearch@gmail.com

Educational Foundation of Orinda opts for professional leadership

... continued from page A6

The new executive director position will offer a competitive salary, and the EFO expects to find someone with a high level of skills, who is a relationship builder, volunteer leader, and strategic thinker with a proven track record of attracting and sustaining a broad base of volunteer and financial support as well as have proven effective communication skills. The position will be full time, but will offer flexible hours.

The group seeks a leader who is genuinely passionate about building an organization for the future of education, and expects that the salary of the executive director will be more than covered by growth in fundraising. It is possible that more paid positions will be added in the future.

The EFO hopes to move quickly to hire an executive director. The deadline for applications is March 15, or until filled.

A search committee is being formed, led by parent volunteer Jodi Kaelle, who has 20 years of experience as a professional recruiter. The goal is to begin interviews in March and hire soon afterward.

The EFO has made a series of frequently asked questions available online at www.orindaefo.org.

For questions or more information, email EFOEDSearch@gmail.com.



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All-access playground opening
 ... continued from page A1



Photos Carol & Gary Irwin

The town of Moraga played a big role. The Club thought about the Rancho Laguna Park, but the council said that for something like this, it should be in the center of town. "We wanted to attract people from throughout Lamorinda and Contra Costa County. We settled on this spot which was underutilized, but we never in our wildest dreams thought we'd raise over \$340,000," said Reneau, who noted how the donation was the biggest gift to the town in its history. "And, as anyone who came early saw, there's no way to keep the kids out. They see a great looking playground and, yellow tape or not, they're coming in!"

According to its website, the Moraga Rotary Club's mission is to "help make children better citizens of the world, through peace and understanding ... all children, rich and poor, everywhere in the world." The club "donates an average of \$40,000 each year to charitable activities throughout the world. That's making dreams real for those that receive our prosthetic hands, and wheelchairs, and clean water, and shelter, giving them a new chance

at a happier life with dignity." Answering the club's plea to support the idea, multiple Moraga, Orinda and Lafayette foundations, nearby Rotary clubs, community organizations, businesses, Boy Scouts, local students, and individuals enthusiastically stepped forward to help with generous donations of cash, materials, and actual physical labor.

Lafayette resident Steve Parlatt, who joined the playground committee in 2016, said, "My son, Adam, has a limited ability to communicate. When you add a little bit of extra effort, and add some fun and joy to his day, he will turn, look at you, and smile; when you get that smile, it's gold. This playground is going to create so many smiles for so many years to come, and that is the best type of gratitude you can ask for."

Moraga Mayor Dave Trotter said, "The fact of the matter is, we're going to hear a lot of gleeful laughter and shouts and joy, and that's what this is all about. We all owe a great debt of gratitude to the Rotary Foundation for pulling this off for the greater benefit of the Moraga community."

"Parks make life better," said Assemblywoman Catharine Baker. She attended the opening not only as a public official but as a mom of twins. Baker talked about raising her kids within a twin playgroup that included a set of twins with one child who used a wheelchair. "It was really a challenge to make sure we could find parks and places for both of the boys and everyone in our playgroup to come to play together," Baker said. "It's wonderful to celebrate this today. This is for people all across the Lamorinda community, and as far as you can travel."

Dochterman presented Moraga Rotary Club President Dianne Wilson, Trotter, and Reneau with a large pair of scissors to cut the ribbon across the entrance. The crowd of children streamed in at once, running to play on the new equipment, and the air was filled with happy shouts.

Parlatt said, "I just tried to help with the perspective of families who have a child with special needs, as well as trying to get Lafayette involved, and Orinda as well, because I believed it needed to be a three town effort as much as possible."

Parlatt said that he looked for a combination of the right surface and the right equipment that would provide something for both able-bodied and special needs kids to play on. He praised Moraga Commons for providing three distinct playgrounds, for children of all ages and abilities.

"I feel that families can agree, if it's a nice sunny day, lets' go to Moraga Commons where everyone can run around and do different things," Parlatt said.

Lamorinda parent Jennifer Montague Clark moved with her family to the area five years ago. Her son Will has Down syndrome and autism, and Clark said he has trouble keeping up with his athletic brothers.

"They love to climb play structures and run around, play football, and he isn't able to do that," Clark said. She loved the idea that Will could enjoy the new playground as much as his brothers did. "Any place like this that can make it better for him in the community is a win for everyone," Clark said.



Share your thoughts, insights and opinions with your community.
 Send a letter to the editor: letters@lamorindaweekly.com

~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

Married, and in high school

By John T. Miller



Grant and Liz Cusick on their wedding day at the Acalanes High School Performing Arts Center. Photo provided

By all accounts, sharing the same work place with your spouse seems to be a hit with a number of married couples who work together in the Acalanes Union High School District.

Leading the charge is Campolindo High School with four couples, while Acalanes has three married couples, and Miramonte and Las Lomas each have one.

While the convenience of carpooling together from the same house is appealing, in most cases differing schedules and childcare concerns often mean separate cars.

Many of the couples also admit they rarely see each other during the workday because they are in separate rooms teaching students.

Not all the couples were able to respond to the questionnaire.

Campolindo

Tom and Amanda Renno met while students at Campolindo, graduating with the class of 2000. Their teaching careers started right after college, and by 2006 they were both working at Campolindo. Tom currently teaches social studies, and Amanda – who had a five-year stint as an assistant vice principal at Acalanes before returning to Campo this year – teaches math.

They've cut back on extra-curricular activities due to having two young children, but previously Tom coached wrestling and was athletic director while Amanda was advisor for Mock Trial.

Stephanie and Paul Verbanzky met while in college at Claremont McKenna, but didn't start dating until he graduated – he was two years older – and came back to visit friends.

Stephanie teaches chemistry while Paul teaches AP U.S. history. They often can go outside the box with cross-curricular topics, such as the time Stephanie taught the Haber Bosch process in chemistry and Paul taught about the tragic life story of Fritz Haber and WWI poison gas.

The couple enjoys co-coordinating the AGATE program for the district, working with 30 juniors chosen for the districtwide honors program. The students work beyond the classroom with fieldwork, research, and project development.

Paul gets the most satisfaction from coaching the Academic Decathlon group. "All my decathletes get to know my wife and children and it allows for a

family atmosphere. We are very fortunate to work at the same school."

Jenna and Ryan Boyd are the most recently married and this is their first year working together at Campolindo.

Jenna teaches learning skills, while Ryan is a world history and psychology teacher.

A coworker introduced them to each other when Jenna was substitute teaching at her alma mater, Northgate High School, where Ryan taught before transferring to Campolindo.

Jamie and Jake Donahoe both teach in the English department, with Jamie also teaching drama.

Acalanes

Grant and Liz Cusick (nicknamed Mr. and Mrs. Q), are both Acalanes grads, but didn't meet until Liz started teaching English there in 1995. Grant had been the auto shop instructor since 1981.

Liz's father introduced the two, telling her that Mr. Q could "show her the ropes." They started dating in June, 1997, and in 2004 they were married in the Acalanes Performing Arts Center. Their wedding pictures were taken at AHS (a truly alumni event).

Although they don't have any children, Liz says, "We joke that we have 300 children every year. We've been to former students' weddings and baby showers, and have also helped out with many needy students we shared."

Ed Meehan and Natalie Moore met through a Northgate teacher friend, Meredith Tate (also noted in this article). Ed was a Northgate grad who had been a substitute there before getting his first job at a junior high. Natalie came to Northgate later to teach English. When Natalie did a Yoda voice one day, Meredith knew she would be a perfect match for Ed – a Star Wars junkie – and she introduced the two. They dated and eventually got serious.

Eventually, Meehan became the drama teacher at Northgate and five months later they were engaged. It surprised the students, because they thought they had just met!

In 2006 they both transferred to Acalanes. "Overall, we find it very positive to work at the same site," says Meehan, "but sometimes it's difficult to leave work at work and not spend too much time discussing issues."

Betsy and Tom McNamara, met for the first time at a foot-

ball game where they both were assigned to work. Betsy is an Instructional Assistant while Tom teaches Science.

They were both products of the Acalanes district, with Tom attending Campolindo and Betsy a graduate of Acalanes. She recalls one of her first conversations at a staff meeting when they were paired up for some exercises involving teen health. "That conversation jumpstarted our relationship," she said. "We learned that we had similar up-brings with the same moral values. From that conversation we built a working relationship."

It wasn't until they had worked together for five years that they started dating. Amy Bellomo, a coworker, got tired of watching her pine over the young science teacher and told her that if she didn't ask him out, she would do it for her. "Like we were in seventh grade," laughs Betsy.

She walked across the hall and entered a conversation he was having with a fellow teacher, asking him if he'd like to go out for a drink sometime. "The rest was history," she says.

Miramonte

Kristen and Mike Plant are longtime employees at Miramonte. Kristen runs the highly successful public speaking program, while Mike, a native of England, teaches math.

Las Lomas

Meredith Tate, after working in the Northgate English department where she received credit for playing matchmaker with Ed Meehan and Natalie Moore, moved to join the Las Lomas staff.

A short while later, Meehan takes at least partial credit for paying back the favor.

Shortly after Meehan accepted the job at Acalanes, he encouraged his good friend Taron Hensley – also a product of the Northgate drama program – to apply for the open drama position at Las Lomas.

After Meredith was divorced, she and Taron started dating and eventually got married. They are one of the few couples that team up in the classroom. Taron teaches drama, while Meredith teaches four sections of English and then joins Taron in the theater for stagecraft.

"I like to believe the series of events settled my debt to Meredith for introducing me to my wife," says Meehan. "Our students love the idea of our parallel relationships."

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Lamorinda ShortDocs Film Fest moves event date, extends deadline

Submitted by Denise Nomura



Photo provided

Lamorinda Arts Council has extended its entry deadline to March 18 for the 3rd Annual Lamorinda ShortDocs Film Fest, which will now be held at 3 p.m. on April 15 at the Lafayette Li-

brary Community Hall.

This documentary film festival provides local filmmakers an opportunity to create new works and showcase them at a community screening.

The contest is open to anyone 5 years of age or older who lives, works or attends school in Lafayette, Moraga and Orinda, as well as Walnut Creek, Pleasant Hill, Martinez, and Concord. Film submissions will be judged in one of four categories: elementary school, middle school, high school, and adult. One student-made film will also be selected as an Audience Favorite.


The April 15 community screening will feature selected films and accompanying award presentations. Last year's winners included "Anika's Quincinera" by elementary school student Lukacs Gero, "The Culture of Skateboarding Revealed" by middle school student Jack Nixon and "Behind the Scenes of Campolindo's 'Beauty and the Beast'" by high school student Frenel Francisco. To learn more about the Lamorinda ShortDocs Film Fest competition and to enter go to www.lamorindaarts.org/shortdocs.

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Pacific Chamber Orchestra presents 'Golden Strings,' Feb. 17-18



Pacific Chamber Orchestra concertmaster Igor Veligan Photo provided

Pacific Chamber Orchestra's upcoming concert "Golden Strings," under the direction of Maestro Lawrence Kohl, will feature Mendelssohn's very first exuberant Symphony for Strings, Samuel Barber's heartfelt Adagio for Strings, Elgar's enchanting Serenade for Strings, and Richard Strauss' lyrical Symphony for Strings Op. 2.

"From the 12-year-old Mendelssohn's very first exuberant Symphony for Strings to Samuel Barber's heartfelt Adagio for Strings; from to Elgar's enchanting Serenade for Strings to Richard Strauss' lyrical Symphony for Strings Op. 2, these works demonstrate a deep vibrancy, emotional range and incredible craftsmanship of young composers stretching beyond their teachings, discovering pure shimmering gold for us to all enjoy and profit from," says Kohl.

"It is great from time to time to focus on different sections of the orchestra. A program such as this for string orchestra enables us to further hone the unique

ter of such a fine group of musicians. I like the variety that PCO has for full orchestra and that they can also do smaller works. This is a wonderful program for the audience to enjoy and for the musicians to play," says Veligan, who currently serves as concertmaster of the San Francisco Choral Society Orchestra and Pacific Chamber Orchestra.

Veligan has been also been a guest concertmaster of the Sacramento Philharmonic and principal violist with the Reno Philharmonic. In 2013 Veligan along with pianist Natsuki Fukasawa released a CD titled "Voices of Eastern Europe" featuring violin and piano sonatas by Enescu, Skoryk and Babadjanian. Veligan is a founder and violin/viola teacher at the Young Talents Music School in Sacramento. Many of his students are winners of numerous local and state competitions.

Performances will be at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 17 in the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, and at 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 18 in the Bankhead Theater in Livermore. Tickets are \$10 to \$59 and are available at www.PacificChamberOrchestra.org and additionally for Livermore at the Bankhead Box Office or online at bankheadtheater.org.

The concluding performance of PCO's season is The American Radio Hour, featuring Copland's Appalachian Spring and a premier work by Grammy Award-winning violinist Mads Tolling, April 21 in Lafayette and April 22 in Livermore.

— J. Wake

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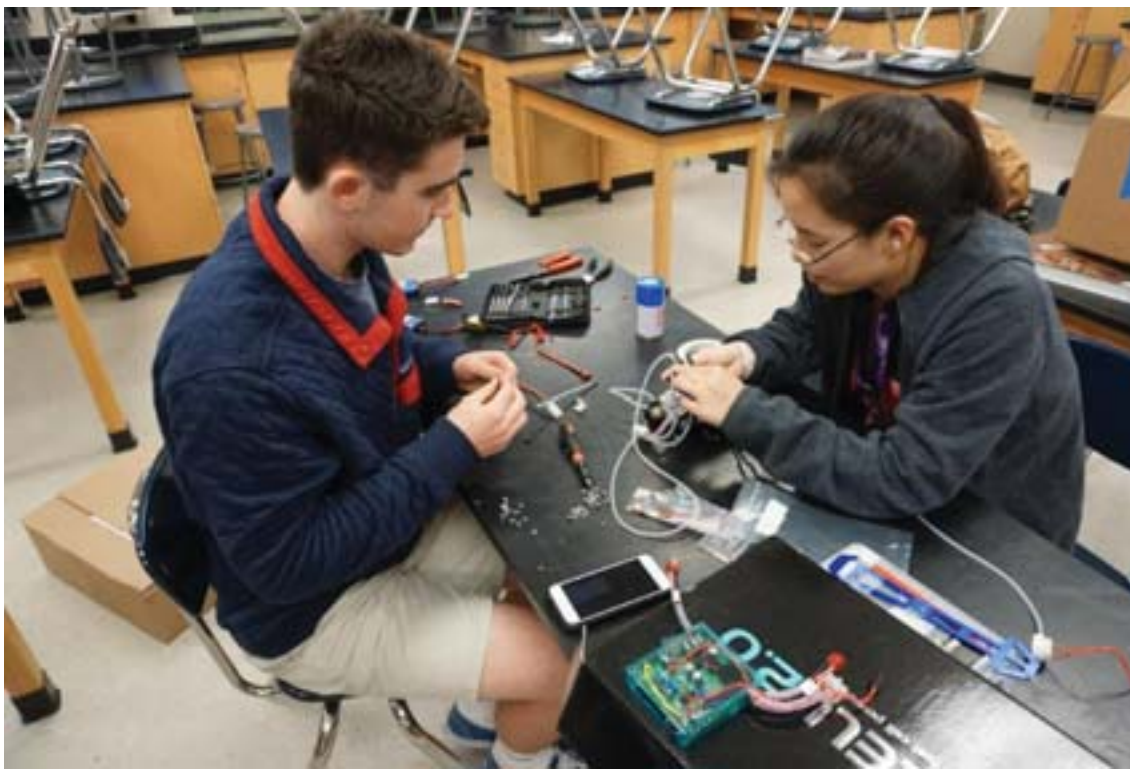
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RC competition a first for Campolindo

By Cathy Dausman



Students work on constructing the hydrogen fueled RC car.

Photos Cathy Dausman

The rubber meets the road for the first time as Campolindo High School students enter the 2018 Hydrogen Horizon Automotive Challenge. The first round of H2AC, as it is called, allows science and automotive class students in 20 Northern California high schools to compete in a four-hour-long endurance race on an indoor track using a hand-built, hydrogen fueled RC car.

The race is sponsored by Toyota, whose Mirai runs on a hydrogen fuel cell. Toyota provides each school with a kit and model specifications. Car dimensions are roughly 18 by 9 by 6 inches.

The Campolindo entry will feature a red and blue paint scheme; it was constructed by a team of students including Connor Gregg, Christian Meckfessel, Aiden Roake, Goldie Zhu and Sean Wright.

Meckfessel, who said he has always been a car person, thought working with the new technology sounded like fun. "I'm not nervous because I am a good driver. I think we have a good chance of going to finals, and winning," he added.

Auto shop teacher Steve Boone pitched the contest to his students "because alternative fuel is one portion of my class."

Environmental science teacher Tren Kauzer says the chemistry and physics behind the alternative power source is this: a hydrogen fuel cell generates an electrical current which then turns the engine.

Emissions are carbon-neutral. "The only thing that comes out of the tail pipe is water, which is pretty cool," Kauzer said.

Entrants are provided with a set of four nickel metal hydride batteries (and may use two more) and 16 hydro sticks. The Campolindo car shell was designed and built on a 3-D printer.

While hydrogen itself is flammable,

Kauzer said the power cells that the students use are small and safe. "It's not hydrogen gas in the little tanks, it's hydrogen that is trapped in a gel," he explained.

The race runs Feb. 24 at Richmond's Craneway Pavilion. The top 10 teams will then compete March 10 against 10 teams from Southern California at the UC Davis Pavilion.



Lively, fun-filled concert benefits Educational Foundation of Orinda



The Mazmanian Family

Photo provided

Some families are considered musically inclined. The Mazmanian Family quartet seems to have that musical inclination on steroids.

Orinda Intermediate School music teacher Greg Mazmanian, patriarch of the Mazmanian Family, is a Juilliard grad and experienced violin soloist who has performed with the San Francisco Symphony, Opera and Ballet orchestras as well as backup musician for Frank Sinatra, Ray Charles, and Tony Bennett among others. The ensemble grew organically 10 years ago, Mazmanian says on the family's website: "The kids saw and heard my daily fiddle practice around the house and wanted to join in!"

Mazmanian's son, Edward, and

daughter, Rose, are both highly accomplished violinists, and his daughter Ida is an award-winning pianist.

The ensemble, which performs "dazzling Gypsy, Hungarian, Armenian, Spanish tunes and other surprises that fly off their fiddles and piano" and has been touted as "delightful, charming, flashy and charismatic" by the San Francisco Chronicle, will be performing at 6 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 10 at Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, 433 Moraga Way in Orinda.

"We enjoy performing all styles of music but especially love performing folk classics that meld our classical training with the spirit and soul of our Armenian roots," Mazmanian says on the website.

"We also have a passion for engaging our audiences with fun and humor and essentially bringing them into our family circle for the time we are together."

Tickets, which are \$20 for adults, and \$10 for students, include a post-concert reception. Proceeds benefit the Educational Foundation of Orinda. To purchase tickets, contact EFO: eforinda@gmail.com. A limited number of tickets will be sold at the door. For information about the Mazmanian Family, visit mazfamily.com.

- J. Wake

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Local businesses support LPIE over the holidays

Submitted by Rachel Blatt



Rachel Blatt, Lisa Spiegler, Teli Thayer, Amy Parlett, Tressa Rust and Myrna Kimmelman enjoy a night out as part of LPIE's Giving Tuesday. Photo provided

For the second year, Lafayette restaurants and retailers came out to support Lafayette Partners in Education this holiday season. Kicking off with Giving Tuesday on Nov. 28, five local restaurants – Barranco, Rustic Tavern, The Cooperage, Bonehead's Texas BBQ, Patxi's Pizza, and California Pizza Kitchen in Walnut Creek

– offered a percent of sales that day to LPIE. Diners were treated to holiday music provided by Acalanes High School and Stanley Middle School performers. "The night was a huge success," said Merilee McCormick, owner of The Cooperage. "Guests were thrilled to dine and know they are supporting such a great organization, their community and children. The Cooperage was pleased to be included in such a great event."

Continuing the holiday cheer, LPIE followed up with two shopping days on Dec. 7 and 14 in which retailers and Pizza Anti-

ca also offered a portion of sales to support LPIE. Clocks etc., J McLaughlin, Alicia Klein Showroom, A Runner's Mind, Specialtees, Learning Express and Lamorinda Music all participated. HoneyBear Trees, FormaGym and Sports Basement also offered percent of sales towards LPIE during the holiday season.

Working directly with the Lafayette and Acalanes Union High School Districts, LPIE is a community-based foundation that helps maintain the hallmarks of an education rich in science, math, music, art, technology, foreign language, humanities and electives and supporting programs and efforts that might otherwise go unfunded.

"Unfortunately, state fund and parcel taxes don't provide enough funding to meet the need of our schools," says LPIE President Amy Parlett, "Thanks to our community partners this holiday season, we were able to raise additional funds to help meet our goal of our 2017-18 goal of \$3.2 million."

Dons show true spirit

Submitted by Louise Laemmlen



Photos provided

The Dons women's varsity soccer team players' spirit really shined through when they made care packets, which they handed out at games all season long, and had two volunteer opportunities this season at

the Alameda County Food Bank and the Janet Pomeroy Recreation and Rehabilitation Center to reach out to the broader community to raise awareness that a good deed can make a huge difference in the lives of others.



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.

Keeping up with the Hendersons

By John T. Miller



Kim, Adam, Tom, Nick, Grant and Spencer Henderson after a game at Acalanes against Alhambra. Photo provided

An incomparable athletic dynasty at Acalanes High School is about to come to an end with the graduation of Nick Henderson this spring.

The Henderson family has dominated the football and baseball fields at the local school for the past 10 years through four sons, Spencer, Grant, Tommy, and Nick.

Their dad Adam estimates that he and his wife Kim have been to about 500 high school contests between the four athletes. "We've rarely missed any of their games and have loved every minute of it," he says. "We'll still go see Cal baseball games with Tommy and there'll be football for Nick at the college level."

They've all been scholar-athletes and all have been named captains for their respective teams.

"To me," says Adam, "the role of captain has been greatest for the kids. It takes them out of being self-centered and focuses them on the efforts of the team."

Here's a rundown of the four student-athlete's individual accomplishments:

Spencer (2012). All-DFAL in football (as a senior) and baseball (junior), and Male Athlete of the Year for Acalanes his senior season.

As a left-handed pitcher and first baseman he finished with a career 18-3 record to help the Dons win the NCS baseball title in 2012. He was a two-way starter in football, playing quarterback and middle linebacker.

Recruited by multiple schools, including Stanford, Spencer chose UC Davis because they allowed him to play both sports. He played one year of football before focusing on baseball. Against Nevada-Reno, he was the winning pitcher and drove in all the runs for Davis. He earned All-Conference honors in the Big West and got his 'cup-of-coffee' in the minor leagues before deciding to give up baseball and move on with the rest of his life.

Grant (2014). All-DFAL honors in baseball as a junior and senior and helped the team to three consecutive CIF NCS Division III titles. Grant, a catcher, who threw right and batted left, hit .438 his junior year and .389 as a senior.

He was also an all-DFAL linebacker but injuries limited his playing time. He suffered a torn ACL his junior year, but rehabbed enough to get back on both playing fields. He tore the same ACL four games into his senior football season, but once again rehabbed and was ready for baseball.

"He worked his tail off and was a great inspiration in overcoming the adversity," says his proud father. "Unfortunately, he tore

ligaments in his ankle in a collision at home plate, and then an arm injury ended his career."

UC Davis honored his baseball scholarship and the team invited him to work in the broadcast booth and help the sports trainers. "Although it devastated him to give up the sport," said Adam, "he embraced the rest of what the campus had to offer."

Grant joined the Outdoor Adventures program and became a raft guide and, in his senior year at Davis, is also a ski instructor at Sugar Bowl.

Tommy. All-DFAL honors as a junior, and MVP of the Foothill League his senior season in baseball and all-league his junior and senior seasons in football. He started four years of varsity baseball at Acalanes as an infielder and three years as linebacker and running back in football.

He batted .365 and helped the Dons to a CIF NCS Division III title. Their 26-2 record is the best ever compiled at the school.

Tommy was the first Henderson to break the mold and committed to UC-Berkeley, even though he had an offer to play for Davis. Adam and Kim were happy they at least didn't have to change colors!

Tommy redshirted last year and should play on the infield this season.

Nick. Now a senior at Acalanes, Nick is weighing multiple offers to play football, including UC Davis.

Nick was a first team all-league selection and defensive MVP for the Dons, notching back-to-back seasons with over a hundred tackles from his linebacker position. He also played on special teams and offense. He helped lead the team to a 9-2 record, including a win over state runner-up Campolindo.

He's currently working hard in the weight room and should handle one of the power hitting spots in the lineup this spring.

Adam and Kim. Mom and Dad have certainly influenced the family. Adam credits his last minute decision to play at UC Davis under legendary coach Jim Sochor as having a profound influence on his life. He won all-Conference honors for the Aggies both his junior and senior years.

Kim grew up on a cattle ranch and the two met at UC Davis. She quit work after their third son was born to take on the full-time job of running the family.

The Henderson's contributions run far beyond their son's successes. On a plaque outside the Don's sports field, they are listed as impactful donors to the Acalanes sports programs.

Lafayette mayor joins Stanley students in annual concert

Submitted by Kerwin Lee



Photo Kerwin Lee

Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin performed on his euphonium with Stanley Middle School Symphonic Band students Jan. 19 during the school's annual Concert for the Mayor, hosted by the Stanley music

department under the direction of Bob Athayde. Not only did Tatzin attend and play with the students, he also provided cookies for the performers, which he baked.

Author discusses memoir and apprenticeship in the Gardens of Kyoto

Submitted by Wendy Constantine



Photo courtesy Maya Blum Photography

Leslie Buck followed a dream, leaving a local landscaping business to travel to Japan and learn from master gardeners, later writing a memoir about the adventure – “Cutting Back: My appren-

ticeship in the Gardens of Kyoto” (Timber Press, 2017).

Buck will speak about her experiences and her New York Times reviewed book, which recounts her challenging but ultimately reward-

ing pruning apprenticeship in the best gardens of Kyoto, at 9 a.m. Friday, Feb. 16 at the Montelindo Garden Club meeting at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephens Drive in Orinda.

College Advisor

Tell Me More about UC Berkeley!

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

The University of California at Berkeley, fondly known as, “Cal” is the first institution of the University of California system; founded in 1868, its nickname is clearly tied to this education milestone in California’s history.

Hustle and bustle characterizes the UC Berkeley campus community and adds to its unique culture. Students encourage campus engagement, community action and political activism. There are over 1,200 clubs and organizations built around the diverse cultural, political and social viewpoints represented in the student body. Shops and restaurants lean toward the entrepreneurial and student-oriented, and mass transit into San Francisco is plentiful and inexpensive.

Since its founding, Cal has nurtured its faculty, students and alumni to scholarly achievements comparable to Ivy League and other highly selective universities. A short list of laudatory successes includes 29 Nobel Laureates, and 1,300 of its graduates have received National Science Foundation fellowships, more than any other college in the U.S. Cal is second only to MIT in its production of Sloan Research Fellows. If you are a chemistry enthusiast, you may know that eight elements of the periodic table, including berkelium, were discovered at Cal. And if you are a physics enthusiast, you might know that Cal is the home of the world’s first cyclotron.

Given the 17 percent admit rate in 2017, it is not surprising that those who get into Cal usually stay. About 98 percent of freshmen return for their sophomore year, a retention rate also comparable to other extremely selective colleges. Students typically graduate within four years, although the 72 percent four-year graduation rate receives a boost from California’s community college transfer students who enter as juniors.

All of Cal’s academic departments are world class; the most popular majors include social sciences, biological and biomedical sciences, engineering and language studies. Students who declare one of the less popular majors may receive a more personal experience than those who declare one of the most popular ones – a fact of life in most public and even some private colleges nationwide. All students must choose an undergraduate division when they apply. But unlike most other large public universities, Cal does not allow freshmen to enroll directly into their first-rate, Haas School of Business. Those interested in business are advised to check undeclared—pre-business administration as their major. The undergraduate program is a general business degree with concentrations (accounting, business communication, finance, marketing and organizational behavior) instead of majors.

UC Berkeley’s career center is excellent with more resour-

ces than most diligent students would ever have time to use. There are more than 15 internship and career fairs on campus and over 900 employers participated in the job and internship fairs last year. This is one of the few universities that hosts internship fairs during the fall and the spring. That said, a student must be proactive and use the plentiful resources available, as there is little hand holding at Cal. For this reason, scholarly minded students with well-honed study and time management skills as well as those adept at self-directed study are the ones most likely to find academic success at Cal.



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.

Super blood moon shines over Lamorinda



Big, bright and rusty red, early rising Lamorinda watched a super blue blood moon hanging low in the western sky on the final morning in January. Overslept? The next blue moon (second full moon in a given month) appears March 3. The next total lunar eclipse (blood moon) visible in North America is two years out – Jan. 21, 2019. The next supermoon event is Nov. 25, 2034, and the next super blue blood moon won’t happen until Jan. 31, 2037. Don’t wait up. – C. Dausman

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Local libraries join forces to offer ‘One Community, One Book’ to teens

By John T. Miller

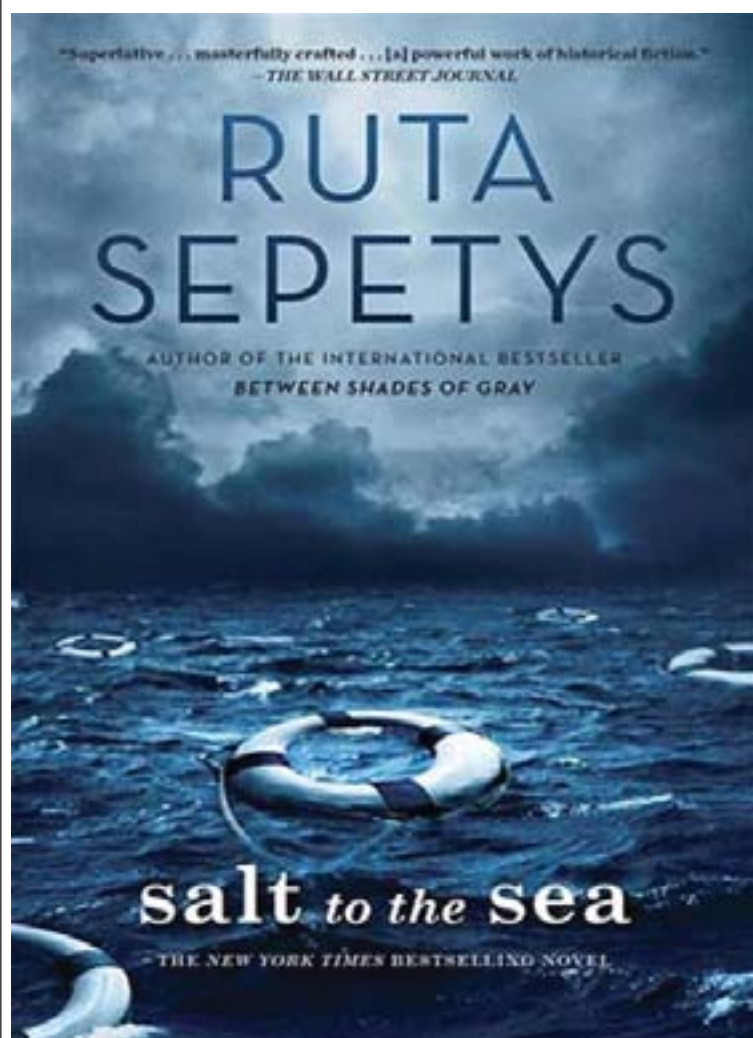


Image provided

In a collaborative effort between the high school libraries of Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte, and in conjunction with the Contra Costa County Library, the Lamorinda communities are invited to participate in the “One Community, One Book” Lamorinda Teens Read event.

Ruta Sepetys’s latest work of historical fiction “Salt to the Sea” – a story of a group of teenage refugees in East Prussia fleeing the wrathful Soviet advance after the collapse of the Nazi Reich at the end of World War II – has been chosen to read during the month of February.

The books are available through any of the public libraries in Moraga, Lafayette and Orinda or at Acalanes, Campolindo, or Miramonte high school libraries, or in displays that will be set up around the three towns.

The books are available due to a generous grant from the California Teachers Association/Institute for Teaching and the help of Orinda Books, which brokered the purchase of 500 books. While the novels are being offered for free, they can also be purchased through any local bookstore.

The concept developed from a brainstorming session between the Moraga branch librarian Geneva Moss and Campolindo High School librarian Sarah Morgan. Their idea was to focus on teens and ask partners in the other cities to collaborate.

Joining them in the effort are Acalanes High School librarian Barbara Burkhalter; Miramonte librarian Susan Williams; and county branch librarians Sierra Campagna of Orinda and Vickie Sciacca of Lafayette.

Baker is enthused by the effort.

“This is a really fun event,” she says, “with all six of our libraries working together to make it happen.”

The event kicked off last Thursday at the Open House for the Acalanes District, with presentations in the library promoting signing up for the free book.

Programs related to the book will take place at the local branches of the Contra Costa library during the month.

A movie about the Wilhelm Gustave – the boat that sank with many refugees on board – will be shown at 6 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15 at the Lafayette Library, with a discussion following.

Later in the month, four refugees from the community have been invited to speak on a panel at 6 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20 at the Moraga Library. They will talk about their experiences fleeing and escaping their country and how their lives are now.

The Orinda Library will host a lecture and discussion at 4 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 28 with Dr. Shir Gal Kochavi, an assistant curator of the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at UC Berkeley, addressing a theme from the book of Nazi-looted art.

Throughout the month of February, the Orinda Library will host a Scavenger Hunt. A teen advisory group of volunteers have created this hunt around issues dealing with Nazi-looted art.

“Another exciting tie-in,” says Baker, “is that most of the U.S. history teachers are beginning a unit on World War II this month and the book is appropriate to the subject. They will be running in-class book talks and encouraging the students to read the books.”

Submit stories and story ideas to storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com

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Not to be missed Not to be missed

ART

Valley Art Gallery presents "Wintermission" – the show between shows, features selected works by Gallery artists designed to brighten and warm even the longest winter days. This offering of over 300 original paintings, photography and other wall art on unique sliding panels runs through Feb 10. Demonstrating a wide range of motifs, styles, media and prices, and representing the best of the best from more than 100 East Bay artists, the exhibition is a must-see show for residents of the Diablo Valley.

"Darker Shades of Red" provides a rare opportunity to revisit the Cold War Era through the exploration of the Soviet Union's official imagery Feb. 7 – May 20 at the Saint Mary's College Museum of Art. The collection of 55 posters reveals the economic, social and political ideology of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. There will be an opening reception from 4 to 6 p.m. on Feb. 8. The Museum is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is free. www.stmarys-ca.edu/museum

Two Ukrainian Egg Decorating Workshops (Pysanky), a wax and dye technique taught by Folk Artist Evie Michon, will be held from 9 a.m. to noon and then from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 17 at Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, 433 Moraga Way, Orinda. Each Workshop is \$25, limited to 20 people and includes all materials. Ages: third grade-adult. RSVP to Sharon at (925) 284-4199.

An unveiling of "Frida Kahlo's Courageous Transformational Life," a vibrant portrait of Mexico's most famous 20th century woman artist by present-day artist Trina Swerdlow, will be held at the Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery in Lafayette at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Feb. 22 where the artist will give a talk about the portrait and the inspiration behind her painting. To attend this free event, RSVP by email: jp@jenniferperlmutter.com with your name and "Yes Frida" in the email subject line. For more information go to <https://tinyurl.com/Frida-Kahlo-Painting>.

MUSIC

Pacific Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of Maestro Lawrence Kohl, presents "Golden Strings" including Samuel Barber's heartfelt Adagio for Strings, Edward Elgar's gorgeous Serenade for Strings, Richard Strauss' Symphony for Strings Op. 2 and Mendelssohn's exuberant String Symphony No. 1 at 7:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 17 in the Community Hall of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Tickets are \$10 - \$59 and are available at the door or www.PacificChamberOrchestra.org. Children are free with adult. (See story page B2)

West Coast Performing Arts Presenters presents "Come Together: The Beatles Concert Experience" from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 24 at Leshar Center for the Arts, 1601 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek. "Come Together" recreates the look, sound and history of the Beatles, taking you back into time to witness their phenomenal rise to pop stardom. Cost: \$40-\$45. For more info see <http://www.concertacts.com> or call (310) 941-0948.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

The 2018 Friends of the Lafayette Library Bookmark Contest will be beginning Feb. 16. The contest is open to all Lafayette students, grade K-8. Entry forms will be available at school libraries in the Lafayette School District and St. Perpetua School, the Lafayette Library and Learning Center and the Friends Corner Book Shop. The entry deadline is Friday, March 9. Winners will receive a gift certificate for a local book shop, the Friends Corner Book Shop and complimentary framing of their winning bookmark at Fastframe of Lafayette. The award ceremony is planned for April 24. For more information please contact Kay Pekrul: kae865@hotmail.com.

Contra Costa Camp and School Fair – the sixth annual free event with booths for camps, schools, preschool, S.T.E.M. and S.T.E.A.M. programs, sports, cooking, enrichment, performing arts, scouts and YMCA. Free coding workshop plus bow and arrow, abacus and tennis exhibitions – will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 25 at Acalanes High School, 1200 Pleasant Hill Rd., Lafayette. Free admission and parking. www.ContraCostaCampFair.com

Sea-k the Treasure at Orinda Library through the month of February at the Orinda Library. Solve the clues inspired by the Lamorinda Teen Reads book selection, "Salt to the Sea," by Ruta Sepytys, to find the treasure. A Lamorinda Teens Read event.

OTHER

Free Legal Workshops available through the Contra Costa Bar Association. Immigration Law workshop from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 26, at the Pleasant Hill Library, 1750 Oak Park Blvd., Pleasant Hill. Sign-ups begin at 5:30 p.m. on a first come first served basis. For more info and other additional clinics and dates go to www.cccba.org/flyer/Legal_Workshops.pdf.

Come break all the rules at the "Night at the Library" – includes cocktails, vino, silent Disco (!?!!) and fun around every corner beginning at 6:30 p.m. Sunday, March 4 in the stacks of the Lafayette Library. Immerse yourself in merriment, while supporting the library and its programs. Buy tickets at www.Tinyurl.com/NATL2017.

Lamorinda Education Forum from 6:30 to 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8 at the Stanley Middle School Multi-Use Room, 3455 School Street, Lafayette. Get the latest on education funding and Gov. Jerry Brown's proposed 2018-19 education budget and its impact on local schools. Speakers include Gerry Shelton, a respected school finance expert, and our State representatives, Senator Steve Glazer and Assemblywoman Catharine Baker. Don't miss this opportunity to get the facts and ask questions. This event is hosted by the Lafayette School District. For more information, contact (925) 927-3502 or go to www.lafsd.org.

Bridge and Bunco game day and luncheon event from 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8 at Saint Mary's College Soda Center. Bring your luckiest cards – all are welcome. Proceeds given to students seeking financial aid through SMC Guild Scholarship Fund. For info, call Shirley Holloway at (925) 376-6588. Cost:

\$36 per person, make checks payable to Saint Mary's College Guild and mail to: Dolores McGonigle, 828 Crossbrook Ct., Moraga, CA 94556.

Discovering Opera: Wagner's "The Flying Dutchman" from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 8 at the Lafayette Library, Arts and Science Room. Take a Dutch sea captain who is condemned to sail the seven seas for eternity, and who has become the stuff of legend. Add a young woman who believes that she is the one who can release him from this curse by being true to him, even unto death; her father, mesmerized by the treasure on the Dutchman's ship; and her nominal lover, who lacks the Dutchman's charisma. Lecturer Bradford Wade will give a guided tour of "The Flying Dutchman," with a description of the plot interspersed with musical examples. This lecture is given in conjunction with Opera San José's production of "The Flying Dutchman," Feb. 10-25. Members free; non-members \$10.

ESL Conversation Circle at 1 p.m. every Thursday at the Orinda Library. Practice speaking and listening to English in a casual group guided by trained ESL instructors. No registration required and free of charge.

A Historic Evening with Anne Frank's Stepsister at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 15 at the Leshar Center, 1601 Civic Dr., Walnut Creek. Enter the world of Anne Frank as told by her stepsister and childhood friend. Like her stepsister, Eva went into hiding in Holland, was betrayed, captured and sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. Listen to a first hand account of the life of Anne Frank and the discovery and printing of her famed diary. Tickets are \$25 to \$35. For info, visit www.JewishContraCosta.com.

The holy season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14, which is also Valentine's Day. Jesus expressed His love for all humanity with His life, death, and resurrection. Come by Lafayette United Methodist Church (955 Moraga Road, Lafayette) between 6 and 8 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14 and receive ashes as a symbol of the preciousness and brevity of life; light a candle; and offer a prayer for the coming season of Lent.

Mt. Diablo Business Women panel from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 14 at Massimo Ristorante, 1604 Locust St. in Walnut Creek. Networking, lunch and panel discussion by three nonprofit leaders: Sister Ann Weltz of Bay Area Crisis Nursery, Jeri Boomgaarden of East Bay Community Foundation and Julie Strand of SalesForce.Org. To attend, register and pay at: <http://mtdiablobusinesswomen.org>. Scroll down to "Upcoming Events." All businesses are welcome. Registration deadline, Sunday, Feb. 11.

Humanities West Fireside Chat at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 20 at the Orinda Library. Join George Hammond of Humanities West for a fireside chat exploring the history, culture and legends of Archaic Greece. More information about Humanities West and other events at www.humanitieswest.net.

... continued on next page

**Please submit events:
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Golden Globe winner Amanda McBroom at Orinda Theatre, March 1

By Derek Zemrak



Photo provided

The next “Live at the Orinda Theatre Concert Series” will be March 1 with Golden Globe winner Amanda McBroom and musical director Michele Brouman. Described by the New York Times as “... the greatest cabaret performer of her generation, an urban poet who writes like an angel and has a voice to match” and “... one of the greatest night club performers of all time” by Broadway World, noting McBroom’s lyrics are “profound and express human emotions in glorious poetry. Her humor is so smart and she sings and acts it all brilliantly.”

McBroom came to the attention of music lovers in 1979 when Bette Midler’s version of McBroom’s song, “The Rose,” became the No. 1 hit all over the world. In addition to Midler, her songs have been recorded by a wide variety of artists including Amy Poehler and Jack Black, Barry Manilow, Judy Collins, Barbara Cook, LeAnn Rimes, Anne Murray, Harry Belafonte, Betty Buckley, Stephanie Mills, The Manhattan Transfer, Donny Osmond, Kurt Cobain, Nana Mouskouri, Conway Twitty, the Chipmunks and the Baby Dinosaurs in “The Land Before Time” (she wrote all the songs for 16 Universal Cartoon videos with longtime collaborator Michele Brouman).

McBroom’s performance of “The Rose” on the Golden Globes convinced audiences worldwide that the best interpretations of McBroom songs are by McBroom herself and they applaud her in concert halls around the world from Carnegie Hall to Angel Place Recital Hall in Sydney, Australia.

Her love of musical theater (she starred in the New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco and European productions of “Jacques Brel is Alive and Well and Living in Paris,” on Broadway in “Seesaw,” and in productions of “Sweeney Todd,” “A Little Night Music” and “Mame”) compelled her to create a musical based on her songs. “Heartbeats” made its debut in 1989 in Los Angeles, and the play has enjoyed more than 15 regional theater productions around the U.S. The original cast recording was released in 1994 on Varese Sarabande Records and is represented by the Rogers and Hammerstein Music Library. Amanda’s musical, “A Woman of Will,” made its off-Broadway debut in 2005.

McBroom recently celebrated the release of “Voices,” her sixth recording on Gecko, the label she established in 1985. Other Gecko recordings include “Dreaming,” “Midnight Matinee,” “A

Waiting Heart,” “Portraits,” and “Chanson.” In addition, she has recorded “Live from Rainbow and Stars” (DRG), and “A Woman of Will” (LML Music). Her first two groundbreaking vinyl recordings, “Growing Up in Hollywood Town” and “West of OZ,” were recorded direct to disc for Sheffield Labs and made McBroom an audiophile darling.


“Amanda McBroom is a legend in the cabaret world. The definition of a true artist – her own compositions are like mini-movies, the kind that become your favorite films. And when she sings, it’s as if she’s painting a beautiful picture, you can see the colors in your mind and you feel the passion and the nuance in the many layers that she unfolds,” stated Producer Michael Williams.

McBroom follows the inaugural sold-out “Live at the Orinda Theatre Concert” that featured Tony Award winner John Lloyd Young in the 190-seat auditorium in the Orinda Theatre on Feb. 1. On the evening of the March 1 concert, Cine Cuvée Wine Bar will be having food and drink specials before the show. Tickets, which range from \$45 to \$100 (VIP), are available online at www.lamorindatheatres.com or at the Orinda Theatre box office.

In addition to McBroom’s March 1 performance, “Live at the Orinda Theatre Concert Series” remaining shows include: Amanda King (“A Salute to Ella Fitzgerald: The Early Years”) on April 5; and Tony-nominated Broadway star Andrea McArdle (“Annie” and “Les Misérables”) on May 3. Subscriber and sponsorship packages are available.

“Live at the Orinda Theatre Concert Series” is produced by Zemrak Pirkle Productions, LLC and Michael Williams.

Service Clubs Announcements



BREAKFAST MEETING:
Friday mornings, 7:00 am.
The Lafayette Park Hotel & Spa,
Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette. More info.
at www.lamorindasunrise.com

February 9 Rocket Lady Mouzima Mousumi and NASA Aerospace Scholar.	February 16 By popular demand we bring you TED KLAUBER presents his dazzling and fun analysis of the 2018 Super Bowl Ads.
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Happy Valentine’s Day

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Lamorinda Weekly

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

OTHER ... continued

Contra Costa Tale Spinners at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22 in the Orinda Library Garden Room – includes a story swap with featured teller, Lois Kincy. Her story, an adaptation of “Little Match Girl” is dedicated to the grandmothers who have stepped up to raise their grandchildren. Share, listen, expand your universe.

Volunteers are needed to prune Fire Blight from the Moraga 104-year-old pear orchard from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 24 from at 1000 Camino Pablo (cross street Canyon). Instructions, gloves/tools provided. Wear sturdy shoes/bring water; bring loppers, gloves, hand/pole pruners, and orchard ladders if you have them. For info, contact Bobbie Preston at (925) 376-8474 or barbarampreston@comcast.net.

The City of Orinda will host its annual Summer Camp Fair from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 24, at the Orinda Community Center located at 28 Orinda Way in Orinda. Find out about summer programs offered through the City of Orinda, meet summer day camp staff plus a variety of specialty camp instructors.

Managing Headaches without the Pharmacy with Tim Appleford, PT, MSPT, OCS, ATC. The Feb. 27 lecture will touch on migraines, tension headaches and bad habits that may contribute to headaches. He will also give an in-depth look at how physical therapy could be ben-

eficial for this ailment through postural correction and tension release with exercise and stretching. Free. Seating is limited; call (925) 284-6150 to register today.

“Me Too” Founder Tarana Burke to speak at Saint Mary’s College of California at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 27 in the Soda Center. Burke is senior director for the nonprofit Girls for Gender Equity and director and founder of Just Be Inc., a youth organization focused on the well-being of young women of color. Burke’s appearance at Saint Mary’s College is part of the ongoing 44 Days Honoring Black History celebration series. Cost: \$15 general public; free for SMC students, staff, faculty and alumni. For more information, visit stmarys-ca.edu/inclusive-excellence/44-days-celebration.

The Elfenworks Center for Responsible Business invites you to its fourth annual conference from 12:30 to 7:30 p.m. Thursday, March 1 in the Soda Activity Center to explore how businesses have defined and honored human rights. Learn what actions businesses have taken to comply with standards and prevent violations of human rights. Explore models and practices that can inspire other businesses. The conference check-in will begin at 12:30 p.m., followed by panels exploring the interdependence of business and human rights, a keynote address, and ending with a networking reception. The event is \$20 (free for current SMC students, staff and faculty) and open to all, but registration is required.

Lamorinda Arts Council (LAC) will now host their 3rd Annual ShortDocs Film Fest at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center at 3 p.m. on April 15. Originally scheduled for Feb. 11 this year, this documentary film festival provides local filmmakers an opportunity to create new work as well as showcase it at a community screening. The extended deadline for Entries for the Lamorinda ShortDocs Film Fest is now March 18. To learn more about the Lamorinda ShortDocs Film Fest competition and to enter go to <http://www.lamorindaarts.org/shortdocs>.

SENIORS

The Stroke Support Group of Contra Costa County will hold its February meeting in the Ball Auditorium at John Muir Medical Center, Walnut Creek Campus (1601 Ygnacio Valley Rd.) from 7 to 9 p.m. Monday, Feb. 12. The speaker will be Eileen Nevitt LCSW, who will discuss “Ongoing Care Management.” After the program, attendees will break up into three coping groups: stroke survivors without aphasia, stroke survivors with aphasia, and caregivers and families of stroke survivors, each group led by a trained professional. For further information about the Stroke Support Group, contact Ann Dzuna at (925) 376-6218. Free.

Veterans’ Benefits, presented by Contra Costa County Veteran Services Office from 10:30 a.m. to noon Wednesday, Feb. 21 at the Lafayette Community Center, Cedar Room. If you are a veteran or a family member of a veteran,

you should be aware of the potential benefits available to you. The Contra Costa County Veteran Services Office provides assistance to the men and women who served in the Armed Forces of America, their dependents and survivors, and the general public, in obtaining benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Defense, California Department of Veterans Affairs, and other programs for veterans and their families. Free

Join LOPC for Men’s Breakfast at 7 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 28. Andy Amstutz from Lamorinda Village will speak on the topic of “Over 55? What can Lamorinda Village do for you?” Bring friends and family. \$5 donation at the door for breakfast. RSVP by noon on Feb. 27 to janet@LOPC.org. Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. (925) 283-8722. LOPC.org.

GARDEN

Lafayette Garden Club General Meeting from 9:45 to noon Thursday, Feb. 8 at the Lafayette Veteran’s Building located at 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. Program: “WELO, the Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance and How it Effects California Gardeners and Homeowners.” Lafayette Garden Club is pleased to present Lori Palmquist, irrigation designer and consultant, who will discuss how everyday gardeners can deal with the challenges of water conservation and be part of the solution. Visitors are welcome. For info, email Carolyn Poetzsch cpoetzsch@gmail.com.

The Walnut Creek Garden Club meeting beginning at 9:45 a.m. Monday, Feb 12 will feature a presentation, “Why are Millions of Trees Dying in the Sierras (and what are we doing about it)?” by Brenda Kendrix, US Forest Service starting with a business meeting at 9:45 a.m.; social at 10:30 a.m. and program at 11 a.m. The club meets at Heather Farm, 1540 Marchbanks Road, Walnut Creek. For info, email mslittle44@gmail.com.

The Montelindo Garden Club of Orinda is pleased to host a free presentation by Leslie Buck, a Berkeley-based gardener and author beginning at 9 a.m. Friday, Feb. 16 at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church, 66 St. Stephens Drive, Orinda. Buck has recently published a New York Times-reviewed memoir currently in bookstores called “Cutting Back: My Apprenticeship in the Gardens of Kyoto.” For info, visit www.montelindogarden.com. (See story page B5)

The Moraga Garden Club will hold their monthly meeting at 9:30 a.m., Thursday, Feb. 15, at the Holy Trinity Church, 1700 School Street, Moraga. The guest speaker will be Heath Bartosh, senior botanist at Nomad Ecology in Martinez, who will discuss “East Bay Floral and the Stories of Early Botanists.” Interested parties are welcome to attend the 9:30 a.m. social hour and the 10 a.m. meeting, as well as the presentation by Bartosh immediately following the meeting.

Campo students learn from musical mentors

By Diane Claytor



Campolindo students Brigitte Jia and Tanya Zhong accompany Gold Coast Chamber Players' musicians and violin soloist, Corina Stoian, as they perform Bartok Romanian Dances.

Photos Diane Claytor

Fifty students, all string players from Campolindo's orchestra, sat in a semi-circle on the school's Performing Arts Center stage last week. Most looked enthralled and listened intently as four of their classmates, sitting alongside four members of the Gold Coast Chamber Players, accompanied Gold Coast violin soloist, Corina Stoian, as she played Bartok Romanian Dances. The music was uplifting and emotional; the musicians — student and professional — were incredible.

"It's an amazing experience for a high school student to see professional musicians up close like this," exclaimed Johnny Johnson, Campo's orchestra teacher/conductor. Proud of his young musicians (violinists Brigitte Jia and Tanya Zhong, cellist Marc Schultz and violist Michelle Perelmutor) who joined the Gold Coast

professionals (Gil Sharon, Dan Flanagan, Pamela Freund-Striplen and Jennifer Klotzel), Johnson was very excited that four of his students were able to play with their counterparts in a quartet.

"We try to provide different experiences for our kids several times a year," Johnson said. "It's easy to get in your little tunnel and get used to the way your playing sounds. Then you hear an example of professionalism and it really opens your ears and mind, knowing you really can strive for a higher level. This was such a special side-by-side experience."

Based in Lafayette for the last 18 years, the acclaimed Gold Coast Chamber Players are dedicated to education, bringing concerts and mentoring to nearly every Lamorinda public school since they moved to the area. Pamela Freund-Striplen, artistic director and co-founder



Campolindo violinist Tanya Zhong and cellist Marc Schultz playing side-by-side with their Gold Coast Chamber Players counterparts in a mini-performance of Bartok Romanian Dances.

of Gold Coast, noted that they are always looking for ways to connect with the community, and going into the schools and working with students is one of her favorite ways to accomplish this.

"Students are always being told what to do," she noted. "But to actually have the opportunity to play with a professional, well, that's something you can't get anywhere else. It really distinguishes Gold Coast from other similar organizations. Sharing the feelings and sounds with professional musicians is pretty cool for the kids."

Prior to the actual performance of the students and professionals at Campo, Freund-Striplen and her Gold Coast players worked with the class, "teaching them about flexibility," Freund-Striplen said. "Romanian music is very free.

"One of the most inspiring things I do

is being able to play with young people and introduce them to an idea and do it in a really deep way," she continued. "Just coming and playing for them is enriching and educational, but this is very different. They learn so quickly because it's so hands on. And playing alongside a professional can be a truly powerful experience."

The Gold Coast Chamber Players were recognized by Contra Costa County in 2015 with the Arts and Culture Award. They are devoted to the art of chamber music as well as sharing their passion with the community. Their next performance — "Czech Mate" — will be at the Lafayette Library next month and their final concert of the season — "French Connection" — will be a celebration of Lafayette's 50th anniversary. For more information, go to gcplayers.org.

Nothin' says lovin' like chocolate cake in the oven

By Susie Iventosch



Polka Dot Valentine's Cake

Photo Susie Iventosch

What can say "I love you" more than a beautiful homemade cake? This cake is especially fun because the loves in your life won't know there's a delicious dark chocolate cake inside until you cut into it. This cake recipe is one of my favorites because it's so moist and the chocolate chips make it even more so. I have been infatuated with the idea of making chocolate cake with white frosting ever since our friends' wedding in

1989, although it's taken me all these years to actually do it! They had a gorgeous tiered wedding cake, and I just loved the fact the cake inside was chocolate instead of the usual vanilla. It was the first time I'd ever seen that in a wedding cake and it was fabulous. Since they are still blissfully married, I thought it would be the perfect recipe for Valentine's Day in honor of them.

Cooking Term of the Week

Xanthan Gum

Xanthan gum is used as a stabilizer, emulsifier and thickener in food products. It is made from the fermentation of corn sugar. Xanthan gum has the special ability of holding particles of food together, thereby making it a good stabilizer and yielding smooth, creamy textures in the products it's used in such as salad dressings, yogurts, sauces, and even ice creams. It is sometimes used as a substitute for gluten in baked goods.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- ¾ cup unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 cup boiling hot water
- 1 cup cold water
- 1 cup canola oil
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- ½ cup dark chocolate chips
- ½ cup white chocolate chips or bar broken into small bits
- 1 recipe vanilla buttercream frosting (see below)

DIRECTIONS

Line the bottom of two 9-inch cake pans with parchment paper. Spray paper and sides of pan with cooking spray. Preheat oven to 350 F.

In a large measuring cup or small bowl, mix 1 cup of boiling water with cocoa powder and whisk until cocoa is dissolved. Add vanilla, and set aside. Cool to room temperature.

In a large bowl mix flour, baking soda, salt and sugar. Stir in cocoa powder mixture, additional cup of cold water and oil. Mix well. Add dark and white chocolate chips and stir to incorporate.

Divide batter evenly between the two prepared cake pans and bake for approximately 25 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in center of cake comes out clean.

Remove from oven, cool and turn layers out onto cooling racks. Frost with vanilla buttercream frosting and decorate with dark chocolate dots!

Vanilla Buttercream Frosting

INGREDIENTS

- 3 sticks (1 ½ cups) unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 6 (or so) cups powdered sugar, sifted
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 3 Tbsp. half & half or milk
- ½ tsp. salt

DIRECTIONS

Place butter in a large mixing bowl or the bowl of your mixer. Beat on high speed until very fluffy and very pale yellow, approximately 5 minutes, scraping down sides as you go.

Slowly add the powdered sugar, about ¼ cup at a time, and beating after each addition until well incorporated. (You may need slightly more or less of the powder sugar than instructed, depending upon the moisture content of your butter, so have a half cup or so extra powdered sugar on hand in case.)

Beat in vanilla and half & half. Adjust to desired spreading consistency with remaining powdered sugar.

Set about ½ cup of the frosting aside for decorating the cake. Place one layer on the cake plate and frost the top of that layer. Now, place the second layer on top and completely frost top and sides of cake.

Add cocoa powder and/or brown food coloring to remaining half cup of frosting and using an icing bag and cake decorating tip, decorate top and sides of cake with dots or whatever pattern you like!



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.

You can find most of the recipes published in the Lamorinda Weekly on our website. Click Food tab. www.lamorindaweekly.com/html2/food1.html



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LAMORINDA SPORTS

Lamorinda high school boys soccer doing well despite injuries, illness

By Jon Kingdon



Oliver Feigin (Acalanes)

Photo Gint Federas

Coming off a championship season, Acalanes coach Paul Curtis was certainly aware that it was going to be difficult to match last season's 20-2-4 record and accomplishments. In the heart of league play, with a record of 13-6-1 and 5-1 in league play, Curtis remains positive about his team and their prospects: "This is a team that has great resilience. They have learned to value the aspects of the game. They know how to take advantage of their advantages."

This was evidenced by the Dons' ability to rebound from an early season three game losing streak by responding with a seven game winning streak of their own. With many of the players competing on club teams during the offseason, Curtis has had to work on the chemistry of the team. "There is a lot of talent here," Curtis says. "The majority of the players play on three different club teams. My job has been to get these players to come together with one system."

Because of the varied styles each of the players has brought to the team, Curtis has come to rely on the leadership of his senior captains, Dominic Van Cleave Schottland and Oliver Feigin. "Our captains have been able to combine being firm and having fun and they are well respected by the team." Schottland has been a four-year player and has unique explosion in his play. Feigin, combining with Chris Rogers have proven to be very effective anchors in our defense."

Goalie Luke Denham has combined with his defensive front to give up a miniscule 0.76

goals/game and eight shutouts. Curtis appreciates Denham's talent in the goal: "Luke is very talented. He is dominant in the back and has great reaction time."

Nick Schirmer has stood out as well for the Dons. "Nick has a real presence on the field," Curtis says. "He is big and physical and is good in the air."

Acalanes lost two valuable players to injuries, Cameron Shapoorian and Zach Flagg. With injuries and the flu taking their toll, sophomore Nick Geannacopulos, has stepped in without missing a beat and become the team's leading scorer. According to Curtis, "Nick has shown good maturity and been a consistent force on offense."

Curtis' goal for the rest of the season is simple: "We want to stay healthy and be consistent."

First year coach and Campolindo graduate, head coach Aaron Girard, came into the season with a decidedly young team. With a 6-10-4 record, Girard has approached the season realistically. "We have only two active seniors on the team and in most matches we are playing teams with numerous seniors. Normally the leaders on the team come from a core senior class however there is a unique dynamic for this team. It's been a learning experience for the players."

The team has also been the victim of the school's success on the football field, having to wait for players to finish the football season, forcing those players to miss numerous games with the team going so far in the playoffs. Senior Seppi Ortman, the football team's placekicker, was

sorely missed and has shown constant improvement throughout the season.

The goalie position was also a position that proved difficult to fill early in the season. Sophomore Lucas Allen, also a football player, left a big hole to fill and Girard was forced to use a make-shift lineup in goal. "We had to use field players as our goalies, Christian Marki who got injured, and then Nico Lewis until Lucas returned to the team and has provided much needed stability at that sport," Girard says. "Lucas, has a natural athleticism. He has a great attitude and everyone on the team looks up to him."

As league play began, Campolindo suffered three serious injuries to expected starters: Steven Metcalf (concussion); Connor Gregg (separated shoulder) and Grayson Gilbanks (hamstring). Girard has had to learn to roll with the punches. "It's a challenge as a coach to focus on more than wins and losses. We are always looking for improvement. This is part of life and we all have to learn how to deal with the adversities of a difficult season and how you apply it to life as a whole."

Jose Carra-Hernandez, a returning all-league player, has been a genuine force on offense, says Girard. "He is the heart and soul of our midfield."

Sophomore Riley Breul has been a pleasant surprise for Girard. "Riley became a starter when the opportunity presented itself and he really stepped up and has been a key to our defense."

... continued on page C3



Jose Carra-Hernandez (Campolindo)



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Challenging season for Lamorinda girls soccer

By Jon Kingdon



Katrina Lee (Acalanes)

Photo Gint Federas

The 2017-18 season for Lamorinda girls soccer teams has proven to be a bit of a challenge for each of the schools. Interspersed with some very positive games and efforts by each of the teams, the combined record for Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte as of this printing is 19-32-3.

With another young team, Campolindo head coach Ernesto Silva knew that his team was going to have to mature as the year has gone on: "The girls have a great attitude. They do not give up. We are a fighting team with the right spirit. We are a young team that is full of potential and it is going take time to develop." Silva has proved prescient as the Cougars have won their last four games to bring their record to 9-7.

The underclassmen have been led by the senior captains and midfielders Molly Ikeya and

Azalea Kim who have played a key role in keeping the team focused on their goals. "They are the voices inside the field," Silva says.

With eight shutouts this season, the defense has proven to be the strength of the team. Defenders Devon Ortman and Nicole Huebner have been very protective of the team's goal. "They have both been solid and have kept us in a lot of games," Silva says.

Campolindo has a unique situation in goal with sophomore Mallory Lewis and Senior Ashley Mulakaluri splitting time in the net.

Each of the girls brings a unique quality and talent to the game, according to Silva. "Mallory is very technical. She has great leaping and coverage skills. She knows how to play quick from the back. She has good height and presence in the goal.

Ashley is extremely quick. She has great reflexes and is scrappy and tenacious."

Silva is most appreciative on how well his two goalies assist each other: "Mallory and Ashley both work very well together in their training sessions. They like each other and yet are very competitive. They have a great relationship and word hard in practice to earn their minutes.

A young team generally is one that needs to learn to be patient with the ball and Silva is working hard to develop this skill with his team. "We can be too reactionary and we need to be more proactive and aware on the field when we have the ball. We need to get ahead of our opponents and be comfortable with the ball when it comes to us."

Silva's main goal at this point in the season is to keep the team's eye on the prize: making the NCS playoffs. "We have had strong

games," he says. "We want to build momentum in the second half of the season and I want to motivate my players to play complete games."

With 10 seniors and juniors and 18 sophomores and freshmen on the Miramonte team, head coach Barry McQuain knew that his team was going to have some difficult matchups. Combining the youth on the team along with some unexpected injuries and illnesses, the 7-11-1 Matadors have had to play shorthanded in several games. An early season Tri-Valley Tournament against upper level competition set Miramonte back early going 0-3-1 in those games. McQuain still sees the positives in his team: "We played the bigger schools well though you don't see it in the record. We are doing well in league play and we are coming together as a team and you can see it in the scores and on the field as the season has progressed."

Senior co-captains Lauren Van Stralen and Kendall Roberts, both of whom have been battling through injuries have proven invaluable to McQuain in keeping the team focused and maintaining a positive attitude: "We have let the girls take responsibility for their actions, formations and performance on the field. They have been organizing the team and bringing it together. They bring their ideas to me and my assistant, Joe McMahan. The girls are having fun. Everyone is getting along very well.

Early in the season, the Matadors were having major issues with their offense but have of late begun to address this area. According to McQuain, "Since the holidays, we have increased our intensity and that has become our strength. When the whistle blows, we are not letting up and are playing as hard as we can. We learned that when we score, we win. We have shifted to more of an offensive game plan."

Junior striker Taylor Walthall

has been the team's leading scorer. "Taylor is very explosive," says McQuain. "She can kick the ball deep with either foot. When she is playing an aggressive game, it sets the tone for the team. She is able to surprise our opponents with her speed and can change the game quickly."

Miramonte's strategy is to emphasize the middle of the field. Sophomore midfielder, Olivia Grillo has been a force on both offense and defense with her ability to see the field and find the open man.

Junior defender Anna Le-Nguyen has been consistent all season according to McQuain: "Anna has been solid every game. She rarely loses the ball. She is very fast and has the ability to find the open player."

Sophomore Mikayla Smith (2.25 goals against) and senior Olivia Goodman (1.38 goals against) have been splitting time in the goal consistent in the goal. "Olivia has made a lot of saves," says McQuain. "She has super quick reflexes. She is quiet and humble and gets the job done.

Having won four of their last six games, McQuain is approaching the end of the season with optimism. "We have a shot to win the league and making the NCS (those are) our two goals. There are no teams in the league that we can't beat. Teams may be overlooking us due to our overall record and that will be a mistake on their part. The girls are optimistic and looking forward to going through the league."

In what has proven to be a difficult season record-wise (3-12-2) for Acalanes, first year head coach, Sasha Chalak, has brought a refreshing attitude to the team. "We have found the positives in our season" says Chalak. "The good is that it is testing the character of the players and the mindset the players have when they go into a match.

... continued on next page

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Challenging season for Lamorinda girls soccer

... continued from page C2



Emily Smith (Acalanes)

Photo Gint Federas

They are learning how to deal with adversity and that is important.”

The Dons are a very young team with 10 seniors and juniors and 13 sophomores and freshmen, which has proven to be a challenge for Chalak. “It’s been a learning experience for the group. Our goal is to maintain a positive attitude and continue to fight until the end, regardless of the outcome. I want the players to focus on their own personal fight and realize that the opponent is none other than themselves and to focus on their actual efforts.”

Chalak has come to appreciate the quality of the leadership that the captains have come to provide the underclassmen: seniors defender Katrina Lee, goalie Sophia Giordano and junior defender Malika Haji.

Giordano, who will be playing at Emerson College next season, holds the team together, according to Chalak. “Sophia has a great ability to process the game. She is a real leader in the back third of the field has been a real force in the goal for us.”

Midfielder Emily Smith, who will be playing at American University next year, has also earned accolades from Chalak. “Emily has a marvelous ability to manipulate the ball and a great ability to receive the ball with pressure on her back without losing control. At game speed to still

have the finesse to the ball is really difficult and Emily has done it phenomenally well. She has been as good as any player we have played against.”

Forward Kierra Krawec, who will be playing for Michigan next year, has been a real force on offense, working particularly effectively with Smith. According to Chalak, “Emily and Keira have a great chemistry and play very well together. Keira has a great ability to move and make specific runs into space. Her high level of intelligence and the ability to navigate about the field makes her deadly in the final third of the field.

Freshman center defender Samantha Hansen has provided Chalak with a lot of optimism for the future. “Samantha has adapted to the high speed of play and never leaves the field. She has done a good job in controlling our back line and in playing against older players.

As the season begins to wind down, Chalak wants his players to stay mentally strong: “I’m looking for the players to find a higher level of motivation to finish the season strong. The test is to see if we can get a collective team effort and will their way to victory. Not getting discouraged and finding the motivation to win is a transferrable skill that can be used in life in general.”

Lamorinda high school boys soccer

... continued from page C1

Freshmen Sean Donovan, Kellen Clancy and Steven Metcalf (prior to his concussion) have all played a great deal which is not an easy thing for such young players. Says Girard: “We have asked them to play against bigger and faster upperclassmen and they have really hung in there.”

By no means is Girard looking past this season, but he has to be excited about the team’s future prospects with so many underclassmen on this team. “On any team, character and attitude of the team is crucial,” he says. “Who are going to be the core that will turn things around for us? Leadership is not how you act when things are going great but when you are facing adversity and after a tough loss. It has been a learning experience for me and my staff as well.”

With a team comprised with an equal mixture of seniors and underclassmen, Miramonte coach Masood Ahmadi has come to appreciate and utilize the assets of his team leading them to a 12-2-2 record so far. “We are a veteran team that does well when we can play our style, a style of possession which increases our scoring opportunities.”

Early in the season, the Matadors were able to establish to themselves that they would be a team to be reckoned with as the season progressed. After having lost to Bishop O’Dowd last season in the NCS playoffs, Miramonte was able to put that loss behind them by winning the Winter Soccer Classic in Livermore in December with a 3-0-1 record, taking particular satisfaction in defeating the aforementioned Bishop O’Dowd 1-0.

Unfortunately the team has not been able to avoid injuries or the flu epidemic but the Matadors have been able to weather the storm, according to Ahmadi. “We are a resilient team. We have been fortunate

to have a lot of depth on the team so that injuries and illnesses have not held us back from playing to our potential.”

With six shutouts this season, Miramonte has benefited from a triumvirate of seniors on the back row. Senior captain and defenseman, Sam Pinto, a four-year letterman, who will be playing at Chico State next year, has solidified the team’s defense. Senior defenseman Ben Andrews also provides great leadership and a front for the defense, utilizing his speed and his ability in the air and in one-on-one situations. Ahmad appreciates the skills Cole Kelez brings as his goalie. “Cole has great feet. He is an excellent field player. He reads the game well and has a lot of spring in his step. He has made a lot of big saves for us.”

Relying more on speed than size, Miramonte’s offense has matched their defense with equal effectiveness, outscoring their opponents by a combined 36-11.

Forwards Gavin Pitt, Owen Reed and Kent Barbir have been leading the way on offense. Ahmadi applauds the effort Reed put in during the offseason: “Owen is a lot stronger and faster. He had a great offseason and put in the effort.”

With Barbir out with a recent injury, the depth for Miramonte has once again paid off with junior Charles McIntyre stepping in with little drop off in offensive production. With three goals so far this season, freshman Simon Neuwirth-Stein is showing great potential for the future.

Ahmadi has let his team know that they cannot expect anyone to roll over for them: “It’s a big test for us in the middle of league play. We have to take it one step at a time. It’s important that the team stays hungry. We are capable of being successful but we have to stay focused each game.”

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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 11 Issue 25 Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2018



February Gardening Guide with Cynthia Brian ...read on page D12

Repeat remodelers love life on the trail

By Cathy Dausman



This Love remodel is an updated version of an Eichler home.

Photo Mendelson Architecture

When it comes to home remodeling, Courtney and Steve Love have amassed a lifetime of experience in a mere 15 years.

The Loves' serial remodeling story began in Burlingame, while living in a century-old Craftsman. "I really do love old homes," said Courtney Love. Over the course of a year with the help of "an amazing builder" they expanded their Craftsman home base-

ment, remodeled its first floor (keeping the original windows) and added a second floor.

"It was a fun, good project," Love said. The family lived there for six years before they purchased a tear down in the Burlingame hills. "I don't even know how we got a loan (for that house)," she admits. The couple rehired their builder and began designing a Spanish-style house. Because of the hillside, that

house would become a three-story home.

When the Loves realized the near-constant stair climbing involved, they decided not to move in but rent it out until it could be sold.

But Burlingame can be cool and windy, and Courtney Love longed for the sunshine.

"One year we tied balloons to patio chairs for our daughter's birthday," she said, "and the wind blew the balloons right off the strings."

The Loves began to house hunt in Lamorinda, where their realtor recommended the Lafayette trail neighborhood. The couple made an offer on an aging four-bedroom ranch abutting the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail. Courtney Love had not even seen the inside—she was out of town.

In many ways their new purchase, a 1942 home, had outlived its usefulness. A family of five skunks occupied the crawl space, the master bedroom was virtually unheated (cosmetics in bathroom drawers froze overnight) and drainage backed up into the bathtub. The Loves considered simply remodeling, but not for long.

With their Burlingame Spanish hillside home as yet unfinished, the Loves offered their general contractor a partnership to complete the project, then acquired a second construction loan. They also moved for the fourth time in four years.

Design and planning of their current house took almost two years – a bit longer than the Loves expected, but they wanted to be sensitive to the concerns of their new neighbors. Their dream this time was to build a single story modern home that fit into a neighborhood of ranch homes. ... continued on page D4



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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	7	\$860,000	\$1,500,000
MORAGA	5	\$315,000	\$1,537,500
ORINDA	2	\$1,050,000	\$1,460,000

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

- 3255 Ameno Drive, \$1,250,000, 4 Bdrms, 1911 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 1-9-18
- 1028 Dyer Drive, \$1,235,000, 3 Bdrms, 1269 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 1-2-18;
Previous Sale: \$663,000, 08-28-09
- 3486 Monroe Avenue, \$1,500,000, 6 Bdrms, 2414 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 1-3-18;
Previous Sale: \$530,000, 03-17-00
- 1121 Palomares Court, \$1,160,000, 4 Bdrms, 1963 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 1-12-18;
Previous Sale: \$343,000, 06-07-00
- 1689 Springbrook Road, \$985,000, 3 Bdrms, 1124 SqFt, 1953 YrBlt, 1-16-18;
Previous Sale: \$651,000, 06-24-11
- 23 White Oak Drive, \$1,225,000, 3 Bdrms, 2508 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 1-5-18;
Previous Sale: \$262,500, 09-15-82
- 301 Willoughby Court, \$860,000, 3 Bdrms, 1724 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 1-5-18;
Previous Sale: \$177,000, 07-22-80

MORAGA

- 2133 Donald Drive #15, \$315,000, 1 Bdrms, 560 SqFt, 1963 YrBlt, 1-10-18;
Previous Sale: \$64,000, 11-23-82
- 1106 Larch Avenue, \$1,150,000, 4 Bdrms, 2403 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 1-3-18;
Previous Sale: \$995,000, 01-05-15
- 9 Ross Drive, \$1,090,000, 3 Bdrms, 1788 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 1-9-18;
Previous Sale: \$820,000, 04-30-10
- 1899 School Street, \$1,278,000, 3 Bdrms, 1963 SqFt, 1971 YrBlt, 1-9-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,162,500, 07-20-06
- 1873 St. Andrews Drive, \$1,537,500, 4 Bdrms, 2883 SqFt, 1983 YrBlt, 1-12-18;
Previous Sale: \$650,000, 12-17-03
- 125 Westchester Street, \$735,000, 2 Bdrms, 1661 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 1-12-18
- 1061 Wickham Drive, \$1,025,000, 4 Bdrms, 1858 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 1-8-18;
Previous Sale: \$236,000, 06-27-86

ORINDA

- 52 Mira Loma Road, \$1,460,000, 4 Bdrms, 2240 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 1-4-18;
Previous Sale: \$677,500, 11-18-03
- 49 Sanborn Road, \$1,050,000, 2 Bdrms, 1254 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 1-5-18;
Previous Sale: \$40,500, 04-21-72



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Repeat remodelers love life on the trail

... continued from page D1



Large windows bring in light and outdoor views.

Photo Mendelson Architecture



Clean lines give a modern feel to this kitchen.

Photo Mendelson Architecture

The result is an updated version of an Eichler home – full of light, clean, bold lines, atriiums and indoor/outdoor living space.

Architect Joel Mendelson removed everything except a single bathroom wall, then added 700 square feet. “These expansions added two bedrooms, a guest bathroom, an expanded master suite and a new kitchen-dining wing,” he said. “A cabana and small garage replaced the oversized existing garage, leaving greater room for the new pool.”

The cabana provides pool shade in the summer. The new home is 2,900 square feet.

The home exterior is wood – a bleached and stained, sweet-smelling cedar planking set horizontally. A clerestory skylight in the raised kitchen ceiling is wrapped in the same cedar. Original plans called for a butterfly roof there, Steve Love says, but the couple felt it would make the ceilings too high and leave the interior space feeling institutional.

The west-facing front entry consists of two walls of glass and a generous built-in wooden bench. Floors are wide planked engineered white oak and match the white oak kitchen countertops. The cabinetry and shelving is poplar and maple. The kitchen, dining and living areas have glass walls opening onto a backyard of grass, young trees, concrete decking and a swim-

ming pool.

Despite removing the fireplace, code compliance called for a ceiling sprinkler installation. The small white disks are unobtrusive. The bedrooms – four on one side (three are their children’s bedrooms; the fourth is a media/game room) and master on the other – were intentionally designed on a smaller scale, although the master includes an alcove for an at-home office. A concrete partition wall shields the kitchen appliance workspace from the dining area. LED lighting, in-wall, Cat-5 cable, electric outlets with built-in USB plugs and in-ceiling speakers complete the tech checklist. Two color landscapes painted by a neighbor adorn a dining area wall.

Although the Loves have not hosted an open house for neighbors, their home was part of the 2017 Lafayette Juniors kitchen tour. Courtney Love agreed to share this remodeling story as a way to allow Lamorindans an inside glimpse into their trailside home.

Love says being on the trail means two of her three children can walk or bike to school. Even their cat Pico loves the trail ambiance. “Most people can’t stomach the idea of spending (that much) money (at once) for major home building projects,” she said, but her financial background gave her the needed confidence.

Courtney Love likens building, or home remodeling, to having a baby. And when the “baby” looks this good, what’s not to love?



Photos Kate Webber

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Bitcoin in Real Estate

Right after the new year, a long-time client came to us and explained that she inherited a large sum of cryptocurrency. She found a home that she wanted to purchase and asked us what we thought about making an offer with a down payment in cryptocurrency with traditional financing. Bitcoin has recently gained mainstream notoriety as merchants like Microsoft and Subway have begun accepting the cryptocurrency. In order to use bitcoin to purchase real estate, it is not as simple as getting a buyer and seller to agree on the form of payment. Such a transaction is complicated when considering you need to actually find both a buyer and seller willing to exchange this new form of payment as well as how financing, escrow companies and title insurance are impacted.

For starters, most lenders will not accept bitcoin or cryptocurrency as a down payment for conventional financing. There may be lenders willing to provide such a product but none that we spoke to. Even if our client was able to combine bitcoin with traditional financing, or even pay fully in crypto we expressed our concern that the seller pool willing to except crypto for payment is limited. Ironically this week the Contra Costa Times printed an article about a home in Oakland that is being offered in cryptocurrency. The article mentioned that the response from buyers was overwhelming.

While there are online brokers that claim to have handled real estate transactions involving cryptocurrency, traditional title companies have yet to embrace this new form of payment. This makes obtaining title insurance difficult. Also, given the recent pull-back in the value of bitcoin, which recently traded below \$10,000 from a high of above \$19,800, the hype around completing real estate transactions in cryptocurrency might fade as most people will not want to deal with the associated volatility and risk.

Please feel free to contact us with your real estate questions -
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At home with Amanda

By Amanda Eck



Our team created this adult haven by adding exquisite new bedding, a custom upholstered bench with acrylic legs, new nightstands, original art from a local up-and-coming artist, custom drapery, and a small sitting area with a settee, floor lamp, and side table. Photos provided



This client's master bedroom was lacking warmth and sophistication. They had purchased the upholstered bed and lamps, but were stumped with what to do next.

February is always an odd month for me; I am still savoring the cold quiet dark evenings of winter, yet longing for the warm days of spring. So since we are still in the throes of dark chilly nights, I thought I would share my top five tips for creating a cozy and inviting bedroom.

When I meet with clients to work on their homes I often see that the master bedroom is the last room on the wish list, or in many cases it doesn't even make the list. I too have been guilty of focusing on the rest of my home (the spaces everyone sees and lives in) while my most sacred space, my place of evening respite and morning stillness, is neglected. I hope these ideas will have you thinking twice about your bedroom.

1) Declutter your space. There is nothing worse than crawling into bed and looking over at your nightstand cluttered with yesterday's coffee mug, used tissues, unread books collecting dust, and stacks of work papers. Take some time each evening to clear off your nightstand. Keep a dust rag or roll of paper towels tucked under your bed to brush away the dust bunnies. Remove dirty laundry daily. Try and resist the urge the toss clean clothes over the chair (guilty; it drives my husband nuts). ... continued on page D13



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Aerial photos and 3D tour at: www.holcenberg.com



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Patti Camras

I believe in the art of living well.

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Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Jungle fever

By Cynthia Brian

"The human spirit needs places where nature has not been rearranged by the hand of man." ~Source Unknown



Cobras, roots, and the encroaching jungle were tamed at the ancient temple where "Laura Croft: Tomb Raider" was filmed. Photos Cynthia Brian

Completely covered by tangles of roots and vines, it is only in recent years that many ancient grandiose brick and sandstone temples were rediscovered in Cambodia. These monumental structures, built on top of one another for over seven centuries as capitals of the Khmer Empire, have survived the passage of time. The jungle swallowed cities and palaces constructed of wood leaving only skeletal remains and inquisitive monkeys. The bustling, colorful life of the Angkor civilization was left to the imagination and research of historians, explorers, archaeologists, and me.

If you ever watched the 1991 film, "Lara Croft: Tomb Raider," you glimpsed the unexcavated and unrestored temple of Ta Prohm completely reclaimed by the jungle. Immense trees grow like magic out of stone walls and through roofs. Our guide told us that visitors were allowed to explore the ruins only in the past few years because this area was occupied by cobras, many as long as 20 feet. To

deter these venomous serpents from continuing to nest here, lemongrass was planted, and it is keeping the poisonous snakes away.

Southeast Asia is uncomfortably hot and humid. The jungles are wild and untamed. The flora is bright, beautiful, and bizarre. Palm, coconut, banana, mango, papaya, jackfruit, passion fruit and breadfruit plantations fill the landscape alongside the never-ending fields of rice. Most villagers don't have running water or indoor plumbing; the banana groves serve as their toilets. Nothing is wasted. Every part of a plant is used for food, shelter, fire, clothing, furniture and other life necessities.

Both in Vietnam and Cambodia, water lilies and lotus flowers grow magnificently in the waterways. Although the two are often confused, water lilies have pads and flowers that float on the surface of the water while the lotus flowers and leaves rise a foot to several feet above water. The various colors of the lotus flower retell tales culturally revered. Because lotus flowers grow in murky water, an unfurled white lotus refers to purity of body, mind and spirit. A red lotus boasts of love and compassion. The favorite pink lotus tells the story of Buddha and the many legends surrounding him. Purple represents mysticism, royalty and spirituality. Lotus flowers are gathered and made into spectacular art pieces delivering the spirit of enlightenment and good fortune to those who embrace their grace and beauty.

Betel leaves and the areca nut are important symbols of love and marriage in Vietnam. A groom's parents will begin the conversation with the potential bride's parents by offering areca nut chewing. In Vietnamese weddings the leaves and juices are used in the ceremony. Betelnut is a stimulant and mind-altering substance. It is also known as "the scourge of Asia" because it causes oral cancer.

Rich in protein, calcium, potassium, iron and other nutrients, the leathery, prickly Jackfruit is considered to be a miracle food with the potential to supply an entire family a complete meal. Grown in every garden, mangoes are a main staple of daily diets, considered one of the most important fruits for improved wellness. They are low in calories, filled with vitamin C, A, B6, and beta-carotene, important elements to fighting cancer, regulating diabetes, aiding in better eye sight, digestion and clear skin.

Golden Shower trees were laden with buttery yellow flowers bringing light and cheerfulness to pathways, hills and cemeteries. One of the most beautiful, yet prickly

plants I witnessed was the Crown of Thorns, an ever-green cactus (*Euphorbia Mili*) that blooms year round in hot and sunny locations. It requires very little water, has spectacular scarlet, pink, yellow, white or salmon colored bracts, grows to three feet or more, and is covered in one-inch spiky thorns. We can grow it outdoors or as a house-plant, however, as gorgeous as it is, definitely keep it away from children.

In the Mekong Delta, floating villages and traditional houses on stilts line the banks with residents laboring and living the way they have for centuries, harvesting what the great waters provide to survive and earn a living. Baskets and mats are created from river reeds and water hyacinth, ancient boats advertise their crops for sale with the fruit or vegetable speared on top of a high pole, floating fish farms supply fresh seafood, while floating markets sell just-picked produce. Sampans are made by hand from felled "Sao" wood, a very water resistant variety of oak.

Discovering the smiling, resilient people and the tranquil lush landscapes untouched by the hands of humans in Southeast Asia, inspired me to pause, breathe deeply, and appreciate this wild environment, once a hotbed of warfare and genocide. Without interruptions from phones and internet, I calmly disconnected from "civilized" chaos to welcome the wonders of essential nature. Spending time meditating in solitude and having a water blessing by monks awakened my sense of gratitude for the gardens of life.

Although I never encountered a tiger, I was consumed by jungle fever. ... continued on page D14



A meditation center on a lake in the jungle outside of Phnom Penh.

At home with Amanda



The addition of this well-lit reading area is perfect for relaxing with a book or enjoying a nice cup of tea.

Hang them up immediately. Try to keep the kiddos' toys out of your space, or at least have a basket or bin to store them away at bedtime. A simple evening routine of tidying up before bed creates a state of order and you can wake up feeling like you already have jump on your day.

2) Purchase high quality sheets. There is nothing more irritating than sleeping on cheap, scratchy sheets! By investing in two sets of nice high thread count sheets, you'll ensure better sleep in comfort and style. My favorite sheets are the Gobi Embroidered sheet sets from Sernea & Lilly.

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

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

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



... continued from page D8

3) Invest in good lighting. Proper lighting, such as overhead lights on a dimmer, whether it is recessed lights or a chandelier or both, bedside lamps, preferably with two-way or three-way switches to control the amount of light, or a small book light that you tuck into your nightstand can help create the proper mood for your master bedroom oasis. If you do not have any overhead lighting, a floor lamp or another lamp on the dresser can help illuminate dark corners.

4) Create a small reading nook. If you have the space, being able to create a reading corner or place to have morning coffee is ideal. While I love reading in bed, there is something comforting about being able to sit in a comfy chair in the bedroom and enjoy a cup of tea or curl up with a good book. And little ones love crawling up with mom or dad to read a book before bed.

5) Refine your space with fresh flowers, candles and music. Never underestimate the power of a small fresh floral bouquet picked up from the grocery store. For music, we have a Bose portable speaker in our bedroom. We like to play soft jazz to unwind, or hip-hop and party music when we have an impromptu dance off with the kiddos (yes momma's got some moves), and I love playing Salsa music when putting away the laundry (hey, it helps). I like to keep unscented votive candles around for soft light in the evenings or vanilla scented ones for a warm yummy fragrance.

I hope I have inspired you to take a second look at your sacred space and take some time to make it beautiful. I am off to go tidy up my bedroom – got to hang up those clothes!

Until next time my dear friends! Xoxo



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Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for February

... continued from page D12

- **GATHER** up all fallen camellia blossoms to prevent disease in your soil.
- **FORCE** bulbs of amaryllis or lily of the valley by adding water to a jar with the bulbs and placing near a sunny window.
- **PLACE** a stem of Daphne by your bedside to sweeten your dreams.
- **ADD** ferns, hostas, and caladiums to a shady spot as companion fillers.
- **APPLY** final application of dormant spray to fruit trees.
- **PLANT** anemone, ranunculus, and freesia for late spring blooming. If you already have freesia growing, blooms will appear in late February.
- **BUY** copies of my newest garden book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," from www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store for best prices and loads of extra freebies. Know what to do in your garden every month! Contact me for fees and scheduling to come speak at your event. Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com
- **SHARPEN** tools for spring spading.
- **BRING** the jungle flavor indoors by purchasing cymbidiums with several spikes of flowers.
- **GIVE** yourself some moments of silence. Use your outdoors as your contemplation and meditation room.
- **REMEMBER** Valentine's Day with a potted plant or beautiful bouquet for your sweetie.

Happy Love Day! Happy Gardening! Happy Growing!



The Gold Shower tree grows to 40 feet with clusters of golden yellow flowers.



Flower market in Phnom Penh.



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Mangoes on Gieng Island.

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.

Tune into Cynthia's Radio show and order her books at www.StarStyleRadio.com.

Her new book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," is available at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store.

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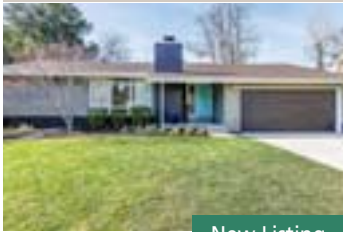


Cynthia Brian treks into Angkor Wat and the surrounding jungles.



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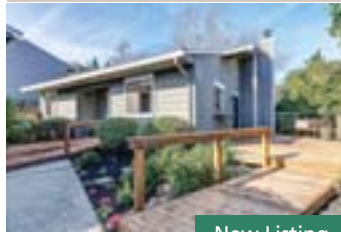


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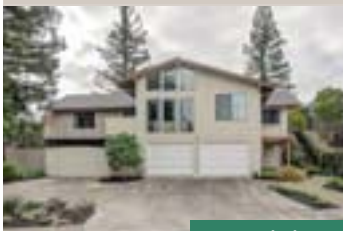


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