

## Golfing for a good cause

Submitted by Matt Pease



From left: Craig Little, Art Owen, Dean Okamura, and Shawn Epperson Photo provided

Lafayette Rotary concluded its annual Charity Golf Event at the Moraga Country Club. The annual event was supported by 74 golfers, a record for this event, and an additional 20 people joined everyone for a dinner at the club that night. The purpose of the event was to raise money for New Day for Children (<https://www.newdayforchildren.com/>) which helps young girls escape sexual slavery.

Golfers competed for prizes on the course and there was an auction that night that raised more money from items donated by local businesses and Rotarians. Winners of the lowest score prize was won by Craig Little, Art Owen, Dean Okamura, and Shawn Epperson. "This event has

grown every year and it shows how Rotarians and the local community care deeply about helping those that are less fortunate, and we are delighted with the results this year," according to Lafayette Rotarian, Andrew Parrott, the co-chairman of this year's event. "A New Day for Children is grateful for the efforts and generosity of the Lafayette Rotarians and the local community to help relieve the suffering from sexual slavery," according to Sharon Wood, the executive director for A New Day for Children.

Lafayette Rotary meets every Thursday at 12:15 p.m. at Oakwood Athletic Club at 4000 Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette. More information is available at [info@rotarylafayette.org](mailto:info@rotarylafayette.org).

## Event focuses on many aspects of Congo

Submitted by Bobbie Dodson

Congo Mission Team chair at Lafayette-Orinda Presbyterian Church, Herb Long, says "It seems most of us did not learn much about Africa in school, an important area on the world stage." Local residents will have an excellent opportunity to learn about one of its countries, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at Celebrate the Congo from noon to 2:30 p.m. on Nov. 4 in Fellowship Hall at LOPC. The Lafayette event will feature Congolese food, music, dance, cultural talk and a fashion show.

"It will be a joyous occasion," says Long. "However, there will also be an opportunity to learn about conditions in Congo today. The humanitarian conditions in the DRC remain in crisis, but the Congolese people have a vibrant, multi-faceted culture that we want to share with the community."

Mboyo Therese Okitukunda, the featured speaker, was born and raised in the Democratic Republic of Congo. She came to the United States after completing two years at the University of Kinshasa. She earned her teaching credential at Foothill and Modesto community colleges and became an associate teacher at Early Head Start. Her passion for education and learning led her to pursue a degree in nursing in 2014. She is a wife and mother of six children. Topics of discussion include historical background, tribes and languages,

and contributions to world civilization.

A fashion show will be presented by Esther Nkunku, an American-born designer who saw her roots from the DRC. After completing her studies in Congo, Esther returned to America to pursue further studies in fashion design at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. In 2006 she launched her clothing designing business, producing mainly traditional African ladies styles. She also combines the traditional African heritage with western style to make it more contemporary. She is skilled in experimental fabric-manipulation, such as pleating, appliqué, layering and gathering.

Featured dancer Byb Chanel Bibene is a dance educator, researcher choreographer and performer, working in theater and contemporary dance and has performed around the world. He received an MFA in dance creative practice from Saint Mary's College. He founded the Mbongui Square Festival that gathers artists from the Bay Area and across the world. In addition, he is the author of numerous poems and short works.

"At the end," says Long, "all three presenters will be available for a question and answer period. There will also be a short explanation of the work the church supports in Congo." Lunch is \$7 and can be paid at the door or by calling Jim Fulford at (925) 254-5419.

## Eagle Scout project updates Lafayette Rim Trail signs

Submitted by Linda Murphy

Residents who hike the Lafayette Reservoir Rim Trail likely have noticed the hard work of Alex Mangoba of Moraga Boy Scout Troop 234. The East Bay Municipal Utility District, which manages the trail, has numerous Backcountry Regulations signs posted along the 4.7-mile hilly, unpaved terrain. But years of weathering had taken a toll on the signs. EBMUD needed new, sturdier signs, and Mangoba stepped up to help as part of his Eagle Scout project.

It was an ambitious project to replace 10 signs, Mangoba collected large amounts of material, hardware, plywood sheets, and heavy poles. Several steps were involved in creating the signs: measuring and cutting the wood and poles to the proper shape and size, affixing the metal signs to the wooden backings, and attaching the signs to the poles. Mangoba weather-proofed all the wood he used to ensure it will withstand many years of exposure.

After constructing the signs over the summer, Mangoba "planted" the signs over two weekends. This phase of the project involved digging holes, mixing cement, and positioning the signs. EMBUD provided a truck to drive him and the signs from site to



Campolindo senior Alex Mangoba (left) is assisted by fellow Boy Scout Andy Babson in installing a new sign along the Lafayette Reservoir Rim Trail. Photo Linda Murphy

site, and Mangoba's father and fellow Scouts helped him set the signs in place. Mangoba never cut corners, and his hard work is evident in the sturdy new signs that now dot the trail.

Mangoba has been a member of Troop 234 since fifth grade. Now a Campolindo senior, he is proud of his hard work in completing his time-consuming and physically demanding Eagle Scout project.

## In Memory

### Sara (Sally) Chappell

1926-2018



Sara (Sally) Chappell quietly passed away in the early morning hours on Sept. 20. She had been living in a memory care unit for the past 3-1/2 years in the Sacramento area. She was a wife, mother and woman whose "soft and gentle voice" spoke with forceful conviction as her children, Peggy, Betsy and Jay, and their spouses came to know and appreciate.

Sally was born in Berkeley on Dec. 22, 1926, in Alta Bates Hospital where she later served as a long-time volunteer. In addition to Alta Bates, she was very active in UCC, Berkeley YWCA, Town and recreational activities were travel, cabin at Donner Lake and reading, she died.

supporting the Orinda Community Church Gown and local book clubs. Her favorite theater, needlepoint, bridge, crosswords, the which she continued to do up to the day

Sally, and her husband Ed, traveled the world and also took their children and grandchildren on some of these trips. She was a good person, a wonderful friend, a gracious host and a mother, a Granny and GG who will be missed by her children, in-laws, 8 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

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## In Memory

### Stephen James Spleiss



Stephen James Spleiss, of Lafayette, California, passed away on August 25, 2018 following a 28-year battle with cancer.

Stephen and his twin sister, Elise were born in Oakland, California at the old Oak Knoll Naval Hospital on April 7, 1951. Their parents were Arthur and Opal Spleiss, both deceased. Raised in San Francisco, Stephen attended West Portal Lutheran School, Herbert Hoover Jr. High and Lincoln High School, where he was a member of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC).

Growing up, Stephen was always interested in and read all he could about the military in history, even up to his death. He entered military service right out of high school. He was proud of his time in the Navy, particularly serving aboard hospital ship USS Repose (AH-16). And later in the Gulf of Tonkin operations during WESTPAC 1972 aboard the USS Berkeley (DDG-15), in May 1972, "Linebacker". These words Stephen wrote in a poem a week before his death reflect how he lived his life: "I served my country with pride. There is not an expiration date on my service to my country".

Stephen is survived by his son Jason Spleiss (Amanda) and two grandsons of Los Banos, California; his twin sister Elise Spleiss of Roseville, California; sisters Kathleen Allison of Florida and Catherine Pratt (Steve); brothers Cliff Brackett (Barbara) of Elk Grove, Art Spleiss Jr. of San Francisco, and 11 nieces and nephews.

He was last employed since 2005 in local theatre production as a Theater Technician at the Leshner Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, California.

In spite of all the odds against him Stephen never let cancer stop him from living. He continued to enjoy a wide range of activities including biking and hiking when he could. When resting, he was a poet, scholar and philosopher, reading books of all kinds and listening to a wide variety of music. He loved a good debate! He liked to cook. He also loved his electronic toys and gadgets, and kept Amazon Prime busy!

Providing him comfort and companionship the last 17 years of his life were his twin cats, Castor and Pollux named after "The Twins", bright stars in the Gemini Constellation. They were born on 9/11/2001. Pollux did precede him death in the last few years, so Castor held down the comfort fort till the end.

Stephen was deeply loved and will be deeply missed.

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](mailto: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](mailto:storydesk@lamorindaweekly.com), and include "Celebrations and Remembrances" in the subject line.