

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Local artist David Mudgett, on left, works to install "Resolve" with city staff on the new roundabout March 13.

Photo provided

Art balanced on Lafayette's roundabout

By Pippa Fisher

With a small group looking on, Lafayette's latest piece of art was installed on a rainy afternoon in the middle of the new roundabout at the Pleasant Hill Road/Olympic Boulevard intersection.

The sculpture "Resolve" stands 16 feet tall and consists of eight corten steel dodecahedrons balanced dynamically one

on top of the other and secured to a concrete pedestal. It is a substantial work of art – each module weighs 420 pounds.

Local artist David Mudgett told the city council last year in his presentation that he had chosen the geometric shapes to reflect Lafayette's policy of putting education first, suggesting math, science and nature. The title, he said at the time,

reflects the city's resolve to solve traffic issues.

To illuminate the sculpture at nighttime the artist will be installing lighting to give the piece a more dramatic feel. Staff Liaison to the Public Art Committee Juliet Hansen says there isn't a date set yet for the lighting installation but that lights are forthcoming.

LAMORINDA WEEKLY

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Advertising

BESTLAMORINDAHOMES.COM		(925) 597-1573	VLATKA BATHGATE	
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Best View of the Lake	Mid Century Modern	Enchanting with buildable lot		

Community uneasy about revamp of Orinda Community Park

By Sora O'Doherty



The Orinda sports wall is a popular spot for tennis practice.

Photo Sora O'Doherty

Public resistance to a proposed master plan for Orinda Community Park at a recent council meeting focused on two elements: how the changes would affect the Orinda Starlight Village Players, and the relocation of the sports wall to facilitate the installation of three bocce ball courts. A number of public commenters ar-

gued that the changes to the park would be a death knell to the local theater group, currently in its 35th season. Other members of the public addressed the sports wall issue, noting that it is one of the most popular features in the park, and that placing it within a tennis court was not a viable alternative. ... continued on page A11

Rheem Theatre to become a community asset: Agreement signed to sell to MCF

By Sophie Braccini



The Moraga Town Council agreed at its March 14 meeting to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Mahesh Puri, owner of the Rheem Theatre, to create a new parcel containing the current Rheem Theatre, two retail spaces on the left and right of the theater entrance and an apartment unit upstairs, with its ownership to be transferred to the Moraga Community Foundation for \$150,000. The MOU also indicates that the town will support Puri's application to develop the adjacent vacant 1.26-acre site. At this time there is no certainty who will operate the theater and when it would reopen.

Making the theater a community-owned asset managed as a nonprofit has been a goal of the Moraga Community Foundation since its creation a few years ago. By owning the new parcel, it will be possible for MCF to revitalize the theater by adding food and drink locations to its footprint, said MCF Board member Andy Scheck. Mayor Dave Trotter said that this MOU offers the best opportunity for Moraga to finally preserve the Rheem Theatre for the long term as a locally owned movie theatre, and cherished community asset.

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Chiefs fight for mutual aid changes – page A8.

Life in Lamorinda B1-B10

Group living option benefits local young adults – page B1.



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Miramonte girls basketball at semi-finals – page C1.



Our Homes D1-D16

Papa John continues workshops about backyard chickens – page D1.





Public Meetings

City Council

Monday, March 26, 7:30 p.m. Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, April 2, 7 p.m. Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, March 26, 7 p.m. Lafayette Library & Learning Center, Arts & Science Discovery Center, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Acalanes Union High School District Wednesday, March 21, 7 p.m. AUHSD Board Room 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette www.acalanes.k12.ca.us

Lafayette School District

Wednesday, March 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



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

Lafayette's Police Chief moves on

By Pippa Fisher



Lafayette Police Chief Eric Christensen Photo Pippa Fisher

Lafayette is losing one of its most popular public figures, as Chief of Police Eric Christensen takes up a position with the Oakley Police Department.

City Manager Steve Falk said in a letter to the community earlier this month that Christensen and his deputies have lifted up the Lafayette community in ways both expected and unexpected and, in so doing, have established a new benchmark for effective community policing in the city.

"During his six years with Lafayette, Chief Christensen has employed a variety of techniques and technologies to solve and reduce crimes, prepare the community for emergencies, address bias, and empower people and their neighborhoods," said Falk. "He's done it with intelligence, humor, an unrelenting work ethic, and a generosity of spirit that he has extended to everybody he encounters."

Christensen says that so far his time in Lafayette has been the best assignment he has had in his career within the sheriff's office. He says he will miss the people of the Lafayette community most of all.

"I have had the opportunity to make a lot of good friends here in the city and I will miss all of them," said Christensen, adding, "It's always seemed that we were working together to make our neighborhoods a little safer."

... continued on next page

Real estate advertisement for 4034 Happy Valley Road, Lafayette. Features photos of the property and contact information for Dan Green, Pacific Union Realtor.

City continues to hash out conflict of interest policy

By Pippa Fisher

The conversation at the Lafayette City Council continues on how best to restore trust in local governance, specifically within the commissions.

In the fall Vice Mayor Cam Burks and Council Member Ivor Samson formed a subcommittee to revise and update the recusal policy applying to commissions and committees, particularly addressing conflicts of interests in cases of those with financial interests presenting to boards on their own, or their firm's projects.

Samson explained at the

March 12 meeting that in addition to updating this recusal policy draft (Version B), the subcommittee also drafted a resignation policy (Version A) - a much stricter policy that Samson described as a "solid conflict of interest policy." He said that although they tightened up the recusal policy in Version B, he still did not think it was meaningful, likening it to putting "lipstick on the pig."

Essentially, in Version A commissioners would not be able to recuse themselves or abstain from participation in a situation of con-

lict, but would have to resign and furthermore a one-year post-service period of exclusion would apply.

Mayor Don Tatzin expressed concern about the quality of commissioners the city would be able to attract on the board if conditions are made too punitive, pointing to the potential for loss of business for a year after service. "Just don't join to begin with," he worried would be the reaction of some.

Samson pointed out that since this is a large metropolitan area

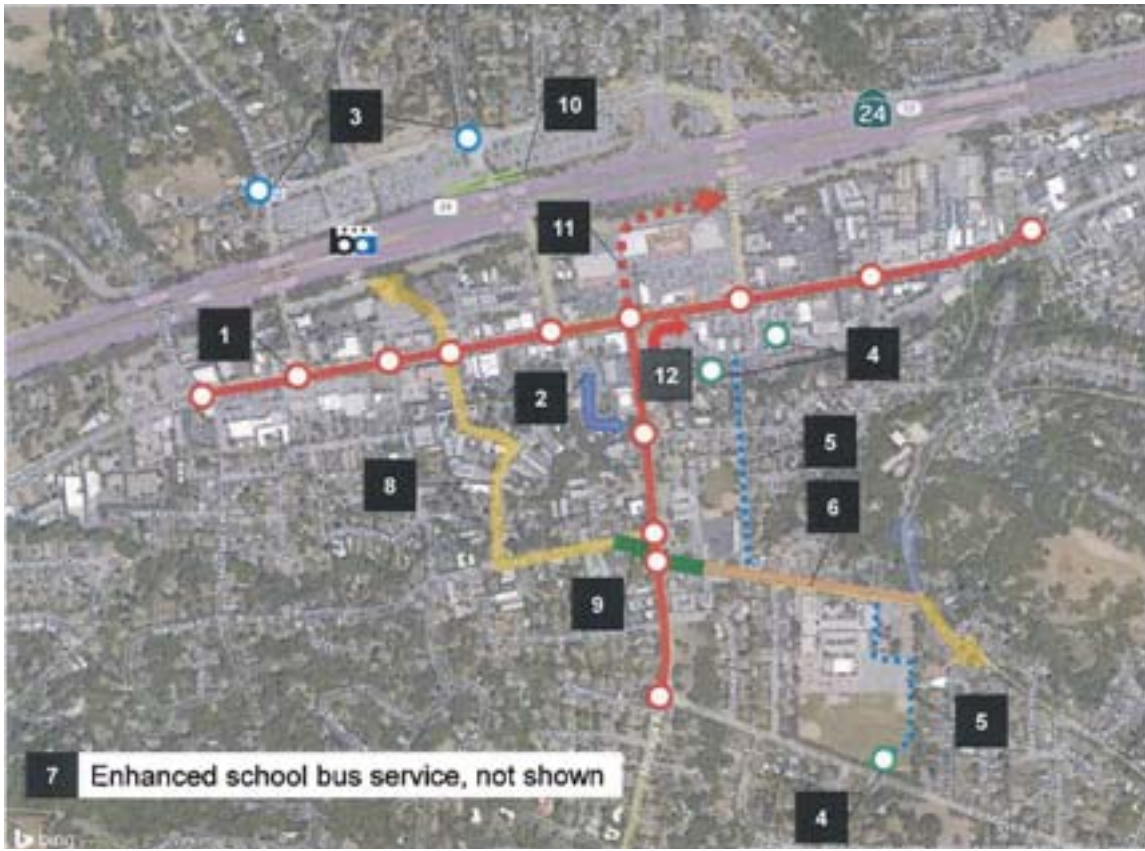
there is a talent pool of people who don't do business in Lafayette. "Public service is a privilege and part of that is saying I'm willing to put aside that sort of financial opportunity for a time."

Several members of the public spoke favoring the stricter policy. Several said they had experienced unfair decisions against them as a result of "reciprocal voting" - commissioners voting for each other's projects, with one speaker saying, "Recusal by itself is just window dressing."

... continued on next page

Traffic relief in downtown inches closer

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

- 8. Regional Trail Connection to BART/Downtown
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

ARUP Image provided

The city of Lafayette looks set to keep all remaining options on the table for traffic relief.

Lafayette is very close to adopting the remaining approved strategies for dealing with downtown congestion as the city council voted unanimously to approve all proposed strategies minus a previous proposal for a BART pedestrian bridge and with certain modifications to wording. To allow city staff time to work on language, the item will be placed on the consent calendar for the next meeting with no further discussion.

The motion was worded to include a pilot test period and barriers put in place should strategy number 12, allowing a second northbound right turn lane from Moraga Road onto Mt. Diablo Boulevard, be implemented. Additionally, strategy number 9 will be worded to give priority to a footbridge (9A) and secondly to the realignment (9B).

At a prior meeting the council members had discussed and approved the proposal for signal lights on Deer Hill Road at Happy Valley Road and Oak Hill Road (strategy number 3).

Most of the discussion at the March 12 city council meeting centered around by far the most controversial proposal - that of the Brook Street/School Street realignment (strategy number 9), which would involve creating a single sweeping intersection straight from School Street through Brook Street through what is now the Masonic Lodge, which would have to be purchased and demolished.

... continued on next page

Kurt Piper Group advertisement featuring property listings (Coming Soon, Just Listed, Pending, Sold) and a 'Buyers' section with contact information for Kurt Piper.

Residents raise flag to show city pride



Erling Horn shows the 5-foot by 8-foot Lafayette flag. Photo provided

The Lafayette Chamber of Commerce is selling special Lafayette city flags. Residents and businesses are being encouraged to show their Lafayette pride during this year of the city's 50th anniversary by flying the flag proudly.

The digitally printed flags have the Lafayette city logo boldly displayed in color on a white background. Made from heavy nylon, the flags are bound around the perimeter and fitted with brass grommets on one end. They are designed to be flown on home or business

flagpoles and have approximately a one-year outdoor lifespan.

The flags, available in either a 3-foot by 5-foot size for \$55 or a 5-foot by 8-foot size for \$110, can be purchased only from the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce and must be ordered by April 3.

Residents should either mail a check to the Chamber of Commerce at 250 Lafayette Circle, Ste. 150, Lafayette CA 94549 or call the Chamber for credit card payment at (925) 284-7404.

- P. Fisher

City continues to hash out conflict of interest policy

... continued from page A2

Lafayette resident and attorney Scott Sommer reminded the council of specific instances of reciprocal voting and pointed to the involvement of Planning Commissioner Thomas Chastain and ex-Design Review Commissioner Bob Cleaver's firms in current Lafayette developments. In his opinion he said that concerns are exaggerated over finding qualified commissioners.

"The bigger concern here is that many citizens have no confidence in the fairness of the land-use process in Lafayette and will probably never vote in a majority for any bond or sales tax measure you propose until you clean this kind of thing up," warned Sommer.

Ex-Mayor Brandt Andersson disagreed and said he'd prefer to see the more lenient Version B.

He spoke of the importance of the many volunteers who give so much to the city, spending many hours of their time for no pay in what he called the "virtuous cycle." He said Version A was a "direct assault on the virtuous cycle."

Burks and Samson both agreed with Andersson that volunteerism is very important to the city but said that it is precisely because of that, that the integrity of the government must be restored.

Council Member Mark Mitchell said that the violations in 2004 and 2016 were troubling and noted that erosion of trust in governance is a problem.

With Council Member Mike Anderson absent, the council decided to hold their vote until the March 26 meeting.

Traffic relief in downtown inches closer

... continued from page A2

Consulting firm Arup spokesperson Mike Iswalt explained the benefit of such a strategy, saying that simplifying the junction would reduce travel time by up to 10 percent on Moraga Road and would provide a direct bike and pedestrian connection across Moraga Road to the (proposed) School Street pathway (strategy number 6).

And that is exactly what most of the public comments addressed. Almost all speakers voiced their concern over increased traffic through the narrow residential streets in the Brook Street neighborhood, citing cut-through traffic and danger to pedestrians as well as increased exhaust. Iswalt spoke of possible calming measures but nonetheless almost all favored another option - that of building a pedestrian footbridge.

To that end, Iswalt explained that they had done analysis showing that travel time and delay on Moraga Road would improve by

only 5 percent with the footbridge as a result of the removal of the existing scramble phase signals at Brook Street and the crosswalk at School Street, compared to 10 percent with the realignment. However several members of the public expressed that safety of the school children trying to cross should come first.

Mayor Don Tatzin reminded everyone that just because it's on the plan doesn't mean it has to be implemented. "Tonight is not the night to do final design work," he said.

According to city staff, upon plan adoption the city will be better positioned to take advantage of grant funding opportunities for strategy implementation. Furthermore, prior to implementation each project would be subject to a whole new public review process, including potential coordination with external stakeholders such as school districts.

Lafayette's Police Chief moves on

...continued from page A2

Christensen says he is accepting a captain's job at Oakley PD, pointing out that it will cut his commute from an hour and a half to 15 minutes. "It will make a big difference for me and my family," he said.

Falk says that he is in contact with Sheriff David Livingston's office and will be receiving resumes from lieutenants interested in the police chief job. As Mayor Don Tatzin announced at the March 12 city council meeting, a group of

people from the community will interview the candidates and then, since the police chief reports to the city manager, Falk will make the final selection.

Falk expects to be able to make an appointment near the end of this month.

Christensen's retirement party will be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, March 29 at the Veteran's Memorial Center, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd, Lafayette.

Spring Market in Lamorinda!

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<p>Coming Soon!</p> 	<p>First Open Sunday 1-4</p> 
<p>8 Magee Court, Moraga Impressive Sanders Ranch home. 3696 sqft., 4Br and 3Ba on a .49 ac lot & a 3 car garage. Brand new master bath! 1,725,000 www.8MageeCt.com</p>	<p>14 Crockett Drive, Moraga Private 5Br, 4Ba 3793 sqft home in Sanders Ranch. 2 Master suites, remodeled kitchen. Backyard w/ pool & spa. \$1,775,000 www.14CrockettDr.com</p>





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PENDING!





Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, March 28, 6 p.m.
Wednesday, April 11, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, April 2, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

Monday, March 26, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Moraga School District

Tuesday, April 10, 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




Feb. 27 to March 12

Alarms	11
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	5
Traffic	34
Suspicious Circumstances	6
Suspicious Subject	1
Suspicious Vehicle	7
Service to Citizen	42
Patrol Request/ Security Check	90
Noise Complaint	2
Supplemental Report	13
Welfare Check	1
Abandoned Vehicle	
700 Block Country Club Dr.	
Accident Property	
Moraga Rd./St. Marys Rd.	
Auto Burglary	
200 Block Paseo Bernal	
Police Department	
Beat Info	
400 Block Stonefield Pl.	
Civil	
600 Block Moraga Rd.	
Police Department	
10 Block Pimentel Ct.	
300 Block Rheem Blvd. (2)	
Coroner's Case	
200 Block Birchwood Dr.	
County Order	
10 Block Buckingham Dr.	
Court	
Walnut Creek Superior Court	
DUI Misdemeanor	
Safeway	
Excessive Speed	
Safeway	
Extortion	
Police Department	
Forgery	
Police Department	
Found Property	
McCaulous	
Fraud Credit Card	
800 Block Camino Ricardo	
Not Available	
Grand Theft	
10 Block Canning Ct.	
Harassment	
Police Department	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
Safeway	
Identity Theft	
Police Department	
10 Block Cortes Ct.	
Medical Hospital	
3900 Block Paseo Grande	
Motorist Assist	
Rheem Blvd./St. Marys Rd.	
Petty Theft	
Rheem Center	
400 Block Tharp Dr.	
Public Assembly Check	
Skate Park, Moraga Common	
Rheem Valley Shopping Center (4)	
Safeway	
1500 Block Canyon Rd.	

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Council finalizes decision on hillside and ridgeline regulation

By Sophie Braccini

During a recent special meeting, the town council made its final decision regarding several important rules addressing hillside development and ridgeline protection. Visual separation standards, a Moraga Center Specific Plan exception, non-Moraga Open Space Ordinance open space density and floor-area ratio guidelines for lots over 1 acre were debated.

These decisions impact what Moraga will look like in the future and how property owners will be able to develop their properties. The council should approve the final revision of the town's rules,

which has been in the making for years, during one of its April meetings.

Planning rules and regulations take years to modify in Moraga and it's rare that this topic stirs residents' passions for more than a few months. The only ones who have had the stamina to follow this long-distance race have been the advocacy group Protect Lamorinda Open Space and large property owners, because the value of their assets is at stake. These voices were indeed the ones offering different perspectives at the March 7 council meeting.

... continued on page A10

Implications of the new rules for the undeveloped 24 acres at the south border of the town

Mark Armstrong, consultant for developer Dobbins Property LLC, which wants to develop the 24 acres between Rancho Laguna Park and Sanders Ranch – a hilly site along Camino Pablo that is county land at this time – said at a previous meeting that if the town's rules precluded development of the land, the developer would not seek incorporation of the property inside Moraga's boundaries and would proceed with more forgiving county regulation. After the meeting, Armstrong indicated that the council's decision to apply Moraga Open Space Ordinance rules to non-MOSO land was acceptable, and that previous height limitation rules on hillsides had been amended to permit planned development on the part of the lot already zoned residential. The process of incorporating the property in the town has not started yet, according to Armstrong.

Coming soon to your mailbox: the Moraga stormwater fee ballot

By Sophie Braccini

An opportunity to decide the future of Moraga's infrastructure is on its way to your mailbox. In keeping with proposition 218 proceedings, the town can now send a ballot by mail to each property owner to decide whether or not to approve a stormwater fee.

Less than 5 percent of property owners opposed this voting process in writing. Opposing property owners had to provide the town clerk with their formal written protest by the March 15 council meeting. If more than half of the town's property owners, equaling more than 2,500 people, had opposed the balloting, the process would have ended there. Only 273 residents logged a written protest.

While the written opposition was small, a spirited discussion over a stormwater fee took place during the meeting. More than half of the speakers were opposed to the fee, and the town chambers overflowed with residents interested in hearing or speaking about it.

The process will continue as prescribed by regulation. The next step will involve printing and mailing one ballot per parcel at the beginning of April. The mailing from the town will include a ballot that has to be signed after voting yes or no. The back of the ballot will list the parcels belonging to the same owner(s). Most people own one parcel and will have one vote, but those with multiple parcels will have as many votes as they have parcels. The ballots will have to be returned to the town clerk, who is

the official tabulator, in a provided envelope. A simple majority is required for the fee to be adopted.

Jerry Bradshaw, a consultant for the town on this issue, explained that this process follows the rules laid out by proposition 218. He explained that the stormwater fee would be no different than the light assessment residents pay for municipal lighting at night, and that the cost of \$10 per month for the average homeowner will be in keeping with the fees paid to utilities such as the Central Contra Costa Sanitary District or PG&E.

Public Works Director Edric Kwan made a compelling presentation of the needs that exist in town to update the subterranean runoff infrastructure, and opened his talk with Rheem sinkhole images.

Among the people who came to register their opposition to the fee, few disputed the need for repair and maintenance. The comments focused mostly on the town's management of its financial resources.

... continued on page A12



Image provided

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‘More Moraga’ offers actionable items to support the business community

By Sophie Braccini



Bob Fritzky at the Rheem Shopping Center.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Bob Fritzky took the Moraga Chamber of Commerce presidency at the beginning of the year with the intention of creating with the board “More Moraga” – a series of tangible new opportunities supporting Moraga businesses.

Fritzky, who has been living in Moraga for almost 20 years, runs his business, Med Matrx, from Moraga and has clients all over the United States. During his first years in town, he had no desire to reach out to the local chamber; for him it was a service dedicated to those who have busi-

nesses in town. He recalls a discussion six years ago with Frank Melon, then president of the chamber and general manager of the country club: “He told me that a prosperous town needs a successful school district and a vibrant economy,” remembers Fritzky, “and that the chamber does have an impact.” Fritzky realized then that contributing to the chamber would support the town as a whole, and he joined.

After Fritzky made proposals to improve the chamber’s golf tournament, he was encouraged to join the board; he was

vice president for two years before becoming president.

Fritzky and the board have worked with several stakeholders to develop “More Moraga.” The first service available to members starting April 1 will consist of grants to improve operations of local businesses. The grants will be open for retail as well as service businesses. One example, cites Fritzky, is a retail store that might need a facelift, or a local service that would need support for its marketing program. Each year the chamber will raise funds, working with strategic partners and allocating the monies to several local businesses.

Fritzky explains that right now the chamber has garnered the support of Orchard Supply Hardware for the grant program and is working with other large corporations. The objective is to start with \$10,000 the first year and to grow from there. He adds that these strategic partners, along with several chamber board members, will sit on the committee that will review the applications and allocate the grants, and that they will receive a lot of recognition in town.

The second “More Moraga” actionable item will come from a closer relationship with the Saint Mary’s College School of Business. Each year, Fritzky says, teams of business students will choose a study topic focused on ways to improve an economic aspect of Moraga impacting businesses, like how to help transport employees to Moraga or how to make Moraga more of a

college town. The teams will give a presentation to a panel made up of Saint Mary’s professors and members of the chamber, and the winning group will make propositions for change in town and be heard by the town council.

The last “More Moraga” program is the creation of a discount card sold by the chamber featuring local retail and services. Fritzky says that it will not compete with other cards sold by the local Boy Scouts or Campolindo sports teams, which feature mostly restaurants; the chamber card will offer discounts at places such as Massage Envy or Captain Vineyards. The chamber president says that the card will be part of the Shop Moraga campaign and he hopes that the sale of the card will replace all other fundraisers led by the chamber.

Fritzky says that the Moraga Chamber has been much more than an organization offering mixers and presentations; in the recent past the chamber advocated for improving the town’s regulations to make Moraga business friendly. He remembers how the chamber took an active role in advocating for the creation of Commercial Planned Development districts that will allow property owners to adopt blanket rules for a commercial area, making it simple for new and existing businesses to remodel. He believes that the actionable items of the “More Moraga” program will make Moraga an even more attractive town for new businesses while offering support for existing ones.



MCE Contra Costa

In April 2018, residents and businesses in Moraga, along with Concord, Danville, Martinez, Oakley, Pinole, Pittsburg, San Ramon, and unincorporated Contra Costa County, will have their electricity service upgraded to 50% renewable energy at lower cost than PG&E, or they can choose another service option.

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*Please have your PG&E account number on hand.

How does MCE affect electricity services for Moraga residents and businesses?

Aside from having access to more renewable energy, not much will change. Residents and businesses can choose 50–100% renewable energy from a local public agency. MCE customers continue to enjoy the same reliable electricity service, with PG&E delivering power, maintaining the wires, and providing billing and gas services.

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Yes. MCE’s 50% renewable electricity **costs less** than PG&E’s 33% renewable electricity. You will save between 2-5% (3% on average) with MCE depending on your rate class. MCE has reduced rates the past two years in a row). For detailed rates and cost comparisons visit: mceCleanEnergy.org/rates

Do CARE, Medical Baseline, and other discount programs continue with MCE?

Yes. Low-income assistance programs like CARE, FERA, and Medical Baseline are unaffected by enrollment; these customers receive the same discount with MCE as they would with PG&E. Customers in these programs do not need to re-enroll nor take any further action.

Will my billing change?

No. PG&E will continue to send one monthly bill. Instead of one fee that combines charges for the delivery and generation of your electricity, the bill will show separate charges — one for electric delivery (PG&E) and one for electric generation (MCE). **MCE’s generation rates simply replace the generation charges you currently pay to PG&E;** they are not an additional charge.

Is MCE’s power supply more renewable than PG&E’s?

Yes, considerably! MCE’s power supply contains a higher portion of renewable resources like solar, wind, bioenergy, and geothermal. According to the most recent California Energy Commission Power Content Labels, MCE’s Light Green service is 55% renewable and PG&E’s service is 33% renewable.

Which communities does MCE serve?

MCE has been serving Bay Area electric customers since 2010. Today, about 255,000 customers in Marin and Napa Counties, and the cities of Benicia, El Cerrito, Lafayette, Richmond, San Pablo, and Walnut Creek are buying more renewable energy from MCE. Concord, Danville, Martinez, Moraga, Oakley,

Pinole, Pittsburg, San Ramon, and unincorporated Contra Costa County will enroll with MCE in April.

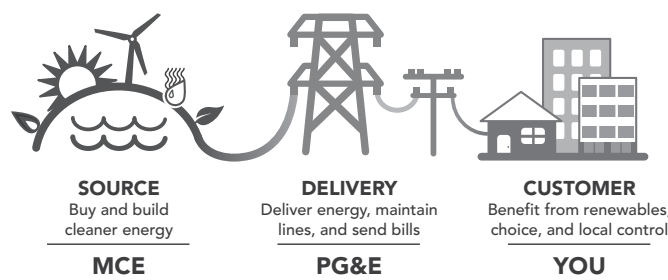
What kind of organization is MCE and who controls it?

MCE is a local, not-for-profit, public agency directly controlled by its member communities — like Moraga. Formed by the public to buy cleaner power and re-invest ratepayer dollars locally, MCE always prioritizes the interests of its customers. MCE’s Board of Directors are democratically elected leaders from each community MCE serves and are not paid for their role with MCE. In consultation with MCE’s staff, the Board determines MCE’s rates, policies and programs in meetings that are open to the public.

How is MCE funded?

Like PG&E, MCE is funded by electricity ratepayers through their monthly energy purchases. MCE is not funded by taxpayers. A cornerstone to MCE’s mission is to redirect ratepayer dollars back to local economies, and reinvest in its communities by providing low, stable rates, supporting local workforce development, and partnering with community-based organizations.

HOW MCE WORKS





Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, April 10, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Planning Commission

Tuesday, March 27, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Citizens' Infrastructure

Oversight Commission

Wednesday, April 11, 6:30 p.m.
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

School Board Meetings

Orinda Union School District

Monday, April 9, 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

Feb. 11 to Feb. 17

Alarms	57
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	6
Traffic	123
Suspicious Circumstances	4
Suspicious Subjects	12
Suspicious Vehicles	14
Patrol Request/ Security Check	82
Service to Citizen	61
Vacation House Check	17
Welfare Check	5
Accident Property	
300 Block Tahos Rd.	
Orinda Way/Santa Maria Way	
Bear Creek Rd./San Pablo Dam Rd.	
Auto Burglary	
20 Block Ardilla Rd.	
20 Block Ardor Dr.	
Barking Dog	
200 Block El Toyonal	
Civil	
20 Block La Campana Rd.	
10 Block Altarinda Rd.	
Police Department	
Moraga Way/Glorietta Bl	
Found Property	
70 Block Brookwood Rd.	
10 Block Ardor Dr.	
Hailed By Citizen	
10 Block Camino Sobrante	
MOFD Station 45	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
10 Block Camino Sobrante	
10 Block Van Tassel Ln.	
Identity Theft	
600 Block Moraga Way	
300 Block Tappan Terrace	
20 Block Las Vegas Rd.	
10 Block Camino Encinas	
Police Department	
Indecent Exposure	
Orinda Community Center (2)	
Lost Property	
Orinda Convalescent	
Loud Music	
10 Block La Campana Rd.	
Loud Party	
600 Block Moraga Way	
Medical Hospital	
100 Block La Espiral	
30 Block Park Lane Dr.	
Occupied Stalled Vehicle	
Bigleaf Rd./Rabble Rd.	
Ordinance Violation	
10 Block Bobolink Rd. (2)	
200 Block Holly Ln.	
400 Block Miner Rd.	
100 Block Coral Dr.	
El Gavilan Rd./La Espiral	
Nations	
Orindawoods Dr./Ironbark Cir.	
Petty Theft From Vehicle	
10 Block Via Farallon	
Prom Shoot	
10 Block Lavenida Dr.	
Public Assembly Check	
20 Block Orinda Way	
Public Nuisance	
60 Block Oak Rd.	
100 Block Oak Rd.	
100 Block Overhill Rd.	
60 Block Martha Rd.	
Heather Ln./Scenic Dr.	
Reckless Driving	
Camino Pablo/Eb Sr 24	
Camino Pablo/Ardilla Rd.	



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Orinda garners more awards for sinkhole repair, street repaving

By Sora O'Doherty

On the list of items for the good of the city at the March 6 city council meeting were two new awards won by Orinda staff for two projects that have already won other awards.

The Miner Road Sinkhole project was selected as the winner of the 2018 Public Works Project Award for Small Cities under the Emergency Construction Repair category by the American Pub-

lic Works Association - Northern California Chapter at their annual project awards luncheon in San Leandro. Larry Theis, director of public works and engineering services; Jason Chen, senior civil engineer; and Dustin Rath, construction project manager with Vali Cooper and Associates accepted the award on behalf of Orinda.

Given the extensive storm damage last winter throughout northern

California, there was considerable competition for the award. The winners for each local chapter of APWA will be submitted to national competition in their respective categories. Winners of these prestigious awards are announced at the national APWA conference in August each year.

In addition, the League of California Cities notified Orinda that the 2017 Annual and Measure J and

L Pavement Rehabilitation Project is the winner of the 2018 Outstanding Local Streets and Road Project award. The League will recognize the city's accomplishment at the 2018 Public Works Officers Institute award luncheon on March 29, in Monterey. The council was happy to recognize Theis as well as Farah Khorashadi, Orinda's paving program project manager.

Host family sought for girl from Czech sister city

By Sora O'Doherty



Photo provided

The Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation and the Tabor Czech Club reviewed 12 applicants and selected Marie Ruzickova as the new student. Ruzickova will come to Orinda and spend the fall semester studying

at Miramonte High School.

The foundation is now actively looking for a host family with whom Ruzickova can live. The students in this program usually arrive the first week of August and stay until the first week of February the following year, depending on the end of the semester.

Ruzickova is a member of the student parliament at her school. She likes to watch debates, interviews and read the news. She also enjoys photography, drawing and painting. Ruzickova is very much into the Scout program and would love to be part of a Girl Scout troop in Orinda.

It has been four years since the Orinda/Tabor Sister City Foundation hosted a female student. Roxana Ray came for the 2013-14 Miramonte High School semester.

Corrections:

In our March 7 issue, the article "Library parcel tax increase to be on June ballot" incorrectly stated that the remaining 25 hours per week that the Orinda Library remains open are funded by the Friends of the Orinda Library, but those hours are funded by the library parcel tax. Also, Friends of the Orinda Library treasurer Linda Landau's name was misspelled.

The March 7 article, "Nonprofit group ready to build more senior housing in Orinda," incorrectly stated that

Mark Roberts said Orinda Senior Village opened about three years ago, but he had said Monteverde senior apartments opened three years ago this spring.

In the March 7 article, "Wilder Development Agreement Amendment approved by council, but not by residents," the three-foot sidewalks installed were not ADA compliant, and builders received verbal approval from the Orinda public works department, not the planning department.

Mayor delivers annual state of the city address



Mayor Amy Worth Photo Sora O'Doherty

Mayor Amy Worth delivered the annual state of the city address March 7 at the Orinda Rotary Club meeting in the Orinda Community Center. The mayor updated members and guests on the four P's: public safety, planning, public works, and parks and recreation. She highlighted the city's awards for its rapid response to last year's sinkhole on Minor Road and its full-depth reclamation process used in street repaving. She also noted that the most popular recent project has been the food truck event every Thursday evening; people love it, she said. — S. Doherty

Moraga Via/Glorietta Blvd.
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.
El Nido Ranch Rd./St. Stephens Cir.
San Pablo Creek/Miner Rd.
Moraga Way/Glorietta Blvd.
Residential Burglary
100 Block Via Floreado
20 Block Diablo View Dr.
Revoked License
Camino Pablo/Manzanita Dr.
School Assembly Check
Sleepy Hollow School
Wagner Ranch Elementary School
Miramonte High School (2)
Supplemental Report
50 Block Moraga Way
20 Block St. Stephens Dr.
40 Block Altarinda Cir.
Orinda Convalescent
Zander Dr./Rheem Blvd.
Traffic Hazard
10 Block Honey Hill Rd.
Moraga Way/Camino Pablo
Camino Pablo/San Pablo Dam Rd.
San Pablo Dam Rd./Bear Creek Rd.
Camino Pablo/Wb Sr 24
Charles Hill Cir./Charles Hill Rd.
Camino Pablo/Wildcat Canyon Rd.
Oak Arbor Rd./Miner Rd.
Vandalism
40 Block Via Farallon
80 Block Tarry Ln.
Verbal Dispute
50 Block Moraga Way
10 Block Las Vegas Rd.
700 Block Miner Rd.
Violation Dom. Viol. Order
10 Block Wilder Rd.
Walk Through
10 Block Camino Sobrante
Theater Square
Warrant Arrest
Warranty
Cvs



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Construction site burglaries up

By Sora O'Doherty



A burglary suspect at this Orinda residential construction site is caught on camera. Photos provided

In recent weeks, the Orinda Police Department has received reports of theft at construction sites.

According to Orinda Police Chief Mark Nagel, the thefts primarily occur at single-family construction sites and the theft of property is from the area immediately surrounding the site. Items such as machinery, equipment, appliances,

furnishings and material supplies are desirable given their high dollar value. Typically, most contractors are insured for loss, but those costs are increasing.

One company operating in Orinda, Bayview Builders, confirmed that they have been hit twice. The first time over \$10,000 worth of equipment and tools were

stolen from a locked construction site storage box. The thieves cut it open, apparently with some sort of torch. The second time, approximately \$1,500 worth of electrical plugs, switches and related items were taken. As a result, Bayview set up a security camera and captured photos of a suspected thief carrying away material from its building site. The photo was turned over to Orinda police, but no arrest has been made.

According to Nagel, residential construction sites are difficult for police to monitor as the locations are typically spread throughout the city and most locations are not fenced. If there is some fencing material, it's usually secured by a padlock or another device that can be easily defeated. Nagel offered some tips to locations currently under construction or remodel to prevent thefts from occurring and also identify property in the event of theft.

He suggests that all assets on a construction site be identified, such as by engraving a driver's license number on the equipment itself and monitoring it as closely as possible. He also suggests locking gates when not in use, securing tools and



equipment, and adding lighting and security cameras, which should be placed in a location that will capture entry and exit of the construction site by persons or vehicles.

Thefts and burglaries are often crimes of opportunity and are often repeat offenses, Nagel says. A successful theft of construction equip-

ment and building supplies often leads to repeated thefts from location to location.

Nagel advised that if you see unfamiliar people in the area without an obvious purpose for being at, on or near the construction site, you should call the OPD at (925) 646-2441.

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Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors
Wednesday, March 21, 7 p.m.
Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit www.mofd.org

ConFire Board of Directors

Tuesday, April 10, 1:30 p.m.
Board Chamber room 107,
Administration Building,
651 Pine St., Martinez
For meeting times and agendas,
visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.

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

Lafayette officials react to the approval of Fire Station 16

By Nick Marnell

When the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District board of directors unanimously authorized the execution of a \$3.4 million contract for the rebuild of Lafayette Fire Station 16, there may not have been a more relieved human being in the county than Fire Chief Jeff Carman.

"The hurdles we had to jump through to get to where we are today were ridiculous in my opinion, but Chief (Lewis) Broschard had the perseverance and tenacity to stick with it and bring this to fruition," Carman said.

Not the least of the hurdles was convincing the city of Lafayette that the fire district was deserving of its business in the first place, after the county closed Fire Station 16 in 2012. Many a meeting of the city's emergency services task force – which did a top-to-bottom assessment of the delivery of fire and emergency medical service in the city – devolved into accusations that Carman was stonewalling the station rebuild in order to save the county the money.

Then surfaced the option of Fire Station 46, a joint venture between

ConFire and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District to combine stations 16 and 43 into one fire station at the Orinda-Lafayette border. But the project never got off the ground, most likely due to philosophical differences between the two agencies. "It took a lot of thought to make the decision to back away from that concept, and the decision to do this on our own was not an easy one," Carman said.

"I always felt that a new Station 16 would be the only way to go," said former Lafayette fire commissioner Bill Granados.

Slowly, the tables began to turn in ConFire's favor. "I was mayor when Chief Carman sat down with me and the city manager, and told us that the joint station on the Orinda border was not going to work, but the fire district had the commitment and the money to reopen Station 16. He was as good as his word," said former Lafayette emergency services task force co-chair Brandt Andersson. "It took longer than we'd hoped, as it nearly always does, but I always felt confident that Station 16 would be rebuilt."

The firefighters union did not

support the combined station and heralded the March 13 action by the board. "It is great to see that the plans to rebuild and staff Station 16 have finally cleared all hurdles and are moving forward," said Local 1230 President Vince Wells. "This will be a significant improvement of service in the area."

Former emergency task force co-chair Traci Reilly concurred. "When it's all said and done, most people will not remember how many hours were spent discussing and debating the merits of rebuilding Station 16, because in the near future we will once again have an operational fire station in the west end of Lafayette," Reilly said.

"It has been a long road with many a winding turn," said Peter Clark, who relentlessly pushed the fire district to action. "I and the other task force members have been frustrated by the leisurely pace of progress toward better response times in western Lafayette – arguably the highest fire danger zone in the county. So (the March 13) vote is cause for serious celebration."

Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin and Vice Mayor Cam Burks both

termed the board's approval a milestone, with Tatzin expressing cautious optimism. "Let's hope that construction proceeds quickly and without any alarms," he said.

ConFire director Candace Andersen, who had smiled from ear-to-ear as she made the motion for the approval of the fire station contract, sounded as excited as the No. 16 seed UMBC Retrievers who upset No. 1 Virginia in the NCAA Tournament. "Stating that I am delighted to see us reach this point would be an understatement," Andersen said. "We did it!"

Carman finally had a chance to exhale. "The relationship between the fire district and the city of Lafayette (and the emergency services task force) was pretty contentious when I first got here, but they too eventually gave us a chance and the relationship that has formed between us now is strong and trusting, which is important to me. Right to this point some people still questioned whether we would follow through, and I hope our actions have proven we are truly a partner in the public's safety."

ConFire beefs up ambulance service with ALS interfacility transport capability

By Nick Marnell

The Contra Costa County Fire Protection District added a new service as part of its contract as ambulance provider in most of Contra Costa County when it began offering its patients advanced life support interfacility transport service. The service is provided for patients who do not meet critical care transportation requirements but who need more than basic life support.

ConFire and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District transport patients

who call 911 to hospital emergency rooms, if necessary. That does not change. What has changed is that ConFire, through its American Medical Response ambulance subcontractor, can also provide transport between hospitals, or from another medical facility to a hospital, for a Lafayette patient who needs advanced life support care and observation. Examples of advanced life support include administering continuous positive airway pressure for patients with breathing problems

and thoracostomy, inserting a thin plastic tube into the pleural space between the lungs and the chest wall to remove excess fluid or air.

"We have been working on this for the past 15 months with AMR and our local emergency medical services agency," said ConFire Assistant Chief Terence Carey. The county LEMSAs is Contra Costa Health Services, whose medical director must approve the medical facilities for transport.

ConFire deploys up to 40 am-

bulances daily, all staffed with a paramedic and an emergency medical technician. The ambulances are stationed dynamically, and Carey said that if the demand for the interfacility transport is high, the district may have to add even more resources.

"MOFD does not have a similar program and I do not believe it is feasible in our service area," said Fire Chief Dave Winnacker. MOFD currently staffs a single dedicated ambulance from Sta-

tion 41 in Moraga with a second cross-staffed ambulance responding from Station 45 in Orinda. The chief explained that, because of the limited size of the system, taking a unit out of service for non-emergency transport would significantly degrade the district's ability to respond to emergencies and would result in delays for both response and transport.

ConFire began its ALS-interfacility ambulance transport service March 6.

Fire chiefs want extra staffing up front to fight major wildfires

By Nick Marnell

The state mutual aid system is unable to keep up with the unprecedented demands caused by larger and more frequent fires that have devastated California in recent years, according to Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Chief Jeff Carman.

Speaking at a Feb. 27 hearing in Sacramento, Carman, as president of the California Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association, asked a senate committee for \$100 million to beef up the California mutual aid system, an interagency agreement to provide emergency assistance when requested. The funds would go toward increased staff-

ing of overloaded dispatch centers, upfront deployment of resources during predictable weather events and an upgrade to the cumbersome state tracking system with newer, quicker software.

"We're operating under a 50-year-old system. Things have changed in the last 50 years, and before, we depended on mutual aid to get us mutual aid in the first 12 to 24 hours. Now we need them in the first minutes to hours," Carman said.

The chief said that at the start of the Napa and the Southern California wildfires, ConFire had resources ready to go, but the district was

unable to send crews or engines for hours because it had not received an official order. "That was as frustrating as you can imagine," Carman told the committee. "The system became overwhelmed."

Carman often kidded that each year, he would predict the worst fire season ever. But he wasn't joking in Sacramento. "How long are we going to call these fires unprecedented, when we continue to have them year after year after year? Soon they will become the norm," the chief said.

Under Carman's proposal, local agencies would put together strike teams in advance of major, predictable weather events, rather than wait for resources to be assembled and deployed after a fire starts. Should a major wildfire roar over the Lafayette Ridge into Upper Happy Valley, or jump Bear Creek Road into north Orinda, local agency strike teams would be able to deploy instantly, without overwhelming the dispatch and ordering systems. Fire chiefs would be able to pay the local strike teams without relying on local funding, which doesn't exist, according to ConFire Deputy Chief Lewis Broschard, the system's operational area coordinator.

The \$100 million to pay for this upfront staffing would come



ConFire Chief Jeff Carman testifies in Sacramento. Photo provided

through the state cap and trade program, which charges penalties to companies that exceed allowable greenhouse gas emissions. Carman drew a connection between cap and trade and wildfires in that the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere from the Napa and Southern California fires equals what every car in California emits in two years. The sooner a fire is put out, the fewer pollutants in the air.

In 2017, Cal Fire received \$200 million from the greenhouse gas funds through the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, which manages the state mutual aid system. Local districts received \$25

million. But most of the mutual aid comes from local agencies, like ConFire and the Moraga-Orinda Fire District, which regularly send out engine companies in response to mutual aid requests. Carman said that state officials were unaware of how little money trickles down to the local agencies.

But hope appears on the horizon, as Carman said that Gov. Jerry Brown wants to meet with local fire officials. "So after eight years of totally ignoring local government fire agencies, and after two years of giving us a fraction of our ask, we at least have his attention," Carman said.

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Firefighters lobby Washington

Firefighters traveled to Washington in March to lobby Congress on various industry issues, including the continuation of federal grants for emergency personnel. From left, Local 1230 President Vince Wells, U.S. Rep. Mark DeSaulnier and MOFD engineer Dan Elbanna, a member of the Local 1230 executive board. –Nick Marnell



Photo provided

Letters to the Editor

Information about storm drain fee

Here are some answers to questions about the proposed fee to fix Moraga's storm drains:

- All property owners in Moraga soon will receive ballots to approve or disapprove a fee for work on our storm drains, with one vote per parcel.
- The deteriorating storm drains are at the end of their expected life spans. Some of the underground pipes, such as the one that failed in Rheem in 2016, were built with deficient materials.
- The new fee revenue can be spent only on the storm drain project. Some Moragans appear to be unclear on this.
- Included in the project are all underground pipes, inlets, catch basins, culverts, ditches, and channels that convey stormwater from Moraga to reservoirs and rivers.
- This work will take many years, so the fee will be collected for many years. It will appear on our property tax bills.
- The costs are beyond the ability of the Town's present financial resources. A dedicated revenue stream is required.
- The Town of Moraga's spending per resident is one of the lowest in Northern California. It has to be a lean operation because it gets back only 5.32 per cent of the property taxes we pay, which is less than most cities receive.
- The deteriorating storm drains can only get worse, and the opponents of the proposed fee have not put forward an alternative plan for this much-needed work.
- This fair voting procedure was approved by California voters in 1996 to help public agencies improve and maintain essential infrastructure. Although new to Moraga, it has been employed by other cities throughout the state.
- Ballots must be returned by May 15 in the self-addressed, postage-paid envelopes provided. Only signed ballots will be counted.

John Haffner
Moraga

A vote of no

Moraga's proposed storm drain ballot has resulted in a lot of discussion and division within the community. It is as much about the process as the need for money itself.

It seems to me this is in large part because of the town's haste to take advantage of the recent memory of the sinkhole and a declaration of fiscal emergency (which the town hasn't addressed or provided updates on since last summer/fall). Town officials have selected a special ballot process that subjects schools and churches to taxes, requires excessive contingencies in forecast needs because of the uncertainty and incompleteness, is costing taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars to get to a special ballot, and then creates confusion among voters.

It also has (rightly so) eroded trust in the town council's honesty and forthrightness, with only the Lamorinda Weekly and SMARTMoraga calling out inconsistent statements and partial truths, while other websites and newsletters simply parrot the town's messages.

All of this could have been avoided if the town waited just a few months to craft a well thought out plan and put this on a regular ballot. It's quite clear that the town hasn't sufficiently explored all the options available to it, nor has it even presented a viable financial plan for using the new tax money if the measure passes.

I'm voting "no" because I don't agree with the way the process is being handled and that there is no definitive plan on what they will do with the money raised. I'm voting "no" to send the message to the town that they should do this the right way.

Linda Johnson
Moraga

Teacher salaries

We as teachers are so grateful for everything that the community does to help us educate the future members of Lafayette. As teachers we work hard to help your children be thoughtful and prepared citizens of the world.

Along with the children, we are the bedrock of one of California's top rated school districts.

In this capacity, we, the teachers of Lafayette School District, are asking for your support. Right now we are negotiating for a fair contract for 2016-17 with the district. We are currently working without a contract. Unfortunately, the district has offered no pay increases on the salary scale for teachers for the second year in a row. As anyone who lives in the Bay Area well knows, aside from inflation (around 2%), the costs of housing, food and transportation have all risen sharply in recent years and continue to climb. Over the last 10 years our raises have averaged 1.39% annually. We deserve more.

The district is working with a challenging budget. However, teachers, the foundation of any education program, are not prioritized in financial planning. Last year the superintendent of SF Unified made a firm financial commitment to teachers. The Chronicle quoted him saying that maintaining fair wages for teachers would be a financial stretch, but the district was willing to make it work because of an "ongoing commitment to attracting and retaining talented educators." Lafayette needs to make a similar commitment to its teachers to retain and attract talented educators. Teacher salaries must be prioritized.

If you care about maintaining the high-quality education that the students and parents in Lafayette have come to expect, you can help us. Please write to the Lafayette board members, attend board meetings, and ask your children's teachers what you can do to show support. As a community we know how much you do for this district and the children who live here. One of the best ways to support the children of Lafayette is to support their teachers.

Respectfully,

Christina Freschl, Katie McSherry, Betsy Morris, Kitty Hellman, Shannon Venturini, Kim Stern, Jan Broad, Katie Norris, Sue Somers, Chelsea Doolan, Danielle Boone, Stephanie Tompkins, Molly Shannon, Evelyn Dykstra, Wendy Duncan, and Joannie Wedell
Teachers of Happy Valley Elementary School

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

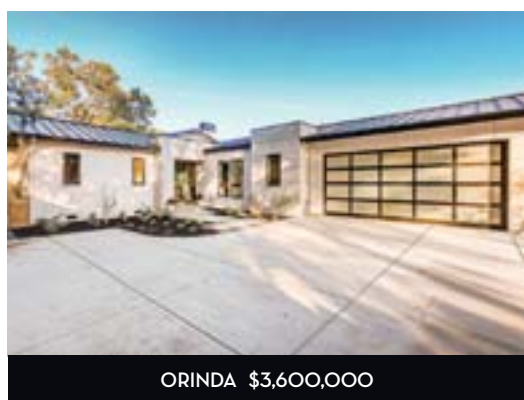
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Men's Dinner with Giorgio Tavechhio



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The Raider's Italian kicker, Giorgio Tavechhio, has not had a typical trajectory in to the NFL. Born in Milan and moved to Moraga, he played football at Campolindo and Cal, with coaching by MVPC's Mike Ahr, on his way to filling a critical spot in the Raider's lineup.

At 27 years old, his journey is like out of the movies.

Rheem Theatre to become a community asset

... continued from page A1



Image provided

Getting the property owner to sell the town's art deco movie venue at a reasonable price has been a goal of local officials, especially since the operators, Derek Zemrak and Leonard Pirkle, closed the doors in January. Since then intense negotiations have been taking place between the mayor, Vice Mayor Teresa Onoda and town staff, the MCF, and the property owner. Puri had listed the complete theatre parcel, including two restaurants, for \$4.75 million.

The MOU indicates that the town will support Puri's application to build 48 units on the lot adjacent to the theater, a 38 dwelling unit per acre density, with a height of 48 feet - 7 feet higher than the theater. The building will have multiple layers and patios and will not be a block structure; only a small portion of the roof will be taller than the theater. The memorandum also indicates that the town is retaining its discretion to approve, deny or add conditions to the proposed development. The town states its intent to conduct a timely proceeding of the application. To do so, Town

Attorney Michelle Kenyon said that the town would condense its usual three-step development process.

The transfer of ownership will not happen until the development is approved. Puri also agreed to lease the theater for \$5,000 a month to an operator that would reopen the closed movie venue.

Pirkle indicated in an email that when he and Zemrak made the decision to close in January after months of deliberations, they stated that they would be interested in reopening the theatre after close of escrow on the building and after the major repairs and reduction of liabilities had been completed throughout the structure.

"Our main concern remains the liability issues within the building and a long-term plan for ongoing operations," Pirkle said. "We want a safe environment for the moviegoers and a long-term plan for uninterrupted operations."

Council Member Kymberleigh Korpus was the single voice of opposition to the agreement on the council. She said that she felt that

the council was tying its hands from the very beginning by agreeing to expedite the process. She explained that four-level buildings along the scenic corridor did not correspond to town standards, and that if the planning commission reduced it to three levels it could void the MOU. Council Member Jeanette Fritzky recused herself since her husband sits on the MCF board.

MCF's president Tom Schnurr said that the foundation was committed to making the theater a community asset and securing its continuous use. He added that the foundation was developing a plan, assessing the maintenance needs, so everything would be taken care of before reopening. There were rumors that Puri would support the maintenance effort, but the property owner did not confirm that before press time.

At this time the former operators have not said that they intend to come back to Moraga prior to the close of escrow, which could take years. The theater could be leased to another operator.

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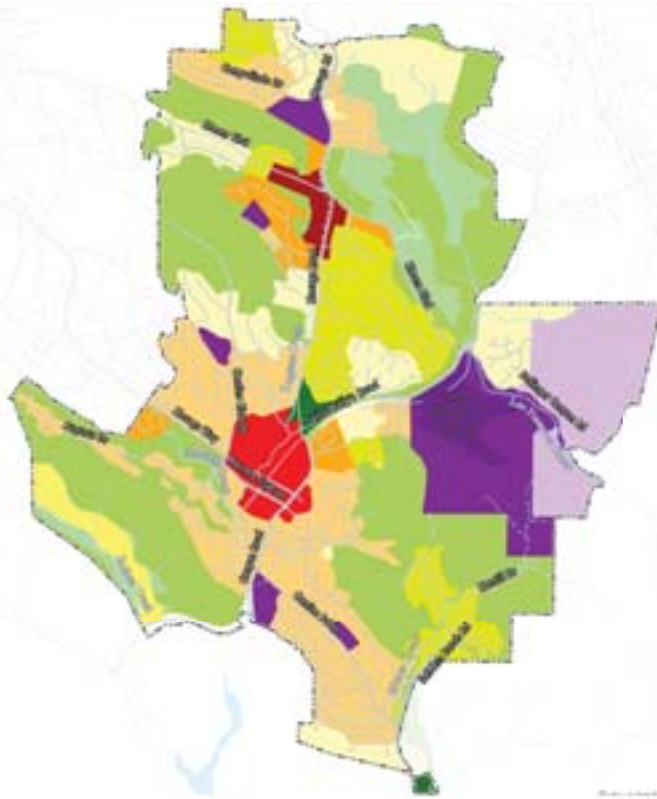
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Hillside and ridgeline regulation

... continued from page A4



General Plan Land Use Map



Image provided

Council members first needed to make a final decision regarding the regulation of building heights so it would not obstruct views of the hills. Previous meetings led to the decision that these views would be observed from a number of specific locations on Moraga scenic corridors (Moraga Road, Moraga Way, Rheem Boulevard, St. Mary's Road, Camino Pablo, Canyon Road, Bollinger Canyon Road, or Donald Drive along the ridgeline of Mulholland Hill). There, an observer needed to be able to see a certain amount of undeveloped ridgeline. The council members had to decide whether 35 percent of the ridgeline should still be visible, or 500 feet from the top or 200 feet from the top of the ridge.

Staff prepared simulations of the different rules for the council members to make a decision. Property owner Stacey LaBarge asked not to add any new cumbersome rule to already protected hills and noted that the height of the observer, whether that person would be on one side of the street or another, changes what is observed. Protect Lamorinda Open Space represen-

tative Susan Jones said that her group considered the 35 percent rule a more elegant solution, and the council members agreed.

The elected officials were also asked if the rule should be applied to hillside development only or also to valley floor buildings such as the shopping centers. David Bruzzone, whose family owns the shopping center at the crossing of Moraga Way and Moraga Road and surrounding areas, explained that enforcing such a rule to the valley floor would seriously cripple the economic feasibility of the entire approved Moraga Center Specific Plan.

Council members had different opinions on the topic but chose not to make a decision at the meeting. Instead they agreed that the discussion would be part of the MCSP's revision. Vice Mayor Teresa Onoda and Council Member Kymberleigh Korpus were appointed to an ad-hoc committee that will propose new options for the development of the MCSP, including view shed preservation. Onoda said that in her opinion, larger setbacks and lower building requirements would be

necessary to address this question. The two council members have a maximum of nine months to return with ideas.

Most open space areas in Moraga are regulated by MOSO; the non-developed Bollinger area is zoned a "study area," and some land along Rheem Boulevard and Palos Colordos properties are non-MOSO open space. All council members agreed that present regulations limiting development to one unit per 5 acres, or one unit per 10 acres, or one unit per 20 acres as determined by the planning commission should be continued, but that some criteria such as adjacent densities or soil stability should be taken into account.

Finally, the town council unanimously agreed to limit the size of homes on lots over an acre to 5,500 square feet, if the new construction is visible from one of the scenic corridors.

The council decided to set the date of either April 11 or 25 for a final hearing of the new regulation, followed by a vote of the council to adopt it.

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Orinda Community Park

... continued from page A1

Parks and Rec Director Todd Trimble inherited the project when it was well underway, and presented the staff report at the March 6 Orinda City Council meeting. Trimble noted that there is currently only one women's restroom and one men's restroom in the park, that the park's play equipment is obsolete, and that the new plan would incorporate exercise equipment.

When public comment began, the amphitheater was the first matter of concern. John Cahill, a 37-year resident of Orinda, said that the message to ORSVP was "get out of Orinda." JoAnn Cahill said the ORSVP brings the community together, but they need bathrooms near the amphitheater, a ticket booth, and space for concessions.

Jill Gelster, ORSVP administrative director, told the council that the theater group has rented the amphitheater for 35 years and last year added pennants and painted the facility to match the Globe Theater. Contacted after the meeting, Gelster said that the ORSVP had heard nothing of the plans for the park until shortly before the meeting.

When the city decided to build the public restrooms in the park they added a concession stand/ticket booth to the construction. Gelster said that then Mayor Victoria Smith gave ORSVP a grant of \$1,000 which was used to improve the city's electrical box, enabling the use of theatrical lighting effects. If any of the proposed plans are implemented, Gelster said, it will prevent theatrical performances in the park. She also said that the group uses the Kindergym area for storage in winter, and in the summer for keeping props, furniture, and costumes. Without the space, ORSVP cannot function, she said. Gelster was also concerned about the ticket booth, the locations of the bathrooms, and concessions. ORSVP is due to begin auditions in April and will open its 35th season in June.

Former Mayor Laura Abrams said that the first responsibility of local government is to do no harm. She asked the council to not disenfranchise ORSVP, and also suggested that the bocce ball courts might be better in Orinda Oaks Park.

Comments then shifted to the sports wall, which is located adjacent to the tennis courts and used by people to practice hitting tennis balls. Drew Diefenbach works with the city of Orinda and coaches tennis in the park. He works with a lot of kids, he said, and thinks Orinda Community Park is a great, safe park. While he would like the bathrooms nearer the tennis courts, he thinks it would be a bad idea if it takes away from other park functions. Tennis is huge in Orinda, he said, and the wall is used by many people. Todd Nyman, a 26-year resident of Orinda, said that the

sports wall is the most highly utilized area of the park all day long, all year long. Lots of friendships start at that wall, he added. Several commenters stressed that a single person who wished to play against the wall would never ask two people wanting to play a game to leave the court, if the wall were relocated inside the third court.

The park is one of the major features of the civic area in Orinda Village, and has been the focus of future planning for some time, including during the downtown development studies conducted last year by the Urban Land Institute and the National Main Street Center. The project began as a capital improvement project in 2013. In June of 2016 the city executed a contract with Callander Associates Landscape Architecture, Inc. for the purpose of design and development of an overall master plan. Callander conducted three public meetings with the Parks and Recreation Foundation and presented four different options. A draft Master Plan was approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission in December 2016. Construction costs were then approximately \$2.6 million.

Although Orinda staff felt the additional dialogue was productive in building consensus during the process, the project funds were exhausted before presenting to the city council. The project also suffered from unintentional delay caused by the Miner Road sinkhole and a period of transition in city administration. On Dec. 19, the council approved a \$8,340 increase to the authorized contract amount for the Master Plan Services Agreement, raising the total amount from the original \$25,000 to \$33,340.

After hearing comments from the public and questions from the council, City Manager Steve Salomon stepped in and suggested that the discussion be discontinued and the matter returned to the staff for further work. Many of the parks features are well loved and need to be improved, he said, noting that no one attended the meeting to speak in favor of adding bocce ball courts. The budget includes \$100,000 for the park design, and is expected to be sufficient.

Mayor Amy Worth suggested that perhaps the bocce ball courts might work at Wilder, and Vice Mayor Inga Miller, noting that this was the first time the council had seen the plans for the park, asked about the enhanced entrance, and wondered if the amphitheater used by the OSVP could be suitable for another use. Trimble responded that the amphitheater could be used for events to raise money for the city. Council Member Dean Orr suggested that staff figure out what the next steps should be and not just hand the project back to Callander for further work as he felt that the project had clearly not been managed the way it should have been.



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A graduate from the University of Notre Dame, Michelle started her career in the IT industry. Since then she has been awarded a patent from the US government, built and sold a business, run various non-profit organizations, taught at our local schools all while raising 4 children. Michelle has lived in Lafayette for 20 years and is the newest member of the Chris Swim and Tracy Keaton team. With Michelle's organizational and creative skills, she brings a fresh new perspective to the real estate industry. Her connections with the community along with the expertise and experience of her team makes Michelle the perfect agent for your real estate needs.

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Moraga stormwater fee ballot

... continued from page A4



This sinkhole developed in March 2016 Photo provided

Approximately seven residents said that they would not support the fee because either they did not trust the proposition 218 process, or they thought that the process was being rushed when millions of dollars will be coming back to the town sooner or later, or that the town had been spending money for other projects, on consultants or legal fees when the resources should have been prioritized to maintain the town's assets.

Some residents disapproved of the fact that the fee would impact the Moraga schools, Campolindo High School and Saint Mary's College. These large entities will pay depending on the amount of impermeable surfaces that cause runoff, the most taxed entities being the commercial areas.


A representative of the largest property owner in the Rheem Shopping Center, U.S. Realty Partners, came to voice its support of the fee, saying that it is better to be proactive than reactive.

Moraga Chamber of Commerce president Bob Fritzky added that businesses had been negatively impacted by the col-

lapse of the culvert under Rheem Boulevard and that the chamber therefore supported funding a plan to prevent future infrastructure failure.


Other supporters of the fee said that repairs after something fails cost a lot more than prevention, that events like the sinkhole can disrupt not only businesses but also schools, and that unmaintained infrastructure can affect home values.

The town has a web page dedicated to the subject at www.moraga.ca.us/StormDrainFunding.



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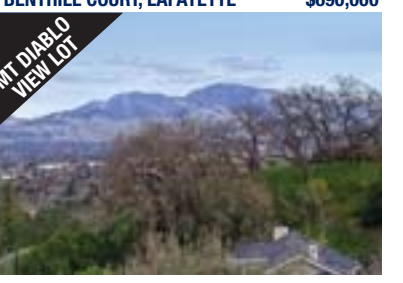
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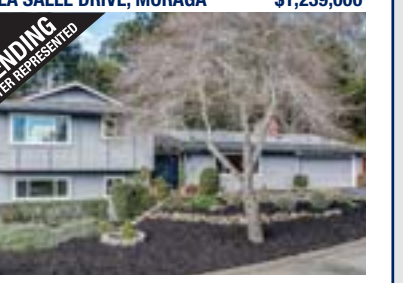
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~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

Team-living PODs provide young adults with supportive environment

By Diane Claytor



Tuesday nights at the Team Living PODs means one of the residents is cooking dinner for his fellow PODsters. Photo provided

Sam, a bright, articulate 25-year-old from Danville who requested we not use his last name, admits to having had a difficult time during his younger years. Diagnosed with both depression and anxiety, it was hard for him to make friends. He was always nervous. And, he said, “when there is a strain on one aspect of your life, other areas like school and family relationships can crumble too.” He found himself lacking direction and realizing that things needed to change.

Sam’s not alone. According to a 2015 National Institute of Mental Health report, 6.3 million teens suffer from an anxiety disorder, a number that has been steadily increasing.

Another rising statistic: the American Psychological Association reports 1 in 68 children are diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum (complex disorders of brain development characterized by varying degrees of difficulties in social interaction, communication and repetitive behavior).

Fortunately for Sam, and others like him, there is the Orinda-based Aspen Network, an organization helping young adults with social and behavioral difficulties learn to live a better and fuller life.

The Aspen Network was founded nine years ago by Meg Fields, who holds a doctorate in clinical psychology and spent more than 20 years as a psychiatric emergency room nurse, and her husband, Mike, who has been an emergency room nurse for more than 15 years. Wanting to provide a safe and accepting place for young people with social challenges, anxiety disorders and spectrum behaviors, Aspen Network offers programs for teens and young adults, enabling them to learn and grow with peers of their own in a comfortable and welcoming environment.

There are adventure-filled overnight retreats in Tahoe; One-on-One Coaching designed to help create goals and make next-step plans; and a weekly Living Skills Group, offering a safe space to share and learn. The newest program – the Team-Living PODs – offers co-ed residential living for young adults 18 years and older.

On a winding road in the Lamorinda hills, a group of Team-Living PODsters reside in a large house with a warm, inviting atmosphere. These residents may have social anxiety, depression, spectrum dif-

ferences, learning disabilities or basic fear of the unknown; many have felt the need to isolate themselves in order to remain safe. “We understand that each individual is a whole, perfect person in an imperfect, judgmental world ... a world that does not always understand that accommodations and structure are necessary,” Meg Fields stated. The PODs offer a comfortable environment where life skills needed for independent living can be learned and mutual respect and nurturing is emphasized so friendships can be formed, self-esteem can increase and “our young people can realize their potential to move forward,” she noted.

Meg Fields explained that many of the PODsters drive, go to work, to school; she explained that they’re frequently the people who did well in school but “get missed. They’re often lacking in certain skills: organizing, prioritizing, remembering, observing, planning.” They go off to college but without a parent or teacher guiding or assisting when they hit those proverbial bumps, they’re unable to succeed. “They may begin to unravel and depression and anxiety peak,” commented Liz Wilson-Palmer, an Aspen Network transition specialist.

This is what happened to J, an articulate former Aspen Network resident who recently moved from the POD to his own apartment – but returns frequently to see his friends. The 29-year-old, who preferred we not use his name, attended community college, only to discover that an AA degree “wouldn’t get me very far. I went home and collapsed,” spending most of his time alone in his room. He became a PODster, making friends and achieving goals. “The people, structure, community and group living provided a lot of positive experiences,” J said. “There’s just enough structure without being intrusive or overbearing. The program is very good at pushing you just to your limit, maybe stretching your comfort zone a bit but not bending you so far that you break.”

J described the program as intense but positive and productive. His 18-year-old friend, Jennifer, an extremely bright and talented PODster for the past year, agreed, stating that Meg and Mike “give residents both options and freedom.”

“Our residents have independence but most need an infrastructure to address their challenge

areas,” Meg Fields said. Wilson-Palmer agreed, noting that many “simply need that extra scaffolding to support them.” For those that need it, basic daily living skills are built into Aspen Network’s program. “Some need to be reminded to change their linens,” Meg Fields stated, “or take a shower.” Grocery shopping, cooking lessons, laundry training, and money management education are all offered.

Sam, the young man from Danville, has been a PODster for three years. He landed a job he enjoyed,

proclaiming that “having that success and giving me more confidence allows me to branch out in other aspects of my life. [Aspen Network] gave me that first push. They don’t guide you every step of the way; it’s more like they give you a kick in the right direction,” he said.

The Fields will soon be opening another residence to provide transformative experiences for more young people with social or behavioral challenges. For information, please go to aspennetwork.net.

Easter

March 25
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9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

April 1
EARLY MORNING SERVICE
6:30 a.m. | Communion Served

March 25
EGG HUNT & POTLUCK BRUNCH
12:15 p.m. • RSVP Required

April 1
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8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
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4 years and under

March 29
MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE
7:00 p.m. | Communion Served
Childcare provided

April 1
CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS
Pre-K - 4th Grade
9:30 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.

March 30
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'In the Fade' (Aus dem nichts) - A dark drama at Orinda Theatre

By Sophie Braccini



Image provided

German screenwriter, producer and director Fatih Akin created "In the Fade," a drama that tackles an all too contemporary tragedy: terrorism. Akin once said that the violence happening all over the world made him very angry; from that anger was born a movie of violence, destruction, injustice and revenge.

Katja is a beautiful young German woman whose life is shattered when her Kurdish husband and her son are killed in a terrorist attack. When the normal system fails her, she takes it into her own hands to get justice.

Former top model and international actress Diane Kruger ("Inglorious Bastards") leads the film with a powerful interpretation that granted her a well-deserved Best Actress award at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival.

The genesis of the movie began in 2011, according to Akin, when the neo-Nazi group National Socialist Underground was prosecuted for killing 10 people, mostly Turks, over a seven-year period. He said what infuriated him most was that for all these years, the police, the media and the justice system all assumed that if these people were

killed, it was because they must have been drug dealers and that they had been killed by the Turkish mafia.

The director added that while the idea of the movie started with a political theme, as the character of the mother developed, the political content of the movie began to fade, and it became more of a film about grief.

Kruger explained this was why she was interested in the film, and in playing this role, which is so far from herself. She explained that the story needed to be told of what happens to those who survive and have lost loved ones, and how they can continue to live with the horror of what happened and with injustice.

The violence of the terrorist acts infuses this entire film. As Kruger put it in one interview, we are in a world where that reality is here to stay, and films must account for this distressing part of our reality. While the film's radical ending may not have been necessary to express the real and terrible drama victims' families go through, Akin said that he does not judge the path that Katja, the main character, takes, and that each viewer will make his or her own judgment.

"In the Fade" received the 2018 Golden Globe Award for Best Foreign Language Film. It will play at the Orinda Theatre as part of the International Film Showcase for at least one week starting March 23. For more information, visit lamorindatheatres.com.

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Perlmutter gallery exhibition challenges the mind and pushes boundaries

By Sophie Braccini

Expect to be challenged in a positive way when you visit Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery – challenged to encounter art in a way that is different from what is usually expected, and challenged to reflect as well as to experience the art that is on display. The current "Bio-Genesis" exhibit, which is on display until April 7, propels visitors through the intersection of art and science, delighting the intellect and stirring emotion.

On the wall of the gallery located at 3620 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette, beautiful and strange creatures seem to have crawled out from ancient times, coming back to life in vivid colors. The detailed paper sculptures of Judith White Marcellini come straight out of the Cambrian Explosion, when these strange creatures emerged on Earth 540 million years ago.



Parents and children at Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery experience creatures of the Cambrian period as seen through the eyes of an artist.

Photo Jennifer Perlmutter

White Marcellini recreated the creatures in a larger scale – most were only a few millimeters long – using collected fossils from the period. From the flat images set in ancient rocks, she visualized and generated 3D organisms painted in brilliant hues. With the displays, the artist provides explanatory cards that describe what these living things were like.

Also set on the wall is a striking timeline starting with the dawn of existence, represented by a scale of what we know as the evolution of life on Earth, with the arrival of mankind represented by a sliver at the top of the scale. Like the artist, one can't help but wonder what caused the Cambrian Explosion, what caused the relatively sudden multiplication and diversification of life forms after billions of years in a world of simple, single cell life forms.

Next to the creatures from our past, Perlmutter offers a juxtaposition with Jill Taffet's work, whose visual creations explore the relation between creation and consciousness. Taffet is known for her large-scale immersive video installations, motion drawings and New Media. Taffet would have liked to

fill an entire dark room with motion drawings at the Perlmutter gallery, but the space does not permit it. Instead, screens have been installed to exhibit the artist's lively creations.

Each animation is made of original paintings, created frame by frame by Taffet. The short videos show the transformation of her vision and repeats itself continuously. Frames representing a specific phase of the work can also be purchased and displayed. Visitors can download an app on a tablet or smartphone and when pointing to the still painting, the entire animation comes to life on the tablet. The artist says her pursuit is to discover new ways of looking, thinking and experiencing the universe in which we live. Her intention is to create phenomenological experiences that evoke wonder and provoke inquiry.

The artistic animations that she created can be purchased on a thumb drive and projected on any screen.

The Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery is open Wednesday through Saturday, from noon to 6 p.m. and by appointment. For more information, visit jenniferperlmuttergallery.com.

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Local high school students join national walkout

By John T. Miller



Students who participated in the nationwide walkout at Miramonte could register to vote and write postcards to elected representatives at tables set up on campus. Photo John T. Miller

Hundreds of high school students in the Lamorinda area participated in the national walkout protesting gun violence, joining over 3,000 other participating schools in the movement that took place at 10 a.m. March 14 across the nation's time zones and Puerto Rico.

Mercifully, it seems, the heavy rains abated for the 17-minute event here, and returned just moments after the student protests were over.

At Miramonte, students from the Acalanes Union High School District organization Equiteam organized and ran the event. Areeba Yasin, Zahra Hasanian and Thalia Kelly set up tables for voter registration, post card writing to the area's elected officials, and gave out orange ribbons representative of the #neveragain movement.

They chanted slogans such as "No hate, no NRA or gun violence in the USA," "Keep your guns out of our schools," and "When do we want this? Never again!"

Many teachers wore orange in support of the protests, and one woman, a parent and a teacher, wore a flak jacket.

A teacher commented that he believed "the NEA and the NRA should be going toe-to-toe, and I'm wondering where my union is on this."

The event ended with a long and heartfelt minute of silence for the shooting victims in Parkland, Florida.

Miramonte principal Julie Parks praised the students who organized the event, and said, "We believe in supporting the students' freedom of speech and encourage them to have have a voice. Students who chose to leave class early were asked to submit a reflective statement as an appropriate consequence for missing class."

At Acalanes High School, approximately 300 students joined the national multitude and walked out of classes. The students gathered in the front quad and silently walked to the corner of Pleasant Hill Road and Stanley Boulevard where they stayed for the duration of the walkout.

Kate Gilberd and Fiona Warburton, seniors who led the event,

walked through the crowd and gave a somber recital of the names of each of the victims of the Parkland shooting.

In a letter home to parents, Acalanes principal Travis Bell stated, "This was not a school-sponsored event, as walking-out is not something we can plan or promote." He also stressed that appropriate consequences would reinforce the school's "core values of respect, engagement, and student safety." Like Parks, he affirmed students' Constitutional right of free speech.

After the walkout, Academy sessions were available for all students to write letters to the families in Parkland, Florida.

Over 200 students chose to walk out of class at Campolindo High School to attend the student-led rally for school and public safety and show solidarity with the national movement.

Sofia West, a junior, along with a group of fellow students, organized the rally. Participants gathered in the main quad area of the school and listened to a pair of student speakers, Sam Nunn and Fiona Deane-Grundman, who delivered compelling messages about gun violence and its effects.

At the end of the event, student leaders had information for registering and preregistering to vote.

Principal John Walker called it "a powerful display of student activism and a clear call for increased school safety."

The events at the AUHSD schools meant students missed five minutes of their fourth period block and the first two minutes of the Academy period. All three schools called on their respective police departments, school administration, and other personnel to help supervise those who decided to walk out in order to ensure the students' safety.

At Bentley School in Lafayette, the entire student body of approximately 350 students participated in the walkout, gathering in the sports field for a reading of the 17 names.

Afterward, students had their choice of activities, from creating art and video messages to the victims' families, letter writing, or talking about issues such as safety,

gun laws, and how they wanted their futures to look.

Arlene Hogan, head of school for Bentley, said, "The students were remarkable. They were very passionate about participating."

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Photo Andy Schreck

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Five Moraga Odyssey of the Mind teams advance to state championships

Submitted by Rich Render



Moraga Rotary's Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School eighth-grade Odyssey of the Mind team advances to the state championship. From left: Madison Lee, Amrita Malhotra, Jacqui Huebner, Caroline Botsford, Olivia House, Daniel Granicher, and Marshall Franklin. Photo provided

Five Moraga Rotary Odyssey of the Mind teams will advance to the state championship competition at UC Riverside after placing first or second in their group at the March 3 San Francisco regional competitions. These teams, out of the 14 teams sponsored by Moraga Rotary Club, were part of the 102 teams competing overall. Moraga Rotary had two teams in grades K-2, three teams in grades 3-5, seven teams in grades 6-8, plus two Campolindo High School teams. The two Campolindo teams advanced to the state championship.

Odyssey of the Mind is an international creative problem-solving program that engages students in their learning by allowing their knowledge and ideas to come to life in an exciting, productive environment. Participants build self-confidence, develop life skills, create new friendships, and are able to recognize and explore their true potential in this creative and competitive program.

Moraga Rotary began sponsoring the Moraga Odyssey of the Mind teams in 2005, and have continued the tradition for 12 years. Every year, many Moraga teams go on to the state championships, and at least one team goes to the world championships held in the Mid-West in June.

First-time coach Irene Jai of a new grade 3-5 team said, "None of us knew what to expect on competition day at Concord High School. Walking through the school hallways, it was thrilling and impressive to see all the unique backdrops, props, costumes and makeup. We watched an entertaining classmates' performance on the Mockumentary Problem, where they recapped at the end with an original rap song. Our problem was the Structure Performance Problem, where you construct a flimsy balsa wood structure that weighs no more than 15 grams, and compete to hold the most weight before collapsing. We were amazed by the Moraga team A whose structure held 755 pounds,

winning first place. Our team did not advance to state, but success was defined by surpassing all our expectations, improving by leaps and bounds, and working out team conflicts respectfully."

"What I found to be most successful was the community bonding in our Moraga Rotary teams. The anchors are Reena Malhotra and her son Aman who is the Student Leader for Rotary. They supported each team by sharing valuable information from the get go and stopping by each performance to cheer for the Moraga teams. Whether your child likes to perform, build, design, draw, write, laugh, or entertain, Odyssey of the Mind is a boundless platform for solving problems using their own ideas."

Coach Cynthia Granicher of an eighth-grade team said, "The competition day was filled with nervousness and excitement and literal thunderstorms with rain and hail, but nothing could deter our team. They were all positive and supportive and continued to think of ideas to improve their performance. Two of the favorite comments from the judges were on ideas that the team came up with in the car on the way to the tournament. When their team name was called for the first place spot, the team went wild and the parents were happily shocked. It was an excellent day with all parents in attendance to lend their support and the team leaving with an immense feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment for the work and time they put into their performance. This is our second time in the past three years advancing to the state competition, and we are hoping we can make it to the world competition this time."

Several other Lamorinda teams from Orinda Rotary, Orinda Intermediate School, Burton Valley, Lafayette and Glorietta elementary schools also advanced to the state competition.

CCI dogs visit Miramonte students

By Cathy Dausman



Photos Cathy Dausman

Miramonte High School seniors Sophie Bubrick and Emilie Carrington recently introduced three beautiful girls – and their human partners – to Anthony Ohlson's special needs class.

Bubrick and Carrington oversee a therapy dog program at Miramonte, which now includes bringing Canine Companions for Independence volunteers and their dogs into Ohlson's class. They receive community credit for the program and are working to ensure it continues after they graduate.

Fundraising efforts last month on campus raised \$330 for the nonprofit CCI.

Two hearing assistance "girls" – a golden/Lab mix named Isabelle, and her kennelmate and dog friend Banni, a yellow Labrador – were escorted by owners Penny Hansen and Janet Levey. The third was a black Labrador and new mama dog named Maisy. Maisy is a breeder dog for CCI; she

whelped her first litter in January, said owner Kenny Tuckerman.

Hansen and Levey are hearing impaired; Hansen explained their type of assistance dog tends to be more lively. That much was quickly apparent, as Isabelle befriended everyone eating lunch and puzzled over tennis balls seemingly stuck under table legs.

Banni was happy being asked to greet students by visiting, paws up onto their laps, or doling out wet, sloppy kisses.

Carrington assured her visitors the students are super excited when the dogs visit.

"It's good to see them smile and interact," Ohlson agreed. Student reaction ranged from "hello doggy!" to body language proclaiming "get her out of my space!"

Hansen and Levey demonstrated how the dogs alert their owners to ringing doorbells, and explained the dogs are also trained to wake their humans up when a smoke alarm triggers. "They give you a sense of security," Levey says.

Professional Canine Companions instructors teach dogs to master over 40 commands during the six to nine months the dogs spend at CCI's Santa Rosa headquarters. Dog graduates become either service dogs, hearing dogs, facility dogs or skilled companion dogs and are matched with adults or children with special needs.

The resulting CCI dog graduate is said to be valued at approximately \$50,000, Hansen says, although some students in Ohlson's class might simply call each dog's presence priceless.

Canine Companions for Independence is a nonprofit organization founded in 1975 which enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships. For details, visit www.cci.org.



Teen Opinion

The perfect li(f)e

By Lauren Kim

We sit in our homes, our charming little castles and look down onto the problems of our community. Most of the time, we choose to look away and ignore the victims on the ground. This is the colossal flaw in our world. We sit in our perfect little homes, with our perfect family, and our perfect life with our heads buried in the sand. We hope, and we pray that something will happen, but never take action. We shut our eyes and close our ears and hope that this situation will blow over. It's a beautiful lie that everyone's living.

The lie that things will magically get better, that world peace will just happen, and bullying will somehow stop.

This superficial statement that hangs over our heads and blinds us from the real truth. And what created this shiny, beautiful lie? Society. Our society creates a world in which we are forced to keep our heads in the sand, and blindly ignore the problems that lie at our feet.

The fine print in our society dictates grotesque rules to be accepted, or deemed normal. Anyone who doesn't follow these rules is cast out, like defective toys. I used to follow these rules too. I would keep my head down in fear of being like the people that were being bullied everyday. I somewhat still do. I look at the people ridiculed at my school and I turn my head away sometimes in fear of standing out, and fearing what seemed different.

Our fellow human beings that we assume abnormal are persecuted every day because of their skin color, race, sexuality, gender, disability or religion. They go out into the world and are ridiculed by the "ordinary" people who fear anything different. They abhor it because it contrasts and challenges their own standards. The anomalous people are the victims of society, laid out for the per-

secutors to snicker and point at. The only solution to this crude knockoff we call society is the involvement of bystanders.

The bystanders who ignore the spiteful remarks, the horrifying incidents and think "at least it's not me" are the ones who can do the most. But the bystanders can choose to help those victims, to try and aid them. The spectators who ignore the tormented could at least step up and speak for the ones who have no voice. They can rebel against the tormentors that rule with their superficial power, reconstructing this prison that we call society. But the simplest thing they could do, is to say plain, comforting words to heal the wounds that have been ripped open by the tormentors.

The smallest act of humanity could save someone's life. It would only take some empathy, or decent manners, or even a small smile to help the victims that have been brutalized by our artificial society. The famed writer George Orwell (Eric Blair) said "Being in a minority, even in a minority of one, did not make you mad. There was truth, and there was untruth, and if you clung to the truth even against the whole world, you were not mad."

We shut the doors and leave the radio blaring to keep ourselves in this beautiful, nurturing lie. We do this because we cannot handle the ugly truth of the flawed world we live in. The vile, frightful truth that our fellow human beings are being tormented daily because we look the other way.

Will you keep believing in the deception of our daily lives?

Lauren Kim is a freshman at Acalanes High School. She loves Batman and her dog, and enjoys reading and writing. Her favorite book is "Murder on the Orient Express" and her favorite movie is "Dunkirk."

In Memory

Kitty Ann Tate-Lipscomb-Miller



Kitty Ann Tate-Lipscomb-Miller passed away peacefully at 40 years of age on Feb. 20, 2018. Survived by her beloved husband, Alex Miller, a longtime resident of Orinda who brought his bride here only three years ago from Sacramento. Kitty leaves behind her mother Sharron Lineberry, father Timothy Lipscomb and her brother Kenneth Lipscomb. She will be missed by her family and many friends.

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.

Riding a trend: e-bikes catch on in Lamorinda

By Sora O'Doherty



Larry Tessler Photos Sora O'Doherty

E-bikes are becoming more and more popular. Whether for touring purposes or for commuting to work, they are appealing to a wide variety of riders in Lamorinda.

Former Stanley Middle School principal Tom Schindele has been biking all his life. The 76-year-old purchased an e-bike a month ago and is planning to ride the Katy Trail ride in Missouri, some 220 miles, in June. When Schindele was 45, he spent 24

days biking through England and France by himself. He plans to ship his e-bike in a large box when he travels this summer, either by plane or train.

Here in Lamorinda, bicycle shops Hank and Frank's and Sharp Bicycle, both in Lafayette, stock an increasing number of e-bikes, which come in models for mountain biking, commuting, or just riding in comfort. Sharp carries Trek bicycles and Hank and Frank's carries the Giant brand.

Moraga resident Larry Tessler is 79 years old and loves the e-bike he bought off the internet about two years ago. Up until his 60s he rode a regular bike, but now he rides his e-bike recreationally, and only when it is warm. While he was interested in e-bikes, they were expensive, but he found a couple of guys doing a Kickstarter: FLX Bikes, who have a group on Facebook. He paid just \$1,300 for his bike, and couldn't be happier. "Originally," Tessler said, "I had difficulty with balance when the bike was stopped, but never while riding." Tessler always bikes alone. While his wife is very athletic, she doesn't bike.

Tessler's bike has a throttle, so he can coast a little, but it won't take him up a hill. The battery on his bike goes 40-55 miles on a charge, which takes two to three hours when plugged into a charger. He's never run

the battery out, and his longest journey has been 22 miles. He only likes to ride on off-road bike paths, so he throws his bike on a bike rack and goes to Walnut Creek to ride the Iron Horse Trail. He adds that you have to be wary about leaving your bike. Tessler has spent about \$500 to \$600 on accessories for his bike, which he keeps in a pack on the back of the bike.

Lafayette resident Michael Dimitruk is much younger than Tessler, but at age 40 with three children, he finds that he has less time to ride. He likes to bike in Briones Regional Park, but it has steep hills. On his regular mountain bike, he says, he really needs to pace himself so he won't run out of gas halfway through a ride.

"I end up riding slow and steady, trying to keep a constant pace and relentless forward progress," he says. "But on my e-mountain bike, I can cover four times the ground in the same amount of time, essentially riding at a sprint the whole way."

For James Leach, 68, the author of "The Sustainable Way" it's all about the climate. He's been a bicyclist for years and is concerned about global warming. He likes to use his bike to run errands, but he lives on a steep hill in Lafayette, so he uses his Trek bike, intended for riding on the road. He has a rack to carry his purchases home. Riding on the roads, he says you quickly learn which streets to avoid, like Moraga Road and Mt. Diablo Boulevard. One of the benefits of riding an electric bike is that it is easy to use alternative routes. Hills are not a problem. "The city could improve bike access," he says, "but I generally feel safe." With no assist, Leach says an e-bike feels like a heavy bike, but with assist it feels kind of like someone is pushing you. Leach uses his e-bike strictly from his house. For recreation, he still rides a regular bike. All the e-bike riders interviewed believe that disk brakes on e-bikes are much better than rim brakes found on regular bikes.

Leach is enthusiastic about e-bikes. "You don't have to leave your e-bike at the station," Leach points out, "you can take it right onto the train." He added, "some e-bikes even fold up to make it easier to take them with you." He is now on his second e-bike. The first he used to commute daily to Dublin, a trip of over 20 miles. He would re-

charge the battery while he worked, then ride home on the Iron Horse Trail. "I would leave early," he said. "Driving would take me 35 minutes, biking only took 45 minutes and you'd have gotten in your exercise too." The only downside he saw was bad air days in the summer time. He notes that bike touring companies are now using e-bikes, and that they are very popular in Europe.

Matt Sharp, who bought his father's bike business and has been in the business about 26 years, said 10 years ago he wasn't impressed with electric bikes, but in the last couple of years, he has been very impressed. E-bikes run about 14 pounds heavier than regular bikes, including six pounds for the battery and eight pounds for the motor, which sits in the middle of the frame. He finds that his e-bike customers fall into three main categories: commuters who ride all the way to work, or just park at BART; older people who can't ride like they used to and want to continue enjoying bicycling; and fit, active cyclists looking for another challenge, to go places they haven't been able to explore at greater distances. Sharp sells e-bikes ranging from around \$2,299 to \$5,000.

Hank and Frank's General Manager Andy Knickerbocker says there are now more options, with six to seven models representing the full range of bicycle styles: commuter, light fitness and full suspension mountain bikes. The bikes carry a limited two-year, no quibble warranty on the motor, battery and head unit (these units attach to the handle bars and tell riders how fast and how far they are riding, for example.) Battery replacement, which is rarely required, might run from \$500 to \$800, and batteries can be recycled.

When he was much younger, Schindele took tours with Bicycle Adventures with family members and worked for them as a tour guide one summer. Summarizing the benefits of owning an e-bike, he said, "The e-bike makes it possible to ride on the trails in our area and to also do some touring. It provides longer rides and easier rides, many of which I could not do at my age without the assistance given."

"If I tried a tour with a normal bike and was able to ride for awhile," he added with a chuckle, "I would probably be exhausted and have little energy for other activities."



From left, Tom Schindele and James Leach.

Looking Good in Lamorinda

Spring fashions arrive with a splash of color

By Moya Stone



Jewelry design by Janet Kaufman

Photo provided

Have you heard? The color of the year is ultraviolet, according to Pantone, the American company known for studying trends in color for the design and textile industries. Every year they predict what particular color will dominate in fashion.

So we may see a lot of purple shades in the coming months, but Eliza Jamkochian from Glamorous Boutique in Lafayette informs me that we're going to see many colors and in interesting combinations: "Red is hot and it's everywhere, styled with mustard yellow." As for seasonal fashions spring and summer are all about the dress, which is available now in familiar silhouettes with added detail including bell-sleeves and scalloped hems. As Jamkochian reminds us, "Classic dresses are a must-have as they are staple pieces that will not go out of style."

Susan Goldie of Sewnow in Lafayette is talking color, too, this season. "It is refreshing to think about yellow, tomato red, sky blue and all shades of purple from ultraviolet to lavender." Goldie has just returned from a textiles show in Los Angeles where, she reports, innovative fabrics were highlighted - fabrics with texture, shiny vinyls

and space-age looking treatments. Goldie was also impressed by the increased availability of fabrics made in the U.S. and sustainable fabrics at prices more affordable for home sewists. Goldie and her staff at Sewnow are gearing up for spring break sewing camps.

Jewelry designer Janet Kaufman is set for the new season working in mixed metals. The Moraga resident has been making jewelry for 20-plus years and is inspired by movement. "I design earrings that are light and move freely." She sees jewelry as an enhancement to women's innate beauty and a way to make a statement. For spring Kaufman is offering feminine pieces. "I plan to bring flowers and pearls into my spring line just in time for Mother's Day and weddings."

I asked San Francisco fashion reporter Tony Bravo what he thought of my latest fashion read, "Infinite Variety: The Life and Legend of the Marchesa Casati" by Scot Ryerson and Orlando Yaccarino. "One of the best artist/muse biographies I've ever read and a compelling story about personal fashion evolution," he said. "Casati's journey needs to be read to be believed."

Marchesa Casati was quite the It Girl in early 20th century Europe. With a family fortune backing her, she lived a large life in several Italian palaces and another one in Paris, bespoke and designer duds, jewels not just for her neck but also adorning the collection of the live exotic animals she kept close at hand - black panthers, snakes, and monkeys. Casati's unusual look and flair for fashion made her an icon of her day and she continued to inspire modern designers such

as Alexander McQueen and John Galliano well into the 1990s. She's worth knowing about for any fashion enthusiast.

I was sorry to hear that Bedazzled bead shop in Lafayette is closing after 17 years. The store owner tells me the commute is getting to be too much. A popular destination for local crafters, the shop will be missed.

Speaking of commutes, I recommend a drive to Lacis Museum of Lace and Textiles in Berkeley to

view their new exhibit called The Fringed Shawl. Opening on April 6th, this exhibit takes a look at the history of the shawl from the must-have accessory of the Victorian Lady to the fashionable home decor item of many a hippie in the 1960s. Take a look at the website for more information: lacismuseum.org.

Enjoy the season of color and go forth in style.

Moya Stone is a fashion writer and blogger at overdressedforlife.com.

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Mobility Matters helps seniors overcome transportation hurdles

By Jon Kingdon

It's easy to take for granted the ability to drive, to go shopping and make the required visits for one's doctors and dental appointments. For many seniors, the ability to travel by car or public transportation has been lost, cutting them off from the general public and forcing many to move prematurely to long-term care facilities.

For a long time, seniors have lacked alternatives to driving themselves and taking public transportation. Lafayette resident, Elaine Welch, the CEO of Mobility Matters, saw a problem and made it her mission to address it. In 2005, Welch, who also has an MBA degree from Saint Mary's College, launched a program called Rides for Seniors to address senior mobility needs. "After retiring as a registered nurse and working as a volunteer ombudsman, I was very upset at what I saw in the nursing homes," Welch says. "I wanted to do something about it."

Doing something meant addressing the problem head on. Welch rode the buses and cabs to learn what was and wasn't available for seniors and how difficult it was for them to utilize public transportation. "These seniors needed someone to drive them to their medical appointments and not to just be dropped off. They need to be escorted into the doctor's offices and to have someone to help them with their shopping and finally to make sure that they are settled back in their homes, not just dropping them off at the curb. Our services are 'door through door.'"

Located on Carol Lane in Lafayette, the Mobility Matters building, which is next to and belongs to Our Savior's Lutheran Church, was originally used as a crisis helpline service that began in the 1970s. "The church helps us as one of their missions and rents us the building at a very reasonable rate, but we are a private 501(c)(3) non-profit organization," says Welch.

Though located in Lafayette, the services provided by Mobility Matters extend throughout Contra Costa County, servicing over 250 clients and utilizing 130 volunteer

drivers. In the Lamorinda area, there are 45 individuals that utilize the service and 27 drivers to meet their needs.

Sam Sotelo, director of programs for Mobility Matters, says his goal is simple: "We are just trying to make the world better for everybody." In 2017, Mobility Matters provided 3,179 rides in Contra Costa County.

The program is individualized, with only the volunteer driver and the client in the car to insure the safety of both. With some clients with vision and balance problems, it is essential that the volunteer's focus be entirely on the client.

Sotelo says there is a constant effort to raise funds for the program. "One of the main grants is through Caltrans and some smaller grants from the county and private foundations. There are also donations from individuals as well and Mobility Matters holds an annual raffle to help fundraise."

Drivers may not be younger than 25, or older than 75, due to insurance requirements. Using their own vehicles, the drivers can request reimbursement for their gas expenses and must go through a training program Welch runs, utilizing her nursing background. "We do a three-hour driver's training class. We explain how the clients call in for help and how we make the assignments for them and what types of visits they are making," Welch says. "We stress how to work with the clients who are more vulnerable physically. We familiarize them with their special equipment, such as walkers, and what to do should the client slip and fall. Unlike Uber, Lyft and cabs, we assist riders from start to finish."

Though Mobility Matters would like to help all those in need, they simply do not have enough volunteers and financial resources to do so. The seniors cannot be under 60 years of age, and Mobility Matters cannot accommodate those who require wheelchairs as they require special vehicles to be transported.

If the company is unable to

directly provide rides to an individual, they will do what they can to address and facilitate needs. "We have a toll-free transportation, information and referral helpline where we attempt to match riders with providers that can meet their needs," Sotelo says. "We have a 'Way to Go Contra Costa' resource guide in hard copy and online which will inform them of the services that fill their needs."

Mobility Matters recently expanded the services to include veterans in the county with similar needs. Unlike seniors, there is no age minimum for a veteran in need. "With so many veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorders and physical disabilities, many of them are falling into the patterns of the seniors as they grow older," Welch says. "These individuals need the type of help that we are providing our seniors. Ideally we would like to have a veteran serve as the volunteer driver as they can share similar stories and situations."

The need for volunteers is constant, according to Sotelo. "Many of the drivers develop great friendships with their clients. We would like to double the number of drivers we have currently. If we could do that, we could then provide 'quality of life' rides such as attending meetings, getting haircuts and other needs."

Pamphlets for Mobility Matters are available in senior centers, resource buildings and libraries across the county. Being forced to give up a driver's license can be a shock to the system. Welch wants to be able to provide help to those people immediately. "I want every Department of Motor Vehicles office to have a station that has a sign that says 'mobility equals independence; you don't have to drive to keep your independence,' and to offer the information from the American's With Disabilities Act and to let everyone know what is available for them once they can no longer drive."

For those looking for help, or those looking to volunteer, call (925) 284-6161.

Seniors

What to do when you see early signs of memory loss

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson

What do you do when you notice a close family member or friend having more and more challenges with memory or making sound decisions ... and how should you approach this sensitive subject?

Recently, I was asked to do a podcast interview with a geriatrician. She asked me if there were any books for families dealing with this beginning stage of a dementia that brings on worry and concern. Sadly, my answer is that I could think of none that just addressed this issue.

When my mother first started to exhibit some lapses in judgment or memory, I didn't want to confront it head on for two reasons: 1) I did not wish to see this fiercely independent woman (who was driving all over San Francisco with friends a decade younger than her) lose her independence. I needed her to be my strong role model even at 86. This is called denial. 2) My clinical background said I just needed to gather more information before jumping to conclusions. So, I started a log of times she forgot to take the keys out of her garage door as she drove away, or repeated the same story to me five times, or when she went to see six different doctors with vague symptoms.

I had been providing my mother a personal assistant once a week since she was about 80 years old. She just needed someone to help her with organizing paperwork and following up on the telephone for her when she had questions regarding a bill or an upcoming medical

appointment because her hearing was impaired and phone calls were challenging. Her personal assistant came for two hours a week and was amazed at how well my mother was. She was my gatekeeper as mom's memory and judgment started to fail. Her dementia was from small strokes.

Not everyone has this type of information and monitoring of a parent at a distance or even nearby. Often those with dementia like Alzheimer's disease are socially appropriate for a long time into the illness, and even the family doctor might miss it on routine appointments. But, when you have the red flags that safety is at risk, it is time, or probably past time, to jump in. Start slowly, maybe with someone you call a friend or a trainer, when they are really a paid caregiver from a reputable agency, like Eldercare Services.

If you jump in and say, "Mom your memory is failing," most likely you will be faced with total resistance and denial. How each of us approaches a parent can make all the difference in the success of the intervention. The best way to design a good plan is to bring in a third-party expert, called a professional geriatric care manager, that will give you the most chance of success with your intervention. You might have a hard time with being entirely honest with a parent, but a professional care manager can help you to design "therapeutic fiblets." These are sometimes called white lies that are to be used to reduce stress for everyone, and most of all

protect the self-esteem of the person with the early stage dementia.

If an evaluation has not been done, the care manager will help you make that happen and connect you with the best dementia screening clinic in your area.

At Eldercare Services, we have classes on caring for someone with a dementia. We start our next series at 5:30 p.m. March 21; classes are complimentary and held every other week for a three week period. We also offer a free support group for families held on the second Thursday of each month at 6 p.m. in our office. Advance registration is required, please call to register at (925) 937-2018 or visit www.EldercareAnswers.com.



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989, which now employs over 200 caring people. Eldercare Services has been providing Bay Area families with care management, home care services (caregiving), advocacy, counseling, support groups and education for 29 years.

A savory side perfect for spring

By Susie Iventosch



Carciofi (Artichokes) with Olives and Capers

Photo Susie Iventosch

I've been studying several foreign languages on my iPad with the Duolingo language app. It is really fun and the more languages you study, the more time it takes because Duo challenges you to keep up learning streaks. So, every day I try to get in 5 to 10 minutes per language. It's especially fun to learn the words for various foods in these languages, which helps to understand menus when dining in ethnic restaurants, as well as words used in recipes of foreign origin. The languages I've been studying are Spanish, French, German and Italian. Because I wanted to make

an artichoke dish for this week's food column, I decided to look into the word in each of these languages. In French and German it's very similar to English, artichaut and artischocke, respectively. In Spanish, it is alcachofa, but in Italian it's carciofo (plural: carciofi), which is different and fun to say, kar-chaw-fo. This week's Carciofi with Olives and Capers can be served as a side dish, or as a condiment to serve with meat. It would also be fantastic served on a sandwich, much like the olive salad on a mufuletta sandwich, or as the topping on crostini.

Carciofi (Artichokes) with Olives and Capers

- 12 oz. jar marinated artichoke hearts (I use Trader Joe's Marinated Grilled Artichoke Halves)
- 1 cup Greek olives, pitted and halved
- 1 small yellow onion, chopped
- 2 Tbsp. capers
- 2 Tbsp. olive oil
- Optional: ¼ cup grated Parmesan for topping

In a large sauté pan, heat oil and add onions. Cook over medium-high heat until translucent, about 5 minutes or so. During this time, drain the artichoke hearts and pat dry with paper towels. Cut into bite-sized pieces. Add to cooked onions, along with olives and capers. Continue to cook until artichokes and onions begin to brown slightly. Remove from heat. Serve with a sprinkling of Parmesan cheese over the top.

Cooking Term of the Week

Bain Marie

Bain Marie is a hot water bath in a large container, into which smaller cooking containers with food are placed to be gently cooked by the heat in the water surrounding them. This process can be done on the stove top or in the oven, and is often used for custards and terrines.



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.

Middle school walkout in Moraga

By Sophie Braccini



Students participate in the March 14 walkout at Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School.

Photo Sophie Braccini

There was a little break in the rain on Wednesday morning March 14, long enough for Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School students to assemble for 10 minutes just before their third period for a walkout against gun violence, in solidarity with the students and school staff across the U.S. commemorating the killings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, exactly one month before.

Over half of the 400 JMIS students gathered around the flagpole at the school's entrance. A few parents came in support of the student-led event. All teachers had been asked to stay in the classrooms to supervise the students who decided not to participate.

Joan Danilson, principal at JMIS who witnessed the walkout, said that she was neither for nor against the walkout but supported the fact that students expressed themselves regarding social issues. The event, organized by eighth-grader Chase Obsitnik and her friends, proceeded in an orderly fashion.

Five middle school girls stood by the flag with a sound system and talked to their peers who listened with sustained attention. They read a poem from a Parkland student who had died, they read the list of those killed during the Parkland shooting, and mentioned all the shootings that have happened in the United States since Columbine. Chase asked for a minute of silence before calling the meeting to an end.

Besides the messages of remembrance, the students also called for politicians to enforce tougher gun control laws and institute a ban on assault weapons. In the crowd, students were holding

signs reading slogans such as, "I've seen smarter cabinets at Ikea" or "Your A.R. or my life," or simply, "I stand for safety."

When parents left, some found a sheet of paper with the text from the Second Amendment on their windshield, stating: "A well regulated militia, being necessary for the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed."

Superintendent Bruce Burns, who came to JMIS to see how the

event went, said that he received protest letters from a few parents who were opposed to the district authorizing the walkout. He informed JMIS parents of the position taken by his district in a letter where he emphasized the healing power for the students to express themselves in a meaningful, safe, respectful, empowering and non-political way.

(See the article by John Miller on page B3 about the local high school walkouts.)

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Scratching the surface to aid in local dog adoption

By Cathy Dausman



From left: Izzy Smith, Jordan Cooney, Kelly Dissman and Tyler Kaplan.

Eighth-graders Kelly Dissman, Jordan Cooney, Izzy Smith and Tyler Kaplan are on a mission. The foursome, members of Lafayette's Girl Scout Troop 30577, recently completed a publicity campaign designed to benefit Lafayette-based Shake, Wiggle N' Roll Animal Rescue Foundation. It will also help them earn their Silver Awards, the highest award a middle school Scout can earn. Only 14 percent of girls in the Girl Scout Northern California division achieved this honor during Division fiscal year 2017.

In the aftermath of the 2017

North Bay wildfires, dogs, as well as people, needed rehousing. To help, the students from Stanley Middle School designed posters, e-flyers and donation boxes and wrote letters and posted photos online to promote fostering and adopting displaced dogs while raising awareness about animal euthanization. While developing teamwork and communication skills the girls hope this project will offer the nonprofit ongoing support.

Shake, Wiggle N' Roll founder Maryann Lovi said she feels blessed the girls selected her small

but mighty organization for their joint project. Each girl had an obvious love for animals, Lovi said. In fact, Cooney's family recently fostered, then adopted two dogs – Stevie and Louie – directly from Shake Wiggle N' Roll.

"They couldn't be in better hands," Lovi says. She educated the Scouts about the organization's all-breed acceptance of animals from overcrowded shelters as well as how she takes in animals surrendered by families who become unable to care for them for any reason.

The students have submitted the project paperwork to the Girl Scout office and should receive their Silver Awards in the fall, says Silver Award parent volunteer Lisa Palma.

"These girls are really working hard," says volunteer troop leader Nicole Carberry about the Stanley group. She notes four other groups are also working toward their Silver Award.

"It's pretty cool when you are 12 or 13," Carberry said.

To learn more about Shake Wiggle N' Roll's part in animal rescue, visit www.adoptapet.com/shake-wiggle-n-roll-animal-rescue-foundation/.

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 March 25 Supper Sunday: Holy Week Sampler Platter!
 March 28 Tenebrae Service: 7pm
 March 29 Maundy Thursday: Supper & Service: 6pm
 March 30 Good Friday: noon and 7pm
 March 31 The Great Vigil of Easter & Sacrament of
 Holy Baptism: 7pm (A festive reception follows in the parish hall)
 April 1 Easter Sunday: 7am, 9am, 11am

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ART

Valley Art Gallery reopens with the new show "Art for the Picking." With more than 300 works reflecting multiple motifs, styles and media, the show continues our mission to represent the best of the best of more than 100 East Bay artists.

12th Annual Arts Ambassadors Exhibit, celebrating music and artwork from Orinda students. The Exhibition will run from March 27 through April 15 at the Orinda Library Art Gallery, with a reception from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. on April 12. Gallery is open for viewing artworks while mixing and mingling with the arts ambassadors.

The Moraga Art Gallery presents an international exhibit, "Impressionism Times 2," featuring the work of lifelong friends: ceramicist Jacqueline Proulx of Walnut Creek and the celebrated French-Canadian expressionist painter Rita Rodrigue, a resident of Quebec. The show, which also includes the gallery's 13 member artists and several guest artists, runs from March 21 to June 2. The public is invited to an opening reception from 5 to 7 p.m. on Saturday, March 24. For more information, visit www.moragaartgallery.com or call (925) 376-5407.

MUSIC

University of California Alumni Chorus and Chamber Chorus presents Voices of Change II; We Must Have a Dream - A program commemorating the life and leadership of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the 50th anniversary of his assassination at 7 p.m. on April 4 in Hertz Hall, UC Berkeley campus. Featured works are Undine Smith Moore's Scenes From the Life of a Martyr with narration by Noah Griffin, and the premiere of a new commissioned work by Paul Ayres with text from a sermon by Dr. King. Tickets: \$20 - \$15 - \$10 at Brown Paper Tickets (brownpapertickets.com), or at the door. www.ucac.net

THEATER

Town Hall Theatre presents Ayckbourn's dark comedy "Woman in Mind" through March 24 at Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, in Lafayette. Tickets are \$18 - \$30, and are available through the Box Office at (925) 283-1557 or online at www.TownHallTheatre.com.

Town Hall Theatre History Guided by Local Food Adventures: The Powerful Jane Austen and The Women Behind Town Hall from 4 to 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 14 at the Town Hall Theatre Company, 3535 School Street, Lafayette. Tickets: \$40 Town Hall Theatre subscribers; \$45 non-subscribers. Box office: (925) 283-1557; www.townhalltheatre.com

LECTURE & LITERATURE

Charitable Gift Annuity Seminar at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 24 in Delphine Lounge, adjacent to Café Louis (Saint Mary's College campus). Learn how you can make a charitable dona-

tion that will also earn you income for life, receive tax benefits, and provide support for yourself or a loved one. Charitable gift annuities are a tax-savvy way to support your favorite causes and care for loved ones.

KIDS, PARENTS & TEENS

The Moraga Junior Women's Club will host the 36th annual Spring Egg Hunt from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March 24 at Moraga Commons Park, featuring an egg hunt, games, bounce houses, rock climbing wall, face painting, and arts and crafts. Tickets are \$15/child (age 0-8). Order online at www.moragajuniors.org/events/spring-egg-hunt.

Mt. Diablo Peace and Justice Center 20th annual Peace through Art and Writing Challenge. This year's topic: "The Next Chapter of the American Dream." Using your unique, artistic voice, create a visual and/or literary interpretation that conveys your response to these thoughts. The contest is open to middle and high school students in Contra Costa County. They may submit works in three categories: Essay, Creative Writing and Art. The deadline for entries is March 26. Detailed information on the contest requirements is available at www.creatingpeacefulschools.weebly.com or you may contact the Center office at (925) 933-7850.

The Lafayette Rotary Club is pleased to announce its "Annual Candy Scramble." This event is open to all children ages 2 through 2nd grade. The event takes place at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 31 at Lafayette Plaza (corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road). The park lawn will be covered with candy for the kids to put in their baskets. The youngest are always given extra time to get their share! The Bunny along with the police and fire departments will be there to take pictures with the kids. And don't miss the Jonny's Donut Dive (for adults only).

Orinda Rotary Club's Annual Egg Hunt at 11 a.m. on March 31 at the Orinda Community Center Play Field. There will be over 2,000 eggs and prizes for all as well as pictures with the White Bunny. Ages: toddlers through kindergarten and grades 1 and 2 only. Be sure to bring a basket. Rain cancels the event.

You're invited to take a photo with the Easter Bunny, so bring your camera to the suite between Dover Saddlery and Nation's Giant Hamburgers between noon and 3 p.m. Saturday, March 31 at the Rheem Shopping Center at Rheem Boulevard and Moraga Road in Moraga.

OTHER

17th Annual Women's Film Festival LunaFest at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 22 at the Orinda Theatre. This unique film festival highlights women as leaders in society, illustrated through nine short films by women filmmakers. The films range from animation to fictional drama, and cover topics such as women's health, body image, relationships, cultural diversity and breaking barriers. There will

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be a VIP reception starting at 6 p.m. in the Fourth Bore Tap Room. Tickets are \$25. Advance tickets only, purchase at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lunafest-film-festival-tickets-43121612905?aff=es2>.

Contra Costa Tale Spinners at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 22 at the Orinda Community Center Room 6. Join us for a story swap with featured teller, Bill Zarchy, writer, teacher, film and video photographer, and natural raconteur. Share, listen, expand your universe.

Give Back in Lamorinda Style at the Moraga Valley Kiwanis Lobster Fest taking place at the Saint Mary's College Soda Center from 6 to 11 p.m. Saturday, March 24. The evening includes a silent auction, music, dancing, Lobster Pot Drawing, Wine Cellar Raffle, lots of lobster and tons of fun! Local high school Key Club members serve the dinner and join in the dancing. Tickets are \$55 per person at moragavalleykiwanis.org or (925) 388-0492.

The friendly felines of Community Concern for Cats will be back at Pet Food Express in Lafayette and Pleasant Hill, plus Petco in Walnut Creek from 1 to 4 p.m. this weekend, March 24 and 25. For more information, see www.communityconcernforcats.org.

Free workshop "Are your 1099 workers really employees?" A reality check" is being offered from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 28 at the Contra Costa Small Business Development Center, 300 Ellinwood Way, Bodega Room, 2nd Floor in Pleasant Hill. Please register for the free workshop by March 27 with Marjorie Wallace at maw@worklaw-maw.com. There will be a raffle and refreshments will be served.

What's up down there?: The role of Physical Therapy in Pelvic Floor Dysfunction with Allison Romero, PT, Pelvic Health Specialist on March 27 at Lafayette Physical Therapy. The workshop explores the pelvic floor and how to enhance your pelvic health and awareness in all stages of life. This workshop will teach you how to identify when there is a problem and what can be done to fix it. You will leave with a deeper knowledge of how to engage your pelvic floor muscles and the correct way to do a kegel (it's about time right?!). Seating is limited, call to register your spot today: (925) 284-6150.

Join LOPC for Men's Breakfast at 7 a.m. Wednesday, March 28. Jim Boyd, Monument Crisis Center Board Member, will lead a discussion about MCC's mission to help low income individuals and families become stable and secure in the community, with its many programs including food distribution, youth enrichment, senior programs, and resource center. Bring friends and family; \$5 donation at the door for breakfast. RSVP by noon on March 27 to janet@LOPC.org. Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, 49 Knox Drive, Lafayette. (925) 283-8722. LOPC.org.

... continued on next page

'Love, Simon'

By Derek Zemrak



MOVIE REVIEW



Image provided

In the vein of the great John Hughes' films of the 1980s, "Pretty in Pink" and "Sixteen Candles," the teen romcom (Romantic / Comedy) "Love, Simon," which is based on the 2005 novel "Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda," is now playing at the Orinda Theatre.

"Love, Simon" is an important film as it is the first coming-out film distributed by a major film studio (Fox 2000 Pictures) that is rated PG-13. The studios have released previous gay coming-out movies in the past few years, such as "Moonlight" (2016) and "Call Me By Your Name" (2017), but both were rated R. The PG-13 rating will give more teens an opportunity to

see "Love, Simon."

The story centers around Simon (Nick Robinson from the television sitcom "Melissa & Joey") who is dealing with coming out. He soon befriends another young man online from his high school who is struggling with the same issues. Although they both have not revealed to each other who they are, their friendship and support grows.

When the protagonist in the movie, Martin (Logan Miller, "The Walking Dead") finds out Simon's secret, he begins blackmailing him. The film has all the right elements: a solid script with humor, meaning and a positive message for the movie-going audience. The casting is spot on with several very talented young actors (Kathrine Langford, "13 Reasons Why"), Alexandra Shipp ("X-Men: Apocalypse") and Keiynan Lonsdale ("The Flash"). Some strong supporting roles with Golden Globe winner Jennifer Garner ("Alias") and Josh Duhamel ("Transformers") as Simon's supportive parents. When Simon's dad has a discussion with his son about being gay, it will bring a tear to your eye.

In the movie a Ferris wheel is used as a metaphor that "Life has its ups and downs" but when is the right time to get on or off? "Love, Simon" is a charming crowd pleaser which was evident at the press screening when the teens in the audience cheered and applauded numerous times throughout the movie. Go see "Love, Simon."

The movie is rated PG-13 for thematic elements, sexual references, language and teen partying. The total running time is 1 hour and 49 minutes.

Springtime events set for local kids



Fun was had by all at Lafayette Plaza last year during the Lafayette Rotary's Candy Scramble. Photos provided

The Big White Bunny is getting around this year, hopping to several Lamorinda locations March 24 and 31 as part of four community events designed to delight local children, as well as their shutter-happy parents who will have ample opportunity to capture happy egg-or candy-hunting moments.

The Moraga Junior Women's Club will host its 36th annual Spring Egg Hunt from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, March 24 at Moraga Commons Park. This popular fun-filled event will not

only include the exciting egg hunt, but games, bounce houses, a rock climbing wall, face painting and arts and crafts – and, of course, a photo op with the big bunny himself. Tickets for the event are \$15 per child, age 0-8, and are available online at www.moragajuniors.org/events/spring-egg-hunt. Food will be available at the event, which will be held rain or shine.

The following weekend will feature the Lafayette Rotary Club's annual Candy Scramble at 10 a.m. Saturday, March 31 at Lafayette

Plaza on the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Moraga Road. The park lawn will be covered with candy for the kids to put in their baskets, and the youngest will be given extra time to get their share. Open to all children ages 2 through second grade, the Candy Scramble will also feature visits from the Big Bunny himself, as well as police and fire department representatives who will be there for picture time with the kids. The Scramble will start promptly at 10 a.m., and will include the Jonny's Donut Dive (for adults only).

The Easter Bunny will also be at the Rheem Shopping Center (Rheem Boulevard at Moraga Road) in the suite between Dover Saddlery and Nation's Giant Hamburgers between noon and 3 p.m. Saturday, March 31 in Moraga. Bring your camera!

On the other side of Lamorinda that day, the Orinda Rotary will host its annual Egg Hunt at 11 a.m. March 31 at the Orinda Community Center Play Field, featuring over 2,000 eggs and prizes for all as well as pictures with the White Bunny. The event is limited to toddlers or kids in kindergarten, first or second grades only. Be sure to bring baskets for the children, arrive at least 30 minutes beforehand, and park on the street or the Rite Aid lot. Rain does cancel this event.

Happy hunting!
– J. Wake



Children chat with Mr. Bunny at last year's Orinda Rotary Egg Hunt.

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Service Clubs Announcements

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

March 23 STEVE WARE presents in gripping tales of being misunderstood, often imitated but never duplicated.	March 30 WHO? Paul Bettelheim! WHAT? His charted course along life's byways.
--	--

When spring comes the grass grows by itself. Tao Te Ching

Lafayette Rotary Club

Step in on a Thursday and join us for our lunch meeting.

Thursday at noon Oakwood Athletic Club, 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette.

March 22: Chester Santos, Memory Fun 101 – Memory Training for Everyone	March 29: Gus Kramer Marriage, Divorce and Taxes	March 31, 10 a.m. Candy Scramble at Lafayette Plaza Park
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www.rotarylafayette.org
www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-Ca-197392963631366

Not to be missed

OTHER ... continued

Stanley Middle School Rube Goldberg contest: Pour a Bowl of Cereal at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 28 in the Stanley Middle School Gym, Lafayette. Based on the 2018 National Challenge, and in the spirit of inventor/artist Rube Goldberg, students must create a machine using objects such as marbles, dominoes, magnets or levers that will pour cereal into a bowl in 12 steps. Students' machines will be judged on creativity, timing and accuracy. Free and open to the public.

Area residents who own classic cars are invited to participate in the 11th annual Moraga Classic Car Show, which takes place from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on May 12 as part of the 2018 Moraga Community Faire. The \$35 registration fee includes an entry ribbon, lunch for two, a commemorative photo, and a chance for owners to display their restoration work to the public. Prizes will be awarded. The registration deadline is May 2, but space is limited to 70 cars, so register early to secure a spot. To register, go to www.moragachamber.org/faire or call Gloria at (925) 247-4473.

Join a National Park Service ranger for a Springtime Saunter beginning at 9 a.m. on Saturday, March 31 on Mt. Wanda, part of the John Muir National Historic Site in Martinez. This free, two-hour program begins with a moderately strenuous hike to look for wildflowers and learn about the plants and animals native to the area. The trail includes about 650 feet of elevation gain, but the reward is a beautiful 360-degree view from the top. Visitors should meet at the parking lot at the corner of Alhambra Avenue and Franklin Canyon Road, Martinez. Reservations are not required. Please call the John Muir NHS Visitor Center at (925) 228-8860 if you have questions. For more information, please visit the park website at www.nps.gov/jomu.

POLITICAL GATHERINGS

Assemblywoman Catherine Baker is holding a Moraga Walk and Talk Town Hall beginning at 10 a.m. on March 24 at Rancho Laguna Park, 2101 Camino Pablo, Moraga. Enjoy a walk on a local trail and get the latest updates on state legislation. RSVP to asmrc.org/AF/WALKTALKRSVP or call (925) 328-1515.

SENIORS

Senior Scam Workshop presented by Pearl Yon, Better Business Bureau from 10:30 a.m. to noon on Thursday, March 22 in the Lafayette Community Center Cedar Room. This workshop will educate you on the scams that most frequently target older adults. You will learn to recognize the red flags and receive tips on how to avoid the scammers' tactics. Additionally, you will be provided with useful resources that will help lower your chances of falling victim to these scams. Handouts of the information will be yours to take home. Members: Free, Non-Members: \$10.

Giorgio Tavechhio, a Campo grad who is a kicker for the Oakland Raiders, will be the special guest speaker at the Moraga Valley Presbyterian Church Men's Dinner at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 11 at the Saint Mary's College Soda Center. Tickets are \$25 via www.mvpctoday.org and must be purchased by April 4.

Lamorinda Weekly

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LAMORINDA arts COUNCIL



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Miramonte falls to Sacred Heart in state semi-final 69-48

By Jon Kingdon

Playing a team whose nickname is “The Fightin’ Irish” is never a good thing to do on St. Patrick’s Day.

Connecting on only 14 of 66 (21%) shots ultimately led to Miramonte’s defeat at the hands of Sacred Heart Catholic. Despite such a poor shooting performance, Miramonte only trailed by eight points, 45-37, after three quarters but the Matadors were outscored 24-11 in the final period.

Miramonte head coach Kelly Sopak pulled no punches: “They kicked our butts. They were a lot tougher than we were. We made our runs but we had too many breakdowns defensively. They played downhill and our intensity was not there.”

Three statistics evidence the size ad-

vantage that Sacred Heart utilized in the game: Miramonte was outrebounded 56-41 with seven shots blocked, and Sacred Heart scored 32 points inside with Miramonte only scoring 10 points in the paint.

Senior Clair Steele and sophomore Rebecca Welsh led the Matadors, each scoring 11 points.

Despite the loss, Sopak spoke highly of his team: “It’s been a great season. We were 18-2 since January 8th and lost to two top teams (Bishop O’Dowd and Sacred Heart).”

Steele, playing her last game for Miramonte, also saw the season as a success: “This was a young team (eight sophomores and freshmen). The youth stood up. Losing this game does not make it a bad season. I love this team.”



Photo Gint Federas

Promising early returns for Lamorinda baseball

By Jon Kingdon



Photo Gint Federas

A couple of weeks prior to major league baseball’s call for pitchers and catchers to show up at training camp, the Lamorinda baseball teams have been practicing in anticipation of the 2018 season. Early returns are promising with Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte having a combined record of 15-2.

After a 27-1 season in 2017, losing in the championship game, Miramonte head coach Kevin Hodges has made it a point to have his team not look back and to put the success and final disappointment of last season behind them. “We have set new goals this season,” he said. “We are not trying to go undefeated and are looking for top competition early in the season. We need this team to establish their own identity. We respect what we did last year but we are moving on from there with a tougher early schedule.” Still Hodges can’t be disappointed as the Matadors have won their first five games.

With 15 seniors, seven juniors and only one sophomore, this is a very mature team. Says Hodges: “The team has good chemistry on and off the field. They not only enjoy playing but the workouts outside of practice as well. They have high goals and they want to win a championship.”

When asked the strength of his team, Hodges mentions the team’s pitching, hitting, speed and defense, which pretty much covers it, though he is still trying to establish the depth at each position.

Senior Bill Doby is the ace on the pitching staff. Sam Liang, bound for San Jose State next year, is the second starter and also plays the infield. Hodges is still looking for someone to step up and become the third starter.

Liang holds the defense together in the infield and seniors Jake Hassard and Will Cassriel are the leaders in the outfield.

Hodges is excited about the potential of the one sophomore on the team, outfield Declan Curran. Says Hodges: “Declan played on JV last year and I have seen him play in over 70 games. He can play and hit varsity pitching and is making his way into the rotation in the out-

field.”

Coming off a 14-13 season in 2017, Campolindo has begun this year 4-1. Campolindo head coach Max Luckhurst attributes the change very simply: “Last year’s team did not have much experience, playing with only two players with varsity experience and we have been able to move forward from that point. They understand that they can compete at this level. Now they understand our format and what is going on. We have a lot of players that are fighting for playing time.”

With 15 seniors and juniors and four sophomores, this is a mature team that last season made it to the third round of the playoffs. Luckhurst likes the maturity of his team and its perseverance: “This team knows how to compete. After falling behind, we have kept our cool and won the types of games that we were losing last season.”

Luckhurst appreciates that his team is not sitting on their laurels after their early season success: “This team is always looking to get better every day. Ideally our last game will be our best game.”

The team’s pitching staff is led by junior Michael Crews and senior Will Bishop, a four-year player.

Backing up the pitchers is a defense that Luckhurst sees as a strength: “Our defense is playing well. We have a lot of returners and the new guys are picking it up. They pay attention to detail and are working every day to get better.” With the conclusion of Campolindo’s basketball season, Trevin Kroichick and the ever-present John Torchio will be joining the team.

Luckhurst does not see the need to name captains for the team: “This is a mature team. No one is above anyone else. Our seniors will lead by example. They all can take care of their responsibilities.”

Acalanes has started off quickly having won five of their first six games after going 12-13 last season. Head coach Justin Hughes is excited about his team: “They are an extremely competitive and resilient group. It is a talented team with very good chemistry. It’s a good group of guys.”

The Dons roster has both ex-

perience and youth with 16 seniors and juniors and seven sophomores and freshmen.

According to Hughes: “This is a well-rounded team. We have a good defense but our offense is what will separate us. All of our players can hit and a number of them are dominating. We don’t strike out and we can hit for power. We also have excellent team speed. This puts a lot of pressure on the defense with a lot of base stealing.”

The youth of the team can still be an issue but Hughes welcomes their enthusiasm: “They all love to play and are competitive but there will be mental lapses with young players though they don’t get down. After losing to Elk Grove, the team responded by defeating Clovis West 4-3 after falling behind 3-0.”

The pitching staff is led by senior lefthander Brian Merken, who has an effective fastball, curveball and slider. The next two starters are senior Josh Cerejo and sophomore Nick Kresnak. Freshman Michael Castelli has proven to be an effective closer with three saves so far. Says Hughes: “Michael is very poised. In his first game, he came in with bases loaded and one out and got out of it.”

Freshman shortstop Davis Diaz and Kresnak are the key players in the infield. Hughes likes how well the team works together: “It’s a weird dynamic. They lead as

a group. We have a lot of young players but it just all goes together.” The Dons also welcome the return of Gavin Shipp who just concluded his basketball season.

Hughes is looking forward to

the upcoming stretch of games: “We are playing a number of Division 1 schools and we have the talent to compete. We are going to see where we are with our nonleague games.”

Cougar Football

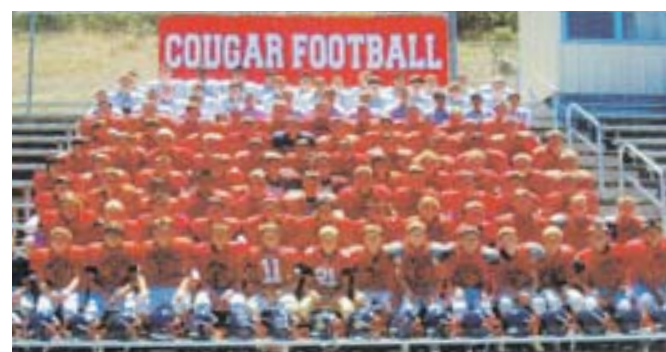
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Will youth be served in Lamorinda softball?

By Jon Kingdon

The Lamorinda softball teams are all relying on various freshmen and sophomore players to step up and mature quickly. Hopefully this will all happen prior to league play.

Coming off a successful 2017 season (16-5), Acalanes head coach Victor Silva enters this year with a very young team, having only five seniors on the roster. With three juniors, five sophomores and three freshmen, Silva understands that his team will be going through a maturation process: "We are really young. The talent is there but we're making mental mistakes. We're still trying to figure out how to win and finish which is hard with so many sophomores and freshmen. We're trying to get them to believe in themselves."

As an example of this, Acalanes lost to Encinal 7-6 in a game where they committed seven errors, many of which Silva said were mental mistakes.

With such a young team, the leadership of the seniors becomes even more important. Co-captains Kylie Berry and Rosetta Shackett along with Alexis Carlson are being counted on to provide direction.

Despite playing so many underclassmen, Silva is excited about the talent on the team: "We're just going through growing pains. Last year I knew what to expect. I'm not sure about this year's team, but we have the potential to be better than last year."

Berry is being counted on as the ace of the staff. "Kylie is our one pitcher with experience and has to stay healthy," Silva says. "She is a very consistent pitcher that throws strikes and has good movement on the ball." Backing up Berry is freshman Ellie Palma who is "still finding her way."

Leading the offense is shortstop Morgan Salmon, despite only being a freshman. Salmon also plays on the Junior British Olympic softball team, bringing international experience with her. Shackett and Carlson are the other leaders on offense.

Despite some early season missteps, conceding that "defense is the area we need to improve," Silva expects his defense to become more consistent. "Every position is

solid and we have good speed. We should be able to improve our defense as the year progresses."

When sophomore Kaylee Pond went down with a major knee injury last December, it was a blow to both the Acalanes basketball and softball teams. Pond, who has already committed to Iowa State University upon graduation, would have been the Don's third baseman and will be counted on for next season.

As young as Acalanes is, Campolindo takes it a step further having only one senior on their roster, four juniors and 11 sophomores and freshmen. Head coach Wayne Stephens appreciates the effort being put forth by the team: "It's a very hard-working team. All the girls are doing what they can to get better trying to get to the highest level. It's getting them exposed to the speed of varsity level softball."

Leading the team on the field are juniors, pitcher Tara McAteer and catcher Katelyn Poole, who led the league in hitting last season.

Like Silva, Stephens is also relying heavily on a freshman, shortstop Abbie Lee. Says Stephens: "Abbie has been huge for us. She is the key to our infield and I am confident in her play. She has had a lot of experience in tournament ball and is already a leader on the team."

Looking for more depth in his offense, Stephens is counting on two other freshmen, Kaitlyn Dowdall and designated hitter, Jordan Roberts. Roberts is playing organized softball for the first time after focusing on tennis. According to Stephens, Roberts' tennis stroke has proven to be a natural transition for her baseball swing.

To Stephens, the key for a successful season is simple: "We have to stay healthy. With the girls working hard and showing constant improvement, our goal is to compete for the league championship and go deep in the NCS playoffs."

Taking on the responsibility of leading the Miramonte team, first-year and first-time head coach Melody Wall is flashing back to her days on the softball field at Encinal High School. Fortunately for Wall, the players are rallying around her, much to her appreciation. "The girls

want to be out there and improve," she says. "They very much love the game and have been very helpful to me in our practices."

With neither a freshman or JV team to allow their players to develop, the Matadors are also playing utilizing several underclassmen.

In such a situation, leadership from the senior captains become crucial. Senior captain Cassidy Wall and sophomore vice captain Genevieve Rovetti set the tone for the team. As battery mates, Wall as pitcher and Rovetti as catcher will be the glue that holds the team together.

Coach Wall is particularly familiar with Cassidy, who is her daughter and wears the same number 18 that she wore in high school. Coach Wall is relying on Cassidy to be her ace pitcher: "Cassidy has great accuracy. She is confident and is not afraid to throw strikes. At this point, we are still looking for another pitcher to step up and establish themselves as our second starter."

Crucial to the staff is the play of Rovetti. Says Wall: "Genevieve really knows the game and does a good job making the calls behind the plate."

Wall is very confident in her defense: "We have great fielding. They are confident and smart."

Sophomore Maddie Webber has been moved to shortstop for the first time and has taken on the role of the leader in the infield on the field and, says Wall, "keeping everyone's spirits up."

Securing the defense up the middle is second baseman Ellie Sinha. Though only a freshman, Sinha brings a lot of experience to the team, having played a lot of travel ball.

Junior Carly Johnson is set in centerfield due to her speed and the ability to cover the whole outfield.

On offense besides Wall and Rovetti, sophomore first baseman Madison Lehman should be a threat as well.

With so many of the young players being thrown into the deep end of the pool, it should at the very least bode well for the Lamorinda teams down the road.

Lamorinda Lions 1st grade girls win indoor championship

Submitted by Kenji Sytz



Back row, from left: coach Amit Ahuja, coach Kyle Lerch, coach Kenji Sytz; middle row: Casey Lerch, Darcy Best, Hadley Hastings, Eloise Britton, Regan Roy; front row: Sage Vasquez-Fireman, Soraya Ahuja, Kelly Reidenbach, Leela Cargain, Ava Sytz

Lamorinda Lions beat Richmond Academy in a 2-1 thriller on March 10 in Moraga association Indoor Soccer championship for first-grade girls. This team has now won three straight league titles.

Lafayette 4th Graders Win Next Level Super Bowl

Submitted by Tim Jones



Five local Lafayette fourth-grade boys won the Next Level Flag Football Super Bowl in a combined countywide team at De La Salle high school in Concord this month. Lafayette residents pictured include: T. Jones, L. Potts, R. Thuma, R. Reinhart and E. Dudum.

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Lamorinda Wrestling Teams finish at the DAL Tournament

By Jon Kingdon

The wrestling season for the Lamorinda teams concluded at the Diablo Athletic League tournament.

Though Acalanes, Campolindo and Miramonte finished 1-2-3 in league competition and were represented at the DAL tournament, each of the team's competitors were unable to make the next step to the state finals.

After concluding an undefeated league season, Acalanes head coach Dave Ridge was anticipating sending as many as seven of his wrestlers to the DAL tournament. Due to illness and injuries, James Trainer, Ed Gray, Jeremy Ridge, Antonio Correa and Togy Batkhuu were unable to wrestle. Acalanes was only able to send two wrestlers, Issac Douglas (162) and Addison Early (184).

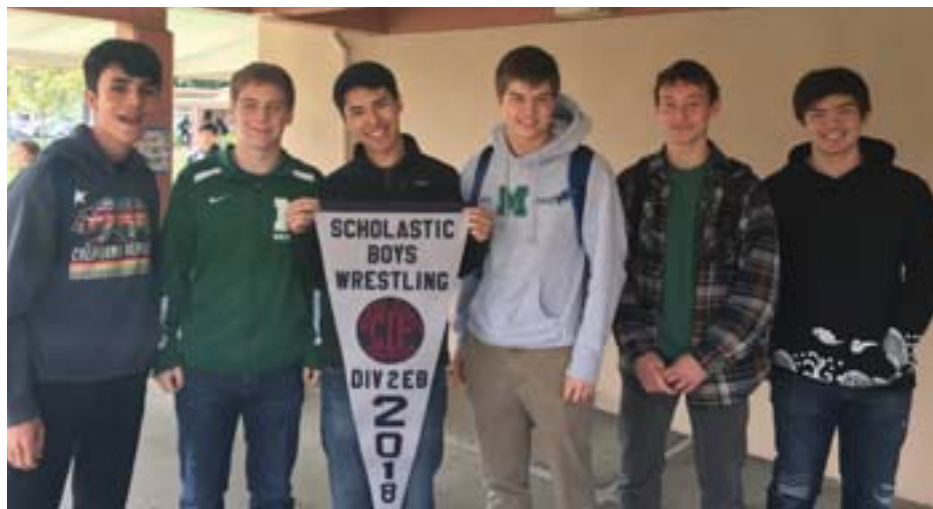
Ridge spoke highly of both of his wrestlers: "Both had very good tournaments, going 3 and 2. Douglas lost his last match in the last few seconds and would have medaled had he won that match."

Particularly frustrating to Ridge was the injury suffered by his best wrestler, Jeremy Ridge: "I was confident that Jeremy was going to win. He was going to be seeded No. 1 and was ranked seventh in the state overall, had easily beaten the ultimate winner in his weight class earlier in the season." Ridge will be continuing his wrestling career next year at the University of Pennsylvania.

Ridge succinctly summed up the unfortunate turn of events: "It was just one of those things."

Campolindo had five wrestlers that qualified for the tournament: Noah Hamann (108), Adrian Bautista (122), Steven Williams (154), co-captain Craig Amador (182) and Nick Shaw (195).

Though none of the wrestlers were able to make it to the second day, head coach Sam Sotelo spoke highly of their efforts: "Though none of them qualified for the state tournament, they all battled hard and represented themselves and Campolindo very well."



Part of the Miramonte Wrestling squad show off their 2018 banner for Top GPA in NCS out of 175 schools. Back to Back Champs. Great season on and off the Mat. Provided by Jason Rosiak

Leading the team was Amador with three wins and Hamann with two.

Miramonte was represented by Eric Banisadr (138) and Owen Madaus (145). Head coach Jason Rosiak was pleased with the

showing by both of his wrestlers: "Banisadr had a good showing losing his last match in the final seconds 10-9. Madaus went 4-1 on his first day and made it to the top 12 before being eliminated."

St. Perpetua's 4th grade boys win Tournament of Champions

Submitted by Andrea Hilsabeck



Back row, from left: coaches Brad Hilsabeck, Tony Dudum, Ronell Jones and Rick Beers; front row: Eli Dudum, Gavin Beers, Adam Caceido, Gabriel Van Houten, Alessandro Curletto, Saaj Shah, Preston Hilsabeck, Illias Kaplanes-Jones, Mark Bellusa Photo provided

St. Perpetua's fourth-grade national boys basketball team won the Tournament of Champions March 11, winning by one point in the championship game. The Tournament

of Champions brings together the first and second place teams in the West Diablo, East Diablo, Mission Valley and SAC Diocese.

St. Perpetua 5th Grade American Team wins Diocese Basketball Championship

Submitted by Rhodora Del Rosario



Back row, from left: coach Brian Frechman, Addi Ames, Maddie Ingham, Clara O'Connor, Campbell Evans, Dulci Vail, coaches Mark Del Rosario and Matt Vail; front row: Megan Churchill, Natalie Frechman, Mylie Jacquet, Ella Del Rosario, and Leila Hamidi Photo provided

The fifth-grade American girls team from St. Perpetua finished their CYO season by winning the Diocese basketball championship on March 10. The Lady Panthers faced Santa Maria, the same team the Pan-

thers lost to at last year's fourth-grade championship game. The win was a complete team effort as each player exhibited grit, determination and focus.

American boys basketball team wins championship

Submitted by Steven J. Balassi



Front row, from left: Tyler Bergren, Liam Krackeler, Calvin Kotarba, Dylan DeVinney, and Patrick Floyd; back row: Tom Krackeler, Trevor Carrillo, Dylan Mansour, Aditya Kapur, Will Balassi, Jordan Brown and Steve Balassi Photo provided

The St. Perpetua (Lafayette) sixth-grade American boys basketball team won the Oakland Diocese CYO championship on

March 3. The Panthers finished the season 20-0.

St. Perpetua 6th grade girls National Team wins championship

Submitted by Stephen F. Shea



Players, front row, from left: Alexis Suer, Zoya Acuna, Kennedy Shea, Fiona Aguilar; back row: Maria Tzanova, Melina Nath, Tatum Haggerty, Victoria Alessandrini, Carolina Wackowski, and Josephine O'Shea Photo provided

The St. Perpetua sixth-grade girls basketball National Team won the championship in style. The girls had a tough hard-fought weekend of basketball. First they beat St. Monica's 22-18 in overtime. After, the girls faced an undefeated St. Catherine's

team. With 6 seconds left in the game, tied 18-18 the St. Perpetua girls played fantastic defense, Kennedy Shea saved the ball from going out of bounds and Victoria Alessandrini made a shot with 1 second left to give the girls a second consecutive league title.

Lafayette Team wins NextLevel flag football championship

Submitted by Charlie Vezzali



Front row, from left: Alessandro Curletto, Illias Kaplanes-Jones, Luca Vezzali, Cody Michlitsch, Rhett Hollyfield; middle row: Grant Ricker, Ben Pass, Reid Habas, Ryan Ventrelle, Brody Jones and Leo McDonough; back row: Charlie Vezzali (parent volunteer coach), Rocco Locicero (student head coach), Dan Ventrelle (parent volunteer coach) Photo Allison Curletto

The Lafayette fourth-grade flag football team went undefeated for the

second straight year to capture the title in their division.

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YOUR LMYA BASKETBALL CHAMPIONS



3rd GRADE GIRLS, OHIO STATE

(Front Row): Willa Wolcott,
Kendall Lee, Kyle Pearlstein.
(Back Row): Meher Jeyakrishnan,
Annabelle Strause, Carissa Penn,
Sydney Scovic.
(Not Pictured): Edith Maxmin.



3rd GRADE BOYS, ARIZONA

(Front Row): Hugo Perez, Alex Marino, Zayden Bronson, Lincoln Meyer.
(Back Row): Coach Josh Smith, Joshua Smith, Logan Houston,
Troy Rickman, Brayden Shin, Taylor Lockwood, Pacer Yeung,
Coach Ken Shin.



4th GRADE BOYS, OREGON

(Front Row): Ryder Blete, Caleb Blete, Julian Hood, Cameron Hood,
Ahmed Ahmed. (Back Row): Coach Terry Blete, Coach Hisman Ahmed,
Sebastian Young, Coach Mukona Ndou, Jacob Chun, Aria Valiyeec.
(Additional Photo): Daniel Wang.



4th/5th GRADE GIRLS, MICHIGAN

Katia Mediano, Clara Cecchin, Finley Cain, Tamar Links, Sonal Patel,
Gwen Koplán and Grace Rich.



5th/6th GRADE BOYS, KANSAS

(Front Row): Lucas McCaffrey, Anthony Yamamoto, Julian Cohen,
Dominic Patitucci. (Back Row): Steffano Patitucci, Dane Wilcox,
Sean Aslam, Kiumars Koopah, Matthew Hoffman, Reza Koopah.



6th/7th/8th GRADE GIRLS, OREGON

(Front Row): Miriam Moyes, Molly Keliher-Burke, Maya Bleich.
(Back Row): Coach John Kirke, Tessa Kirke, Kali Smith, Sarah Pezman,
Alex Wittlin, Coach Steve Parlett. (Not Pictured:) Catherine Devlin,
Nicole Parlett.



7th/8th GRADE BOYS, UCONN

(Front Row): Lleyton James, Ryan Chan, Rami Adnan, Saylen Cardoni,
Ted Helvey. (Back Row): Andrew Sappal, Aidan O'Brien, Jonah Low,
Coach Doug Cardoni. (Not Pictured): Never Abcari.



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Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 12 Issue 2 Wednesday, March 21, 2018



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

...read on page D12

Papa John talks chickens

By Pippa Fisher

Papa John is once again helping Lafayette residents with their chickens. As he has done many times before, this spring John Kiefer – better known to most as Papa John – is running workshops from his Lafayette home, sharing his extensive knowledge of chickens.

In fact his classes have proved so popular, they are once again full, so he is (once again) adding another class on March 25 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. to accommodate those on the wait list – and he has room for a few more.

Each workshop is a complete class, not part of a series, and teaches how to raise chickens from starting young chicks in a brooding box to moving them into the coop, maintaining laying hens and constructing a sustainable coop. All participants receive an email upon completion of all course materials.

Papa John has been raising chickens since he moved to Lafayette in 1966. He decided to develop a sustainable environment for chickens appropriate to the limited space of residential living.

And thus was born his sustainable coop which keeps chickens on soft soil, rather than raised up on a floor in the way of traditional pre-made coops. Kiefer says that the chickens like to scratch in the dirt and, by keeping them on the soil they create healthy manure by effectively digging it in for themselves. And because in this natural environment the manure dries quickly, there is no odor and no cleaning is required.

Kiefer likes to hold his classes in March so that

anyone interested in going ahead with chickens has April to build their coop in time to get new chicks in May, which he says is a good time for healthy chicks.

Residents interested in the free March 25 class should contact Kiefer directly via email at chickenspapaohn@gmail.com to find out further details.



Papa John talks with interested residents outside of his backyard chicken coop.

Photo Pippa Fisher

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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	5	\$1,300,000	\$3,485,000
MORAGA	3	\$715,000	\$1,815,000
ORINDA	4	\$1,075,000	\$1,539,000

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

- 3149 Gloria Terrace, \$1,300,000, 5 Bdrms, 2541 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 2-23-18;
Previous Sale: \$481,000, 04-14-00
- 3192 Lucas Circle, \$1,370,000, 2 Bdrms, 1553 SqFt, 1959 YrBlt, 2-21-18;
Previous Sale: \$825,000, 05-21-10
- 1601 Reliez Valley Road, \$3,485,000, 3 Bdrms, 2263 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 2-26-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,250,000, 08-07-15
- 872 Solana Drive, \$1,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 2196 SqFt, 1947 YrBlt, 2-13-18
- 3253 Surmont Drive, \$2,075,000, 4 Bdrms, 2876 SqFt, 1964 YrBlt, 2-20-18;
Previous Sale: \$565,000, 05-23-96

MORAGA

- 13 Hanson Court, \$820,000, 2 Bdrms, 1845 SqFt, 1984 YrBlt, 2-23-18;
Previous Sale: \$269,000, 08-30-93
- 28 Sullivan Drive, \$1,815,000, 5 Bdrms, 2781 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 2-15-18;
Previous Sale: \$750,000, 07-18-01
- 538 Woodminster Drive, \$715,000, 2 Bdrms, 1620 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 2-23-18;
Previous Sale: \$550,000, 06-05-13

ORINDA

- 28 Dos Encinas, \$1,539,000, 4 Bdrms, 2874 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 2-22-18;
Previous Sale: \$72,500, 06-29-73
- 215 La Espiral, \$1,075,000, 4 Bdrms, 2656 SqFt, 1952 YrBlt, 2-14-18
- 21 Ramona Drive, \$1,400,000, 3 Bdrms, 1637 SqFt, 1954 YrBlt, 2-20-18;
Previous Sale: \$1,050,000, 09-05-17
- 201 Village Gate Road, \$1,100,000, 2 Bdrms, 1858 SqFt, 1979 YrBlt, 2-14-18

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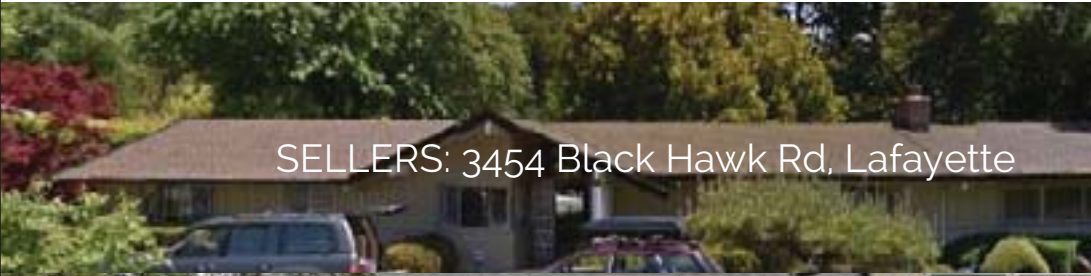


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Feng Shui

Activating the colors of spring

By Michele Duffy

*Benjamin Moore's Mayonnaise is a great flow color that can go right into the living room or dining room.**Photos provided*

Now that spring is truly here, are you feeling inspired by all the local color?

Nature-inspired color is the real purpose of balanced feng shui in your home – color that mirrors the barely translucent dewy sky, the persimmon fruit, the slate earth of the coast, the dancing blues of the waves, or the barky ruddiness of the redwoods. If we want the benefits of nature indoors, one key element is through the colors we choose from our interaction with nature around us here in the Bay Area.

Color influences the vibe of various rooms, infuses our senses with a backdrop for our lives, and creates necessary depth in a room's canvas. Color is meaningful and important for an energy-rich environment and life. The right colors create restorative calm in a master bedroom, a complimentary reflection for the food we

eat in the kitchen, and sets the tone for a cozy living room or intimate dining room.

But for some, color is daunting. Many clients tell me that they would no sooner be able to select a hue of their dreams for their home even if they personally dreamt it. Seriously and to be sure, color selection can be a happy journey if you are prepared to do some up-front legwork first.

First, it's a great idea to spend some time thinking about the colors that you love. What makes you feel happy and alive? Forget about trends; spend time researching and thinking about the colors that resonate with you, or certain colors that inspire you in nature. Consider the amount of natural light in your space. Is there more or less natural light, depending on the different location of the rooms in your home?

Those rooms with southern exposure can possibly handle darker, stronger hues. If rooms do not receive adequate natural light and are dark or small, choosing lighter colors will brighten and vastly enlarge the space. In addition, consider having a “flow color” or the one neutral that will be on most of the walls of the common areas, like stairwells and hallways. If the layout supports it, paint the flow color in your living room, kitchen or dining room; those decisions can also be made ahead of time.

Benjamin Moore's “Full Moon” is a bright light grey that fits the flow color task, or if you prefer a creamier hue, take a look at Benjamin Moore's “Mayonnaise” which has a lot of creamy warmth.

Deciding on a color should take you on an exquisitely straightforward journey that includes narrowing down your favorite two or three finalists. Paint brushouts on the lightest walls (opposite windows) and darkest walls (with the windows) and then look at your picks morning, noon and night. Ask your partner or kids to weigh in as well and see if a favorite doesn't begin to emerge. ... continued on page D8

*Benjamin Moore's Full Moon is the brightest grey and shines in this Orinda kitchen.*



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Feng Shui

Activating the colors of spring

... continued from page D6

Following these steps will help you end up with a color you absolutely love, with no do-overs required!

Second, consider the room you are painting. Restorative feng shui recommends softer, lighter, more “Yin” versions of most colors for master bedrooms and if you want a stronger, more “Yang” hue of color in your bedroom then it is wise to paint that stronger color only on the wall behind your bed, so in effect, you won’t see the color as you sleep.

My current favorite color is a soft ethereal blue Benjamin Moore color called Constellation, which also conjures up starry dreamy nights in the one spot you spend the most amount of time in the evenings. If you want a stronger pop of color, consider painting a pass through room like a boot, laundry or guest bath

in a bolder hue. Benjamin Moore’s 2018 Color of the Year is a festive bold red called Caliente and it can work in some of those rooms, but if you are interested in good feng shui, please never paint any bedroom red. Over time you may find yourself either awake all night or a tad angry when you wake up.

The last part to consider is that color can be a major feng shui adjustment in your space, in other words, the colors you choose can strengthen or weaken the feng shui of your home or office. Looking at the feng shui map or Bagua you can discern Five Elements of Water (Career), Wood (Family & Wealth), Fire (Reputation), Earth (Health, Relationships and Wisdom), and Metal (Children, Helpful People).

... continued on page D10

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

The Bagua Map: Front Door



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Feng Shui

Activating the colors of spring

... continued from page D8



Constellation is a light blue color that sets a calming serene tone for any master like this one in Lafayette

When you hold the Bagua looking into your home, for example, Relationships are the far right area and Wealth is far left. Where is the room located that you want to paint? Are your hallways or stairs in the center, or off to the right? Each element has colors that represent it but you are not limited to just those

colors; you can also pick the elemental color scheme that creates or supports the area you want to paint. Other colors that enliven and strengthen feng shui are the colors that symbolize the element that produces or creates the area that you want to paint.

Consider the creative cycle: water creates wood,

wood creates fire, fire creates earth, earth creates metal, and metal creates water. So for example, a client of mine had her master bedroom in the wealth area (ruled by wood) and chose another lovely Benjamin Moore blue, Harbor Haze, to represent water, which creates wood. Getting some professional guidance might also be fun, especially if you are interested in this last step of incorporating feng shui. A professional can help with your color choices that support your intention either way, and add the right decorative elements to the room to balance out any color choice and improve the flow of chi!

Happy spring!



Michele Duffy, BTB M.F.S. is an Orinda resident who, since 1999, enjoys creating "Space as Medicine" Feng Shui one space at a time, as well as hiking in nature, cooking, and spending time with her family; Canyon Ranch Feng Shui Master, International Feng Shui Guild (IFSG) Red Ribbon Professional. To schedule a professional 2018 Feng Shui Consultation, contact Michele at (520) 647-4887 or send an email to spaceharmony@gmail.com.

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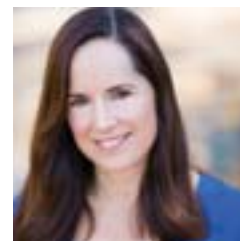
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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Sow spring

By Cynthia Brian

“All through the long winter I dream of my garden. On the first warm day of Spring I dig my fingers deep into the soft earth. I can feel its energy, and my spirits soar.” – Helen Hayes



A cover crop of mustard prepares the soil for sowing.

Photos Cynthia Brian

My cell rang as I juggled to open the front door, arms filled with books. I pressed the speaker button and in the few seconds it took me to say “hello” my daughter’s excited voice chimed, “Mom, I hear the frogs singing. It’s springtime!”

As winter bids farewell, the male troubadours “de printemps,” fill the early evening mist with their mating croaks to entice the females. Their call is joyous, raucous, and a welcome harbinger of new life. My garden has erupted in a cavalcade of color as one blossom after another unfurls its beauty. Cherries, chestnut, plum, crabapple, Asian pear, Western red bud and tulip magnolia are magnificent with their new wardrobes of rose, white, pink and purple. The feathery fronds of fennel glisten in the sunlight. The fragrance of freesia, narcissi, and stock perfume the atmosphere. Periwinkle, also known as vinca, enhances garden beds with its tiny blue flowers. Even my roses are blooming earlier than normal. Hellebores, more commonly called Lenten roses, inject the earthy colors of browns and grays into the landscape. As their spring sepals emerge, vibrant hues of purple, green, blue, lavender, red and pink brighten shady gardens, eventually fading in color variation.

It seems that all of nature has been holding its breath until the frogs returned cueing the melodic symphony of nature.

On the first 70-degree weather day, I was outside in my bikini and shorts digging in the dirt. Thickets of weeds sprouted after the recent rains. The good news is that they are easy to pull with the dampness of the soil. If you planted cover crops, it is time to turn them under. Once weeds are eradicated, rake the ground before scattering seeds. I’m a fan of California poppies, not only for their shimmering range of sherbet colors, but also because they tolerate extremes in weather, are resistant to deer munchies, and reseed easily. Even the recent hailstorm won’t adversely affect poppies. As soon as you can work the ground, sow seeds directly into well-drained beds and plant in full sun. Even if the weather is cool, poppies can handle light frost, so sow now! If you haven’t amended your soil with compost, you may need to fertilize. Keep the soil moist then thin seedlings to about six inches apart to allow for the plants to flourish.

... continued on page D14





Green hued Lenten Rose (*hellebore*). *Hellebores are toxic. Wear gloves when handling.*

Sow Spring Seeds

For a succession of blooms, scatter seeds from any of your favorite annuals. These plants are pollinator attractors, enjoy plentiful sunshine, and most are excellent as cut flowers.

Alyssum	Bluebell	Cosmos	Poppy
Aster	Calendula	Forget-Me-Not	Stock
Baby Blue Eyes	Candytuft	Gaillardia	Strawflower
Baby's Breath	Cornflower	Hollyhock	Sunflower
Bachelor Buttons	Clarkia	Lavatera	Zinnia
Black Eyed Susan	Coreopsis	Marigold	

My preferred time to spread seeds is right before a shower. Keep an eye on the forthcoming weather and plan accordingly. The rain will give your seeds a deep drink and you won't have to water immediately.

Grab your hat, gloves, a spade, and packets of seeds to enjoy the renaissance of nature. Dig your fingers into the soft earth and watch your spirits soar. As the renowned horticulturist, author, artist, and garden designer wrote, "The love of gardening is a seed that once sown never dies." Be reborn this spring.



Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for March



A fan of fennel nestled above sage and French persil.



Harvest beets and eat the greens and the root vegetable.

- **PLANT** rhubarb for a pretty perennial that will supply you with plenty of ruby red stalks for pies and tarts this summer. Cut off and discard all rhubarb leaves as they contain poisonous oxalic acid.
- **INVEST** in roots of asparagus. Asparagus can take up to five years to produce spears but will continue to offer a bountiful harvest for 20 years. Experiment with Purple Passion (purple is the color of the year!) for a sweet, tender, and mild flavor.
- **PULL** weeds as soon as you see them sprout while the ground is still moist.
- **CHOP** down cover crops and hoe into the soil.
- **FERTILIZE** lawns to give them a good boost of nitrogen and nutrients for the forthcoming season.
- **PICK** established kale and other greens before they go to seed.
- **CHECK** irrigation system for breaks or leaks.
- **BUILD** raised beds for your vegetables and herbs. Your back will thank you throughout the year.
- **ADD** fresh compost to all garden beds.
- **SEED** or reseed lawns. I recommend Pearl's Premium for its durability, deep roots, and need for minimal water. <http://www.PearlsPremium.com>.
- **PRUNE** privets into hedges and bushes unless you want tall trees.
- **LOOSEN** compacted soil by turning amendments into the soil with a garden fork.
- **CLIP** boxwoods and shape as needed.
- **HARVEST** beets that were planted in fall.
- **BUY** discounted tickets to the June 15 Oakland A's versus Los Angeles Angels Baseball Game with a portion of proceeds benefitting the 501 c3 charity, Be the Star You Are® <http://www.BetheStarYouAre.org>
- **START** seeds of tomatoes indoors or a in a greenhouse.
- **CONTINUE** to pick up all fallen camellia blossoms until there are none left on your bush or tree. My tree had thousands of blooms this year. My daily regimen includes collecting at least 100 or more spent blooms.
- **CHECK** the weather forecasts to know when it's going to sprinkle or rain. It's best to sow and fertilize at this time.
- **SUPPORT** eco-therapy and walk in the woods. Forest bathing or shinrin-yoku has been scientifically proven to improve our immune systems.
- **FOR** more spring landscaping tips, buy "Growing with the Goddess Gardener," www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store.

Happy Gardening and Happy Growing!



Color combos of freesia and succulents.



Cynthia Brian gets ready for St. Patrick's Day in a field of shamrocks.

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.

Buy a copy of the new book, Growing with the Goddess Gardener, at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store.

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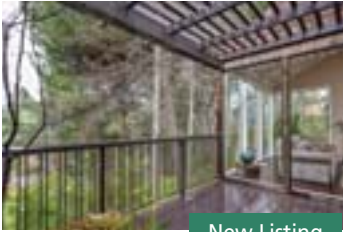
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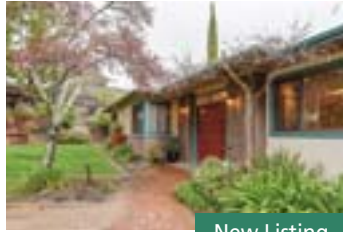
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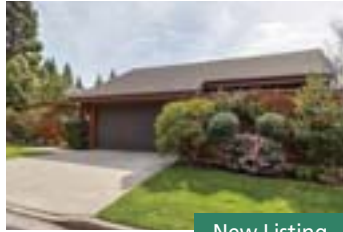
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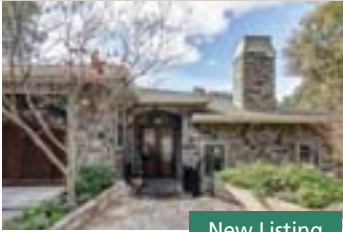
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