

Cycling for a cause

By Jennifer Wake



Perez on a ferry near Rio Vista during a ride from Lafayette to Sacramento. Photos provided

Longtime Orinda resident Rick Perez has been cycling since around 1990. “My rides have included numerous centuries, the coast of Oregon and the Ice Field Parkway in Canada from Jasper to Banff, a route I highly recommend to everyone, by bicycle or motorized vehicle, for its beauty and wildlife,” said Perez.

Laura’s Ride 2016 was his first cross-country ride from Santa Monica, California, to St. Augustine, Florida. “I rode with a bike friend, Nick Bloisa, and our two support vehicle drivers, Alejandra and Sarah. Nick and I were both 70.”

The 2016 ride raised more than \$20,000 in honor of Laura, Bloisa’s good friend who had died of breast cancer at 45 in September 2015. “The money was donated to the Lazarex Cancer Foundation – a charitable foundation for which 100 percent of the donations go to those afflicted with cancer due to the generosity of its founders,” Perez said. “That ride was probably most notable

for its endless roads through nowhere and riding temperatures of 114 degrees.”

In 2017, Perez rode Laura’s Ride North from Astoria, Oregon – “Actually from Sunset Beach, which is west of Astoria because I wanted to start on the Pacific,” he said – to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where the 71-year-old dipped his wheels in the Atlantic and popped a bottle of champagne.

“I chose that route, which (included) a couple of days in Canada, so I could climb the mountains that had been avoided in 2016. I rode by myself with Alejandra again helping as the driver and general assistant. It was also a fundraiser for breast cancer victims through Lazarex Cancer Foundation,” Perez said.

Laura’s Ride Atlantic Coast, or “Twice Across +,” will be from Quebec City, Canada to Key West, Florida. Perez will again be riding by himself with Alejandra as the primary driver. To further assure that all of



the donations go to the intended beneficiaries, Perez is funding the cost of the ride itself. So far, the rides have raised more than \$28,000.

Perez prepared for this most recent ride with his normal three days a week rides of 25 to 60 miles each with riding buddies from the Lamorinda area as well as their annual ride from Lafayette to Sacramento. “I also rode from Moraga to Half Moon Bay with Dave of our riding group as the first day of his ride to Los Angeles,” Perez said.

Perez flew to Quebec City June 28 to meet Alejandra, the truck and his bike and started riding July 2. To follow Perez on his ride or to make a contribution online, visit laurasride.org.



Lamorinda Safety Fair, Classic Car Show and Police Motorcycle Competition July 21

Submitted by Carol Yates



Children check out a Contra Costa County Sheriff’s helicopter at last year’s fair. Photo Carol Yates

Children can once again enjoy hopping aboard helicopters, sitting in police cars to sound the sirens, and climbing aboard the county’s water rescue boat and armored truck at the Lamorinda Safety Fair, hosted by the Lafayette Police Department and Emergency Preparedness Commission, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, July 21 at Saint Mary’s College, 1928 St. Mary’s Rd. In addition to the Safety Fair, over 50 cars will be on display for the Classic Car Show. The popular Police Motorcycle Competition will also be featured between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. and St. Mary’s Road will be open to traffic on the day of the event.

Meet your local first responders and see their emergency equipment. Watch police and medical helicopters landing to allow children to inspect and sit on board. See CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) demonstrations, a bicycle rodeo with an obstacle course teaching children how to ride safely, hands on fire extinguisher training with fire department personnel and

East Bay Regional Park District Rangers on horseback. Questions you may have about preparation for an emergency or a safer daily life can be answered by experienced volunteers and personnel from a multitude of agencies such as Red Cross demonstrating the sheltering of residents and pets during a large emergency. CERT members will show you how to secure items in your home for earthquake resistance and demonstrate disaster medical operations and radio communications. An Emergency Personal/Family Cache and Neighborhood Cache is part of the extensive CERT display.

At the Motorcycle Competition, you may meet officers from across the Western United States and Canada who will perform a variety of skills as they compete for first place in various competitions. And the Classic Car Show will have the owners on hand to offer tips to the aficionados on the restoration of classic cars.

Flag retirement program offered in Lafayette

Submitted by Beverly Brown



Oakmont Mortuary has launched its “Stars & Stripes Flag Retirement Program.” Community members who are looking for proper flag disposal can bring their

flags to Oakmont Mortuary located at 2099 Reliez Valley Road in Lafayette during normal business hours. Flags will be stored safely and disposed of in the proper, dignified manner as outlined by the United States Flag Code. Flag donors will have the opportunity to attend an official Flag Retirement Ceremony to be conducted at a future date. The Flag Retirement Ceremony is a special, unique presentation conducted by the Boy Scouts of America. For information, call (925) 935-3311.

Saklan science teacher on the move

Submitted by Christine Kuckuk



Saklan science teacher Victoria Obenchain. Photo provided

Victoria Obenchain, a longtime science teacher at The Saklan School in Moraga, was selected last fall from over 400 applicants for the 2017-18 Teachers for Global Classrooms Fellowship funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs and implemented by IREX, an international nonprofit organization. After completing a graduate level course on global education, she was placed in Senegal where she visited cultural sights and taught in their classrooms for two weeks, from April 16 to May 2.

Obenchain’s experience with TGC was an enhancement to Saklan’s already rich program of global education. The TGC program is based on four key components: investigate the world; recognize multiple perspectives; communicate ideas; and take

action. In the short term the program seeks to implement more Global Education opportunities for students and in the long term to effect systematic change on a global plane for the betterment of mankind.

She is on the move again this summer, having set sail June 25 on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Ship Fairweather for an Alaska Research Cruise to assist scientists on a 12-day hydrographic survey in northwest Alaska, along the coast of the Chukchi Sea. The cruise is part of NOAA’s Teacher at Sea program, which bridges science and education through real-world research experiences. Obenchain was one of 35 teachers selected from nearly 300 applicants.

“Through my experience with NOAA, my students will not only be able to learn first-hand about exciting research projects at sea, they will be witnesses to them, and on some level, participants in them,” says Obenchain. “Making their learning relevant through my own hands-on experiences is vital to getting students excited about science.”

In addition to these professional development programs, Obenchain also leads the annual seventh-grade trip to Hawaii to study evolution, adaptation and culture. During Spring Break she also led an EF Tour group of 15 students to Iceland to study the geothermal wonders and sub-arctic fauna.

For more information about the Teachers for Global Classrooms Program, visit <http://ECA-Press@state.gov>.

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.

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