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Saint Mary's Guard Jordan Ford takes his shot at the Dec. 1 rivalry game against Cal.

Photo Tod Fierner

Saint Mary's trounces Cal in rivalry game

By Jon Kingdom

After a 30-year hiatus, the California basketball team deigned to make the 14-mile drive to Moraga to take on Saint Mary's Dec. 1 at McKeon Pavilion. Playing in front of a loud and highly partisan crowd, Saint Mary's defeated California 84-71, ending a four-game losing streak. It was a game that was not that close and it may be another three decades before California opts to return to Moraga.

The Gaels dominated in every aspect of the game. Saint

Mary's shot 60 percent from the field, outrebounded Cal 24-24, connected on 13, 3-point shots to Cal's seven and most telling, got 33 points from their bench to only 10 for Cal. With 15 minutes to go in the game, Saint Mary's had their biggest lead 57-32.

Breaking the team's losing streak was the most satisfying aspect of the game to head coach Randy Bennett: "You get beat down by losing four games in a row. However, our guys

kept believing in themselves, hanging together and trying to get better."

Guard Jordan Ford (16 points, 7 assists) saw a real difference in the team's play: "We played a lot harder. We're a young team and we're working hard every day."

Concerned with his team's defense, Bennett started Tommy Kuhse because "he's our best defensive guard."

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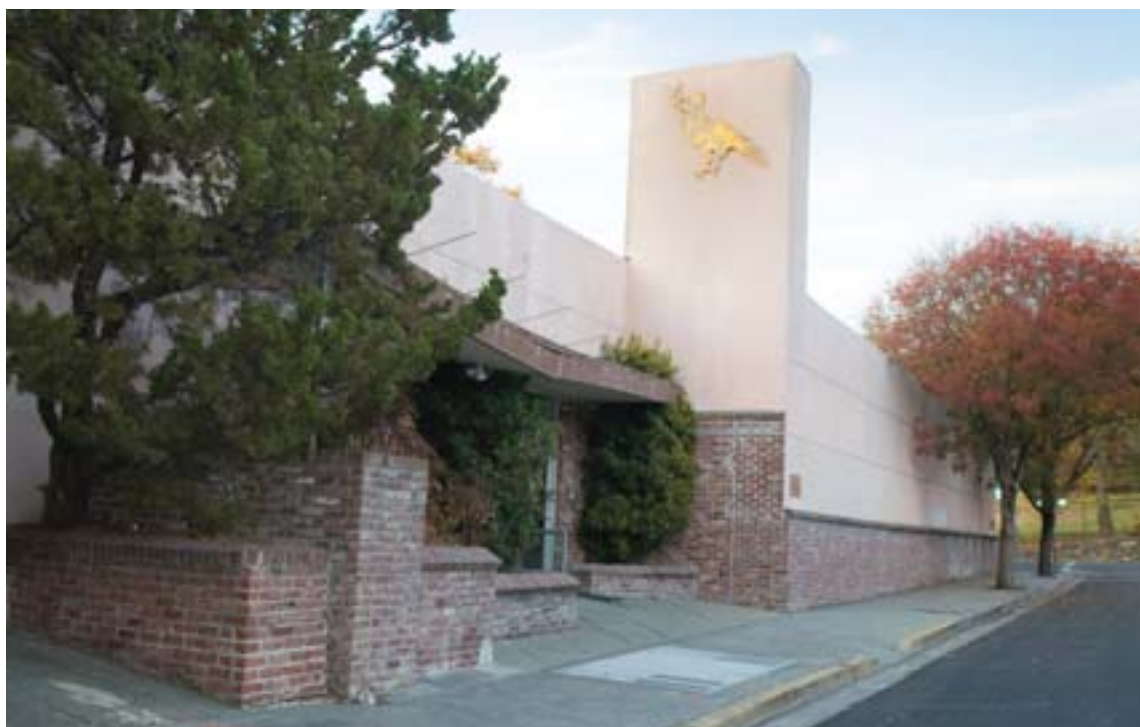
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Hometown owner cares for Phairs

By Sora O'Doherty



Phairs in Orinda

Photo Sora O'Doherty

Joanna Guidotti grew up in Orinda and has strong ties to the community, even though she left to open Churchill Manor in Napa 30 years ago. She inherited a half ownership in Country Club Plaza from her father, attorney Aldo Guidotti, who was elected to the first Orinda City Council and twice held the position of mayor. Three years ago Guidotti, who also owns a half interest in the lot behind Phairs, purchased the Phairs property, including the old shop, which has been abandoned for 20 years, as well as the parking lot that stretches from Avenida De Orinda through to Camino Sobrante. Now Guidotti dreams of restoring the Phairs building to honor her father and to meet the needs of Orinda.

Since acquiring the property, Guidotti says that she has heard

from a lot of developers, but that they are motivated by the desire to make a profit, and that, she says, is not always compatible with serving the needs of the community. Guidotti recognizes that Orinda is not like Napa, where she has transformed an old, neglected home into a preeminent destination hotel, Churchill Manor.

When Guidotti first purchased the old Churchill home, built in 1889, people told her she was crazy, that the building was "on the wrong side of the tracks," in a bad neighborhood. But Guidotti had a vision, and in transforming the old home, she was also instrumental in the transformation of the neighborhood into Napa Abajo, now listed as a historical district in the national register.

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Public Meetings
City Council
 TBA
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
 Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Planning Commission
 Monday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
 Community Hall, 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
Design Review
 Monday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.
 Lafayette Library & Learning Center,
 Arts & Science Discovery Center,
 3491 Mt. Diablo Blvd.
School Board Meetings
Acalanes Union High School District
 Wednesday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.
 AUHSD Board Room
 1212 Pleasant Hill Road, Lafayette
 www.acalanes.k12.ca.us
Lafayette School District
 Wednesday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.
 Regular Board Meeting
 District Office Board Room
 3477 School St., Lafayette
 www.lafsd.k12.ca.us

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Lafayette loses longtime resident, 'honorary mayor'

By Pippa Fisher

Founder of Lafayette's Diablo Foods Ed Stokes passed away peacefully Nov. 28 amidst family and friends.

Stokes was known as honorary mayor of the city because of his philanthropy.

"Ed personified the best of Lafayette. His generosity, friendliness, ability to seemingly be everywhere, and business practices set a standard we should all try to emulate," said Lafayette Mayor Don Tatzin, adding "I had the privilege of serving as mayor while recognizing Ed was the true mayor of our community."

Stokes founded Lafayette-

based Diablo Foods, which is still family-owned and operated, 50 years ago. For two years he worked 12-hour days with his wife Betty behind the deli counter. Three generations of the family adhere to Stokes' principles: best quality, full friendly service, excellent selection, utmost cleanliness and always fair prices. Over time he opened another store in Danville and two more in Concord.

Ed served for 12 years on the board of the Northern California Grocers Association. In 2010, the California Independent Grocers Association named him "Retailer of the Year." Diablo Foods was



Diablo Foods paid tribute to its founder, Ed Stokes, on the day that he passed away with a photo at the entrance of the store.

Photo Jeff Heyman, City of Lafayette

voted the number one specialty food store in Contra Costa County by Diablo Magazine in 2011, and the California Independent Grocery Association recognized Stokes and Diablo Foods as the "Best Independent Grocer" in 2011.

Additionally Stokes was named Lafayette's "Citizen of the Year" and 2012 "Distinguished Citizen of the Year" as well as having been the only two-time Lafayette "Business Person of the year" recipient.

He received the Su Stauffer Acalanes Friend of Education Award, a Marine Corps League Award, the Humanitarian Award by the Soroptimist Club, and the Paul Harris Fellow Award from Lafayette Rotary.

Stokes served as president

of Lafayette's Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club and Town Hall Theatre as well as having been a director of numerous other community organizations. He was generous in his support of Lafayette schools and local charities.

He continued to be a presence in the store throughout his life, always checking to make sure colleagues, friends and customers were cared for.

Lafayette City Manager Steve Falk said, "Ed's passing makes me sad, but also grateful that I was able to spin in Ed's orbit for a couple of decades. His unbounded generosity served as an example for us all, and I am a better person because I had the great gift of knowing Ed Stokes."

Outgoing public servants honored

By Pippa Fisher



From left: Rachel Zinn, Don Tatzin, Candace Andersen, Steve Falk, Teresa Gerring, Richard Whitmore, and David Gerson
 Photo Jeff Heyman, City of Lafayette

Driving rain didn't dissuade hundreds of people from showing up to a joint reception at the Lafayette Veterans Memorial Center Nov. 27 for six public servants who are retiring or moving on in their service to the city.

Following refreshments and mingling, people took their seats, with many having to stand due to the size of the turnout, to listen to anecdotes and stories along with long lists of accomplishments of the six.

Executive director of the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, Jay Lifson, performed master of ceremonies duties.

The honorees were recognized in alphabetical order, starting with City Manager Steve Falk, introduced by Lifson. Falk was the first to mention what was to be the common thread through all the speeches – that of community involvement. Noting that 28 years is a long time for a city manager to stay in one job, he credited the city council, the chamber of commerce, and his "brilliant" city staff and said it was "because we did it together."

Former Lafayette School District Board Member Ann Appert introduced outgoing Lafayette School District Board Member Teresa Ger-

ringer, who is now taking a seat on the city council.

Former LAFSD Superintendent Rachel Zinn introduced outgoing LAFSD Board Member David Gerson.

City Council Member Mike Anderson introduced outgoing Mayor Don Tatzin as he leaves the council after 33 years of service, noting his legacy of making all feel welcome to the podium to speak at council meetings with a simple greeting each time of "Welcome" to put people at ease.

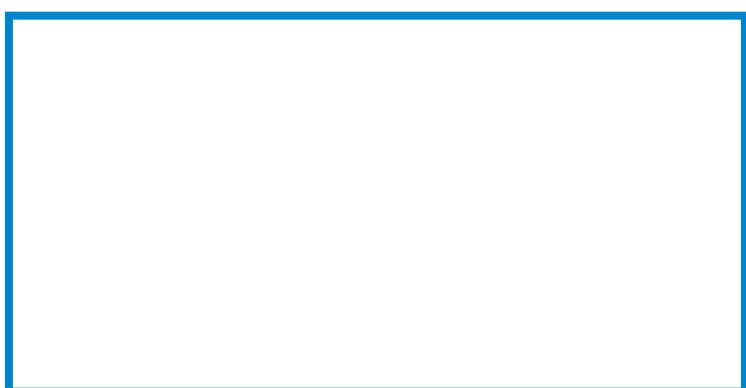
Tatzin for his part highlighted the collective achievements of the past years and expressed his optimism that the next council will solve issues of traffic and parking.

Acalanes Union High School District Superintendent John Nickerson introduced outgoing Board Member Richard Whitmore, who is leaving the board but taking up the position of Superintendent of Schools at LAFSD.

And then finally Gerring reappeared to introduce Zinn as she leaves the position of LAFSD superintendent.

Contra Costa County Supervisor Candace Andersen was on hand to present resolutions.

Tatzin noted that between them all, their service amounted to 125 years.



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Lafayette through the eyes of the lens; photos on display

By Pippa Fisher



Chuck DeLeuw's first place photo: "Thanks for Stopping in Lafayette."

Photo Chuck DeLeuw

Lafayette city council took time during the Nov. 26 meeting to recognize the participants of the most recent "Day in the Life" photo contest, including first place winner Chuck DeLeuw for his submission entitled "Thanks for Stopping in Lafayette."

This is the fourth such contest organized by the public art committee. Rules specify that the photo must be taken on a particular day – in this case, July 29 on the 50th anniversary of the incorporation of Lafayette.

Lafayette resident Christine Yarosh received special recognition for her photo "Tour de Lafayette." Other contestants included Dana Anderson for her photo, "50 Years of Leadership," Stu Selland for his untitled photo, Michael Dawson for "Trees of the Lafayette Moraga Trail" and Erin Partridge for "Sun Over Burton Valley."

The photos are all currently on display in the Lafayette Library and Learning Center's homework room through the end of December.

City wins victory in lawsuit

By Pippa Fisher

The city of Lafayette won a trial court victory Dec. 6 over a group of neighbors who alleged the city had used biased procedures in reaching a land use decision in 2016.

A statement released by the city Dec. 7 said, "The Court found that the council's closed sessions were justified and proper, that the council's decision was based on a fair, thorough process, and that there was no evidence that anyone at the city – the council, staff, or the city attorney – was biased."

The city noted that legal fees cost the taxpayers \$683,692.

At issue were claims that the city violated the Brown Act by meeting in closed session and of prejudice at the design review and

planning commission level due to conflict of interest.

The plaintiff's attorney Scott Sommer was surprised by the verdict, and by the amount of the legal fees.

"This was a one-day trial based on an administrative record with no live witnesses. There were four one-hour depositions in the case. The only relief sought was a new and impartial hearing," said Sommer, adding, "The city hired a litigation firm from San Francisco which lists white collar criminal defense among its specialties. Petitioners are astonished at the report of the city's attorneys fees."

The plaintiffs are currently considering whether or not to appeal.

Community hall renamed for Tatzin

By Pippa Fisher



Mayor Don Tazin, left, poses next to Vice Mayor Cam Burks at the community hall renaming.

Photo Pippa Fisher

A sizeable crowd showed up for the Nov. 26 city council meeting. And people weren't there to hear policy discussed on this occasion – they were there in appreciation of Mayor Don Tazin, for whom the community hall at the Lafayette Library and Learning Center was being renamed in his honor.

In recognition of all the hard work and dedication Tatzin put into making the library a reality nine years ago, the LLC Foundation proposed renaming the hall to the Don Tatzin Community Hall as Tatzin steps down from public ser-

vice after 33 years.

Vice Mayor Cam Burks noted that they were standing in the middle of the heart of the city. "And I'm standing next to the man who represents the spirit of this heart," he said.

Burks said that there is only one leader whose impact has been so profound and so enormous, decade after decade. "And that is Don Tatzin. And that is why the heart of Lafayette, our Library and Learning Center Community Hall, is being named in his honor."

... continued on Page A9

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Moraga

Public Meetings

City Council

Wednesday, Dec. 12, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Planning Commission

Monday, Dec. 17, 7 p.m.
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

Design Review

TBA
Council Chambers and Community Meeting Room, 335 Rheem Blvd.

School Board Meetings

Moraga School District
Wednesday, Jan. 15, 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

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Critter Tree tradition continues at Moraga Library

By Vera Kochan



Critter Tree Photos Vera Kochan

Just when you think you've seen your share of critters around Moraga, along comes the annual Critter Tree exhibit at the Moraga Library, 1500 St. Mary's Road. These critters come in the form of adorable ornaments handcrafted by members of the Moraga Garden Club, and are on display through Jan. 4, when they are lovingly rewrapped in tissue and stored away at the library for next year's holiday season.

The tradition began in 1998, and was inspired by an annual display at the Brandywine Museum of Art in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. The Moraga Garden Club wanted to display a non-denominational exhibit in the library and decided that a Critter Tree was as close to it as they could get, while still allowing them to display their crafty creations.

All of the critters are made from nature's bounty, such as pine cones, various seeds, dried flowers, hay, pods, beans, tree bark and corn husks. What animals they become is up to the crafter's imagination.

The garden club's publicity chairman, Karin Biasotti said, "We need to have more workshops



Two critters in a boat

to create new ornaments, because many of these were made in 1998, and have become fragile. Nature doesn't last forever."

As if on cue, original member Sharon Galiani walked into the library on a personal errand and admitted to having some of her old ornaments on the tree.

Janice Lieu was in charge of putting up all of the decorative garlands and wreaths gracing the entryways, shelves and windows.

... continued on Page A12

Moraga police remind residents to beware of scammers

By Vera Kochan

The holiday season is a time for giving, and scammers are literally banking on your generosity. Consumers have the ability to detect fake charities at their fingertips, and it's all available on the very same computer or cell phone that the scammers are using against you.

Caller ID is exactly what it says – a means of identifying your caller. According to the Moraga Police Department, "Often times, the best way to prevent being scammed is not to answer calls from unknown or unfamiliar telephone numbers." If the caller doesn't leave a voice message, most likely they were not someone important to you. If you're curious enough to identify the caller/phone number, use your computer to look up the information they've left behind."

Email scams are on the rise, with scammers claiming to be from a bank, telecommunications provider or other business you

regularly deal with. Scamwatch (www.scamwatch.gov.au) tells us, "Do not click on any links or open attachments from emails claiming to be from your bank or another trusted organization and asking you to update or verify your details – just press delete." If you receive a phone call, "Never provide your personal, credit card or online account details. Instead, ask for their name and contact number and make an independent check with the organization in question before calling back."

The Federal Trade Commission (www.consumer.ftc.gov) warns consumers that some scammers call and claim to be computer techs associated with well-known companies like Microsoft or Apple. Claiming to be "tech support," these scammers send pop-up messages warning about computer issues and claiming they've detected viruses on your computer.

... continued on Page A12

Community gathers for annual holiday tree lighting ceremony at Moraga Commons

By Vera Kochan



Holiday Tree Photo Vera Kochan

With hot chocolate with whipped cream being served up by members of Moraga Youth Involvement, wearing elf hats, and two of the "elves" guarding the source of power used to light the tree, a large crowd was serenaded with Christmas carols by the Northgate High School Madrigal Choir at the annual Moraga Tree Lighting ceremony Dec. 7 at the Moraga Commons. The event was organized by the Moraga Parks and Rec Department.

Santa Claus made a quick trip from the North Pole to visit Moraga a little early this year. Since Rudolph was busy getting his shiny nose buffed, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District escorted Santa to the event in a fire engine decidedly much larger than his sleigh.

At 7 p.m. young and old alike began the countdown that led to the lighting of the beautiful, big tree for another holiday season.



1919 Ascot Drive, Moraga

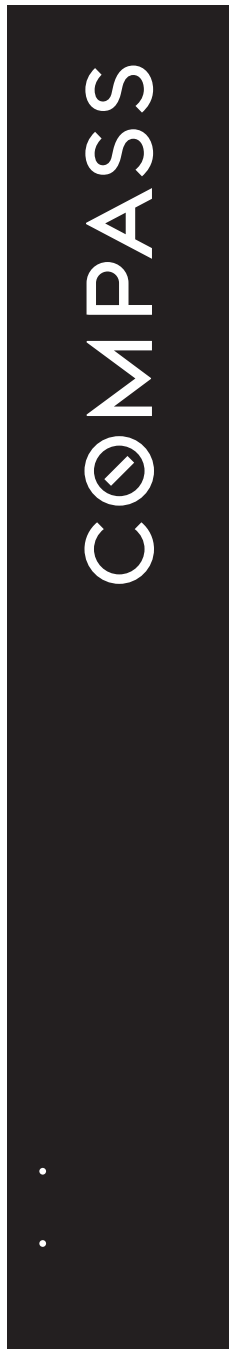
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Saint Mary's business students strive to tackle Rheem Theatre's woes

By Vera Kochan



Photos Vera Kochan



First place \$5,000 winners with Trotter and Kasimatis

It's no secret that the Rheem Theatre has gone through its share of ups and downs in the past 10 years. The Moraga Chamber of Commerce and Saint Mary's College partnered to organize a business competition aimed at focusing on the theatre's financial issues.

Held in the Soda Center at SMC on Nov. 29, the event was a much-anticipated experiment in economic problem solving, with five teams of students tasked to resuscitate a beloved landmark in their own backyard.

The competition, which was compared to TV's "Shark Tank," was part of SMC professor Marco Aponte-Moreno's Business Ad-

ministration Strategy Class. The ultimate goal was to develop a 10-year business plan to maximize Rheem Theatre's potential as a community entertainment and event center.

Rheem Theatre, built in 1957, originally as a 1,000-seat, one screen venue, underwent a renovation in the 1990s and was split into two levels. Trying to keep up with multiplex cinemas, it expanded to four screens: one downstairs and three smaller screens upstairs.

In 2008, while the country suffered through a recession, the Rheem Theatre's troubles were just beginning. Current owner Mahesh Puri announced the sale of the the-

atre, looking to invest in a "more stable commercial venture." The property failed to get a buyer.

Puri unsuccessfully tried to sell the property again in 2014, attempting to avoid a new historic preservation law that he felt would reduce its value.

In February 2015, the Town of Moraga adopted the historic preservation law allowing the town to determine its historic landmarks and give guidelines to owners of those properties, while granting tax breaks and incentives.

By May 2015, Puri increased the theatre's monthly rent from \$5,000 to \$8,000 making it impossible for the theatre operators,

Derek Zemrak and Leonard Pirkle, to continue business, having just invested \$250,000 on new seats and digital projectors.

One month later, Puri agreed to a 60-day delay in rent increase to allow the establishment of the Moraga Community Foundation, expecting the organization to defray the operating expenses. A few months later the Moraga Community Foundation was formed, and by December, Puri and the operators reached a one-year agreement that would allow more time to find a long-term solution while the MCF obtained a nonprofit status from the IRS.

During 2016 and 2017, discus-

sions regarding the theatre's fate were never reached. The MCF continued its fundraising efforts while the theatre operated on a month-to-month lease. By the end of 2017, with low attendance and high operating costs to blame, Rheem Theatre admitted defeat.

It wasn't until the theatre's closing in January 2018, that the ball began to roll in its favor. In March, the Moraga town council approved a Memorandum of Understanding following negotiations between MCF and Puri, transferring theatre ownership to the foundation for \$150,000.

... continued on Page A12

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Orinda

Public Meetings

City Council

Tuesday, Dec. 18, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Planning Commission

Tuesday, Dec. 18, 7 p.m.
Library Auditorium, Orinda Library
26 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

Citizens' Infrastructure

Oversight Commission

Wed., Dec. 12, 7 p.m. cancelled
Sarge Littlehale Community Room,
22 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563

School Board Meetings

Orinda Union School District

Monday, Jan. 14, 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

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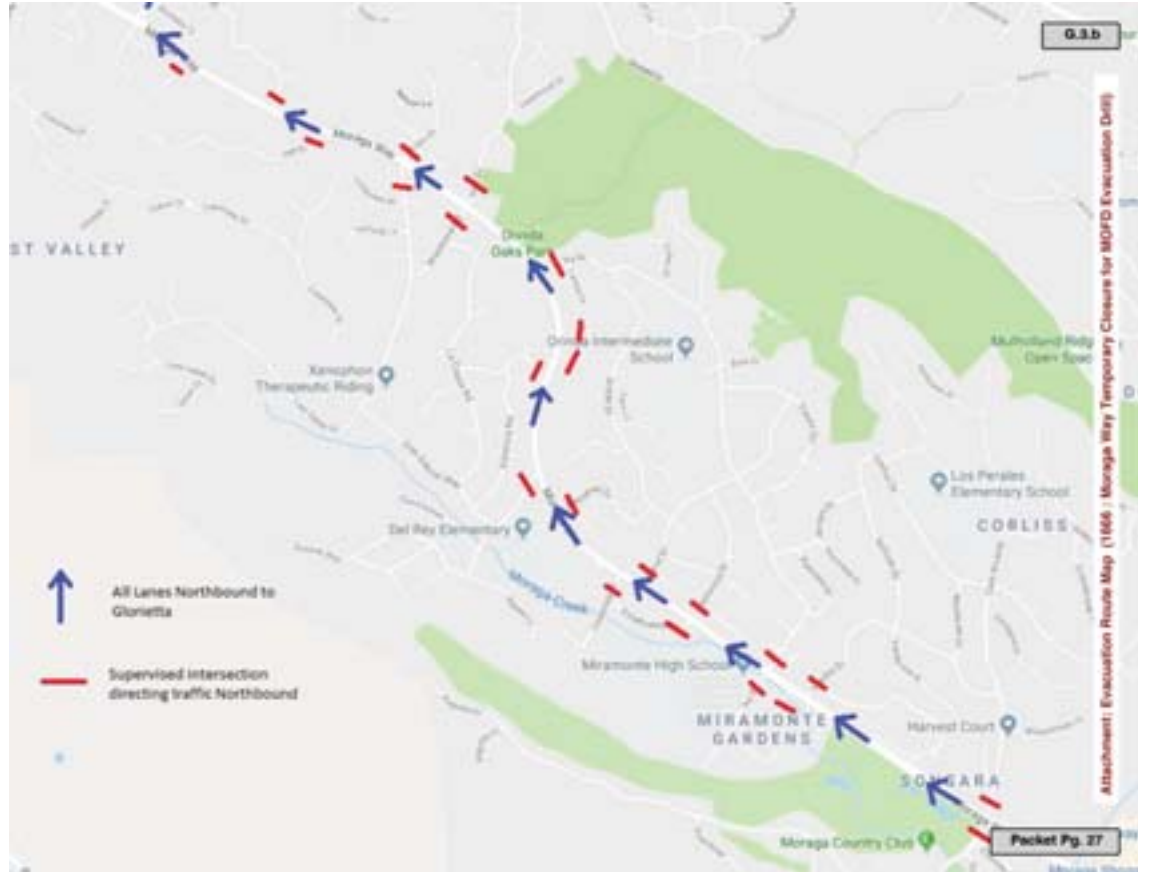
MOFD to conduct evacuation drills in Orinda and Moraga Dec. 15

By Sora O'Doherty

All traffic in both lanes of Moraga Way from the Orinda city limit at Ivy Drive to Glorietta Boulevard will travel only in the northbound direction from 7 to 8 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 15 as the Moraga-Orinda Fire District tests evacuation procedures. The Orinda City Council adopted a resolution Nov. 27 authorizing the temporary closure of the road to southbound traffic, which will be diverted to Rheem Boulevard. The resolution recognizes that the need for practicing and simulating evacuation efforts has only been heightened with the loss of life in the recent Camp Fire. Moraga Way is considered a major evacuation route for most of south Orinda and portions of the town of Moraga.

Moraga-Orinda Fire District Fire Chief Dave Winnacker, Orinda Police Chief Mark Nagel and Public Works Director Larry Theis presented the plan to the city council. Vice Mayor Inga Miller noted that the test "is a comfort to our residents." The officials have been working with Moraga, which will also be affected by the drill.

Nagel explained that 50 or so CERT volunteers will stand along the road and at intersections to assure the smooth flow of traffic. Moraga Country Club residents will be invited to sign up to participate in the drill, and those who are not participating will be asked to take an alternate route. "We want it to be very controlled, very slow," Nagel said. The plan included advertising on social media for a week before, as well as the day before and the day of the drill. Changeable message signs will alert drivers to



Evacuation map provided the drill this week. The number of vehicles that will participate in the drill is unknown.

The first responders are hoping to learn how volunteers can help coordinate traffic from the exercise, which, admittedly, is not quite the full-blown situation of an evacuation in the event of a real emergency, such as a wildfire. Armed with the lessons learned on Saturday, the group anticipates a second drill early next year on Miner Road, the primary feeder route for north Orinda. Council Member Eve Phillips pointed out that Orinda Country Club has a robust block captain system and Theis noted that Orinda has worked well with PG&E to clear vegetation along Miner Road.

Laura Lyons spoke during the council meeting's public comment period. "I'm a little concerned about this very limited evacuation," she said, adding, "There is general panic; we are being compared with Paradise: one road out, one road in." She made a number of suggestions, including widening the road, getting CERT in-

involved, and developing a plan not dependent on cell phones and cell towers. Lyons commended the very active parents groups that helped get water tanks installed at Sleepy Hollow and Wagner Ranch elementary schools, but noted that there is nothing similar at the three other schools in Orinda or the high schools. She added that in a firestorm, a fire moves an acre a second.

Winnacker noted that the primary mode of notification is landlines, underscoring how the old-school system of direct wired phones is the best because no electricity is required. If your telephone system uses wireless handsets, he recommends the purchase of an uninterrupted power supply for both the phone and the modem. The secondary route of notification is for people who have registered their addresses and mobile telephone numbers; they will receive an alert via cell phone. Also, the broad-based federal notification system would be similar to amber alerts, broadcast to every cell phone in range of the tower.

However, there is no way to opt out of this type of notification.

Winnacker also recommended the use of weather alert radios with battery backups, which, he said, even when turned off will sound a 120-decible alarm with a flashing light. He said that these items are stocked on Amazon, starting at around \$20. After the alert, the radio gives more information, such as which evacuation route to take.

Mayor Amy Worth asked Winnacker about school fire safety, and the chief discussed meeting with the site safety council at the schools. For Wagner Ranch and Sleepy Hollow the plan is to shelter students and staff in place in inherently Type 3 fire resistant multipurpose rooms; 10,000-gallon tanks have been provided and filled, and a fire engine would be allocated to each site in the event of a fire. "Of the five engines we have available to us," he said, "two are allocated to those schools. I know that it is an extreme ask," he continued, "but it is better not to go get your child."

Worth also asked about efforts to control vegetation and fire load. Winnacker responded that the 14,000 parcels in the district get a notice each year asking them to focus on three big things that are required: grass cut to less than 3 inches, bushes broken up so that they don't form a fire ladder, and trees limbed up to 6-8 feet. MOFD is also working with East Bay Parks and the East Bay Municipal Utility District to ensure mitigation of wild land surrounding the district.

Winnacker said that EBMUD has been a great partner, and that the agency has facilitated a lot of grazing which, to the untrained eye, looks untreated but really leaves just stubble. Prescribed burns were carried out this year on 30 acres, with burns on 200 acres planned next year, and 30 miles of fire trails were mowed or disked, and the plan is to expand that number next year.

"The year after that," Winnacker said, "we hope to burn a perimeter black line around the entire district to create a fire-safe island."

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Orinda mom takes over District 16 California Assembly seat

By Sora O'Doherty

Lawyer and law professor Rebecca Bauer-Kahan didn't find out that she had won her seat in the California legislature until 10 days after the election. She spent that time trying to make certain that every vote was counted. Afterward, she was treated to a tour of the Contra Costa County Elections Division, a tour which she wishes everyone could take, so impressed

was she with the procedures there. Although her years working on environmental compliance law and teaching at Santa Clara and Golden Gate law schools make her comfortable with the legislative process, she was enthusiastic about the two-week new member training course.

... continued on Page A12



Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
Photo Sora O'Doherty

New assistant city manager is familiar face: Larry Theis

By Sora O'Doherty



Larry Theis Photo Sora O'Doherty

many Orindans because he is responsible for Orinda's roads and drainage issues, so he is often out and about on the streets of the city. Although he works on average 40 to 50 hours as public works director, Theis says that he strives to maintain a good work/life balance. He lives in Concord, where he grew up, with his wife, Kirstin, and two children, Maddy, 7, and Desmond, 4. When he must attend night meetings, on average three times a month, he tries to get home for dinner with the family before the meeting.

In order to take on his new duties, Theis says that he will lean on his staff more and will possibly use consultants more. Plans are for him to transition gradually to areas of broader city interest as he assists current City Manager Steve Salomon, who undertook his position based on an agreement limiting his work to 90 percent of full time.

... continued on Page A10

Orinda's director of public works has been named assistant city manager. The city council affirmed the appointment at its Nov. 27 meeting. The role will be in addition to Larry Theis's regular duties and carries with it a 5 percent differential increase in his salary.

Theis is already known to

2019 Youth Ink Writing Contest now open

By Sora O'Doherty

The 2019 Youth Ink writing contest – created by the Orinda Junior Women's Club to support the literary arts among young people in the Orinda community and open to all sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders who live in Orinda or attend an Orinda school – was launched on Dec. 3.

Entries must be a story (fiction or nonfiction), poem, or other creative writing form, presented in English and written specifically for the contest and without teacher or parent involvement. Submissions will be evaluated on content, clarity, structure and originality. The

writing prompt for 2019 is "It Matters;" however, students may write about anything they like. The only limits are that entries must be 750 words or less and only one entry per contestant will be accepted.

Entries may be submitted by email only until Feb. 15. There is no fee to enter the contest. Late entries will not be accepted. Entrants can download a Youth Ink 2019 entry form at: http://www.orindajuniors.org/wpcontent/uploads/2018/11/youthink_form_2019.pdf.

There will be three money prizes awarded, in addition to 10 honorable mention gift certificates.

The first-place winner will receive \$250, second place will receive \$125, and third place \$75. Winners will be notified by mail and receive their prizes at an Awards Ceremony in April. The ceremony is open to the public and all family and friends are invited.

The contest is organized and run by the Orinda Junior Women's Club, with additional financial sponsorship provided by Friends of the Orinda Library, the Lamorinda Arts Council, and Orinda Community Foundation.



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Fire Districts

Public Meetings

Moraga-Orinda Fire District

Board of Directors

Wednesday, Dec. 19, 7 p.m.

Nov. 21 cancelled

Go to the website for meeting location, times and agendas. Visit www.mofd.org



ConFire

Board of Directors

Tuesday, Jan. 15, 1:30 p.m.

Board Chamber room 107, Administration

Building, 651 Pine St., Martinez. For meeting times and agendas, visit <http://alturl.com/5p9pu>.



New MOFD board defies tradition, elects Danziger president

By Nick Marnell



New MOFD board, from left: Michael Donner, Craig Jorgens, Steven Danziger and Greg Baitx. Missing: John Jex
Photo Nick Marnell

The three newly elected, union-supported members of the Moraga-Orinda Fire District governing board made an immediate impact Dec. 5 by shattering tradition and electing newcomer Steven Danziger as president of the district board of directors.

A stunned silence followed director Michael Donner's motion to nominate Danziger, and when Room No. 7 of the Orinda Community Center sprung back to life, speakers bashed the action as dangerous and irresponsible. One member of the public stoked the fears and the rhetoric that suffused the November election campaigns. "I find it disturbing," he said. "I'm concerned with the idea that the union is taking over the board and taking over the fire district."

Possibly sensing a runaway train heading his way, Local 1230 President Vince Wells attempted to quell the uprising. "I don't want this election to be the union versus other candidates," Wells said. "Decisions should not be made based on who supported which candi-

dates. I would hope that no members of the board – including the ones we supported – will operate from that platform."

The MOFD board elects officers at the end of every year, and traditionally, though not a district bylaw, the vice president is elected president for the succeeding year. There have been exceptions, as when former director Alex Evans turned down his nomination for president in 2014, citing an extremely heavy workload at his market research firm during an election year. Had precedent been followed, the 2019 board president would be John Jex.

"There are good reasons for tradition," cautioned one speaker. "Learn how all of this works before taking on a leadership role." The rotation of the role as president is a politically neutral mechanism, offered another speaker, stressing that with everyone given a chance to be president, contention is avoided.

Kymerleigh Korpus, Moraga town council member and MOFD liaison, agreed on the likelihood of contention. She warned that

when traditions were not followed in Moraga, divisiveness and anger among town council members soon followed.

So why did Donner, a retired Oakland firefighter well versed in the nuances of the fire service, break with tradition and nominate Danziger? "Fire is steeped in tradition, and I normally honor that," Donner said. "With Steve, I made an exception. We worked together in Oakland for 20 years, and I know how well he comports himself. He is very composed, and he will be a great leader."

Despite a final plea by director Craig Jorgens to honor tradition, the board elected Danziger president by a 3-2 vote, with Jex and Jorgens voting no and Greg Baitx joining Donner and Danziger, the three union-supported directors, to vote yes.

In 2018, through November, the MOFD board voted on 28 agendized items and split only five times. The cohesiveness of the new board will be a development to watch closely throughout 2019.

MOFD elections: Firefighters union achieves 100 percent ROI

By Nick Marnell

Voters in the Moraga-Orinda Fire District rejected the notion that a candidate backed by the firefighters union would present a conflict of interest as district director by placing three union-backed candidates on the MOFD governing board in the November election. The three new directors, comprising a board majority, took office Dec. 5.

The firefighters union contributed more than \$30,000 to back the campaigns of Greg Baitx, Steve Danziger and Michael Donner, who defeated candidates Nathan Bell in Division 1, Steve Anderson and Red Smith in Division 3, and Lucy Talbot in Division 4. Opponents of the union-backed candidates raised less than half that amount, with incumbent Anderson reporting no campaign contributions.

Rarely has one board seat been contested in any election in the district's 21-year history, let alone the three this year. Not only did the elected directors benefit from the political campaigns but so too did district residents, who were treated to analyses of fire issues they may have never understood or even heard about in their lives. Discussions on topics like net pension liability, adequate staffing, response times and tax equity bombarded local media outlets for months. The electorate, which disregarded the endorsement of Bell, Smith and Talbot by a competing regional newspaper, was likely the best informed ever in the district.

In Division 1, voters chose Baitx, a firefighter with the East Contra Costa Fire Protection District, whose family has a history

in Moraga and in the fire service. Danziger, a retired fire department administrator, won the Division 3 seat by the widest margin of the three. And Donner, businessman and retired firefighter, eked out a 123-vote victory in Division 4.

For Bell, it was his second try at securing a district board seat, having lost to Kathleen Famulener in 2014. "It was an honor to participate in the democratic process. I thank all who supported my candidacy. Congratulations to Mr. Baitx," Bell said.

Talbot also remained gracious in defeat, promising to continue to make her voice heard. "I plan to be involved in MOFD citizen committees to help communicate the financial standing of the district, and progress implementing critical programs – such as prevention – our citizens have been asking for," she said.

The most startling outcome occurred in Division 3, where Anderson's six-year term on the board ended abruptly after his third-place finish. "It's clear that money talks," he said. "I never realized that on the local level." But Anderson took full responsibility for his defeat, saying that he dropped the ball by not confirming that he was even going to run until it was too late to secure endorsements.

Donner dismissed the idea that he owes the firefighters union for its financial support. "I think the public believes that we are individual thinkers and not in the union's pocket," Donner said of the three new board members.

Anderson, who spent hours coaching and mentoring the newly elected directors, concurred. "I believe they are prepared to do what's right for the district," he said.

ConFire Chief Jeff Carman to depart in March

By Nick Marnell

Contra Costa County Fire Protection District Chief Jeff Carman announced his retirement to his staff, officials and district residents on Dec. 7.

"It is with mixed emotions that I write this message to inform all of you that I plan to retire on March 29, 2019," wrote the chief. "This year marks my 35th year in the fire service. It has been an incredible career highlighted by being the fire chief of ConFire for the last five and a half years. In that time, we have accomplished incredible things together, and, while I still enjoy coming to work and being a part of this organization, I think it is a good time for me to move aside and allow new talent and ideas into the organization. Over the course of my career, I have worked for fire chiefs who stayed too long, and I would prefer to end my career on a positive note rather than overstay my welcome."

Carman took over a troubled fire district in October of 2013 and directed ConFire to such financial and operational success that he was named California Fire Chief of the Year in 2018. Among his many achievements are the formation of the Alliance, a public-private partnership that provides ambulance transport service in most of Contra Costa County, beefing up the dis-

trict hazardous materials response program and the rebuilding not only of a fire station but of district relationships with the city of Lafayette.

"City staff was tough but fair," Carman said. "Withdrawing from the joint fire station project with the Moraga-Orinda Fire District was ultimately the right decision and I am anxious to be here for the grand opening of Fire Station 16 next year. I think that decision showed the city of Lafayette we were committed to providing the best possible service to them and was a step in the right direction."

The chief praised his staff and recognized the organization, which he touted as morphing from a reactive organization to a more strategic one, anticipating customer needs and assuring that those needs were met when issues arose. "As a result, I am confident that I can leave the organization knowing that it is on a good path and has a bright future," Carman said.

Over the next four months, the chief plans to come to work every day just as he has for the last five years. "There are still many things I would like to accomplish before I go, and I will continue to work hard to complete those things before I leave. Until then, I look forward to continuing to be the fire chief of this district," Carman said.

Police Departments

Moraga Police Department Incident Summary Report

Nov. 20 - Dec. 3

Alarms	21
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	7
Traffic	46
Suspicious Circumstances	8
Suspicious Subject	6
Suspicious Vehicle	5
Service to Citizen	32
Patrol Request/ Security Check	37
Supplemental Report	15
Welfare Check	3

Vehicle violations

Excessive Speed	
Moraga Rd./Alta Mesa Dr.	
Moraga Way/Miramonte Dr.	
Moraga Rd./Draeger Dr.	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
1000 Block Country Club Dr.	
1000 Block Larch Ave.	
100 Block Fernwood Dr.	
Reckless Driving	
Canyon Rd./Camino Pablo	
Rheem Blvd./Moraga Rd.	
Campolindo High School	
Moraga Way	
Moraga Rd./Campolindo Dr.	
Traffic Hazard	
St. Marys College	
Moraga Rd./Corliss Dr.	
Vehicle Theft	
10 Block Francisca Dr.	

Other criminal activity

Fraud False Pretenses	
20 Block Carr Dr.	
Grand Theft Other	
600 Block Rheem Blvd.	
CVS	
Petty Theft	
10 Block Fieldbrook Pl.	
600 Block Augusta Dr.	
Rape	
St. Marys College	
Sexual Exploitation	
40 Block San Pablo Ct.	
Trespass	
10 Block Mayfield Pl.	
Vandalism	
Joaquin Moraga Int School	
Los Perales Elementary School	
Moraga Rd./Alta Mesa Dr.	
800 Block Camino Ricardo	
1900 Block Ascot Dr.	

Nuisance to the Community

Drunk In Public	
600 Block Moraga Rd.	
Harassment	
100 Block Paseo Del Rio (2)	
Loud Noise	
Miramonte Dr./Ivy Dr.	
Villa Ln./Hardie Dr.	
800 Block Villa Ln.	
Loud Party	
10 Block Miramonte Dr.	
Public Assembly Check	
Rheem Valley Shopping Center (2)	
Safeway	
Moraga Commons Park	
Public Nuisance	
1900 Block Joseph Dr.	

Other

Threats	
40 Block Blaine Ct.	
Violation Custody Order	
1700 Block St. Andrews Dr.	

ORINDA POLICE

Orinda Police Department Incident Summary Report

Nov. 11 - Nov. 17

Alarms	21
911 Calls (includes hang-ups)	4
Traffic	27
Suspicious Circumstances	1
Suspicious Subjects	3
Suspicious Vehicles	3
Patrol Request/ Security Check	8
Service to Citizen	32
Supplemental Report	11
Vacation House Check	7
Welfare Check	1

Vehicle violations

Auto Burglary	
10 Block Altarinda Rd.	
Hit And Run Misdemeanor	
La Espiral/Las Vegas Rd.	
Occupied Stalled Vehicle	
Vashell / Moraga Way	
Reckless Driving	
Camino Pablo/Miner Rd.	
Camino Pablo/Brookwood Rd.	
Camino Pablo/Eb Sr 24	
San Pablo Dam Rd./Bear Creek Rd.	
Orinda Theater	
Traffic Hazard	
Bear Creek Rd./San Pablo Dam Rd.	
Camino Sobrante/El Caminito	
Glorietta Blvd./Rheem Blvd.	
80 Block La Espiral	
Camino Pablo/Eb Sr 24	
10 Block Acacia Dr.	
Moraga Way/Brookwood Rd.	

Other criminal activity

Burglary	
20 Block Orinda Way	
Fraud Credit Card	
70 Block Barbara Rd.	
Petty Theft	
100 Block Estates Dr.	
Petty Theft From Veh	
70 Block Underhill Rd.	
Residential Burglary	
200 Block Sundown Terrace	
Warrant Arrest	
10 Block Orinda Way	

Nuisance to the Community

Battery	
200 Block Camino Sobrante	
Disturbance-Domestic	
20 Block Orinda Way	
Loud Noise	
100 Block Lucille Way	
Charles Hill Pl./El Nido Ranch Rd.	
Loud Party	
Glorietta Blvd./Moraga Via	
School Assembly Check	
Sleepy Hollow School	
MHS (2)	
Verbal Dispute	
10 Block Southwaite Ct.	
500 Block Miner Rd.	

Other

Accident Injury	
Camino Pablo/Santa Maria Way	
Missing Adult	
10 Block Crown Ct.	
Possession Of Burg Tools	
Wb Sr 24 at Wilder Rd.	

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Letters to the Editor

In support of block schedule

The schedule change that occurred in my school has completely changed the experience of high school. I believe all high schools should adopt the block scheduling. It has helped me have more time to do my homework. I am a football player who would have practice for almost 3 hours and then I would go to weights for another 45 minutes. I would get home by 7 p.m. each day however with block scheduling I easily finished my homework that would be due the next day. I am also able to finish homework early and I can be ahead in school with that. There's also academy which is a genius idea. It allows students who have missed school days due to sickness or other important matters to be able to take missed tests or learn material they missed. Academy also allows kids to take a break from constantly listening to lectures and allowing for people to meet and talk with friends. It also lessens the weight of backpacks for everyone. Imagine having to carry around a bunch of textbooks, notebooks, and a computer around. With block scheduling, you only have to bring some books for a couple of classes. Many students say that the worst day of the week is Monday. People hate Mondays in general but with block scheduling Mondays are even worse. That's because Mondays are like old school days where all the classes are on one day. Peo-

ple hate Mondays because people don't like the old school days. Block scheduling may be downgraded by some teachers however this actually helps the learning process for kids. Kids can't take in different types of information all in one sitting. With block scheduling, kids are able to learn all the subjects more efficiently. Another great aspect of block scheduling is that on Thursdays and Tuesdays, kids with no 7th periods are able to leave school at lunch. They can go out to lunch or go home and rest before practice. Block scheduling has nothing but benefits and, I believe, all students should be able to have block scheduling.

Jake Leuteneker
 Moraga

Gas pipeline safety

Lafayette's City Council and City staff have historically done an excellent job of representing and serving its citizens, and for that we should all be thankful. I find it difficult to understand, however, why Council and Staff have historically ignored the high-pressure gas pipelines that line our trails and traverse our neighborhoods.

Residents reported exposed pipeline along the Lafayette-Moraga Trail and Beechwood Drive to the City decades ago. Only after hundreds of Lafayette citizens raised the red flag of safety did PG&E begin the work of installing newer and deeper pipeline in that

area, as evidenced by current construction. And just this fall, PG&E finally installed new cathodic protection stations and legally-required gas signage.

Unfortunately, the City continues to battle its own residents by defending a lawsuit around tree removal on pipelines. Why aren't City officials demanding inspec-

tion of 70-year old, untested pipelines? Or addressing the 27 gas dig-in accidents the last two years? And why is a lawsuit demanding the City do its legally-obligated duties being defended so fiercely when tree removal on pipelines will do nothing to make us safer?

My sincerest wish is that the new City Council members join

Councilmember Anderson who suggested on Sept 10th that the \$530,000 tree payment be returned. It should instead be applied to identify and implement pipeline safety concerns in our community, and our new Mayor should help make this happen in 2019.

Michael Dawson
 Lafayette

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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

Community hall renamed

... continued from Page A3

"Under incredibly complex and challenging circumstances -- specifically around funding and sustainability -- Don led the way, not only serving as the financial architect but also ensuring that the library would be successful for generations to come," said Burks.

LLLCF President Victoria DeMoss spoke of Tatzin's "funding genius" and said that it was her distinct honor to recognize Tatzin for his extraordinary vision and ongoing leadership of the library.

Tatzin said that he was humbled by the honor and credited the hard work of many who made it possible.

To future users of the building Tatzin suggested, "Gain personal rewards by what you do for the community, act with fairness, transparency and openness, create rapid evolutionary change, think differently, spread credit widely, learn from criticism and remember that public service is just that."

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MOFD fire chief the impetus behind relocation of Moraga Fire Station 41

By Nick Marnell



Next in line for an overhaul

Photo courtesy MOFD

According to local officials, the Moraga-Orinda Fire District is under no pressure from developers or the town of Moraga to move Fire Station 41, which sits on Moraga Way next to the new Town Center Homes development.

“It’s 100 percent my idea,” said MOFD Chief Dave Winnacker.

Fire Station 41 was built in 1967, and according to a district 2011 Facilities Committee report, compiled under the direction of then-director Dick Olsen, the station suffered from “health and safety, gender separation, firefighter housing and other deficiencies” and needed to be rebuilt, as did the adjacent administrative and training centers.

“Following the priorities laid out in the 2011 report I began looking at the Station 41 project,” Winnacker said. “Given that the current site has always been marginal for training activities and that the report was written before the adjacent Town Center Homes project was approved, I believe it is appropriate to explore all viable options before committing significant capital resources to rebuilding or extensively remodeling Station 41.”

With the limited number of buildable lots in south Moraga of sufficient size to house the fire station and training center, the chief’s outreach and research narrowed the list of options to two: Remain at the current location or move to a site adjacent to the Joaquin Moraga Intermediate School. Winnacker contacted Moraga School District

Superintendent Bruce Burns in the fall.

“There have been informal discussions about this for years,” said Burns, who noted that this time, the fire district was seriously interested in moving the fire station to the JM location. Burns said he will bring the topic to his school board at a December meeting.

The superintendent seconded that outsiders did not recommend that he make a land deal with MOFD. “No pressure, no lobbying from the town,” Burns said.

Moraga Mayor Dave Trotter also confirmed that neither the town nor any developer made any demands to move the station. “The Town Council gave no such directives to MOFD, in connection with approval of the Town Center Homes project or otherwise,” Trotter said.

As for the relocation of the administrative center, Winnacker spoke with John Valentine, pastor of Orinda’s Holy Shepherd Lutheran Church, on the idea of the church selling a portion of its property to the district. “It is something we are considering,” Valentine said. The church lies adjacent to Fire Station 44 on Moraga Way.

“I understand that moving a fire station is always a sensitive issue and look forward, with appropriate board direction, to working with the public to explore MOFD’s future options,” Winnacker said.

No work will begin on Fire Station 41 until completion of the rebuild of Station 43 in north Orinda, expected in the spring.

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New assistant city manager

... continued from Page A7

Both of Theis’ parents are Japanese, and were born in Japan. They married in Los Angeles, where Theis was born and lived until he was about 3 years old. His German name results from the fact that his father was adopted by his grandmother, who was married to a merchant marine. Theis has only limited family in the United States, but has many cousins in Japan, which he visited with his brother twice when they were younger.

Theis attended Diablo Valley College and earned a bachelor’s degree in engineering at UC Berkeley in 2000. He was hired by Caltrans, where he worked until 2002 when he was hired by Contra Costa County. He joined the staff in Orinda in 2013, and was named director of public works in September 2016, after the retirement of Chuck Swanson. He’d only been in the job for a few months before the Miner Road sinkhole happened in January 2017.

At public works, Theis works most closely with the planning department. While public works

is responsible for roads and drainage, it is actually the parks and recreation department that is responsible for maintenance of the city’s buildings.

The 2019 road paving program will be his highest priority in the new year, and he is looking forward to the completion of that massive program, as next year is its final year. Beyond that, Orinda has several bridges that require seismic retrofitting, including the bridge at Miner Road (below the site of the sink hole), and a bridge on Bear Creek Road.

Insofar as downtown development goes, Public Works will be involved with the streetscape and is currently working on parking programs. Theis will report to the city council on the city’s experience with the Brookwood Road parking program on Dec. 18, when the council is also scheduled to get an update on the easement at 53 Rheem Blvd. In addition to its other duties, Public Works is also taking over parking enforcement from the Orinda Police Department.

Santa drops by It's a Wonderful Life

By Pippa Fisher

It was beginning to look a lot like Christmas on a beautiful evening in the packed Lafayette Plaza Dec. 7 as local students groups sang and performed holiday music.

The party really got started though when Santa arrived in style on his "sleigh," other-

wise known as Old Betsy, Lafayette Historical Society's fire truck.

The fun, free annual event presented by the Lafayette Chamber and sponsored by Lafayette Realtor The Dana Green Team with Branagh Development, included free activi-

ties and hot chocolate provided by the Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary.

The Sunrise Rotary club was also responsible for raffling a 1961 Volkswagen Beetle. And the grand prizewinner this year was ... drumroll, please ... City Manager

Steve Falk.

Residents should be on the lookout for a relaxed, carefree former city manager cruising through Lafayette in the distinctive car in the New Year after his retirement.



Photo Gint Federas



Photo Pippa Fisher



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Baagan vegan restaurant opens in Moraga

By Jenn Freedman



Photo provided

Baagan, an Indian-inspired vegan restaurant, opened in the Rheem Shopping Center in mid-November in the space previously occupied by New Delhi Bistrot. “Eat the Way Nature Intended” is Baagan’s slogan; the menu offers organic, healthy, plant-based meals like burgers, salads, teas, and more. The food is all handmade and sourced from local farmers and businesses.

Owner Rajbir Randhawa decided to open the Moraga location after listening to her customers at the Baagan food truck at the Moraga farmers’ market persistently

ask, “When are you going to open a storefront in Moraga? We want the option to eat this food every day, not just on Sundays!” So when the prospect arose to move in permanently, she and manager Roos Pal jumped on the opportunity.

Baagan offers a variety of burgers using its two signature patties: the chana (chickpea) patty and the mung patty are both packed with veggies, seeds, and therapeutic spices. My personal favorite is the spicy mung burger, satisfying and beautifully served with cashew herbal cheese, arugula, pickled onion, jalapenos, cucumber and

tomato. Another popular choice is the mushroom chana burger, served with garlic mushrooms, cashew herbal cheese, and a rainbow of veggies. Burgers can be served on a bun or with two side salads. Consider adding a side order of fries with the luscious, “creamy” lime cilantro sauce (made with cashew cream).

Baagan offers four seasonal salads daily, which can be mixed and matched. Current highlights include the kale ribbon salad in “honey” mustard (using agave nectar to sweeten) with pomegranate seeds and persimmons and the sautéed beets with mustard seeds and Himalayan salt. Baagan also offers a seasonal soup, currently a simple yet delectable butternut squash. A unique must-try is the veggie potato cakes side dish served with a delightful tangy tamarind sauce.

Baagan also offers dessert options, all gluten-free. For a nostalgic and healthy bite, try the raw chocolate chip cookie dough bites (approved by my kids) or the turmeric donut holes. More decadent

options include raw blackberry cheesecake and tiramisu cheesecake – both made with cashew cream.

The restaurant specializes in a variety of healthful beverages as well. Baagan formulates signature Ayurvedic (an ancient holistic healing system developed in India) teas like the gingery Immunity Booster. Nourishing, hot creamy lattes are perfect to beat the winter chill: the Peaceful Panda with matcha green tea, ginger and cashew milk is decadently warming, or for a decaf option try the Golden Warrior made with turmeric, cardamom and cashew milk. Baagan also offers cold fusions, like the refreshing blackberry sage lemonade and iced herbal tea.

The restaurant is focused on clean, healthy food; everything is free of preservatives, dairy, GMOs, soy, peanut and palm oil, and most items are gluten-free. In addition, Baagan uses low glycemic index sweeteners like coconut sugar and agave nectar.

The restaurant also maintains



sustainable practices. For example, it uses biodegradable containers and utensils for to-go orders and does not have straws. The staff also shops at the local Moraga farmers’ market for at least 25 percent of the produce.

The Moraga location is the second brick-and-mortar restaurant; the first is in San Ramon. The food truck is currently parked while the team focuses on the new Moraga restaurant.

Baagan is open daily, Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Saint Mary’s business students

The MOU gave Puri the opportunity to apply for a 48-unit residential project in the theatre’s vicinity and subdivide the parcel for other uses. Puri agreed to keep the rent at \$5,000 until transfer of ownership to MCF.

As the dust temporarily settled, Rheem Theatre reopened its doors in June 2018, with sellout shows its first weekend. However, ticket sales once again began to dwindle.

With the goal of making the Rheem Theatre’s problems a thing of the past, SMC professor Aponte-Moreno tasked his students to find a feasible business solution.

He provided them with the theatre’s history, a summarized income statement for 2017 and background information on the movie theatre industry as a whole. Essential demographics of Moraga, surrounding communities and SMC were also given, along with in-class visits from many town representatives to provide expert advice to the students.

The teams were expected to conduct a thorough analysis of the industry, the market and the business by coming up with an overall 10-year strategy, a profitability estimate and a short business plan.

The competition essentially began at the start of the new school year in September with the introduction of the case and team se-

lections. Interviews and a tour of Rheem Theatre went into October. Research and development continued through November, along with a written strategy plan and executive summary.

Even though bragging rights to solving the Rheem Theatre’s financial woes should be enough of a prize, a cash scholarship award totaling \$10,000 provided by the Chamber was distributed to the top three teams: First Place \$5,000; Second Place \$3,500; Third Place \$1,500.

SMC Associate Dean Larisa Genin and BUSAD Program Director Mary Alice McNeil had been working with town representatives since the competition was announced. Genin, having had experience with prior case studies, gratefully acknowledged “the generosity of the Moraga Chamber of Commerce,” and the efforts of chamber president Bob Fritzky and its executive director, Kathe Nelson, “for providing scholarship money to our students.”

Aponte-Moreno stated, “I’m amazed at the opportunity for my class to do an actual case with hands-on simulation. It was great to get to know the town and its expectations.” He added, “The winning strategies will be applied and the students are very excited.”

Fritzky said, “I’d like to have

this type of challenge annually in Moraga.”

The five competing teams were: TEAM 1: Lauren Overstreet, Hunter Tully, Ricardo Santos, David Bortins (coached by Lawrence Souza, faculty, Finance Dept); TEAM 2: Lilia Corral, Kelsey Wise, Jonathan Cortes, Daniel Hernandez (coached by Michael Alderete, Corporate Fellow & Executive Coach); TEAM 3: Asher Finkelstein, Christian Houser, Tyler O’Campo, Luke Sanchez (coached by Brent Meyers, Managing Partner, Competitive Dynamics); TEAM 4: Leah Emerson, Lourdes Hess, Jonathan Chan, Jeremiah Michael (coached by Michael Alderete), and TEAM 5: Neylene Leon, Gerardo Reyes, Justine Roman, Kevin Sudduth, Kendal Vargas (coached by Lawrence Souza).

There were 12 judges from all walks in the business community: Moraga Town Manager Cynthia Battenberg; East Bay Leadership Council CEO Kristin Connelly; Tailor Brands CEO Doug Ewert; Semifreddi’s CEO Tom Frainger; Wells Fargo Northern California Retail Banking President Peter Gruebele; PGIM Real Estate CEO Tim Hennessey; ESPN sports marketing senior director Bruce Kalfus; Compass Residential - Olsen Team CEO Ben Olson; Moraga Community Foundation president

Tom Schnurr; Next Move CEO Shari Simon; and Derek Zemrak, operator, Rheem Theatre.

The teams were judged on competitive advantage, market need, potential for success, financial needs and presentation.

Recommendations by TEAM 1 were to create a membership program, offer \$6 Student Mondays, \$5 Super Tuesdays for all customers, create an internship program with SMC, offer unique live events, have a bar/café and an arcade.

TEAM 2 recommended partnering with local schools in hosting live events, offer a speaker series, Senior Bingo Night, private screenings, magic shows, stand-up comedy, serve hot food (hot dogs, fries and nachos), vintage arcade games and monthly membership/discount cards.

Offerings from TEAM 3 were to have Foosball/Ping-Pong tables in the lobby, \$5 Student Tuesdays, family-oriented bundling deals, incentives for free concessions/tickets and take advantage of the free advertising available through social media.

TEAM 4 wanted more partnering with SMC by having college events take place at the theatre and offer an eSports arena (multi-player video competitions) for games in the smaller theatres upstairs.

Suggestions by TEAM 5 included updating the theatre website, offer on-screen advertising

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before/in between screenings, open the outside ticket booth, redecorate, serve higher quality food and beverages, book concerts that will draw 300-500 patrons, have VIP seating and turn the theatre into a restaurant/entertainment center.

After each team’s timed presentation the judges were allowed a question and answer period. While praise for the students’ efforts was in abundance, many, if not all, of the questions boiled down to money. The cost of expenses verses profits.

Once all of the team presentations were concluded, the judges were sequestered while the points were tabulated and the winners announced. TEAM 3 took third place, dividing \$1,500, TEAM 1 took second with \$3,500, and the first place winners, dividing \$5,000, went to TEAM 4.

Moraga Mayor Dave Trotter and Saint Mary’s College Provost Margaret Kasimatis presented the larger-than-life sized checks to each of the winning teams.

When members of the winning TEAM 4 were asked for comment, the stunned recipients replied, “Feeling great!” and “So excited!”

Derek Zemrak, Rheem Theatre’s operator, was looking forward to utilizing many of the ideas presented during the competition. “It was interesting and beneficial.”

Critter Tree tradition continues at Moraga Library

“We try to reuse them every year, and sometimes I have to refurbish them beforehand.”

Another club member, Phyllis Reed, came equipped with her trea-

sured copy of “Brandywine Critters – Nature’s Crafts from a Brandywine Christmas” by volunteers of the Brandywine River Museum, Brandywine Conservancy. The

small hardcover book is packed with “how to” advice, pictures and “recipes” for creating a critter ornament for those whose imaginations need a little nudge.

The ladies admitted to feeling a bit intimidated at creating a recognizable critter, but eventually got into the spirit of the occasion and were thrilled with their results. The

... continued from Page A4

tree displays a myriad of imaginative efforts, and just when it seems that each critter has been identified, suddenly a new ornament is discovered, as if by magic.

Moraga police remind residents to be aware of scammers

If you give them access to your computer they will diagnose non-existent problems and charge you. The FTC says, “If you get an unexpected pop-up, call, spam email or other urgent message about problems with your computer, stop. Don’t click on any links, don’t give control of your computer and don’t send any money.”

Scammers are also counting on our fear of the IRS (www.irs.gov). You may get a call demanding immediate payment using a specific payment method such as a prepaid debit card, credit card or wire transfer. They may threaten to involve law enforcement to have you arrested for non-payment. The IRS wants consumers to know that,

“Generally, the IRS will first mail you a bill if you owe any taxes.”

Using the telephone for scamming has not gone out of style. A longtime tried and true scam is the, “Help me, Grandma! I’m in jail and need bail money!” scam. The person calling may also claim to be in the hospital or stuck in Europe. In any case, they’re not going

anywhere and this gives you the opportunity to do some investigating. Before you do, get your “relative’s” contact number and call other relatives to verify the story. According to MPD, “If they are truly in trouble, that is when families come together to help each other.”

The most important advice to

... continued from Page A4

potential scam victims is not to panic, don’t be bullied into providing information and always do your own independent investigation before relinquishing personal information to strangers.

If you have any questions or think you may have been scammed, contact the Moraga Police Department at (925) 888-7055.

Orinda mom takes over District 16 California Assembly seat

“Every department that supports the legislature comes and gives presentations to the new members,” she said. Her favorite was the 80 lawyers who assist the legislature in writing bills. “I think that is so valuable,” she said, “because it removes lobbyists from bill drafting.”

Bauer-Kahan has stepped into the shoes of the former Assemblywoman Catharine Baker, taking over the District 16 office in San Ramon and her office in the state capital, both of which are state-funded. Bauer-Kahan, who has lived in Orinda since relocating from Oakland in 2011 and who is

in the process of hiring her team, will continue to live in Orinda, commuting to Sacramento daily when the legislature is in term from January to mid-June and August through September.

The new representative is committed to local control, and hopes to hear from her constituents their ideas on how to make things work better, like BART parking or solving the housing crisis, because she says it is the locals who understand the challenges faced by their particular location. For example, she points out, the city of Dublin has grown 30 percent in the last few years. That kind of growth makes

it difficult for local services, such as schools, to keep up.

Bauer-Kahan acknowledges that she is representing a diverse district, but she believes that her constituents share similar values, such as environmental impact. For example, she points out that fire protection is so crucial because of its obvious threat to lives and homes, but also because California fires have the biggest impact on climate change. It’s a vicious cycle, she acknowledges: climate change causes the fires, which then intensify climate change.

Among her other priorities are school funding and general fiscal

responsibility. With children in the Orinda schools, Bauer-Kahan knows how the local control funding formula, set up to bring up the districts that need more support, impacts the other districts. “We need to prioritize education,” she says, noting that California spends more on prisons than on schools. And she has a lot of ideas about how California can reduce its prison spending. “We need to do something about recidivism,” she says, pointing to a program initiated in Los Angeles that not only reduced recidivism by 40 percent, it was 50 percent cheaper to run.

While acknowledging that

... continued from Page A7

she is entering an Assembly with a Democratic super-majority, she believes that “we need to be careful with the health of the state budget.” She says that she believes in “slow government,” and notes that while there are many Democrats in the Assembly, “there are different shades of blue.” In addition, she points out that because of the change in term limits, she is joining the first class of Assembly members going into their eighth year.

“They are the most mature” members in a while, she says, and she is interested to see how that affects the Assembly.

Hometown owner cares for Phairs

... continued from Page A1



Joanna Guidotti outside Phairs building in Orinda. Photo Sora O'Doherty

Having run Churchill Manor for 28 years with her husband Brian Jensen, Guidotti is now ready to turn her attention to the town where she grew up. As a tax attorney and investment banker, as well as a successful property owner in more than one state, Guidotti has expertise in a number of related fields.

Not only did Guidotti transform a historic inn in Napa, but her family was involved in the rebuilding of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake. Her grandfather, an Italian stonemason who settled in Barre Vermont, the self-proclaimed granite capital of the world, was brought out to work in San Francisco after the earthquake and resettled in the Bay Area. Aldo Guidotti was born in Oakland and his law

practice was in the Temescal district, but he wanted his daughter to go to the good schools of Orinda, so he moved the family there when Guidotti was 5 years old. She attended Del Rey Elementary School until she transferred to Sleepy Hollow, then Pine Grove Intermediate School and Miramonte High School. She was in the first class at Saint Mary's College after the college opened to women.

Joanna Guidotti later graduated from the University of San Francisco Law School and obtained a master's degree in tax law from New York University, which is, she explained, rated the number one tax law school. There were only 5 percent women in her class. After graduation, she went to work

for Bank of America in San Francisco, becoming a vice president of investment at the age of 29. She met her husband and they closed escrow on the old Churchill home on New Year's Eve, 1987. Since 1988 the two have been running the historic inn together, with Jensen as chef.

When she looks at the Phairs property, she sees a place in a quiet neighborhood, with beautiful views, ample parking, and plenty of space. The old Phairs building comprises 10,500 square feet downstairs and 2,500 square feet upstairs. Guidotti looks at the broad flat roof and imagines, maybe, a rooftop restaurant overlooking the tranquil views of the Orinda Country Club on one side and San Pablo Creek on the other. She aspires to use the property in a community-based, family friendly way. Perhaps part of the property could house an upscale grocery, one that also has prepared foods that could be picked up on the way home for an impromptu dinner. When she looks at another part, she enthuses, Wouldn't this make a great yoga studio?

Guidotti is already working with an architectural firm and having conversations with the Orinda Planning Department. She would like to do something quickly, as opposed to the type of development that could take years to clear regulatory hurdles and building challenges. Living in Napa, she knows that the tourist trade supports developments such as the Oxbow, but, she says, Orinda is not Napa, and she doesn't think that the city wants to be, either.

Amigos fundraisers help send volunteers to Latin America

By John T. Miller



Amigos volunteers unload product in November for the annual fundraiser. Photo provided

In an annual ritual dating back to 1975, truckloads of grapefruit and holiday poinsettias arrived in Moraga recently to signal the beginning of this year's Amigos de las Americas fundraising drive.

The Amigos program, as it is commonly known, is a nationwide organization established in 1968. Volunteers are sent to Latin American countries to help with projects such as community health, equality through sports and teamwork, and environmental preservation. In addition, each pair of volunteers works in collaboration with community members on projects the community needs, whether it be building a covered bus stop, a soccer field, or painting the local school.

The Ruby Red grapefruit is shipped directly from Texas, with about 20 grapefruit per box and a price of \$25 each.

Poinsettias are deep vibrant colors of red and green and are

approximately 15-inches tall, providing attractive holiday ambience. The cost is \$15 each.

The program also recently added organic, fair trade coffee to the list of items for sale, purchasing the product from the Santa Cruz Roastery and selling it for \$15 a pound.

The Amigos program purchases the products at wholesale prices and uses the profit to fund their programs. It is also a test of the trainees' commitment to fund their own volunteer experience.

All total, the East Bay Chapter - with 28 trainees this year - will sell 1,400 boxes of grapefruit, 1,176 poinsettias, and 1,008 pounds of coffee.

Parent coordinator Mary De Luna said, "We are close to sold out but we still have some product left." To order, contact them through their website at <http://www.eastbayamigos.org/buy-products>.

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more than ever, my thoughts turn gratefully to those who have made my progress possible. And in this spirit I would like to say, simply but sincerely...

Thank You and Best Wishes for the Holiday Season and a Happy New Year.

Ana Zimmank

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ana.zimmank@camoves.com



Saint Mary's trounces Cal in rivalry game

... continued from page A1



played against Saint Mary's. However, since Bennett became the head coach at SMC, the Gaels have won three of their last four games against the Bears. Bennett would very much like to make the Saint Mary's-California game an annual event: "It's special to play Cal. We should play them every year whether it is at Cal or Saint Mary's. It should not be played at a neutral site. It's good for both programs and their fans."

Trey Hannula, the Director of Communications at SMC, appreciates Cal's reluctance to come to Saint Mary's: "Cal knows the environment at McKeon Pavilion and how difficult it is to play here with the fans so close to the court and how loud they are. To get them to play here once, we had to agree to play two games in Berkeley."

Fans such as Saint Mary's graduate Dick Moore took great pleasure in the game. His wife Linda and his brother-in-law, Chris Carpenter, are Cal alumni and Carpenter also played basketball for the Bears from 1961 to 1964. Says Moore: "It makes perfect sense that two Division I teams, so close to each other, should meet more often. Gonzaga and Washington, two schools that are at opposite ends of their state, play every year. I hope that this becomes an annual tradition in the Bay Area."

Dan Fotu

Tanner Krebs then came off the bench and scored 11 points, hitting three 3-pointers. Krebs appreciated the rivalry inherent in the game: "It's great for the Bay Area for us to play Cal. We circled this game because it was with a cross-town rival. To beat them the way we did gives us a lot of confidence."

Jordan Hunter, had a very balanced game at center, scoring 9 points, leading all rebounders with eight and had two blocks. Hunter had the play of the game when he blocked a shot and raced down the court, scoring on a lob pass while getting fouled and converting on the foul shot. Replacing Jock Lansdale has not been easy but

Photo Tod Fierner

Bennett sees improvement in Hunter's game: "Jordan is still coming on and starting to make great plays. He has really improved his concentration and focus on the court."

Two freshmen have found significant playing time so far this season - forward Dan Fotu who hit all four of his 3-point shots, scoring 16 points and center Matthias Tass with 6 points, two rebounds and two blocks. It's all taking time, says Bennett: "We're trying to get an eight-man rotation and having them comfortable in their roles. It's easy to say but hard to do, but they are gaining confidence."

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~ Life in LAMORINDA ~

Foundation linked to Lady Gaga promotes acts of kindness in local communities

By Diane Claytor



Springhill Elementary Kindness co-chairs, Maya Smith (left) and Kelly Fleming kick off the Born This Way Foundation's BeKind21 campaign this past August. Photo provided

Sept. 11, 2001. A young Maya Enista Smith was eagerly looking forward to beginning her college days as a freshman at New Jersey's Rutgers University. Then the planes crashed, the buildings came down and the world changed. Instead of attending classes, Smith and her new college friends went to a local church to donate blood for the survivors of the World Trade Center attacks.

Smith had always had a deep belief in America but after 9/11, "it all just felt so confusing and frail." Her parents chose this country, giving up everything in their native Romania to seek political asylum in the United States. "I grew up with a strong appreciation for what this country had given my parents – so many opportunities and the ability to rebuild their lives and live the American dream," she stated.

Smith began reconsidering the career choices she had previously gravitated toward – communications or fashion design; she now wanted to find work where she could contribute to making the world a better place.

She started researching youth activism and quickly found Rock the Vote, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to building the political power of young people. This became the first step in her role as both an activist and passionate supporter of young people and all they can accomplish. It was also through Rock the Vote that she met her husband, David, "this dreamy California boy from UC Berkeley."

A stint working for mobilize.org, an organization founded by David Smith focusing on getting young people active in identifying and solving problems unique to their generation, moved them to Washington, D.C., where they married and lived for the next seven years – "a magical time," Smith noted. Although she loved the East Coast, a San Francisco job offer for her husband brought them to Lafayette six years ago.

A note Smith sent to contacts announcing her interest in "finding my next adventure" prompted a call from a friend suggesting Smith talk to her client, someone looking to start a new foundation focused on young people, but she couldn't reveal the client's name. Eight months pregnant with Hunter, the first of her two children, and taking her husband with her just in case,

"to make sure he wouldn't miss the birth of our first child," Smith flew to LA.

The client, it turned out, was Lady Gaga and that first meeting was with her mom and Born This Way Foundation co-founder, Cynthia Germanotta, as well as others from Gaga's team. While light on specific details at the time, Germanotta explained that the basic vision for the foundation was to build a kinder, braver world, while empowering and involving young people. "I just fell in love with the idea that Lady Gaga ... simply asked me to help build a youth advisory board so together we could create this amazing organization," Smith said.

According to Smith, Gaga experienced a lot of meanness and cruelty growing up "because she was different. She had a really hard time," Smith explained, "and she decided, from an early age, that if she ever became successful, she would use her time, talents and energy to make sure that young people thrived." And from this passion, Born This Way was created, with Smith first consulting and then leading its operations. For the past two years, she has served as the foundation's executive director. "We work in two main areas that really go hand in hand," she explained, "kindness and mental wellness."

Gaga cares deeply about the foundation and is certainly not just a figurehead, Smith reported. She leads the vision and has said that "this is her legacy to the world," Smith noted. Both women believe strongly in the power and potential of young people.

This past summer, Smith, with the absolute support of Lady Gaga and the foundation, created the Be Kind 21 campaign. "I was having all these really intense feelings about Hunter starting kindergarten, being a little kid in a big school. We talked about ways to make new friends, how to be kind and build a community," Smith remembered. Describing her feelings during a foundation staff meeting prompted a suggestion from Germanotta — let's have this conversation with all kids. Smith took that ball and ran with it.

"Research shows that an action becomes a habit in 21 days," Smith said. So the Be Kind 21 campaign was created and participants were asked to perform an act of kindness

– for themselves or others – for 21 days in September. "It actually started at Springhill Elementary School when the kids returned in August and grew like wildfire," Smith proclaimed proudly. More than 20 schools and organizations, including the city of Anaheim and all Starbucks, joined the campaign. This resulted in more than 440,000 participants performing more than 8 million acts of kindness. As Gaga said when inviting her millions of Twitter followers to join the extremely successful campaign, "Kindness is so simple and yet so powerful..."

... continued on Page B4

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Orinda baby food store helps organization collect diapers for mothers in need

By Vera Kochan



Diaper donation bin outside of Square Baby

Photo Vera Kochan

According to Help A Mother Out, a nonprofit organization that distributes donated diapers to institutions and families in need, one in three families struggle to afford diapers, which can cost \$75-\$100 a month. Public assistance programs (such as food stamps) don't help with this basic need and the lack of a clean diaper can affect a baby's health, because they may have to spend extended time in a dirty diaper. Most childcare programs require parents to provide clean diapers. Without clean diapers, babies must stay at home with adult supervision, thereby keeping

the adult unemployed, reducing the family's chances of being financially self-sufficient. Square Baby in Orinda's Theatre Square is teaming up with HAMO to help.

Donated diapers can be placed in the large bin outside of Square Baby on a continuing basis. Katie Thomson, co-owner along with Kendall Glynn, says, "We will accept diapers, pull-ups and baby wipes (in original packaging), new cloth pocket diapers, even partial boxes (unopened sleeves) of diapers and wipes such as those purchased in big box stores." Sizes 4-6 are especially needed, but all sizes

are accepted and appreciated.

Square Baby, which sells baby food aimed at providing "a square meal," has also been involved with donating its products to Family House, a sister organization of UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital that provides extended stay to families of children being treated for cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. Thomson and her husband, Kevin, Square Baby's marketing director, have taken their two children with them to volunteer at Family House. "We want them to appreciate how lucky they are," Thomson explained.

Patients at Family House can enjoy a variety of healthy baby food such as Mango Coconut Chicken, Salmon Mash, Apple Rosemary Lentils and Peachy Oatmeal, just to name a few.

Square Baby also sponsors a periodic Mom's Night Out at the store where they give away baby meals, swag bags and gift certificates for Baby Boot Camp, a workout class for moms who just had a baby.

With personally developed recipes and all natural ingredients, Square Baby has begun to ship product throughout California, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Arizona and most recently Colorado. Thomson states, "We expect to ship to the East Coast next year."

For more information about Square Baby, visit www.squarebaby.com or call (415) 273-9756. The Orinda store, located at 2 Theatre Square, suite 112, is open Monday through Saturday from 11a.m. to 3 p.m.

For information about Help A Mother Out, visit www.helpamotherout.org.

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The prolific practice of yoga is expanding

By Lou Fancher

As a former professional ballet dancer and physical fitness devotee, I'm always seeking athletic challenges and opportunities. Running, biking, hiking, swimming, tennis, weightlifting and occasional tree climbing began recently to take their toll, so I turned my attention to yoga, an endeavor I thought might be in my future. Reaching out to people in the Lamorinda community, I discovered a

world wonderfully open to multiple generations, inclusive of all gender, race, ethnic and faith identities and, significantly, available to people living on generous or limited budgets.

While not endorsing a specific outlet, a simple Google search revealed yoga available in the East Bay at community centers, local gyms, pilate and dance studios, and specialty spas and boutiques. Private lessons conducted in-home by expert practitioners represent top-price options, while free programs found online, at public libraries (Yoga Storytime for ages 2-5 at Lafayette Library, just one example) or outdoor, in family-friendly sessions held in local parks (Berkeley has one monthly) extend the opportunities. Opening the window to the many techniques available, yoga can be practiced in 100-degree temperatures (Bikram), with baby goats (Yogoat), suspended in the air (aerial) or privately in homes, to name only extremes.

Important especially for novices, yoga honors long-held traditions and in 2018 is practiced and best learned from forward-thinking certified professionals like Bela Watson, a master's candidate at Saint Mary's College in Moraga. Watson is a graduate of North Carolina School of Yoga (now the Shanti Niketan Ashram) and has a degree in fine arts from Florida State University. Diagnosed with cancer that temporarily interrupted her performing and instructional dance career, she turned to yoga for physical rehabilitation. The mind-body connection applied to movement therapy is her focus.

In the United States, Watson says popular yoga trends are specific to each city or town. Addressing the Hatha, Yin, Children's, Vinyasa, Flow and Power Flow styles she is qualified to lead, Watson says people in high income locations prefer approaches that emphasize physical exertion and aesthetics. "(In contrast), folks attending in less financially abundant communities appreciate the spiritual as-

pects more. Perhaps it is because people in lower income areas typically hold jobs where physical labor is exhausting and thus come to yoga to quiet the body and mind," she says.


A new trend pairs cacao ceremonies or plant-based medicines with yoga; aiming to achieve greater healing or calming through organic substances combined with focused poses, breath work, meditation and other ceremonial aspects of yoga. Western medicine's goal-oriented, "fix it" approach to health, Watson says, means slower recognition comes to yoga's transformational practices in America than does in India and other Eastern countries and cultures.

Watson's comments notwithstanding, there is good indication that yoga is more mainstream than ever before. At Aegis of Moraga, Life Enrichment Director Tina Laurena says up to 30 residents participate. Offered twice weekly to Assisted Living and Memory Care residents, instructors Esther Jun and Anandi Martinez adapt poses to accommodate 90-year-old bodies and more. "When the residents see chair yoga on their schedule they will ask about it the whole day," says Laurena. "They get excited. When I ask them 'How was yoga?' they reply with a smile and say 'wonderful.' To see them do the poses and focus on their breathing is amazing." Several residents, she adds, report improved moods after the lessons.

Charlie Craig, 17, is a Campolindo High School student and a linebacker and tight end on the football team. He took yoga taught by phys ed instructor Chris Walsh, who completed a YogaWorks 500 Hour Teacher Training Certification program in 2017. "It was a health P.E. requirement needed to graduate, but I took yoga because I wanted something relaxing that seemed interesting." Craig's favorite pose was savasana, also known as corpse pose.

... continued on Page B3

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Lafayette Inventor Shares Secrets on Raising Kids to be Problem-Solvers in New Book

By Kara Navolio

105 - 2012



Jim Marggraff speaks at Nov. 29 Rotary Club meeting in Lafayette.

Photos provided

When Jim Marggraff was 4 years old he was placed in a special education class because he stuttered and had a droopy eye. He almost didn't finish college at MIT because, as a child of a single mom, he couldn't afford the tuition. Marggraff, a Lafayette resident since 1998, went on to become an inventor, entrepreneur and author. The guiding principal in all his work is finding ways to make the world a better place.

Marggraff spoke at the Lafayette Rotary Club Nov. 29 about his involvement with Rotary Club's Virtual Reality projects (he is a member of Lamorinda Sunrise Rotary) and his new book "How to Raise a Founder With Heart: A Guide for Parents to Develop Your Child's Problem-Solving Abilities," which was released in November and achieved a No.1 New Release ranking within the category of "Family Activities" on Amazon in its first week of publication. It's a subject he knows much about. Marggraff has invented many products including LeapPad and the Livescribe smart pen and owns 36 patents. He has started many companies and sold them to the likes of Google and others. He advises companies and was inducted into the Entrepreneur of the Year "Hall of Fame." Every new invention starts with what Marggraff calls a "Problem To Solve". "The correct PTS has to be identified," stated Marggraff. "Many times we aren't focusing on the right problem."

But beyond being a founder of companies himself, he and his wife MJ have raised two children who also have taken the problem-solving mindset to their own careers.

Their son Blake, an Acalanes High School graduate, is running his second start-up at the age of 26, Epharmix. Epharmix provides digital intervention messaging to reduce re-hospitalization of patients by increasing their compliance in behavioral and medical therapies. In 2011 the Marggraffs' son and friend Matt Fedderson, also an Acalanes graduate, won the Gor-

don E. Moore global prize for the Intel Science Faire for developing a treatment for cancer.

The Marggraffs' daughter Annie, age 24, started a nonprofit called StepAhead to help autistic youth. University student athletes are paired one-on-one with autistic children in a running program. The benefits to the children are being studied by a leading autism researcher at Washington University St. Louis and will be published soon in the Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. Their daughter is a finalist for the 2018-19 Westly Prize, which honors young social innovators in California with novel solutions to community challenges.

Marggraff stated of his book, "If you would like to guide your children, or grandchildren, to develop

skills for positively impacting the world, with a well-developed sense of ethics, empathy, confidence, resourcefulness and creativity, please enjoy the stories, suggestions, and simple science of 'How to Raise a Founder with Heart.' You'll likely find yourself laughing, crying, and taking away some ideas that you'll use immediately and will help you further bond your family and help your kids."

All profits from the sale of the book will be donated to the Rotary Club's charity works, Rotary International, The Gratitude Network, and The Team Gleason Foundation.

What's next for the serial entrepreneur? He is working on a new PTS – social isolation. "Many people do not get daily personal or deep connection with other people. This is a huge problem as social isolation leads to depression," explained Marggraff. The specifics of his newest invention, using artificial intelligence, are still top secret, but both he and his wife are working on parallel solutions. MJ Marggraff is pursuing her Doctorate at University of Southern California on developing a counter measure for the psychosocial issues encountered by astronauts during long duration space flights. "MJ's work and my exploration for a parallel solution on earth to address the increasing conditions of loneliness and isolation are based on the concept of creating the world's first AI Social Agent. While it might seem that technology might be part of the problem, rather than a solution to social isolation, the proper application of any technology, designed around a well-specified 'PTS' (Problem To Solve) can positively impact human performance, cognition, and emotion," adds Marggraff.

To learn more, visit www.jimmarggraff.com.

"It's a tremendous pleasure to read a book written for parents that will help them establish a mindset of problem-solving, empathy, and limitless potential in their children. Jim has nailed it."
—Tony Robbins

HOW TO RAISE A FOUNDER WITH HEART

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Yoga

The restful but surprisingly difficult pose has people lie on their backs, legs spread roughly 18-inches apart, arms open and palms facing upward. "It was nice to rest in school and not be stressed," he says. The primary benefits to his football performance, he says, were increased flexibility in his hips and – due to challenging one-foot poses – improved balance and footing on the field.

Of course, with holiday gift-giving season, there's definitely yoga bling to consider. Flashy or functional athletic leisurewear is available everywhere, from large department and sporting goods stores to specialty dancewear boutiques to online.

But which accessories are helpful? Watson says she's "enthralled"

with a yoga wheel from Clever Yoga that has increased the flexibility of her spine. Therabands strengthen the feet, an area of the body not always emphasized by yoga. "I also find bolsters helpful when teaching – to find comfort amidst uncomfortable, long-held postures."

Other ideas with safety in mind include yoga blocks for stretching during challenging poses (Yoga Outlet offers a Hugger Mugger cork version for the eco-minded) and foam rollers, lacrosse balls or acupressure balls (bodyback.com has a spiky version for \$6.45) for self-massaging sore muscles. Yoga straps used for some poses can be purchased or fashioned using a scarf or fabric belt.

Footwear is yoga's final fron-

... continued from Page B2

tier and for that, this former professional dancer offers a sure-to-please suggestion tested directly. Apolla Performance Wear is a company founded by three dancers who sought to prevent injuries in the feet of dance artists and sports athletes. The Apolla Shocks line includes socks with no-slip traction that allows a person to feel the floor and provides ergonomic, targeted compression that supports and controls inflammation in ankles and metatarsal arches. They are comfortable and safe to use on typical dance flooring. Having tried a number of "no-slip" socks, I found the Apolla Shocks worth consideration. Now, to decide the what, when and where. ... I wonder, does anyone offer tree yoga?



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Girl Scout Gold Award project helps homeless

Submitted by Diana Lee



Mina Boozarpour with "Tool Kits"

Photo provided

Homelessness is an issue in many communities and the larger East Bay Area is no different. Homeless or highly mobile children often have a harder time keeping up in school and progressing academically. It is well known that lack of or poor education is a major cause of poverty, which can lead to homelessness. One Campolindo senior, Mina Boozarpour, decided that her Girl Scout Gold Award Project would focus on helping the homeless in the East Bay. After much research into different services and outreach programs for the homeless, Boozarpour decided to develop her project to support the Oakland-based nonprofit Community Education Partnerships, started in 2011, which supports HHM children in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade by recruiting and training volunteers who are willing to provide academic tutoring to HHM children. The

CEP mission is to partner with community members to increase the learning opportunities and enhance the academic achievement of HHM youth.

Boozarpour's project involved creating, through the collection of education materials from various sources, "tool boxes" that provide quick resources of education material organized by grade level and common core structure. Mina raised money for her project through a bake sale and worked with other troop members and friends to collect and develop tool boxes for grades pre-K and kindergarten through third grade. She also enjoyed meeting with many educators, some past teachers, and attending CEP tutor training. If you would like to test out one of the tool boxes, consider volunteering with CEP to make a difference in a child's life.

Lions provide free eye screenings in Lafayette

Submitted by Bob Murtagh

Members of the Lamorinda Lions Club and Lions Center for the Visually Impaired teamed up on Nov. 5 to check 28 residents of Chateau Lafayette for a various eye problems. The Lions Center for the Visually Impaired preserves vision, fosters independence and enhances the quality of life for adults in the East Bay who are blind or at risk for vision loss. If the screening detects

the need for further eye care the person is referred to appropriate medical professionals. If necessary, Lions will cover the expenses of additional medical care to include providing eyeglasses.

For further information about Lions Eye Screening, contact the Lions Center for the Visually Impaired at (925) 432-3013.

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.

Foundation linked to Lady Gaga promotes acts of kindness in local communities

... continued from Page B1

Smith takes no credit for Be Kind 21. "Every mom uses everything they have at their fingertips to make their kids kinder. I just have access to a different set of things," she humbly said.

With the holiday season upon us, Smith and Born This Way have just inaugurated a new kind-ness campaign: #MultiplyYour-Good. "Kindness is being in a community where people ask 'what unmet need can I help meet? How can I alleviate the suffering of another person?'" Smith explained. The

new campaign asks all of us to do an act of good by volunteering or donating to a nonprofit in our own community. The foundation will match every act of good pledged, and reported by performing an act of good for one of its nonprofit partners. (More information may be found at bornthisway.foundation.)

As Smith, who lives every day thinking of new ways to make the world a better place, noted, "It is such an honor to work for the foundation and be a steward of kind-ness."

Lafayette: New Eagle Scouts in Troop 200

Submitted by Ben Douglas



Lafayette Troop 200's newest Eagle Scouts. Back row from left: Nick Shaw, Donovan Fuller, Cole Brightbill, Isaac Douglas; Front row from left: Ed Laskey, Ryan Everly, Maverick Fabela, Matthew Raffel
Photo Robert Raffel

Boy Scout Troop 200, chartered by Our Savior's Lutheran Church of Lafayette, is proud to announce its fall 2018 Eagle Scouts - Ryan Everly, Isaac Douglas, Cole Brightbill, Matthew Raffel, Maverick Fabela, Nicholas Shaw, Edward Laskey and Donovan Fuller. The new Eagle Scouts were honored at a National Eagle Court of Honor ceremony on Nov. 10. To become an Eagle Scout, a candidate must earn a minimum of 21 merit badges, including 13 Eagle-required badges, demonstrate leadership and Scout spirit, and successfully complete a community service project.

Everly is a senior at Acalanes High School. For his Eagle Scout project, he replaced broken and rotted benches between the big and small gyms at Acalanes. Douglas is a 2018 graduate of Acalanes, and currently a freshman at UC San Diego. For his Eagle project, he renovated the remainder of the benches between the gyms at Acalanes, replacing rotted surfaces with new redwood.

Brightbill, a senior at Acalanes, designed and constructed an oversized vegetable box at Burton Valley Elementary's Garden Classroom for his Eagle Scout project. Raffel, another Acalanes senior, built a drinking fountain at Springhill Elementary School,

digging ditches for the pipes, laying a foundation, and then building the fountain.

Fabela is a senior at Acalanes. For his Eagle Scout project, he oversaw the collection, repair and cleaning of musical instruments, which he then delivered to the Oakland Unified School District for the use of students in need of instruments. Shaw, a senior at Campolindo High School, assembled baskets of home essentials for veterans and previously-homeless families moving into new homes for Shelter Inc.

Laskey is a senior at Acalanes. For his Eagle Scout project, he led a group of friends and younger scouts in refurbishing and repainting the Acalanes ticket booth. Fuller, also a senior at Acalanes, built a display table for the Lafayette Historical Society (located on the ground floor of the Lafayette Library and Learning Center), now being used to display periodically rotating exhibits.

Troop 200 invites boys and girls to attend its Open House at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11 at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Lafayette. For information, contact Scoutmaster Mark Weyland at jadesigns@sbcglobal.net or ASM Anthony Toribio at at7724@yahoo.com.

Troop 237's newest Eagle Scouts

Submitted by Shaun Ansel



Photo provided

Boy Scout Troop 237 of Orinda honored five Scouts, Ryan Ansel, Matt Lyons, Mason Januszewski, Adam Brudzinski and Andrew Patten, for achieving Scouting's highest rank of Eagle Scout on Sunday, Nov. 25 at the Orinda Community Church.

Ansel, a junior at Miramonte High School, wanted to give back to his high school and chose a project to support Miramonte's horticulture program. He built four large planter boxes with integrated covers. The covers provide insect and frost protection enabling the planter boxes to be used for the full school year. The produce grown is used by students in the culinary program. In addition to Scouting, Ryan plays baseball for Miramonte and is an avid surfer.

Lyons is a sophomore at Miramonte High School and designed a project to support fundraising efforts for Sleepy Hollow Elementary School. He organized Scouts to build eight life-sized figures out of plywood and mount them around the school's carpool circle, which would remind parents to donate. These "kids" are now part of the school's culture and are frequently brought out and redecorated for holidays and for fundraising efforts. Outside of Scouting, Lyons rows for Oakland Strokes Rowing Club.

Januszewski, who is a junior at Campolindo High School, designed and built a cage-free mobile adoption center for Cat Town in Oakland. Cat Town is dedicated to providing shy, senior and other at-risk cats a second chance at adoption in a cage free environment. The goal of the project was to demonstrate Cat Town's on-site adoption

success by duplicating its cage-free experience on the road. Januszewski also served as the Troop's Senior Patrol Leader in the 2017-18 school year. Outside of Scouting, Januszewski is on Campolindo's football and track and field teams.

Brudzinski, who is a freshman at Miramonte High School, partnered with the East Bay Regional Park District to conserve water and protect a young grove of 84 redwood trees at the Kennedy Grove Park. The project involved protecting the tree bases with landscaping fabric and wood chips and is estimated to save 8,900 gallons of water per year. In addition to Scouting, Brudzinski plays JV football at Miramonte and likes to ski and golf.

Patten, a junior at Miramonte High School, upgraded a fence at the Wagner Ranch Nature Area frog pond. The nature area is an outdoor education center serving the Orinda Schools. Together with fellow scout volunteers, Andrew rebuilt portions of the perimeter fence and dug a trench system around the fence to add a barrier net to keep predator wildlife out of the pond area, which is home to a variety of native and rare species. The location of the project was personal to Patten, as he visited the nature area often during elementary school and benefited from the hands-on outdoor education experience it provides. Outside of Scouting, Patten is on Miramonte's wrestling and cross-country teams.

For more information about Troop 237, visit www.troop27orinda.org.

Lynn's Top Five

It's not too late to make some year-end tax planning moves!

By Lynn Ballou, CFP®

Welcome to the end of the tax year. And what a year it's been! With all the coverage of what some embrace as a great step forward and some disparage as a total mess, here we are nonetheless with just a few short weeks left to put the final touches on almost all the tax moves that will impact our 2018 income tax bill. I'd like to recap five for your consideration that you should review with a CPA or tax professional.

1) Terrible stock market? Maybe a silver lining: Every year financial planners like me remind clients that it's a good idea to tax loss harvest. The past few years haven't provided much opportunity for that, but maybe this year you'll find it's worth the effort to dig into your basis information and look for losses in non-retirement accounts. To understand if this option is beneficial for you, this is a perfect opportunity to review this with a Certified Financial Planner professional and a CPA or tax professional.

2) Prepay property taxes? Maybe. Many taxpayers will be

surprised that itemizing their deductions will no longer help them, and this may especially be the case for married filers and particularly those 65 and older. Why? The standard deduction for married filers is now \$24,000 with an additional \$1,300 deduction for each filer 65 years of age and up. That, plus the limitation for property and California state taxes at \$10,000 whether married or single and the loss of all miscellaneous deductions, has the government estimating that millions of us will no longer itemize our deductions. So this year do we still double down on our property taxes and pay the fall and spring vouchers like many of us have in previous years given the limits? Maybe. This is yet another item that you should review with your CPA or tax professional. Keep in mind that the state of California has not conformed to the new federal tax law and that may tip your decision.

3) When will I get that refund promised me in the new tax law? In a few months when you file, you may be saying "what

refund?" because the payroll tax withholding tables for the year took the new brackets into account and thus many have already been paying less. Unfortunately, the new tax laws weren't a tax cut for all – some of us will actually pay more because of the loss of the personal exemption as well as the many changes to itemizing. Run the numbers! Now is the time to work with your trusted advisors and be ready, if needed, to pony up more via either withholding or a fourth quarter tax payment due in mid-January.

4) Will my business get a 20 percent tax break? Many small business owners will receive a 20 percent deduction on their business income. The tax break phases out at \$157,500 for single filer and twice that amount if you are married and have other limits as well. This new deduction is based on what's called Qualified Business Income. This is a complex possible deduction inside the sweeping new tax law. If you feel your business might qualify, or you are

considering an entity change, you can do some preliminary reading at the IRS.gov website before you reach out to your tax and legal professional. Search for QBI and you will be directed to several helpful publications.

5) Bunching – it's not just for bananas! When you aggregate your potential deductions, take a look at two categories in particular: out of pocket medical expenses and charitable donations. If you are very close to benefiting from these costs with a deduction, you might want to bunch more into 2018, or similarly, push out your year-end planned medical payments and donations to next year and deduct them in 2019. However, with regard to itemizing medical expenses, note that this year you have a 7.5 percent Adjusted Gross Income threshold to overcome whereas next year the threshold increases to 10 percent of AGI. Important: If you are taking Required Minimum Distributions this year, don't forget to look at the possible benefits of donating directly from your RMD.

You may have noticed there's a theme here: Run the numbers. This isn't a year for guessing. And don't delay. You have very little time to make some big decisions. Reach out to your tax and financial planning pros to help you. Then you can breathe a little easier and enjoy the holidays!



Lynn Ballou is a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ professional and Regional Director with EP Wealth Advisors, a Registered Investment Advisory Firm in Lafayette. Information used in the writing of this column is believed to be factual and up-to-date, however, we do not guarantee its accuracy. This column does not involve the rendering of personalized investment advice and is not intended to supplement individualized professional advice. A financial, tax and/or legal professional should be consulted before implementing any of the strategies directly or indirectly suggested and discussed. All investment strategies have the potential for profit or loss.

Can you afford your 'dream school'?

By Elizabeth LaScala, PhD

Does your child have her heart set on a "dream school"? If determination carries her forward, that dream could become an admissions reality. But, depending on your family financial situation, that dream might become a financial nightmare. Rather than taking the chance that you might have to confront the heartbreak of telling your child you can't afford the school she has toiled years to receive an offer of admission, or sacrificing your retirement to send her there, read on.

First, let's take a look at some actual college costs. Within California, the estimated total cost of attendance—tuition and fees, room and board and incidentals such as books, transportation, and entertainment—for a freshman at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo is \$28,400 and at UCLA it's \$35,700. At Santa Clara University, a selective private school, it's just under \$72,000 and at Stanford, among the most selective schools, it's about the same. Tuition and fees typically rise by 3 to 4 percent each year; the other costs will likely rise, too. Four years at Cal Poly may cost a family over \$125,000 and it will cost about \$160,000 for four years at UCLA. Stanford will likely cost over \$300,000.

Most colleges award merit and need-based scholarships, but the

most selective schools, like Ivies and Stanford, grant awards strictly based on demonstrated need. Financial aid officers use information from the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and sometimes gather more information from the College Board's College Scholarship Service Profile and your tax returns, to determine how much your family can afford to pay for college—and how much aid you might need.

Financial aid offices use your Expected Family Contribution, calculated after you complete your FAFSA, to determine how much your family is expected to pay for college. The difference between the college's total cost of attendance and your EFC is your Estimated Need. You can find out what your EFC will be before you start the FAFSA by Googling "College Board EFC Calculator" and follow the instructions.

Most colleges will not meet your full need. And many may not even come close. Fortunately, if your dream school is a UC or CSU campus, you can find out if you qualify for the UC's Blue and Gold Opportunity Plan, Cal Grants or the Middle Class Scholarship Program. Reviewing the requirements for these programs is a good starting point.

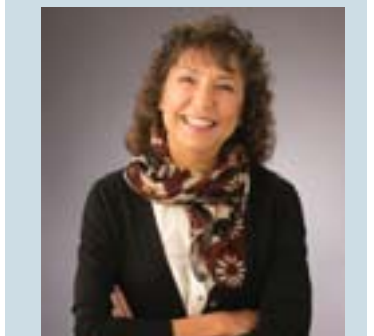
If merit scholarships are available to make up any difference, you should know in advance if your student qualifies for them. Many college admissions offices post information on their Web pages that gives you the dollar amounts and requirements for scholarships, and what it takes to renew the award each year. Often a minimum GPA requirement is needed for renewal. You should be confident that your child can maintain the grades to keep the award. Tuition and fees rise each year, while merit awards often remain the same. So, remember that your family may need to make up the difference.

College admissions offices use merit scholarships to attract excellent students, an enrollment management strategy used to fill the freshman class with the most academically desirable students money can buy. The general rule of thumb is that a student who falls at or above the 75th percentile of the college's applicant pool that year would be eligible for the highest awards. Typically, the college's most-awarded scholarships require a student to do nothing more than apply for admission and be accepted. Other merit awards require separate applications that might require additional essays or even an interview. Many colleges do this

for their largest awards or for those tied to a unique academic opportunity, such as an honors college.

Private scholarships may also help lower college costs. Competition for the larger four-year renewable scholarships that are available, such as the Coca Cola Scholarship, is often greater than competition for admission to the most selective colleges. Smaller awards from local businesses and community organizations are far more within reach. Samantha Stuber, College and Career Advisor at Miramonte High School in Orinda, founded ScholarsShop (<https://www.scholars.shop/>) to help high school students find scholarships offered by universities, multi-national corporations, smaller businesses, foundations and community organizations. Students can also raise money for their education online through crowdfunding and collections from friends, family and community.

When costs are a consideration, as they are for most families, it is important to teach your student how to balance dreams about college with reality, especially if your child has ambitions for further education. Life after college is far better when it is not dominated by the debts incurred during the undergraduate years.



Elizabeth LaScala, PhD personally guides each student through each step of selecting and applying to well-matched schools for undergraduate, graduate and professional school admissions. For over two decades, Elizabeth has placed hundreds of students in some of the most prestigious colleges and universities in the U.S. By attending professional conferences, visiting college campuses and making personal contacts with admissions networks, Elizabeth stays current on the latest trends and the evolving nature of admissions and passes that know-how on to her clients. Both college and graduate school advising is available and the number of clients taken is limited to ensure each applicant has personalized attention. Contact Elizabeth early in the process to make a difference in your outcomes. Write elizabeth@doingcollege.com; visit www.doingcollege.com or call (925) 385-0562.

Planning is key for seniors in emergencies

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson

We in the San Francisco Bay Area have recently experienced one of the worst air quality periods in our history, brought about by the raging fires in Paradise and the surrounding area. Many of us have had some eye or respiratory issues directly relating to the devastation of homes and lives in this Northern California community.

It was disheartening to hear on public radio that the expectation of those who have not been accounted for and who have lost their lives in this tragedy will end up being mostly the old, frail and disabled. It is hard for most of us to imagine the terror and fear the community experienced when this fire exploded and engulfed this small quaint town. Our hearts go out to all who have experienced loss.

What could have been done differently, if anything, in Paradise? What can we do for ourselves to be ready for emergencies? Even more important, what can we do for our older or disabled family members to ensure that they can evacuate if necessary and have the supplies and support needed for a similar or a different kind of emergency?

Make sure to have an emergency supply for three days and flashlights (both good ideas for

holiday gifts). Professional care managers can do home checks and assist in getting those items in the home (one of many reasons to have a care manager serving you). Most pharmacies will also provide you with a seven-day package of your medications for this emergency kit. There is a fee for service and is usually outside your prescription drug coverage – but worth the cost. Be sure to check it every time there is a change in medications.

Having face masks with an N95 or better rating in our emergency kits is a good idea, too. We should all be changing our furnace filters and running the fans on our heating system during smoky times.

Besides an emergency kit and flashlights, shoes with soles (not soft slippers) should be under the bed for emergencies that require evacuation at night. A whistle on your bedside table is another good idea.

Cell phones should be charged daily; a solar radio with a hand crank feature that includes a USB plug for charging cell phones is another good idea and something that would be a great gift.

If your older family members live alone, or if one of them is a caregiver to another, an "Emergen-

cy Response System" (the pendant or bracelet that you push when you need 911 help) is always a good idea – and also a great holiday gift. The cost is about \$40 a month and perfect for the person for whom you can't find gifts.

Stay informed. Register your family member for emergency alerts in the county in which he or she resides. During an emergency your family member will be alerted

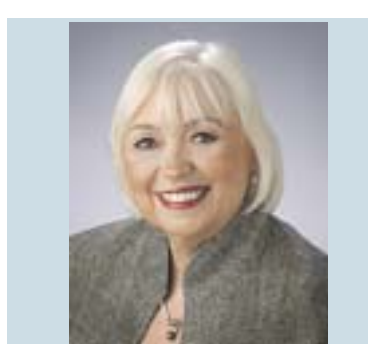
to the situation (if all the necessary contact numbers are available). The registration link in Contra Costa is cwsalerts.com.

We tend to believe that earthquakes are the biggest emergency that we need to prepare for, but with the fires in Santa Rosa and Napa last year and now in Redding, Paradise and Malibu, we could be at risk for a fire storm as well. It happened to us in 1991 when

the Oakland fire destroyed 3,000 homes.

Along with exercise, good diets and socialization, aging well is also aging safely – so remember to plan for the emergencies!

A professional care manager can assist you with a "Comprehensive Aging Life Care Plan" that will cover emergency planning and be a partner in your journey. Stay independent and have life your way.



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.

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Not to be missed

ART

In the spirit of the season, the Moraga Art Gallery presents "Holiday Magic in Porcelain and Paint," a colorful new show featuring the works by two of Lamorinda's most celebrated artists: Lafayette's Donna Arganbright and Orinda's Maria SantaStefano. The show, which includes paintings, jewelry, ceramics, photographs, and many other gifts of art by the gallery's 14 members and guest artists, runs through Jan. 5. For more information, visit

www.moragaartgallery.com or call (925) 376-5407.

Valley Art Gallery's annual Artful Giving show runs through Dec. 29 and includes a wide variety of beautifully crafted ceramics, wood and glass pieces, original designer jewelry, fiber arts, holiday decorations, small paintings, and many other unique, one-of-a-kind gift items all handcrafted by our talented East Bay artisans.

Third Annual Small Things

Not to be missed

Exhibition at the Jennifer Perlmutter Gallery through Dec. 22. Over 35 artists have been chosen to display 3D and 2D artworks in a variety of media and styles. www.jenniferperlmuttergallery.com

Bedford Gallery, located in the Leshner Center for the Arts, offers enriching, educational volunteer opportunities. Train to become a docent from 1 to 3:30 p.m. on Wednesdays, Jan. 16, 23, 30 and Feb. 6, 13. Docent volunteering is fun and provides opportunities

to make friends, learn about art, and help foster the arts in our community. No prior art knowledge is required. To sign up, contact Carmen Kelly at (925) 295-1416 or kelly@bedfordgallery.org. Learn more at: <http://www.bedfordgallery.org/support/volunteer>

MUSIC

Benefit Concert to support aid to victims of the Paradise Camp Fire, 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 13 at St. Mark's United Methodist Church, 451 Moraga

Way in Orinda. The concert features accomplished guitarist Mark Holzinger. While trained in classical and jazz, Mark Holzinger, who grew up in Orinda, enjoys playing many kinds of crowd-pleaser music to fit the age and interest of the audience on hand. The concert will include plenty of holiday music for everyone's enjoyment! For more info, email [Rev. Michele Robbins, shalom-pastor3@gmail.com](mailto:Rev.MicheleRobbins@shalom-pastor3@gmail.com).

Join the Oakland Gay Men's Chorus for 'Tis the Season for Singing, beloved seasonal carols and songs to celebrate winter solstice, yuletide, and holiday festivities at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 15 at the Lafayette Christian Church, 584 Glenside Drive Lafayette. Whether you're a lover of wintertime or a Scrooge, this concert will warm your heart and fill you with the spirit of the season. <https://tistheseasonforsinging.eventbrite.com>

Sing-Along Messiah concert 7 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 16 in the San Ramon Community Center located at 12501 Alcosta Blvd. in San Ramon. More information is available at the San Ramon Arts Foundation web site events page at <https://www.sanramonarts.org/events>.

Drum, Relax and Learn at the monthly Lamorinda Drum Circle from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday, Jan. 7 at Lamorinda Music, 81 Lafayette Circle, Lafayette. Enjoy learning to drum in a fun small-group environment. Drums are provided. Meetings on the first Monday of each month. Suggested donation \$10-\$20. www.MusicForTherapy.com

THEATER

An art chat and dance performance: "Moving, Feeling & Generating: a site for Chicano Resistance" with professor Catherine Marie Davalos and members of the Davalos Dance Company from 6 to 8 p.m. on Thursday, Dec 13 at the Saint Mary's College Museum of Art, 1928 Saint Mary's Road, Moraga. Beverages available at 6 p.m., performance at 7 p.m. Free.

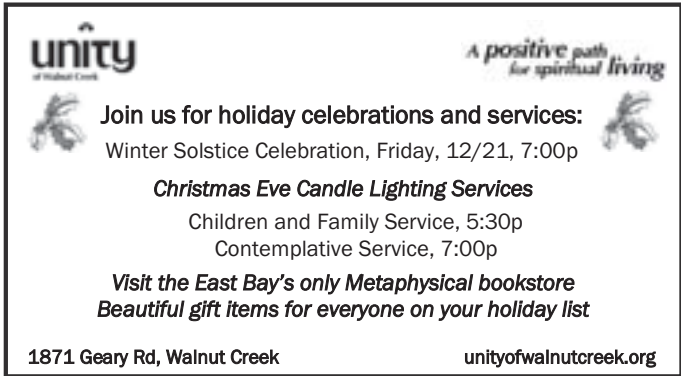
A Charlie Brown Christmas, based on the animated special, Friday, Dec. 14 through Sunday, Dec 23. at the Poison Apple Playhouse, 847 Arnold Drive in Martinez. Tickets and showtimes at <http://poisonappleproductions.org>. Tickets are \$16 for general admission.

The Peter Pan Foundation presents its winter musical, "Into The Woods" Dec. 14 through 16. This award winning show is a modern twist on the beloved Brothers Grimm fairy tales in a musical format that follows the classic tales of Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk, and Rapunzel – all tied together by an original story involving a baker and his wife, their wish to begin a family and their interaction with the witch who has put a curse on them. There will be six performances held throughout the weekend at the Northgate High School Little Theatre and ticket information is available at peterpanfoundation.org.

Mountain Shadow Film Society presents a delightful comedy "Swimming with Men", 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. at the Walnut Creek Library, 1644 N. Broadway Street. Based on the 2007 Swedish Men's Synchronized Swimming World Champions, a group of middle-aged men attempt to stave off their midlife crises by forming a synchronized swim team, the first rule of which is: "Don't talk about swim club." Accompanying the feature film is an animated short, "Coin Operated." Tickets are available on a first come, first served basis for \$12. More information at <http://mountainshadow.org>.

... continued on next Page

Lamorinda's Religious Services



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Masses Saturdays at 5:00 p.m.
Sundays at 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m.
School for TK - 8th grade
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Christmas Eve 5 p.m. Worship Celebration with Children and Families in mind
11 p.m. Traditional Candlelight Service with Candles, Choir and Message
Christmas Day, 2 p.m. Holy Communion Service
Sundays 10am Worship and Faith Formation for all ages
Explore ways to Love God and Serve neighbor
Lafayette United Methodist Church
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WINTER WORSHIP SCHEDULE
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9:30 a.m. Worship Service
Coffee Fellowship at 10:30 a.m.
Childcare available for ages 5 and younger

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In-church Youth Zone, 10 AM Nursery Childcare
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- **Sacred Music** Presented by our many amazing choirs, featuring soloists and musicians from the greater Bay Area
- **"Come As You Are" Pageant** Where kids choose their costumes and get to be part of the story (no rehearsal necessary)
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Mass times:
Saturday – Confessions 3:30 – 4:30 pm and Vigil Mass 5:00 pm
Sunday – Masses at 7:30, 9:00 and 11:00 am
Coffee and donuts following the 9:00 am Mass.

Christmas Eve / Christmas Day Mass Times:
December 24 – 4:00, 6:00, 8:00 pm (8:00 pm with choir)
December 25 – 9:00 & 11:00 am

Solemnity of Mary December 31 - Vigil 7:00 pm
January 1 - 10:00 am
This is a Holy Day of Obligation

WILLOWSRING community church
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www.willowspringchurch.com
1689 School St. Moraga | 925-376-3550
Sunday Service 10:45 am

'The Gold Seekers' (Los Buscadores) at Rheem



By Sophie Braccini

The Rheem Theatre in Moraga will host the December performance of the International Film Showcase. This month, Efi Lubliner and Jo Alice Canterbury who run these monthly presentations have brought back "The Gold Seekers," a funny and touching South American adventurous comedy.

Los Buscadores is based on an existing Paraguayan urban legend that permeates Asunción's social stratus, leading many to still believe that millions are buried in the basements of the capital city as a

result of wealthy people fleeing during the 19th century Paraguayan War.

The heroes of this epic story are ordinary and somewhat naive people caught in a dream of riches. They are colorful, touching and very funny. A good choice for a time when families go to the movies together, the film by Juan Carols Maneglia and Tana Schembori tells the story of ordinary people, trying very hard to make a better life for themselves. It shows a society where poor people have to face great hardship and do so with a mix of fatalism, creativity, superstitions

and religious faith.

The International Film Showcase brings almost every month to Lamorinda a foreign film of high caliber (including several Oscar winners or nominees), not yet distributed in the Bay Area. The films offer an opportunity to discover other countries, ways of living and thinking. Started at the Orinda Theatre, the showcase now incorporates the Moraga-based Rheem Theatre.

Screening of "The Gold Seekers" starts Dec. 14 for a full week. For more information, visit <http://lamorindatheatres.com>.

A perfect pumpkin bread to serve holiday house guests



Photos Susie Iventosch

Pumpkin-Squash Breakfast Bread

By Susie Iventosch

Recently, I made pumpkin bread using canned pumpkin, which turned out to be more like pumpkin cake (with caramel glaze) and realized that I wanted more substance to my bread. A quick online search produced the Macrina Bakery Squash Harvest Loaf recipe. Macrina supplies many of the coffee shops and retailers with baked goods in the greater Seattle area. I've had their squash bread and it is delicious! After

reading through the recipe and seeing what we had on hand, I made several changes, one of which was to add some canned pumpkin in addition to freshly baked and puréed squash. Another was to add raisins to the batter. And, since I am a huge cardamom fan, I included that in the assortment of spices that make this bread so yummy. I also used some white whole wheat flour in place of all white flour, to give a little healthy boost. White whole wheat flour is made from hard white spring

or winter wheat berries, and has the nutritional value of whole wheat flour, but milder in color, flavor and texture. It still includes the bran, germ and endosperm of the berries, all ground into the flour. The flour we normally see labeled as Whole Wheat Flour is made from the red spring wheat berry, and has a darker color and more robust flavor than the White Whole Wheat Flour.

If you plan on having holiday house guests, this bread is delicious and goes a long way, since it is chock full of goodies and quite dense. Double the recipe for two loaves.

For more on the difference between whole wheat flour and white whole wheat flour, please visit: <https://www.thekitchn.com/whats-the-difference-between-whole-wheat-and-white-whole-wheat-flour-236647>, or <https://www.bobsredmill.com/blog/healthy-living/hard-red-wheat-vs-hard-white-wheat/>.

For more information on Macrina Bakery, please visit: <https://www.macrinabakery.com/>.



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.

Pumpkin-Squash Breakfast Bread

(Makes one 9 x 6 loaf of bread)

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup cooked and puréed squash (Delicata, Acorn, or Butternut)
- ½ cup canned pumpkin
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup canola oil
- ¾ cup (6 tablespoons) milk mixed with 1 teaspoon cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup raisins, soaked in boiling water and then squeezed dry of any excess water (I use Trader Joe's Jumbo Raisin Medley)
- ½ cup walnut pieces, roasted
- ½ cup pecan pieces, roasted
- 2 1/2 cups pepitas (green pumpkin seeds), half for bread and half for topping
- 1 cup unbleached white flour
- ¾ cup white whole wheat flour
- ¾ cup, packed, light brown sugar
- ¾ cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 1/2 teaspoons nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon cardamom
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons raw sugar for topping

DIRECTIONS

For squash: *It depends upon the kind of squash you choose in order to know how many to cook, but whatever the case, cut squash in half, and clean out seeds. Place cut side down onto greased baking sheet and cook at 400 F for approximately 35-40 minutes, or until a knife easily inserts and pulp is tender. Remove from oven and cool. Scoop out pulp and smash with a fork, or purée in a food processor. Use 1 cup of this purée for this recipe.

For nuts: Place nuts and pumpkins seeds on a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil. Bake at 400 F for approximately 10 minutes, or until just beginning to brown. Remove from oven and cool.

For raisins: Place raisins in a small bowl, completely cover with boiling water and allow to sit for about 15 minutes, or until soft. Drain water and squeeze any excess water from raisins. Set aside.

For bread:

In a large bowl, place all dries, including flours, sugars, spices, nuts and half of the pumpkin seeds. In a separate bowl, combine squash purée, canned pumpkin, eggs, soured milk, oil, raisins and vanilla. Mix well. Add to dries and stir until well combined.

Pour batter into a greased 9x6 bread loaf pan. Sprinkle remaining half of the pumpkins seeds and the raw sugar on top. Bake for approximately 50-55 minutes, or until a knife inserted in bread comes out clean.

*I used about 2 Delicata squash or 1.5 Acorn squash. I have not made it with butternut squash yet!



When I say "good," you say "neighbor."

Mike Rosa

Agent

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Service Clubs Announcements

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.

<p>December 13: Jon Dwyer District Governor "State of District 5160"</p>	<p>December 20: Sharon from New Day for Children</p>
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www.rotarylafayette.org
www.facebook.com/Rotary-Club-of-Lafayette-CA

Not to be missed

THEATER ... continued

"The Great God Brown" by Eugene O'Neill directed by Eric Fraisher Hayes, 8 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 12 and 2 p.m. Sunday, Jan. 13, at the Museum of the San Ramon Valley, Danville. Prior to the plays of Eugene O'Neill, masks were seen as a theatrical way to become another person or animal or to become unrecognizable. In this play, for the first time, characters wear masks to hide their true feelings and take their mask off to show how they really feel or see themselves. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased at www.eugeneoneill.org.

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Friends Corner Book Shop, located at the corner of First Street and Golden Gate Way in Lafayette, is having a half-price sale from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 15. We are currently featuring holiday books in addition to regular inventory.

Hospice East Bay's Tree of Lights 5:30 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 16 at the Moraga Country Club, 1600 St. Andrews Drive. <https://hospiceeastbay.org>.

Pause to honor the longest night of the year at 6 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 21 on the outside patio of Our Savior's Lutheran Church located at 1035 Carol Lane. Enjoy a warm drink as a local fire arts performer brings light to the darkness. Solstice poetry and a brief reflection will guide participants into a candle light labyrinth walk as we honor the wonder of winter. This child-friendly event is sponsored by the Order of the Sacred Earth. Dress warm. Donations welcome.

OTHER

5A Rent-A-Space presents Santa's Secret Wrapping Room from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Dec. 1-24.

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Acalanes girls and Campolindo boys win NCS Championships

By Jon Kingdon



Campolindo boys water polo team with the NCS trophy.

Photo Stewart McGuire

For the second year in a row, there was an undefeated water polo team that came out of Lamorinda. Last year it was the Miramonte Girls that went 30-0 on their way to the NCS championship. This year it was the Acalanes Girls that did not lose a game, going 27-0 ultimately defeating Campolindo 11-7 in the NCS finals.

Prior to the start of the season, Acalanes head coach Misha Buchel said with great perspicacity: "With the depth of our talent, we feel that if we are going to do it and be successful, this is our year." After losing an overtime game in last year's NCS semifinals, Buchel told his team that if they put in the effort in the off-season, they would be successful this year. How right he was.

With the championship games postponed for three weeks due to the air quality, it proved to be chal-

lenging for all teams in and out of the water. Further frustrating for Acalanes was when they were told to drive to Clovis, California for a "home" playoff game and learned upon arrival that the match was canceled.

Regardless, Acalanes put that all behind them. Says Buchel: "There's been nothing like this. This has been the best girls water polo team in Acalanes history. It was a magical season. It was hard to stay focused but we had a great week of practice prior to the championship game."

Senior Lexi Rowell, who will be playing for Stanford next season, attributed the team's success to its overall talent and mental toughness: "With the postponements and cancelations, it was a 'mind game' to get back into the pool. This team was very close and we were able to win due to the coaching and team-

work."

The Campolindo boys' water polo team defeated San Ramon Valley in the NCS final by a score of 15-3, after leading 6-3 at the half. Once again, the defense was led by goalie West Temkin who was aided greatly by his defensive front, blocking numerous shots before they made it to the Campolindo goal.

... continued on Page C4



Garrett Dunn

Photo Gint Federas



Lexi Rowell

Photo Gint Federas

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Lamorinda girls soccer – 2018

By Jon Kingdon



Megan Go, Acalanes and Alexandria Ziem, Miramonte



Aliye Wingate, Acalanes and Angelina Basso, Miramonte

As has been mentioned incessantly for all sports, the infamous air quality index was a factor for the girls soccer teams, limiting the opportunity to practice and prepare for the season.

Though the new head coach at Acalanes, Nick Barbarino, grew up in Southern California, he brings a Lamorinda connection to his position. Barbarino had four cousins who went to Campolindo and came to Acalanes after being an assistant at Miramonte, receiving a strong recommendation from Miramonte head coach Barry McQuain.

Last season, Acalanes only won four games. Barbarino has turned things around with a 3-0-1 start and appreciates the attitude his team has brought to the pitch: "With only three practices before our first game, I have found that our players are really hard workers and great teammates with each other. There are no cliques and they have all been supportive of each other."

The Dons are a largely veteran team comprising mostly juniors and seniors. Barbarino was familiar with the team having coached against them at Miramonte: "What I had seen was that there was a lot of individual talent and they did not really get along with each other, which hurt their success. We have worked with the seniors on being good leaders on and off the field and we're really trying to focus on bringing in a positive culture. My goal from the start has been to make it a place where the girls want to play and have fun."

The strength of the team has been its defense. Junior goalie Kate Carter has been dominant in goal, giving up only 0.5 goals per game. Says Barbarino: "Kate has been playing great. She is great with saves in the air and is good handling breakaways."

The Dons offense has been equally impressive scoring 4.25 goals per game. Leading the offense have been seniors Sasha Sadoff, Maddie Zuber and Lara Dissman. Each of them brings a unique asset to the offense, says Barbarino: "Sasha is a great dribbler and is very tough. Maddie does a great job

in holding the ball up and laying it off to the other players and facilities our transfer from defense to offense. Lara's strengths are her speed and shooting. We also have a lot of depth at the wings."

K.K. McDonagh and Malika Haji were voted co-captains by the team and Barbarino will have a third rotating captain each game for the players.

Summing up his philosophy, Barbarino is concerned about the experience as well as the results: "I'm a positive coach. I don't expect them to be perfect. Everyone makes mistakes. It's how they react to the mistakes. They have to learn how to handle the hard times on the field as a player and as a person."

As an assistant coach for Campolindo for the past six seasons, new head coach Luis Pinto was able to witness the late season success for the Cougars when they were undefeated in 10 of their last 11 games, making it to the Northern California Regional Championship. Pinto has learned the difference in being a head coach: "I know that a lot more falls on me. I had a very good mentor in (former coach) Ernest Silva. He taught me a great deal as a coach and as an administrator regarding such things as tryouts and scheduling."

The Cougars have a total of 62 players playing soccer this year with 20 on the varsity, 21 on the JV and for the first time, a freshman team with 21 players. Yet, there are only three seniors on the varsity, says Pinto: "With so few seniors, it's basically a young team but it's a team with a lot of energy and potential and the girls are passionate about the game."

Campolindo's defense is being led by junior goalie Mallory Louis who only gave up 1.36 goals per game last season and is being backed up by freshman Anna Solomon. Says Pinto: "Mallory has great reactions and is really good second-shot stopper. Anna's strength is her technical ability but still has a lot to learn. Mallory and Anna should be a great combination."

The back line on defense has a lot of experience led by senior Nicole Huebner and junior Devon Ortman who have played together for the last seven years on club teams and Campolindo.

The offense is being led by seniors Celia Campo, Savannah DeCarlo and sophomore Jojo Flower. According to Pinto: "Celia at left wing has really stepped it up and will be our key player in the front line. Savannah at right wing is a very dynamic player, makings runs into space, pushing up the field and helping out on defense as well. Jojo is a striker with good technical ability to distribute the ball."

The co-captains of the team are Julia Colombini, DeCarlo and Huebner, a group Pinto is counting on: "They have been setting the high standards for the rest of the team on and off the field and carrying on what we are teaching. They have really helped getting the team to become a team despite our lack of practice."

Miramonte head coach Barry McQuain, coming off a playoff season, sees the strength of the team this season being its balance: "Along with a lot of speed on the team, we have an even level of talent. Overall, we have good speed and the team as a whole has good skills which gives us a lot of depth."

The Matadors offense has a number of players that were very productive last season. Junior Taylor Walthal (9 goals, 5 assists), Bea Whitaker (4 goals, 1 assist) and Olivia Grillo (4 goals, 5 assists). Says McQuain, "Taylor is deceptively fast. She ends up with the ball with good fakes and movement. Bea is just a strong player. She is a great athlete who runs cross country and is very motivated to win. Olivia is a great passer and has tremendous power."

Sophomores Angelina Basso and Emerson Bohling are being counted on to be forces on the wings. At midfield, Mc Quain says the key player is senior Isabel Fine: "Isabel is the playmaker on the team. She develops and transitions the team from defense to offense."

The defense is led by junior goalie Mikayla Smith. "Mikayla is in her third year on the varsity, says Mc Quain, "She has played a lot and is a lot more comfortable in the goal. She is very strong and is good getting depth on the goalie kicks."

The defensive front is led by Alison Whipple, Taylor Johnson and Sabrina Grant, all of whom are "strong players who do a good job staying focused," says Mc Quain.

Whipple and Johnson, along with Teveen Aghababian, are the team's co-captains. "They have a great attitude," says McQuain. "They are a great help at our practices and help keep us organized. Teveen is coming off a serious knee injury and we are hoping to get her back by the end of the season."

McQuain understands that with the early season practice limitations, it is going to take time for the team to develop: "We had only one practice prior to the season where everyone was able to show up. I am looking for us to gel as a team as the season progresses. We're still learning our timing, which is the most important part of the preseason but I know that we're all on the same footing."



Alison Whipple, Miramonte

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Campo cross country squads reach state meet podium

Submitted by Eric Yabu



Photo Abby Buckley

For the first time in 15 years, both the boys' and girls' Campolindo cross country squads reached the podium at the California State Meet in Fresno, finishing second and third in the Division III races, respectively. It was a particularly challenging road to the State Meet this year as the runners had to move almost all of their post-season workouts indoors due to the poor air quality from the Camp Fire. The smoke also delayed their state qualifying race, the North Coast Section meet, until just four days before the state meet. Even then, the boys ran under less than optimal air conditions, which ultimately caused the cancelation of the girls' race. The Campo boys finished in first place, reclaiming their NCS title from Maria Carrillo, and the girls were selected by the NCS committee to advance to Fresno.

At the state meet, the boys were led by senior standout Teddy Buckley who covered the 5K course in 15:38, finishing eighth overall. Dylan Gunn, the highest sophomore finisher in the race, was Campo's No. 2 scorer in

11th place. Junior Cayden Hein, competing in his first state meet, also finished in the Top 20. Junior Dylan Cronin and senior Cameron Iniguez-Reyes rounded out the scoring for the Cougars. Finishing just 11 points behind champion Ridgeview of Bakersfield, it was the boys' highest finish since finishing second 10 years ago and fifth podium finish all-time.

The girls came into the meet as the defending champions but had lost their top four finishers at last year's State meet to graduation. Junior Paloma Hancock was Campo's top finisher, crossing the line in 11th place in a time of 18:51. Sophomore Sophie Webster was just four seconds behind in 13th place in her state meet debut. Junior Alicia Hober also cracked the top 20 in 17th place. Freshman Sarah Berten and junior Ellie Guthrie were the final two scorers in 61st and 65th place, respectively. It was the girls' 13th podium finish in school history, placing them second on the state all-time list.

LMYA 2018 girls soccer champions

Submitted by Roger Chelemedos



Front row, from left: Talia Bruner, Samantha Driver, Tess Gundacker, Kate Carter, Mari Testa; bank row: Shea Volkmer, Sidney Ross, Paige Brockmeyer, Jasmine Frost, Sasha Lesjack, Makena Chelemedos; not pictured: Ana Macleod and Abbe Selke

The LMYA 7/8 grade girls soccer team ended their undefended season with scoring 22 goals in 7 games and only 2 goals scored against them.

5th & 6th Grade girls LMYA soccer champions

Submitted by Roger Chelemedos



Front row, from left: Emma Larose, Phoebe Gerlings, Valerie Vojta, Leighton Tanaka, middle row from left: Claire Cassidy, Molly Aldrich, Grace Ayers, Hailey Sourifman; back row: Kayden Page, Haley Chelemedos, Kiyah Watenmaker, Bianca Gracie, Hana Chelemedos; not pictured Kate Widman

Team Japan compiled an 8-1 record, scoring 25 goals, with only 5 goals scored against.

St. Perpetua fifth grade boys national team winners

Submitted by Andrea Hilsabeck



Top row, from left: head coach Brad Hilsabeck, Preston Hilsabeck, Gabriel Van Houten, Eli Dudum, Caden Busfield, Blake Marshall, Theo Slovak and Assistant Coach Ronell Jones; bottom row: Larkin Ellis, Alessandro Curletto, Luca Potts and Illias Kaplanes-Jones

The St. Perpetua fifth grade boys national giving tournament. team won the 2018 MVP Flight Thanks-

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Lamorinda wrestling roundup

By Jon Kingdon



Lamorinda wrestling head coaches: Micah Canestaro (Acalanes), Jason Rosiak (Miramonte), and Louis Suba and Nikko Triggas (Campolindo). Photo provided

It's been a unique start of the season for the Lamorinda wrestling teams as it has been for every other sport. Due to the academic schedule, wrestling practice started two weeks early but with the smoke issues, none of the teams were able to practice much.

When Jason Rosiak took over as the head coach for the Miramonte wrestling team last year, he was the newest coach among the Lamorinda teams. With new head coaches at Acalanes and Campolindo, Rosiak has become the most experienced head coach.

In his initial year at Miramonte, it was Rosiak's goal to attract more wrestlers to the program. The difference this year, says Rosiak: "The team has a smarter coach. It's still a wrestling culture but it's now more inclusive. I'm setting goals for each person, using the sport as a learning tool for more than wrestling. Success on the mat is icing on the cake. I'm incorporating cardio work into the practices along with more weight training and honing into more specific moves for our squad – teach less, but go more into depth."

Despite having over 30 wrestlers on the squad this year (25 boys and eight girls), it's still a young team, says Rosiak: "There are not a lot of 3-4-5-year veterans but we are deeper this year. There are a lot of kids that are new to the team. They are creating their own culture and will be putting their stamp on Miramonte Wrestling. We will be able to fill 12 of the 14 weight classes this year."

With so many young wrestlers, Rosiak is relying on the captains to lead his team: Dylan Welch, a second-year sophomore who will be wrestling at 112-119; Andrew

Patten, who also runs cross country, a second-year junior who will be wrestling at 160; Ryan Edmister, a sophomore wrestling at 145; and Shannon Lipp, a junior in her second year of wrestling. Rosiak is looking for leadership from this group in many areas: "They are helping to make sure that the mental and physical well-being of the group is good. They are helping to run the practices as well. It's more than wrestling; it's gaining leadership skills and working with people by being respectful and responsible that will carry over to the real world. We have a lot of new wrestlers that are coming up to speed quickly."

There are various reasons why people are going out for wrestling. Benjamin Chin sees wrestling helping him with his football skills: "It will help me with my tackling, staying low and using my legs. It will help my endurance on the field. I'm enjoying learning the new moves and techniques."

Alexandra Finnegan, a sophomore in her first year of wrestling sees it helping her other main interest: dancing. "It really helps with my flexibility and agility and with my emotional aggression."

Rosiak takes great pride in having the second largest group of girls on his team in the league: "The girls stand toe to toe with the boys. It's empowering to see them working and striving together with the boys which builds up a large amount of respect for each other." Yahzee Mendez, a transfer from St. Patrick-St. Vincent's High School brings experience with her to the many freshmen on the team. The girls will be competing in at least five tournaments of their own this season.

Overall, Rosiak appreciates the attitude of his team: "I really enjoy the team's focus and how they really enjoy practicing. They want to learn."

With the retirement of Dave Ridge, Micah Canestaro was named the head coach at Acalanes after being an assistant for 10 years and he's learned it's a lot more than coaching: "It's a lot of administrative work. I'm the point of contact for everything – parents, the press, uniforms, a lot of paperwork besides continuing to manage practices and teaching techniques."

Having won their league the last two years, the Dons have moved up to a more difficult division that includes such traditional powers as Las Lomas, College Park, Benicia and Northgate.

Canestaro, who is from Boston and wrestled at Plymouth University, is excited about his team: "We have a really big group of young wrestlers. It's our largest freshman class in the past 10 years. It's great to have a lot of guys that are really excited to wrestle and roughhouse and are fast learners. My goal is to incorporate the technique with the wrestler's natural aggressive. It helps that we have a lot of good athletes."

Leading the team will be sophomore James Trainer, wrestling at 113, senior Addison Early wrestling at 182 and junior Steven Williams who transferred in from Campolindo wrestling at 152. The light weight division for Acalanes is made up of a number of freshmen. The Dons are still looking to fill some of the upper weight classes and may have to bump someone up to 195.

Canestaro is looking to build on the success that his predecessor

established: "I will be using a lot of Dave Ridge's techniques. We will work especially hard on getting our kids tougher through hard practices while making it fun for them as well. It's a fine line between difficult and enjoyable and we dance on that line."

The co-captains are Early, Williams, Tony Correa and Youssef Qteishat. Canestaro is counting on his captains to "lead by example with hard work in practice and in the dual meets. We are expecting wins from these wrestlers. Off the mat, we expect them to be good examples on campus and in the off season."

There are three girls on the team who are coached by Marty Martinez, Alex Haase, Corina McTigue and Abeagail Dunsmore, who won her weight class (143) last week.

Canestaro has no shortage of assistant coaches: "I have a great coaching staff with nine assistants. I've built a lot of relationships and I called upon all of them when I became the head coach and everybody agreed to help. They're not there every day but we always have at least five coaches at every practice. I'm very fortunate to have so many people to help us out."

When last year's head coach, Sam Sotello, moved away, Campolindo was able to promote from within. The Cougars have co-head coaches, Louis Suba and Nikko Triggas. Each brings Division I wrestling experience with Suba having wrestled at Indiana University and Triggas who wrestled at Ohio State and was a 3-time NCAA championship qualifier.

So far, it's been a very positive experience, says Suba: "It's working out great. We both love wrestling and want to pass it on to the next generation."

There has been a real growth in the number of participants in high school wrestling and each of the teams have found that exposing the students to the sport has prompted this growth, says Suba: "Nikko and I did a wrestling demonstration for the students, since most of them had never seen a high school or college wrestling match, to show them it is a controlled, non-violent aggressive sport that was both physically and mentally demanding. We have a core group of juniors and a lot of first year wrestlers that are showing some definite talent. They have the personality for the sport – aggressiveness and a willingness to learn. Some of the freshmen will be starting for us this year."

There are eight girls on the roster, double the number from last year. As with the other schools, the girls ask for and give no quarter, says Suba: "The same is expected of them as the boys. They don't do anything different. They wrestle against the boys in practice and are willing to compete in matches with the boys though there are separate girls tournaments as well."

Leading the girls is Madison Lee, wrestling at 132, who says Suba "is always there for us." Sophomore Juliana Meneses is returning from an injury that prevented her from wrestling last season. Says Suba appreciatively: "Though injured, Julianna never missed a practice and learned what she could be another of our leaders this year."

Two freshmen, Isabelle Lurie and Angie Warren, both new to wrestling, bring a unique skill set to the team. Warren has trained in boxing and Lurie has jujitsu experience. Lurie appreciates what she is getting from wrestling: "I've never been a fan of traditional sports. I love the combat and aggression in wrestling. I am really improving my strength and cardio fitness. Though I can't use most of my jujitsu techniques, the techniques in take downs I have learned in wrestling will help with my jujitsu."

With so many young wrestlers, the leadership of the upperclassmen is a crucial factor for the Cougars. Senior Nick Shaw, (182-195) and Jack Gruen (170) and juniors Adrian Bautista (120-126) and Noah Hammann (120) each bring a unique quality to the team says Suba: "Adrian has a real passion for the sport and wrestles all year round. Pound for pound, he is our strongest wrestler." Jack and his younger brother Sam have taken to teaching wrestling at Joaquin Moraga where their father is the PE teacher. Noah who finished third in the league tourney last year is another year-round wrestler and Nick has been a tremendous leader.

In a recent five dual meet, Bautista was 3-1, only losing to last year's NCS champion while Ethan Baxter was 4-1, pinning his opponent in each victory.

If there is one particular move that has become a favorite for Campolindo, it has been the arm bar, says Suba: "This move was essentially patented by Nikko which he used with great effectiveness in high school and college. He has put Campolindo's name on that move."

Campolindo loses to Bishop O'Dowd

By Jon Kingdon



Charlie Craig

Photos Gint Federas

In a game where Campolindo needed to play a mistake-free game Dec. 1 and didn't, the Cougars lost to Bishop O'Dowd by a score of 35-14.

Coming into the NCS semifinal

game with identical 10-2 records, the 3rd seeded Campolindo Cougars and the 2nd seeded Bishop O'Dowd Dragons seemed to be very evenly matched – Campolindo won their two prior playoff games by scores of 35-6 (vs. Redwood) and 49-14 (vs. Ukiah) while O'Dowd won their games by scores of 35-7 (vs. Hayward) and 49-14 (vs. Benicia). Both teams played Hayward earlier in the season, with Campolindo winning by 27 points and O'Dowd winning by 28 points.

Campolindo dug themselves a big hole early in the game with a fumble and interception on their first two possessions deep in their own territory, which O'Dowd converted into touchdowns, jumping to a quick 14-0 lead. Brandon Manty scored on a 32-yard fumble return for Campolindo, cutting the deficit in half, but O'Dowd answered that with a five-minute drive to go ahead 21-7 at the end of the first half.

After Campolindo stopped O'Dowd on their first drive, forcing a punt, the Cougars were anticipating getting the ball in good field po-

sition. However, there was a roughing the kicker penalty on Charlie Craig that allowed O'Dowd to keep the ball and finish off the drive with a touchdown to go ahead 28-7. With the score 35-7, Campolindo quarterback Grant Harper connected on a 60-yard touchdown to Max Schoenberger to make the final score 35-14.

Field position, long a strength for Campolindo, was very much in O'Dowd's favor. Campolindo averaged starting their drive on the 24-yard line while O'Dowd's starting average was the 44-yard line. Though the game was played under a sunny sky, the wind seemed to be a factor for Harper. Finishing the year with a 60 percent completion rate, against O'Dowd, Harper was only 11 for 33 for 199 yards. Still, Harper walked off the field with his head held high: "I loved playing with every one of our seniors. We fought together all year long. It is disappointing but we never gave up and that was our identity."

Campolindo finished the season with a 10-3 record, the eighth straight year the Cougars had at

least 10 wins. Macy praised the performance and attitude of his team: "We contained their top back, Austin Jones, never allowing him any big runs. We played hard and we have nothing to be ashamed

about. We never gave up. We gave a great effort every play. Our seniors advanced tremendously as a group and as individuals. It was an incredible year."



Grant Harper

Waterpolo

The postponement of the games was also a challenge for Campolindo. Senior Beck Jurasio spoke of the team's character after the victory: "We were a very close team and

came together as the season progressed. We had a lot of will power and we all wanted it so badly."

Campolindo head coach Miles Price arrived just in time for the

game, returning from a trip to Australia. During the hiatus he spoke highly of San Ramon Valley and the Cougars: "First, congratulations go out to San Ramon Valley

for the great season they had. We had great senior leadership that anchored our team from the start and we look forward to watching them continue to develop at the DI level.

... continued from Page C1

We have some special underclassmen who developed throughout the season and are excited to see what they are capable of in the years to come."

Lamorinda OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 12 Issue 21 Wednesday, December 12, 2018



Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

...read on Page D12

Simple reminders to make the holidays bright

By Amanda Eck



Photo provided

Can you believe we are in the home stretch of 2018? Where did the year go? It's like they say, the days are long but the years are short. I am sure most of you are gearing up for the holidays: shopping, baking, wrapping gifts, and getting your home ready for guests. Today I thought I'd share a few tips to keep you from getting frazzled during these last few weeks of 2018.

Keep it simple: Keep the holiday décor to a minimum. No need to haul out the 252 boxes of decorations this year. Keep the set up and take down to a minimum and have more time to just "be". Use fresh poinsettias or greenery to decorate your home. Fill decorative bowls with ornaments and add sprigs of greenery. Tie bows around lamps or vases. And candles, candles, and more candles. There is nothing more magical than candlelight during the holiday season.

Buy, don't bake: Anyone else have 342 invites to holiday parties? From school parties, work events, book club cookie exchanges, mom's groups, you name it there is a party happening almost every day of the week. How about this year you step away from the oven and head to your local grocery store for some yummy baked goods. Place them in fun decorative tins or wrap them in clear cellophane and tie with a festive bow. Give yourself permission to take it easy this season. No one needs to know you didn't battle all afternoon with the hand mixer.

Write it down: Instead of gifts this year to every aunt, uncle, second cousin and neighbor, what about writing a heartfelt note? We live in such a digital age that handwritten notes of gratitude and encouragement are few and far between. Why not take an afternoon to sit down and write a letter to someone telling him or her how much they mean to you? Believe me, that letter will mean much more than a hastily purchased gift.

Brian Tracy wrote, "The greatest gift you can give to others is the gift of unconditional love and acceptance."

Wrap as you go: Who needs to spend Christmas Eve catching up on wrapping chores? I'll admit gift-wrapping is one of my least favorite jobs. I tend to leave it to the last minute and then I am overwhelmed with stacks of gifts asking myself "why did I buy this?" and "who did I buy this for?" Some simple things to make the task easier: use Post-it notes on gifts so you can keep track of who gets what. Wrap gifts as soon as you purchase them. Or better yet, forgo the wrapping and instead use a decorative bag tied with ribbon!

Just say no: Don't overbook yourself! This time of year it is easy to find yourself invited to multiple events and have something to attend every weekend in the month of December.

... continued on Page D4



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69 Barbara Rd, Orinda



2121 Risdon Rd, Concord



39 Barbara Rd, Orinda

RECENTLY SOLD REPRESENTED BUYER



113 Estates Dr, Orinda



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24 Camino Sobrante, Orinda



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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded

City	Last reported:	LOWEST AMOUNT:	HIGHEST AMOUNT:
LAFAYETTE	20	\$645,000	\$4,825,000
MORAGA	6	\$1,260,000	\$1,545,000
ORINDA	10	\$950,000	\$3,268,000

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

- 20 Beaumont Court, \$1,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 2366 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 11-02-18,
- 3567 Boyer Circle, \$1,705,000, 4 Bdrms, 2210 SqFt, 1938 YrBlt, 11-02-18,
Previous Sale: \$1,610,000, 06-22-15
- 3983 Canyon Road, \$4,825,000, 5 Bdrms, 5135 SqFt, 2008 YrBlt, 11-01-18,
Previous Sale: \$1,450,000, 03-20-06
- 5 Greenvalley Drive, \$2,700,000, 4 Bdrms, 4048 SqFt, 1922 YrBlt, 10-30-18,
Previous Sale: \$1,950,000, 04-27-13
- 3788 Happy Valley Road, \$2,850,000, 3 Bdrms, 1879 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 10-24-18,
- 4016 Los Arabis Drive, \$2,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 3485 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 10-24-18,
Previous Sale: \$2,275,000, 07-06-06
- 3186 Lucas Circle, \$1,000,000, 3 Bdrms, 1421 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 10-30-18,
Previous Sale: \$102,000, 02-01-79
- 519 McBride Drive, \$1,655,500, 4 Bdrms, 2223 SqFt, 1965 YrBlt, 10-29-18
Previous Sale: \$510,000, 02-04-14
- 3838 Palo Alto Drive, \$2,350,000, 4 Bdrms, 3440 SqFt, 1961 YrBlt, 10-31-18
- 181191 Pleasant Hill Circle, \$1,787,000, 4 Bdrms, 2511 SqFt, 1949 YrBlt,
10-25-18, Previous Sale: \$1,600,000, 04-07-17
- 3797 Quail Ridge Road, \$1,295,000, 4 Bdrms, 2189 SqFt, 1973 YrBlt, 10-26-18
- 3266 Quandt Road, \$900,000, 3 Bdrms, 1578 SqFt, 1960 YrBlt, 11-02-18,
- 809 Rosedale Avenue, \$1,320,000, 3 Bdrms, 1499 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 10-31-18,
Previous Sale: \$1,150,000, 05-13-16
- 3330 St Marys Road, \$1,420,000, 3 Bdrms, 1866 SqFt, 1940 YrBlt, 10-23-18,
Previous Sale: \$937,000, 05-14-10
- 1011 Sunnybrook Drive, \$1,670,000, 4 Bdrms, 2556 SqFt, 1950 YrBlt, 10-26-18
- 1126 Upper Happy Valley Road, \$2,650,000, 4 Bdrms, 4495 SqFt, 1947
YrBlt, 10-29-18
- 3357 Victoria Avenue, \$1,653,500, 3 Bdrms, 2016 SqFt, 1941 YrBlt, 11-02-18,
- 3113 Withers Avenue, \$1,495,000, 4 Bdrms, 2498 SqFt, 1957 YrBlt, 10-26-18,
Previous Sale: \$1,108,000, 03-18-15
- 1004 Woodbury Road #101, \$1,525,000, 2 Bdrms, 1495 SqFt, 2015 YrBlt,
10-30-18, Previous Sale: \$1,337,000, 05-04-16

... continued on Page D10



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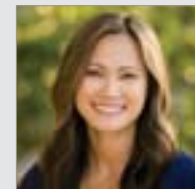
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Where Is The Market Headed?

With the recent volatility in the stock market combined with rising interest rates and the lengthy bull market run since 2009, more of our clients are asking us, "Where is the market headed?" While none of us have eyes into the future and all markets are subject to short-term fluctuations, there are a few local market considerations that are important to keep in mind that bode well for the long-term value of Lamorinda real estate.

The Bay Area Council Economic Institute and McKinsey & Company recently released the 10th edition of their Bay Area Economic Profile. A few key conclusions included, "Even though these economic success trajectories have been almost unprecedented, the Bay Area economy is still currently on the upswing" and "In 2017, 45 percent of US venture capital investments were made in the Bay Area." Almost half of US venture investments are in the Bay Area!

Recently, CNBC released the Upstart 100, its annual list of the 100 most promising start-ups around the world. There are 33 Bay Area companies on the list. Of these 33 companies, 22 are in San Francisco or the East Bay. This list is another example that the Silicon Valley is moving north to San Francisco and the East Bay making Lamorinda a viable commute option for today's "new-tech" workforce. Fifteen years ago, you would have only seen one or two San Francisco based start-up companies on the list as most Bay Area companies would have been located on the Peninsula, which has historically been the heart of the Silicon Valley. Today 90% of "new-tech" is San Francisco based and moving east.

While it is always very difficult to predict short-term market changes, there is not a more desirable location than the Bay Area, and specifically Lamorinda. History has proven that over the long run our real estate market will appreciate.



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MARTIN
HOMES

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Simple reminders to make the holidays bright ... continued from Page D1



Photos provided

It's okay to say no to your Aunt Gertie's sister's best friends cookie exchange. Keep your holiday commitments to a minimum.

Be present, instead of presents: What if we committed this season to less "things" and more "time" for others and for ourselves? What if we turned off our phones and TVs and had dinner with our family by candlelight? Or hired a sitter and surprised our spouse with a spontaneous Tuesday night date? Called up that friend you haven't spoken to in months just to say you're thinking about them. And what about you? How present are you with yourself? Are you taking time to just be with yourself? Are you OK to just sit in silence with no email alerts or Facebook notifications? Why not take a walk alone or head to bed 30 minutes early to enjoy a good book? The gifts, the parties, the goodies, and the family will all still be waiting for you, but you will be

able to present a better you by taking the time to be.

I hope these tips help keep you from getting frazzled this holiday season. And I wish you and yours a wonderful Holiday and a very Happy New Year! See you in 2019!



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

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

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





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Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year

During this magical time of year, we'd like to stop and express our gratitude towards our clients, friends, and community. Thank you for letting us help you find your place in the world.

On another note, we cannot wait to show you what is COMING SOON for 2019!



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The Paddy Kehoe Team



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We wish you and your family all
the best this Holiday Season!




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Lamorinda Market Activity

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5 Bed 4 Bath 3,761± SQ. FT. .57± Acre Lot







Sold

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Terri Bates Walker
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Lamorinda Home Sales recorded ... continued from Page D2

MORAGA

- 2135 Ascot Drive #17, \$645,000, 3 Bdrms, 1640 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 10-22-18
762 Augusta Drive, \$1,130,000, 2 Bdrms, 1649 SqFt, 1974 YrBlt, 10-26-18
182 Fernwood Drive, \$1,260,000, 4 Bdrms, 2955 SqFt, 1970 YrBlt, 10-30-18,
31 Fieldbrook Place, \$1,545,000, 4 Bdrms, 2152 SqFt, 1962 YrBlt, 10-31-18,
Previous Sale: \$950,000, 04-15-13
219 Paseo Del Rio, \$1,375,000, 4 Bdrms, 2340 SqFt, 1969 YrBlt, 10-26-18
14 Ravenhill Lane, \$1,450,000, 4 Bdrms, 2270 SqFt, 1966 YrBlt, 10-26-18

ORINDA

- 30 Charles Hill Circle, \$3,268,000, 5 Bdrms, 4507 SqFt, 2017 YrBlt, 10-25-18,
Previous Sale: \$1,460,000, 08-26-16
98 Coral Drive, \$1,140,000, 4 Bdrms, 1649 SqFt, 1956 YrBlt, 10-26-18,
35 Crestview Drive, \$1,950,000, 4 Bdrms, 4176 SqFt, 1999 YrBlt, 10-26-18,
20 El Castillo, \$2,399,000, 4 Bdrms, 3653 SqFt, 1998 YrBlt, 10-31-18,
Previous Sale: \$2,272,500, 05-17-17
144 Glorietta Boulevard, \$950,000, 3 Bdrms, 1560 SqFt, 1955 YrBlt, 10-23-18
32 Las Vegas Road, \$1,525,000, 4 Bdrms, 1966 SqFt, 1951 YrBlt, 10-24-18,
Previous Sale: \$800,000, 04-25-03
300 Miller Court, \$2,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 3304 SqFt, 2013 YrBlt, 10-31-18,
Previous Sale: \$1,970,500, 10-03-13
432 Miner Road, \$1,150,000, 3 Bdrms, 2193 SqFt, 1939 YrBlt, 10-29-18,
Previous Sale: \$160,000, 08-01-77
32 Orchard Road, \$1,862,000, 4 Bdrms, 2820 SqFt, 1946 YrBlt, 10-30-18,
Previous Sale: \$1,998,000, 02-24-16
91 Redwood Terrace, \$1,500,000, 4 Bdrms, 3502 SqFt, 1982 YrBlt, 10-26-18,
Previous Sale: \$1,130,000, 06-06-14



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2018 Sales



613 Murray Lane,
Lafayette
\$2,295,000
Represented Seller



420 Westcliffe Circle,
Walnut Creek
\$632,000
Represented Seller



132 Northcreek Cir-
cle, Walnut Creek
\$640,000
Represented Seller



518 Bavarian Ct.
Lafayette
\$1,440,000
Represented Buyers



5370 Meadow Wood
Place, Concord
\$670,000
Represented Sellers



1899 Stratton Circle,
Walnut Creek
\$860,000
Represented Buyer



805 Arlington Way,
Martinez
\$640,000
Represented Buyer



1965 Ascot #10,
Moraga
\$500,000
Represented Sellers



1691 Saint Germain
Place, Concord
\$870,000
Represented Seller



1555 Beechwood Drive,
Martinez
\$650,000
Represented Buyer



1240 Apple Drive,
Concord
\$529,000
Represented Buyers



2607 Grande Camino,
Walnut Creek
\$1,190,000
Represented Sellers



1170 Maywood Lane,
Martinez
\$393,500
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"Striking a Chord in Our Community"

Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

Joy to the world!

By Cynthia Brian

"Only those who go where few have gone can see what few have seen." ~ Buddha



Christmas delight at Cynthia's fire chief nephew's home. Merry Christmas!

Did you know that poinsettias grow into trees? Or that mother's tongue, also known as snake plant, is an excellent fence barrier? Without a thought from whence a plant derives, most of us buy our indoor plants at nurseries, grocery stores, and big-box centers. Our holiday décor includes colorful tropical specimens that thrive inside.

On a quest to discover the flora and fauna that bring joy to our world, I traveled to Cuba with a program in support of the Cuban people. Throughout my journey, the diverse and unique landscape constantly changed as our small group of six plus an informative Cuban guide hiked through nature reserves, parks, rainforests, and into the magnificent Escambray Mountains. In 1492 Christopher Columbus landed in Cuba, describing it as "the most beautiful land that human eyes had ever seen." Supporting 7,500 species of flowering plants, with more

than 53 percent being endemic, Cuba is a garden lovers paradise.

The rivers, grottos, caves and waterfalls were dotted with gigantic tree ferns, indigenous species of orchids, tillandsias (air plants), bromeliads and palms as well as banana, mango, papaya, orange and grapefruit trees. Philodendrons twined up 50-foot trees and Ixora commonly called jungle flame or jungle geranium, firespike and ginger flanked the narrow footpaths. Fields of sugar cane, coffee plants and tobacco straddled the lowlands and hillsides. We traversed log bridges over rushing rivers in Topas de Collantes and were mesmerized by the delicate mimosas. Their leaves instantly closed with the touch of a finger. We tiptoed on rocks crossing trickling streams and swam in the poceta de cristal or crystal pond under a waterfall near the top of the mountain. A sign on the tree read *salto los desparramaderos*: translated means

"jump the scatters." Chuckling, we jumped numerous "scatters." Tall thick spires of bamboo led to the mouth of the river where rocky stalactites hung from the ceiling of caves and the rocky formations of stalagmites rose from the cavern floor.

We were fortunate enough to witness the unique Cuban national bird, the trogan tocororo, sitting on a limb in the forest. Its striking feathers are red, white and blue, reflecting those of the national flag. It is said that this endemic bird found only in Cuba will die of sadness in captivity, symbolizing the desire of the people to always be free. It was called *guatini* by the Taino Indians and is also known as the onomatopoeic *tocoloro* because of its song. At lunch one day under a thatched canopy, we met the largest endemic land mammal in Cuba, the friendly and curious social rodent, the Cuban Hutia. Prized as a rare delicacy, it lives in trees and is almost extinct because of over-harvesting. We stopped at a lunch hut in the Zapata Swamp another afternoon but didn't see any Cuban crocodiles, an endangered species found exclusively in Cuba. ... continued on next Page

Photo Cynthia Brian



*Firespike, *odononema strictum*, attracts hummingbirds and beneficial insects.*

The produce on this island is always organic, fresh and delicious. When I commented about the importance of growing and eating organic, our guide informed us that farming organically was not a choice but a necessity because the cost of fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides are prohibitively expensive. Growing organic is cheaper than using chemicals in farming. Fruits and vegetables are only eaten in season. Pineapple, guava and bananas are the sweetest I've ever tasted anywhere. In Havana, carts of tomatoes, peppers, lettuces, beets, bananas and cucumbers are pushed through the streets, offering a daily rolling farmer's market to the populace.

Nature is what attracted me to Cuba and it didn't disappoint. After hiking, biking, snorkeling, kayaking, bird watching, horseback riding and examining the flora and fauna of the island, it was the people that stole my heart. They have so little economically speaking, yet they are joyful, full of life, and welcoming to Americans. In the casa particulares where we stayed, tiny Christmas trees or frayed holiday trinkets brightened the small rooms where families gathered, a far cry from the Disneyesque Christmas spectacle I'm accustomed to in my family. Speaking Spanish to several Cubans, I learned of dreams to travel and hopes for a freer future.

Not many Americans have had the opportunity to visit this impoverished, yet beautiful Caribbean nation. If you are one of those individuals who want to see what few have seen, consider supporting the Cuban people. You'll be rewarded with a visit of joy, diversity, and plenty of grateful hugs!



A happy coleus is bright and pink.



The fruit of the Cuban Royal Palm is a favorite of birds.



The glorybower vine in bloom in Cienfuegos, Cuba.

Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for bringing a slice of Cuba to your landscape

Cuban plants that make great houseplants in California:

Ixora, commonly called jungle flame, flame of the woods, or jungle geranium with clusters of star shaped flowers.

Poinsettia, a *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, is the most well-known holiday flower. Although red is the most popular color, the bracts are available in pink, white, salmon, and bi-colors. Poinsettias love warmth and humidity and in Cuba grow to be trees.

Tillandsias, the largest genus in the bromeliad family, are air plants that will cling to anything. Natural light, soaking and misting will keep them happy.

Bromeliads, add a touch of the tropics to every home. With flowers of pink, red and maroon, they require minimal care. Fill the cup at the base with water and let them thrive.

Philodendrons are easy care houseplants. Vining philodendrons need a pole to climb; non-climbing will grow upright without any support. They like bright, indirect sunlight, and enjoy an occasional vacation outdoors in the shade.

Snake plant, also known as mother's tongue, is one of the air freshener plants. It requires almost no care at all and will keep you breathing freely.

Mimosa pudica, a perennial herb in the pea family, is the touch-me-not-plant. When touched it closes its leaves, titillating audiences.

Cuban plants to grow in your garden:

Gloryblowers (*Clerodendrum*) make excellent choices for trellises, poles, and other structures in full sun as climbers. Since they are tropical, they need to be protected from frost.

Coleus, painted nettle plant, grows outdoors when it is warm, but being a tender specimen, are best grown as a container or houseplant.

Royal Palm will grow to 60 feet in frost-free areas and is moderately drought resistant, bringing the sway of the island inland.

Bamboo is a fast growing giant grass that makes an excellent privacy screen. Beware, certain species of bamboo can take over, breaking concrete and sidewalks.

Firespike, *odononema strictum*, is an evergreen shrub that tolerates drought producing brilliant panicles of tubular waxy flowers summer through winter.

Ginger, both ornamental and edible, is easy to grow and incredibly pretty. To grow edible ginger, just break off a piece of a healthy, plump ginger root that you buy at the store and plant in the location you want. Leaves die back in winter. Harvest whenever you need to add spice to life!

Look around your house and garden to identify what botanicals you are growing with a Cuban origin. Wishing you a beautiful holiday season of joy, peace, gratitude, and love.

Happy Gardening. Happy Growing.
Feliz Navidad y Feliz Jánuca!

Cynthia Brian



Arabian coffee beans growing in Cuba. Photos Cynthia Brian



A philodendron climbs a tree in the Cuban forest.



Fresh vegetables on a rolling cart in Havana.



Ixora, scarlet jungle flame grows throughout the rain forests.



Cynthia Brian shaded by a poinsettia tree in full bloom

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 her new books, Growing with the Goddess Gardener and Be the Star You Are! Millennials to Boomers at www.cynthiabrian.com/online-store.

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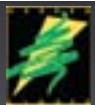
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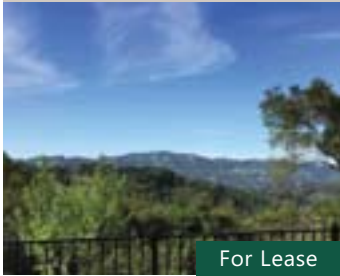
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